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I DON'T: A STUDY OF MARRIAGE, ETHNICITY, AND CITIZENSHIP IN ETHNIC WOMEN'S WRITING

By

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I DON'T: A STUDY OF MARRIAGE, ETHNICITY, AND CITIZENSHIP IN ETHNIC WOMEN'S WRITING

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University of Nebraska, 2011

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For the 19th and well into the 20th century, marriage was the most formative institution that defined women's civic presence in the American community. Nancy Cott's Public Vows provides crucial context for my study. Cott shows how marriage not only implied a structure for private life but also participated in public order, namely the wife's civic status was subsumed by the status of her husband. An unmarried woman's civic identity was ambiguous absent a husband who could represent her in the public sphere. For ethnic women, marriage did not guarantee access to the benefits and protections of U.S. citizenship, but, in some cases, further marginalized her from mainstream society. The four ethnic women writers in this study all belong to ethnic groups who were deemed unfit for U.S. citizenship. In different ways they all engage discourse about marriage and its limitations on female agency. The writers featured here are: Sioux activist and writer Zitkala-Sa, Jewish American fiction writer Martha Wolfenstein, biracial Anglo-Chinese writer Sui Sin Far, and African American writer Zora Neale Hurston. All of these ethnic women writers reject a narrow normative definition of U.S. citizenship and offer alternative paradigms from redefining womanhood to rejecting the marriage relationship altogether. They use fiction as a platform to agitate for change and as writers act with the full conviction of citizenship to voice opposition to unjust government policies.

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INTRODUCTION

The Statue of Liberty is a conspicuous emblem of the conflicting positions about who is entitled to U.S. citizenship, and its very orientation provocatively symbolizes how citizenship was conferred or denied certain categories of people. The statue faces east, toward Europe, implying that immigrants from there would be welcomed into American society. Despite this seeming welcoming embrace of European immigrants, as Peter Schrag argues in Not Fit for Our Society, those who have argued against immigration throughout American history have recycled arguments over and over again. Nativists from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the era most associated with the Statue of Liberty as an emblem of welcome to European immigrants, recycled old arguments about the inability of immigrants to assimilate (1-4). They simply targeted different immigrant populations for critique, namely the large influx of Jewish and Southern Europeans they deemed unfit for U.S. citizenship because their values clashed with Anglo-American ones.

Notably, the Statue of Liberty's back faces the continental U.S., symbolizing how Native Americans, African Americans, and Asian immigrants were systematically barred from full belonging to the American political community. The 1790 Naturalization Act stipulates that citizenship by naturalization could be conferred only on "a free white person…of good character…who supports the Constitution of the United States…[and who] renounce[s] allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty." Furthermore, the Act stipulates that a child of naturalized citizens would also be considered U.S. citizens whether born domestically or abroad, but only if their "fathers had never been resident in the United States." Free white women born in the

U.S. were clearly citizens, and free white women who immigrated to the U.S. could become naturalized citizens, but for women, citizenship did not carry with it the right to vote until 1920. Ethnic women's civic status was even more constrained. If she was of a race that was not considered "white," if she had not adopted the outward markers of Anglo-American culture, or if she married a man who was not naturalizable, her access to the protections, benefits, obligations and rights of U.S. citizenship was tenuous at best.

Nancy Cott's Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation provides crucial context for my project. In her wide-ranging history of marriage and the formation of the republic, Cott argues that women, white and ethnic, were barred from full citizenship in the U.S. because their civic status was tied to the status of their husbands. "Under common law," she explains, "a woman was absorbed into her husband's legal and economic persona upon marrying, and her husband gained the civic presence she lost" (7). Marriage was the most formative relationship for a woman, and it defined how she belonged in the American community. Married women of all races, whether or not their husbands were citizens, were arguably invisible and could not access protection, benefits and rights conferred by U.S. citizenship. Thus, as Cott's study suggests, marriage, as an institution that formalized gender discrimination and sexism, prevented women from claiming full citizenship, even though such exclusion would seem to conflict with the nation's founding democratic principles.

The ethnic women in this study were members of groups excluded, in varying degrees and in different ways, from full participation in Anglo-American society. As members of ethnic minorities, these women faced both social prejudices and discriminatory laws, and they also sometimes faced sexism and discrimination as women

within their own ethnic groups. In a study of how marginalized groups place restrictions on women's subjectivity, cultural theorist Anne Phillips suggests that despite agitation for cultural independence, marginalized groups also tend to oppress women in their own group (271). In the case of Chinese Americans, patriarchy based on Confucian values severely curbed Chinese women's ability to act independently in American society. Patriarchal structures in African American and Jewish communities also limited women's access to mainstream society. In traditional Native American cultures, women were strong and consequential participants in the tribe (Hoxie 54), but U.S. government policies aimed to inculcate patriarchal family values. In important ways, the four ethnic women writers in this study write against patriarchy within their ethnic groups in order to formulate alternatives to the systematic oppression of ethnic women by ethnic men. They provocatively explore the marriage relationship as a means by which ethnic women are oppressed and excluded from power in both their ethnic communities and the larger American community. Sometimes, the women characters in their fictions triumph over marriage's restrictions to find new ways to claim agency and identity separate from their husbands.

The four ethnic women writers in this study all engage in different ways the marriage relationship as central paradigm for women's belonging in the American community. This study surveys the semi-autobiographical writings, journalism, and fiction of the prominent Native American activist in the early 20th century, Zitkala-Sa. As I will demonstrate, her writings express a deep concern about Native American women's access to the benefits of U.S. citizenship during the Dawes Act era and through the various genres, Zitkala-Sa shows how unmarried women are the best warriors for the

cause of her people. Martha Wolfenstein is the second author featured in this study. She is a Jewish American writer who emigrated from Central Europe in the 1870s. As I will show, her stories reflect the debates of her time about the difficulties of balancing Jewish tradition with the inevitable modernization that Jewish American women must adapt to in order to keep Jewish traditions alive. Sui Sin Far is a writer of mixed racial heritage who places the marriage relationship squarely in the center of her fictional characters' lives. In important ways, these Chinese American wives embody the best qualities of American womanhood and demonstrate the lengths that Chinese women will go to keep their families together. My survey of Sui Sin Far's fiction shows various versions of the marriage relationship to show the different ways that Chinese American wives defend themselves against assimilation that their husbands force upon them. They withstand the cultural assaults and show the inhuman effects of the Exclusion Act era as it rips Chinese American families a part. Zora Neale Hurston is the only writer whose stories appeared after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. But, as I will show, her stories show how American government policy in the south prevented both African American women and men from meaningful access to the benefits, rights, and obligations of U.S. citizenship. Her characters are all birth-right citizens, but they are systematically prevented from acting on those rights. Hurston chooses marriage as a paradigm to explore her characters' isolation in Jim Crow south as well as the ways and lengths their husbands will go to transfer their feelings of oppression onto their overburdened wives. Both Zitkala-Sa and Martha Wolfenstein reject the marriage relationship as a model of civic identity. In Sui Sin Far's stories, Chinese wives rebel against the strictures of marriage to claim agency over husbands who keep them isolated to try to force them to

assimilate. In Hurston's story "Sweat," an African American marriage ceases to be mutually sustaining, prevents a woman from achieving full self-actualization, and ends in violence and death. In all of these marriages, gender as a social construct makes women invisible in the civic sphere, and they can gain access only through their husbands. Looking at the marriage relationship as a social phenomenon, we can begin to see how it produces gender inequality.[1] By making social construct visible, these four ethnic women authors seek to change it and to formulate a new role for all women. The four women writers here all posit alternatives to the marriage relationship, in which ethnic women claim agency and gain control over their lives.

Several landmark laws and legal decisions were designed to, and largely succeeded in, limiting access to full citizenship in the U.S. The passage of the so-called Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution after the Civil War sparked controversy and motivated activism by those who sought to expand the scope of citizenship for women. The Fourteenth Amendment granted birth-right citizenship to former slaves, both men and women, but the Fifteenth Amendment, which granted the right to vote to only male former slaves, inaugurated a debate about who was better suited for full enfranchisement: white women or former slave men. As historian Ellen Dubois observes, previous to the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, the "case for suffrage had consistently been put in terms of the individual rights of all persons, regardless of their sex and race. Angered by their exclusion from the Fifteenth Amendment, women's rights advocates began to develop fundamentally different arguments for their cause. They claimed their right to the ballot not as individuals but as a sex…The reason women should vote was not that they were the same as men but that they were different. That

made for a thorough reversal of classic women's rights premises" (340). While women's rights activists agitated for the right to vote, ethnic women were largely left behind. Indeed, while the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments gave African American men both citizenship and the right to vote, the late 19th century saw the passage of laws that excluded men and women from other racial groups from citizenship. The two most consequential pieces of legislation designed to regulate and limit who could become a U.S. citizen were the Dawes Act and the Chinese Exclusion Act.

In 1882, Congress passed a law limiting the number of Chinese laborers who could enter the country, but Section 14 went further, excluding Chinese not only from immigration but also from citizenship. Chinese Immigration, a landmark analysis by early 20th century historian Mary Roberts Coolidge, exposed the injustice of the Exclusion Act and its practical consequences for the Chinese in America. In her book, Coolidge outlines the major arguments for the passage of the Exclusion Act, ranging from the unwillingness of the Chinese to change their allegiance to the U.S., to their perceived clannishness, to the sojourner habits of the Chinese workers, and their ostensible unwillingness to conform to white, Anglo-American culture by learning the language or practicing Christianity (402). Critics of Chinese immigration and citizenship targeted Chinese women in particular for exclusion on moral, cultural, and economic grounds. In the late 19th century, social critic and economist George F. Seward wrote about the challenges Chinese immigrant women faced. Restricted from entering the country legally because they were thought to be mostly prostitutes, Anglo-Americans also considered them to be weak and subject to corruption by Chinese men (269, 286). Many Chinese men returned to China to marry Chinese women, but the strict laws

requiring immense and detailed documentation to leave and return to the U.S. had the effect of breaking up these Chinese families. Chinese men who returned to the U.S. without their wives often financially supported their families in China, but because it was so difficult to obtain the necessary paperwork to reunite families, marriage did not afford Chinese women meaningful protection under the law or help to keep their families intact. Indeed, even if a Chinese immigrant man successfully brought his Chinese wife to the U.S. and she gave birth to children who could claim status as birth-right American citizens, she herself had no access to citizenship. She thus was at a double remove from the mainstream American community.

The Dawes Act, also passed in the late 19th century, laid out a path to U.S. citizenship for Native Americans who became yeoman farmers, separated from their tribes living instead in individual nuclear families. The Act allotted land to individual families for a 25-year trust period, on the theory that during that period they would establish self-sufficiency and become prepared for full citizenship. At the end of the trust period, the land and citizenship were supposed to be granted to them permanently, but only if they had shed their native ways and adopted Anglo-American cultural practices, speaking English, living in nuclear families, taking up Christian religion, and living in Anglo-American style dwellings instead of traditional housing forms, such as teepees. Section 6 of the Act states, "And every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States to whom allotments shall have been made under the provisions of this act…and every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States who has voluntarily taken up…his residence separate and apart from any tribe of Indians therein, and had adopted the habits of civilized life, is hereby declared to be a citizen of the

United States." The consequences of the land allotment process under the Dawes Act were grim. When Native Americans renounced their tribal customs, Native American women lost their power in the family and their status in the tribe because Native American men became patriarchal heads of household. Allotment and the cultural transformations it fostered also destroyed traditional practices in relation to land, with Native American men replacing Native American women as the main agriculturalists. Adopting the habits of "civilized" life also meant that indigenous peoples would conform to Anglo-American marriage, in which wives were subordinate to husbands, even though such subordination of wives was alien to Native American sensibilities. In her study of Native American culture during the period of the Dawes Act, Louise Newman suggests that one of the main goals of the U.S. imperial expansion westward was to destroy Native American culture via modeling Anglo-American domestic roles; and white women were, as she demonstrates, complicit in the systematic sexism they transposed from their own lives onto the lives of Native American women. "One of the most profound ironies of this history," Newman writes, "is that at the very moment that the white women's movement was engaged in various critique of patriarchal gender relations in the United States, it called for the introduction of patriarchy into those societies deemed 'inferior' precisely because they did not manifest the supposedly civilized gender practices of the United States" (171). Indeed, the emancipation of Native American women from a perceived oppressive relationship to her husband was the marker that the Native American society had become "civilized" enough for Native American individuals to become citizens. Ironically, however, turning Native American women into housewives actually caused them to lose status, while only men gained status (Newman 166).

African American women were granted citizenship under the Fourteenth Amendment, if not suffrage under the Fifteenth. Even though they were not excluded from citizenship, like Chinese women, or forced to undergo a process of cultural exclusion to gain citizenship, African American women were nevertheless alienated from meaningful participation in the American community until well into the 20th century by the institutionalized sexism of the marriage relationship and by Jim Crow laws in the Southern States and social segregation and exclusion in other regions, both of which often prevented African American men and women from exercising rights granted by the Reconstruction Amendments. In Critical Social Theory in the Interests of Black Folks, African American cultural historian Lucius Outlaw analyzes the processes that created and reinforced the disparities between people of different races and the white mainstream culture. Those in power believed that there were "'natural kinds' – races, sexes, and social orders of caste and class – whereby place in the hierarchy was determined by capacity and character as a function of kind that thus determined the absolute (in themselves) and relative (compared to others) and moral and social value of persons and peoples" (165). Those of races or "natural kinds" that were outside of the mainstream were considered to be, among other things, intellectually incapable of carrying out the obligations of U.S. citizenship (Outlaw 165). Racism, sexism, and social alienation thus combined to prevent African American women from participating fully in the American community. African Americans were citizens by birth, but they were still at a double remove from the American mainstream because patriarchal marriage, strongly promoted to former slaves as a social ideal, and Jim Crow laws in the south constrained the daily lives of African Americans, both men and women. Although birth-right citizens, African

American women were even further marginalized by Anglo-American cultural imperialism.

For immigrants from Western and Central Europe, selective assimilation and cultural adaptation to Anglo-American values came relatively easily. These immigrants were not excluded from either immigration or naturalization. Neither were Jewish immigrants from Europe excluded from immigration or citizenship, but many in Anglo-American culture considered them undesirable as citizens and argued for their exclusion. Eric L. Goldstein considers the case of Jews from Central Europe from the mid 19th century forward in The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity. Jews from Central Europe were considered white and therefore, under the Naturalization Act of 1790, were eligible for U.S. citizenship. They also shared important values with Anglo-American culture (84). Indeed, some considered Jews to be a model for other immigrants to the U.S. Horace Kallen and other proponents of cultural pluralism thought that the Jewish immigrants were not that different from the first English settlers in North America: they came with the same spirit, prepared to start new lives, and adapted easily to American customs. As Avraham Barkai demonstrates in his study of German-Jewish immigration to the U.S., these immigrants did not come destitute to America's shores, but rather had education, skills, and enough capital to start businesses (34). But many immigrant Jews found it difficult to balance their commitment to Judaism with their desire to assimilate and Americanize. Hasia R. Diner's study of the second Jewish migrations in the mid 19th century, A Time for Gathering, highlights how difficult it was for immigrants to strike such a balance. For all of their preparedness to start new lives in the U.S., many Jews were unwilling, for instance, to abandon certain Jewish religious and

cultural practices, such as burial rites and Jewish charitable groups, to fit in with their Anglo-American neighbors (Diner 165). As Jewish immigrants sought to balance assimilation and preservation, Jewish women were tasked with transmitting Jewish culture to the children of the family. They were often isolated from the broader secular American society, while Jewish husbands worked outside of the home and assimilated enough to be able to make a living and support the family (Goldstein 13). Much of the discourse that surrounded Jewish domesticity was based on gender and race as immutable aspects of Jewish culture that limited Jewish women to the home and prevented them from integrating into Anglo-American culture (Goldstein 22). Gender roles and the pressure to create good Jews (as distinct from American citizens) put the cultural pluralism of a large democratic society like America beyond Jewish American women. Although cultural ideologues like Kallen supported multiculturalism, Jewish women's integration and experience with American democratic principles remained ambiguous. A gendered and racialized ideal of Jewish womanhood limited Jewish women's access to Anglo-American society. It was also an ill-fitted and out-dated ideal that ill-equipped them to deal with the pressure to assimilate that their children and husbands faced.

Much of the discourse surrounding who was fit to join the American community centered on a concept of nation that seems both rigid and pliable. Debates about how to define the American nation and the experience of being a citizen were wide-ranging, simultaneously offering inclusion and emphasizing exclusion. Early 20th century cultural theorist Emory Bogardus suggests in Essentials of Americanization that American society is built on a concept of "neighborism," an inclusionist ideology defining how the nation is built. Those who practice "neighborism," he writes, "[enter] into the spirit of our

country…Americanization means helping the foreign to acquire an American standard of living and an American loyalty…Americanization means giving the immigrant the best America has to offer and retaining for the Americans the best in the immigrant…Americanization is the uniting of new and native-born Americans in fuller common understanding and appreciation to secure by means of self-government the highest welfare of all (32). Defining Americanization as a process of inclusion, with existing citizens welcoming immigrants into the nation by enacting the Golden Rule philosophy, Bogardus defines the nation as built on the promise of transformation and the making of new citizens. When they themselves have been transformed into members of the national community, peoples originating from different cultures can also cultivate the practice of "neighborism" and feel equal to native-born Americans. Similarly Horace Kallen saw the American nation as one that could bring in elements of many cultures, a symphony of multiple cultures (12). Randolph Bourne, another early 20th century cultural theorist, described American pluralism as a form of cosmopolitanism: Americans were citizens of the world, not citizens of a narrowly defined nation, as others at the turn of the 20th century argued.[2] However, the nativist line of reasoning was powerful at the turn of the century. Royal Dixon, a special lecturer on Americanization in the early decades of the 20th century, argued that America's distinct culture required those who wanted access to citizenship transform themselves: "The formal act of registering citizenship in the United States should be only the outward sign of an inward and patriotic grace" (Dixon 68). Those who aspire to citizenship should not bring with them elements of their home culture that might enrich Anglo-American culture they must change fundamentally to reflect their assimilation into a new culture.

In the early 20th century, then, nativism was based on a principle of exclusion rather than inclusion. Many late 20th century theorists have suggested that the rigidity of nativists' ideas about who could belong to the American community is based on the logic of family belonging and a collective agreement on the fundamental principles of democracy.[3] Considering these questions in light of the texts by ethnic women authors I analyze in the chapters of this dissertation and ethnic people's access to American citizenship, it seems that at the turn of the century, the American nation was constituted by the acceptance of common myths, memories, symbols and values by a well-defined mainstream culture connected to a specific homeland and patriotism (Weber qtd in Leoussi 3). Indeed, one of the more common critiques of ethnic peoples was their unwillingness to declare allegiance to the U.S. and their determination to keep their traditions alive in ways that might conflict with the dominant culture's understanding of loyalty to the U.S.

For ethnic women, the road to full belonging in the American community at the turn of the century was beset with obstacles. It was decidedly difficult to reconcile a desire to embrace the principles of American democracy and to retain their cultural identity. Marriage profoundly shaped the ways that ethnic women, as well as white women, could access the American community. The women writers I feature in my study all write about marriage and womanhood as central paradigms for belonging. In important ways, these ethnic women write about the experience of marriage as a rigid institution, anti-democratic in spirit. In their fiction, marriage is not fitted as a metaphor for citizenship as a form of belonging, nor does it qualify women for Americanization or guarantee them access to full U.S. citizenship. Full citizenship was denied all women

until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920 granted women the vote, but ethnic women were even further alienated from full participation in the American community because they were socially barred from accessing the benefits of and acting on the obligations that American citizenship confers. Thus, many of the female characters in the fiction that I foreground in this project break with marriage conventions to defy narrow normative definition of American citizenship and offer alternative paradigms, from redefining womanhood to rejecting the marriage relationship all together. Unable to participate in the consensus constitution of the nation and barred from transformation, their fiction challenges both conceptions of nation formation and citizenship.

Family as a metaphor for who "belongs" to American society had powerful implications for both ethnic and white women, and in many respects, it was more than a metaphor. Ethnic women and their families were marginalized, prevented from accessing the full protection of U.S. citizenship, and denied the opportunity to act on its obligations or to voice opposition to unfair and unjust social policies through the ballot box. Furthermore, the Cable Act of 1922 stipulated that a woman lost her U.S. citizenship if she married a man who was unnaturalizable by law (Cott 164-165). Thus marriage to the "wrong" man could cause even a birth-right, cradle-American woman to lose the legal protection and the rights that she had as a U.S. citizen, and conceivably, her family could be deported and she would have little recourse. The Cable Act seemed designed to prevent the contamination of the American national family through intermarriage, or at least to isolate mixed families in American society to the point that wives, mothers, fathers, and husbands were virtually powerless.

The family metaphor also constructed a particular version of the nation and national "character." If the American community is a family unit, citizenship is a matter of inheritance, something that is "passed down" through generations of a family. In Walter Benn Michaels' influential account of turn-of-the-century American culture and literature, nativism depends on just such concepts of bloodlines and nuclear family structures. According to Michaels, "nativism is wanting to belong to a family [which] transforms American identity to the sort of thing that could be acquired (through naturalization) to the sort of thing that had to be inherited (from one's parents)" (8). None of the four women in this study belonged to this national family as nativists defined it. U.S. citizenship, then, is a status that is deferred and denied whole populations of people by race and reasons for the exclusion of whole sectors of people are based on familiar and well-worn arguments. Citizenship could not be an equalizer if whole categories of people were excluded from citizenship based on race or culture, two aspects of a woman's background that were seemingly indelible parts of her character. Nativists effectively deployed a definition of U.S. citizenship to white-wash American society. The ethnic women in this study defy in important ways the marginalization of people of their same ethnic and racial heritages. These women use their fiction to reject government policy and point out its inconsistencies and injustices. Fiction thus becomes a means to protest the treatment of their communities. Nevertheless, hope is also an important theme in their stories. They write in hopes that U.S. immigration law and marriage will change and that their stories might be the impetus for change. Peter Schrag argues that time is an important leveler for ethnic people in the U.S. (or at least for immigrants). "Often, as most of us should know," he writes, "the immigrants who were

demeaned by one generation were parents and grandparents of the successes of the next generation. Perhaps, not paradoxically, many of them, or their children or grandchildren, later joined those who attacked and disparaged the next arrivals, or would-be arrivals, with the same vehemence that had been leveled against them or their forebears" (1). The nativist concept of nation as family changed and evolved over time, seemingly reversing the discrimination against ethnic peoples as policies change. The family metaphor is a powerful reminder of the ebb and flow of immigration policy in the U.S. from the turn of the 20th century to the 21st century. However, for ethnic women in the early decades of the 20th century, family and marriage were precisely the social constructs that marginalized them. While Schrag argues that given time, generations of immigrants and their descendants will be included in the American family, the price could be quite steep for an individual ethnic woman and her family, and the logic of change over time cannot explain the situations faced by Native American and African American women.

The four ethnic women writers in this study all position themselves in the same way relative to their cultural and racial heritage: they are expert interpreters of their people's experiences because of their status as insiders to their communities. Their fiction is clearly tailored to a reading audience from the dominant Anglo-American culture and is designed to educate them about ethnic people and communities. They do not only seek to educate or give exposure for marginalized people, however. They want to inspire their readers to activism. Their stories might entertain readers by giving them access to "exotic" lives, but these ethnic women writers also write to preserve their culture from being absorbed by Anglo-American culture. In "Mapping the Field," Daniele Conversi studies how marginalized groups agitate for the preservation of culture,

suggesting that marginalized peoples might not be motivated by material gains, but rather by the preservation of cultural heritage (17). Indeed, preservation of cultural heritage is a core aim of these ethnic women, but they also seek fundamental change in the dominant society. That dominant culture they seek to reform is the crucial historical context for the stories, which were not written in isolation or in a vacuum. Rather through their stories these writers actively engage with policies that limit agency and ability of ethnic peoples to operate independently from the dominant Anglo-American culture or to exercise power within as citizens. The characters in their stories fight against oppressive laws and the social and legal structures of marriage, dramatizing what full citizenship for ethnic women might look like. Marriage is the crucible for these writers to explore the dynamics of the social constructs of gender and sexism. If marriage is a socially sanctioned institution that oppresses women (as these ethnic women writers demonstrate), then society must reform itself and marriage so ethnic women can be liberated and ushered into full U.S. citizenship. Their fiction demonstrates that marriage itself cannot protect ethnic women in American society. Their fiction also suggests that single women must be granted full agency in the American community, rather than being marginalized by a dominant culture that defines the relationship of all women in the nation, whether married or single, through marriage, giving them access to citizenship only secondarily through men.

One of the most important rights of U.S. citizenship is the right to vote, a key means for expressing dissent against unjust government policies. In a representative democracy like the U.S., the vote is a crucial form of voice in government, and yet female citizens were not granted the vote until 1920, years after the most exclusionary

immigration and citizenship policies had become deeply embedded in society (and, indeed, immigration policy became even more restrictive after women were granted suffrage, and civil rights enforcement continued to decline). Ethnic women had even less of a voice in shaping law and policy designed to break up their families and send them to the margins of society. The four women in this study had very different legal relationships to the U.S. nation. Zora Neale Hurston was a birth-right citizen, although she faced the same obstacles to exercising her citizenship rights as did other early 20th century African Americans. Martha Wolfenstein was an immigrant who became a naturalized citizen in the late 19th century. Zitkala-Sa did not become a full citizen until 1924, when Congress passed a statute granting all Native Americans citizenship. As a subject of the British Empire, Sui Sin Far was not an American citizen at all but she felt a deep connection to the Chinese American immigrant women she wrote about and understood the complexity of U.S. laws affecting them. While their citizenship status was varied, they all acted and wrote with the full conviction that citizenship confers, expressing their disagreement with unjust U.S. immigration and citizenship policies and drawing attention to the plight of those most deeply affected. Acting on their duties as citizens, (whether or not the U.S. nation recognized them as such), they voiced their dissent, urging their own people to rebel against policy that did not affect their lives directly. In their fiction, they take on the responsibility to act on behalf of the people they write about, those who have no voice by law, and demonstrate that they are worthy of U.S. citizenship. Acting on their sense of themselves as citizens, these four ethnic women writers use writing as a way to fulfill their duties as citizens and implicitly argue that other marginalized peoples, and especially ethnic women, should be granted

citizenship. Conversi compellingly argues intellectuals should act as interpreters rather than manipulators (26). These four women act as interpreters of a particular experience in American culture, but they also try to effect change, to make the lives of all ethnic peoples better and give them access to independence.

Zitkala-Sa wrote the majority of her fiction during the fifty years that the Dawes Act was in place. In her early semi-autobiographical essays published in the Atlantic Monthly in the first decade of the 20th century, she chronicles her life on the reservation on the Great Plains with her mother and contrasts it with her experience at a boarding school and at a college in Indiana. She effectively expresses the irony of "civilizing" efforts of the teachers at the school and the benefactors who seek to change Native American sensibilities and tribal culture, demonstrating that the civilizing process is inhumane and violent. She makes it clear that the Dawes Act and its prescription for Native American citizenship is a bad policy that fails to bring Native Americans into the mainstream in a meaningful way. Later, when she gained editorship of the American Indian Magazine, she used the journal as a platform to argue for selective assimilation of Native Americans, most importantly by learning English. She also urged Native Americans to take land allotments under the Dawes Act, but contrary to the logic of the law, to use them to keep tribes together. She thus simultaneously fomented native rebellion against American government policy and urged Native Americans to modernize in ways that did not conflict with their cultural sensibilities. Her later fiction, including the two stories featured in this study, "A Dream of Her Grandfather" and "The Wide-Spread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman," takes on the role of women in native society while also imagining how Native American women can engage mainstream

society as representatives of their communities. In both of these stories, single women are the inheritors of Native American traditions, and they are savvy and alert to the Anglo-American threats to their people and culture. In "A Dream of Her Grandfather" Zitkala-Sa suggests that single young women are the inheritors and future activists for the Native American cause, mirroring Zitkala-Sa's own activism. In "The Wide-Spread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman" she shows how an older single woman functions in native society and attempts to resist the treachery of male Native Americans who have adopted white ways and seek to undermine native culture. The men in these two stories, native and white, are proven to be treacherous and untrustworthy, or, as is the case with Chief High-Flier in the latter story, are completely impotent. In this way, Zitkala-Sa suggests that single Native American women unburdened by powerless men represent the best hope for rebellion against policies like the Dawes Act and can lead their tribes in strategic modernization efforts designed to help them survive in the new century and beyond.

Although Martha Wolfenstein's stories take place in a European Jewish ghetto, they implicitly present a model of Jewish womanhood that might be adopted by American Jewish women who seek to navigate narrow normative prescriptions for U.S. citizenship. Wolfenstein's Jewish women are all strong characters who feel keenly the sorrows and troubles of their people, who are marginalized in a predominantly Christian society. These women try to keep Jewish traditions alive in the face of certain violence against them in the form of pogroms. There were no pogroms in the U.S., but Wolfenstein implicitly exposes the complacency of Jewish Americans in a democratic society that allows religious freedom and cultural diversity. Jewish Americans from the

mid 19th century to the early decades of the 20th were deeply conflicted about Americanization, assimilating enough to make a living in an Anglo-Protestant culture while keeping Jewish religion alive. Although Wolfenstein's fiction supports the idea that women were the bearers of and transmitters of Jewish traditions, her stories also suggest that, paradoxically, Jewish womanhood must be modernized so that Jewish women can combat the complex and powerful forces of secularization. Wolfenstein's European Jewish heroines provide positive examples of how Jewish American women should function both in relation to dominant American Anglo-Protestant society and in relation to American Jewish society. She provides several scenarios Jewish women anywhere might face, namely the conversion of their children to Christianity, the treachery of non-Jews towards Jews, and the negative way Jews treat unmarried Jewish women. Wolfenstein's fiction resembles Zitkala-Sa's, in that she shows Jewish women acting independently of Jewish men to protect their culture; however, she suggests that the primary threat Jews face in Christian society is the failure of women to keep their children from leaving the Jewish tradition altogether. By depicting the difficulties European Jewish women face in keeping Jewish children faithful, Wolfenstein suggests that Jewish American women, who do not face the same threats of violence, must find ways to modernize to prevent the dissolution of Jewish culture. Wolfenstein also uncouples Jewish women from marriage to show how they can succeed in keeping Judaism alive while combating the prejudice that single Jewish women face. Single women are warriors for the faith, not burdened by Jewish men easily lured away from the community. Indeed, Wolfenstein shows how single women are the best examples of

Jewish womanhood. Ultimately she suggests that in an open society like America, being a good Jew does not conflict with U.S. citizenship.

Marriage is the defining institution for women in Sui Sin Far's fiction featured in this study. She writes about marriages between Chinese men and women, as well as marriage between a white woman and a Chinese American man. Whereas the wives in the stories from Zitkala-Sa, Martha Wolfenstein, and Zora Neale Hurston find ways to leave or avoid the marriage relationship, Sui Sin Far's Chinese American wives find ways to keep their families together without abrogating the marriage. The Chinese exclusion era is the historical backdrop for Sui Sin Far's stories, and she purposefully writes against exclusion by showing how Chinese American wives fight against cultural assimilation desired by their husbands in order to keep their families together. These Chinese American wives resist assimilation because it conflicts with their understanding of Chinese cultural values. However, Sui Sin Far does not write about one experience of marriage. Instead, she depicts a variety of marital scenarios to reflect a range of experiences of Chinese American wives. Literary historian Molly Crumpton Winter suggests that the women in Sui Sin Far's fiction about marriage break stereotypes about the Chinese and posit meaningful alternatives to assimilation that best embody a multicultural democracy (138). By depicting Chinese husbands as willing to assimilate even though they have no access to U.S. citizenship, Sui Sin Far points out the injustice of the Exclusion Act and shows that the Chinese are not all clannish and unwilling to adapt to Anglo-American culture. Sui Sin Far also demonstrates the far-reaching consequences of the Act when it takes the protection and benefits of U.S. citizenship away from a white woman who marries a Chinese man. Finally, Sui Sin Far paints a

portrait of the difficult situation faced by a young mixed race woman, the daughter of a Chinese-white marriage, when she fantasized about marrying a white man who is using her to get an insider's perspective on Chinatown. The young man eventually betrays the girl, and Sui Sin Far sympathetically depicts her main character's particular hardship when forced to decide between Chinese and American culture. The marriage relationship is the crucible for Sui Sin Far's dramatization of the forces and issues Chinese American women face in American society, and she demonstrates that Chinese women in America, who struggle to act in the best interest of their communities and families, deserve the rights and protections of U.S. citizenship.

Marriage is the central subject of Zora Neale Hurston's "Sweat" and "The Gilded Six-Bits," stories that dramatize via the marriage relationship the oppression all African Americans face under Jim Crow in the South. In "Sweat," domestic violence and infidelity trouble the marriage, and the African American husband's violence toward his wife mirrors his own oppression in the racial caste system; that is, he effectively transfers the oppression that he experiences onto his wife. Delia makes a variety of attempts to reconcile with her husband, but he flaunts an extra-marital affair with a woman he supports financially with Delia's earnings. Even though Reconstruction Amendments and the promotion of legal marriage sought to impose male-headed family structure on former slaves, Delia is the economic head of the household. She fights to protect not only her ability to make money, but also her property (the house she has paid for with her earnings). Sykes' violence and appropriation of her earnings and property effectively threaten her rights as a citizen. Indeed, Sykes resents his wife's economic status and finds ways to torture her. In the end Delia succeeds in throwing off the mantle of her

husband's abuse, but it is an uneasy victory: Hurston exposes the extremes an African American wife must go to in order to free herself from the oppression of her husband as well as, analogously, American society beyond the marriage relation. In "The Gilded Six-Bits" the wife, Missy May, slips easily into the groove of submission in her marriage to Joe. While Joe is not violent like Sykes, he still succeeds in transferring the oppression that he feels in the racial caste system onto his wife. The plot turns on Missy May's infidelity and on the subsequent emotional punishment Joe inflicts on his wife. The marriage relationship is not broken, but the economics of this version of African American marriage places Joe as the breadwinner and Missy May as his tortured worker. The economic situation of the marriage mirrors Joe's situation working for a white-owned fertilizer company. Whereas Delia goes to extremes to escape her husband's abuse, Missy May submits completely and seems defeated. Through these two different versions of marriage, Hurston shows the extremes African American wives and husbands will go to transfer their oppression into the marriage relationship in an attempt to transcend it. In neither story do these attempts succeed. Hurston uses stories about marriage to write against Jim Crow and to urge African Americans to agitate against the racial caste system. Hurston's stories are the only stories in this study written after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, but as Hurston demonstrates, full citizenship remains an unfulfilled dream for African American women.

Marriage was a formative relationship for ethnic women excluded, in various ways, from the protection and benefits of U.S. citizenship. The four ethnic women writers featured here use the marriage relationship in their fiction to play out the oppression of ethnic peoples, and particularly ethnic women, by Anglo-American society.

They seem keenly aware that ethnic women must find a way to transcend or transform the marriage relationship if they are to find freedom and justice.

CHAPTER 1

DREAMS OF THE GRANDDAUGHTERS: THE DAWES ACT AND THE WRITINGS OF ZITKALA-SA

In the 19th century, Native Americans were at a curious crossroads concerning their civic status in the U.S. The most influential piece of legislation that shaped Native American policy until 1934 was the Dawes Act, or the Land in Severalty Act. Passed in 1887 and amended in 1906, the Dawes Act aimed to systematically change the grounds on which Native Americans would be included in the American community, creating a path to citizenship for Native Americans who accepted private land holdings and abandoned the communal lifestyle of their tribes in favor of living in nuclear families. Since the 1790s, citizenship was granted based on birth, naturalization or marriage with the important caveat that only white people were eligible for naturalization. Native Americans represented a complex exception. In 1831, as a result of a lawsuit filed by the Cherokee, who were attempting to protect their land holdings in Georgia from white settlers, the Supreme Court ruled that all tribes were domestic dependent nations. As a consequence of this status of tribes as nations with in the boundaries of the United States members of tribes were ineligible to claim the status of full citizenship in the U.S. nation even though they were born within its territorial boundaries. Over the course of the 19th century many tribes (including the Cherokee) were relocated from their tribal homelands and were resettled on reservations.

The sponsor of the Dawes Act, Henry Dawes, thought each Native American needed to leave the reservation and become an "individual separated from the mass" (30)

and that the tribe must disappear, being replaced by separate nuclear families, with only the head of each household having a civic presence and relationship to the American nation. Dawes reasoned that the reservation system treated Native Americans as children and wards of the government. By encouraging them to be private property owners living in nuclear families he reasoned the Act made them self-sufficient and thus suitable to be citizens.

In 1885, the National Indian Association had a different view of the effects of the Act. As Francis Paul Prucha demonstrates in his study of Christian reformers in Indian policy during the Dawes Act era, the NIA thought that the break up of the tribal system would not bring Native Americans readily into American society, but instead "argued that the immediate dissolution of the tribal relations would be an impediment to the civilization of Indians, that individual allotments would motivate the Indians to part with their holdings, and that while education might help the next generation, it could not solve the problems of the present one" (166). Although the NIA advocated a slow transition into the American polity, they still believed that Native Americans needed to become educated and adopt new traditions to better fit with Anglo-American culture.

In subsequent years, members of Congress and Secretaries of the Interior made it clear that they thought reservations were not incubators of good citizens. The annual Mohonk Conference in the late 19th and early 20th century was designed to create policies to help bring Native Americans into the mainstream of the American community. Dawes Act supporters believed that its provisions promoting individual land ownership and the breaking up of tribal lands and communal life would "set free" Native individuals and families, allowing them to mix with white settlers and transform themselves into worthy

citizens of the American nation (Hayt 2-3, Hoxie 183, Painter 27, Price 17-19, 34-35). The Dawes Act created a pathway to citizenship for some Native Americans, but many did not gain access to citizenship until 1924, when the Indian Citizenship Act granted citizenship to all.

Before 1924, however, the Dawes Act was designed to make Native Americans see the error of their native ways and to adopt the American ideals of private land ownership and nuclear family structure. One of the problems with the implementation of the Dawes Act concerns exactly how and when the Act conferred citizenship on the Native Americans who were allotted lands. Section 6 of the Act reads: "…every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States who has voluntarily taken up, within said limits, his residence separate and apart from any tribe of Indians therein, and has adopted the habits of civilized life, is hereby declared to be a citizen of the United States." Thus, in order to become citizens, the Native American must, once land has been allotted, "adopt the habits of civilized life," which means that they must abandon tribal traditions in favor of private property ownership, nuclear family structure, and Christian values. Consequently, traditional gender roles and communal family and property concepts also had to change. The Act not only urged acculturation, but also granted a new legal status as citizens of the United States to Native Americans who complied. Some argued that Native Americans allotted land under the Act needed more time to adopt these "habits of civilized life." The Burke Act of 1906 slowed down the process of naturalization, deferring citizenship and a final transfer of the land in fee simple until the twenty-five year trust period had expired. Essentially, the Burke Act extended the wardship status of the Native Americans, suggesting that they were not

intellectually capable of carrying out the obligations that U.S. citizenship conferred. Consequently, even Native Americans living on allotted land were relegated to the margins of American society. Indeed, the Burke Act put them on the margins even after their traditional structures had been disrupted, leaving them in limbo. They had lost their functioning tribal communities, but they weren't allowed to be grown-up members of the broader American community. In his study of Native American assimilation and citizenship policies, historian Frederick Hoxie see policies such as the Burke Act as enforcing a subaltern status for Native Americans in relation to the dominant culture: "As they found their slots, Indians would not alter existing social relations or overturn accepted notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority. Instead they would be taught to follow the direction of their 'civilized' neighbors and labor patiently on the fringes of civilization" (210).

Native American activist and writer of the early 20th century, and the focus of this chapter, Zitkala-Sa wrote extensively on the troubles that native peoples faced under these U.S. policies. Her writings emphasize her own trials with U.S. citizenship policy for Native Americans as well as chronicling in fiction how Native American women try to keep native communal family structures and tribal land holdings intact. The new family structure enforced by the Dawes Act detached Native American women from tribal structures and subsumed her status in both the family and the nation under her husband's as head of the nuclear family. Native American women who did not change were essentially barred from civic life. Native American women had no direct relation to civic life in either scenario – they either entered civic life as subordinate dependents of men, or they had no status at all. Zitkala-Sa's journalistic writings and fiction show

native women struggling with the consequences of the Dawes Act for their families and to their tribes.

Native women were profoundly marginalized in Anglo-American society during the Dawes Act era. The allotment process and its rules about what constituted a family disempowered Native American women. In her study of marriage law in America Nancy Cott suggests that the Anglo-American family structure "hastened the destruction of the Indians' communal way of life by securing individual property ownership, and further subverted Native American women's roles as agriculturalists by presuming the Indian male should be the landowner and farmer" (123). Subjected to a system that did not recognize their place in tribal organizations, they also lost their traditional influence in family life. Under the allotment policy, Native American men were the heads of families while Native American women's traditional roles were effectively erased. A major component of the Dawes Act was to make agriculturalists of the men and to make those men heads of families. In addition to urging Native American men to become farmers, the Dawes Act presupposed a particular family structure that critics like former Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis Leupp recognized were alien to native culture: "What the white man struggles to obtain was forced upon the Indian without his asking, if not indeed against his will" (35). The Dawes Act imposed a family structure whereby the male was the head of the household and responsible for the support of his family, preferably through agriculture. Thus the Dawes Act was intended to restructure and redefine gender roles in Native American families. And, one of the keys to moving towards full citizenship for the Native Americans was a change in the roles of women in native society. In his role as Secretary of the Interior under President Hayes, Carl Schurz

was an advocate for the dissolution of tribal society and wanted to reform what he deemed the oppression of women in native society. He described the Native American woman as a "beast of burden" subject to the cruelty and "brutality of a slave-driver husband" (20). He suggested that if the Native American man was to be a productive citizen, Native American women must be respected and taught Victorian gender roles in imitation of Anglo-American women: "Nothing will be more apt to raise the Indians in the scale of civilization than to stimulate their attachment to permanent homes, and it is woman that must make the atmosphere and form the attraction of the home. She must be recognized, with affection and respect, as the center of domestic life. If we want the Indians to respect their women, we must lift up the Indian women to respect themselves…If we educate the girls of to-day, we educate the mothers of tomorrow, and in educating those mothers we prepare the ground for the education of generations to come" (20). The educational system promoted the notion of women as republican mothers whose civic duty was to raise good Americans for all girls, not just native girls. However, Schurz made that education a necessary precursor to Native citizenship, promoting values and cultural practices in direct opposition to the traditional communal way of life in a tribal society. Ironically, Euro-American society simultaneously demanded that Native Americans alter their traditional values in order to "Americanize" while continuing to deem them outsiders incapable of adapting habits of civilized life.

Zitkala-Sa was a complex and sometimes polarizing activist. In editorials in The American Indian Magazine and in her writings critiquing guardianship provisions put in place as a result of the Dawes Act she urges fellow Native Americans to learn English and to use the land allotment policy to keep tribal lands together. In contrast, her fiction

depicts defiance of the American government. In her autobiographical writings and in the fiction studied here, she concerns herself mainly with the plight of Native American women and their struggles to preserve their identities by resisting Anglo-American concepts of family and gender roles. Native American women appear in her fiction as mothers, daughters, granddaughters, and unmarried women. Native American men appear in her writings as powerless chiefs, grafters, and in one case more positively, as a benevolent (but long dead) grandfather. She does not, as others in this study do, make the relationship between husbands and wives primary because native cultures do not organize family life around this dyad. Thus the most important relationship for women and their civic presence in the U.S. is curiously absent in most of Zitkala-Sa's writings. Indeed, in Zitkala-Sa's writing, the Anglo-American concepts of marriage and nuclear family are a hindrance to Native American women's autonomy. In this chapter I trace her activism and critique of the Dawes Act in writings in the several genres. Addressing both white and native audiences, she used a multi-pronged approach to change perceptions and spur readers to action to resist policies that aimed to make Native Americans U.S. citizens by eradicating traditional land and communal family structures and replacing them with Anglo-American values and practices. She advocated for citizenship for all Native Americans, but on different terms; she wanted natives to have legal protections afforded by U.S. citizenship, but did not want to compromise the most important aspects of Native American life. In this chapter, I will begin with her editorials in The American Indian Magazine then turn to her speech at Earlham College followed by her autobiographical writings and her late fiction. This strategy will reveal the large scope of her work on behalf of Native Americans as well as show how she herself was

acting with the full conviction of citizenship to try to force change in American government policy towards Native Americans.

Many critics of the Dawes Act believed that, as applied, it harmed people that it was meant to help (Hayt 81, Hoxie 77, Painter 121, Teller 780-781, 783, 934-935). Even those who supported the Dawes Act feared that white settlers might abuse the system and swindle Native Americans out of their allotted land holdings. The federal government's allotment policy was disastrous for Zitkala-Sa's people, the Sioux, who were already living in fragmented communities on reservations. Devastated by military defeat and the loss of surplus land as a result of the allotment system, the Sioux were particularly hurt during the Dawes Act era.[4] Reform movements rose in earnest between 1889 and 1934 and Sioux men and women were at the forefront of many of these movements (Gibbon 144). Zitkala-Sa was a founding member of the Society of American Indians, "the first national pan-Indian association dedicated to promoting the cause of all Indians" (Gibbon 144). Her activism put her in an intermediate position where she advocated on behalf of Native Americans and "adopted an agenda of social and political change" (Gibbon 146) and the establishment of The American Indian Magazine was the incarnation of that effort.

Becoming editor of The American Indian Magazine during her most active years in the early decades of the 20th century allowed her the opportunity and the audience to express her views on Native American land policy in a way that could influence government policy. Indeed, she articulates an incisive understanding of the laws and policies of her time, especially when it comes to land in severalty. In 1919, in an open letter to chiefs and headsmen published in The American Indian Magazine, Zitkala-Sa

urged Native Americans to take individual allotments, but to use them to preserve tribal affiliations and keep traditions intact. She criticizes Native Americans who sell off or lease their allotments rather than preserving the land for their heirs: "Sometimes I fear they are selling their lands too fast and without consideration for the future children of our race. Indians are an out-of-doors people, and though we may become educated in the White man's way and even acquire money, we cannot really be happy unless we have a small piece of this Out-of-Doors to enjoy as we please. For the sake of our children's children we must hold onto a few acres that they may enjoy it as we have" (197). Not only did the Dawes Act carve up tribal lands, it was designed to turn Native American men into Euro-American-style agriculturalists, farming their allotted land (Gates 52; Hoxie 28, 33,50; Schurz 84-86). Zitkala-Sa, however, did not advocate that Native American men become farmers. Rather she urged them to keep tribal bonds strong by not allowing tribal lands to be sold off to white settlers. She was deeply suspicious of the allotment policy as applied during the half century it was in effect. Her most pointed critique was aimed at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In a companion editorial to her "Letter to Chiefs and Headmen of the Tribes," she summarizes the sentiments expressed at the Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians that the Bureau was "dishonest…that they have no respect for the rights of Indians and their property. They ignore the laws and exercise arbitrary and illegal power over the person and property of the Indians" ("Editorial Comment" 139). She accuses the Bureau of favoring white settlers and leaving scores of Native Americans destitute and bereft of their homelands ("Editorial Comment" 139).

In 1919 in The American Indian Magazine she passionately pleads for Native Americans to adapt to Anglo-American society in some ways so that they must use the law to protect their homes. She observes that since before the World War, Native Americans have been left behind in English language learning. "If the White people have found it worth while to do this (teach immigrants English)," she asks her native readers, "isn't it worth our while to renew our efforts to speak English? No doubt there have been occasions when you wished you could have expressed your thoughts in English…Very often I have wished that you could write to me in a language that we would both understand perfectly. I could then profit by your advice in many things, and you would know that you were not forgot" (197). Addressing a Native American audience, she is also speaking over their shoulders to an Anglo-American readership. Section 6 of the Dawes Act encourages Native Americans to leave the tribal life behind and mix culturally with white settlers. Many other supporters of the Act also saw the value of living next to and learning the values of Anglo-American culture (Painter 5; Price 17-19, 34-35; Hoxie 50, 183). Zitkala-Sa is not urging Native Americans to forsake the tribal life. Rather she encourages them to adapt selectively, emphasizing the undeniable fact that learning English would enable them to preserve their culture by communicating their needs to people who can help their cause. Notably, the language that Zitkala-Sa used for her activism is English. Her plea for the tribes to learn English signifies that she sought to influence Anglo-American society as much as she was trying to bring Native Americans into the mainstream. On the other hand, learning English would allow members of different tribes, who do not share a single language, to communicate with each other. Once again, however, Native American women are left out of the discourse

about U.S. citizenship. She appeals to male heads of household who might learn English from their children or grandchildren and use the skill to represent their families. Learning English was a staple of boarding schools for Native American children where they were also taught trades (if they were boys) and domestic science (if they were girls). In a sense, then, she suggests that older generations, who were less likely to speak English, needed to cede responsibility to the younger generations who are better equipped to balance tradition and modernity the way that Zitkala-Sa herself did.

In 1924, she continued her critique of dishonest government actions in a co-authored pamphlet about the abuses of probate courts and the nullification of inheritance laws in Oklahoma titled "Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Legalized Tribes – Legalized Robbery." In 1908, shortly after it achieved statehood, Oklahoma enacted legislation declaring that the local county courts, not the federal government, had jurisdiction over the land holdings of "full-blood" members of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes" within the boundaries of the state of Oklahoma. In subsequent years, the state expanded court control over lands allotted under the Dawes Act. Under a system of court-supervised guardianship, when the owner of allotted land died, the court could declare an heir incompetent to manage the allotment, appointing a guardian to manage the land on an heir's behalf. The declaration of incompetency was often times based on whether or not the heir was able to effectively manage money from their allotment and native women were particularly vulnerable.[5] This system was ostensibly designed to protect native landholdings, but white grafters quickly saw opportunity serve their own interests. The court-appointed guardian would collect fees from the "incompetent heir" and would turn around and dole out a meager

allowance to the heir for living expenses. In addition to the fees, guardians would undervalue property then lease it at much higher prices with the heirs receiving only nominal amounts for living expensed ranging from $10 to $15 dollars a month and they were limited to buying goods at a local store where the guardian had financial interest.[6] Abject poverty resulted from the practice. Controversy particularly arose in relation to allotments rich in oil and minerals, which grafters stole from their rightful owners. Heirs were forced off their land and prevented from realizing its pecuniary value. Instead, profits went to grafters and land grabbers. Zitkala-Sa and her co-authors document in their pamphlet many cases of abuse stemming from the "legal" system of guardianship, including fraud, kidnapping, and even murder.

Zitkala-Sa was well aware that the Dawes Act was designed to break up tribes and recast Native American families into the images of families with Anglo-American values. When writing about the need to learn English and the injustices of guardianship policies, she rebukes the originators of the Dawes Act for their ignorance regarding Native American culture, but is also putting her own spin on the Dawes Act to show how it could benefit and protect Native American traditions. Similarly, in her "Letter to Chiefs and Headsmen of the Tribes," Zitkala-Sa advocated limited and selective adoption of Anglo-American values, such as learning English and maintaining tribal control of land. However, by addressing the letter to male leaders of the tribes, she implies that Native American women have no influence. Zitkala-Sa did not entirely exclude Native American women, but rather acted pragmatically by appealing to a particular audience who could best help her cause. It was up to the men to bring the tribe into the modern era, but it was up to women to keep traditions alive.

In her fiction and autobiographical writings (and in contrast to her editorials), Native American mothers, daughters, granddaughters and unmarried women are the trustees of Native American culture, while Native American men are weak, impotent, or gullible. While her fiction and editorial writings at first seem to contradict one another, through both she creates powerful Native American women who are beacons of traditions to their tribes; in her fiction, these women are characters and in her editorials, she herself is that powerful woman. She divides Native American men and women according to traditional native interpretations of gender roles, but does not disturb the delicate balance of traditional communal family and land structures.

One of Zitkala-Sa's earliest engagements with the Dawes Act came in a speech she made at a forensics competition at Earlham College in 1896 as described in one of her autobiographical essays published in the Atlantic Monthly. In this speech she commenced what would be a lifetime of activism against abuses of the Dawes Act. In the speech titled "Side by Side" she argues that Anglo-America should not be surprised that Native Americans, who have been mistreated throughout history, are acting in anger toward the dominant culture. "The White Man's bullet," she explains, "decimates his tribes and drives him from his home…His forests were felled; his game frightened away; his streams of finny shoals usurped. He loved his family and would defend them. He loved the fair land of which he was rightful owner…He loved his native land. Do you wonder still that in his breast he should brood revenge, when ruthlessly driven from the temples where he worshipped? Do you wonder still that he sulked in forest gloom to avenge the desolation of his home?" (224). In front of a largely white audience Zitkala-Sa outlined what would become the object of her most ardent activism on behalf of

Native Americans. But by using the masculine pronoun, she effectively excludes women from the discourse. When she writes that the Native American man "loved his native land" and "he loved his family" women appear only as objects of male affection and desire. They do not have voices separate from the men in their lives. The curious irony is that Zitkala-Sa, clearly a Native American woman, wrote and performed this speech. However, performing in front of an Anglo-American audience she appealed to them by invoking their values, including their understanding of gender roles in the family. In essence, she takes the lessons that she learned in the American university system and uses them to dismantle the popular argument against Native American citizenship. She opens the speech by appealing to the white audience's sense of propriety and private property, presenting Native Americans as the first inhabitants of a bountiful land that meets their simple needs. That is, they are the original landowners. By making Native American culture simultaneously complex and simple, she appeals to her white audience's fascination with primitivism, which was very much in vogue in the popular, and recently institutionalized, sciences such as anthropology and ethnology.[7] It is crucial to her scheme to focus on Native American men and their stewardship of the land. Using the masculine pronoun she implicitly argues that Native American men speak for their families and have a sense of what it means to live on productive and life-sustaining land and to own it as property, even if the land was not being farmed using modern agricultural methods. Later in the speech she mourns the loss of Native American lands to white settlement, suggesting that the closer Native Americans come to the Pacific, the more likely they are to become extinct: "To-day the Indian is pressed almost to the farther sea. Does that sea symbolize his death? Does the narrow territory still left to him

typify the last brief day before his place on Earth 'shall know him no more forever?'" (225). Manifest Destiny leaves no room for Native Americans, either men or women. Zitkala-Sa does not leave the podium on an accusatory not, however. Well aware of the surge of European immigration in the late 19th century, she wonders why Anglo-America accommodates the influx of European immigrants, offering them education and other support for working towards citizenship when the Dawes Act gives Native Americans only one path to citizenship. She further suggests that selective adaptation to the dominant culture that was destroying the traditional way of life for Native Americans was necessary for their survival in the modern world. She assures the audience that Native American men will make loyal and productive citizens: "Within the last two decades a great interest in Indian civilization has been awakened; a beneficient government has organized a successful system of Indian education; training schools and college doors stand open to us. We clasp the warm hands of friendship everywhere" (226). The warm handshake that she describes between Native American and Anglo-Americans signals equality, but at the end of the speech she also suggests that the Native American must rise up to seek "the treasures of knowledge and wisdom, seeking to comprehend the spirit of your laws and the genius of your noble institutions, seeking by a new birthright to unite with yours our claim to common country, seeking the Sovereign's crown that we may stand side by side with you in ascribing royal honor to our nation's flag. America I love thee" (226). In this concluding sentence she suggests that Native Americans are actually in a marginalized social position, but they can rise up with better opportunities from American style education. She also emphasizes that Native Americans are, in fact, birth right citizens, even if the U.S. does not recognize them as such. The deferential tone and

evident flattery work to shape her message of unity and common humanity for a white audience, who, as she describes in her account of the speech, on the one hand rejects her by hanging a crude drawing of a squaw from a balcony in the auditorium, but on the other hand is fascinated by her. It is clear that the banner with the squaw image is meant to insult her and undermine the authority of her message. For an audience of fellow college students, she is a problematic insider and they objectify her to diminish the power of her speech. This difficult balance between advocating for her people and sexism would become familiar to her. For most of her life Zitkala-Sa would play this delicate role expertly and she "felt compelled to live up to the critical expectations of her white audience" (Fisher vii). The audience reacted as if a speech could not possibly come from a Native American woman, and thus hung the image of the squaw in the auditorium where she was giving her speech. She had to find a rhetorical strategy that would work, and by using the masculine pronoun, she argued that Native American men were ready to become citizens and that Native American women like herself would support them. In "Side by Side" Zitkala-Sa first articulates her position on Indian policy and as modern readers we can see how deeply gender discrimination went when a Native American woman speaks of men, but not of women, as inheritors of native tradition.

In Native American women's culture, and in the Sioux tribes in particular, native women occupied an important place in tribal culture. While they were generally not warriors, their opinions on tribal matters and family life were influential and many Sioux women commanded respect in their tribes (Ostler 73). Nevertheless, many Anglo-American activists believed that if Native American women could be made to accept gender roles different from their traditional ones, Native Americans could speedily

become productive citizens. In her article about the education of Native American girls "'If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race:' Missionary Education of Native American Girls," Carol Devins acknowledges that "the history of mission schools is a troubling one in which stories of benevolent, self-sacrificing missionaries contend with accounts of relentlessly rigid discipline, ethnocentrism, and desperately unhappy children" (158). Originally, the mission schools focused on education of men and boys, but by the mid nineteenth century also, educated girls and young women based on the Victorian understanding of gender roles. "By the missionaries' Victorian standards," Devins writes, "Native American women were careless, dirty, and unfamiliar with the concept of hard work. Indian girls, they complained, were woefully unfamiliar with the lore, paraphernalia, and routines of feminine domesticity. Schools therefore trained girls in sewing, knitting, cooking and other domestic skills and tasks…Indeed, the schools' underlying principle was that Anglo-American history, morality, and health were inherently superior to and should replace those of their students' cultures" (161). Education enforcing Victorian notions of womanhood alienated Native American girls from Native American women's culture. Zitkala-Sa described her experience growing up in Sioux society in "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" and in a boarding school in "School Days of an Indian Girl." In "School Days" she writes about how she felt bereft of her mother's culture when she left for boarding school. She learned how to sew beads and buckskin and entertain guests as part of women's culture in Sioux society, but although sewing and being a good hostess are similar to the Victorian domestic norm Zitkala-Sa is careful to make clear in "Impressions" that the method of teaching girls how to behave like Native American women is more humane. Describing her mother she

writes, "She treated me as a dignified little individual as long as I was on my good behavior; and how humiliated I was when some boldness of mine drew forth a rebuke from her!" ("Impressions" 20). Although her mother rebukes her, her humiliation is more internal – her mother does not terrify her, but instead makes her feel her error from the inside. The word "humiliated" takes on a charged meaning when Zitkala-Sa recounts her experience getting her braids cut off at the boarding school. She hides from the teachers of the school under her bed but is dragged out and tied down to a chair to have her hair "shingled by the enemy" ("School Days" 54). She recalls thinking, "Short hair was worn by mourners and shingled hair by cowards!" ("School Days" 54). The young Zitkala-Sa struggles against the teachers until she feels the cold blade of the scissors on her neck. "Then," she explains, "I lost my spirit" ("School Days" 56). Bereft of her mother's culture, she becomes "one of many little animals driven by a herder" ("School Days" 56). She has been transformed into the animal that she feared she would become if she left her mother. Long hair was not exclusive to Native American women – Native American men also wore their hair long – but Zitkala-Sa's point is that the cutting of hair symbolized a transition from tribal culture to Anglo-American culture. It was as if the hair killed the Native American child who would be born again into Anglo-American society. Thus, the Anglo-American school system destroyed and then rebuilt according to its standards of womanhood. The young Zitkala-Sa saw the hair cutting as a brutal act and she laments that no one came to comfort her: "Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do" ("School Days" 56). She does not admire the women who work at the school whose ways are alien to her. She does not want to imitate them as she wished to imitate her mother. As she recounts in "Impressions," "we delighted in

impersonating our mothers. We talked of things we had heard them say in their conversations. We imitated their various manners, even to the inflection of their voices. In the lap of the prairie we seated ourselves upon our feet, and leaning our painted cheeks in the palms of our hands, we rested our elbows on our knees, and bent forward as old women were most accustomed to do" (22). The physical posture of Native American women is markedly different from the women at the boarding school who have cinched waists and ramrod straight backs. By alienating Zitkala-Sa from her mother's culture, the boarding school sought to destroy her allegiance to Sioux culture. However, Zitkala-Sa refused to be a passive participant in the erasure of her culture. She actively rebelled against her teachers and tried to reconnect with her Native American culture.

One of the main goals of the boarding school system was to teach the Native American children to speak English. Learning English was one way for the teachers to control the children by destroying and then rebuilding them, culturally and physically, to resemble citizens of Anglo-American society. Many studies of Zitkala-Sa's autobiographical writings have analyzed the ways she adopted the language of the dominant culture but used it as a weapon to carve a place for and preserve Native American traditions and stories (Chiarello 1-26, Cutter 31-44, Spack 3-24). The best example of her rebellion against and mastery of the language of the dominant culture is an episode in "School Days" in which she is punished by being ordered to "mash" turnips. "I saw that the turnips were in a pulp," she explains, "and that further beating could not improve them; but the order was 'Mash these turnips,' and mash them I would" ("School Days" 60). When the jar crumbles and the turnips are ruined, she "whooped in my heart for having once asserted the rebellion within" her ("School Days"

61). In this episode, the young Zitkala-Sa resists speaking English and subverts it. In writing about the experience, she uses the dominant language to speak back to and create a space for herself and her subjectivity in an atmosphere of oppression. In essence, she has birthed herself through language and has become powerful in it.

After three years in boarding school, Zitkala-Sa returned to the Sioux reservation. In section of "School Days" titled "Four Strange Summers" Zitkala-Sa describes her recognition that a cultural gulf had opened between her mother and herself. Anglo-American education in the boarding schools system had caused her to separate herself from her mother's and tribe's culture. She feels differently about her life on the reservation after having spent time in the Anglo-American education system. "During this time," she writes, "I seemed to hang in the heart of chaos, beyond the touch or voice of human aid" ("Four Strange Summers" 69). The language and culture that she learned in school had alienated her from her mother's culture and she laments that she can no longer relate to her mother as she had as a young girl because her mother "had never gone inside of a schoolhouse, and so she was not capable of comforting her daughter who could read and write" ("Four Strange Summers" 69). The language of the dominant culture has failed to allow Zitkala-Sa to make a connection – or has even destroyed one – with Native American culture and has, in essence, superimposed itself on her consciousness in order to break her connection to her mother's culture.

In "An Indian Teacher Among the Indians," about her experience teaching in a similar boarding school to one she attended, she explains how Anglo-American education has transformed her. She no longer fits as neatly as she once did in tribal culture. Instead she feels bereft and disconnected: "Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my

mother, nature, and God. I was shorn of my branches, which had waved in sympathy and love for home and friends. The natural coat of bark which had protected my oversensitive nature was scraped off to the very quick. Now a cold bare pole I seemed to be, planted in a strange earth" ("An Indian Teacher" 97). Describing herself as a "cold bare pole," she brings to mind the telegraph poles she saw from the train window as a girl travelling to boarding school. Telegraph poles transmit language across great distances, uniting people in a common language, but she, as a denuded pole, is disconnected from both her mother's culture on the reservation and from Anglo-American culture off the reservation. By urging Native Americans to take land in severalty, the Dawes Act destroyed the tribe and isolated its members from one another on tracts of land their traditional way of life usurped and conquered by the Anglo-American ideal of citizenship. Boarding schools for Native American children taught English as a part of a systematic attempt to colonize native children and to force speakers of native languages to the margins of American culture. By writing about her boarding school experiences in English, the language of the dominant culture, Zitkala-Sa simultaneously sacrifices aspects of native culture while seeking to make a similar sacrifice to keep their traditions alive. The process of assimilation that Zitkala-Sa experienced at the boarding school, and at Earlham College in Indiana, was troubled. On one hand, she was celebrated as the best example of the possibilities of Native American assimilation, but on the other hand she was further marginalized in ways that demeaned her native heritage. She was a rebel and a realist. The Dawes Act also institutionalized monogamy so that marriage became relevant to land allotments and citizenship. Cott suggests that the "sexual divisions of labor and property – ownership and consequent inheritance patterns – all these behaviors

hung on the institution of marriage" (27). Zitkala-Sa does not present the portrayals of Native American men in her autobiographical essays or in her fiction. Her women characters (including herself as a "character"), however, are all strong and single, decidedly the opposite of the Dawes Act and Indian policy more broadly tried to enforce for native women. Her native women have strong voices and are deeply suspicious of government policy whereas her native men are largely powerless. Notably, she chose not to write about the controversial subject of the polygamous marriage practices of Native Americans. In her editorials and journalism in The American Indian Magazine, her letters, and her pamphlets, however, she regularly argues for the preservation of Native American families (Willard 11-16). Indeed, promoting the preservation of Native American families is one of the primary aims of her activism. Although she mourns the loss of her tribal culture in her autobiographical writings, she is clearly aware that she needs to work within conventions set by her white audience in order to achieve a particular end (Hafen 23, Spack "Revisioning Sioux Women" 25-42, Susag 3-24).

In her late fiction, Zitkala-Sa continues to engage critically the discourse that Dawes Act fostered, but with a twist. In her autobiographical writings and journalism, she addresses the Dawes Act and the problematic path it created to U.S. citizenship, but her late fiction shows women engaging in full-scale resistance to all forms of assimilation promoted by the Dawes Act, rather than selectively adapting to it. In another departure from her journalism and editorials in The American Indian Magazine, she makes unmarried native women central to her final thoughts on Native American land policy. Most of her late stories are set in the past when Native Americans were still living traditionally before the allotment of their lands in severalty. But two stories, "A Dream

of her Grandfather" and "The Wide-Spread Enigma Concerning Blue Star Woman," pointedly engage the allotment process and argue that Anglo-American concepts such as inheritance of land through the male line and the stigmatization of unmarried women as weak are alien to Native American sensibilities and that they cause more problems than they solve. She foregrounds Native American women who survive without the aid of Native American men who are powerless, corrupt, or dead. Her unmarried women symbolize a rebellion against the policies of the American government and suggest that Native American women are the best inheritors, not the males, for the tribes' futures. Thus she deliberately defies the Dawes Act and its precepts in these two stories focused on native women.

"A Dream of Her Grandfather" begins with the revelation that the main character's grandfather was an early activist and even made a long trek to Washington D.C. as part of the first delegation for Native American affairs. His granddaughter takes up his mantle to carry on his humanitarian work after his death. It is unclear whether or not her grandfather spoke English, but Zitkala-Sa is careful to draw a line of distinction between the generations because the granddaughter learned the white man's tongue (156). During her stay in Washington D.C., where she works for the welfare of her people, she has a strange dream: "Returning from an afternoon out, she found a large cedar chest had been delivered to her home in her absence. She sniffed the sweet perfume of the red wood, which reminded her of the breath of the forest – and admired the box so neatly made, without trimmings. It looked so clean, strong and durable in its native genuiness" (156). The cedar wood is significant because it preserved valuable objects from damage. Anglo-American readers might connect the box to a hope chest in

which women kept their linens for their weddings. The box thus symbolizes the preservation of culture, but also the granddaughter's transition into maturity and a deeper connection and responsibility to her people. In a sense, she is wedded to her people's cause. The first sense that affects her when she opens the box is the sense of smell; the scent conjures up images of her homeland and connects her to the box because, not only because it reminds her of home, but because it is made of the wood from a tree where her people live. In this opening scene, Zitkala-Sa subtly suggests that Native Americans can preserve their culture by staying on tribal lands and preventing white settlers and grafters from robbing them of their allotments. In addition, the strong connection the girl feels to her grandfather reminds young people that they must remain faithful to the teachings of their elders and respect tradition. Indeed, the girl greatly admires her grandfather, who was a medicine man in her tribe. However, the granddaughter's relationship with her grandfather, despite her admiration of him, is also problematic because she thinks of him as a sort of relic from the past: "She remembered her childhood days and the stories that she loved to hear about the unusual powers of her grandfather – recalled how she, the wee girl, had coveted the medicine bags, beaded and embroidered in porcupine quills in symbols designed by the great 'medicine man' her grandfather. Well did she remember her merited rebuke that such things were never made for relics. Treasures came in due time to those ready to receive them" (156-157). She covets the medicine bags not because they are her grandfather's but because they come from a different time and generation. She sees them as props from an earlier time in her people's history. She is sentimental about them and wants to preserve them in an original state (as a cedar chest preserves valuable objects) but her grandfather's rebuke reminds her that the ceremonial

objects are meant to be used to contribute to the longevity of tribal culture. In order for her cause to be relevant, the "relics" must no longer be relics, but must be used to keep native culture alive. Just as the granddaughter is rebuked, so are the younger generations of educated Native Americans like Zitkala-Sa. The rebuke teaches a lesson about inheritance of land and loyalty to the traditional way of life. At the beginning of the story, the granddaughter is not yet sure of the box's value and purpose, but the narrator assures us that when she is ready to understand the nature of the gift, its message and intent will be duly revealed to her.

When she lifts the lid of the box, she is disappointed: "'Oh!' she exclaimed, with a note of disappointment, seeing no beaded Indian regalia or trinkets…She was mystified and much perplexed" (157). The granddaughter is surprised that the box does not contain Indian regalia. Again, she does not yet understand the meaning behind the gift and still expects something physical, i.e. the medicine bags she desired as a girl. The medicine bags would be important mnemonic devices, conjuring up particular feelings and memories, so she is confused when the contents do not match her expectations. Zitkala-Sa is setting the stage for the girl to understand how important land and tribes are, even to the younger generations, if only they would pay attention. Finally as she gazes into the box she has a vision: "A picture of an Indian camp, not painted on canvas nor yet written. It was dream-stuff, suspended in the thin air, filling the enclosure of the cedar wood container" (157). The ephemeral nature of the image suggests that it will not endure; it is not painted on cloth, nor is it recorded in language. That the image is "not <u>yet</u> written" (emphasis added) implicates the granddaughter – she will write about what she sees in the box and thus preserve the culture. That Zitkala-Sa describes the dream-

vision in the box as web-like is significant. Spider Woman is a cultural figure who weaves Native Americans together in a confluence of the present and the past – she holds tradition, keeps the stories, and protects her people. The granddaughter recognizes the vision as a sign of the importance of keeping traditional lifestyles alive with the web connecting her to the vision. The vision is relevant to her, yet it is also edenic, idealized, even sentimentalized. She admits that the vision in the box "was all so illusive a breath might have blown it away; yet there it was, real as life – a circular camp of white cone-shaped teepees, astir with Indian people" (157). Such a vision is nostalgic, but is not derived from her own experience. Rather it is her grandfather's dream of his boyhood, when his tribe still lived communally on its land. The granddaughter relates to the vision nostalgically, valuing it as embodying stories her grandfather would have told her about Sioux life before the Dawes Act when they were unmolested by white land grabbers and could live comfortably in the traditional way on their land. The vision also empowers the granddaughter. As she watches the activities of the camp in the vision, the chieftan's crier calls out to her: "She heard distinctly the Dakota words he proclaimed to the people. 'Be glad! Rejoice! Look up, and see the new day dawning! Help is near! Hear me, everyone!'" (158). If the people in the vision looked up, they would see the face of the granddaughter hovering above the box. The crier is calling to the people to see the granddaughter as the new warrior and activist for their cause. Through the vision she is anointed by her grandfather as his successor and that is why she was "thrilled with new hope for her people" (157). In "A Dream of Her Grandfather" the torch is passed to a younger generation equal to the task but not through the Anglo-American practice of inheritance through the male line. The inheritor is a female, decidedly opposite of the

conventional understanding of primogeniture. Also, the granddaughter is unmarried, not under a male head of the household, the position to which the Dawes Act would assign her. She is a single woman bent on a singular cause, without a man to direct her or to curb her ambition. Indeed, the most influential male in her life is her dead grandfather. An unmarried young woman is the new leader of the cause of her people, a powerful figure who does not exercise influence through male surrogates. The message of the story is hopeful and encouraging, telling young Native American women to value the traditional way of life and to work hard to keep it alive in their hearts and in actuality.

Although "A Dream of Her Grandfather" ends on a positive note, the story following it in American Indian Stories, the final one in the collection, has a very different message, one not quite as heartening as the vision in the cedar box, which signifies hope for the future of native culture. "The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman" opens with Blue-Star Woman cooking over an open fire in the shadow of her log hut. She does not live in a teepee, but rather in a structure that indicates, to some extent, she has moved away from the traditional lifestyle of the Plains Indians. During the Dawes era, federal officials introduced several types of frame houses by the 1890s that were designed so that the Sioux could live on the land and farm their allotments (Gibbon 138). Yet because the structures were poorly built many were eventually abandoned and some Sioux actually returned to living in teepees to signal their adherence to tradition (Gibbon 138). The log hut symbolizes her lack of a clear tribal identity. Indeed, she is puzzled about her identity and the question "who am I? had become the obsessing riddle of her life" (159). Having lost her parents when she was very young, she is an orphan who does not remember them. When the bureau agent

comes to verify her tribal affiliation as part of the land allotment process, she cannot answer the question "Who were your parents?" (160). It is not only a failure of memory that prevents her from naming her parents, but also her desire to honor a tradition, "one of the old, old teachings of her race that the names of the dead should not by idly spoken. It had become a sacrilege to mention carelessly the name of any departed one, especially in matters of disputes over worldly possessions" (160). Not speaking the names of the dead leaves their souls in peace and keeps them unentangled with worldly matters. Very real inheritance troubles beset Zitkala-Sa herself but in her story, the question is broader than her personal dilemma.[8] Blue-Star Woman thinks that she should not be penalized because she cannot name her parents. Responding to the question of the bureau agent, "The unwritten law of her heart prompted her naturally to say, 'I am a being. I am Blue-Star Woman. A piece of earth is my birthright.'" (159). In a sense, she is claiming to be a birthright citizen of the natural world but she also understands the importance of knowing one's antecedents as she ponders the fact that "the verbal reports of the old-time men and women of the tribe were varied – some were actually contradictory" (161). These traditional accounts of her family history are sketchy at best and fail to meet the requirements of the Dawes Act. In order to receive a parcel of land, one must be a part of a family that is recognized by the law, namely a nuclear family. Blue-Star Woman's situation is complicated: she does not bear a family surname, she cannot name her parents, and she is not married. Even more important, she does not claim affiliation with a particular tribe. As a result she has no identity that the Dawes Act recognizes as a basis for being allotted land from tribal holdings. Blue-Star Woman's claim to the land on which she lives is based on a traditional native understanding, in which no individual

"owned" nature as private property. In native culture all tribe members shared the land. She does not abide by the Anglo-American concept of land inheritance. Indeed, her act of claiming land may be read as a subversive act in deliberate defiance of the American government. Because she has no husband, her act takes on an amplified force. Even though she has no family or husband she is not powerless. Her sense of justice is based on an unwritten native law, which the narrator implies is superior to American law.

As the story progresses, Blue-Star Woman muses about how confused she is by Christian missionaries she encounters who claim to read the Bible everyday but "cannot understand mere man's laws. This also puzzles me" (164). "Man's laws" would include the Dawes Act. Blue-Star Woman seems to understand the Christian teaching all people are one in God's eyes, and she seems to suggest that "man's laws" are inferior to both the Bible's teachings and her beliefs. There is also an interesting gendered shading to this statement. As a Native American woman without a husband, she is not subject to a man and his rules – she is decidedly outside "mere man's laws." Blue-Star Woman further suggests that the Great Spirit does not discriminate between native people and Anglo-American people by recounting a statement a native leader made about equality: "Once a wise leader of our people, addressing a president of this country said: 'I am a man. You are another. The Great Spirit is our witness!' This is simple and easy to understand, but the times are changed. The white man's laws are strange" (164). The Dawes Act as " a white man's law" is "strange" because it attempts to force Native Americans into an Anglo-American mold, making land ownership private and nuclear families the norm. These practices are alien to Blue-Star Woman's sensibility. The Dawes Act enforces an order that does not match Native American notions of fellowship and community. Blue-

Star Woman does not see the logic of the white man's laws that draw arbitrary distinctions between the races, families, and genders. Living under the conditions created by these laws is like "walking in the dark. In this darkness, I am growing fearful of everything" (164).

Her meditative state of mind distracts her from the arrival of two Native American men who have come to pay her a visit. At first glance, she sees defining markers of their assimilation into Anglo-American culture: "Their short-cropped hair looked blue-black in contrast to the faded civilian clothes they wore. Their white man's shoes were rusty and unpolished. To the unconventional eyes of the old Indian woman, their celluloid collars appeared like shining markers of civilization" (164-165). The short hair recalls the scene in "The School Days of an Indian Girl" when a young Zitkala-Sa's hair is cut short, leaving her bereft of one of the physical markers of her Native American identity. The appearance of these would-be white men in the story clearly evokes Zitkala-Sa's critique of the erasure of Native American culture through the harsh assimilation practices of the boarding school system. One of the premises behind the Dawes Act was that Native Americans would more rapidly assimilate if they came into more regular contact with whites (Hoxie 181, 183). The celluloid collars of the two men, which suggest clerical collars, refer readers back to Blue-Star Woman's critique of hypocritical and ignorant Christian missionaries, and their dirtiness symbolizes their nefarious intentions. Conceivably, these external markers could be changed to construct a different identity. Dirt can be washed off and scuffed shoes can be polished to cast a more positive light on the good that might come from adopting Anglo-American values. In Zitkala-Sa's story, however, the dirtiness of the assimilated Indians clearly signals that

no good will come from assimilation. As the story unfolds, none of the white or assimilated native men are proved redeemable. Blue-Star Woman understands their appearance signifies that their assimilation has made them precisely like white people, dishonest grafters looking to grab land. Their increased contact with white people has not truly benefitted them, nor will it benefit Blue-Star Woman. The creators of the Dawes Act assumed that Native Americans would willingly choose the path to U.S. citizenship laid out by the law, and that both whites and Native Americans would live in harmony. Blue-Star Woman, however, sees the irony of the situation: a native woman who is alone, without men in her life, is approached by two natives who have adapted to the dominant culture in visible ways. Her interaction with these men is not positive and she is cautious. Nevertheless, she invites them in and is a good host to them. She tries to see past the dirtiness signifying their assimilation-gone-wrong and acts in accord with traditional native values of hospitality. The reader knows that the men will take advantage of her hospitality and victimize her. Earlier in the story the narrator comments that "generosity is said to be a fault of the Indian people," (162) a comment that does not make us think less of Blue-Star Woman, but rather highlights the lack of gratitude and decorum on the part of her visitors. Blue-Star Woman is not entirely duped by these men; instead she is trying to kill their dire intentions with kindness. The men try every trick to deceive her by speaking her language and "shak[ing] hands according to our custom" (165). The men do not waste any time in revealing the intention of their visit: "We heard you are one of those Indians who have been cheated out of their share in tribal lands by the government officials…We can help you get your land. We want to help our aunt. All old people like you ought to be helped before the younger ones. The old will

die soon, and they may never get the benefit of their land unless some one like us helps them to get their rights, without further delay" (165-166). The "old people like you" part of their spiel presumes Blue-Star Woman has a relationship with a tribal family, but she does not. She does not have younger family members to pass land down to, nor does she have a husband who would subsume her identity in legal affairs. Blue-Star Woman already benefits from her land and she still believes that land can never really be "owned" because native society's stewardship of the land is based on natural law. She lives in a house, a settled home unlike the temporary shelters used by migrating plains tribes. She also cares for herself and is completely self-sufficient. Her visitors try to exploit her lack of a husband and her lack of affiliation with a particular tribe. Blue-Star Woman is suspicious of their sincerity and desire to help her, and her ill feelings are confirmed when she watches them eat: "Inwardly she made a passing observation how, like ravenous wolves, her nephews devoured their food. Coyotes in midwinter could not have been more starved" (167). Their behavior reveals their greed and selfishness, and indeed, they eat all of her food. While Blue-Star Woman must infer their character through observation, the narrator directly exposes their motives, stating that: "Their solicitation for Blue-Star Woman was not all altruistic. They thrived in their grafting business. They and their occupation were the by-product of an unwieldy bureaucracy over the nation's wards" (168). Whether or not they are bureau agents, they are dishonest in ways that agents sometimes were. Blue-Star Woman, despite her suspicions, does not fully understand how they intend to deceive her and force her to falsify her identity so that they can take her land. The men exploit her deep concern about her lack of tribal affiliation or family history and suggest that they can remedy the situation. "If any one can discover

evidence, it's us!" they exclaim; "I tell you, aunt, we'll fix it all up for you" (168). Blue-Star Woman is not convinced, and when they reveal a financial motive behind their façade of helpfulness, she is wary: "'There is one thing you will have to do – that is to pay us half of your land and money when you get them.' Here was a pause, and Blue-Star Woman answered slowly,'Y-e-s,' in an uncertain frame of mind" (168). If the dirty appearance of the men and their ravenous appetites had not sufficiently aroused her suspicions, the revelation of their motive only confirms them and the men sense her wavering. Her good sense is telling her that these men are grafters and will only abuse her. The men make a compelling argument to her, asking "'Wouldn't you rather have half a crust of bread than none at all?' She, in turn, "was duly impressed with the force of their argument. In her heart she agreed. 'A little something to eat is better than nothing!'" (168-169). However, she is only partially convinced that their scheme is the best way she can secure her land and live the rest of her days without worrying about starving to death. The "little bit of something to eat" reminds her that the men had eaten all of her food and now they are trying to tell her that the only way she can provide for herself is to go along with their scheme. On the other hand, her seeming gullibility and innocence elicit frustration and anger in the reader that Blue-Star Woman is so easily swayed. However, she is not. Zitkala-Sa created Blue-Star Woman to show the resolve of those faithful to traditional ways of life, and it is women who are tasked with keeping traditional ways alive. Through Blue-Star Woman, Zitkala-Sa makes clear that the path to citizenship and belonging in American society systematically excludes Native American women. A strong, unmarried woman can challenge the Dawes Act and its one-size-fits-all approach to citizenship for Native Americans. After her visitors leave, Blue-

Star Woman sits with her chin in her hand thinking about the men's logic, and she remembers bygone days when an altruistic band of Native Americans came to the rescue of those in need. "In bygone days," she thinks, "brave young men of the order of the White-Horse-Riders sought out the aged, the poor, the widows and orphans to aid them, but they did their good work without pay. The White-Horse-Riders are gone. The times are changed" (170). The altruistic motivations of the White-Horse-Riders contrast starkly with those of her visitors and even the white color of their horses contrasts with the dirty appearance of the visitors who sit near her fire. When the men leave, Blue-Star Woman "shrugged her shoulders. The sun high in the sky had witnessed the affair and now glared down upon her white head" (171). She is still concerned about the deal she made to allow the men to take her land, and the sun as witness condemns the men, as does the reader. Shrugging her shoulders does not indicate that Blue-Star Woman has entirely given up, however. She knows that there is more to come from men like those who visited her, but she did not waver in her suspicions or belief in her right to use the resources of the land available as part of a larger identity as a strong Native American woman preserving in ways unorthodox in Anglo-American society.

At this point in the story, the scene shifts to Chief High-Flier, who gets a letter from the government telling him that Blue-Star Woman has been enrolled as a member of his tribe and will get an allotment of land. This troubles Chief High-Flier because Blue-Star Woman is not a part of his family or any nuclear family within his tribe as imposed upon him by the Dawes Act. Conceivably Blue-Star Woman might be related by blood to the tribe, but because she cannot prove who her parents were she is excluded from Chief High-Flier's tribe as reconfigured by the Dawes Act as a group of nuclear families.

The agents working to enforce the Dawes Act have added her to Chief High-Flier's family, and he is upset because his children will be cheated out of their land allotment. In a letter that he dictates to his educated granddaughter, he objects to Blue-Star Woman's addition to his roll. "We do not know her," he writes: "We were not asked to give land, but our land is taken from us to give to another Indian. This is not right. Lots of little children of my tribe have no land. Why this strange woman get our land which belongs to our children?" (172). Chief High-Flier has learned how to work with the limitation of the Dawes Act so well that he abandons and rejects an old woman, allowing her to be abused by dishonest agents. There is a twist, however, to Chief High-Flier's understanding of the Act. Chief High-Flier expresses Zitkala-Sa's ideas about land in severalty, namely that allotments should be taken to keep the tribe and families together. Blue-Star Woman is a threat because, as is indicated in the title, she is an enigma. The words "wide spread" in the title amplify the story's critique of the injustices of the Dawes Act. First, Blue-Star Woman herself is a sort of mystery. She has no parents and no husband. In order to receive an allotment, she must be part of a nuclear family with a male head of the household. Without a male-headed family she is unrecognized as eligible for allotted land. The creators of the Dawes Act would see no "enigma" in her situation; however, the clash of fundamental principles of native life with the statue's provisions turn her into a mystery. The assimilated Native Americans who make the deal with her take advantage of this "mystery" to profit from the sale of her land. The absence of a husband leaves her vulnerable to exploitation, and they take advantage of this vulnerability. She can barely feed herself and has no husband to support her. While Chief High-Flier is trying to make sense of the situation, the narrator steps in and

explicitly critiques the guardianship system and the Bureau of Indian Affairs: "the Indian's guardian had got into a way of usurping autocratic power in disposing of the wards' property. It was growing intolerable" (172). The "guardian" is the American government, charged with bringing Native Americans into the American community as full citizens, but only after an extended period as dependent wards. Not only was the Bureau itself corrupt: the Dawes Act and Indian policy more broadly created widespread and systemic injustice against Native Americans. The American government did not keep its promise to bring Native Americans into the fold with their own traditions intact. Instead, these policies were designed to – and succeeded at – eradicating traditional native cultures. Chief High-Flier, like Zitkala-Sa, is savvy and alert to the corruption of the system. However, he finds himself nearly powerless to combat it. His letter to the government pleads for justice according to the provisions of the Dawes Act. He wants to play by the rules on behalf of his people, but is punished for doing so by greedy men who subvert the rules for selfish ends.

As Chief High-Flier makes his way to the post office to mail his letter, he muses over the great changes in moral behavior brought on by poor policy: "Memories of other days thronged to the wayside, and for the lonely rider transformed all the country. Those days were gone when the Indian youths were taught to be truthful – to be merciful to the poor. Those days were gone when moral cleanliness was a chief virtue…Untold mischief is now possible through these broken ancient laws" (174). The "broken ancient laws" refers to traditional practices such as communal family structure, stewardship of the land, and hospitality, customs the Dawes Act set out to eradicate. Clearly Chief High-Flier has himself encountered morally bankrupt Native American youth who have become grafters.

On the other hand, Chief High-Flier makes his plea in the language of the U.S. government. Consistent with Zitkala-Sa's plea in the "Letter to Chiefs and Headmen of the Tribes," he recognizes that he needs to communicate in English if he is to save his land and protect his people. His educated granddaughter, just like the one in "A Dream of her Grandfather," is the next generation, literate and schooled in the American system. He knows that if any progress is to be made in his case he must communicate and rely on the younger generation. In her editorials, Zitkala-Sa emphasizes that Anglo-American culture was strong and that Native Americans needed to learn English to communicate their needs effectively to those in power. She also argued that English language could unite disparate tribes who could not communicate with one another because they spoke different languages. Thus acquisition of English could both strengthen individual tribal communities by enabling them to argue their cause with the dominant culture and build fellowship and community between tribes.

Chief High-Flier's letter in English is addressed not to the American government generally, but to a "prominent American woman" (173). He rides to within sight of the post office but is discouraged when he sees soldiers surrounding it, thinking to himself that sending the letter would be a useless gesture: "If only my good friend knew the folly of turning my letter into the hands of bureaucrats! In face of repeated defeat, I am daring once more to send this one letter…and this one letter will share the fate of the other letters" (175). Recognizing that his letter has only a slim chance of making it to the woman who would help him, he decides to burn the letter, sending "his message on the wings of fire and he believed she would get it. He yet trusted that help would come to his people before it was too late" (176). He seems to believe that a woman would intuit and

sense his generalized anxiety but he assumes that she must know about the abuses and corruption of the Bureau and of American government policy. He also assumes that her position will allow her to influence policy – she is better enlightened and equipped to help him in his cause. He does not craft his plea to American men, whom he perceives to be corrupt and dishonest. American women, however, are powerful in his eyes as they were in Zitkala-Sa's estimation. The fire catches the attention of the soldiers at the post office and they ride quickly to arrest him, making claims Chief High-Flier recognizes as ridiculous and outrageous. Addressing him as "Uncle," the spokesman explains to him, "we are hirelings as you know. We are sent by the government superintendent to arrest you and take you back with us. The superintendent says you are one of the bad Indians, singing war songs and opposing the government all the time; this morning you were seen trying to set fire to the government agency" (177). Chief High-Flier knows these charges are trumped and exclaims "all this is unbelievable!" (177). In the arrest scene, Zitkala-Sa makes painfully clear how the American government systematically oppressed Native Americans and treated them unjustly. Chief High-Flier is not treated as a citizen with rights, but as a ward under the care of a guardian. Ironically, the soldiers accuse him of treason against the government, even though only a citizen who owes loyalty to the government can be guilty of this crime. Chief High-Flier is locked in a jail cell without trial, and there he has a powerful vision: "Lo, his good friend, the American woman to whom he had sent his messages by fire, now stood there a legion! A vast multitude of women, with uplifted hands, gazed upon a huge stone image. Their upturned faces were eager and very earnest. The stone figure was that of a woman upon the brink of the Great Waters, facing eastward. The myriad living hands remained uplifted till the stone woman

began to show signs of life. Very majestically she turned around and, lo, she smiled upon this great galaxy of American women. She was the Statue of Liberty! It was she, who, though representing human liberty, formerly turned her back upon the American aborigine. Her face was aglow with compassion. Her eyes swept across the outspread continent of America, the home of the red man…At the moment her torch flamed brighter and whiter till its radiance reached into the obscure and remote places of the land. Her light of liberty penetrated Indian reservations. A loud shout of joy rose up from the Indians of the earth, everywhere!" (179-180). In this elaborate dream, Zitkala-Sa imagines citizenship for all Native Americans, without allotment and the breaking up of traditional ways of life as a prerequisite. It is no coincidence that Zitkala-Sa has Chief High-Flier dream about American women, and not American men, in a story published in 1921. First, his encounters with American men and Americanized Native American men are negative. These men oppress their "wards" and betray their trust. American women, however, were granted the vote in 1920. His appeal is to these newly minted voters, women who were already citizens but previously denied this fundamental right. He believes them to be sympathetic to his cause, and as voters to have power to reform Native American policy. And, if all Native Americans became citizens, native women would also become full citizens able to vote just as white women could after 1920. The significance of the franchise was not lost on Zitkala-Sa and she wanted the same for all Native Americans, men and women.

"A Dream of her Grandfather" and the "The Wide-Spread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman" appeared in Zitkala-Sa's collection, American Indian Stories, published in 1921, three years before the Indian Citizenship Act made Native Americans

U.S. citizens. The image of the Statue of Liberty in Chief High-Flier's dream is provocative. His dream is accurate; she faces the east as though welcoming the immigrants from Europe into the American fold. The promise etched on the pedestal also assures new immigrants that they will be cared for and made citizens. Naturalization was only available for immigrants who were members of "white races," however (even though such persons were allowed to enter the country and live and work in it), and after 1882, Chinese were excluded from immigration in addition to naturalization. In the chief's dream vision, when the Statue of Liberty turns toward the west, she, as emblem of American women newly empowered by the franchise, welcomes Native Americans into the American fold. It is a powerful image of compassion and welcome. The land that the statue turns to face includes Indian reservations, "the obscure and remote places." The light of the torch as a beacon of hope breaks down not only physical boundaries but also gives Native Americans hope of bright future. This is not to say that the dream does not speak to the present as well as the future. Chief High-Flier is in a difficult situation and needs, literally and metaphorically, to be released from jail to join the ranks of American citizens, including the enfranchised American women.

Chief High-Flier is eventually released, but on a devilish condition. The two men who swindled Blue-Star Woman out of half her land have now made a deal with the chief's son to forfeit half of his father's allotment to get him out of jail. Chief High-Flier knows that his son made a bad deal, but he also knows that he is powerless to stop it. He is resigned in the same way Blue-Star Woman is resigned at the end of her part of the story. "The old chieftan sighed, but made no comment," the narrator explains: "Words were vain. He pressed his indelible thumb mark, his signature it was, upon the deed, and

drove home with his son" (182). His thumbprint "signature" reveals his illiteracy, and while he may understand the gravity of the situation, he is voiceless. His dream vision is not irrelevant, but impotent. No American woman comes to help him, and robbed of half his land he will return to poverty and desolation. The melancholy ending reminds readers of how futile resistance to corruption and the reach of land in severalty policy could be. By writing this provocative story, Zitkala-Sa engaged meaningfully in the controversy surrounding Native American land policy. Her stories give voice to the cause of voiceless Native Americans and appeal to those who have the power to help. Zitkala-Sa's multi-faceted approach, using stories, editorials, and pamphlets, remind us that the printed word can be a potent means of active resistance to a dominant culture intent on forcibly assimilating, culturally transforming, and even exterminating an entire race. A clear picture emerges from her writings of proud Native Americans loyal to their traditions.

Over fifty years, the Dawes Act was the most consequential part of a broader Native American policy, regulating access to citizenship. In her activist writings, Zitkala-Sa argues vigorously against abuse and exploitation of her people. The most consequential element of the Dawes Act was its imposition of an alien family structure and usurpation of native women's role in the family and tribe. By eradicating communal family structures, the Dawes Act made native women powerless except through their husbands. They were also robbed of their traditional role as agriculturalists when the Act made native men farmers and heads of nuclear families. It is no coincidence, then, that in her writings Zitkala-Sa should task native women who are unmarried and self-sufficient with the roles of activists and stewards of Native American peoples. This activism was

an uneasy role for Zitkala-Sa and other Native Americans, leading to contradictory feelings about assimilation. Literary historian Molly Crumpton Winter sees ambivalence in Zitkala-Sa's activism in the Dawes Act era: "[I]n her writings, the figures who move between the American world of the Dawes-era boarding schools and the tribal world of the reservation are simultaneously troubled by a sense of disconnection from their traditional culture and proud of their resistance to assimilation" (88). Winter sees this dichotomy of disconnection and resistance as troubled, but Zitkala-Sa struck an effective balance by emphasizing the role that Native American women play in keeping traditional ways alive. She elevates and preserves Native American women by tasking them as preservers of native culture. Winter concludes her analysis of Zitkala-Sa with the suggestion that "their relationship to American citizenship, however, remains unresolved" (88), with "their" referring to both native men and women, but this claim should be more nuanced. In Zitkala-Sa's stories, Native American men are systematically excluded, but Native American women are able to claim citizenship more easily. In the context of her stories, the Dawes Act, and particularly its emphasis on marriage based on the Anglo-American concept of the nuclear family, does not define the parameters of native women's access to citizenship. Instead, her women resist and reject the marriage relationship and act as citizens (whether or not the law recognized them as such) by agitating against oppressive policies. Zitkala-Sa thus defies the American government and places native, single women such as the granddaughter in "A Dream of Her Grandfather" and Blue-Star Woman at the forefront of the fight for justice.

CHAPTER 2

PRIMROSES IN THE GHETTO: MARTHA WOLFENSTEIN'S FICTION ABOUT JEWISH WOMANHOOD

The image of the Statue of Liberty faces east to Europe, extending the beacon of citizenship to those crossing the Atlantic to congregate on American shores. The image is a welcoming one. It is also particularly inviting for the Jewish people because of the inscription on the base of the statue from a poem titled "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, a popular Jewish writer in the late 19th century. The poem emphasizes the creation of a nation of exiles from other countries and not of the brutal conquest by a nation at war. Indeed, Lazarus describes the Statue of Liberty in her poem as a peaceful image: "From her beacon-hand glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command/The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame. 'Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!'" (lines 3-5). The America of the poem is not built on past glories but rather is a nation in the making – the very syntax of the poem implies that American society is open to foreign immigration. In an article about American Jewish identity in the late 19th century, Wendy Zierler suggests that the poem's hyphenated compound modifiers indicate a willingness to accept ethnic diversity: "The repetition of hyphenated words form in the descriptions of the Statue of Liberty and her new-world constituency -- sea-washed, air-bridged, world-wide welcome, tempest-tost – a set of word patterns that gesture toward the idea of America as a place that allows for hyphenated forms of identity, that embrace ethnic diversity and affiliation even as it hopes to unite all of the newcomers into one nation" (72). Although the poem, published by Lazarus in 1883, was not inscribed on the base of the statue until 1903, it promised Jewish immigrants

during the first decade of the 20th century a new national home in which they would be able to retain the important aspects of Jewish culture and Americanize in ways that did not erase their essential Jewishness.

Martha Wolfenstein, a Jewish woman who immigrated to America as a child with her family from Central Europe sometime in the 1870s, published two collections of short stories, one in 1901 and another in 1906. The first collection of short stories, Idyls of the Gass, is comprised of stories about a precocious Jewish boy who lives with his grandmother on the Judengasse in the fictional German or Austrian town of Maritz. The stories trace the *bochurle's* (little scholar's) progress as he alternately challenges and accepts the tenets of Jewish culture and religion. He learns about Jewish charity, as well as the horrors of the pogrom that, in a story at the end of the collection, kills his grandmother and his blind uncle. The second collection, A Renegade and Other Stories, is comprised of stories that appeared in prominent literary journals of the day, such as Lippincott's and Outlook. They, too, are about Jewish life and mores in the European ghetto and show other aspects of Jewish thought, such as fears about Jewish children turning away from their religion and the nature of Jewish womanhood and marriage practices. Wolfenstein's stories are interesting for this project because in them she depicts the virtues of European Jews, subtly suggesting that American Jews lack these virtues. She presents her European characters as moral and virtuous examples of how Jews can survive in largely Christian societies. The characters in her stories who best embody the most admirable qualities of the Jewish people are Jewish women. As unmarried women, grandmothers, and foster mothers, Wolfenstein's Jewish women operate independently from Jewish men. Indeed, Wolfenstein's fictional stories about

European Jewish women show them resisting gender role prescriptions that limit their influence to the home.

The marriage relationship, in which a woman's civic identity is subsumed by her husband's, is the most formative relationship between men and women. For Jewish women in America, marriage meant isolation from non-Jews, as well as economic dependence on men and alienation from enfranchisement. Jewish women's domestic culture implied that they were keepers of tradition, while Jewish men functioned in secular society outside the home. Wolfenstein's stories suggest that being a good Jew did not necessarily conflict with U.S. citizenship and that Jewish women were entitled to independence from the men in their lives so that they could represent themselves and the Jewish people in the American polity. In her stories, Wolfenstein simultaneously critiques European Jewish society for disparaging and isolating Jewish women who were not married and provides a model of Jewish womanhood to which American Jewish women could aspire. Through her stories Wolfenstein implicitly urges her Jewish readership to resist the forces of assimilation while at the same time modernizing traditional views of Jewish womanhood and marriage. Crucially, Wolfenstein is keenly aware of the potential for religious tolerance in a large democratic society like the United States. By depicting Jewish women functioning outside the parameters of marriage, she presents them as examples of what Jewish women could achieve as U.S. citizens. In this chapter, I analyze Jewish women characters in Wolfenstein's stories to show how these characters redefine Jewish womanhood outside the parameters of marriage, and, in one case, how traditional Jewish marriage is modernized by the practice of companionate marriage. My study reveals how Wolfenstein rejects cultural Americanization while

claiming the rights of U.S. citizenship in a religiously tolerant society. In other words, through her position-taking in relation to the debates about Jewish citizenship, she argues against a linking of citizenship to a narrow, normative definition of American identity.

The Jews who emigrated from Central Europe in the mid 19th century were both educated German Jews from cities and Jewish artisans who lived in villages. Both educated and artisan Jews were eager to capitalize on the openness of American society and found it easy to adapt in many ways. Indeed, their education and trade skills made them valuable assets to the American community, which was looking to expand and profit from industrialization. In his study of German Jewish immigration from 1820-1914, Avraham Barkai suggests that the Jews who received a secular education in Germany wanted to integrate culturally and economically into American society: "They were by no means destitute, and did not arrive totally unequipped; many of them had learned trades and crafts before leaving home. Most had acquired some elementary education and had brought with them at least a small amount of money to help with getting started. Generally they were a group of healthy, industrious young people, full of hope and enterprise, and ready to work hard in order to make the best of the opportunities offered by an expanding economy and a democratic political system" (38). The education and skills these Jews learned in Germany allowed them to capitalize on work opportunities in America. Many started off as modest peddlers but rapidly earned enough money to open sundry and grocery stores, establishing themselves as productive merchants in communities all across the country.[9] Yet many also felt the pull of loyalty to family and homeland, which, according to Barkai, delayed their assimilation: "The German Jews in America had to grapple with a double identity problem, for they were

both Germans and Jews. 'Americanization' implied the conscious or unconscious loosening if not severance, of emotional and cultural ties with the homeland" (153). Many Jews of this period were willing to downplay certain aspects of their Jewish identity in order to selectively adopt the habits of Anglo-American society. Historian of Jewish culture Hasia R. Diner describes this dichotomy in terms similar to Barkai's: "By and large, they did not draw attention to their Jewishness in their cultural endeavors, nor did they disassociate from Judaism in order to win acceptance" (165). This delicate balance was strained. In Wolfenstein's stories set in European ghettos, the younger generation similarly struggles with competing forces of assimilation and adherence to traditional lifestyles. There is no question, however, that her characters, especially the women, preserve and, in some cases, physically defend Jewish traditions and attempt to intervene in their children's lives. In her stories, Jewish women, not Jewish men, preserve and defend Jewish culture. Most Jewish men in her stories are on the periphery of the marriage relationship rather than the head of it. In her fiction about the conflict between generations, Jewish fathers do not intervene in the lives of their children; instead, it is the Jewish mother, and in several cases, the grandmother, who is tasked with bringing children back into the fold. Wolfenstein's female characters model how to preserve Jewish tradition while living in a large Christian society. Her fiction set in Jewish ghettos in Europe evokes the Jewish ghettos in America, but she implicitly rebukes Jews in America, who are too willing to assimilate and leave behind the traditions that keep their faith strong. Despite living on the margins of Christian society, Wolfenstein's pious Jews function effectively without compromising core values. Instead of using marriage as the paradigm to play out the possibilities of U.S. citizenship,

Wolfenstein separates Jewish women from Jewish men, showing that the marriage relationship is not the most important one in Jewish women's lives. Written before the enfranchisement of women in the U.S., Wolfenstein's stories are ahead of their time in depicting Jewish women in Europe as having a power analogous to the franchise that allows them to change their circumstances. In essence, Wolfenstein's fiction de-couples citizenship for Jews from an imperative to assimilate into a majority Christian culture, in the process giving Jewish women a central role.

As Jews from Central Europe expanded their communities across the U.S., many began to modify certain Jewish traditions to better fit in with Anglo-American Christian neighbors. The first and earliest modifications to Jewish culture in America occurred in religious services. Barkai notes that the earliest German Jewish immigrants initiated such modifications: "The first stirring of reformed ritual and ceremony, such as requests for a weekly sermon and some prayers in English, had appeared in the 1820s…These early tendencies were part of the Jewish communal and religious situation with which the new immigrants were confronted upon their arrival in the New World" (100). Jews who emigrated westward continued these changes, adopting American-style community structures that often times substituted for daily religious practices.[10] The Americanization of religious practices was a particular concern for Wolfenstein. In the orphanage her father operated in Cleveland, she worked to inculcate Jewish religious traditions into the children's daily lives. She recognized that Americanization was inevitable, but was also a vocal advocate for preserving Jewish tradition and rituals. Of her concern for the younger generation of Jews Wolfenstein wrote, "The disintegrating influence of our country is surely operating on our race…The second, or at most the third

generation of American born Jews, have already lost their religion, one of the strongest strands in the bonds which holds us together" (qtd in Benjet 369). There were, however, non-negotiable traditions that not even the most Americanized Jews of the mid-19th century parted from, namely observing burial rites, caring for the sick, and establishing charitable societies to care for the poor.[11] As Rosalind Benjet observes, Wolfenstein framed her stories to introduce Jewish culture to an Anglo-Christian American audience. However, I argue that Wolfenstein goes much further than cross-cultural introduction. She acknowledges that America has been an asylum for many Jews fleeing persecution, but she also suggests that U.S. citizenship is expansive enough to include religious Jews who were not culturally assimilated. By focusing on the younger generations she constructs a compromise between the inevitability of Americanization and a continuing strong connection to Jewish identity. Through her fiction, she argues that Jews can be devout and still have a strong civic presence in a religiously tolerant American community.

Martha Wolfenstein's European Jewish characters face a similar dilemma that the Jewish immigrants to America faced. Although American Jews did not encounter the horrors of pogroms, Wolfenstein implies in her stories that the European faces similar pressures to assimilate to the dominant Christian culture, and that, perhaps, without the threat of violence and bloodshed, American Jews became complacent. American Jewish women were also on the frontlines of a battle to maintain Jewish traditions, and, even without the threat of violence, the need to keep Jewish culture and traditions alive was urgent. Wolfenstein's Jewish characters are reverent and peaceable, adhering to ancient culture. Women are at the center of keeping the religion alive despite the challenges

presented by their children's desire to take the easy way by assimilating and letting valuable traditions die out.

The real danger for Jews in America was the conversion to the dominant Protestant Christian religion. Conversion meant not only a loss of Jewish traditions, but also a loss of Jewish identity. Conversion stories were common in Anglo-Protestant religious literature, which portrayed both Jewish men and women falling in love with Christians and changing their faith to be married to their Christian lovers. In his comprehensive study of the image of the Jew in American literature, Louis Harap traces the ways Anglo-Protestant literature emphasizes religious conversion as a necessary precondition for Jews to be fit for American citizenship in the 19th century. In order to be accepted by non-Jews, the Jews themselves had to declare their allegiance to the American polity through conversion to the dominant religion. Although Jewish conversion to Christianity became a popular theme in 19th century novels, as Harap observes, "The actual results of Christian conversion efforts were quite meager, but one would never guess this from the succession of conversion novels in which Jews are easily won over and in turn bring their whole families into the fold" (150). In these novels, conversion is both simple and dramatic. Stereotypical money-hungry Jews and vengeful Shylocks mend their ways, and beautiful Jewesses fall in love with Christian boys and convert willingly in order to marry them. Harap suggests the readers of this literature accepted the notion that the Jews were misguided in adhering to the Old Testament. However, this characterization of Jews as changeable and easily converted produced an ambivalent reaction in American culture. Louise Mayo traces this ambivalence and concludes Anglo-Christian American writers often relied on stereotypes to assign their

characters to pre-existing categories of greedy Shylock, charitable Sheva, and dusky-eyed seductress (62). These stereotypes and the circulation of stories of conversion lead to Americans to view Jews as simultaneously resisting Americanization and easily adopting external markers of Anglo-Christian American culture.

Wolfenstein's female Jewish characters bear no resemblance to the stereotypical images in Anglo-American Christian literature of Jews as Shylocks, wandering Jews, and money grubbers. Wolfenstein writes about the violence of pogroms and discrimination analogous to the pressure Jews face to Americanize. Instead of focusing on young Jew's experience assimilating to the dominant culture, Wolfenstein emphasized Jewish women's reactions to their children's decision to assimilate. At first glance, it seems as if Wolfenstein's Jewish mothers fail in the task of creating good Jewish men. By the end of her stories, however, the sons recognize their mistakes and repent at the graves of both their mothers and foster mothers. Indeed, two stories, "A Renegade" and "A Monk from the Ghetto," feature young men who struggle with their decisions to convert to Catholicism, but their mothers bear the brunt of the pain caused by their son's abandonment of Jewish religion.

In "A Renegade" the main character converts to the Catholic faith in order to secure a stable living. In a letter to his mother telling her about his baptism, he writes that he did not have a choice: "Didst thou but know what pain and struggle I have gone through, thou wouldst pity and not condemn me. What I am about to do *must* be, or all my striving all my life were in vain" (13). The young man, Peretz, feels much the same conflict that many Jewish men in America felt as they strove to adapt to the dominant culture. Peretz's conversion sends a strong message: his mother's religion is not

profitable, and to survive he must change his religion to gain acceptance from the dominant Christian culture. Although he rejects his mother, he attempts to soften the blow, reasoning that Christianity and Judaism are not so different and that she should not be concerned: "In the end they are all alike – Judaism and Christianity – both for the betterment, the happiness of mankind. All the rest is trifling – empty form" (13). His mother feels painfully the loss of this "empty form" and, to an extent, blames herself. Peretz's mother, Frau Neuer, vehemently opposes his education in a Christian school and his ambition. In a prescient speech to the rabbi she says, "There will no good come of it…We dare not take it from the Gentile" (22). The younger generation argues that Peretz's ambition represents the progress the Jewish community of the Gass needs to make if it is to continue to exist in the modern world: "Times have changed, and the Jew and Christian are now equal" (22). His mother responds vehemently, "The Jew and the Christian can never agree. There will no good come of it" (22). Frau Neuer feels a strong pang of guilt about her son's desire to have a Christian education, explaining that "he has it from his father. God forgive me that I must confess it" (21). The Jewish men in her life have failed her. Peretz rejects his mother's predicament and forces it, at least initially, into the background. Because his father is dead, he is the man of the house and takes charge of the family's material needs, but his mother is not weak, nor does she submit willingly to her son's desires. Frau Neuer fights with her son and tries to convince him to not go through with the conversion. The struggle against conversion to Christianity that Wolfenstein describes in Europe has parallels to Jew's experiences in the United States, with the key difference that Catholicism was the dominant form of Christianity in the areas of Central and Eastern Europe Wolfenstein was writing about in

her fiction. Jews who convert to Catholic Christianity in her stories of Jewish European life are thus roughly equivalent to American Jews who converted to Protestant Christianity – both convert to the dominant and thus most powerful form of Christianity.

Crucially, the Jews who convert in her stories regret their actions and seek a return to the old ways and to their mothers. Peretz, who becomes a college professor after his baptism, returns to the Gass to grieve his mother's death, a death he arguably caused. He returns home resplendent, wearing a sable coat and a gold cross of the Legion of Honor. His material possessions and social rank cannot heal the pain he feels at his mother's grave, however. An old friend finds him lying on his mother's grave, holding a book: "It lay open at the *Kaddish*, the mourner's prayer for the dead, that glorious exaltation of God, that deathless, ancient cry which with mysterious power binds together all Israel as with imperishable bonds of steel" (44). At the end of the story, Peretz is buried in a Catholic cemetery, "but every year, at the anniversary of his death, that ancient *Kaddish* prayer rises to heaven, and a deathlight is kindled in his memory, in the house of Yakiew Holzman [his childhood friend] of the Gass" (44). The moral of the story is that conversion leads to a loss of community, alienation from family, and general confusion about identity. These are all dangers that the new generation faced when they left the ghettos of Europe and made their way to America. Forgiveness is also a central theme. The strong European Jewish woman perseveres in the face of her troubled relationship with her son while also taking a moral high ground and forgiving him. The widowed mother should defer to her son as the head of the household, but Frau Neuer does not. She fights the whole way, and the ending suggests that she is right about the power of Jewish traditions, such as burial rites, to bring Jews back into the fold.

Wolfenstein portrays Jewish men as too weak to resist the urge to assimilate, while Jewish women are better at preserving Jewish religion from decay despite threats from the majority Christian society. While Peretz's mother says that Jews and Christians can never live peacefully together, Wolfenstein's story as a whole does not advocate that Jews should remain in segregated ghettos in Christian Europe rather than emigrating. Instead she makes clear that both Jewish men and women suffer when those debating whether Jews should assimilate cannot find a compromise. Peretz does come back to his mother after her death, however, and by showing her power after death, Wolfenstein argues that if Jewish women were given more room and power in the family while they were alive, they could keep Jewish families together and their traditions alive. Peretz should have regretted his actions long before his mother's death. Both he and his father fail her. Jewish women, not men, should, the story argues, be the consequential decision makers in the family, that marriage narrowly defined should be modernized to allow Jewish women to be family leaders. Jewish women should assume leadership, Wolfenstein suggests, because the lure of wealth and Christian assimilation compromises husbands and sons as leaders.

In "A Monk from the Ghetto" Wolfenstein further problematizes the conversion story by writing about a Catholic priest who fathers a son and begs his Jewish friend, Reb (rabbi) Nathan, to raise him. On the stormy winter night when the priest brings the child to Reb Nathan and his wife, Reb Nathan promises, "He shall be my son and bear my name, and I will love him as my own" (210). As the child Rudolph grows, Reb Nathan takes him to Catholic masses and makes him stuff wads of cotton in his ears during the family's Hebrew prayers in the kitchen before meals. Little Rudolph, however, wants to

participate in the family's religious traditions. When his father the priest wants him to come to Prague to study, Rudolph does not want to go, and Rachel, Reb Nathan's wife, laments, "Is there one in that great wicked city who knows how to make a pea-soup as he loves it? Who will tell him to wrap a shawl around his neck when the wind blows?" (215). Rachel clearly loves him as her own, but at the same time, however, she is powerless to change Rudolph's destiny. Reb Nathan forces the young man away from the family, and Rachel is supposed to accept her husband's decision. Rudolph does not want to leave his Jewish family either: "'I shall come home every week' cried Rudolph, weeping in chorus with his sisters" (215). Rudolph clearly thinks he is culturally closer to his Jewish family than to the priest to whom he is being sent for his education.

Even after his Catholic education under the priest, he does not think of himself as culturally Catholic. One night as Reb Nathan stood by a young man in torment at the synagogue: "In front of Reb Nathan stood a young man who grieved not the resigned sorrow of long-suffering patience. He flung his arms against the wall near which he stood, buried his face upon them, and shook in every limb with a paroxym of grief. At the Kaddish which ended the service he wrapped his face in his tallith and sobbed aloud" (221). Reb Nathan goes to comfort the young man and recognizes that it is Rudolph exclaiming, "Art thou gone mad?" (221). Wolfenstein notes the irony of the situation: "Full many a strange sights had the time-stained walls of the old synagogue looked down upon in their long and eventful life, yet none more strange than the one which unfolded there on that day. A Catholic cried out for the God of Israel. A pious Jew pleaded for Jesus the Christ" (222). Rudolph's forced assimilation to Christian culture has serious repercussions. Tormented and unhappy with his circumstances, his life teaches a lesson

to young American Jews: avoid causing this pain to your families and to yourself by assimilating too far. Compared to Wolfenstein's other stories in which Jewish women figure prominently, "A Monk from the Ghetto" places Rachel largely in the background as keeper of the hearth and of the broken heart. Rudolph's formal education takes place outside the home in a Christian school. Reb Nathan has him plug his ears during family prayers because he is trying to carry out the wishes of Rudolph's natural father, Reb Nathan's friend the priest. Yet perhaps Rachel teaches the children of the house the prayers Rudolph overhears and whispers to himself at the dinner table. Rudolph does not yearn for formal education, but for the emotional sustenance of Rachel's kitchen. Thus, the focus is not on Rachel's relationship to her husband, but the active role she takes in shaping Rudolph in the foster mother-son relationship.

After the confrontation between Reb Nathan and Rudolph in the synagogue, the story skips two years into the future when Rudolph takes the hood of the Franciscan order. More time passes in the Gass, and Reb Nathan and Rachel die and are buried in the local Jewish cemetery. On All Soul's Night, a "pale-faced monk appears in the town. He joins the people at mass and follows them to their pilgrimage to the cemetery…In the evening, when the speeding twilight has trailed her hazy robes through the roads and the streets, he walks through the Jews' quarter" (230). The local Jews recognize Rudolph and he visits his foster parents' graves. "He places no wreath nor candle upon them," the narrator reports, "nor does he seem to pray. He only kneels in silence. But when the gathering night has wrapped him safely within its hiding folds, he bows his head upon his hands and weeps" (230). Rudolph mourns the people whom he considers his cultural kin. Wolfenstein's inversion of the conversion story is a cautionary tale about what happens

when the forces of assimilation make a man leave the true faith of his heart. Rudolph wants to be Jewish, but because of his absent Catholic father, he must leave the Jewish foster family he loves. His emotional connection to them is real and deep-rooted. His "real" father is distant, but Reb Nathan and Rachel are close and intimate. Although Rudolph has adopted the external markers of Christian culture, Wolfenstein's message is that young Jews must have the spiritual fortitude to balance Jewish traditions and religion assimilation to Anglo-American culture. Her variation on the conversion story makes Jewishness as a racial category impotent, but Jewish religion is expansive enough to accept people of different races and cultures by letting them be spiritual kin. In that sense, she diffuses and writes against notions of a Jewish race by suggesting that spirituality, not racial feeling, is the key to keeping Jewish traditions alive. Rachel succors Rudolph and adopts him into her heart, overcoming Reb Nathan's attempts to change the mind of their foster son. Although Rudolph becomes a priest, superficially signifying that Reb Nathan kept his promise to the priest, Reb Nathan does not succeed in keeping the Jewish religion from infusing the boy's sensibility and spirit. Rachel wins the battle, and through her example, Wolfenstein shows that women are better family leaders. Rachel knows Rudolph best and anticipates his emotional struggle with his father's order that he be trained for the priesthood, but Wolfenstein shows the resiliency of Judaism in women's culture. By dramatizing the sadness of Rachel and Rudolph, Wolfenstein cautions young Jews, especially boys and men, about not being true to the religion in which they were raised. The depression that all of the characters feel sends a message about the consequences of failing to balance Jewish and Christian culture. Jews can assimilate to a point without betraying the tenets of Judaism. By dramatizing that

need for balance, Wolfenstein suggests that good Jewish morals are not in conflict with citizenship in a large, religiously-tolerant society like the United States.

As men, Peretz and Rudolph have, and struggle with, their public identities, but, according to Wolfenstein, the Jewish women do not. These men have opportunities outside the home that their mother and foster mother do not, and so they are in greater contact with non-Jews, and thus in greater peril. Nevertheless, Rachel and Frau Neuer have great influence over their sons. Indeed, the mother-son relationship is the formative one, so Wolfenstein offers a different paradigm from the typical husband-wife relationship. In these stories, the mother-to-child relationship is stronger and symbolizes the role of Jewish women in keeping traditions alive. Furthermore, Wolfenstein suggests women can act and influence their communities, even though husbands may try to isolate them and limit them to the home. The European Jewish women in these two conversion stories serve as beacons to American Jewish women, who were also struggling with the increasing secularization of their husbands and children. The emotional distress of Wolfenstein's mothers makes clear that mountains had to be moved to keep Jewish religion from disintegrating. Peretz's mother and Rudolph's foster mother were role models for American Jewish women, whose own sons and husbands were tempted by opportunities for work and wealth opportunities in American society. If women do not assume leadership, their children will forget Jewish traditions or abandon their families and the faith altogether.

In her story "Grandmother Speaks: Chayah," Wolfenstein shows her keen understanding of the difficulties young Jews face in a predominantly Christian society, but she rings yet another variation on this theme. In this story a young woman, not a

young man, contemplates leaving the ghetto for a more comfortable life in the Christian world. A Christian baron at first views Chayah, the young woman, as a sex object, and he enters into a wager with another man about who will conquer her. Writing from the point of view of the Gentiles, Wolfenstein purposefully deploys the stereotype of a "dusky-eyed seductress," and she makes her young Jewish girl willing to give up her faith to follow a rich lover into the Christian world. The baron's betrayal of Chayah dramatizes the need for great efforts to keep both boys and girls in the faith because young women are vulnerable to being lured away as well. At first glance, the story appears to condemn Jewish women's culture, which has failed to educate Chayah properly about the dangers of pursuing a Gentile. Chayah's extreme isolation from the ghetto after her betrayal reminds Jewish American women that women's culture must be strong enough to withstand temptation and their culture must modernize to respond to the strong desires of the young. Indeed, once again the Jewish men in the story are completely powerless. They want to please a rich Gentile, and only the Grandmother predicts the tragedy and fights to force the young woman to see the error of her ways.

Grandmother appears in two stories in Wolfenstein's second collection, A Renegade and Other Tales, and the old woman has no name but Grandmother. She is deeply suspicious of the newer generation of Jewish girls in the Gass and laments their materialism and ambition: "A world nowadays! They say it has grown better. Perhaps. To be sure, nowadays a girl has a silk dress at six years old, that we first got when we were married; and grown-ups they are at ten…And learning they have, that God have mercy! In my day a decent Jewish girl learned to read her prayer-book, to cook and knit and manage a household, but nowadays!" ("Grandmother Speaks: Chayah" 233).

According to Grandmother, the young people of the ghetto are not acting in accord with the tenets of their faith and are instead caught up in a materialist culture. She vigorously disapproves such changes, lamenting that girls want to teach science and learn about insects: "Natural is when a woman has a home, a husband, and children. But these are trifles nowadays. Rather would she stand in the school-room and teach, 'See Kinderlech [little ones], thus and thus is the manner in which a pinchbug scratches his ear, and know take this well to heart, that you all may grow up pious and learned men and women'" (234). Grandmother regrets that the older generation has not passed along the fundamental gender roles that created strong, faithful, humble Jewish women and families. Wolfenstein appears to agree with Grandmother's critique of modernization as corroding the bonds of young people to their faith. However, because young Jewish girls express a strong desire to leave the ghetto, Wolfenstein conversely suggests that Jewish womanhood needs to modernize to stop young Jews, male and female, from leaving the faith. Grandmother's old tactics have no effect on Chayah, and she continues in her pursuit of the rich and powerful Christian baron.

Chayah is seduced by the Gentile when she is caring for him after he is injured in battle, but he betrays her when his wife and child show up at Chayah's family home. Before this betrayal, the baron enthralls Chayah and her father: "Thou canst imagine Reb Lippman's excitement. No other Jew had an officer in his house, and moreover a baron! What ever there was that was fine and beautiful in the household, we carried into the best room, and made it ready for him, and in the evening he came. He was a handsome man of thirty-five or thereabouts; tall and built like an oak, with yellow hair and moustache, bold and jolly, yet with the nicest, politest manners" (244-245). Yet, a rumor fires

through the Gass that the baron participated in a wager among the soldiers that one of them would conquer the beautiful girl sexually: "One of them swore, she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen and that he meant to *conquer* her, -- and what the wretches mean by that everyone knows" (243). When Grandmother's nephew Mordeche tells her of the Gentile's wager, she shows him into Reb Lippman's parlor and his face blanches "white as chalk when he saw the baron. 'Tis he who make the wager,' he said" (246). The situation is complicated because the Jews of the Gass do not want to appear ungratious to their Gentile guests. As Wolfenstein as narrator explains to her readers, "You people who are born in America cannot imagine how it is over there. An insult to a baron, an officer! For less than that whole Jewish communities have been plundered and murdered…What could we do? Nothing at all" (246-247). Directly addressing her American readers, she reveals to them the horrors of anti-Jewish prejudice far beyond what exists in America and positions herself as an insider to Jewish life. Interrupting her story in this curious way also emphasizes for her audience both the difficulties of Jewish life in Europe and the relatively trouble-free life for Jews in America. She might be accusing her Jewish American audience of complacency, but she reminds readers, both Jewish and Christian, why European Jews fled to America in the first place and warns them about the dangers of prejudice.

Chayah falls in love with the baron, braving the battlefield to bring him back to the ghetto and becoming openly affectionate as she cares for him, Grandmother duly notices: "She who had always been so shy of showing her feelings, now caressed and fondled him openly. She was a changed being" (254). The baron changes as well, but from guilt: "He was no longer bold and jolly, but humble and sad. It was most strange to

behold. He talked all the time about how he would repay everything we did, and every day he begged the doctor to let him go" (254). When the baron's wife appears at Chayah's home, she implies that Chayah is not the first woman he has seduced: "I see I am intruding. We received word that you were dying. Your mother thought that you might wish to see your wife and child. I see, however, that you are quite well, since you are at your usual business of deceiving women" (255). Chayah breaks down physically and mentally, becoming as "shrunken and haggard…[as] a woman of fifty" (257). Chayah learns the lesson about the dangers of modern ways at great cost, and Grandmother is filled with sadness. "Woe is me!" she laments, "It was a wretched business. But so it goes when children will know better than their elders. She might have been a happy woman" (258). Grandmother's lament at the story's conclusion also speaks to her failure as well. Because she is set in her ways, she cannot protect the younger generation from the ill effects of assimilation or betrayal by non-Jews. Women like Grandmother need to adapt and change to keep Jewish culture alive and relevant in the early 20th century, when debates about Jew's fitness for U.S. citizenship peaked. The freedom that young American Jews have relative to their European counterparts underscores Wolfenstein's central message: Jewish women must modernize in ways that do not conflict with Jewish traditions in order to adopt new circumstances in the U.S. Writing about the lives of European Jews subject to the horrors of the pogrom and lack of economic and social security, Wolfenstein urges American Jews, both men and women, to take heart and to embrace religious tolerance in a democratic society in order to keep Judaism relevant for the young.

Chayah endangers her status as a traditional Jewish woman by actively pursuing a man outside her faith. Before she meets the baron, her contact with non-Jews is limited. His blonde hair and athletic build make him exotic and seductive: never having met such a man before, she is enthralled. Through Chayah's story, Wolfenstein cautions American Jewish girls against interactions with non-Jewish men, who may seem interesting and sincere, but are actually rotten and untrustworthy. Wolfenstein is also keenly aware, however, that America is an open society and that contact between Jews and non-Jews is inevitable, even routine. She thus urges young Jewish women in America to be faithful to their families and traditions. Although Chayah dreams of marrying the baron, his betrayal thwarts her desire to marry any man, Jew or Gentile. The central relationship in the story is between the Grandmother and Chayah, and Chayah's disastrous fall dramatizes the need for the older generation to guide the younger to keep Jewish traditions alive. The story implies that Chayah would make an excellent wife and bearer of tradition, but because she tried to break away from that cultural role, she ends up an exiled old maid. In Wolfenstein's story, marriage becomes complicated when the heart, rather than logic or faith in traditional marriage practices, prevails. Indeed, Chayah's youthful rebelliousness is a symptom of the pressures the young face to assimilate, and young American Jews must heed the warning. Wolfenstein's story also shows that Jewish women's culture needs an upgrade. Chayah's fantasies of marrying the baron allow her to imagine herself in the Christian world beyond the ghetto. By caring for him in the house, she tests what it would feel like to marry an important Gentile. Chayah's grandmother's suspicions are confirmed, however, and Chayah becomes an outcast from the ghetto, where she cannot function as a wife or as a transmitter of Jewish traditions.

As a single woman, Chayah must earn the right to be a productive part of the community again. Her fantasies of marriage to the baron allow her to imagine herself out of the poverty of the ghetto and into a life of ease, for the baron is wealthy. Grandmother sees it differently and emphasizes emotional wealth in religious tradition. In the end, although to Chayah's dismay, Grandmother is right.

Wolfenstein's family emigrated from Central Europe to the U.S. in the 1870s, making her a part of a broader Jewish community concerned about preserving Jewish tradition and culture. Jews of this period tried to balance the obligations of U.S. citizenship with their most treasured traditions and were keenly aware that Anglo-American society viewed Jews as unwilling to take on such obligations. In his study of Jewish American identity in the late 19th and early Progressive Era, Eric L. Goldstein suggests that the acculturated Jews of the mid 19th century were concerned about how American society viewed their capability and worthiness for Americanization and citizenship: "Before that decade [the 1870s] Jews preferred to describe themselves in ways that further unimpeded acculturation into American life. During the nineteenth century, Jews in the United States – largely immigrants from Central Europe – enjoyed a level of inclusion unmatched at that time in any other setting…Under these circumstances, Jews felt themselves to be an integral part of American society and adopted American ways with zeal" (12). Compared to later immigrants, Jews of the midcentury responded to their sense of being conspicuous by modifying traditions in order to fit in. The European Jewish women in Wolfenstein's stories do not alter their traditions at all, but mothers are keenly aware that they have failed, in some cases, to keep their children in the community. Although not arguing for American Jews to adopt

a hyphenated identity, Wolfenstein's fiction does suggest that, in the face of the forces of assimilation, Jewish women must modernize the culture so that the religion can continue to be relevant in their children's lives. While her female characters do not express a desire to adapt to the dominant culture by sacrificing any religious tenets, they do seem to understand that being a good Jew does not exclude them from citizenship in a predominantly Christian society. By representing the lives of European Jews who are excluded from citizenship in their countries of residence, the Jews are not allowed to be citizens, Wolfenstein suggests that Americanized Jews must not squander the chance to become citizens and thus claim the law's protection. Because, as she takes pains to make clear, Jews in America are not persecuted like Jews in Europe, a strong religious identity and recommitment to Jewish faith does not cancel out citizenship in a religiously tolerant society.

Balancing fitting into the dominant culture and preserving Jewish religious traditions was difficult. In the early 19th century the discussion about the possibility of Jews' fitness for citizenship and membership in American society often pivoted on race and gender. Some in the Jewish community downplayed the racialized conception of Jewish heritage. Goldstein tracks the early ambivalence of racial self-identity from the acculturated early and mid 19th century Jews to the Progressive Era Jews. He observes that "despite the speed with which Jewish immigrants from Central Europe adapted to American customs, manners, and mores…these changes did not reflect a thorough integration of Jews into the intimate social circles of their non-Jewish neighbors" (12). Despite the ardent efforts of the mid 19th century Jews to Americanize, non-Jews resisted accepting them. Jewish women had little contact with non-Jews because their husbands

represented them in public life. Certainly, Jews had contact with other Jews, but the world beyond Jewish neighborhoods was denied them. When they married Jewish men, they were circumscribed within the Jewish community as defined by Jewish men. Goldstein notes that "…in general, before the 1870s Jewish immigrants had little extensive social interaction with non-Jews, and Jewish immigrant women had almost none" (13). Jewish women were relegated to the home and considered the bearers and transmitters of Jewish domestic and religious culture. The marriage relationship insulated them and kept them from engaging with the Christian world. For most of the 19th century, the Jewish American woman carried out her idealized duties in relation to her children and her husband. The home was the physical center of her world and her position in the family was circumscribed by Jewish law. In her study of Jewish American women writers in the 19th century, Diane Lichtenstein suggests that the paradigm for Jewish womanhood, the Mother in Israel, had commonality with the Victorian notion of womanhood. Both ideologies limited the sphere of influence to the home and domestic duties. But the Mother in Israel was also a legal identity for Jewish women. "The appellation Mother in Israel," Lichtenstein suggests, "described the model 'Jewess,' wife, mother, daughter who dedicated herself to the well-being of her family and, through the family, the Jewish nation" (24). As illuminated in Litchtenstein's study, Jewish womanhood defined as Mother in Israel describes an institutional phenomenon (24). Marriage was central to the lives of all Jews, not just Jewish women. It was an obligation that kept the Jewish traditions alive but it was also a legal identity that separated the sexes. Jewish men were allowed to study and it was the Jewish wife's duty to make the home environment conducive to such activity and to allow him a peaceful place to focus

on religious texts. As the century progressed and Jewish American women expressed a desire for more integration into American society, Jewish men actively prevented them from having contact with non-Jews. Goldstein suggests that Jewish men "responded by casting women's perceived obligations in racial terms, hoping to reinforce gender roles that helped mitigate the effects of their own incursions into the non-Jewish world" (22). By appealing to race, Jewish men sought to further isolate Jewish women from Anglo-American society. Wolfenstein also appeals to race in her fiction, but her female characters succeed in keeping families together by usurping traditional male authority rather than being subject to it. In "A Monk from the Ghetto," by portraying a Christian boy who wants to be a Jew, Wolfenstein uncouples Jewishness from race to suggest that a concept of a Jewish race fails to encompass Judaism as a faith and spiritual practice. Indeed, as a religion Judaism can accommodate people of all races, and Jewish women's work to inculcate Jewish values makes their faith open. Her Jewish women do not operate from within the marriage relationship and thus on the fringes of society, whether Jewish or Christian; instead, they are at the heart of it.

Racialized and gendered language describing the role of Jewish women as keepers of tradition appeared in popular magazines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From The Ladies Home Journal to the American Jewess, discussion about Jewish women's role took place in a public forum. In "The Jewess in Authorship" in October 1892 The Ladies Home Journal, Abraham Isaacs suggests that Jewish women must remain faithful to the tenets of ancestral tradition even as they advance in society: "Her womanhood and womanliness will guide her right, and that the religious instincts of the Jewess are innate, and her domestic qualities strong, one may expect her to champion

all that is pure, sweet, and wholesome. She will be enthusiastic and resolute, but however positive her convictions, she will not be less feminine in their utterance. Her ideals will be those of her age, and her inspiration the never-ending, ever-varying drama of humanity" (17). By calling such impulses "innate instincts," Isaacs racializes and genders them as inherited, and he identifies women's role in the home as keepers of the Jewish faith and culture as an inescapable duty. By writing about how the possibility of living in the mainstream culture tempts young Jewish women as well as men, Wolfenstein suggests that narrow conceptions of race and gender such as promoted by Isaacs might force young Jews away from their faith and communities. In her fiction, Wolfenstein also stresses the need for Jewish unity in the face of adversity, but she suggests that neither race nor gender should define Jewishness. Thus, Wolfenstein wrote against the racialization of Judaism, depicting a more expansive religion that could include characters like Rudolph and show young Jewish women, not just men, struggling with a desire to assimilate to the dominant culture. Analogously, American Jewish women faced the same battle on the cultural front, but because they live in a religiously tolerant society, they could actually succeed in the struggle.

Many American rabbis promoted a racialized conception of Jewish identity. Gustave Gottheil, a prominent Reform Rabbi, emphasized, as did Isaacs, a female Jewish culture based on an inherited racial identity. Of the "genus Jewess" Gottheil writes, "Simplicity of manners, modesty, restriction of authority to the proper limits, economy, cheerfulness, piety, charity, chastity, much in Oriental fashion (e.g. she may not let a stranger see a single hair of her 'crown of glory'); watchfulness lest her sanctuary be defiled by things unlawful; training of her children in the ways they should go…Such are

briefly, the materials out of which the Rabbinical ideal of the Jewess has been gradually developed" (21). The phrase "genus Jewess" suggests that Jewish women are a distinct species, and by depicting the Jewess as the guardian of traditional culture, he defines Jewish womanhood in terms of duty to the Jewish "race." The "genus Jew" would be defined differently, not being restricted in the same way as the Jewish woman living in his home. Ideologues depicted Jewish women as ineffective outside the home, but in reality, many late 19th and early 20th century Jewish women toiled in sweatshops to help the support of their families. As a result, Jewish women did double duty as domestics and laborers in their family homes and as breadwinners outside the home.

Other articles in the American Jewess depicted Jews as a race and promoted a strong, united family as essential to the preservation of the race. The anonymous author of "Race Characteristics" reports a remark made to her by a non-Jewish acquaintance interested in Jewish families: "What I particularly admire in your people is the close and beautiful relation existing between those of the same blood; the devotion of husband to wife, of parents to children, and children to parents" (578). Asked how the Jewish race accounts for such closeness and affection in families, the author replies, "There is a beautiful word of four letters called 'Duty.' This word regulated many a beautiful relationship in life. To my mind 'Jewess' and 'Duty' are synonymous" (578). Duty is what defines the Mother in Israel model for Jewish women. She must not only keep her traditions alive she must protect the Jewish nation through the institution of marriage and motherhood. The Jewess must hold tightly to her family and her faith and be heartened that her life will be a good and fruitful one. Contrary to the rabbinical ideal of Jewish women limited to the domestic sphere, the article also suggests that Jewish women could

step out of the domestic sphere and engage in political and social interests. In "Grandmother Speaks: Chayah," Chayah does not understand that "duty" links Jewish women to their families, putting her duty to care for the baron above her family. Chayah is willing to sacrifice her Jewish identity in order to escape poverty, even though she might face prejudice outside the ghetto. Chayah clearly does not feel circumscribed by race loyalty; instead she seeks escape through marriage outside the faith. The baron, however, clearly sees her as a racialized sex object. Race is not in the forefront of the minds of Wolfenstein's young Jewish characters, and Wolfenstein seems to suggest that older Jewish women needed to meet young Jews on their own ground. The older generation needed to understand that racialized language would not sway younger generations. Older women like the Grandmother were out-moded and ineffective, and their attempts to limit young Jews' contact with Christian society backfire. Through Grandmother, Wolfenstein suggests that Jewish women needed to modernize Jewish womanhood in order to keep Jewish children from leaving the faith. Because Jewish men have no power to stop their children from over-assimilating, Jewish women must adjust and meet the young Jews at their own precarious position between two worlds.

There were precedents in American Jewish history for women stepping out from the kitchen to take a public role in the Jewish community. Rebecca Gratz, a mid 19th century Philadelphia Jew whose family were founding members of the Mikveh Israel synagogue, transformed the Jewish woman's role as educator of children into a public one by helping to found and support institutions such as orphanages and schools. Jewish women could not teach the Talmud, but they could teach simple prayers. The rabbinic ideal of Jewish womanhood still limited Jewish women's interaction with Anglo-

American society and limited their influence outside the home. In her study of the image of Jewish women in Jewish American literature throughout the 20th century, Sylvia Barak Fishman suggests that while strong images of Jewish women such as Rebecca, Deborah, and Esther appear in the Bible, many rabbinic interpretations of scripture downplayed their independent, aggressive defense of Judaism. This more conservative interpretation of Jewish womanhood severely limited the possibilities for public action by women. As Fishman explains, "Within the hostile external environments of more Diasporic cultures, the home became crucial for the transmission and continuation of Jewish culture; female devotion to family and the Jewish household was necessary to help guarantee the survival of the Jewish people" (7). Biblical heroines like Rebecca, Deborah, and Esther are quintessential examples of Women of Valor, powerful images of Jewish womanhood that, Fishman explains, defy the limitations of the rabbinic codification of Jewish women's role in society (7). In Anglo-American society Jewish women were largely limited in their sphere of influence, but Wolfenstein's European Jewish women are not. In some of her stories, her female characters are Women of Valor and operate independently of men to change their children and their communities. In depicting these powerful women, Wolfenstein uncouples the limitations of gender from effective citizenship. As Fishman's study suggests, positive images of Jewish women appear in a century's worth of Jewish American fiction. Some problematic stereotypes persisted in literature, such as the overbearing Jewish mother and the delicate and spoiled Jewish American princess (Fishman 26-30), but, the Woman of Valor served as a strong counter-image to the Rabbinic ideal of Jewish womanhood.

Wolfenstein's character best embodying the Jewish woman as Woman of Valor is Maryam, a widowed grandmother and village elder and the main female character in Wolfenstein's collection of short stories, Idyls of the Gass (1901). Maryam uses her wits to operate in a Christian society and to help inhabitants of the Gass, and especially the grandson she is raising, maintain Jewish traditions. She does so without a husband, and she often succeeds in preserving traditional Jewish culture, even though she steps outside the bounds of traditional Jewish womanhood. As a Woman of Valor, she defends and is a leader in her community. She makes her living and pays for the religious schooling of her grandson, Shimmele, by baking and cooking for the inhabitants of the Gass. Jewish tradition did not allow women to be intellectuals and interpreters of the law, but Maryam's community considers her to be as adept at interpreting Jewish law as a rabbi, and they often call upon her in his absence. Because no husband controls her behavior or limits her access to the world outside the home, she operates with particular freedom. The main relationship in Wolfenstein's stories about Maryam are male-female, namely Maryam to her grandson, but she does not defer to him and he does not try to control her. It is a different paradigm from the rabbinic ideal of Mother in Israel that limited Jewish women's influence to the home. Maryam is a powerful guide in several of the stories, including "Shimmele Chooses a Profession," "The Scoffer," and "The Backstub."

"Shimmele Chooses a Profession" begins with a lament about the lack of opportunity afforded people of the Gass: "For twenty times one hundred years Israel was barred out of every honorable trade and calling" (87). Indeed, such was the economic situation of Central Europe before the emancipation of the Jews in 1848, which drove many to America's shores in search of better employment opportunities.[12] In the Gass, if

a boy showed the ambition to become a doctor, professor, or lawyer, parents worried "for too often, alas, the price of advancement in the professions was apostasy" (89). In Central Europe Jews were barred from professions, and their parents feared that if they emigrated in order to pursue these professions, they would be lured away from their faith. European Jewish men, like American Jewish men, sought to balance assimilation and maintenance of Jewish tradition. Wolfenstein's story points to the analogous pressures in Europe and America. Maryam's brother succumbs to the pressure of the dominant culture when he chooses a business career over becoming a rabbi. Thus the family heritage of religious learning becomes Maryam's, and she is known as "a whole *maggid* (scholar and preacher)" (90). Few women in the Gass have the religious education that Maryam has. Her education makes her a good mother for children who will grow up in the faith, but as a woman Maryam cannot aspire to a career as a religious leader. Instead, she looks for creative ways to use her learning to help her community: "There were people who valued her word as highly as they did the rabbi's…Maryam's good clear sense discerned many distinctions between religious observances based upon tradition of the Law and those whose tradition was mere superstition" (92-93). Wolfenstein creates an empowered creative woman without a husband who learns to adapt to her surroundings. Maryam lets her instinct guide her sense of justice toward the needed in the community, and she also encourages a healthy skepticism toward Jewish religion in her grandson. She embodies the strength of Jewish women who resist assimilation into the dominant culture and create robust and pious Jewish families. She is also a symbol of how Jewish women must adjust to the changing times to keep the young in the religion. European Jews, much like American Jews, live in segregated communities within

Christian nations. Maryam, and women like her in Wolfenstein's stories, do not cling to land to unite the Jewish people, but tradition. Wherever Jewish people live, they face the competing forces of assimilation and maintenance of Jewish tradition. In the context of "Shimmele," Jewish citizenship is not possible. Nevertheless, Wolfenstein presents an example of Jewish perseverance in a predominantly Christian society and, by implication, suggests that emancipated Jews can achieve citizenship in America.

Maryam provides a stop-gap for the younger generations in the Gass, who are tempted by assimilation. She is keenly aware of how to negotiate the Christian world while still protecting Jewish tradition, presenting American Jewish women with a role model. Although American Jewish women do not face the same violent anti-Semitism that Maryam faces at the end of Idyls of the Gass, Wolfenstein suggests that American Jews face equally dangerous threats. Wolfenstein urges American Jewish women to take advantage of the peace in their communities to create good pious Jewish people. The lack of violence in America allows American Jews to live according to their principles, while still benefitting from the nation's religious tolerance. At the end of "Shimmele Chooses a Profession," Maryam's grandson decides to become a rabbi, not because he has no other choice, but because Maryam, as a Jewish woman who operates independently to minister to her own flock of Jews, inspires him to imitate her example.

In "The Scoffer" Maryam encourages Shimmele's rebellion and skepticism about Judaism. Shimmele, who opens the schul every morning before prayers, does not believe that the spirits of the dead inhabit the schul in the early morning hours. He is supposed to knock before he enters so that the spirits are not surprised and do not strike him blind. Shimmele asks many religious people in the Gass about the spirits and decides to test the

theory. When he is not struck blink after entering without knocking, he tells his grandmother and "a smile rippled over Maryam's soft cheeks, up to the shores of her clear gray eyes, where it broke into a twinkle" (81). At the end of the story, she explains to him that it is best to keep the event secret from the Gass so as not to trouble their faith: "Shimmele, *thou* knowest it, and *I* knowest it, and it is well…but why need *they* know it?" (81). Maryam proves that she has a keen understanding of what the people of the Gass need in order to remain faithful, and she adapts to keep the religion relevant. If they need such things as spirits of the dead in the schul, she is willing to perpetuate a little white lie to protect them in their belief and keep the community unified. As in the conversion stories, the most important male-female relationship is not marriage, but mother to son or, as in this case, grandmother to grandson. The generations of women who pass down traditions are key to these relationships. Through Shimmele, Wolfenstein shows Jews in America how to survive skepticism and tests of faith. Shimmele's curiosity and doubt are typical of young Jews everywhere, and Wolfenstein suggests that a little bit of common sense can keep the Jewish community in America together in the same way that Maryam works to not disturb the Gass's inhabitants with what she considers to be minor details.

In the story "The Backstub" Maryam works her particular brand of justice. Her work outside the home meting out justice makes her a compelling version of the Woman of Valor who vigorously defends the faith rather than being a passive domestic woman. Maryam believes that charitable institutions are a non-negotiable aspect of Judaism. As the narrator explains, "Maryam was a socialist, a protestant by nature, she chafed at the slow progress of the world toward Messianic perfection. Yet there was one institution in

the Gass that pleased her, for it was based on her precept. This was the Burial Society" (109). By describing her admirable Jewish woman as "socialist," Wolfenstein implicitly engaged in political discussions of the day, in which proponents of socialism critiqued American capitalism. Maryam is a socialist because she believes that all human beings deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, that all people bear a solemn responsibility to care for one another, and that the government must treat all people equally. Maryam is not a "protestant" in a religious sense, but in a secular one: she is one who protests, who chafes under some of the practices of the Gass. The Burial Society, however, fits her "socialist" ideology, and supporting it is her way of protesting the disintegration of the threads of faith in the Gass, where people are failing to act on their religious faith by helping one another. The Burial Society provides financial assistance to families who cannot afford to bury a family member. The society sends the bereaved family two locked boxes, one with money in it and the other empty. The family then transfers money to the empty box and either takes money it needs, adds to the sum, or leaves it intact. When the locked boxes are returned to the Burial Society, the financial situation of an individual family remains a secret. Maryam sees this system as the epitome of progress in Jewish tradition and employs her own version of it to administer benevolent justice via her work in the community.

In the story, every Sabbath the Gass inhabitants come to her house, where she cooks their dinners in great pots sealed with flour and water. In this way Maryam cannot be sure of the contents, but she can make a good guess based on weight: "These [the Shalet pots] were brought to her Friday afternoon, tightly covered and hermetically sealed with paste made of flour and water, yet Maryam had but to take one in her hands,

and she knew what it contained" (107). Her grandson is amazed with her ability and marvels at her keen sense of the economic status of the Gass inhabitants: "When she could, Maryam helped out a deficiency, but this was connected with great care, and involved an intricate system of strategy, for her troubles were particular ones" (109). Maryam employs a variation of the Burial Society system to provide food and clothing to the poor. Through Maryam, Wolfenstein suggests that the same principles should be translated into American Jewish life. Even as Jewish women are tasked with preserving their race, the character of Maryam shows that women can care for their communities in a variety of ways, including by exercising political and social influence. Wolfenstein holds up Maryam, a Woman of Valor, as an example for American Jewish women to imitate. Maryam does not need a man to sanction her work – her charitable work comes from her own moral compass and desire to better the lives of the people of the Gass. Similarly, American Jewish women should strive to better their own communities, adapt to changing times to keep Judaism relevant. In this way, Wolfenstein uncouples women from the marriage relationship to show how they can work independently on behalf of their communities' interests.

Although most of Wolfenstein's stories are about independent Jewish women, she does take up the subject of marriage in two stories, "Dovid and Resel" and "Babette." The former depicts a successful marriage match in which the partners are equal, while the latter examines the prejudice against unmarried Jewish women. These stories suggest that Jewish marriage practices have modernized enough to be acceptable in a large democratic society like America. In particular, in these stories Wolfenstein seeks to reconcile Jewish tradition with an Americanized notion of companionate marriage.

On the surface, "Dovid and Resel" is about a successful match brokered between two fathers who exaggerate the better qualities of their children in order to make a favorable financial agreement. In the comical negotiations, each father in turn plays the fool, wanting to appear as though he is being duped by the other to suggest that one of the other was getting the better deal. Both fathers want a good match, but culture also complicates the betrothal. Resel is a city girl and Dovid is a country boy, but the narrator is careful to note that although a bumpkin, "the Gass already knew that his stiff collars worry him, but beyond that he is cultured, for not only does he carry a white handkerchief, but he uses it" (57). Wolfenstein pokes fun at the Gass inhabitants, who focus on such seemingly insignificant markers of culture as handkerchiefs. Culture is also important to Resel, however, and after they are married, Resel proves to be a disaster in the kitchen and is resentful of Dovid's mother, who implies that Resel does not know how to cook like a good wife. Resel is angry at this insinuation about her lack of preparation for wifely duties: "I should just like to see one of *them* in town. What do *they* know of culture? Can any one of them set a table that the knives and forks stand upright together and the napkins are folded into hats?" (65). Wolfenstein emphasizes the conflicts about these details to make it clear that Resel and Dovid are focusing on the wrong things, that the marriage relationship is not defined by material things. Resel keeps trying in the kitchen, making a horrible soup, which Dovid eats without complaint. Nevertheless, Resel tortures herself and Wolfenstein describes the change in her attitude as a thawing of the heart: "Thus, full of self-reproach and penitence until the winter in her heart was melted away, and in its place bloomed a new and joyous springtime" (69). Resel doesn't learn to be a better cook so much as she learns what it means to be a part of

a companionate marriage. Dovid doesn't scold his wife about the soup, but he is concerned that she has misinterpreted his response. He tries to correct the misunderstanding by bringing her flowers and "standing in the door-way, self-conscious and awkward as a school-boy on exhibition day" (73). Indeed, the soup incident is a test for both of them. Resel broaches the subject of the scorched soup and Dovid tells her, "I l – I like soup when it's burnt" (74). Then Resel "flung herself, laughing and sobbing, on her husband's neck. Dovid strained her close to his heart. Then he lifted her moist, glowing face, and for the first time kissed his wife upon the lips" (74). While Dovid does not match Resel's image of the perfect suitor, he is the perfect husband, who does not try to limit or control his wife. Although arranged according to traditional Jewish practices, their marriage proves to be more than a transaction. It succeeds because of the mutuality of feeling between Dovid and Resel. Their companionate marriage shows how Jewish culture can accommodate modern sensibilities and how Jews have advanced enough to be productive members of the American polity. By depicting this European Jewish heritage, Wolfenstein suggests to her readers that Jews have successfully adopted companionate marriage and thus can accommodate themselves to America's democratic society. By coupling companionate marriage with traditional Jewish marriage customs in "Dovid and Resel," Wolfenstein provides a model for adapting to Christian-American society while retaining essential Jewishness.

In "Babette," the title character is not married because a suitor failed to marry her as promised. Babette's marital status severely compromises her social position in her small European Jewish community. The story sharply criticizes this community for its harsh treatment of an unmarried woman and the little humiliations it subjects her to.

Babette, elderly and simple-minded, lives in a charity house, where she wishes and prays for the husband that never comes. The community mocks her relentlessly. In this fictional Jewish community, a husband subsumes a woman's position and identity, making an unmarried woman, as the narrator suggests, "a joke" (289). Abandoned by her community, Babette "is like a stray leaf of a forgotten book which one might find on the highway" (293). The reader learns how Babette was abandoned and cheated out of a dowry by a lover who failed to fulfill his promise to marry her. The story is sad and her death is poignant. Because her heartache is so great, "Nature, more merciful than Man, closed the eyes of Babette's soul and it fell asleep, and began to dream the fair dream that she was young and beautiful and beloved of a good man whose wife she was to be" (305). Babette cannot see herself except in relation to a husband, but the reader understands that she is at last at peace, no longer tormented by the villagers. For Jewish women at the turn of the 20th century, marriage was the formative relationship, and without it, Wolfenstein's story suggests, they risked ridicule and abandonment. Lichtenstein's study takes on the subject of single Jewish American women and shows how the Jewish community sought to isolate them. "Because she did not enjoy many rights under Jewish law" Lichtenstein writes, "a woman without a father or a husband was almost invisible. Legally, religiously, economically, and socially, she needed a man for and through whom she could perform her duties…It is not surprising, then, that marriage remained the clear purpose in life for female Jewish youth" (25). However, Wolfenstein does not condemn single women. Instead, she chastises the townspeople for their bad behavior towards unmarried women. When she dies, Babette is nearly angelic in her delusion, and the readers understand that her fantasies were a means for surviving

social discrimination. Nevertheless, the story also suggests that Jewish rituals, including marriage, are important to maintaining harmony in Jewish communities. Babette cannot be a teacher and keeper of Jewish traditions because she is not married and thus has no husband or children. She is excluded from the community precisely because she cannot uphold traditions. In her study of Jewish women and assimilation in the late 19th and early 20th century, Paula Hyman suggests that women's role in the home was to protect Jewish traditions: "This ideology called upon women to create a peaceful domestic environment free from the stresses of the larger society and devoted to the preservation and transmission of traditional morality, while men assumed the burden of earning a living and governing society. Religion fell naturally within women's domain, for it drew upon emotion to disseminate morality and social order" (25). As Mothers in Israel Jewish women were supposed to create good, faithful Jews. As an unmarried woman, Babette cannot perform this role. Although the role of Jewish mother gave women a kind of power, Wolfenstein shows the other side of the coin, the unmarried Jewish woman banished to the charity house. Thus, Wolfenstein strongly rebukes the narrow-mindedness of some Jews about the value of Jewish women outside the marriage relationship and argues for allowing unmarried women to become equal and effective members of the Jewish community.

The women in Wolfenstein's stories are strong and willful. The Jewish community is built on their worthy shoulders, and they bear the cares of the Gass. They hold the community together in creative ways and must adapt to the changing times to keep the young from falling away from the religion. Wolfenstein's portraits of European Jewish women set a standard for Jewish American women to emulate. For the Jewish

community to survive in America, Wolfenstein argues, future generations must be schooled by the women folk, and in the face of a large Christian society like America, this was a daunting charge.

In the debates about Jewish women's sphere of influence and of the Jew's fitness for American citizenship, Wolfenstein stands a part. Her stories about religious European Jews argue against religious and cultural assimilation in America, but they still embrace the potential of American citizenship for Jews. She offers a different paradigm than the one promised on the base of the Statue of Liberty. Characters like Maryam play strong leading roles and are not relegated to the background sphere of influence. Wolfenstein presents Jewish males as the weaker gender as they are seduced by the Christian society that surrounds them to convert or to assimilate in order to gain material advantages denied to Jews in the European ghettos. Wolfenstein's stories reject the concept of a hyphenated ethnic identity in America. There are no hyphens in Wolfenstein's stories, which show that being a "good Jew" is not incompatible with the obligations and benefits that citizenship confers in the religiously tolerant United States.

CHAPTER 3

THE WOMEN OF CHINATOWN: THE FICTION OF SUI SIN FAR DURING THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ERA

The orientation of one of the most provocative symbols of the promise of membership in American society signifies the institutionalized exclusion of Chinese immigrants in the late 19th century and into the 20th century. The Statue of Liberty faces east and her back is to the west, symbolically rejecting, and in the case of Chinese immigrants, excluding immigrants from the Pacific from belonging in the American community. Critics of Chinese immigration reasoned that the Chinese were not eligible for U.S. citizenship because as unmarried men and sojourners, they sent most of their wages back to China and were clannish and self-goverened (Coolidge 402). The first paragraph of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 states that Chinese immigration should be stopped because Chinese workers "endanger the good order of certain localities," meaning that their willingness to work for lower wages caused them to displace poor white laborers ("Preamble" Chinese Exclusion Act). Even before they were excluded from immigration, Chinese were not allowed to become American citizens because they were not considered "white." Section 14 of the Chinese Exclusion Act highlighted and reinforced this interpretation of the naturalization law: "That hereafter no State court or court of the United States shall admit Chinese to citizenship; and all laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed" (Chinese Exclusion Act Section 14). Race and culture were conflated in this exclusion of Chinese from U.S. citizenship. "Not white" meant that

Chinese were racially distinct, but also that they were unwilling to adopt the tenets of Anglo-American culture, such as the English language, allegiance to American government, and the establishment of nuclear families. Indeed, the main criticism of Chinese immigrants was that their communities in the U.S. were insular. In 1898, the Supreme Court ruled in the landmark case U.S. v Wong Kim Ark that the Fourteenth Amendment gives birthright citizenship to those born in the U.S. even if their parents were ineligible for citizenship.[13] Thus, children born on American soil to Chinese immigrants were birthright citizens, even though their parents could not become citizens through naturalization or marriage. Policies limiting access to citizenship through marriage seemed designed to discourage the production of new Chinese-American citizens.

For Chinese women, the exclusion laws not only prevented them from becoming U.S. citizens, but also from establishing or reuniting families. In the 19th century, Chinese women were excluded from immigrating based on the assumption that most were prostitutes and slaves. Policy makers considered Chinese women ineligible for immigration or citizenship because they were deemed weak and easily corrupted by immoral Chinese men who lived in a bachelor immigrant culture (Seward 269). Assumed to be prostitutes and lacking documentation of their marriages, many Chinese women could not join their husbands and reunite their families. By preventing the establishment of permanent Chinese families, the Exclusion Act ironically reinforced the stereotype of Chinese men as clannish, sojourning bachelors who were unwilling to Americanize. Creators of the Exclusion Act provided no opportunities for Chinese to Americanize, nor did they imagine that upstanding, moral Chinese people could become

productive U.S. citizens. Also, legislators did not imagine that a multicultural society could be the answer to their questions about the stability of American society and the nuclear family. As Molly Crumpton Winter argues, multiculturalism would have allowed greater autonomy for citizens of all races and cultures and validated the true democracy and equality (138).

All Chinese immigrants were barred from naturalization as individuals, but Chinese women were doubly barred from citizenship, whether they married an American citizen or a Chinese national. Marriage determined citizenship for both Chinese immigrant and Anglo-American women. As Nancy Cott observes in her study of marriage and citizenship, the law excluded immigrant women well into the 20th century. Cott writes: "The earliest federal legislation directly linking the citizenship of immigrants to marriage required very little debate, although it reversed a long-standing tradition. It was an act of Congress in 1855, declaring a woman of any origin or nationality became a citizen upon marrying an American man, so long as she met naturalization requirements. That meant she had to be a 'free white person' in accord with the naturalization statue of 1790" (132). Since they were not white, nor, according to Anglo-American assumptions about the status of women in Chinese society, free, female Chinese immigrants were relegated to the far margins of American society.

Edith Maude Eaton, who later used her family nickname Sui Sin Far as her pen name, was born in 1865 in England to a Chinese mother and a white, British father. The family emigrated from Britain to Canada while she was a child, where they struggled financially. Poverty was not the only obstacle the Eaton family confronted in Canada; the children also struggled with their mixed racial and cultural status and endured ill-

treatment from whites. The Eaton children pitched in to help the family support itself, with Sui Sin Far pedaling homemade lace and her father's paintings door to door. In the early years of the 20th century, Sui Sin Far traveled to the Western U.S. to write about the Chinatowns there. She was able to easily move between Canada and the U.S. because to most observers she did not appear to be Chinese. After spending significant time in the Chinatowns on the Pacific coast, she began writing stories about the people who lived there, and especially the trials faced by Chinese wives. In her stories, she sought to illuminate the consequences of Americanization for Chinese wives and their families.

Chinese immigrant women's lives in America were difficult. Many studies of the exclusion era suggest that the exclusion laws were unjust and inconsistently interpreted and caused whites to act deplorably against Chinese immigrants (Chan 112, Lee 82, Ling and White Parks 15, Pfaelzer 28). Chinese women faced persecution from within and without: Chinese men sometimes forced them into prostitution, and Anglo-Americans sometimes burned their homes. They thus lived an uneasy life, never knowing what trouble they might encounter. The isolation of Chinatown allowed some the space and opportunity to raise their children according to Chinese tradition, but the dominant culture inevitably infiltrated their lives. Well-meaning social workers made the women of Chinatown their pet projects, encouraging them to Americanize and initiating them into the tenets of American womanhood. This alliance between Anglo and Chinese American women was uneasy. Excluded from citizenship, Chinese women did not value such "education" about American culture. Perhaps women social workers aim to better the lives of American-born Chinese children, who were citizens, but in her fictions about exclusion-era families, some of which feature white women social and missionary

workers, Sui Sin Far suggests that Chinese culture did not need improving. Sui Sin Far paints an unflattering portrait of white intervention in Chinese lives in Chinatown. Her fiction implies that Americanization efforts, not Chinese families in Chinatown, are the problem.

The Exclusion Act and state anti-miscegenation statues affected not only Chinese women, but also white women who chose to marry Chinese men. Sui Sin Far's fiction also explores this dark landscape where white women who love and marry Chinese men are threatened with the loss of their American citizenship and rejected by the dominant culture. Moreover, her stories highlight efforts by Chinese men to Americanize their wives and children, efforts ultimately ending in isolation from both communities. Sui Sin Far unsparingly critiques the Exclusion Act as unjust and even silly when it prevents fine law-abiding people who believe in strong families and responsible communities from becoming citizens. The unimpeachable virtues of many Chinese women in her stories reveals the irony of laws that bar good people from the benefits of American citizenship. My study of Sui Sin Far's fiction shows the complex culture created by Chinese exclusion, reading her stories as testimony of how Chinese women navigated the perilous waters of marriage and Americanization at the turn of the century. I focus on her stories that reveal most provocatively the injustice and foul play to which Chinese women and their families in Chinatown were subjected, but that also depict Chinese American women rebelling against injustice in their communities and in their families.

The title story of Sui Sin Far's collection Mrs. Spring Fragrance depicts the eponymous character, an Americanized Chinese immigrant woman helping another Americanized Chinese immigrant woman marry a man of her choosing rather than a

bridegroom to whom her parents promised her at a young age.[14] Mrs. Spring Fragrance cleverly uses her understanding of both American culture and Chinese courtship tradition to release her from outdated Chinese marriage conventions. Provocatively, Sui Sin Far also uses this story about love and marriage to launch a highly ironic critique of U.S. citizenship and the era of Chinese exclusion. In other stories in the volume, Sui Sin Far writes consciously about the exclusion era and embeds, both subtly and explicitly, criticism of an ignorant and prejudiced law affecting the lives of Chinese immigrants. Presenting a cast of Chinese characters struggling to make lives in the U.S. in the early 20th century despite the Exclusion Act, Sui Sin Far's carefully staged fiction casts light on an era when race was conflated with morality and Anglo-Americans believed Chinese could not assimilate into the dominant culture.

The opening lines of "Mrs. Spring Fragrance" portray the title character and her husband as successfully Americanized. "[T]here are no more American words for her learning," the narrator says of Mrs. Spring Fragrance, and she is "what is called by the Westerners 'Americanized'" (17). Despite her cultural assimilation, she is not a citizen and cannot become one through naturalization.[15] The positive image of a Chinese immigrant in the first sentences of the story is implicitly ironic: someone who, contrary to the popular sentiment of the day, has easily adapted to American culture is nevertheless excluded.

The neighbor girl Mrs. Spring Fragrance seeks to help is also an immigrant. Mai Gwi Far, "whose American name was Laura" wants to marry a Chinese boy who is "American-born, and as ruddy and stalwart as any young Westerner" (17). Sui Sin Far very deliberately specifies the U.S. birth and thus citizenship status of Kai Tzu, Laura's

boyfriend, and his "ruddy" complexion, which also links him to white America. Laura, born in China, can claim no kinship with white America and will not acquire citizenship status by marrying him. Even if she gives birth to American citizens, she will remain unnaturalizable. Mrs. Spring Fragrance is barren and cannot give birth to citizens. Ironically, then, a Chinese immigrant girl behaves in accordance to American mores and marriage traditions, showing that she is truly Americanized. Indeed, she actively resists the traditional values of her immigrant parents by wanting to marry for true love, like Americans do, effectively renouncing her loyalty to China and its traditions.

The story steps away from the romance plot to comment explicitly and ironically on the Exclusion Act. In a letter to her husband, Mrs. Spring Fragrance councils him about the need for patience in the face of the injustice of the exclusion laws. She writes that while in San Francisco and in the company of Mrs. Samuels, an American woman, she went to a lecture titled "America, Protector of China." The title inspired in her the hope that America would cease harsh treatment of immigrants like brother-in-law and her husband. After the lecture, however, she writes with bitter irony that it "was most exhilarating, and the effect of so much expression of benevolence leads me to beg of you to forget to remember that the barber charges you one dollar for a shave while he humbly submits to the American man a bill of fifteen cents. And murmur no more because your honored elder brother, on a visit to this country, is detained under the roof-tree of this great Government instead of your own humble roof. Console him with the reflection that he is protected under the wing of the Eagle, the Emblem of Liberty. What is the loss of ten hundred years or ten thousand times ten dollars compared with the happiness of knowing oneself so securely sheltered?" (21). Mrs. Spring Fragrance's irony is pointed,

and she clearly sees the double standard applied to her husband, but she nevertheless begs her husband to have faith that times will change, even as she makes clear that they are most emphatically not. Calling the immigrant detention center where her brother-in-law is confined a "roof-tree," Mrs. Spring Fragrance (and Sui Sin Far) puns on the image of a family tree. The Spring Fragrances are decidedly not part of the American national family, and the law subverts their ability to live together as a family.

The critique of the exclusion era policies continues when Mr. Spring Fragrance invites his white neighbor boy to a card party. Mr. Spring Fragrance says rather jokingly that "everything is 'high-class' in America" when the boy wants to call the get-together a "high-class Chinese stag party" (23). Mr. Spring Fragrance's joke provokes the neighbor boy to respond, "…haven't you ever heard that all Americans are princes and princesses, and just as soon as a foreigner puts his foot upon our shores, he also becomes of the nobility – I mean, the royal family" (23). Chinese immigrants were not, of course, treated as royalty. Instead they were detained in prisons (sometimes lawfully, sometimes unlawfully), forced into prostitution, chased out of towns at gunpoint and under the threat of arson, and taxed much more heavily than their white counterparts (Lee 115; Huping Ling 22, 61). When Mr. Spring Fragrance mentions his brother's detention, the young man replies, "Well, that is a shame…But understand, old fellow, we that are real Americans are up against that – even more than you. It is against our principles" (23). Mr. Spring Fragrance dryly responds, "I offer the real Americans my consolations that they should be compelled to do that which is against their principles" (23). Here, Sui Sin Far suggests that America's immigration policy contradicts the true American spirit and the desire of Americans to open wide their arms in welcome to the huddled masses

arriving on their shores. The Statue of Liberty does not open her arms to Asian immigrants arriving on Pacific shores. Mr. Spring Fragrance feels the burden of exclusion keenly, but he does not take action against it. Sui Sin Far's ironic story is her form of action against exclusion. Through her pointed critique, she positions herself as an insider into Chinese American culture. Indeed, Sui Sin Far's journalism and fiction was the first Chinese contact for many non-Chinese people in the U.S. (Ling and White Parks 2).

While Mr. Spring Fragrance is thinking about the injustice of the exclusion laws, Mrs. Spring Fragrance manages to abrogate the marriage brokered by Laura's parents. Laura's father, lamenting the loss of the Chinese marriage tradition, says, "the old order is passing away, and the new order is taking place, even with us who are Chinese. I have finally consented to give my daughter in marriage to young Kai Tzu" (25). Ironically, the new order Laura's father suggests is upon them is actually denied them. Through marriage, Laura will not gain citizenship and its freedoms and privileges. Laura's father will have U.S. citizens for grandchildren, but only those children will benefit from a "new order" that excludes Chinese immigrants from the American national family. Despite their successful Americanization, the Spring Fragrances and Laura are denied full membership in the American community. All of the characters in the story seem aware of the importance of adapting to the dominant culture, but they delicately balance traditional Chinese culture and Anglo-American cultural practices. This balance is evident at the end of the story when Mr. Spring Fragrance muses on his traditional marriage to his wife. Comparing the Anglo-American custom, in which a man and woman freely choose their own marriage partners, and his own experience of an arranged

marriage, he thinks, "Strange that that should be so, since he had fallen in love with her picture before *ever* he had seen her, just as she had fallen in love with his! And when the marriage veil was lifted and each beheld each other for the first time in the flesh, there had been no disillusion – no lessening of the respect and affection, which those who had brought about the marriage had inspired in each young heart" (25 emphasis original). He accepted a bride his family chose for him, seeing nothing but her picture before their wedding day, unlike Laura, whose love-match marriage Mrs. Spring Fragrance had just made possible. However, Mr. Spring Fragrance makes clear that a non-Western marriage tradition can also foster love between husband and wife. Marriage still defines one's position and status in American and Chinese society, especially for women. Love is the defining emotion in both contexts. Sui Sin Far thus implies that multiculturalism best embodies the democratic principles of America's founding.

In another set of stories in the collection titled Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Stories, Sui Sin Far further explores the theme of Americanization as it applies to Chinese immigrant women in the early decades of the 20th century. Through her fiction, she shows the struggles between the competing desires of husband and wife and comments on how the marriage relationship complicates conflicts over whether to Americanize or to maintain Chinese traditions. "The Wisdom of the New" and "The Americanization of Pau Tsu" function as a pair of overlapping sisiter stories, with similar themes, characters and character names, and plot lines. Both stories are about young Chinese wives who come to America to join husbands they haven't seen for many years, and both wives resist their husbands' efforts to Americanize them. Studied side by side, these stories reveal complex and complimentary portraits of Chinese families, their

interactions with well-meaning white women, and their marriage struggles during the exclusion era.

"The Wisdom of the New" is the first Chinatown story in the collection, appearing before "The Americanization of Pau Tsu." At the beginning of the story, Wou Sankwei, a young Chinese immigrant who has worked his way up from laundryman to a position of authority in a Chinse run business in Chinatown, has not seen his wife for seven years. When he receives word that his mother has died and his uncle has taken in his wife, he sends for Pau Lin and his son to join him in America. He reveals his plan to his mentor, Mrs. Dean, a missionary worker who helped him Americanize. While Mrs. Dean is glad that Sankwei is sending for his wife, her niece, Adah Charlton, is puzzled that he would send for her even though, as he admits, he has not written his wife at all during their long separation. Mrs. Dean explains to Adah that for Chinese men like Sankwei, marriage is more like a business deal: "'It is dreadful to our minds, but not to theirs. Everything with them is a matter of duty. Sankwei married his wife as a matter of duty. He sends for her as a matter of duty.'" (45). The notion of a loveless, duty-bound marriage bothers Adah, who muses, "I wonder if it is all duty on her side," to which her aunt responds, "You are too romantic" (45). The gulf between Adah's Anglo-American ideal of marriage based on deep mutual affection and the Chinese notion of marriage as a duty is great, but both cultures make marriage central to the lives of both men and women: the marital relationship determines the place of the individual in society. Sankwei keeps his wife separate from his Americanized life. In contrast, Adah Charlton finds it inconceivable that a man who passionately loved his wife would exclude her from his life outside the home. At this point, the story draws a clear line between the

Americanized Chinese man and his unassimilable wife, making compromise between them seem unlikely.

Sankwei is in no hurry to Americanize his wife, suggesting, perhaps, that he, like Anglo-American society, thinks Chinese women are weak and incapable of Americanization: "From the first Pau Lin had shown no disposition to become Americanized, and Sankwei himself had not urged it" (47). Instead, Sankwei wants to Americanize his Chinese-born son, "intend[ing] to put him through an American college" (47). As he says of Pau Lin, "I do appreciate the advantages of becoming westernized…but it is not as if she had come here as I came, in her learning days. The time for learning with her is over" (47). He does not broker a compromise between Pau Lin's lack of desire to assimilate and his own successful Americanization. Instead, he treats her as though her duty is to maintain Chinese traditions. Although he believes that his son would profit from Americanization, his son was born in China and is ineligible for American citizenship and its benefits, making Sankwei's ambition for him impotent.

Sankwei admires Adah Charlton, but Adah is ignorant of the young Chinese wife's feelings about her relationship with her husband. When Sankwei's second child is born, Adah brings flowers and touches Pau Lin affectionately on her hand: "Secure in the difference of race, in the love of many friends, and in the happiness of her chosen work, no suspicion whatever crossed her mind that the woman whose husband was her aunt's protégé tasted everything bitter because of her" (51). Adah believes that she is being respectful in a way that transcends the boundaries of race and culture and is bestowing a thoughtful gift. In reality, however, Pau Lin is deeply suspicious of her and says spitefully, "She can be happy who takes all and gives nothing" (51). When Sankwei

asks her what she means, Pau Lin replies, "She has taken all your heart…but she has not given you a son. It is I who have had that task" (51). Sankwei defends Adah, describing her as a "pure water-flower – a lily!" (51), but Pau Lin feels as though she is the lower status wife in a plural marriage. As a traditional Chinese woman, Pau Lin is not opposed to plural marriage per se, but she does not want, as the narrator makes clear, want to share her husband with a white woman: "That a man should take to himself two wives, or even three, if he thought proper, seemed natural and right in the eyes of Wou Pau Lin. She herself had come from a home where there were two broods of children and where her mother and father's other wife had eaten their meals together as sisters. In that home there had not always been peace; but each woman, at least, had the satisfaction of knowing that her man did not regard or treat the other woman as her superior. To each had fallen the common lot – to bear children to the man, and the man was master of all" (51). During the gold rush, those promoting exclusion often cited the Chinese tradition of polygamy as a justification for exclusion (Yung 19, 30, 83, 171). Again, Pau Lin does not oppose polygamy, but she does not want a sister wife who takes her husband's affection, leaving her with the burden of childbrearing, finding the though humiliating: "But, oh! The humiliation and shame of bearing children to a man who looked up to another woman – and a woman of another race – as being above the common uses of women. There is a jealousy of the mind more poignant than any mere animal jealousy" (51). Sankwei, however, remains oblivious to his wife's feelings.

Pau Lin is clearly threatened by comparatively liberated women like Adah Charlton. She believes a wife should be subservient to her husband, taking care of him and bearing him children. As a friend and as an object of Sankwei's worshipful love,

Adah Charlton problematizes duty-bound wife as a woman's true role. She is also oblivious to Pau Lin's anger and jealousy and persists in her romantic frienship with Sankwei. When she finally learns that Pau Lin is jealous, she even conjures up traditional Chinese polygamy as part of her defense of her extramarital friendship with an Americanized Chinese man. "Of what is she jealous?" she asks; "Other Chinese men's wives, I have known, have had cause to be jealous, for it is true some of them are dreadfully immoral and openly support two or more wives. But not Wou Sankwei. And this little Pau Lin. She has everything that a Chinese woman could wish for" (53). Ironically, then, Adah Charlton thinks Chinese polygamy is an abomination against American marriage, while Pau Lin thinks she could live in a Chinese polygamous marriage with any wife other than the American Adah Charlton. In her acceptance of polygamy, Pau Lin is decidedly un-American, but the true cause of Pau Lin's jealousy eventually dawns on the clueless Adah. She comes to understand that Sankwei's attention to her violates Chinese custom, which dictates that women have no male friends outside of marriage. Curiously, Adah may herself be jealous of Pau Lin's marriage with Sankwei. As she explains to Mrs. Dean, "I do not believe there is any real difference between the feelings of a Chinese wife and an American wife. Sankwei is treating Pau Lin as he would treat her were he living in China. Yet it cannot be the same to her as if she were in their own country, where he would not come in contact with American women. A woman is a woman with intuitions and perceptions, whether Chinese or American…and Sankwei's wife must have noticed, even on the day of her arrival, her husband's manner towards us, and contrasted it with his manner towards her. I did not realize this before you told me that she was jealous…I can see that the poor thing became

more of an American in that one half hour on the steamer than Wou Sankwei, for all of your pride in him, has become in seven years" (53). Adah Charlton refers to Sankwei's inability to recognize his wife when she arrived: he had to be told which woman she was among the many just arrived from China. His blindness is particularly poignant because he sees Adah and her virtues clearly, but he does not see the pain this friendship causes his wife, nor does he see Adah's real affection for him. When Adah suggests that Pau Lin became more of an American in those moments waiting for Sankwei to recognize her, she means that an American wife would not tolerate the intrusion of another woman, especially of another race, into her marriage. She explains to Sankwei, who is mystified about Pau Lin's behavior, why she is jealous: "If I were married I would not think my husband loves me very much if he preferred spending his evenings in the society of other women than in mine, and was so much more polite and deferential to other women than he was to me. Can't you understand now why your wife is jealous?" (58). She is clear-eyed in her understanding, but the narrator also suggests that she had ulterior motives: "Had he been a white man, there is no doubt Adah Charlton's little lecture would have had a contrary effect from what she meant it to have. At least, the lectured would have been somewhat cynical as to her sincerity. But Wou Sankwei was not a white man. He was a Chinese, and did not see any reason for insincerity in a matter as important as that which Adah Charlton had brought before him. He felt himself exiled from Paradise, yet it did not occur to him to question, as a white man would have done, whether the angel with the flaming sword had authority for her action" (59). Sankwei understand his wife's role in their marriage, but is confused by Adah Charlton's suggestion that his relationship with her would be permissible if he were not married: "It would be different if you were

not married and free to advance. But you are not" (57). Adah Charlton sees a clear conflict between Sankwei's marriage and Sankwei's friendship with her, but the narrator hints that she has an interest in pursuing a more intimate relationship with Sankwei. Sui Sin Far is daring here – she shows, if briefly and elliptically, an educated American woman expressing her desire for a Chinese man. Adah, however, is also painfully aware of the complications that such a relationship would bring during the exclusion era. Considering her affiliation with Mrs. Dean and missionary work in Chinatown, she would certainly know the grim consequences for an American woman married to a Chinese immigrant man, namely loss of citizenship and isolation from and rejection by the dominant white race. Although she considers, or at least imagines, a love relationship with Sankwei, he doesn't respond the way a more attentive white man would (by declaring his love for her and leaving his Chinese wife). Nevertheless, Sankwei loses something he values, Adah's friendship and affection, and Adah is, arguably, the cause of Pau Lin's fatal act at the end of the story.

Marriage is the crucible in which all the characters in the story converge and are formed, and the Chinese wife feels unsure of her relationship with her husband when an American white woman dogs his every move. Protecting her family from Americanization and its accompanying difficulties, Pau Lin fiercely resists change. She fears, not without cause, that Americanization will cause her family life and her marriage to crumble. Feeling as though her back is against the wall in her marriage, in her final act in the story she perverts the maternal instinct, choosing to harm rather than protect her children.

In the final pages of the "The Wisdom of the New," Sankwei wakes up early on his son's first day of American school and hears his wife singing in his son's bedroom. He follows the music and finds his wife sitting on the edge of the bed, where his son lies motionless. An empty cup "with its dark dregs told the tale" (60) of his wife's poisoning of their son. When he questions her, her face is serene and happy, and she explains, "He is saved…from the Wisdom of the New…The child is happy. The butterfly mourns not o'er the shed cocoon" (61). The "wisdom of the new" is an ironic reference to Mrs. Dean's Americanization of Sankwei. Mrs. Dean made him precisely what she does not want her son to become, an Americanized Chinese man who spends his time with an American woman "friend" rather than with his Chinese wife. By killing their son, Pau Lin teaches her husband that Americanization harms Chinese immigrant families. Even though their son was enrolled in an American school, he was ineligible for U.S. citizenship, which Pau Lin implicitly misunderstands. Sankwei learns the lesson his wife is teaching, that he and his family do not belong in America. At the end of the story, Sankwei writes Adah Charlton that "I have lost my boy through an accident. I am returning to China with my wife whose health requires a change" (61). By not telling her about Pau Lin's murderous act, he leave Adah in the dark, but Sui Sin Far's readers are not similarly protected from knowledge of Pau Lin's murderous actions. Readers are as shocked as Sankwei is, but Sui Sin Far does not paint Pau Lin as a crazy person whose actions have no logic. On the contrary, Pau Lin is calm and happy, and her husband no longer ignores her. She has achieved her desired end and gets precisely what she wanted, a return to China and the return of her husband's affections.

Some critics have argued that Sui Sin Far represents her Chinese women as not all that different from their Anglo-American peers in the early 20th century, that the model of American womanhood is not that far removed from the tenets of Chinese womanhood. In her study of images of American womanhood in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Martha H. Patterson argues that Sui Sin Far's strong female Chinese characters resemble the Gibson Girl ideal of American womanhood. According to Patterson, Sui Sin Far "writes Chinese Americans into the history of the nation by making her anxieties – be it of workplace demands, parental responsibilities, consumer pressures, or new gender roles – akin to those of her write readers" (104). Patterson suggests that Sui Sin Far's fiction points to a balance between cultures as the answer for Chinese immigrants, that Sui Sin Far calls attention to "a host of cultural anxieties Chinese culture may help mitigate, in effect suggesting that a bicultural identity offers a much safer alternative to American social life" (104). Yet, Patterson downplays the real resistance to Americanization by characters like Pau Lin. Literary historian Charlotte J. Rich disagrees with Patterson on an important point. Focusing on the "New Woman" rather than the Gibson Girl, Rich argues that Chinese women's culture has no equivalent ideal. Rather, the New Woman ideal served to exclude women based on social class and racial identity (Rich 22). Rich concludes that that Sui Sin Far's fiction "deliniate[s] both the promise and the limitations of the Progressive New Woman" (135). I agree with Rich, but with the caveat that Sui Sin Far's fiction foregrounds the legal consequence of marriage for all women, whether Chinese or white. Both the Gibson Girl and the New Woman are ideals of single womanhood, and single women are not circumscribed by marriage as wives are. Sui Sin Far's stories studied in this chapter focus on female characters who are indeed powerful

and take decisive action; however, as married women they struggle to find a balance between gender roles and Chinese and American culture. The Chinese wife had no legal identity separate from her husband whether or not Americanized, making her ineligible to be either a Gibson Girl or a New Woman.

In her fiction, Sui Sin Far calls attention to the most controversial stereotypes of Chinese people in America, and she places her characters in compelling and difficult situations in which their choices reflect back to white readers their prejudices against and misunderstandings of Chinese immigrants. White American readers might have thought Pau Lin's actions barbaric and uncivilized, but her extreme action vividly illuminates the rigid barriers separating Chinese and American culture and the dire consequences of discrimination and segregation. Her stories highlight the need for a compromise that would allow Anglo-American and Chinese culture to co-exist, sharing some values but also preserving difference. Pau Lin's actions are tragic, but understandable. Had the family lived in an American culture that would have allowed them to temper an adopted American culture with Chinese traditions, their marriage would not have been strained, and Pau Lin would not have felt compelled to sacrifice their son.

"The Americanization of Pau Tsu" follows "The Wisdom of the New" in the collection and includes similar plot lines and names. A Chinese wife struggles with Americanization, while her husband easily Americanizes. A white woman befriends the husband, who develops a great affection for her and wants his wife to emulate her. The wives' names are nearly the same (Pau Tsu *versus* Pau Lin), but their personalities differ. By using similar names, Sui Sin Far suggests that the women's stories are parallel, but she also treats the characters as individuals. As mentioned earlier, literary historian

Molly Crumpton Winter sees recognition of the multiethnic character of America as key to autonomy and individuation for ethnic minorities. She cautions against overgeneralization about Chinese culture "when discussing the writings of Sui Sin Far" because "what might be said about one character will probably be false if applied to another" (124). Rather, she argues, critics should focus on the distinct individuality of each character and how she negotiates conflicts between Chinese and American culture. The names of the wives, Pau Lin in the "The Wisdom of the New" and Pau Tsu in "The Americanization of Pau Tsu," signal that each represents a different version of Chinese womanhood, and together they illuminate the diversity of Chinese women's experiences in west coast Chinatowns.

In both stories, the white woman is named Adah. There are two Adahs in Genesis, one who is the wife of Lamech and the other wife of Esau and mother of Eliphaz. The Biblical resonance of the name Adah underscores the way that each woman acts like a second wife to a Chinese man, which threatens the Chinese wives. As traditional Chinese women, neither Pau Lin nor Pau Tsu totally reject polygamy, but both reject a white woman who claims the affections of her husband. Adah Charlton of "The Wisdom of the New" and Adah Raymond of "The Americanization of Pau Tsu" mirror one another. Although they share a name, one is clueless about the wife's feelings, while the other is keenly aware of the young Chinese wife's pain and her resistance to her husband's efforts to Americanize her. In "The Americanization of Pau Tsu," Adah Raymond chastises the Chinese husband for his aggressive efforts to Americanize his family, but unlike Adah Charlton, she is not clueless for most of the story about the Chinese wife's jealousy. Rather, she fights for the legitimacy of Pau Tsu's stand against

Americanization. Very early, she notices how Pau Tsu struggles against her husband's efforts: "Adah Raymond, who at Lin Fo's request was a frequent visitor to the house, could not fail to observe that Pau Tsu's small face grew daily smaller and thinner, and that the smile with which she invariably greeted her, though sweet was tinged with melancholy" (87). As Winter suggests, the Chinese wives do not reject Americanization outright. Instead, "what the Chinese wives object to…is not American culture per se, but the insensitive ways in which their husbands introduce it to them: through the intrusion of single, white American women" (132). Focusing on marriage as a crucial force in these stories amplifies and reinforces Winter's point. Winter sess the Chinese wives as individuals, but the marriage relationship is the crucible of conflict between husband and wife between American and Chinese cultures. The Chinese wives are not dealing with Americanization as an abstract force, but as a keenly personal one, brought into their homes by their husbands.

At the opening of "The Americanization of Pau Tsu," Wan Lin Fo eagerly awaits the arrival of his deeply-loved wife, but his affection is divided between his passion for his wife and his admiration for the American ways and culture Adah Raymond represents. Wan Lin Fo admires Adah and wants his wife to be like her. He confides in Adah that he has sent for his wife from whom he has been separated for five years and surprises Adah with his confession that she "inspired in me a love" (84). Adah "started" and Wan Lin Fo continues, "For the little girl in China to whom I am betrothed…Every time I come to this house, I see you, so and so beautiful, dispensing tea and happiness to all around, and I think, could I have in my home and ever by my side one who is also both good and beautiful, what a felicitous life mine would be!" (84). He clearly wants an

Americanized wife, his ideal embodied in Adah, an unmarried woman who helps Chinese immigrants to Americanize. After Pau Tsu arrives, she endures her husband's repeated attempts to make her act like an American woman, from wearing western-style dresses to being treated by a male doctor. Indeed, Pau Tsu suffers like a true martyr, like, as the narrator describes her, "a second Vashti – or rather, Esther" (87). In the book of Esther, Vashti, the king's first wife, disobeys his order to dance naked. As a result of her moral resistance, he executes her as an example to others who might disobey him. Esther takes Vashti's place, and she defends the Jewish people and facilitates their peaceful existence in Persia. Like Vashti, Pau Tsu rebels against the patriarchy; like Esther, she keeps the cultural traditions of her homeland alive when she is living in exile.

In "The Wisdom of the New," Pau Lin rebels against her husband's attempt to Americanize their son through her extreme act of murdering her son the day before he is to start school. Pau Tsu's rebellion is passive, rather than murderous. She simply runs away, leaving a note telling her husband of her suffering: "Your unworthy Pau Tsu lacks the courage to face the ordeal before her. She has, therefore, left you and prays you to obtain a divorce, as is the custom in America, so that you may be happy with the Beautiful One, who is so much your Pau Tsu's superior…Else, why should you have your Pau Tsu follow in her footsteps? She has tried to obey your will and to be as an American woman; but now she is very weary, and the terror of what is before her has overcome" (90). While Pau Lin imagines that Adah Charlton might become her husband's second wife in a polygamous marriage, Pau Tsu does not entertain the idea of a plural marriage and instead suggests that her husband abrogate the marriage according to American custom. Like Vashti, Pau Tsu refuses what she sees as her husband's order

to act immorally. Pau Tsu's note confuses Lin Fo, who thinks he has treated her very well, but Adah Raymond shows him the error of his ways: "You're a Chinaman, but you're almost as stupid as an American. Your cruelty in forcing Pau Tsu to be – what nature never intended her to be – an American woman; to adapt and adopt in a few months' time all our ways and customs. I saw it long ago, but as Pau Tsu was too sweet and meek to see any faults in her man I had not the heart to open her eyes – or yours…You wanted your wife to be an American woman while you remained a Chinaman. Do you think an American would dare treat his wife as you have treated yours?" (91). Adah Raymond seems to understand that Americanizing dress, language, and cultural customs makes neither of them American, at least as long as he still enforces his patriarchal priviledge as a Chinese husband whose Chinese wife feels duty-bound to do as he says. The three Confucian laws of obedience dictate her behavior: obey the father, then the husband, and then the son. He thought he was helping his wife get along in the new world but didn't see her suffering. While Sankwei's admiration in Adah Charlton remains undiminished in "The Wisdom of the New," Lin Fo sees Adah Raymond differently after she tells him the truth about his wife: "He was wondering how he could ever have wished his gentle Pau Tsu to be like this angry woman" (91). Adah Raymond's aggressive behavior taints his image of her as an ideal woman. A Chinese woman, he thinks, would not berate her husband. He seems to have learned his lesson – when he finds his wife, he tells Adah Raymond when she comes to visit, "ten thousand times I beg your pardon, but perhaps you will come to see my wife some other time – not today?" (92). Adah comes to understand she must keep her distance, and Lin Fo is not bothered by losing her friendship. The tale, then, tells missionizing white women to act

with caution. Even though Pau Tsu only runs away and then returns, it would seem that the Chinese immigrant husband and wife would have been happier if Adah had never intervened in their lives.

At the end of "The Americanization of Pau Tsu," Sui Sin Far shuts out the American women involved in the lives of Chinese men, as if to say that they have done enough damage, even if unintentionally. Marriages between Chinese men and women suffer, and marriages between a white American woman and a Chinese immigrant man would not be possible because of the anti-miscegenation laws of many states (Pfaelzer 257). In Sui Sin Far's story, young Chinese men like Sankwei and Lin Fo are vulnerable to women like the Adahs, who seem to offer alternative lives outside of Chinatown and access to the broader experiences of American society. Positioning herself as an insider to Chinatown, Sui Sin Far warns well-intentioned social and missionary workers that they do not understand Chinese culture. Although the similar names and plot lines may confuse readers, that is Sui Sin Far's point – the intervention of white women in Chinatown caused versions of the same story to play out over and over again. Nevertheless, there are important variations: in "The Wisdom of the New" the husband realizes too late the consequences of his actions, whereas in "The Americanization of Pau Tsu" he gets it right; Pau Lin's violent rebellion leads to tragedy, while Pau Tsu's rebellion leads to peaceful reconciliation. Thus, Sui Sin Far shows the range of experiences of Americanization in the most important relationship in Chinese women's lives. She effectively writes against stereotypes to suggest that a multicultural American society that accepts cultural difference would best honor the principles of democracy.

And, the marriage relationship is the institution where society can begin to heal itself and move away from the exclusion laws that ruined Chinese families and lives.

In "In the Land of the Free," Sui Sin Far takes the question of how enforcement of the Exclusion Act can break Chinese families. At the beginning of the story, Hom Hing, an established Chinese immigrant living legally in the U.S., joyfully welcomes his wife and Chinese-born son as they arrive by ship in San Francisco: "Hom Hing lifted the child, felt of his little body and limbs, gazed into his face with proud joyous eyes; then turned inquiringly to a customs office at his elbow" (93). The customs officer immediately interrogates Hom Hing about the boy's birth and immigration status. He "stroked his chin reflectively" before telling the family that the child cannot come ashore because "[t]here is nothing in the papers that you have shown us – your wife's papers and your own – having bearing upon the child" (94). His wife, Lae Choo, also a legal resident of the U.S., left to visit China in the early months of her pregnancy, so her exit paper document only her, not her child born in China. The Exclusion Act required permission and documentation for every Chinese person entering the country, so the customs officer must take the child away from his parents.

Lae Choo and Hom Hing are horrified at the injustice and cruelty of the Exclusion Act, which allows customs officials to break up a law-abiding Chinese family merely on a technicality. Hom Hing pleads his case to the customs officer and explains his long-standing status as a Chinese merchant resident in the U.S.: "I have been in business in San Francisco for many years…I had no fear of trouble. I was a Chinese merchant and my son was my son" (94). Hom Hing understands the law and is completely stunned that despite all of his efforts to abide by the law, the customs officer acts randomly and

cruelly. The scene at the waterfront ends with the boy being taken away from his heartbroken parents, who are scared but are keenly aware that "the law of the land must be complied with" (95). The law of the land sought to prevent the establishment of Chinese American families because if such families formed and flourished, Chinese Americans would become a part of the national fabric of American society and produce new citizens with permanent status. In this story, Sui Sin Far again emphasizes how cruel and illogical the Exclusion Act is in practice.

Hom Hing and Lae Choo wait anxiously for word from the government about the return of their son. As months pass, he becomes accustomed to his new home, a mission nursery school. As the narrator reports, "White women were caring for him, and though for one full moon he pined for his mother and refused to be comforted he was now apparently happy and contented" (97). Foregrounding again the work of white missionary women, Sui Sin Far criticizes their seemingly good intentions by showing how much they hurt Chinese families. Chinese families do not, she makes clear, need the help from American women missionary workers to raise their families. The ease with which the authorities take the child from his parents further underscores the irrationality of the Exclusion Act. The actions of Hom Hing and Lae Choo make readers understand that Chinese families are not that different from American ones – they also want happy, healthy lives for their children and opportunities they themselves did not have.

A corrupt lawyer fleeces Hom Hing and his wife, but they finally are allowed to pick up their son from the mission women. They are shocked at what they see at the mission when they collect him: "The mission woman talked as she walked. She told Lae Choo that little Kim, as he had been named by the school, was the pet of the place, and

that his little tricks and ways amused and delighted everyone. He had been rather difficult to manage at first and had cried much for his mother, 'but children soon forget, and after a month he seemed quite at home and played around as bright and happy as a bird.'" (101). The mission woman implies that being taken away from his parents liberated and transformed the boy. Indeed, the change has done the boy good, if "good" signifies that he acts like an American child. Even his clothing shows how the mission has Americanized him. He was "dressed in blue cotton overalls and white-soled shoes. The little boy's face was round and dimpled and his eyes were very bright" (101). When the teacher transfers the bright and healthy little boy to his mother, he "shrunk from her and tried to hide himself in the folds of the white woman's skirt. 'Go 'way, go 'way' he bade his mother" (101). The folds of the white woman's skirt suggest the Statue of Liberty's robes, and the little boy clings to his American "mother." In an irony clearly not lost on Sui Sin Far, however, although the white missionary workers have colonized the little boy and he easily adapted to American culture, he is ineligible for citizenship. Even more ironically, it is the law that excludes him from citizenship and which sought to exclude him even from entry into the U.S. which sent him to their mission in the first place. In this story, Sui Sin Far vividly portrays the ugly, unjust, and irrational consequences of American immigration policy. By dramatizing how a good, upstanding and law-abiding Chinese family that works within the law is betrayed by it, she uses fiction as a platform for reform and advocates a change in American policy.

Sui Sin Far was born Edith Maude Eaton and first adopted her pen name while writing for U.S. west coast magazines (White Parks "Introduction to Part 2" 172). Her early journalistic writing focused on the lives of Chinatown residents in the region, giving

many readers their first glimpse of a world to which they had no access. As Annette White Parks suggests in her introduction to Part 2 of Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Stories, Sui Sin Far was probably the first writer to use the term "Chinese American" (174). In the autobiographical "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian," Sui Sin Far writes poignantly about the experience of growing up biracial in England and Canada, struggling to balance a desire to fit into the dominant culture with a desire to remain true to her mixed ethnic identity. Because she is the biracial child of a white English father and a Chinese mother, schoolmates were intolerant and prejudiced against her.

The stories discussed earlier in this chapter portray Chinese immigrant women whose experiences are very different from her own, but in two stories in Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Writings, she dramatizes the challenges biraciality and mixed marriages encountered. Crucially, however, she inverts the racial dynamics of her own family and sets the stories in the U.S. during the exclusion era. In the paired stories "The Story of One White Woman Who Married a Chinese" and "Her Chinese Husband," Sui Sin Far makes a white wife of a Chinese man the first person narrator and pointedly makes her the victim of the Exclusion Act because of her marriage to a Chinese immigrant man. In both stories, Minnie cares less about herself than her biracial son. In "The Story of One White Woman Who Married a Chinese," Minnie, wife of Liu Khanghi, ponders the fate of her biracial son: "Only when the son of Liu Khanghi lays his little head upon my bosom do I question whether I have done wisely. For my boy, the son of the Chinese man, is possessed of a childish wisdom which brings tears to my eyes; and as he stands between his father and myself, like yet unlike to us both, so will he stand

after years between his father's and mother's people. And if there is not kindliness nor understanding between them, what will my boy's fate be?" (77). The boy is wise, but his hope that a racist American society will fully accept him is childish. Born in the U.S., he is a birth-right citizen, but Minnie believes that, in the early 20th century in a country that excludes Chinese immigrants and denies them citizenship, he will still face prejudice like his father did. In "Wavering Images: Mixed-Race Identity in the Stories of Edith Eaton/Sui Sin Far," literary historian Carol Roh-Spaulding argues that the early 20th century U.S. of Sui Sin Far's fiction was not "ready for a racially mixed America" (169). Despite this resistance, Sui Sin Far's stories argue for the importance of diversity to American democracy; only trouble ensues when strict lines are drawn between races and cultures.

Few white American women married Chinese men because of anti-miscegenation laws. As Roh-Spaulding notes, the San Francisco Chronicle reported only twenty white women married to "Mongolians" in Chinatown (168). Minnie, the white female narrator of both stories, acknowledges that white Americans condemn marriages like hers: "Loving Liu Khanghi, I became his wife, and though it is true that there are many Americans who look down upon me for so becoming, I have never regretted it…I accept the lot of the American wife of an humble Chinaman in America" ("The Story" 77). Minnie knows that as the wife of an unnaturalizable man, she has lost her American citizenship and civic identity, leaving her with no choice but to claim her husband's cultural identity. Early in the story, when Minnie temporarily leaves Chinatown, she reminisces, "My little girl pined for her Chinese playmates, and I myself felt strange and lonely" ("The Story" 75). Minnie feels guilty about the challenges her son will face if he

leaves Chinatown and tries to pass for white. He is a birth-right American citizen, and it is ironic that Minnie willingly gives up her own citizenship to marry a Chinese man who succors her. In "Her Chinese Husband," Minnie eulogizes her dead husband and acknowledges the troubles she experienced as a white wife of a Chinese man: "Yes, life with Liu Khanghi was not without trails and tribulations. There was the continual uncertainty about his own life here in America, the constant irritation caused by the assumption of the white men that a white woman does not love her Chinese husband" (81). As an unnaturalizable Chinese immigrant, he suffered discrimination and the constant threat of deportation. However, not only white people discriminate against him: "There was also on Liu Khanghi's side an acute consciousness that, though belonging to him as his wife, yet in a sense I was not his, but of the dominant race, which claimed, even while it professed to despise me. This consciousness betrayed itself in words and ways which filled me with a passion of pain and humiliation" ("Her Chinese Husband" 81). Minnie is white, a member of the dominant race that oppresses Liu Khanghi, and he ironically holds her responsible for that oppression even though she has lost her status as a white American by marrying him. Minnie speculates on the genesis of such "consciousness" of racial antagonism and asks rhetorically, "Was it the barrier of race – that consciousness?" (81).

The ending of the story complicates Minnie's question: Chinese people murder her Chinese husband. Minnie explains, "There are some Chinese, just as there are some Americans, who are opposed to all progress, and who hate with a bitter hatred all who would enlighten and be enlightened" (83). Through Minnie's words, Sui Sin Far comments on the reverse prejudice of Chinese immigrants (like Pau Lin and Pau Tsu)

who resist Americanization and insist on maintaining their Chinese culture. Sui Sin Far's stories complicate notions about easy assimilation of immigrants into American culture. As Roh-Spaulding argues, "contrary to a multicultural perspective that regards Sui Sin Far as a turn-of-the-century hero for the Chinese, her stories complictate traditional narratives of assimilation and amalgamation with tales of failed cultural mixing and conflicted identity" (173). Indeed, Chinese husbands' attempts to Americanize their wives and families fail, but her stories don't focus only on failed Americanization but also on how intolerance and prejudice tear a part the most important relationship in women's lives, namely marriage. In plots that complexly comment on what it means both to be an American and to be Chinese, Chinese husbands try to recast their Chinese wives in the image of the white women they admire. The balance is strained, and Minnie's marriage becomes a similar crucible for such forces to play out. However, because Minnie is a white woman married to an Americanized Chinese man, the marriage turns on a different axis. Minnie loses her civic identity and status as an American citizen, but she does not entirely lose her American cultural identity. The Chinese wives, on the other hand, reject cultural Americanization and have no access to U.S. citizenship even if they wanted it. "The Story of One Woman Who Married a Chinese" and "Her Chinese Husband" compliment one another and draw a complex picture of mixed marriage during the exclusion era. Minnie and Liu Khanghi share the same concerns about raising mixed race children in a prejudiced society. Sui Sin Far suggests that the child of Minnie will be confused about his racial and cultural identity as he grows up and learns to live in a society that rejects his father and his parents' interracial marriage.

While there is happiness in their marriage, there is also sadness as they confront the forced duality their son faces.

Many of Sui Sin Far's stories suggest that Chinese American identity is performative. Chinese wives resist adopting the performative markers of American identity, such as dress, language, and food. In contrast, their husbands don the markers of American culture by cutting their queues and wearing Western-style clothes. In her study of Chinese immigration, Erika Lee suggests that during the exclusion era Chineseness was socially constructed by government officials, such as immigration agents in west coast ports. Lee analyzes the case of Kentwell, a young man who was the son of a Chinese mother and a British businessman father. Kentwell led an uncomplicated childhood in Hong Kong, but havoc ensued when he landed on the island of Hawaii (a U.S. possession) after visiting the Philippines. Because he bore no clearly visible markers of his Chinese heritage, he had encountered no difficulties during previous travels. He was not a U.S. citizen, so enforcement of the immigration provisions of the Exclusion Act was at issue. Kentwell traveled first class, not steerage, dressed in Western clothing, spoke English with an English accent, not a Chinese one, and to most Anglo-American observers did not "look Chinese." U.S. government officials in Hawaii stopped him because they knew his mother was Chinese. Despite his outward appearance, which had permitted him to travel freely in the U.S. many times, he was denied entry. Lee suggests that many forces worked against Kentwell and people like him who could "pass" as white. When pressed to explain why they prevented Kentwell from landing, government officials explained that not only was he half Chinese by birth, and therefore subject to exclusion, but also that he associated with the Chinese

community in Hawaii, where he answered to his Chinese name, Kam Duck Won (80). Lee writes, "how the government determined who was a person of Chinese descent reveals how Chinese racial identity, or 'Chineseness' continued to be socially constructed. 'Chineseness' was determined by mostly socially defined physical markers or race, but immigration officials also depended on symbols of actual or perceived common descent such as language, association, class, and behavior. These markers and symbols were more obvious to some officials than others, and thus the determination of who was or was not Chinese could be inconsistent" (79). The Kentwell case highlights such inconsistency. While Kentwell went to the courts to plead his case, Sui Sin Far used fiction to protest the application of the Exclusion Act to people of mixed race backgrounds.

In "It's Wavering Image," Sui Sin Far makes a biracial girl who can pass for white her protagonist. Pan, the child of a Chinese immigrant father and a deceased white American mother, lives in Chinatown with her father, where a white American man finds her and proposes marriage. However, despite her status as a birth-right American citizen, anti-miscegenation laws would prevent such a marriage unless she "passes" as white. Pan, however, refuses to pass, choosing instead to claim an identity as a Chinese woman. Her life in Chinatown before she meets her white suitor is described thus: "All her life Pan had lived in Chinatown, and if she were different in any sense from those around her, she gave little thought to it…As to Pan, she always turned from whites. With her father's people she was natural and at home; but in the presence of her mother's she felt strange and constrained, shrinking from their curious scrutiny as she would from the sharp edge of a sword" (61). Pan is conflicted about how to reconcile her two identities. Roh-

Spaulding suggests that Pan is teetering on the perilous, unstable edge of biculturality: "The true 'wavering image' is Pan's own unstable image of herself" (172). More broadly, Roh-Spaulding argues that multicultural studies fail to acknowledge racial complexity and elusiveness of racial self-definition in Sui Sin Far's fiction (156). I agree that in "It's Wavering Image," Pan represents a complex notion of biculturality that eludes definition, but I would add, the Exclusion Act defined Chinese identity precisely: anyone of Chinese descent not born on American soil was subject to exclusion laws. Pan, as an American citizen, is legally equal to the young American man who pursues her, even though, as Roh-Spaulding argues, as the product of an interracial marriage she is still socially below him. Roh-Spaulding observes, "What 'It's Wavering Image' suggests most strongly is that Pan's sense of herself will never be perfect, perhaps never even be completely safe" (172). Yet, as an American citizen Pan's legal identity and safety are clear. At the end of the story, Pan rejects her white suitor, Mark Carson, after he betrays her and her Chinese community. Her health declines, and confines her to Chinatown and she adopts traditional Chinese clothing. A little Chinese girl, who may also be a birth-right American citizen, sits on Pan's lap, and "pressed her head upon the sick girl's bosom. The feel of that little head brought tears" (66). Perhaps her tears signify her recognition of the troubles of mixed-race children during the exclusion era. The final scene is painfully ironic. Pan is a citizen and legally a part of the American community. The law does not force her to choose between being American and Chinese, but she chooses Chinatown and Chinese identity. When Mark Carson tells her she has to reject her Chinese identity and claim whiteness, he thinks the choice is obvious: she must reject the identity the American nation excludes. For Carson, her choice to live in

Chinatown is an insult to the dominant race. Although Roh-Spaulding sees Pan's racial self-identification as ambiguous, Pan chooses to identify herself with the legally excluded Chinese race, and the Chinese community accepts her. In this story, then, Chinese culture is far more open and accepting than the dominant Anglo-American one.

Whereas Roh-Spaulding argues that Pan does not choose one racial identity over the other, I posit that a key literary allusion to Robert Louis Stevenson late in the story problematizes the notion that Pan's racial self-definition is ambiguous. Indeed, this allusion comments on the nature of choosing one's racial identity. Mark Carson sees only Pan's outward appearance identifies her as white (much as white Americans identified Sui Sin Far as white based on her appearance). She wears Western-style clothes and speaks American English without a Chinese accent, and these performative acts lead Carson to believe that Pan would be crazy to take up the ethnic identity of her father. Carson is a journalist, and he is reputed to be "a man who would sell his soul for a story" (62). When Carson meets Pan, she is a confident young woman on whom a slur or hurtful remark about the Chinese is not lost. Thus, "he would be a brave man indeed who offered one to childish little Pan" (62). She protects her Chinese community and would avenge any slight. Carson persuades her, however, that "until his coming, she had lived her life alone. So well did she learn this lesson that it seemed at times as if her white self must entirely dominate and trample under foot her Chinese" (62). Her love for Carson weakens her resolve, and he preys on her feelings to get her to show him the secrets of Chinatown. She happily does so, but he still provokes her with comments such as, "Pan don't you see that you have got to decide what you will be – Chinese or white? You cannot be both" (63). She responds, "I do not love you when you talk to me like that"

(63). Carson, perhaps more than Pan, imagines that their love will lead to marriage, but he will not marry her unless she claims a white identity. Pan resists his advances until Carson sings a song titled "It's Wavering Image," the lyrics of which describe the moon as a symbol of love in heaven that is reflected on earth. When she kisses him, Pan feels tempted to give in and live as a white woman so she can marry Carson, so the next sentence in the story devastates the readers, who have become sympathetic to Pan: "Next morning Mark Carson began work on the special-feature article which he had been promising his paper for some weeks" (63). Here, Sui Sin Far carefully lays the groundwork for the story's climax, which foregrounds not just racial ambiguity but also the duality of humankind.

Pan and her community feel keenly betrayed. When the newspaper article comes out, Pan's father is furious: "'Cursed be his ancestors,' bayed Man You" (64). Pan feels guilty that Carson exploited their relationship to get a scoop on the mysterious Chinatown. Sui Sin Far describes Carson's betrayal as a sword piercing her heart and nearly killing her: "Ah, well did he know that the sword which pierced through others, would carry with it to her own heart, the pain of all those others" (64). Pan exclaims upon reading the article, "Betrayed! Betrayed! Betrayed to a betrayer!" (63). Pan's guilt is intense because she feels like she herself betrayed her community by revealing its secrets to Carson. He, in turn, does feel some guilt. After an absence of two months he returns to Chinatown to talk to Pan, and on his way there, he sits in front of a statue of Robert Louis Stevenson to think through what he is going to say to her: "But for all these soothing reflections, there was an undercurrent of feeling which caused his steps to falter on his way to Pan. He turned into Portsmouth Square and took a seat on one of the

benches facing the fountain erected in memory of Robert Louis Stevenson. Why had Pan failed to answer the note he has written telling her of the assignment which would keep him out of town for a couple of months and giving her his address? Would Robert Louis Stevenson have known why? Yes – and so did Mark Carson. But though Robert Louis Stevenson would have boldly answered himself the question, Mark Carson thrust it aside, arose, and pressed up the hill" (65). With the reference to the Stevenson statue, Sui Sin Far clearly directs her readers to consider Stevenson's novel Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as a context for interpreting Mark Carson's conflicted feelings about hurting Pan and "selling his soul" to get his news story. So, he in a small way, embodies the painful duality of human nature. He chooses the evil side and attempts to force Pan into passing as a white woman against her will. Pan, however, chooses virtue and protects her Chinese heritage; she is the opposite of Mark Carson. Her duality does not endanger Carson, even though she feels as though she endangers her community. A true Chinese woman would not have allowed Carson access to Chinatown's secrets, and Pan feels like she herself betrayed her father's people. After Carson's moment of contemplation at the park, he finally goes to Chinatown to see Pan, and she is dressed like a Chinese woman: "Mark Carson felt strangely chilled. Pan was not herself tonight. She did not even look herself. He had been accustomed to seeing her in American dress. Tonight she wore the Chinese costume. But for her clear-cut features she might have been a Chinese girl" (66). This final moment supports Erika Lee's suggestion that Chinese identity is socially constructed. Mark Carson, confronting the duality of human nature, acts on the insidious and cruel side. Although biracial, Pan is an American-born, Chinese American girl who can easily live in either world but chooses to associate the racial identity rejected by

people like Mark Carson who privilege whiteness. Pan is a biracial American citizen who renounces her cultural loyalty to Americaa for loyalty to Chinese culture.

As a journalist herself, Sui Sin Far resembles Mark Carson, who gets the scoop on Chinatown for her white readership. She used her biracial status to gain access, but she did not exploit her Chinese subjects. Instead, her goal was racial uplift, to reveal the injustice of exclusion era discrimination that hurt virtuous, biracial people like Pan, and to warn off wolfish inquirers who preyed on the innocent for personal gain. Pan's biracial status does not confuse her in the end. Rather, she insightfully chooses her Chinese heritage to protest against the injustice of the exclusion laws. Thus, Pan is a complex character tormented by the way American culture makes her two identities seem incongruent. A society that forces her to choose between them denies even birth right citizens the possibility of living in a multicultural democracy.

Sui Sin Far's stories portray residents of Chinatown during the exclusion era as complexly interacting with white people and both rejecting and negotiating Americanization practices. The white people in her fiction are also complex. Their motives and means often conflict with what the Chinese in America want for themselves. Sui Sin Far's stories of the lives of Chinese women do not, however, focus only on differences between traditional Chinese and contemporary Anglo-American culture. Rather, they complexly comment on the injustices of a system that excludes Chinese people who are good and morally upright enough to be productive members of a large democratic society. That society must be tolerant of their views and practices, however, rather than enforcing racial and cultural homogenization. Sui Sin Far uses the marriage relationship in particular to explore issues of identity and citizenship in the U.S. at the

turn of the 20th century. By writing about rocky marriages, she explores the complex balancing act between Chinese and Anglo-American culture in the lives of immigrants. She does not portray one culture or the other as superior. Indeed, Mrs. Spring Fragrance is Americanized and yet balances her Chinese culture and her marriage without a forced choice between cultures. In Sui Sin Far's fiction, hybridity embodies progress and diversity, the greatest principles of democracy.

CHAPTER 4

BACKS TO THE WALL: AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGE AND JIM CROW IN THE WORKS OF ZORA NEALE HURSTON

For nearly two hundred years, most African American slaves in the U.S. lived in the southern states. Abolitionists of the antebellum era worked enthusiastically to abolish slavery, but once the Civil War was over and Reconstruction failed, progress for African Americans was elusive if not altogether a fiction. Although the Fourteenth Amendment made former slaves citizens, in actuality in the late 19th and for half of the 20th century freedmen and women could not act on the rights of citizenship. The legally enforced system of segregation known as Jim Crow separated blacks and whites in public spaces, and threats of violence further complicated attempts by blacks to act on the rights of citizenship, including voting. Jim Crow created a social infrastructure that divided everything by race, from bibles to train cars to schools, effectively marginalizing African Americans. Fifty years of systematic oppression created a racial divide that contradicted the democratic principles of equality and the pursuit of happiness as inalienable rights of American citizens. Indeed, African American access to the promises of democracy was tenuous at best.

Early 20th century African American historians such as Carter G. Woodson shed light on the contradiction between the failure of Reconstruction and the principles of democracy. An important voice of the time, Woodson was an early advocate of black history as a legitimate scholarly subject. In his study of the rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court that repeatedly upheld the separate but equal doctrine, Woodson makes clear that

the promise of so-called Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution passed in the aftermath of the Civil War was hollow. From the Supreme Court, he drily observes, "the Negros received little encouragement" (38). Literacy tests and property ownership requirements for voters imposed by Southern states made it impossible for African Americans to exercise the right to vote, and white trade unions prevented African Americans from gaining access to well paid jobs (Woodson 49-51). Woodson concludes that the courts reinforced a double standard that marginalized African Americans and left them little recourse against discrimination by the white majority. Absent enforcement by the courts of the rights guaranteed to African Americans in Reconstruction Amendments and the Civil Rights Act of 1870, African Americans were only partial citizens of the U.S.

For African American women, the path to full citizenship was even more difficult. Marriage determined the civic presence in American polity of both black and white women. During the slavery era, the law did not recognize marriage between slaves, largely because slave marriages would have impeded the ability of slave owners to break up slave families. Absent legal marriage, slaves created their own version of the marriage that, because of the constant threat of the dissolution of the family unit, was necessarily looser than the white ideal (if not actual practice) of marriage. Slave marriage was an adaptive form that gave some semblance of commitment to families under constant assault by slave owners who wanted no impediment to selling their slaves or to their sexual access to females/breeding stock without slave husbands getting in the way. Nancy Cott's study of marriage practices during and after slavery shows the complex relationship of slave marriage customs to African American legal marriage after

the Civil War. Both before and after the Civil War, African American women were doubly marginalized. As Cott documents, both African Americans and government officials embraced legal marriage among former slaves because the white majority deemed slave marriages immoral and former slaves wanted the protection that legal marriage affords.[16] Paradoxically, efforts after the Civil War to legalize marriage for freedmen and women and make African American marriage over in the image of Anglo-American marriage practices made African American men heads of household and subordinated women as wives.

By the end of the 19th century, however, marriage relations proved inconsequential in the lives of African American women in Jim Crow South. Legal marriage modeled on the white ideal also enforced an economic model of the male head of the household as financial provider. Although legal marriage may have initially empowered freedmen, as their political status declined after the failure of Reconstruction, neither African American men nor women could claim the equality promised by the Reconstruction Amendments. Instead, Jim Crow in the South and an uneasy equality in the North further alienated African Americans from a meaningful civic presence in the American community. This chapter is focused on African American marriage in Zora Neale Hurston's fiction as a crucible in which African Americans women's citizenship is defined. The marriage relationship reflects the society in which it is embedded, including some of the most insidious effects of the caste system on African American wives and husbands.

Hurston's early 20th century short stories, set in the South, reveal the oppression African Americans suffered in American society. Set in all African American towns, her

stories depict communities on the margins of American society. Even though her characters live a part from white society, their marriages show how they have internalized the oppression of Jim Crow, where husbands and wives treat each other in ways that reflect their sense of oppression. In their battles over gender roles in marriage, Hurston's husbands and wives act on the only agency they have in a society that oppresses them and discriminates against them. Husbands transfer their feelings of powerlessness onto their wives, but wives also fight against their husbands in order to claim rights to their bodies and labor. Hurston depicts her wives as exemplary revolutionaries, whose battles represent larger battles for social and legal reforms benefitting all African Americans. In the two short stories highlighted in this chapter, "The Gilded Six-Bits" and "Sweat," however, the battles for agency are difficult and the victories morally questionable. In "The Gilded Six-Bits," the wife fits comfortably into the groove of submission to her husband and society. Hurston's fiction vividly documents African American lives in the Jim Crow era, but writing fiction was also Hurston's own revolutionary act, a way of claiming full American citizenship. Jim Crow was the social and political reality of America, Hurston's writing in the face of oppression urged African Americans to promote changes in government policy.[17]

African American writers of the late 19th and early 20th century did not write in a vacuum. By making the ills of society a conspicuous backdrop in their fiction and writing about contemporary society, African American writers expressed their discontent with oppressive government policies. In her illuminating survey of African American women's popular literature Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century, Claudia Tate argues that such fictional domestic dramas

of genteel African American lives were designed to show that African Americans could successfully imitate white marriage conventions and were thus qualified to become productive citizens. These stories of domesticity and marriage allowed African Americans of the post-Reconstruction period "to identify imaginatively with actions they would like to perform but could not in the ordinary course of events given their exclusion from civil political participation" (7). Writing such fiction was a way for African Americans to imagine themselves into the American polity when they were barred from full civic participation in the real world. Tate argues that genteel domestic fiction of African American life was not merely escapist; instead, "It offered the recently emancipated an occasion for exercising political self-definition in fiction at a time when the civil rights of African Americans were constitutionally sanctioned but socially prohibited" (7). Fiction writing, then, was a site and method for African Americans to express publicly their disconent with American policy. American citizens had the right to express their opinions on the direction of the country and to vote as a way of bringing about change in the government (or, in the case of voting, all *male* citizens had the right to vote, but women did not acquire the right until 1920). Rather than using fiction to explore a kind of political fantasy of democratic participation, like the authors Tate analyzes, Hurston's work explores harsher realities and shows the mountains that must be moved in order for oppressive policy to change. The authors Tate analyzes suggest that African Americans can fit into the mold of citizenship without compromising their identities, and their domestic novels work to counter stereotypes about African Americans as lazy and primitive and thus unfit for the citizenship the Reconstruction Amendments conferred on them. According to Tate, "a main objective of post-

Reconstruction domestic novels was to repudiate retrogression" and put their faith in "work, education, and frugality as practical means to attaching social and economic prosperity…[thus] demonstrating their worthiness as full U.S. citizens" (10-11). In Hurston's stories "Sweat" and "The Gilded Six-Bits," African Americans do not achieve full citizenship based on education and elbow grease, nor is there a fantasy of belonging based on achieving some generic standard of behavior for citizens of a democracy. The marriages in "Sweat" and "The Gilded Six-Bits" are not allegories of African American adaptation to a white dominated American society. Indeed, in her stories of marriage Hurston breaks the mold of African American domestic fiction created by her predecessors and urges revolutionary change. Confronting oppressive American social policy that fails to fulfill the democratic principles or to protect its African American citizens from harm and injustice, she rejects it, using her fiction as a means of critique. Hurston's fiction suggests that African American women, as socially powerless and voiceless citizens excluded from democratic participation, must find another way to claim a civic identity. The authors of the earliest African American domestic dramas assumed that African Americans could prove their worthiness for citizenship through imitation of white literary conventions, but Hurston's characters do not imagine that they can belong. Instead the actions of Hurston's characters, and especially her women characters, are symptomatic of the real dysfunction of the American government, which supported Jim Crow in the South and of uneasy equality in the North. Hurston's characters are anything but "happy darkies" unquestioningly accepting American policy.

In her final chapter, Tate acknowledges the marked shift in African American domestic fiction from the late 19th century post-Reconstruction period to the 1920s.

Novels of the 1920s "exploit the domestic discourse to chronicle respectively the preservation and ultimately the deterioration of black Americans' collective dream of freedom as full U.S. citizens" (214). Hurston's fiction does the same, but I would suggest that her female characters are keenly aware of the reality of their inability to access the rights of U.S. citizenship. Their failure to imagine their way out of difficult marriages reveals their second-class, marginalized status in the American polity. As African American women, their dreams of full citizenship have been deferred by social practices that circumscribe their actions and which Hurston represents symbolically in the form of abusive husbands. Yet, Hurston's women characters in "Sweat" and "The Gilded Six-Bits" do seem to have dreamed, if only briefly, of happiness with their husbands, even if the reality of systematic oppression invades their domestic lives and effectively forecloses such dreams. Not only does society at large prevent their achievement of full citizenship, marriage and white models of patriarchy also stand in the way of their actualization of political agency.

"Sweat" is a vivid reminder of the far-reaching consequences of Jim Crow in the South. Protagonist Delia fights with her husband for control of her body and property and is analogous to the difficulties that all African Americans faced in the early decades of the 20th century. The story opens at 11 o'clock at night, when Delia is sorting laundry of white people who hire her to do this backbreaking labor. Her husband decides to play a trick, throwing a bullwhip on her shoulders to scare her. A frightened Delia asks him, "Sykes, what you throw dat whip on me lik dat? You know it would skeer me – looks just like a snake, an' you knows how skeered Ah is of snakes" (26). Clearly, Sykes' trick is an attempt to assert power over his wife. In her introduction to an edition of Hurston's

short fiction (including "Sweat" and "The Gilded Six-Bits"), Cheryl A. Wall, like several other scholars, suggests that the whip as imitation snake and the actual rattle snake Sykes later brings into the house are phallic symbols of his domination of Delia (Wall 10, see also Abrahams 106, West 29). I argue that the whip and snake represent Sykes' own oppression by Jim Crow, which he attempts to transfer to his wife. Delia seems at first to bear the abuse patiently as she gathers the clothes and continues sorting them, but she loses patience when he insults her religion. Sykes criticizes Delia not only for working for white people, but for working on Sunday, the day of rest prescribed for Christians in the Bible. Sykes himself is clearly not religious; instead, he accuses Delia, a devout Christian, of hypocrisy for working on the Sabbath just after she has returned from church. Sykes tells her, "You ain't nothing but a hypocrite. One of them amen-corner Christians – sing, whoop, and shout, then come home and wash white folks' clothes on the Sabbath" (26-27). Precisely as he intends, Delia takes his accusation as a deeply personal affront. It is the last straw. Hurston describes Delia as transformed when she talks back to Sykes; her "meekness seemed to slip from her shoulders like a blown scarf" (27). The blown scarf image suggests that her patience is a gentle quality, but she can also shed that gentle quality rapidly, as anger emerges and she musters strength in "her poor little body, [with] her bare knuckly hands bravely defying the strapping hulk before her" (27). She rises up and confronts her husband head on saying, "Looka heah, Sykes, you done gone too fur. Ah been married to you fur fifteen years, and Ah been takin' in washin' fur fifteen years. Sweat, sweat, sweat! Work and sweat, cry and sweat, pray and sweat…Mah tub of suds if filled yo' belly with vittles more times than yo' hands is filled it. Mah sweat is done paid for this house and Ah reckon Ah kin keep on sweatin' in it"

(27). As Cheryl Wall notes, "No matter how onerous the labor, a black woman could always find work in the early twentieth century South. Black men had more difficulty" (8), and, indeed, Delia is the sole breadwinner in her family. As Nancy Cott observes of African American families in the 19th century during Reconstruction, when marriage was legalized for freedmen and women, the white model of the male centered household was an arrangement that didn't work for many African American women. John Freedman, a work of didactic fiction created by white reformers, aimed to inspire emancipated slaves to take up the male-head-of-household structure. In one story a young African American wife complains that her husband, Prince, will not work, but an idealistic white female teacher consoles her with the thought that once he "learned the value of libery" his behavior would change (qtd in Cott 81). John Freedman promotes the twin notions that freedmen must work to support their families and that freedwomen must stay at home and keep house. Prince eventually learns what he is supposed to do and becomes the economic head of the household. At the end of the story, a white Union officer remarks, "When a man has a wife and child to work for, he has a motive to industry and economy which others do not have. If he is good he will try very hard to make his family happy, and his home comfortable and pleasant, and will never want to spend money for his own selfish pleasure, which he can use for their enjoyment" (qtd in Cott 81). The book promotes the American dream of upward mobility, and the pursuit of happiness is embedded in the marriage relationship between African American men and women. Indeed, marriage provides access not only to happiness, but also to citizenship. In "Sweat," however, marriage does not foster the pursuit of happiness, nor does Delia seem to benefit from being able to marry legally. Sykes is no "Prince" or benevolent patriarch;

instead he is a monster who resents his wife's economic status as primary wage earner. Her status so angers him that he tries to beat her into submission. Late 20th and early 21st century scholarship frequently focuses on Sykes' inability to earn a living, and some scholars conclude that Delia's work emasculates Sykes.[18] I would add that he punishes Delia for the way white society emasculates him. When Delia brandishes her iron skillet and threatens to return violence with violence, Sykes is only temporarily cowed. Not only is he determined, but the racism he internalizes is tenacious. Delia's angry speech indicates that she is the true head of this household, and her status as property owner aligns her with a pillar of American citizenship. She both supports her husband financially and puts a roof over his head, but she paid for the property with the wages she earns from the white people. It seems that Delia's white employers are the real target for Sykes' aggression and animosity, but abusing her is easier than effectively resisting white economic power.

In the early 20th century, African American women had a different relationship to work than white women did, just as they did in the 19th century. In her study of African American women's labor in the fiction of the Harlem Renaissance, Sharon L. Jones suggests that Delia's work evokes that of African American slave women: "Even after slavery ended, black women worked outside the home to provide economically for the family. The representation of Delia in 'Sweat' illustrates Hurston's deft portrayal of a black woman whose sweat remains unappreciated by the ones she labors for – her husband and the whites in her community" (83-84). Delia is caught in a terrible double bind. Sykes abuses and oppresses her, and her white employers constrain her. When Delia claims ownership of her little cottage and has earned the right to labor in it, she acts

on the slim margin of agency she has as compared to her husband. However, her work for white people is back-breaking, and she, too, transfers her feelings of oppression onto her marriage partner. She tries to change dynamics of her marriage in order to overcome her feelings of powerlessness imposed on her by the dominant culture beyond the walls of her little cottage. Delia is not a passive victim. Rather she, too, brings the insidious effects of a segregated society into the marriage relationship, where she plays out her desire for emancipation by standing up to her husband.

Overbearing men like Sykes appear often in Hurston's fiction. Deborah Plant posits that Hurston's portrayal of abusive husbands reflects her resentment toward her domineering father (173), but Plant also suggests that Hurston admired men, complicating her fictionalized versions of black manhood. Plant suggests that Hurston does not like feeble, weak-hearted men, but instead envisions a "benevolent patriarch in a humanistic Eden" (167). There is clearly no benevolent patriarch in "Sweat," however. The patriarch is abusive, manipulative, and he eventually spurs Delia's drastic fatal action (or inaction) at the story's conclusion. Thus, in "Sweat," marriage is the crucible in which oppression causes husband and wife to battle one another. Jim Crow circumscribes both Sykes and Delia, limiting their agency as participants in American civic life.

Delia's body is another site showing the effects of oppression on African American women. When Delia rises up against Sykes, she gathers all the strength she can from her broken down body, abused by the hard work laundering clothes but also by Sykes' continual physical violence against her. As Delia reflects while lying in bed, her life and her body both have changed. In the early days of her marriage, "She was young

and soft then, but now she thought of her knotty, muscled limbs, her harsh knuckly hands, and drew herself into an unhappy little ball in the middle of the big feather bed" (28). In her youth, Delia's body was not hardened by manual labor, and the memory of her young body reminds her of the hopes she once had of happiness with Sykes. The decrepit state of her body fifteen years later reflects fifteen years of hard labor for white people. The transformation of her soft body into a haggard one is a symptom of the systematic oppression of African American women as workers in Jim Crow south. Mentally Delia is worn down as well, but it is her body that is a physical reminder of dashed hopes, lost innocence, and the ways of the working world in America for African American women.

Bertha, Sykes' mistress, is a literary foil and counterpoint to Delia. African American scholar Pearlie M. Peters traces the appearance of characters like Bertha in Hurston's fiction. Bertha as a particular type of Hurston character, Peter observes, "ha[s] negative personality…She is often a misfit and symbolizes the negative side of black womanhood as embodied in her devious ways" (18). Delia would not chase another woman's husband, and the contrast between Bertha and Delia points to Delia's moral superiority. Not only do they contrast morally, Bertha's fat body starkly reminds us that Delia's is a working body, not a leisured one. Sykes brazenly proclaims his preference for fat women over skinny ones: "Ah sho' 'bomminates uh skinny 'oman. Lawdy, you sho' is got one portly shape on you! You kin get *anything* you wants. Dis is *mah* town an' you sho' kin have it" (33, emphasis original). If Delia's work and status as economic head of the household emasculates Sykes, he feels powerful when he harbors and succors a fat woman who does not bear the marks of the brutalitiy of oppression. Sykes may

succeed in transferring his feelings of impotence onto Delia, but Bertha is a reminder of all the things Delia is not, and Sykes latches onto Bertha to reclaim his manhood. Even black men on the front porch of the town's general store recognize that Bertha is a poor substitute for Delia, however. They comment on Bertha's dark skin color and corpulence by calling her a "hunk uh liver wid hair on it," and they call her repulsive when she laughs and "opens huh mouf an' latches it back tuh de las' notch. No old grandpa alligator down in lake Bell ain't got nothin' on huh" (32). Liver is cheap food, and a good modest woman like Delia would not laugh the way Bertha does. Nevertheless, it seems that Bertha strangely escapes the negative effects of oppression in a way that Delia can't. Bertha's portly body is not deformed by hard labor – she seems to have no job – and Sykes plays the role of economic provider for her. Indeed, this unmarried couple would seem to be successfully imitating the conventions of white marriage. Bertha does not truly transcend social limits and achieve freedom, however. She lacks the agency required to act independently, even in the context of the all-black town where the story takes place. She seems to be an exception at the same time that she is a good example of the lengths an African American might go to shrug off the effects of oppression (in her case committing adultery with a man known to physically abuse his wife). There is the potential that Sykes would tire of Bertha, just as he tired of Delia, and then would transfer his frustration with his oppression in the Jim Crow South to her, just as he did Delia. Delia differs from Bertha in one crucial respect – Delia comes close to being autonomous and independent. Delia fights Sykes for control of her own labor and property, which marks her as a potential citizen. Hurston portrays Delia as occupying the moral high ground, while Bertha represents the opposite extreme of black womanhood, being

completely dependent on a man who is himself lacking real agency in the early 20th century Jim Crow South.

After the opening conflict of "Sweat," Delia and Sykes are at an uneasy stalemate, until Delia comes home one day to find that Sykes has brought a rattle snake into the house to try to scare her. A frightened Delia pleads with Sykes to remove the snake to no avail. Delia presses her case by insulting Sykes by "playing the dozens," "Yo' ole black hide don't look lak nothing tuh me, but uh passle uh wrinkled up rubber, wid yo' big ole yeahs flappin' on each side lak uh paih uh buzzard wings" (36). Pearlie M. Peters suggests that Delia's words successfully emasculate Sykes: "Her victory is a verbal one where she plays the dozens and ridicules Sykes to the point where he is virtually helpless and speechless. She emasculates him as she methodologically strips away his once superior voice and mightly fighting hand" (107). The "wrinkled up rubber" is a sly reference to his manhood: Delia suggests that he is impotent literally and metaphorically. Although Sykes' adultery is an attempt to reclaim his authority, Delia momentarily renders him powerless. His "buzzard wing" ears evoke the way he scavenges from Delia. When she threatens to go to the white people if he abuses her again, Sykes threatens her with violence but does not act on his threat before he leaves the house. As a democratic republic, the U.S. is a representative democracy: citizens choose their leaders by voting, and their elected leaders shape policy. The right to vote is thus a keystone of U.S. citizenship. In playing the dozens, Delia effectively claims a voice and speaks against the tyranny of her husband. Her voice is Delia's means of exercising agency and is analogous to the right to vote, which by the time "Sweat" was published, women had

achieved. In order for her to effect change, Delia's voice must be heard, so it is ironic that at the end of the story, her silence decisively frees her from Sykes.

On a Sunday after Delia comes home from church, she thinks about her hard life and wishes that there was a way out of it: "Fifteen years of misery and suppression had brought Delia to the place where she would hope *anything* that looked towards a way over or through her wall of inhibitions" (37, emphasis original). Sykes is her primary insurmountably inhibition, and the language implies that it would take an act of God to help her overcome him. She begins to sort the laundry where "she could sit and reach through the bedposts – resting as she worked" (37). Her position on the bed with her arms through the bedposts evokes manacles and the stocks, and, indeed, Delia is chained to both the works she does for the white people and her parasitic husband, who takes her wages. When Delia realizes the snake is in the house and is not confined to its cage, she runs to the barn to escape. In abject terror she lays in the barn until "out of this an awful calm" (38) and sleep descends on her. She awakes to hear Sykes in the woodpile and watches him enter the house as "the gray in the sky was spreading" (38). The graying sky simultaneously suggests that something bad is going to happen to Sykes and that the breaking dawn symbolizes a positive change for Delia. Delia's serendipitous awakening in the barn suggests that she is waking from a kind of death into a new life. As Delia hears a ruckus in the house, Hurston describes Sykes scream as sounding as if it came from a "maddened chimpanzee, a striken gorilla" (39). His primate scream signifies that Sykes has reverted to an animal state and that Delia sees him as no longer human. As the poison from the rattlesnake's bite begins to circulate through Sykes' body, Delia stays outside the house in the flowerbed. Crucially, Delia hides in flowers on her property:

she owns the house and the land around it, and her connection to the land as owner makes Delia's uneasy emancipation from Sykes particularly significant. She finds strength in the flowerbed because it represents her independence and the fruits of her own labor. Her property embraces her, protecting her from her husband and assuaging her guilt over his death. Thus the nature around the house and the house itself are sites of her rights as a citizen and symbolize her new freedom from the tyranny of her husband.

In this final scene, Delia calculates both that the doctor is too far away to save Sykes and that Sykes knows that she is there and is not sending for help. Delia feels guilty: "She could scarcely reach the chinaberry tree, where she waited in the growing heat while inside she knew the cold river was creeping up and up to extinguish that eye which must know by now that she knew" (40). The heat that Delia feels as the day dawns suggests that blood is coursing through her veins and with it a new life for her body. This heat constrasts starkly with the "cold river" of death overtaking Sykes inside the house. It is an oversimplification, however, to suggest that Delia has escaped from the oppressive caste system of the Jim Crow South transferred to her body by the abuse of her frustrated husband. Her shaky retreat to the tree testifies to her uneasiness as she silently watches her husband die. However, in the broader context of the story, Delia's claim of agency works against oppression inflicted both by society and her husband. Hurston seems to suggest that to enact real social change and shape government policy, a woman must claim the rights of U.S. citizenship. If the American government supports Jim Crow in the South, then bucking that system is acting on the rights of citizenship, analogous to voting to change the policy. Yet, even though all adult women citizens gained the right to vote in 1920, Jim Crow still would have disenfranchised Delia. She

and her male peers might have been able to vote in elections affecting soley their segregated African American town, but were likely powerless to use the vote to effectively change beyond its boundaries. Even without the literal opportunity to overthrow Jim Crow by voting, however, Delia's actions at the end of the story stand in for her absent vote. Refusing to help Sykes is the only way Delia can change the circumstances of her life. The real struggle, however, is to overcome internalized oppression, and in order to do that African Americans must take revolutionary action. Delia is a problematice revolutionary: she is uneasy as she sits under the chinaberry tree and is upset by watching her husband die. Throughout the story, Delia not only wants to end her husband's violence against her but also to claim her property rights. Property ownership alone does not guarantee Delia's liberation from the oppression of Southern society. In this post-woman-suffrage story, Hurston dramatizes the hard long path to full citizenship and representation in the polity for African American women. There is no indication in the story that Delia will shrug off the manacles of her labor for her white employers. The systematic oppression of African American women ran deep and was hard to change, but to effect change, women like Delia had to find a way to voice their rejection of oppression and the caste systemt. By letting her husband die Delia takes control of her life and acts on the rights of citizenship to challenge Jim Crow. As a husband, Sykes is incapable of standing up to oppressive policy and fails to prevent the emotional trauma caused by segregation from seeping into the marriage. Through Delia, Hurston suggests that an African American woman who does not depend on men has a better chance of liberating herself from oppression. Doubt lingers, however, because Delia has taken only the first step by emancipating herself from her husband, and it is not

clear that her rebellion will go any further. Just as Sykes transfers his feelings of impotence onto his wife, Delia plays out her desires for freedom from oppression and Jim Crow in a contest with her spouse. Thus, the marriage relationship serves as a proxy for American society: unable to change society, husbands and wives struggle with each other. In particular, African American women struggle with their husbands for their rights to work, property, and voice when the real object of their agitaton for freedom is a government that excludes them.

Like "Sweat," Hurston's story "The Gilded Six-Bits" portrays an African American marriage in which only hurt and threatened violence can resolve the troubles between husband and wife. As in "Sweat," the marriage serves as a metaphor for the deterioration of African American citizenship: African American women are powerless in relation to the dominant white society and African American men similarly lack agency. Thus "The Gilded Six-Bits" similarly challenges late 19th century African American dramas and restates African American's alienation from full citizenship.

Whereas "Sweat" opens with Delia at work sorting clothes, "The Gilded Six-Bits" opens with Missy May bathing herself: "Missy May was bathing herself in the galvanized washtub in the bedroom. Her dark-brown skin glistened under the soapsuds that skittered down from her washrag. Her stiff young breasts thrust forward aggressively like broad-based cones with the tips laquered in black" (135). Missy May has time to focus on her own beauty and to pamper herself before her husband Joe comes home from the night shift at the white-owned fertilizer company. Missy May's attitude about her conspicuous beauty is brazen, perhaps even arrogant. Her beautiful body contrasts starkly with Delia's knarly limbs and sweaty brow. Missy May doesn't work

outside the home, but she is a diligent housewife who makes sure that "everything [is] clean from the front gate to the privy house. Yard raked so that the strokes of the rake would make a pattern. Fresh newspaper cut in fancy-edge on the kitchen shelves" (135). Missy May's work differs from Delia's: she bathes in her galvanized steel tub rather than sweating over it as she washes white people's clothes. Missy May perhaps bathes before her husband comes home because she also sweats over his laundry before he comes home. However, the story portrays the housework she does is for her husband's pleasure: he likes to come home to a clean house and a lovely, polished wife, and Missy May plays the part expertly. First Missy May cleans the house, then she cleans herself, obliterating the evidence of her labor.

The kind of work Joe does at the fertilizer plant is not described; however, his payment of Missy May with coins makes their situations parallel. Joe works in the public realm, gets paid for his work, and then comes home and acts the boss, using part of his salary to pay his wife for her work in the privacy of their home: "Missy May grinned with delight. She had not seen the big tall man come stealing in the gate and creep up the walk grining happily at the joyful mischief he was about to commit. But she knew that it was her husband throwing silver dollars in the door for her to pick up and pile beside her plate at dinner. It was this way every Saturday afternoon. The nine dollars hurled into the open door, he scurried to a hiding place behind the cape jasmine bush and waited" (136). This playful "mischief" contrasts sharply from the tricks that Sykes plays on Delia. The interaction between Missy May and Joe is playful and erotic, rather than abusive and torturous. Nevertheless, Joe's "mischief" exemplifies African American husbands' economic control over their wives. In her article about the gold standard and

the economics of "The Gilded Six-Bits," Hildegaard Hoeller suggests that the interaction between Missy May and Joe reinterprets the economic dynamics of the husband-wife relationship: "While the story celebrates the joyful, erotic rituals of husband and wife, the function of these rituals is simultaneously to deny, rewrite, and assert various economic relationships between them" (768). Joe's relationship with Missy May mirrors the relationship between white society and African Americans. Joe is in charge financially in the home, but his employers have the real economic control. Missy May's powerlessness later in the story is analogous to Joe's impotence in white society. In her analysis of economic relationship in the story, Hoeller focuses on the parallel status of Missy May's housework and Joe's factory work, as well as Joe's payment of a gilded coin for sex, and Missy May's humbling at the end of the story. Money defines the husband-wife relationship in the story, but it also defined African American marriage generally in the early 20th century. As Wall and other critics have noted, black women could more easily find employment than black men, but Missy May does not work outside the home. On the surface, their marriage reflects tenets of Victorian domesticity. However, Missy May still symbolically earns a wage for her work in the home. She takes care of the house and of her husband, but Joe controls the finances and doles out a limited amount to his wife. Hoeller suggests, "Joe (like a bank as his name suggests) distributes money and holds the power to make decisions in the home" (768). Joe is not a tyrant, nor does he abuse his wife for the work that she does or does not do, but he is the head of the household, and Missy May keeps the house to please him. Her pleasure depends on Joe's pleasure. When he throws coins at the door, Joe asserts himself as head of household and reminds Missy May of her subordinate status. Sykes, unlike Joe, is

unemployed, openly audulterous, and violent. Sykes' head of household status is thus of a different cast than Joe's, but Joe is actually more powerful and assertive than Sykes. Joe finds a way to keep Missy May subordinate to his will without threatening violence. Instead he is a benevolent patriarch who subtly and insidiously reminds her that she is powerless in the household. Thus Joe creates a home life that mirrors the dynamics of his relationship with white society. Missy May plays the happy wife to Joe just as Joe plays the happy darky to his white employers and white society.

Missy May's happy home life is a farce. As in "Sweat," the enfranchisment of women in 1920 does not change Missy May's status in society or in her home. Both African American men and women were prevented from exercising the right to vote, and Missy May's silence in the house reflects this repression. Unlike Delia, Missy May does not act on her citizenship to critique and agitate against her submission to her husband, and, by extension, her submission to white society. On the surface, Joe and Missy May's marriage is like the marriages in Victorian domestic dramas Tate analyzes. Their model marriage could inspire African American readers to imitate their cozy and happy home life and thus prove themselves worthy of U.S. citizenship. Missy May does not embody the modern individualism and agency of work and property ownership Delia fights so hard for. Instead, Missy May does not consider herself powerful enough to change her circumstances. She desires nothing more than to be a housewife. Together, however, these stories testify to use of writing as a form of citizenship: she writes against American policy that harms African Americans. She critiques American society and urges African Americans to unite to end oppression. Delia and Missy May represent a range of angles from which Hurston agitates for change. Delia fights for independence,

whereas Missy May fits comfortably into the groove of submission that Joe transfers to her from his situation in white dominated society. Thus, Missy May's situation exemplifies what happens when women do not act to change their situation and society.

After the playful fight at the beginning of "The Gilded Six-Bits," in which Missy May searches Joe's pockets for candy, Joe tells her about Otis D. Slemmons, a new member of the African American community who is from "spots and places," (138). As a newly-arrived black man in an all black town, Slemmons is simultaneously an insider and an outsider. He claims no roots and no family connections. He also does not work for the white-owned fertilizer company, where most of the men in town work, claiming instead to have gotten his money from rich people in big cities. The air of independence that Slemmons projects is an extension of the false liberty that money confers on him. He transforms his seeming powerlessness in white society into power in African American society, where money allows him to feign independence from the real social inequality of American society. As an insider he is a curious figure. He understands the economics of the town and flaunts a symbol of wealth (a gold coin) that the townsfolk value. He understands the importance of money in Joe and Missy May's community. Believing themselves to be poor in comparison, Joe and Missy May admire Slemmons' characteristics that seem to place him in a higher social class. Joe's description of Slemmons to Missy May emphasizes his belly: "Yeah, he's up to date. He got de finest clothes Ah ever seen on a colored man's back…Wisht Ah had a build on me lak he got. He ain't puzzle-gutted, honey. He jes' got a corperation. Dat make him look lak a rich white man. All rich mens is got some belly on 'em" (138). The white model of wealth Joe refers to excludes him and the other African American men who work at the white-

owned fertilizer plant. Indeed, Joe's description of Slemmons emphasizes his difference from the rest of the town. Joe admires his clothes and his body, and particularly the large belly symbolizing white wealth and power over people like Joe. It is also no coincidence that Missy May's body is round and soft, if not as fleshy as Slemmons' body. Labor does not mar Missy May's body the same way it does Delia's in "Sweat." Her body reflects back to Joe an image of what he thinks wealth and power looks like. Missy May's body conspicuously reminds Joe of his own economic power and mastery in his home.

Missy May chides her husband for wishing to look like Slemmons and tells him that many rich white men are not corpulent like Slemmons: "Ah seen de pitchers of Henry Ford and he's a spare-built man and Rockefeller look lak he ain't got but one gut…ah'm satisfied wid you jes' lak you is, baby. God took pattern after a pine tree and built you noble. Youse a pritty still man, and if Ah knowed any way to make you mo' pretty still Ah'd take and do it" (138). Missy May pokes holes in Joe's theory about rich men, but crucially she uses examples of rich white men instead of African American men. Hoeller suggests that African Americans had not acquired wealth in the same way as white people had, that they were, in fact, excluded from wealth: "The story suggests that African Americans cannot acquire gold through business but only through a fairy-tale stroke of luck or by 'selling' themselves to white people" (772). Fords and Rockefellers are fantasy rich men, whose legendary wealth is beyond the imagination of people like Missy May and Joe. Joe clearly admires Slemmons, but as a wealthy black man, Slemmons might as well be a unicorn. Eventually, of course, he proves too good to be true.

Early in the story, Missy May and Joe are happy in their marriage, with no inkling of trouble ahead that will change their relationship. Slemmons and his ice cream parlor bring trouble, however. Slemmons compliments Missy May to Joe, and Joe is impressed with the way Slemmons talks: "'Who is dat broad wid de forty shake?' Dat's a new word. Us always thought forty was a set of figgers but he showed us where it means a whole heap of things. Sometimes he don't say forty, he jes' say thirty-eight and two and dat mean de same thing. Know whut he tole me when Ah was payin' for our ice cream? He say, 'Ah have to hand it to you, Joe. Dat wife of yours is jes' thirty-eight and two. Yessuh, she's forte'. Ain't he killin'?" (139). Slemmons' slick talk impresses Joe, and he fails to understand that Slemmons is pricing Missy May, judging her as a commodity on the open market even though she is married. The language of Slemmons' appraisal of Missy May suggests a slave auction. It also suggests that Slemmons, like white masters, did not respect African American marriage; Slemmons feels free to break up a black family. Perhaps Slemmons is less interested in breaking up a family than in buying Missy May to have sexual access to her. In any event, Joe is blind to the fact that Slemmons wants to steal his wife. Of course, Slemmons does not pay Joe. Instead, he gives Missy May the gilded coin, making clear that Joe is powerless in the face of a slick imposter who puts on a show of being a member of the African American community but who, behind the scenes, acts like a privileged white man. On the other hand, Joe and Slemmons are not that different: Joe pays for Missy May every week for sex, just like Slemmons, who promises Missy May a gold coin if she sleeps with him. Although both men pay for sex, the exchange is about more than sex. Rather, both exchanges are delicate political negotiations. In her article about "The Gilded Six-Bits" Laurie

Champion argues that money is inherently political in the story: "Far from taking a non-political stance, 'The Gilded Six-Bits' demonstrates that economics regulates Missy May's sexuality. Hurston shows Missy May as a victim of a capitalist economic structure that exploits women who become commodities for empowered men" (84). The men completely subordinate Missy May, and she doesn't escape either relationship in a way that leaves her independent or empowered. Even though all of the primary characters in the story are black, Missy May's situation exemplifies the marginalization of African American women in America's predominantly white society. Marriage as legal institution holds Missy May in bondage, and she cannot escape or transcend it. Instead, the price for her sexuality escalates. When Joe accosts Slemmons in the bedroom, Slemmons offers a specific amount of money to Joe so that he will not kill him: "'Please, suh, don't kill me. Sixty-two dollars at de sto' gold money'" (141). From nine silver dollars to sixty-two dollars in gold coins, Missy May's value increases while she herself is morally bankrupt. Joe also bears responsibility for her compromised morality, however. Missy May is skeptical about Slemmons, but Joe insists on taking her to the ice cream parlor to show her off every week. He seems anxious to have others recognize the value of his wife as property. If he had not done so, it is possible that Slemmons would not have seduced his wife. Missy May explains to Joe that she slept with Slemmons so she could get the gold piece for Joe and because Slemmons would not leave her alone: "Oh Joe, honey, he said he wuz gointer gimme dat gold piece money and he jes' kept on after me" (142). Indeed, Joe confiscates Slemmons's watch fob with a bit of broken chain as "the link between historical slavery and the ideology of consumerism" (Abrahams 77). The broken chain and the gilded money remind readers that the white-

controlled capitalist economy systematically excluded African Americans. Capitalism and citizenship are lined as well: one of the rights of citizenship is the right to make a living. After the failure of Reconstruction during the Jim Crow era, African Americans lived in enforced poverty. White-controlled trade unions and physical violence kept African Americans from the best jobs. Excluding African Americans from full participation in the free market was another means of denying them full citizenship. Yet the economy of Missy May and Joe's household is a miniature economy in which they act out fantasies of full participation in the American economy. Joe works in a white-owned company, but his job does not pay him enough to make him economically secure. While Missy May and Joe are not wealthy, in their home Joe is supremely wealthy. The capitalist economy of their household allows them to imagine their successful integration into the American economy.

After Joe catches her with Slemmons, Joe punishes her with the silent treatment, and then her own guilty conscience punishes her. She allows the house to fall into disrepair and takes no pleasure in cleaning and preparing for Joe's return. Joe eventually returns and seems different to her: "Missy May knew why she didn't leave Joe. She couldn't. She loved him too much. But she couldn't understand why Joe didn't leave her. He was polite, even kind at times, but aloof. There were no more Saturday romps. No ringing silver dollars to stack beside her plate. No pockets to rifle. In fact the yellow coin in his pocket was like a monster hiding in the cave of his pockets to destroy her" (143). Even though he comes back, the marriage relationship has changed. Joe is holding onto the one thing that causes shame in Missy May, Slemmons' gilded coin attached to the broken chain. While Joe doesn't lord it over her, he knows that she is

aware of its presence and is cowed by it. Joe, unlike Sykes, does not threaten her with a snake to make his point, but his intent to hurt her is no less obvious. Their seemingly ideal marriage turns into a caricature of the ideal domestic relationship portrayed in African American women's post-Reconstruction novels. Missy May does not attempt to claim rights guaranteed to her in the Reconstruction Amendments or the more recent Woman Suffrage Amendment. She shows no desire to leave the marriage and take up the mantle of citizenship separate from her husband. Indeed, she expresses no desire for agency outside of marriage. In that sense, Missy May seems incapable of the kind of action Delia takes at the end of "Sweat." Whereas Delia takes an extreme action to free herself from her husband, Missy May seems more interested in luring her husband back. Indeed, she shows no awareness that she might be something other than a wife. By portraying a woman with no civic presence in American society who has no desire to change her situation, Hurston exposes the consequences of inaction for African American women like her: complete obliteration and silence in American democracy. As in "Sweat," the marriage relationship is a metaphor for African American women's marginalization in white-controlled American society. Missy May and Joe do eventually overcome the troubles in their marriage, but Missy May has violated one of the important tenets of marriage. Her husband punishes her, forcing her to purge her transgression and repent. The deterioration of both Missy May and the house mirror her emotional decline, but the house is also a chrysalis from which Missy May emerges as a mother and thus a new woman. She emerges when Joe half-heartedly forgives her, but her new identity remains fraught.

Before this new emergence at the end of the story, the cold war between the two briefly thaws when Joe comes home from work and asks for a backrub. The backrub leads to sex, and he leaves Slemmons' gilded coin under her pillow. Missy May forces herself to consider the coin's meaning: "Alone to herself, she looked at the thing with loathing, but look she must. She took it into her hands with trembling and saw first thing that it was no gold piece. It was a gilded half-dollar…She was glad at first that Joe had left it there. Perhaps he was through with her punishment. They were man and wife again. Then another thought came clawing at her. He had come home to buy from her as if she were any woman in the long house. Fifty cents for her love. As if to say that he could pay as well as Slemmons. She slid the coin into his Sunday pants pocket and dressed herself and left his house" (144). Although she is happy that the stalemate is broken, she sees for the first time, and very clearly, that he sees her as a commodity and is paying for sex. He comes home every ten days to be rubbed down but when he comes home one day to find Missy May chopping wood, something that he would have done himself, he takes the axe from her and shocks her by saying, "'You ain't got no business choppin' wood and you know it.' How come? Ah bin choppin' it for de last longest.' 'Ah ain't blind. You makin' feet for shoes'" (144). Missy May is surprised that Joe has noticed her pregnancy and quickly assures him that the child will look like him, but Joe isn't convinced: "Joe said nothing, but he thrust his hand deep into his pocket and fingered something there" (145). He fingers the gilded money in his pocket to remind himself of Missy May's betrayal and to suggest that Slemmons might be the baby's father. After the baby's birth, Joe recovers from his doubt when his mother assures him the baby is his: "You oughter be mightly proud cause he sho' is de spittin' image of yuh,

son" (145). Hoeller suggests that the baby becomes a kind of currency reestablishing the relationship between Missy May and Joe – by exchanging recognition that the baby is not Slemmons' child, they restablish their marriage" (774). At the end of the story, Joe does not disclose to the curious white shopkeeper precisely how he came by the gilded half dollar, but he does ask if it will "spend." Joe says to himself when he decides to use the coin to buy Missy May candy that Slemmons "come 'round me wid his smart talk. Ah hauled off and knocked him down and took his four-bits 'way from 'im. Gointer buy my wife some good ole 'lasses kisses wid it" (146). The thaw of Missy May and Joe's frozen marriage is nearly complete and he resumes the game with her, but the scene at the candy shop is about more than their reconciliation. After Joe leaves the shop, the shopkeeper thinks, "wisht I could be like these darkies. Laughin' all the time. Nothin' worries 'em" (146). Clearly the white owner sees Joe and the other "darkies" as hapless simpletons with no cares of the world, who are content to remain in their subordinate positions and who don't even know that they are being oppressed. Such a view of African American character is reassuring to whites holding economic power, including the shopkeeper and the owner of the fertilizer factory. Although Joe's gesture of reconciliation is powerful, the store owner's comments undercut Joe's dignity and the power he tries to exercise in his relationship with his wife. No matter that he is head of his household, he is still under the thumb of white society, which denies him his rights and excludes him from membership in the American community. Missy May's feelings of powerlessness as a wife are analogous to Joe's feelings of powerlessness as an American citizen. Their marriage testifies to the degradation of African American citizenship.

Not only does the shopkeeper's remark undercut Joe's power, Missy May has lost power and vitality during her husband's absence. Childbirth has ravaged her, and her housekeeping has declined: "Back in Eatonville, Joe reached his own front door. There was the ring of singing metal on wood. Fifteen times. Missy May couldn't run to the door, but she crept there as quickly as she could" (146). Many critics see simplicity and happiness in the story's conclusion (Boyd 244, Chinn and Dunn 776, Jones 163-166, Lowe 191), but Missy May has been transformed for the worse. She is too weak to play her part in her husband's game, and she has become more prostitute than wife. In her economic analysis of the story, Hoeller observes, "[Hurston] turns erotic energy into a kind of prostitution and self-love into self-hatred based on race" (777). Missy May is in a degraded position: although the ritual is the same, her "price" has increased from nine to fifteen dollars as Joe uses money to reassert himself as the man of the house and remind Missy May of her subaltern status. The end of "The Gilded Six-Bits" does not, as Hurston's other short stories do, celebrate a benevolent patriarchy. Instead, it suggests that Joe and Missy May's future marital happiness is uncertain. Missy May's decrepitude casts doubt on her true happiness in their newly configured marital relationship, but she is too weak to change it for the better. Instead, she goes through the motions, trying feebly to recreate a ritual whose meaning has forever changed. Delia finds a way to change her situation by allowing her husband to die, but Missy May remains in bondage with no opportunity – or will – to escape. Unlike Delia, she has no metaphoric or literal voice to fight her subordination or power to fight against injustice. Instead, she remains silenced and oppressed, not only by her husband but by American society. She is not independent or self-supporting and her marriage is hardly a positive model. It seems likely that she

will continue to feel tortured by her husband and will be burdened with more children. Slaves were emancipated decades before and women recently enfranchised, but Missy May does not reap the rewards of these reforms. Her marriage is a dark parody. With her happiness predicated on submission and emotional torture, her marriage is a dark parody of the Victorian ideal rather than a positive for African American readers. Indeed, Missy May and Joe's marriage show the dangers of trying to live up to the cultural standard set by the white majority. Hurston's ironic story testifies to the fact that citizenship was still a distant, even non-existent, goal for African American husbands and wives.

Deborah Plant argues that Hurston believed in an individualistic philosophy of "personal industry, individual merit, and self-empowerment" (14), a philosophy that would seem to complicate Delia's uneasy emancipation and Missy May's subordination. Plant's interpretation focuses on characters like Janey in Their Eyes Were Watching God, who find a state of grace after turbulent experiences in the world. However, Delia and Missy May do not experience individualism as a liberating force that empowers them as women. They, and other female characters in Hurston's short stories, are problematic heroines, and Hurston sometimes sympathizes with her male characters at the expense of her female characters. Indeed, many contemporary feminist scholars are baffled by gender relations in Hurston's fictions and have difficulty justifying a feminist reading (Carby xv, Howard 146, Jordan 112). In "Sweat" and "The Gilded Six-Bits," however, Hurston clearly shows the consequences when men go too far in asserting their patriarchal authority through domestic violence and abuse. Sykes and Joe fail to treat their wives with respect and curb or eliminate their wives' ability to act independently.

Thus, in these two stories, Hurston decidedly critiques and challenges traditional gender roles in marriage, making clear how the stress of living in the Jim Crow South creates severe dysfunction in African American marriage.

The marriages in these two stories are realistic relationships between African American husbands and wives, but they also metaphorically depict the situation of African Americans living in a white-dominated society. When each husband mistreats his wife, he testifies to the impotence of African American men in American society beyond the marriage. Without real social power, they exert power in the most important relationship in their lives. Hurston's stories also dramatize how both African American men and women are barred from full citizenship and participation in the American community. If they were able to act as citizens, they could effectively critique and rebel against unjust government policy that supports the racial caste system and their oppression. Their turbulent marriages, then, symbolize the systematic foreclosure of African American men and women from exercising their rights as American citizens. In "Sweat" Delia achieves an uneasy emancipation after taking desperate measures to claim agency in a society that bars her from expressing dissent. Serendipity and a stroke of luck liberate Delia from her husband's oppression, and Hurston's portrayal of Delia's emancipation suggests that only rebellion against government policy can bring about change. Metaphorically, Delia asserts her right to dissent by letting her husband die. After his death, Delia may go back to work for the white people and therefore to her position on the margins of society, but Hurston leaves open the possibility that if she was able to escape her oppressive marriage she might analogously claim agency in other areas of her life. She could seize the vote and the other rights of citizenship to work against the

oppression of African Americans. Thus the end of the story suggests that women like Delia are on the path to liberation, empowerment and self-control.

Whereas Delia escapes the oppression and frees herself, Missy May is restricted to the home as a kind of prison rather than as a means of liberation. Delia claims full ownership of her house, but Missy May lives in Joe's house, not her own. She struggles to get back into her husband's good graces rather than seeking agency for herself. At the end of these stories, African American woman are, if not the "mules of the world," fighting off oppression from a variety of sources. Joe holds Missy May in golden handcuffs, and while Delia escapes Sykes' bullwhip, she must sweat over washtubs to support herself. Hurston wrote these stories after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, when the law no longer gave men "head of the household" status and power over women in the household. Missy May, however, is still a burdened housewife and mother who, in her subordination to her husband, plays out analogously her subordination in American society. Hurston's stories map the rocky road to full citizenship for African American husbands and wives. By dramatizing the effects of oppression and the caste system on African American families, she uses fiction as a platform for social criticism and dissent. The marriage relationship gives Hurston a fictional paradigm for her critique of American policy, and fiction writing is her means of exercising fully her own power as a citizen to try to change white society's marginalization of African Americans. She writes against the stereotypical conventions of the white marriage ideal to show the possibilities of empowerment, but also the costs. Hurston invites African American women readers to take a stand and change their lives, but at the time she wrote her stories, liberation was still an unrealized promise.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Barbara J. Risman's study of gender as a social construct does not take into account marriage as a social construct that embodies gender inequality. Here I am adding marriage to the list of social constructs that limit and constrain women's agency. By revealing marriage as a social construct, the ideologies of gender inequality become apparent.

[2] Bourne also suggests that there is no real distinct American culture in the truest interpretation of democracy. 91.

[3] Benedict Anderson qualifies citizenship as a collective fantasy nation 15, and Walter Benn Michaels describes nativist ideas of exclusion as based on a family model that excludes based as much on blood or racial identity and fellow feeling 42. Both, however, acknowledge that a shared history and mythology is key to defining national character.

[4] In his study of the history of the Sioux nation, Guy Gibbons outlines the hardships that the Sioux faced during the Dawes Act era. From the loss of thousands of acres of land to surplus sales to the undermining of traditional communal lifestyles, the Sioux were one of the hardest hit by the policy. For further information about the reaction of the Sioux to the Dawes Act see 134-161.

[5] In the pamphlet Zitkala-Sa highlights two cases where female heirs were considered incompetent to handle their business affairs. One female heir was declared incompetent because she supposedly spent too freely the $500 she was given by the Department each month. Another Native American woman was declared incompetent because she did not spend her money. If the Native American girl is of age, it is necessary to only prove that they are incapable of managing their business affairs. Native men, although empowered by the Dawes Act as head of household, were powerless to protect young women from abuse by grafters.

[6] Zitkala-Sa highlights a case where the young heir died and her grandmother, as only heir, was declared in competent to manage the property. As a result, she was given only $15 dollars per month. This case is one of many examples where Native Americans were defrauded and forced into poverty by the guardianship system. Native women were subject to the worst of the attempts at fraud, such as sexual assault and kidnapping. Native men were powerless to stop the abuse.

[7] In his study of assimilation policy, Hoxie suggests that the newly developed sciences made Native Americans the subject and focus of their studies. The new science was meant to illuminate the lives of Native Americans but in actuality it did little to ameliorate their situation.

[8] In his forward to American Indian Stories Dexter Fisher characterizes the disagreement between Zitkala-Sa and her mother over the profits of her land as a dispute between the younger generations and the older one. Young Native Americans like herself represent a more progressive view about land in severalty that simultaneously breaks with tradition but that also works within the parameters of the Dawes Act to secure tribal lands.

[9] For further information about Jewish trades people and the establishment of Jewish communities across the United States, see Barkai 44-53.

[10] For further discussion of the types of community organizations influenced by American models, see Diner 86-113.

[11] For more information about the blending of American and Jewish culture, see Diner 88-89.
[12] For further discussion about the effects of emancipation of Jews in Central Europe, see Diner 14-23.
[13] See Cornell University Law School's outline of the complete decision in U.S. v Wong Kim Ark for further information.
[14] In her article "Domesticating the Aliens Within," Cho Yu Fang writes that Sui Sin Far's stories about romantic love imitated Anglo-American love stories and showed how Chinese culture had evolved enough to be considered eligible for full belonging in the American community. I agree with Fang, but I also suggest that Sui Sin Far's stories about American Chinatowns also show how Chinese culture is superior if not equal to American culture.
[15] Yung suggests that the percentage of Chinese prostitutes in the early days reached nearly 71% of the female Chinese population. As the exclusion laws and moral purity laws were passed, the decline in female immigration was precipitous. 37-40.
[16] Cott summarizes a Reconstructionist who outlined how the white majority viewed slave marriages. Slave marriages were described as "the most revolting slavery has produced upon the Negro, is their utter want of chastity or modesty; hence the marriage relation is yet as but a loose bond, and in many cases parties refused to be married preferring the system of concubinage brought out by slavery. It will take stringent laws rigidly enforced to break up licentious habits of this generation, and a patient teaching of the young" qtd in Cott 85.
[17] Francesca Morgan's book Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America is a study of clubwomen in the early 20th century who institutionalized the caste system in such groups as the Daughters of the American Revolution. African American clubwomen had their own groups such as the National Association of Colored women who acted on their civic nationalism by arguing against segregation. Morgan's concept of "de-Americanization" is a call to work against the injustices of American government policy by acting on the basic right of a citizen to protest and dissent 46. Morgan's focus is on clubwomen and their organizations, but I am adding fiction to the platform where change in government policy can be heard.
[18] For futher discussion about misogynist attitudes of African American characters in Hurston's fiction, see Jones 86, Samuels 243-244, Wall 9, West 29.