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The Masochian Woman: Coming to a Philosophical Understanding of Haudenosaunee Women's Masochism

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Theory and Criticism

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Abstract

This dissertation is a philosophical examination of women's masochism from several different viewpoints. Beginning from a centre of Western psychoanalytic thought, I analyse what Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze, and Slavoj Žižek say about women and masochistic practices, and then continue the discussion by looking at the work of several women theorists and writers, including Angela Carter, Judith Butler, Kathy Acker, and Luce Irigaray. This analysis centres around Lacan's theorization of the death drive through the figure of Antigone, and while he does not describe her as the original woman masochist, I believe she is a central figure in understanding women's masochism and how engaging in masochistic acts is a radical action. In Chapter Two, the concepts of masochism and feminine jouissance are re-examined through the figure of Mohawk Saint Káteri Tekahkwí:tha, a figure whose masochistic jouissance has undergone revision and overwriting by the Roman Catholic Church, but who nevertheless illustrates a form of feminine jouissance which I demystify through an understanding of Haudenosaunee culture. The third Chapter examines the stories which are told about Indigenous people by Canadian settlers such as Duncan Campbell Scott so that the settler reader can enjoy the suffering of Indigenous peoples "masochistically" via the racist fantasy. These fantasies depend on the actual suffering of Indigenous people at the hands of the sadistic settler colonial state, and amount to literary political warfare in the formation of the nation state. The fourth and final Chapter theorizes what masochism means for Indigenous women writers, including E. Pauline Johnson, Marie Clements, and Tenille K. Campbell, and through methods such as Indigenous futurism, Indigenous moral sadomasochism, and Indigenous erotica. To theorize Indigenous women's masochism means to reject it as a fantasy of men and look to our own culture for guidance.

Keywords

Psychoanalysis, Lacan, Deleuze, Masochism, Sadism, Haudenosaunee, Feminism, Káteri Tekahkwí:tha, Duncan Campbell Scott, Indigenous futurism, Kathy Acker, erotica, Sky Woman, E. Pauline Johnson, Indigenous erotica

Summary for Lay Audience

This dissertation is divided into four chapters which each examine women's masochism from a different viewpoint. I begin from an understanding of masochism through continental philosophy and expand into the ways in which women theorists and writers were influenced by these theories and how their own work expresses a new way of looking at women's masochism. The second chapter examines the figure of Mohawk Saint Káteri Tekahkwí:tha to understand how her masochism was not just an influence of the Jesuits, but was uniquely Haudenosaunee. The next chapter delves into more contemporary philosophy related to the pleasure-humiliation discourse that emerges from talking about race. In the Canadian sense, this can be examined via the settler who enjoys masochistically through the pain of real Indigenous bodies. Lastly, my final chapter answers back to the first and the failures inherent in women's masochism by envisioning a form of Indigenous futurism where Indigenous peoples can explore their sexuality outside the context of settler colonialism.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor John Vanderheide for his enduring support in completing this project, and writing reference letters for an innumerable number of scholarships and jobs over the last eight years. I wouldn't have been able to complete this project without John and the support of the rest of my committee: Allan Pero (also a prolific letter writer), Regna Darnell, Renée Bédard, Vanessa Watts, and Lina Sunseri. Many thanks to Melanie Caldwell for always being there to answer questions and help fill out many forms.

I would like to thank my family for the unconditional support over the years. My parents, Peter and Laurie, have always believed in me and have provided support in almost every way imaginable. Thank you to my kids, Ethan and Sebastian, to my brother Tobias and his family, and especially to my sister, best friend, and collaborator Rowan Red Sky: you have helped me survive.

Finishing this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of all the friends I made at Western over the last seven years. Many thanks to my entire PhD cohort: Chris Burke, Andrew Woods, Nick Wees, Sangie Zaitsoff, and Julian Evans for all the studying, drinking, and support over the last five years. Thank you to the rest of my friends for your support: Michael Bodkin, Eva Cupchik, Ryan Shuvera, Annaliese Pope, Ben Maynard, Jonathan Nash, Jeremy R. Smith, Anna Stoutenburg, Jacob Vangeest, Vikram Panchmatia, Maxwell Hyett, Alex Hudecki, Maryam Golafshani, Cindy Smithers Graeme, and many more. Thank you to Aaron for always being happy for my successes, believing that I can finish this, and telling me I have something to look forward to when I'm finished.

I don't think I would have survived grad school, a divorce, and a pandemic without the support of the entire Indigenous community at Western. Thank you to David Monture for your support and belief in me and my work. Thank you to everyone working in Indigenous Student Services, including Mandy Bragg, Amanda Myers, Kelly Nicholas, Ashley Kewayosh Samuel, Donna Noah, Paul Porter and the Elders who provide support,

especially Myrna Kicknosway. Many thanks to the Indigenous Writers Circle, including Dave, Melissa Schnarr, Gerry Dell, Lynn Coveney, and Wanda King. Thank you to the many Indigenous women at Western not already mentioned who provide unconditional support and always work to lift each other up: Lillian Smallboy, Sākihitowin Awâsis, Chantelle Richmond, Vanessa Ambtman Smith, Sara Mai Chitty, Paula Cornelius-Hedgepeth, Tara Rose Hedican, and Candace Brunette-Debassige.

I would like to thank the Southern First Nations Secretariat, especially Jody Noah, for support completing my research.

This dissertation draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

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Preface

I am a member of the Oneida Nation of the Thames, with a mixed settler and Indigenous background. As the daughter of an adoptee, I watched my mother work to reconnect during her adult life, and I was fortunate that she included myself and my siblings in this as well. In my academic work I originally resisted combining Indigenous knowledges with Western philosophy because I didn't want my Indigeneity to be something for academic consumption. As a white-passing Indigenous woman I carry with me a certain degree of privilege, for example, I can walk down the street without being racially profiled. However, that does not mean that I have been exempt from gendered and racialized violence, being called a 'squaw', or suffering from the effects of intergenerational traumas. This is one of the reasons that I eventually decided to take my work in the direction it went and formulate not just a generic "Masochian woman," but the figure of a woman who is grounded in Haudenosaunee matriarchal values and power. I wrote this not for the academy, but for all Indigenous women.

This research emerges from several years of work in the areas of psychoanalysis and women's avant-garde writing. My Master's thesis is an examination of the voice as a Lacanian object of desire in the work of British avant-garde writer Ann Quin, and this thesis led me down the path towards thinking about a philosophy of women's masochism. In fact, this PhD project was originally supposed to include close readings of the work of writers like Quin, Chris Kraus, and Elfriede Jelinek, but I quite simply ran out of room (I'll save those for the book!). My first foray into literary and philosophical masochism was through the work of Rene Girard, when I gave a seminar presentation about his work on masochism for my supervisor's class on Mimesis. The Lacanian analysis I began work on in that seminar was the beginning of this research.

The field study which would develop out of that seminar also became the basis for Chapter One, and which I shared with members of the Theory Centre and Western community by presenting the work in a Theory Session which addressed the initial research question: what does masochism mean for women? The Western theoretical foundations which this initial chapter is focus on are rooted in psychoanalysis and French

philosophy and examine what thinkers like Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze, and Slavoj Žižek say about both masochism in general, and a specific form of women's masochism. This dissertation begins with the question: is women's masochism a fantasy of men's desire? Lacan says the masochist's aim is the anxiety of the Other, so this leads to the question of what exactly the anxiety of men is. For Lacan, he identifies this as the exposure of "*what there is not*" (*Anxiety* 191), but from Deleuze there is a much more specific answer: it is the figure of the "Grecian woman," who "believes in the independence of women and in the fleeting nature of love; for her the sexes are equal" (Deleuze 47). This masochistic woman becomes universalized and in patriarchal Western culture when woman wields power and is the equal of man, she provokes anxiety.

In expanding and working further on the first chapter, I had initially been thinking about the work of many of the avant-garde feminist writers already mentioned. There always seems to be a failure in the masochism which is presented here, whether it is the violence in *The Piano Teacher* or the creation of a pirate feminist dystopia absent of men, women's masochism does not work in a patriarchal culture. Even the figure of Sade's Juliette, whom Carter calls a Nietzschean superwoman, is at risk. One of the women I began to look at is the legendary literary figure of Antigone. She is a central figure in both the work of Lacan (*The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*) and Acker's novel *Pussy, King of the Pirates* (1996). But, even in Lacan's use of Antigone in his discussion of the death drive, and a comparison to Sade's heroes, Lacan does not outright call her masochistic. However, in my own analysis of her desire, her actions, and speech she is a primary figure of Western women's masochism. Acker's pastiche writing appropriates the figure of Antigone in her retelling of literary works such as *Treasure Island* and *The Story of O* and she makes Antigone one of her pirate girls. In this analysis, the concept of language becomes incredibly important in thinking about masochism; through the analysis of *Antigone* it can be understood that Creon's law and his speech are part of the chain of signifiers, directly related to metaphor, and opposed to this is Antigone's own speech, separated from the signifying chain and is represented through metonymic speech. This language work carries over to both French feminist thought and Acker's pastiche, itself a form of literary masochism, and thus language is part of the way women can invent a new world for themselves, freed from phallogentrism.

The research for my second chapter on the masochism of Mohawk Saint Káteri Tekahkwí:tha was also originally presented in a Theory Session at Western University. During this presentation a friend of mine, Dave Monture, asked a question which shocked the rest of the, mainly settler, audience: do I feel colonized? I don't remember what my answer was, but this question has stuck with me in thinking about women's masochism and, more specifically, Haudenosaunee masochistic practices. In thinking about Tekahkwí:tha one of the most important aspects of her story is how she has been reclaimed by Mohawks. In making her a Roman Catholic Saint, there is an overwriting of her story that occurs, which is discussed in a Lacanian sense in the work of Vera B. Palmer, and which strips her of her own cultural specificity and significance. The process of reclamation allows Tekahkwí:tha's masochistic practices to be understood through the culturally specific Haudenosaunee lens, and helps to continue to demystify feminine jouissance. In addition to rethinking feminine jouissance through a different cultural lens, this chapter also addresses the Haudenosaunee cultural context of the concepts of pain and sacrifice through Sky Woman and practices of shamanism. Contextualizing Tekahkwí:tha within Haudenosaunee culture gives a starting point for understanding masochistic practices for Indigenous women during a time period which predates residential schools, the Indian Act, and the 60s scoop, although it does not predate the influences of colonization through the Catholic Church. This chapter seeks out an answer to not only who the Masochian woman is, but who she can be in a specifically Haudenosaunee context.

The third Chapter examines the stories which are told about Indigenous people by Canadian settlers so that the settler reader can enjoy the suffering of Indigenous peoples "masochistically" via the racist fantasy. This chapter takes inspiration from the work of Amber Jamilla Musser, whose work focuses on masochism, race, and gender in the Black American context. This chapter is one that I researched and thought about for a long time before actually sitting down and writing it. I was fortunate to be able to present the early work for this chapter in two different job talks, and I received a lot of good questions and feedback which contributed to the further development of these ideas. In my research one of the most surprising things I found is that the stereotypes about Indigenous women being 'squaws' and prostitutes date all the way back to Amerigo Vespucci's writings

from 1503. This stereotype has been part of the very foundation of settler colonialism, and amounts to political warfare against Indigenous peoples, with very real effects, such as MMIWG, resulting from these ideas being perpetuated. The problems with depictions of Indigenous peoples in settler literature have been critiqued for well over 100 years. I begin by discussing E. Pauline Johnson's critique of settler literary depictions of Indigenous women, as well as Margaret Atwood's work in *Survival* which analyses these depictions while also working to reinscribe them with the settler state's collective fantasy. In relation to my research question, this chapter is key to understanding not only how traditional masochistic fantasies are part of a patriarchal worldview, but for Indigenous women how we have been fetishized as part of a settler colonial sadomasochistic fantasy. This complicates Indigenous women's relationships to masochism as something to be enjoyed, and as an Indigenous women there was often a degree of anxiety while working through theoretical issues surrounding practices such as 'race play'. One of the key literary figures whose work I analyse in this chapter is Duncan Campbell Scott. He is the settler sadomasochist par excellence due to his dual role as a high-ranking bureaucrat and as one of Canada's Confederation poets. He was responsible for making residential schools mandatory for all children under the Indian Act, but at the same time he wrote popular poetry about 'savages' who were fated to disappear. His romanticization of the disappearance and genocide of Indigenous people, which he was directly responsible for, ties together the actions of the sadistic settler state and the faux masochistic suffering settlers enjoy enacting when reading about the suffering of Indigenous people.

The final chapter explores different concepts related to sadomasochism in order to understand how Indigenous women can engage in masochistic practices. Much of this chapter was inspired by two courses which I taught at Huron University College over the last two years: Indigenous Science Fiction and Indigenous Women's Resilience. Through the act of teaching works which think about Indigenous futurisms and ways of being in the world I have been able to theorize how Indigenous masochism is a futurism which ties our pasts together with our futures. The question of 'what does masochism mean for women?' turns to specifically look at the practices of, first, Haudenosaunee women writers, and then other Indigenous women writers who are depicting eroticism and

masochism through their work. In this chapter I also theorize the concept of Indigenous moral sadomasochism, following from Deleuze's idea that there must be three forms of sadism which correspond to the three forms of masochism. This concept of moral sadomasochism emerges from the radical expression of our negative affect, which has been suppressed by settler colonialism, and the concept of Indigenous ambivalence—that we can both love and hate at the same time. Examining these concepts through aesthetic creation (Johnson's "A Red Girl's Reasoning" and Marie Clements' *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*), I show how both loving and hating vengefully are a form of moral sadomasochism in which we exact revenge on the settler colonial state while we also feel the pain and emotions in a radical way. To theorize Indigenous women's masochism means to reject it as a fantasy of men and look to our own culture for guidance.

Chapter 1

“Mothers, prescribe this book to your daughters!
Mothers, proscribe this book to your daughters.” (Sade qtd.
in Carter 127)

1 The Masochian Woman: a Fantasy of Male Desire?¹

The Masochian woman is a figure who stages what is at stake for women when desire and the law come together. This figure requires an examination of the conflict that exists between the idea that women’s masochism is the fantasy of men and the truth about who wields power in the masochistic theatre. Thus, the inquiry into women’s masochism means following Jacques Lacan’s conception of women’s masochism in *Anxiety*, wherein it is described as holding a “completely different meaning, a fairly ironic meaning, and a completely different scope” from the (male) pervert’s masochism or moral masochism (*Seminar X* 190). Beginning with a critical analysis of Freud and Lacan’s theories on masochism, I will decipher what feminine masochism is and why we are usually only presented with cases where the man exhibits this type of masochistic desire. In order to reach a full understanding of this different and ironic meaning for women’s masochism, it is important to examine the connection between the gaze and masochism to comprehend the way in which the fantasy of the Other is an essential mechanism in the design of the masochistic theatre. However, connecting these two perversions as both belonging on the passive side of the erotic register, as Lacan does in “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis,” does not go far enough, and it must be understood that masochism itself is inherently reliant on the gaze as an essential part of the masochistic theatre, which allows it to function as a fantasy. Thus, for masochism to exist in women, even if it is ironic, Lacan proposes that the fantasy imagined by the Other, or the male fantasy, is what is enacted. This leads to the question of what role anxiety plays in the male fantasy. Lacan believes the masochist’s aim is the anxiety of the Other. If woman is enacting a male fantasy, and one which causes anxiety in the face of the Other’s desire, and man sustains his *jouissance* through his own anxiety, what is this anxiety? Lacan

¹ Lacan poses this question in “Guiding Remarks for a Convention on Female Sexuality” in *Écrits*.

states that it is the exposure to be seen of “*what there is not*” (*Anxiety* 191), but I believe Deleuze provides an alternative answer to this question in his own discussion of the three women figures in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s work. It is the figure of the “Grecian woman,” who “believes in the independence of women and in the fleeting nature of love; for her the sexes are equal” (Deleuze 47), that is the cause of anxiety for man. For Aphrodite, equality between men and women is the “crucial moment at which she gains dominance over man, for ‘man trembles as soon as woman becomes his equal’” (47-48). In *Écrits* Lacan reminds us of Freud’s advice “not to reduce the supplement of the feminine with respect to the masculine to the complement of the passive with respect to the active” (*Écrits* 615). In representing what Lacan calls the ‘absolute Other’, the Masochian woman, as I argue in divergence from both Lacan and Deleuze, is able to wield the power of law through her control of the masochistic *mise en scène*.

1.1 The Importance of the Gaze and Masochism

In “Guiding Remarks for a Convention on Female Sexuality,” Lacan posits the question, “Can we rely on what masochistic perversion owes to male invention and conclude that female masochism is a fantasy of male desire?” In my discussion of women’s masochism, which answers this question in the negative, I trace the connections between masochism and the gaze in psychoanalysis, which has important implications for the fantasy formation and the theatricality of women’s masochism. Lacan would go on to later state in *Seminar X: Anxiety* that “women’s masochism is a male fantasy” (190), seemingly confirming this question from his earlier writings. By tracing the connections between the gaze as *objet a* and masochism in the work of both Freud and Lacan it leads to an understanding of the process involved in the formation of the masochistic fantasy, and its “extimate” nature. Thus, by transferring this understanding of masochism to the Masochian Woman reveals the irony which Lacan saw in the concept of a masochistic woman, but also the power relations involved in the theatre of masochism. To come to a theoretical awareness of the Masochian Woman, it is also necessary to understand who she is not, and therefore this chapter will also examine several figures of women who display characteristics of masochism, but do not fully embody the identity of the woman I seek.

In Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905/1924) sadism and masochism are named as "the most common and the most significant of all the perversions" (*Three Essays* 23); and, following Krafft-Ebing's naming of these perversions, Freud emphasizes the way that Krafft-Ebing's nomenclature "[brings] into prominence the pleasure in any form of humiliation or subjection" (23). In his discussion of masochism, Freud gives a general description of the perversion as being comprised of "any passive attitude towards sexual life and the sexual object, the extreme instance of which appears to be that in which satisfaction is conditional upon suffering physical or mental pain at the hands of the sexual object. Masochism, in the form of a perversion, seems to be further removed from the normal sexual aim than its counterpart [sadism]" (24). This explanation was added by Freud in 1924, along with the footnote stating: "I have been led to distinguish a primary or *erotogenic* masochism, out of which two later forms, *feminine* and *moral* masochism, have developed. Sadism which cannot find employment in actual life is turned round upon the subject's own self and so produces a *secondary* masochism, which is superadded to the primary kind" (24).

The classifications of these different types of masochism are outlined more fully by Freud in "The Economic Problem of Masochism" (1924), and his discussion is centred around Feminine masochism because, for Freud, it is "most accessible to our observation and least problematical, and it can be surveyed in all its relations" (276). According to Freud, this Feminine form is based not only in the erotogenic form, pleasure in pain, but also "places the subject in a characteristically female situation" (277). Significantly, the "feminine" form of masochism is only ever discussed in the male subject. Since women already exist in these 'characteristically female situations,' Freud never seems to consider diagnosing the perversion in a female patient. Therefore, to understand what it means for a woman to engage in masochism we must also consider Lacan's idea of women's masochism as holding a "completely different meaning, a fairly ironic meaning, and a completely different scope" from either the male pervert's masochism or moral masochism (*Anxiety* 190). However, that does not necessarily mean that Freud's investigation into male masochism is unhelpful. It provides us the means for understanding how and why women engage in masochism.

If we take a step back to Freud's earlier work discussing Krafft-Ebing's naming of sadism and masochism in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, and the emphasis on humiliation and subjection which Freud finds innate to this perversion, the language used in this passage echoes the preceding section in the *Three Essays* regarding 'Touching and Looking.' Here, Freud discusses the pleasure in looking (scopophilia) and, like sadism and masochism, he proposes that perversions of looking occur in two forms: the active and the passive. He goes on in the section 'Sadism and Masochism' to align the pain of masochism with both disgust and shame as forces that "[stand] in opposition and resistance to the libido" (*Three Essays* 25). Thus, for Freud, the passive act of looking/being looked at and masochism are aligned together on the side of the Nirvana principle, which "expresses the trend of the death instinct," although under modification by the libido ("Economic Masochism" 275). The subject who does not seek his own good is influenced by the death drive, and this is manifest clinically, according to Freud, in various ways, such as repetition compulsion, or masochism, which relies for its functioning on the sexual/aggressive form of looking that Lacan will later call the gaze.

Bringing the discussion of the gaze back to Lacan's 1949 essay "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" Lacan first explores the gaze and the role it plays in the formation of the *I*. Here, he describes the mirror stage "as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image" (*Écrits* 76). This stage of identification is understood to involve a specular image reflected for the child to see himself, and this process therefore involves an exteriority in order to resolve the individual's "discordance with his own reality" (76). The end of the mirror stage, which occurs when the *I* is linked to "socially elaborated situations" (79), is also important, as Lacan points out, saying, "It is this moment that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge (*savoir*) into being mediated by the other's desire" (79). This passage hints at the further development of the mirror stage which focuses around the 'other's desire.' Adrian Johnston provides a succinct description of Lacan's later conception of the mirror stage, from the 1960s:

language-using (and language-used) big(ger) Others bathe the infant in a cascade of statements and behaviors whose saturating effects endow the specular components of the mirroring moment, Lacan's primal scene of inaugural identification, with their special, fateful status. The *petit a(uttre)* of the child's forming ego, partially bound up with imagistic representation, is originally and primordially a precipitate of 'the desire of the Other'. (Johnston 256)

Here, Johnston brings together the mirror stage together with later Lacan, and, in doing so, ties the literal, specular activity of seeing oneself in the mirror to the non-specular gaze as empty *objet a*.

These statements regarding the mirror stage focus our attention on the desire of the other/Other. The idea that "man's desire is the desire of the Other" (*Seminar X 22*) is reiterated throughout Lacan's work and will be key to understanding the function of masochism for women. When Lacan states that knowledge is mediated by the other's desire, later to become the big Other, he is referring to an "intimate exteriority" (*Seminar VII 139*), or extimacy, which is naturally mimetic. The process of the mirror stage is not isolated to the individual infant, but, as Johnston outlines it in his article, depends on the influence of big Other(s). Johnston provides the following description for this important process:

Insofar as the ego itself, as what becomes intimate 'me-ness,' is born by crystallizing around a core kernel of external Other-subjects' fantasy-formations, it could be said to be an instance of extimacy in Lacan's precise sense of this neologism. Put differently, at the very nucleus of the recognized 'me' resides a misrecognized (*à la* Lacanian *méconnaissance*) 'not-me,' something 'in me more than myself'. (Johnston 256)

Thus, our own fantasies and desires are never truly our own because the formation of what makes me who I am is built around a kernel of extimacy. So, when Lacan states in *Seminar X: Anxiety* "that women's masochism is a male fantasy" (190) this is what he means. He is referring to the conceptualization of a masochistic woman, which becomes the kernel for the fantasy of masochism for the subject.

Lacan directly links the concept that “man’s desire is the desire of the Other” to the gaze in his essay “What is a Picture?” when he states: “I would say that it is a question of a sort of desire *on the part of* the Other, at the end of which is the *showing (le donner-à-voir)*” (*Seminar XI* 115). The particular word *showing* that Lacan uses here indicates to us that the gaze is not merely a process of being seen, but requires a conscious showing on the part of the subject who is being seen, and literally translates from the original French *le donner-à-voir* as giving-to-see-it. Lacan goes on to pose the question, “How could this *showing* satisfy something, if there is not some appetite of the eye on the part of the person looking?” (115), and he feels that this reveals the truth about the eye: that it is a voracious and evil eye (*ibid*). What is not mentioned here is what this showing reveals about the one who is performing the ‘giving-to-see-it’. This ‘giving-to-see-it’ represents an unstated agreement between the one who sees and the one who shows, not unlike the masochistic contract, which reveals that this giving not only satisfies the appetite of the eye of the viewer, but also satisfies some desire on the part of the one who gives. For Freud, this ‘giving-to-see-it’ is another form of the perversion of looking because it supplants, or overtakes the importance, of the normal sexual aim. Freud provides three cases in which looking becomes perversion: when looking is “restricted exclusively to the genitals,” when it is connected to disgust, or when it supplants the importance of the normal sexual aim (*Three Essays* 23). However, when this ‘giving-to-see-it’ is incorporated into the masochistic fantasy, and if Freud’s classification of what is considered a perversion is strictly followed, then the presentation of the masochistic individual in a submissive or humiliating position as “visual impression” is simply “the most frequent pathway along which libidinal excitation is aroused” (22). As long as the act of looking is only preparatory to the normal sexual aim, this visual arousal can be considered a way to raise the libido to a “higher artistic aim” (23). As I will later discuss in regard to masochism, the theatrical act of looking and showing is usually a step in the script of masochism which does not actually take the place of touching or the normal sexual aim, but instead a passive, masochistic form of looking which can be considered after Freud as an “artistic and theatrical display” (Bronfen 60).

In “‘I Hear You With My Eyes’; or, The Invisible Master” Slavoj Žižek expands further on Lacan’s ‘evil eye’ concept and categorizes the voice and the gaze as *objet a* which

align with life and death (94). Here, he refers to Derrida and the idea that “‘hearing oneself speak’ [*s’entendre-parler*]...is the very kernel, the fundamental matrix, of experiencing oneself as a living being, while its counterpart at the level of the gaze, ‘seeing oneself looking’ [*se voir voyant*], unmistakably stands for death” (94). However, simply connecting these two perversions as both belonging on the passive side of the erotic register does not go far enough. Masochism itself is inherently reliant on the gaze as an essential part of the masochistic theatre which allows it to function as a fantasy. The intrinsic nature of the gaze in relation to masochism is revealed by going back to Freud’s initial discussion of sadism and masochism, where he states that rather than overemphasizing the element of pain associated with these practices it is “the pleasure in any form of humiliation or subjection” (*Three Essays* 23) that should be our focus. By tracing the etymology of ‘subjection’ to the Latin *subiectiōn*, which means the “action of placing something before one’s mental vision” (OED), the important link between these two perversions becomes clear. Lacan further draws out this connection between ‘giving-to-see-it’ and masochism in Seminar X: *Anxiety* where he notes the distinction between voyeurism/exhibitionism and the act of what he refers to as “*letting something be seen*” (Seminar X 191) in masochism. This means more than the specular image being revealed in a process of ‘giving-to-see-it’ because it reveals something about the subject that is normally concealed. Most interestingly, Lacan believes that this revelation of “*letting something be seen*” is anxiety-provoking for both men and women, but for woman the masquerade of femininity is uncovered to show “*what there is*” (191) and for man this revelation of desire only allows “*what there is not*” (191) to be uncovered, and we can understand this to be covering his own anxiety. Lacan also describes the desire of men as “the presence of some imposture” (191) in men, while women are “much more real and much truer than man” (191). For men, it is anxiety inducing to reveal this desire for, not a woman, but the empty object, revealing the lack at the core of his being.

1.2 Women in the Works of Sade and Masoch

Turning from Freud and Lacan to Deleuze it becomes obvious that in most discussions on masochism women have been relegated to a lesser position or altogether forgotten. However, in Deleuze's *Coldness and Cruelty* (1967) he pays particular attention to the role of women in the writing of Sacher-Masoch; Deleuze analyses the different fantasy women that appear in Masoch's works, but this still remains problematic for my discussion because the woman is always described in relation to man's desire. These three women exist in a masochistic relationship with the men, but as female tops they are not the masochistic directors, nor are they sadists able to derive pleasure from the situation, because the male bottoms disregard woman's pleasure. However, Deleuze classifies the women as masochistic based on them existing as "a pure element of masochism" and clarifies that "it is a mistake to think that she is sadistic or even pretending to be so" (42). Two extreme versions of woman are identified as the Grecian woman and the sadistic woman. The first type, the Grecian woman, is the hetaera² or Aphrodite, and "is dedicated to love and beauty; she lives for the moment" (47). Deleuze goes on to describe her as believing "in the independence of women and in the fleeting nature of love; for her the sexes are equal" (47). Aphrodite is the "female principal" (47) and the moment of equality is the moment in which women gain dominance over man because "man trembles as soon as woman becomes his equal" (48). This version of woman wants to cause chaos and destroy patriarchal systems of control, including marriage, morality, the Church and the State because they are "inventions of man" (48). The opposite extreme version of this woman in Masoch's writing is the sadistic woman. As a sadist "She enjoys hurting and torturing others, but it is significant that her actions are prompted by a man or otherwise performed in concert with a man, whose victim she is always liable to become" (48). Deleuze proposes that these two versions of woman are not the ideal type for Masoch because "At one extreme masochism has yet to come into operation, and at the other it has already lost its *raison d'être*" (50). The true fantasy

² The hetaera is often depicted as a courtesan, or prostitute (Deleuze 47), connecting the figure to both Acker's use of prostitution in white feminism later in this chapter, and how, in Chapter Two, settler colonialism prefigures Indigenous women as prostitutes.

woman instead falls somewhere in the middle of these extremes, but is almost impossible to pinpoint. This fantasy woman does not actually exist anywhere within Masoch's writings, and Deleuze can only describe her by piecing together various descriptions from Masoch's work; she is "cold—maternal—severe, icy—sentimental—cruel" (51).

This coldness, however, not only applies to the woman in the masochistic relationship, but also the sadistic heroes found in sadomasochistic literature. For Sade's characters this is expressed as apathy which is directed against all feelings. Masoch differs here from Sade in that the coldness connected with the fantasy woman is not a "negation of feeling, but rather the disavowal of sensuality" (52). For Masoch, this cruel and sentimental woman is able to "compel man to thought and properly constitute the masochistic ideal" (54). However, as I pointed out earlier, this cold-hearted woman is not the woman I seek; she does not enjoy her own subjection and humiliation, and she instead serves as the woman-as-fantasy who exists only to torture the masochistic man.

The Masochian woman whom I seek is only implied near the end of Masoch's *Venus in Furs*; here, Wanda ends her relationship with Severin in order to have a master of her own. When she ends things with Severin she says, "Not another slave, I have had enough of them: a master. Women need to have a master to worship" (Masoch 258). Although few details are provided about Wanda's new relationship with the Greek, the moral of the tale is provided by Severin when he says, "I was a fool...If only I had whipped her instead!" (271). However, this would mean that instead of Severin transforming into 'the hammer' he would have to take on the fantasy role that the masochistic woman plays in the work of Masoch. For if he became the sadistic torturer in order to whip Wanda their relationship would have been incompatible.

In Angela Carter's *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography* (1979) the work of Sade is examined, specifically focusing on the two sisters Juliette and Justine. In Juliette Carter finds the true Sadeian woman, who is also very similar to the extreme sadistic woman that Deleuze finds in the work of Masoch. Juliette's ability to become a Sadeian woman is based on two things: her ability to be the "perfect whore" (Carter 92) and her rejection of femininity. Juliette is motivated by financial profit and libidinal

gratification, and these two things work together to ensure that she does not have to submit to any law. Through the use of her sexuality as power, “Juliette transforms herself from pawn to queen in a single move and henceforward goes wherever she pleases on the chess board. Nevertheless, there remains the question of the presence of the king, who remains the lord of the game.” (91). Juliette lives in a patriarchal world which is “governed by god, the king and the law” (92), which Carter describes as “the trifold masculine symbols of authority” (92). Juliette is aware of how to survive in this world, and does so through her rational sexuality, but, like the Oedipal mother Deleuze describes, she is always at risk of becoming the victim, even as she engages in sadistic torture.

In “Adorno avec Sade...” Rebecca Comay discusses the proximity between Adorno and Horkheimer and Lacan’s work on Sade. She points out that, for Adorno, there exists:

nothing fascinating, nothing shocking, nothing disgusting, nothing virulent...but merely the tedious administration of routine piled upon routine, bleached out, neutralized, antiseptic: sodomy, incest, mutilation, torture, coprophagy, whatever, everything reduced to business as usual, Juliette as gym coach, the bedroom as boardroom, boardroom as boredom, boredom as the congealment of the always-the-same. (Comay 8)

Comay’s description of Sadeian boredom corresponds to Carter’s similar description of the rituals of the libertines, which she compares to the Catholic Church that taught Juliette how to become the Sadeian woman in the first place. The banality which Comay associates with Sade’s smut also applies to Juliette’s libertine education, which is learned by rote, much the way schoolchildren endure learning multiplication tables. For Juliette to become a perfect whore, and eventually place herself “firmly in the camp of the masters” (Carter 98), requires the ability to master the education she receives from several older women figures. Carter traces this education from the convent, where she learns from the abbess Delbène “the elements of sexual expertise, the relativity of ethics, militant feminism and doctrinaire atheism” (93), to the brothel, where she learns to steal, lie, and play a part in a male fantasy. In the brothel her “virginity is sold successively to

fifty buyers” (96) and her apprenticeship is completed when she sells her anus to an archbishop. Much like the rote recitation of numbers, Juliette’s virginity must be repeatedly sold in this banal way for her to master her role as whore.

The ability of Juliette to learn these various sexual acts is an example of Freud’s theory of polymorphous perversity which he outlines in *Three Essays*. His example of the polymorphously perverse subject is the ‘uncultivated woman’ who learns to be polymorphous through the repetition of different sex acts with various partners. Freud provides this description of the woman:

Under ordinary conditions she may remain normal sexually, but if she is led on by a clever seducer she will find every sort of perversion to her taste, and will retain them as part of her own sexual activities. Prostitutes exploit the same polymorphous, that is, infantile, disposition for the purposes of their profession...it becomes impossible not to recognize that this same disposition to perversions of every kind is a general and fundamental human characteristic.

(*Three Essays* 57)

It is easy to find Freud’s description of the process for developing the polymorphously perverse prostitute mirrored in Juliette’s own education. She, however, does not stop at becoming polymorphously perverse in order to satisfy her customers, but instead seeks to become “a Nietzschean superwoman, which is to say, a woman who has transcended her gender but not the contradictions inherent in it” (Carter 98). The contradiction inherent in being a Sadeian woman is just as important for the Masochian woman; woman is regarded as the ‘weaker sex,’ and so even as a sadistic master, Juliette is always at risk of becoming the victim of the libertine men. For the Masochian woman, the same belief that woman is weaker, and that masochism itself has something feminine inherent to it, means that a woman who enjoys being the masochistic bottom is regarded as enjoying her own patriarchal oppression. In theorizing this woman, it becomes clear that she wields as much power as the Sadeian woman, and like Juliette, learns to play a part in her own masochistic fantasy by “[playing] with mimesis” (Irigaray 76). Therefore, as Juliette adopts the libertine theatre of cruelty, where she is willing to play any part, the

Masochian woman adopts her own masochistic theatre, where she dictates the roles to be played for herself and those who enter her theatre.

In their discussion of sadism and masochism both Deleuze and Lacan destroy the illusion of a dichotomy between the two perversions. Deleuze states that “The concurrence of sadism and masochism is fundamentally one of analogy only; their processes and their formations are entirely different; their common organ, their ‘eye,’ squints and should therefore make us suspicious” (Deleuze 46). As I have already discussed, Deleuze sees all the women in Masoch’s works as masochistic in nature, because each woman “incarnates instead the element of ‘inflicting pain’ in an exclusively masochistic situation” (42), and therefore the men have no need, or desire, for the sadistic subject to enter into a relationship with them. This understanding is reiterated in Žižek’s article “Are We Allowed To Enjoy Daphnée du Maurier?” where he emphasizes that sadism involves domination, and masochism involves liberation. The incompatibility of these two perversions is made clear through Žižek’s recounting of Deleuze’s interpretation of Masoch: “far from bringing any satisfaction to the sadistic witness, the masochist’s self-torture frustrates the sadist, depriving him of his power over the masochist” (“Are We Allowed” n.p.).

While Deleuze presents the idea that the sadist and the masochist are enacting different and separate dramas which involve them in completely different interactions of the pleasure-pain complex (45), and are therefore incompatible as a pair of subjects, Lacan’s discussion of the subject provides different detailed reasons illustrating how and why sadism and masochism are incompatible. In *Anxiety* Lacan outlines the fact that these two perversions are “not a reversible couple” (*Seminar X* 177); He details the difference between them, stating:

we find ourselves, betwixt sadism and masochism, in the presence of what presents itself as an alienation. That which, at the second level, is veiled and concealed in each of these two subjects appears in the other party at the level of what is targeted. There is an occultation of anxiety in the first case, of the *object a* in the other. This is not, however, a process in reverse, a switch-around. (177)

In Lacanian terms, it is the differing aims of sadism and masochism which make the subject as sadist and the subject as masochist completely incompatible. The sadist seeks *objet a* in his victim and, as Žižek makes clear, when he does not receive what he seeks from the masochist he is unsatisfied. The sadist wants to invoke shame in the victim through the gaze, but in masochism “the victim no longer experiences shame, it openly displays its *jouissance*” (“Can One Exit” 488). The masochist, on the other hand, is thought to seek the Other’s *jouissance*, but what this mistaken belief conceals is the true aim of the masochist: the Other’s anxiety. Thus, even if the same exercise is performed in sadism and masochism, the desire of these two figures is completely different.

The first point which I will bring up is the question of the value of masochism. Lacan answers this by saying, “When desire and the law find themselves together again, what the masochist means to show—and I’ll add, on his little stage, because this dimension should never be lost sight of—is that the desire of the Other lays down the law.” (*Seminar X* 106). This statement echoes several of the concepts already covered in this paper—the dimension of looking and the importance of the desire of the Other—and these concepts will also prove to be crucially important for the Masochian woman. Lacan goes on to establish that the aim of the masochist is the Other’s anxiety, which has been established as a different aim from the sadist, who seeks the object *a* in the other.

In principle, the concept of women’s masochism “is a male fantasy,” or the fantasy of the big Other. As Lacan explains, “In this fantasy, it is by proxy and in relation to the masochistic structure that is imagined in woman that man sustains his *jouissance* through something that is his own anxiety. That is what the object covers over. In men, the object is the condition of desire.” (190). In contrast, “For women, the desire of the Other is the means by which her *jouissance* will have an object that is, as it were, suitable” (191). Thus, for masochism to exist in women, even if it is ironic, Lacan believes that the fantasy imagined by the Other, or the male fantasy, is what is enacted. This position begs the question of what role anxiety plays in the male fantasy. To reiterate what I have already stated above, Lacan believes the masochist’s aim is the anxiety of the Other. If woman is enacting a male fantasy, which causes anxiety in the face of the Other’s desire, and man sustains his *jouissance* through his own anxiety, what is this anxiety? Lacan

states that it is the exposure, for man, of letting “*what there is not be seen*” (*Anxiety* 191). As I have also already stated in the Introduction to this chapter, but it bears repeating, is that Deleuze provides, albeit unwittingly, an alternative answer to this question in his own discussion of the three women figures in Masoch’s work. As stated earlier in this chapter, it is the figure of the Grecian woman, who “believes in the independence of women and in the fleeting nature of love; for her the sexes are equal” (Deleuze 47), that is the cause of anxiety for man. For Aphrodite equality between men and women is the “crucial moment at which she gains dominance over man, for ‘man trembles as soon as woman becomes his equal’” (47-48). It is important to repeat this point because of the vital importance of the universalized idea that women instill anxiety in men, and the things which are feared and instill anxiety in us are prone to involuntary repetition, one of the factors “which turn something fearful into an uncanny thing” (“The Uncanny” 14).

This revision of Lacan by way of a revision of Deleuze raises the problem of how man can reject the equality or dominance of woman by enacting a masochistic fantasy. For the male masochist, he “stages his own servitude” (*The Metastases of Enjoyment* 92), and in doing so the man is the one “who actually pulls the strings and dictates the activity of the woman [*dominatrix*]” (92). Thus, whether from a Lacanian or a Deleuzian perspective, the man is always the one in control, and, for Lacan at least, the constant disavowal of real violence allows him to confront the anxiety brought on by the Other by acting it out in the masochistic theatre. In Žižek’s *The Metastases of Enjoyment: On Women and Causality* (1994) masochism is compared with the concept of courtly love. Žižek cites Deleuze’s discussion of masochism to prove the important point that sadism and masochism follow opposite modes of negation (violent domination vs. disavowal and controlled violence). In addition to these opposite modes of negation, sadism and masochism also have structural differences in how they are enacted: institution and contract. As Žižek shows, sadism uses the “institutional power” to torment “its victim and taking pleasure in the victim’s helpless resistance” (91). This, however, is exactly what the male masochist does not want, for, if he is tortured by a sadist, he will be horrified at being “reduced in the eyes of the Other to *objet a*” (*The Metastases of Enjoyment* 93). Žižek proposes that in this case the masochist responds with “irrational violence aimed at the other” (93). This hystericization is precisely what happens to the

masochist Severin in *Venus in Furs*. When the Greek whips him, rather than Wanda, he is horrified at being reduced to *objet a* and feels he is “dying of shame and despair” (Masoch 268). While the initial reaction to this was both a humiliation and a sensual pleasure, Severin says “Apollo [the Greek] whipped all poetry from me” (269). The incompatibility between the sadist and the masochist become apparent here and in reaction Severin realizes that he should have whipped her instead (271). In his further contemplation on what happened, he says:

The moral is that woman, as Nature created her and as man up to now has found her attractive, is man’s enemy; she can be his slave or his mistress but never his companion. This she can only be when she has the same rights as he and is his equal in education and work. For the time being there is only one alternative: to be the hammer or the anvil. (271)

When Wanda rebels and takes on the role of the hetera, seemingly becoming his equal, he only sees the treachery of woman rather than the equality. Due to patriarchal Western society, he can not even consider that Wanda would be his equal unless she is his “equal in education and work” (271), and yet her actions have destroyed his fantasy and made him distrustful of women. Contrary to this institutional violence of sadism, masochism is “made to the measure of the victim: it is the victim...who initiates a contract with the Master (woman), authorizing her to humiliate him in any way she considers appropriate” (91). The keys to masochism are that the masochist enacts the power of the contract, so he is the one who is really in control, and that the threat of actual violence is always interrupted. Real violence is suspended and the entire masochistic theatre, as its name suggests, is an act or feigning of violence which covers over what is not there.

How does the masochistic theatre then allow woman to face her own anxiety, which, as Lacan puts it, “is only anxiety faced with the desire of the Other” (*Seminar X* 191)? If women’s masochism is theoretically a male fantasy, consisting of the man dominating the woman, by enacting it in the masochistic theatre the woman is traversing the fantasy, and confronting the anxiety of the Other at the same time. As established, masochism is enacted and the rules set out contractually by the ‘victim’. For woman, this means she is

able to escape the institutional and sadistic violence, which permeates society, and instead can enact the “endless repeating of an interrupted gesture” (*The Metastases of Enjoyment* 92). The full meaning of women’s masochism becomes more clearly intimated in Žižek’s “Are We Allowed to Enjoy Daphnée du Maurier?” when he proposes a possible subversion of the fantasy of woman by woman:

femininity is from the very beginning split between Eve and Lilith, between ‘ordinary’ hysterical feminine subject and the fantasmatic spectre of Woman: when a man is having sex with a ‘real’ woman, he is using her as a masturbatory prop to support his fantasizing about the non-existent Woman... And in *Rebecca*, her most famous novel, du Maurier adds another twist to the Lilith myth: the fantasy of Woman is (re)appropriated by a woman—what if Lilith is not so much a male fantasy as the fantasy of a woman, the model of her fantasmatic competitor? (“Are We Allowed” n.p.)

Thus, as Žižek extends the logic of both Lacan and Deleuze’s approaches, the role playing that takes place in the masochistic theatre allows woman to reappropriate the fantasy of a woman for her own masochistic desire. The multifaceted identity of woman as Eve/Lilith follows the Lacanian definition of the woman who ‘does not exist’; she cannot be defined by one single identity because she has always already escaped signification.

This method of appropriation, sketched out by Žižek, can be compared to Irigaray’s feminist praxis of mimicry and “[assuming] the feminine role deliberately” (Irigaray 76). If the masochist is, to return to Freud, the one who is placed “in a characteristically female situation” (“The Economic Problem” 277), then for a woman to assume the role of the feminine masochist is to reappropriate the role of the feminine, and therefore “[to] convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it” (Irigaray 76).

Žižek sets the groundwork for how this can be accomplished through his explanation of masochism through the libidinal economy of courtly love. The courtly Lady is described as a “cold, distanced, inhuman partner” (*The Metastases of Enjoyment* 89), much like

Masoch's ideal, and she assumes the role of the master in the relationship by imposing on the knight all sorts of "senseless, outrageous, impossible, arbitrary, capricious ordeals" (90). However, as an object of men's desire, the courtly Lady provides a fantasy-structure through which woman "refers to herself with regard to her (potential) relationship to man" (108). The reaction of (some forms of) feminism to this structure is one of panic because it cannot accept any form of 'patriarchal domination' and this becomes a problem because it undermines "the fantasy-support of their own feminine identity" (108). It is only in the perverse (masochistic) contract, which is established between equal subjects, that, as Žižek suggests, paradoxically "serves to establish a relationship of domination" (109) via the balanced contract. Žižek's interpretation of masochism through courtly love reveals that in the masochistic relationship woman always holds some form of power over the man. When the woman is playing the dominatrix she assumes the traditional role of the Lady and makes ridiculous demands of the man as knight. Conversely, when she plays the subordinate role, what I have been referring to as the Masochian woman, she still plays the role of the Lady because she sets the terms of the contract and still makes demands of the man. When woman takes on this subservient role, according to Lacan, she is enacting the masquerade, a reference to Joan Riviere's "Womanliness as Masquerade" (1929), in which she puts on the act of being feminine in a defensive mode (*Seminar X* 191).

To take this defensive mode of the feminine masquerade one step further is to attempt to use femininity to "[jam] the theoretical machinery itself, [to suspend] its pretension to the production of a truth and of a meaning that are excessively univocal" (Irigaray 78). Following Lacan's assertion that in masochism "the desire of the Other lays down the law" (*Seminar X* 106), the act of intentionally taking on a masochistic position for woman to achieve pleasure can be understood as a conscious act which "can be found only at the price of *crossing back through the mirror that subtends all speculation*. For this pleasure is not simply situated in a process of reflection or mimesis, nor on one side of this process or the other" (Irigaray 77). The law, or language, has traditionally been denied to women through their "social inferiority" (85), but through the process of assuming the role of the subordinate in the masochistic situation, woman is able to define the terms of the contract and rewrite the law, and language, in her favour. For Irigaray,

this type of “language work” takes on the function of casting phallogentrism “loose from its moorings in order to return the masculine to its own language, leaving open the possibility of a different language” (80). Thus, the masochistic contract, which is made possible by the equality of the subjects, fulfills the fear of woman’s dominance over man; it is written in the language of the Masochian woman and has the ability to subvert the phallogentric language that dominates the rest of the (Westernized) world.

1.3 The Role of Sexual Difference in Women’s Masochism

One of the key theoretical points for coming to understand the Masochian woman is that of sexual difference. Following Lacan’s starting point ‘The Woman does not exist,’ because there is no universal meaning to what it is to be a woman, for a woman to understand who she is a mimetic process occurs through which she learns from those around her. In Darian Leader’s *Why do Women Write More Letters Than They Post?* (1996), several hypothetical situations are presented in which women place themselves in the role of a man in order to understand the way in which men relate to other subjects, and particularly women, in the case of heterosexual desire. Notably, Leader says that women construct love triangles because “a triangle is a necessary condition for the study of someone else’s desire” (Leader 5). This type of triangulation can be tied directly back to the masochistic theatre and the audience which is implied to be viewing the masochistic action taking place. Thus, the gaze, and the mimetic response which follows, is a crucial part of sexual difference for woman. Another factor which must be taken into consideration when discussing sexual difference in a Lacanian context is feminine jouissance. Grounded in the fact that woman is not whole, woman has what Lacan calls “a supplementary jouissance compared to what the phallic function designates by way of jouissance” (Seminar XX 73). This feminine jouissance is described by Lacan as being what “one experiences and yet knows nothing about” (77).

One of the primary examples Lacan gives to show that this extra (*en plus*) jouissance exists, but cannot be put into language, is the statue “The Ecstasy of St. Teresa” (76). The challenge to describe feminine jouissance put forth by Lacan is answered by Irigaray in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974). Here she takes the same figure of a woman, Saint Teresa of Avila, and instead of silencing her by only considering her as a statue, she looks to her writings to find the description of this extra jouissance. Irigaray makes direct reference to Saint Teresa when she writes, “*How strange is the economy of this specula(riza)tion of woman, who in her mirror seems ever to refer back to a transcendence. Who moves away (for) who comes near, who groans to be separated from the one who holds her closest in his embrace*” (Irigaray 201). The footnote, quoting from Saint Teresa’s vision of the Flaming Heart, refers to pain which “was so great that it made me moan, and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain that I could not wish to be rid of it” (Qtd in Irigaray *ibid*). This experience of Saint Teresa’s feminine jouissance, which in its statue form, as Lacan insists, undeniably makes her appear to be ‘coming,’ is an undeniably masochistic one. Irigaray’s interpretation of this vision is that it is an experience of transcendence, unmistakably masochistic, and is a part of the specularization of woman. This connection back to the mimetic function of the mirror stage and the gaze is described by Irigaray as “the work of death” (54).

In thinking through the ironic masochism of women, it becomes clear that, in materialist terms, it is a contradictory concept, and it is in contradictions where the truth is found.³ Thus, by theorizing the seemingly ironic Masochian Woman, it becomes clear that within the masochistic contract submission requires equality between men and women to come first. Therefore, it becomes apparent that thinking through each contradiction, in turn, leads us to another contradiction. Following this logic, when women enact masochism, its success depends on equality between man and woman, but the outcome is the perceived dominance of the masochistic woman.

³ From Hegel’s thesis “*Contradictio ist regula veri, non-contradictio falsi,*” or “Contradiction is the rule of the true, non-contradiction of the false” (“Being and MacGuffin” 87).

1.4 Is Masochism Really Feminine?

The theorization of the Masochian woman as one who is equal to man, drawn from Deleuze's Grecian woman, is a figure who is symptomatic of second-wave and third-wave feminism, and literary examples from avant-garde women writers from the 1960s onward are abundant. The theoretical work of Angela Carter has already been discussed earlier in this chapter, but the literary work of many of her contemporaries does as much to theorize women's sadomasochistic practices as *The Sadeian Woman* does. An important point to consider in thinking through the work of women such as Carter, Kathy Acker, Chris Kraus, and Elfriede Jelinek is that feminism in the 1980s went through a period known as the 'feminist sex wars.' In the work of Acker, this disagreement is evident in her literary comments about other feminists, such as Andrea Dworkin in *Pussy, King of the Pirates* (1996), and Erica Jong in *Blood and Guts in High School* (1978). Just as there were two sides to feminism, it is apparent that there are two sides to approaching masochism; the first is to deny that women are masochistic by nature. This is evident in texts such as *The Myth of Women's Masochism* (1985) by Paula Caplan, and even in Lacanian psychoanalyst Colette Soler's book *What Lacan Said About Women: a Psychoanalytic Study* (2003).

Caplan works to dispel the myth of women being inherently masochistic, and states that "often women's behavior is used as evidence of our innate masochism, our sickness, while men's similar behavior is used as evidence that they are real men and good providers...the businessman's behavior is admired, but the housewife's is considered masochistic" (Caplan 2). She continues by discussing the way that the everyday lives of women are interpreted as masochistic and gives several scenarios of women's lives where this happens. Caplan believes that the idea that women want and "seek out pain and suffering, that we have an innate need for misery, poisons every aspect of women's lives" (2). Caplan provides many everyday examples of women believing they are masochistic because her goal in writing her book is to dispel women's masochism as a myth, and to understand that "the real causes of women's unhappiness—those events that come from external sources, which can be changed" (6). The examples of women's masochism that she provides are women such as Joanie, who is "more attracted to men who act superior

and cold toward her than to men who treat her well” (4), or the case of Maria, who put her journalism career on hold in order to stay home with her newborn son. When he is not sleeping well or acting colicky she blames herself and says “It was my decision to stay home with him, so I brought this suffering on myself. Subconsciously, I must have *wanted* to suffer” (4). Although I would agree with Caplan that these instances are not cases of a masochistic perversion, and that not all women are masochists, her book ends with the questioning of the existence of masochism at all, asking “is there such a thing as genuine masochism?” (220). She goes on to say that the definition of masochism “as ‘pleasure in pain’ is bizarre” (220).

Although Soler does not subscribe to the same notion that masochism is bizarre, she also dedicates a section of *What Lacan Said About Women* to dispelling the idea that all women are masochistic. In analysing masochism, she begins with one of the key points I have written about in this chapter, that “feminine masochism ‘is a fantasy of the desire of the man’” (Soler 78). She makes clear in this section that there is a difference between the masochistic “perverse scenario” and the “masochistic masquerade” (79). Soler states:

women’s famous accommodation to the masculine fantasy, which pushes them to the unlimited ‘concessions’ that Lacan stigmatizes in *Television*, engenders, among other effects, the masochistic masquerade and makes its meaning clear to us: the traits of suffering and lack that are exhibited are paid into the account of what Lacan called ‘the misfortunes of *vers-tu*’ in order to designate the tribulations of what is sought for in the desire or *jouissance* of the Other (Soler 79)

Soler is outlining a difference here between the feminine masquerade which allows women to “[submit] to the conditions of the Other’s love in order for man’s fantasy to find ‘its moment of truth’ in her” (79) and masochism as a ‘real’ perversion. Soler notes that the phrase “the misfortunes of *vers-tu*” is a reference to Sade’s novel *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue*, as *vers-tu* is a homophone of *vertu* (virtue) (79). This implies that to suffer for the desire of the Other makes woman the victim because Justine, the sister of Juliette, is the perpetual Sadeian victim, and, unlike Juliette, she does not take any

enjoyment from her suffering. Soler's considerations of masochism focus on the idea that the "true masochist" is "almost always a man" and returns to Lacan's point about the masochist's aim being anxiety in the Other, an anxiety which is based around the lack being covered over in men (80). For women, however, instead of aiming at the anxiety of the Other, what we accordingly aim for is merely a semblance. This semblance is both something that is false, found in the masquerade, but also something which is perceived in the gaze.

Returning to the first half of this chapter, the gaze is intricately connected to the enactment of masochism and the theatricality inherent to masochism. For woman, the semblance she enacts still gives pleasure to herself, as the drive is still satisfied through the pursuit of this temporary object, and woman's lack is not revealed as it is for man. For Lacan and Soler, they understand this enactment of masochism as a masquerade to represent how, for woman, "there is no limit...to the concessions that a woman is ready to make for a man: of her body, her goods, her soul, everything that is good for her—in order to adorn herself so that man's fantasy can find its moment of truth in her" (80). Soler goes through these theorizations in order to declare "we can now see why women, as such, are not all masochists" (ibid).

The Lacanian rejection of an inherent masochism in women is important because this is the starting point for women such as Acker and Carter. They do not assume that all women are masochists, but instead reveal that masochism is a perversion for woman, just as it is for man. Soler interprets Lacan's declaration that women's masochism is man's desire as meaning that masochism in women is nearly always a masquerade rather than a perversion. How can the above statement that "there is no limit...to the concessions that a woman is ready to make for a man: of her body, her goods, her soul, everything that is good for her" (80) not come across as masochistic, even if it is performed in the 'masochistic theatre'? Is masochism not at the very heart of this statement about sacrificing everything—body, goods, and soul? Is the woman enacting these sacrifices not the ultimate masochist?

1.5 Antigone: A Model of Women's Masochism

The sacrificial destruction of oneself in order to follow the law is an ethical form of masochism which Lacan theorizes when discussing the death drive in *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1986). In the case of *Antigone*, Lacan writes that it is the “essence of tragedy” (*The Ethics* 304), and for analysts “tragedy is in the forefront of our experience” (300). In understanding Antigone as a tragic figure and as the object of desire, Lacan states:

This line of sight focuses on an image that possesses a mystery which up till now has never been articulated, since it forced you to close your eyes at the very moment you look at it. Yet that image is at the centre of tragedy, since it is the fascinating image of Antigone herself. We know very well that over and beyond the dialogue, over and beyond the question of family and country, over and beyond the moralizing arguments, it is Antigone herself who fascinates us, Antigone in her unbearable splendor. She has a quality that both attracts us and startles us, in the sense of intimidates us; this terrible, self-willed victim disturbs us. (*The Ethics* 304-305)

Following Freud's description of moral masochism, Antigone can be understood as a masochist, although Lacan never directly states this in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. In “The Economic Problem of Masochism,” Freud outlines moral masochism as follows:

the third form of masochism, moral masochism, is chiefly remarkable for having loosened its connection with what we recognize as sexuality. All other masochistic sufferings carry with them the condition that they shall emanate from the loved person and shall be endured at his command. This restriction has been dropped in moral masochism. The suffering itself is what matters; whether it is decreed by someone who is loved or by someone who is indifferent is of no importance. It may even be caused by impersonal powers or by circumstances. (“The Economic” 165)

Lacan's analysis of Antigone, beginning in the lecture "The Splendor of Antigone," does not make direct reference to this passage from Freud, but does compare her story to Sade's heroes. Lacan's first comparison between the two is undertaken through the concept of the second death, "death insofar as it is regarded as the point at which the very cycles of the transformations of nature are annihilated" (*The Ethics* 305). Lacan makes the very Heideggerian point here that it is at this point of annihilation where "being (l'étant) can be distinguished from the position of Being (l'être) itself, and we find its place articulated as such, as a limit, throughout the text of *Antigone*, in the mouths of all the characters and of Tiresias" (305). This evocation of the movement toward death as the point where we can distinguish genuine Being (l'être) can be related to the movement beyond the pleasure principle, where Freud outlines:

the postulate of the self-preservative instincts we ascribe to every living being stands in remarkable contrast to the supposition that the whole life of instinct serves the one end of bringing about death. The theoretic significance of the instincts of self-preservation, power and self-assertation, shrinks to nothing, seen in this light; they are part-instincts designed to secure the path to death peculiar to the organism and to ward off possibilities of return to the inorganic other than the immanent ones...It remains to be added that the organism is resolved to die only in its own way; even these watchmen of life were originally the myrmidons of death. ("Beyond" 39)

The death drive is the same concept from which Lacan's idea of *jouissance* stems; it is the movement to enjoy beyond the pleasure principle which means that *jouissance* is inherently transgressive in nature. In the seminar "The Articulations of the Play," from *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* Lacan continues to analyse Antigone through a comparison to Sadeian characters, stating, "moreover, nothing demonstrates better that Sadean thought is situated at that limit than the fundamental fantasm one finds in Sade, a fantasm that is illustrated in a thousand or more exhausting images that he gives us of the manifestations of human desire. The fantasm involved is that of eternal suffering" (*The Ethics* 321). However, in these comparisons it must be remembered that these sufferings are sadistic in nature, and not masochistic, and following the earlier discussion in this

chapter of Žižek's work, and Deleuze's before him, sadism and masochism are not compatible. Lacan writes that in the Sadeian scenario, "suffering doesn't lead the victim to the point where he is dismembered and destroyed. It seems rather that the object of all the torture is to retain the capacity of being an indestructible support" (321). Therefore, it can be understood that Antigone refuses to be the victim of sadism, the "indestructible support" (321), and that she rejects with "enmity" her situation in life (both living in Creon's household, "subject to his law" (321). Lacan takes exception in his analysis when he discusses the use of the word enmity and the harshness of the dialogue, and contrasts it with Antigone's own self-description, "I am made for love rather than hate" (324). Lacan conceives Antigone's contradictions as an enigma from which he concludes "she is inhuman" (324). Although Lacan refuses to label her as monstrous, the Chorus in the play does not refrain from judgement and cries "she is *ωμόζ*," which Lacan translates as "inflexible" (324). However, "inflexible" in English does not provide the true essence of the meaning of *ωμόζ*. Instead, Lacan explains that "it literally means something uncivilized, something raw. And the word 'raw' comes closest, when it refers to eater of raw flesh" (324). However, Lacan states that the Chorus does not understand, and when they call her *ωμόζ* it is also in comparison to her father, Oedipus. Lacan's explanation for Antigone traversing the limits of what it means to be human is that her desire aims to go beyond *Atè*. This irreplaceable, untranslatable word represents the limit of human life, but is intricately tied up with other processes, or a "chain of events," linked to the Labdacides family (324). The limit which Lacan is taking about with this discussion of Antigone "is the one where the possibility of metamorphosis is located—metamorphosis that has come down through the centuries hidden in the works of Ovid and that regains its former vitality, its energy, during the turning point of European sensibility, the renaissance, and bursts forth in the theater of Shakespeare. That's what Antigone is" (326). The metamorphosis promised through Antigone is dependent on approaching and surpassing the limit of being human, and also receiving a pleasure in surpassing the limit. This metamorphosis is the enjoyment of *jouissance* found through the limit-experience.

When Lacan discusses the punishment Creon announces for Antigone, that she will be "placed alive in a tomb" (329), he provides the reminder that "in Sade [this form of

punishment] is number seven or eight on the list of ordeals to which the hero is submitted” (329). The importance of this is echoed by the Chorus, who say “this story is driving us mad; we are losing our grip; we are going out of our minds; as far as this child is concerned we are moved to [*ιμερος εναργης*]” (329). Lacan defines this term, *ιμερος εναργης*, as “desire made visible” (330). In a later section of the seminar, “Antigone Between Two Deaths,” Lacan goes on to discuss how it is the image of Antigone, living on the limit, which “causes the Chorus to lose its head” (345). When this happens the Chorus “transgress all limits, including casting aside any respect it might have for the edicts of the city. Nothing is more moving than that *ιμερος εναργης*, than the desire that visibly emanates from the eyelids of that admirable girl” (346). Here, it is revealed that the law of Creon is superseded by the desire of Antigone.

In terms of masochistic women, Antigone is revealed as the Deleuzian Grecian woman, “the generator of disorder” (Deleuze 47). In terms of comparing her to the heroines of Masoch’s work,

she is the dream character who appears in the opening chapter of *Venus*; we meet her again at the beginning of *The Divorced Woman*, where she makes a lengthy profession of faith; in *The Siren* she is the ‘imperious and coquettish’ Zenobia who creates havoc in the patriarchal family, inspires the women of the household with the desire to dominate, subjugates the father, cuts the hair of the son in a curious ritual of baptism and causes everyone to dress in clothes of the opposite sex. (Deleuze 48)

This equality of Antigone with man is alluded to through her relationship with her brother. Lacan brings up the relationship in terms of its irreplaceability in her life. A husband and child can be replaced, but a brother cannot. It is the fact that her brother is unique in his relationship with her, because of “the fact of having been born in the same womb” (*The Ethics* 343) that causes Antigone to oppose Creon’s edicts. Lacan says that the brother is unique because of this relationship, but in Antigone’s relation to him she is also unique. There is equality in the sharing of the womb. This is what fixes her position, and what leads to the Chorus, and the audience, understanding of Antigone to be as one

who is harsh, inhuman, and an “eater of raw flesh” (324). Her desire, which will lead to her destroying her own life, is based firstly on the unique relationship she has with her brother. The chaotic nature of the Grecian woman also emerges here, and, in *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (2000) Judith Butler writes about Antigone’s relationship with her brother, stating:

although she operates within the terms of the law when she makes her claim for justice, she also destroys the basis of justice in community by insisting that her brother is irreducible to any law that would render citizens interchangeable with one another. As she asserts his radical particularity, he comes to stand as a scandal, as the threat of ruination to the universality of law. (Butler 52)

In asserting her brother’s radical particularity, Antigone is also asserting her own particularity; in doing so, she makes Creon, his law, and all men tremble.

Another piece of evidence for Antigone’s equality with man is discussed by Butler when she raises the point that Antigone’s actions—the burial of her brother and her “verbal defiance”—are described as many by the chorus, Creon, and the messengers (Butler 8). As well, “Creon, scandalized by her defiance, resolves that while he lives ‘no woman shall rule’ (51), suggesting that if she rules, he will die” (8). The evidence is consistent throughout that Antigone represents what Butler describes as “a certain masculine sovereignty” (9), such as when Creon declares that if her deeds go unpunished, that “Now I am no man, but she the man [*aner*]” (9). While Butler questions whether Antigone has “crossed over into the gender of sovereignty” (9), I will use her to examine the relationship between language, desire, gender, and the law. Butler also brings up, and questions, the relationship between Antigone’s ‘manly’ defiance and language, stating:

Antigone’s deed is, in fact, ambiguous from the start, not only the defiant act in which she buries her brother but the verbal act in which she answers Creon’s question; thus hers is an act in language. To publish one’s act in language is in some sense the completion of the act, the moment as well that implicates her in the masculine excess called hubris. And so, as she begins the act in language, she also departs from herself. Her act is never fully her act, and though she uses

language to claim her deed, to assert a ‘manly’ and defiant autonomy, she can perform that act only through embodying the norms of the power she opposes. (Butler 10)

Butler’s assertion that Antigone is attempting to undermine the power of Creon through an embodiment of the “norms of the power she opposes” (10), is based upon the connection she makes between law and language. Lacan states that “This law, then is revealed clearly enough as identical with an order of language. For without kinship nominations, no power is capable of instituting the order of preferences and taboos that bind and weave the yarn of lineage through succeeding generations” (*Ecrits* 66). The law of kinship which Lacan references here is the Oedipus complex, named after Antigone’s own father, and a vital part of living in the symbolic world. For Antigone, however, her own father, Oedipus, redefines how she identifies in the world when he calls her a man, and also tells her brothers that she is now a man, and not a woman. Butler writes that “when Oedipus is banished, Antigone cares for him, and in her loyalty, is referred to as a ‘man’ (*aner*). Indeed, she follows him loyally into the wilderness, but at some point that following imperceptibly turns into a scene in which *she* leads *him*” (Butler 61). Later, Oedipus proclaims to his own sons that Ismene and Antigone have taken their place, “if I had not begotten these daughters to attend me, I would not be living, for all you did for me. But as it is they preserve me, they are my nurses, they are men, not women, when it comes to working for me; but you are sons of some other, and not sons of mine” (1559-1563, qtd. in Butler 62). Thus, when Antigone uses language to subvert the power of Creon, is she embodying the very power she opposes, or is she speaking from a new symbolic order, given to her by Oedipus himself? In response to Hegel’s analysis of Antigone that says her deed (of speech) is opposed to Creon’s, Butler writes that “the two acts mirror rather than oppose one another” (Butler 10). The same is true for their locations within the sadomasochistic structure. Antigone and Creon occupy opposite positions which are not compatible with one another. She is the masochist, and he is the sadist. In terms of a general rule of tragedy, Lacan says, “the spectator has his eyes opened to the fact that even for him who goes to the end of his desire, all is not a bed of roses” (*The Ethics* 323). For Antigone, her desire to bury her brother and her masochism are tied together and her location at the limit, beyond the pleasure principle, ends in her

own death. This desire is described by Lacan as “a passion” (254), and later that “her desire aims at the following—the beyond of *Atê*” (264). The tragedy of her family and her desire to bury her brother are also tied together with her desire to go beyond the limit due to Creon’s own sadistic law. Even for the hero, the incompatibility of the masochist with the sadist ends in the violence of death.

1.6 The Limit: the Gaze and the Voice as *objet a*

It must also be remembered that it is not only Antigone’s desire which supersedes Creon’s law, but her invocation of unwritten laws. In Butler’s work on Antigone, she writes that “both Creon and Antigone at different moments claim that the gods are on their side: Creon grounds the laws of the city with reference to the decrees of the gods; Antigone cites the chthonic gods as her authority” (Butler 51). However, Antigone confronts Creon with the line “you made the laws” (Sophocles qtd in *The Ethics* 342), which Lacan points that out most people interpret as meaning that “It’s not Zeus who gives you the right to say that” (342); however, she actually denies that it is either Zeus or Δίκη (the “companion or collaborator of the gods below” (342)) that she is following, saying “I’m not concerned with all these gods below who have imposed laws on men” (342). The phrase “*πρισαν, ὀριξω, ὄροζ*” indicates, as Lacan suggests, the “image of a horizon, of a limit” (*The Ethics* 342). That Antigone establishes herself at this horizon or limit indicates that she believes herself to be “unassailable” at this point, and the unwritten laws at this horizon are “an invocation of something that is, in effect, of the order of the law, but which is not developed in any signifying chain or in anything else” (342).

Throughout Lacan’s discussion of Antigone it becomes apparent that the gaze as *objet a*, as discussed earlier in this chapter, takes a backseat to the voice as *objet a*. The voice has already long been associated with masochism, as the commanding voice (*Four Fundamental* 200), (Seminar XVI 257), (Hoffmann 14). The words “*πρισαν, ὀριξω, ὄροζ*” as the unwritten law located at the limit is a silent voice, and as *objet a* ‘speaks’ the desire of Antigone into being: “I am dead and I desire death” (Sophocles qtd. in *The Ethics*). Her desire is to go beyond the pleasure principle, following the death instinct.

Her stubborn desire for death, a punishment from Creon, is tied together with the act which condemns her: to bury her brother. In Antigone's mind she has no choice but to bury him, and she herself exposes herself for punishment when being caught in the act the second time. Her reason is put simply: that her brother is her brother (343), but this simple explanation is more complex; they shared the same womb, and have the same criminal father, "the consequences of whose crimes Antigone is still suffering from" (343). The law Antigone follows is not Creon's institutional, sadistic law, but instead a law of familial connection which forces her to become the masochist. Antigone's line of desire is both a part of the "language of words," but also paradoxically disconnected from the signifier and exists in radical alterity to the laws of man. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan outlines the partial drives, and says "at the scopic level, we are no longer at the level of demand, but of desire, of the desire of the Other. It is the same at the level of the invocatory drive, which is the closest to the experience of the unconscious" (104). Thus, these two forms of *objet a*, the gaze and the voice, are closely related in understanding one's desire, but the voice is actually closer to the unconscious. When Antigone is placed in the tomb she is lost sight of, subverting the scopophilic gaze of the audience, and the sadistic gaze of Creon, and leaving us to solely rely on the invocatory drive (the voice). This invocatory drive has been present throughout the entire tragedy, represented by the Chorus who have been supporting Creon up until the point when Antigone has been led to her death. However, as Žižek theorizes in "I Hear You with My Eyes," the object voice par excellence is silence ("I Hear You" 92), represented by the "the internal voice, a voice which cannot be silenced" (*A Voice* 14). While silence cannot be represented in a play, it is the voice of the Chorus and the prophet Teiresias who provide the unconscious voice for the audience. As Antigone is being led to the tomb the Chorus sings about the suffering of others in comparison to how Antigone suffers now. The fates of those who suffer is tied together with the fates of women: Danae is a woman who suffered by living in hiding with her son Perseus, a Greek hero who like Oedipus was also subject to a prophecy foretelling his patricidal fate; Pentheus was an ancient King of Thebes who was punished by having his mother driven to madness and his body torn into pieces because he mocked the god Bacchus; and Phineus, a prophet whom Zeus was jealous of, who was punished by

having his wife blind their own children (Sophocles 740-770). The women in these stories are all suffering themselves, or tools through which the gods sadistically punish men; comparing them to Antigone includes her in these acts of sadistic violence, and makes us question the role of the gods in the action.

Up until the moment Antigone is sealed in the tomb, the voice of the Chorus provides narration comparing Antigone to the fate of these other Greek heroes. Once she is in the tomb, the voice of Tiresias, the prophet, appeals to Creon to change his course. He appeals to Creon:

I tell you, Creon, you yourself have brought
 This new calamity upon us. Our hearths and altars
 Are stained with the corruption of dogs and carrion birds
 That glut themselves on the corpse of Oedipus' son.
 The gods are deaf when we pray to them, their fire
 Recoils from our offering, their birds of omen
 Have no cry of comfort, for they are gorged
 With the thick blood of the dead. (Sophocles 796-803)

This is significant because Tiresias is not only a prophet who can see the future, but is also famous for having lived as a woman for seven years. This experience of living as a woman means that Tiresias transcends the gender binary, and he speaks for the same gods which Antigone is loyal to, not the gods in whose name Creon writes the laws of man, but claims they are in the names of the gods. The voice of the gods is the voice as *objet a*. Lacan writes about *objet a*:

I will ask you to look at my article *Kant avec Sade*, where you will see that the sadist himself occupies the place of the object, but without knowing it, to the benefit of another, for whose jouissance he exercises his action as sadistic pervert. You see, then, several possibilities here for the function of the *objet a*, which is never found in the position of being the aim of desire. It is either pre-subjective, or the foundation of an identification of the subject, or the foundation of an identification disavowed by the subject. In this sense, sadism is merely the

disavowal of masochism. This formula will make it possible to illuminate many things concerning the true nature of sadism. (*Four Fundamental* 185-186)

The incompatibility of sadism and masochism means that the masochist is not in control. Antigone is both a masochist because of her actions, but in the hands of the sadist (Creon) she attempts to regain control by approaching the limit of *Atè* herself. Her death is ultimately a failure in masochism. She approaches the limit and then goes beyond in her suicide, thus denying Creon's sadistic rule of law, but also end up dead. This points toward a later failure in women's masochism, which is enacted/illustrated/shown by women writers such as Acker, Carter, and Kraus.

1.7 Antigone as Feminist Pirate

Antigone's story is taken up by feminist avant-garde writer Kathy Acker in the novel *Pussy, King of the Pirates* (1996). For Acker, enacting the figure of Antigone throughout this novel represents the power that women can have by expressing masochistic desire through language. Two works about Kathy Acker and her writing have been published recently: Georgina Colby's *Kathy Acker: Writing the Impossible* (2016) and Chris Kraus' *After Kathy Acker* (2017). This resurgence in publications on Acker's work and her life indicate the pertinence of what Acker was writing about and considering theoretically through her texts; Colby's text looks predominantly at her novels and discusses the importance of working with language for Acker. In her novels she often seems to be responding to the types of questions Lacan was raising, and in both her writing and her life she was concerned with "the possibility of a different category of femininity beyond the phallic order" (Moncayo 90). Colby discusses Acker's fascination with language, as well as the particular attention paid to it by female *avant-garde* writers. In differentiating between *avant-garde* modernist male and female writers Colby follows the work of Ellen G. Friedman; Friedman believed that male writers were still fixated on a search for the father, but female writers were searching for something "unpresentable," and rather than being part of the paternal order these texts "evoke the unpresentable as the not yet presented" (Colby 9). Colby posits that in Acker's novels she "succeeds in presenting the unpresentable," effectively responding to the calls for women to write a new language for

themselves, and also “invent the impregnable language that will wreak partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes” (Colby 9, Cixous 886).

Acker begins a section of *Pussy, King of the Pirates* with the title “ANTIGONE’S STORY” by writing: “Hegel, or the panopticon, sees all, except for the beginning of the world. In that beginning, which is still beginning there is a young girl. Her name’s not important. She’s been called King Pussy, Pussycat, Ostracism, O, Ange. Once she was called Antigone...” (*Pussy* 163). Acker, known for her plagiaristic and pastiche method, takes the figure of the masochistic Antigone and rewrites her into scenarios where she is in a brothel, or surrounded by leather-clad punks, and finally as a pirate, scenes which are a pastiche of novels such as Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883) and Anne Desclos’ *Story of O* (1954). Her life as a pirate is a utopian gesture towards the practice of women’s masochism, but to sustain this feminist utopia requires the absence of men. When the characters King Pussy, O, and Ange are all revealed to be embodiments of Antigone, Acker gives us her history (from Antigone’s Personal Diary):

so I just got out I upped and left put it however you want

because it’s all a piece of shit. The world I had been in. I don’t have to give you the details because they’ve been repeated over and over, the whole story, every possible story, again, again, just walk into any bookstore and look at all the stories and they’re all ours, anyway they were all mine, those repetitions, which I call representations, to me were prison. Prison. That’s where Creon, my so-called dad, but he wasn’t my real dad, he just wasn’t perverted enough, wanted to put me. Put me away. He wanted to cut off my head and do worse things. (*Pussy* 163)

Acker’s Antigone lives out her life in literary form as a repetition, described as a prison, evoking the death sentence of being confined in her own tomb. She continues to talk about the boredom of this prison of repetition saying, “If this new dad had stashed me in prison, that would have been a repetition because...you know what prison life is? Prison life’s emotional appearance is boredom, then forcible identity-disappearance, because prison existence is repetition upon repetition so I lived in prison even before Creon wished to put me there” (*Pussy* 164). This repetition and boredom is reminiscent of

Comay's work on Sade via Adorno, which is discussed earlier in this chapter, and in which sadism can be summarized as "boredom as the congealment of the always-the-same" (Comay 8). Acker's iteration of Antigone escapes Creon by stealing money from him, escaping on a motorcycle "so [her] feet could touch this earth" (165), and then becoming a pirate. The following section will outline the theory behind pirate utopias, which are another iteration of Acker's pastiche—rewriting the male-centric pirate utopia of Robert Louis Stevenson for women—and how casting the masochist Antigone as a pirate enables new language to come to exist, and through it a new form of ethical law. As Acker works both literature and theory throughout her plagiaristic literature, it is important to recall the final summation of the rules which sadism and masochism are grounded in. Deleuze outlines them in a list near the end of *Coldness and Cruelty* and contrasts the two perversions:

1. Sadism is speculative-demonstrative, masochism dialectical-imaginative.
2. Sadism operates with the negative and pure negation, masochism with disavowal and suspension.
3. Sadism operates by means of quantitative reiteration, masochism by means of qualitative suspense.
4. There is a masochism specific to the sadist and equally a sadism specific to the masochist, the one never combining with the other.
5. Sadism negates the mother and inflates the father, masochism disavows the mother and abolishes the father.
6. The role and significance of the fetish, and the function of the fantasy are totally different in each case.
7. There is an aestheticism in masochism, while sadism is hostile to the aesthetic attitude.
8. Sadism is institutional, masochism contractual.
9. In sadism the superego and the process of identification play the primary role, masochism gives primacy to the ego and the process of idealization.
10. Sadism and masochism exhibit totally different forms of desexualization and resexualization.

11. Summing up all these differences, there is the most radical difference between sadistic *apathy* and masochistic *coldness*. (Deleuze 134)

Playing out through the structure of the pirate utopia is a recognizable masochistic fantasy. In “Masochism in Political Behavior: a Lacanian Perspective,” Filip Kovacevic outlines how Theodor Reik resolves the paradox of masochism (that some people pursue suffering rather than pleasure), “by pointing out that these human beings do not simply choose pain and suffering for their own sake, but as a means to fulfill their imagined aims...for pleasure to be felt there has to be a preparation by fantasy” (61). In political masochism, according to Kovacevic, the sexual fantasy underlies the political ideology, whether secular or religious (61); and so we see in *Antigone* that the ideological battle between Creon and Antigone reflects the same incompatibility that is found between sadism and masochism, and which is made clear in the rules Deleuze outlines above. Acker transposes Antigone’s situation to the world of pirates in her novel, and it is the suffering that women experience in the pirate world which makes them masochistic, even as they pursue their own form of a pirate utopia.

A consistent theme that runs through writings on pirate utopias is the desire for freedom. In Chris Land’s article “Fly the Black Flag” he describes the pirate ethic as being about “the pursuit of freedom and an egalitarian form of on-board organization” (Land 176). The desire to be freed from the “discipline and domination” of the typical merchant captain, whilst also having the ability to raid other ships for supplies, were characteristics of a revolutionary society which “stood as a challenge to the dominant social order of the time” (169). While increased freedom was a major part of the pirate life, Land also outlines articles which were imposed to keep order on-board the ship. These articles regulated “authority and accountability, the division of booty, and other matters of on-board discipline,” as well as “prohibitions on issues such as bringing women or boys on board, drunkenness in combat, gambling, and the rape of female captives” (179). These prohibitions against having women on-board are also mentioned in Elizabeth Alford Pollock’s book *Popular Culture, Piracy, and Outlaw Pedagogy* (2014) where she mentions the “strict penalties” for having women aboard the ship, or any abuse of women (Pollock 92). These rules form a contractual relationship between pirates, while they

reject the institutional power of the merchant captain, which aligns pirates on the masochistic side of the law and traditional merchant ships on the sadistic side (see rule 8 above). Land's article dismisses the idea of women being accepted as pirates, even with the existence of female pirates like Mary Read and Anne Bonny, because the pirate community was a type of brotherhood connected together through homosocial bonds (Land 182). Pollock's commentary on female pirates would support this dismissal of Read and Bonny because they "donned male clothing to conceal their female identity and gain acceptance in the male-dominated world of piracy" (Pollock 55). They assumed the identity of men in order to become pirates, and therefore were only accepted as the men they presented themselves to be.

In literary pirate utopias women only appear in the role of sex objects: either prisoners vulnerable to rape, thereby necessitating the need to establish rules against this behaviour, or as prostitutes kept in brothels. The woman in the brothel is a consistent figure in writings on pirate communities, appearing as an object upon which pirates can squander their treasure, along with booze and gambling (Land 176). Thus, women were not part of the brotherhood of pirates, separated not only by their gender but also by water, the true utopian community being on-board the ship while the women were left in brothels and beachfront resorts devoted to pleasuring the pirates during their time on land. The transformation from women as whores to pirates is connected here by Acker as a way to subvert the androcentric pirate utopia, however, prostitution will continue to appear throughout this work as a way of condemning women and those who practice sadomasochism as criminals. For Antigone, she is not herself a prostitute, but Lacan refers to her representative of the "criminal good" (*The Ethics* 240), both for her own actions in subverting Creon's law, and her relation to her criminal father Oedipus.

The subversion of the male utopia is not a new concept emerging only from Acker's work; in Louis James' "From Robinson to Robina, and Beyond: *Robinson Crusoe* as a Utopian Concept" she describes Robina Crusoe, a female spin-off of Defoe's original castaway. We are told Robina is "as tough as a male Crusoe," but exists in a utopia "free from sexuality" (James 42). While Robina is capable of handling a band of pirates her literary fate is to live out her days as a spinster (42). Even Anne Bonny and Mary Read,

whom Land has already cast doubt upon, are largely products of the literary imagination of Captain Johnson. He includes the two women in his text, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*, where fact and fiction are inseparably intertwined. Pollock views these women as objects which Johnson can write about, denying us the knowledge of “their own personal experiences” because they were not free to express them (Pollock 9). Bonny and Read sailed under the command of little-known pirate Calico Jack, showing that they were also subservient to a male pirate rather than having any power of their own.

1.8 The Masochistic Language of Women

Acker’s novel *Pussy, King of the Pirates* follows a trajectory within her own writing of attempting to create a new way for women to use language. Her work is well known for its use of pastiche, or what she herself refers to as plagiarism, and the works which she rewrites are usually written by prominent male authors. In one of Acker’s earlier novels, *Blood and Guts in High School* (1978), the character Janey contemplates Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter* and in doing so looks to the future, saying: “There’s going to be a world where the imagination is created by joy not suffering, a man and a woman can love each other again they can kiss and fuck again (a woman’s going to come along and make this world for me even through I’m not alive anymore)” (*Blood and Guts* 100). In this future language and desire are linked together for women, thus by writing woman-becoming a space is opened up in the phallogentric tradition of writing for both women’s voices and desires to exist. Acker believes that we should always remember that,

women are never men. Even a woman who has the soul of a pirate, at least pirate morals, even a woman who prefers loneliness to the bickerings and constraints of heterosexual marriage, even such a woman who is a freak in our society needs a home. Even freaks need homes, countries, language, communication...language presupposes community. Therefore without you, nothing I say has any meaning. Without love or language, I do not exist. We are freaks who have only friendship. (*Don Quixote* 202).

This statement from the novel *Don Quixote* illustrates Acker's belief in the importance of a community outside of the patriarchal tradition that currently exists. The female pirate is the ultimate transgressor of patriarchal norms, but even this female rebel *par excellence* needs a group of likeminded women to communicate with in their own language.

Through a process of rewriting male texts Acker is attempting to create this language by subverting this phallogentric tradition. The process of plagiarizing men's writing serves two purposes for Acker: to create a new language outside of the phallogentric signifying chain, and the also submit to the masochism which stems from the anxiety of authorship. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's theory that women experience an anxiety of authorship, which is an adaptation of Harold Bloom's theory that men experience an anxiety of influence, proposes that women writers suffer from anxiety related to an inability to create. Male critics tend to compare writer's block in a man to both a eunuch and woman, tying together the inability to write with castration saying: "without exercise, without a pen, Sade [became] bloated, [became] a eunuch" (Barthes qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 10). Within the confines of patriarchal writing women are not only "penned" by men, but also "penned up" and "penned in" (Gilbert and Gubar 13). In reference to Honoré de Balzac's words, "woman's virtue is man's greatest invention" (13), Gilbert and Gubar quote a series of metaphors and etiologies from Norman O. Brown: "poetry, the creative act, the act of life, the archetypal sexual act. Sexuality is poetry. The lady is our creation, or Pygmalion's statue. The lady is the poem; [Petrarch's] Laura is, really, poetry" (13). Locked up in the patriarchal metaphor of institutional sadism, women's virtue is man's for the giving (and taking), and it seems that language and writing are as well. Gilbert and Gubar theorize:

Since both patriarchy and its texts subordinate and imprison women, before women can even attempt the pen which is so rigorously kept from them they must escape just those male texts which, defining them as 'Cyphers,' deny them the autonomy to formulate alternatives to the authority that has imprisoned them and kept them from attempting the pen. (13)

Therefore, Acker's plagiarism of men's texts is a radical form of masochism through plagiarism. By refusing to escape the male text, instead rewriting it, it serves as a form of

humiliation from which both Acker as a woman writer, and the reader can gain masochistic pleasure. Acker is highly aware of what she is doing with language and with writing and in the prefatory statement to the second part of *Don Quixote* she states: “BEING DEAD, DON QUIXOTE COULD NO LONGER SPEAK. BEING BORN INTO AND PART OF A MALE WORLD, SHE HAD NO SPEECH OF HER OWN. ALL SHE COULD DO WAS READ MALE TEXTS WHICH WEREN’T HERS (*Don Quixote* 39). By submitting to texts such as *Don Quixote* (1605), *Treasure Island*, and *The Story of O*, Acker is surrendering to the anxiety of authorship for women and revelling in the masochistic humiliation which comes from this act.

For Lacan, the speech of Antigone is grounded in “an invocation of something that is, in effect, of the order of law, but which is not developed in any signifying chain or anything else” (The Ethics 342). The idea that there can be a language which is not connected to the signifying chain of the dominant language is not found only in Lacan’s analysis of *Antigone*, but is also present in his essay “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious.” Here Lacan writes “the linearity which F. de Saussure holds to be constitutive of the chain of discourse, in conformity with its emission by a single voice and with its horizontal position in our writing—if this linearity is necessary in fact, it is not sufficient. It applies to the chain of discourse only in the direction in which it is oriented in time” (“The Instance” 122). However, Lacan seemingly dismisses this idea of conformity by a single voice and the horizontal position through his examinations of both poetics and language, and he states “there is in effect no signifying chain which does not have attached to the punctuation of each of its units a whole articulation of relevant contexts suspended ‘vertically’ from that point” (122). The concept of language having multiple vertical layers means that new articulations can be created from the same signifiers, and this is what both Antigone, in her masochistic push toward the limit, and Acker in her experimental rewriting of women’s suffering both attempt to do, and this language work pushes against Butler’s notion that “[Antigone] can perform that act only through embodying the norms of the power she opposes” (Butler 10). In terms of language then, sadism can be understood as metonymical, while masochism is metaphorical; Lacan says that “the creative spark of the metaphor does not spring from the conjunction of two images, that is of two signifiers equally actualized. It springs from two signifiers one of

which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the hidden signifier then remaining present through its (metonymic) relation to the rest of the chain” (“The Instance” 125). This rule of speech compliments the Deleuzian rules of sadism and masochism, specifically rule #7: “There is an aestheticism in masochism, while sadism is hostile to the aesthetic attitude” (Deleuze 134). The creativity and aesthetics which come to exist through metonymic language have a creative aesthetic which is not possible in following the law or the signifying chain.

In a 1989 interview with Ellen G. Friedman, Acker discusses *Don Quixote* (1986) and her writing process, which she describes as an attempt to “see what pure plagiarism would look like” (Friedman 12). In the process of rewriting *Don Quixote* (1605) Acker changes the character Don Quixote from a man to a woman and in doing so makes the text about “trying to find your voice as a woman” (13). The same type of rewriting is involved in Acker’s novel *Pussy, King of the Pirates* which is a pastiche several works including *Treasure Island* and *Story of O*, both of which depreciate women, and, importantly, *Antigone*. *Treasure Island* almost completely leaves women out of the story and *Story of O* features women who are in a subservient position to men. In order to reassert a place in these stories for women Acker rewrites these stories in the same way she rewrote *Don Quixote* ten years prior. Through this process she not only creates a space for women to become pirates, Acker herself actually becomes a pirate by exploiting “a grey area in the literary marketplace” (Irr 1). In Caren Irr’s *Pink Pirates: Contemporary American Women Writers and Copyright* (2010) she explores how even classic works like *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* can be considered piratical because of the degree to which it draws on other authors’ works. For Irr, ‘pink’ pirates are female literary writers whose “experiments with the limits of authorship often do embrace the pirate’s status as a disruptive figure, darting back and forth across the lines drawn by the law” (2). Irr identifies Acker as one of these ‘pink’ pirates and devotes a chapter to Acker’s philosophy of property. In regard to *Pussy, King of the Pirates* Irr says, “Acker’s intense and long-standing concern with female embodiment becomes directly pertinent to her critique of intellectual property” (113). The entire concept of copyright and ownership of intellectual property is an “unfortunate after effect of having written in a capitalist society,” what Acker refers to as a “phallic scam” (113). Thus the entire concept of copyright law is a patriarchal system

which can be overcome through the act of writing. The concepts of women's desire and language are linked together in Acker's writing, which she explains in *Bodies of Work*: "When I copy, I don't 'appropriate,' I just do what gives me most pleasure: write. As the Gnostics put it, when two people fuck, the whole world fucks" (114).

Although masochism is characterised as feminine in nature, the masochistic processes are tied to the fantasies of becoming stereotypical masculine figures—whether it is a knight, a pirate, or taking on the role of a son to Oedipus and speaking against Creon. Acker does this by creating a line of desire which takes the character O (one iteration of Antigone) from a whorehouse in Alexandria to a pirate community run by women. The whorehouse provides a connection to the role that women played in the golden age of pirates, as sexual objects available to be purchased in a brothel. The dichotomy between the whorehouse and the pirate community is not only representative of O's individual journey but is also representative on a larger scale of the movement from a patriarchal society toward an attempt at a feminist one. The gesture toward a feminist utopia is hinted at several times in the first section of the novel. In the Preface O consults one of the many prescients in the slums where the whorehouse is located. Her fortune predicts failed revolution, "'And then,' the fortune teller said, 'you'll find yourself on a pirate ship'" (*Pussy* 10). O tells us that "The cards that I remember told me that my future is freedom," connecting the idea of a pirate community with utopic freedom (10). However, the movement towards a pirate utopia is the appropriation of an androcentric utopia, which is both a method of masochistic writing for Acker but also what Butler would critique as an embodiment of the "norms of the power she opposes" (Butler 10).

It is not only women who lack freedom and desire a change in patriarchal society. The first section of Acker's novel is told from two perspectives, O and Antonin Artaud. Acker lifts Artaud from Deleuze's chapter "The Thirteenth Series of the Schizophrenic and the Little Girl" in *The Logic of Sense* (1969) in which Lewis Carroll's Alice is representative of surface language and, unlike Artaud, "has not felt the real problem of a language in depth—namely, the schizophrenic problem of suffering, of death, and of life" (*The Logic of Sense* 84). For Deleuze's version of Artaud "there is not, there is no longer, any surface" because "the surface has split open" (86). The result of this split is the loss of

meaning for the world, which is especially pertinent to the discussion of Acker because of her own insistence of a similar loss of the meaning of language. Deleuze is able to describe this loss of meaning in a physical way, saying:

The procedure [for Artaud] is this: a word, often of an alimentary nature, appears in capital letters, printed as in a collage which freezes it and strips it of its sense. But the moment that the pinned-down word loses its sense, it bursts into pieces; it is decomposed into syllables, letters, and above all consonants which act directly on the body, penetrating and bruising it. (87)

Deleuze's description of Artaud's meaningless depths provides a connection between the realm of language and the physical body, a connection which has always been reflected in the writing of Acker. In *The Logic of Sense* Artaud is associated with the idea of "language without articulation" and this gives him the power over language to transform children's nursery rhymes into a poem "about the problem of obedience and command" (89). For Deleuze this power over language creates a "second language" which has the capability of "transforming the word into an action by rendering it incapable of being decomposed and incapable of disintegrating" (89). This creation of a language outside of language is the link between Acker's desire to create a new language for women, Artaud's poetics, and the masochistic voice.

In the Preface to Acker's novel it is Artaud's speeches and letters which communicates the ideas of change before O herself is able to imagine any kind of change in her life or in the world. He writes in a letter to Georges Le Breton: "the Hanged Man card, to me, represents the slight possibility that this society in which human identity depends upon possessing rather than on being possessed, that this society in which I'm living, could change" (*Pussy* 16-17). In Artaud's letter to O he echoes the writings of Deleuze on language, writing: "A hole of the body, which every man but not woman including Gerard de Nerval and myself has to make, is the abyss of the mouth. I have found this language, which is why I can write this letter to you, O. You see, Gerard, who was naked like you are, gave me a language that doesn't lie, for it spurted out of the hold of his body" (20). Artaud's language comes from the depths of the body, split open by the

creation of the hole, and as such it is also the language of revolution. Thus for women to find their own language is a revolutionary act. Acker connects bodily desire to the idea of a new masochistic language through the poet Artaud and O: "I only wanted to fuck with him. Pain, for him at that moment, was the same as sexual pleasure. For me, every area of my skin was an orifice; therefore, each part of his body could do and did everything to mine (22).

The murder of Artaud is the turning point which causes O to leave the whorehouse. She had fallen in love with him after he bought her freedom and this heartbreak leads to O abandon patriarchal society, saying "For me, there were no more men left in the world" (*Pussy* 23). When she reaches the point of being able to eschew the whorehouse and patriarchal society O declares "I stood on the edge of a new world" (23). O leaves for Alexandria in order to start "The only thing in the world that's worth beginning: the end of the world" (27). To begin the end of the world she decides that it is necessary "to find the origin of whoredom" (27). Within "the most famous whorehouse in Alexandria" she discovers three likeminded whores, Ange, St. Barbara, and Louis Vanaen de Voringhem (28). These women are politically aware and have already been dreaming of a "*revolution of whores*, a revolution defined by all methods that exist as distant, as far as possible, from profit" (30). However, Acker's tendency to orientalize women's suffering, if only through the imaginary realm, should be noted. In *Pussy, King of the Pirates* O's travels take her to the whorehouse in Alexandria, Egypt. This transportation to the East is not isolated to this novel, and in *Blood and Guts in High School* (1978) Janey is taken prisoner and trains to be a prostitute until "the Persian slave trader finally decided Janey was ready to hit the streets. She had demonstrated that she knew how to make impotent men hard, give blow and rim jobs, tease, figure out exactly what each man wants without asking him, make a man feel secure, desirable, and wild (*Blood* 116). While this passage evokes Freud's remarks on polymorphous perversity, it is not coincidental that Acker has transported Janey from America to Persia. In Chapter Three, I discuss the Western tendency to locate the fantasy of the Other in the Orient through the work of Alain Grosrichard and the fantasy of the seraglio and despotism.

For Acker, it is clear that one of the methods of revolution is a new form of writing, following Julia Kristeva's own thesis that locates language as the "primary site of revolution" (Colby 85). Kristeva wrote that "we should have learned that there can be no socio-political transformation without a transformation of subjects: in other words, in our relationship to social constraints, to pleasure, and more deeply, to language" (qtd. in Colby 85). Unlike the unsuccessful revolution in the Preface to *Pussy*, which ends with bodies in the streets, Acker's women pirates,

learned that if language or words whose meanings seem definite are dissolved into a substance of multiple gestures and cries, a substance which has a more direct, a more visceral capacity for expression, then all the weight that the current social, political, and religious hegemonic forms of expression carry will be questioned. Become questionable. Finally, lost. The weight of culture: questioned and lost. (*Pussy* 31)

These women in the whorehouse have embraced the revolutionary "language without articulation" that Artaud uses to create a second language (*Logic of Sense* 89). Instead of pleasuring male customers the women begin to masturbate regularly, entering a world of gestures and cries that have nothing to do with the patriarchal commerce of the whorehouse because they are masturbating for their own pleasure, not engaging in sexual intercourse with a paying man to the economic benefit of another man who owns the whorehouse. Therefore, entering this world of a new language for women is closely connected with women's desire. The prostitute Lulu describes a visionary way of thinking about the world, saying, "Soon this world will be nothing but pleasure, the world in which we live and are nothing but desires for more intense and more intense joy" (33). When they orgasm it is "without language," fulfilling the disintegration of language which Deleuze foresaw in *The Logic of Sense*, and pointing to the emergence of a "new kind of world" able to fulfill the desires of women (34; 35).

Acker continues to connect female desire with language, describing the activities of the whores once they are freed from the johns:

the whores, now alone, spewed out bits of ink, words in ink, sexual or filthy words, words that were formed by the scars and wounds, especially those of sexual abuse, those out of childhood. All women bore their wounds as childhoods. Therefore, words apocalyptic and apostrophic, punctuations only as disjunctions, disjunctions or cuts into different parts of the body or of the world, everything priced and priced until, finally, all the numbers disappeared and were displaced by the winds: Ventre, vente, vent. (36)

Freed from the need to sell their bodies, the women are able to express themselves through their individual desire, in the form of masturbation, and in their writing. This new language uses disjunctions and is displaced by the wind. This description of the lines of flight made possible through the ability to represent themselves in language represent the woman-becoming that is made possible in revolutionary language. In order to be accepted by the whores O must prove that she is also a member of this sisterhood by using this revolutionary language to compose and sing the “Second Whore-Song.” She begins her song: “Sailors who’re pirates, journey into nonexistence or *the world of the unfurling rose*” (37). Now that O has language at her disposal she is able to imagine a world where pirates are the object of her desire and whose journey is one that moves in a line of flight toward nonexistence. To frame this within *Antigone*, recall that Lacan writes that “from Antigone’s point of view life can only be approached, can only be lived or thought about, from the place of that limit where her life is already lost, where she is already on the other side. But from that place she can see it and live it in the form of something already lost” (*The Ethics* 345).

The section of Acker’s novel “The Pirate Girls” begins with the story of how Pussy, King of the pirates got her name. It is similar to the story of how Acker’s character Don Quixote got her name after undergoing an abortion and then renaming herself Catheter or Don Quixote. After renaming herself she takes on the identity of a knight in training, wearing the armour of “pale or puke green paper” from her medical procedure and planning adventures, like seeking the Holy Grail (*Don Quixote* 10). This is a symbolic rejection of the responsibilities imposed on women by our patriarchal society and her new identity as a knight is also that of a “female-male or a night-knight” (10). The

association of the knight with male identity allows Don Quixote to reject traditional female roles and embrace a new way to live. The situation which Pussy finds herself in when she renames herself and becomes a pirate is similar to what happens to Don Quixote. She is also waiting to have an abortion and she meets a cat on the street. This cat says to her in a secret language, “I’ll never leave you” and she understands that the cat “goes wherever she wants and at whatever speed, often disappears for days, and that if I welcome this, she’ll never abandon me” (*Pussy* 79). She likes the lifestyle of the cat and renames herself Pussy after her, a way of becoming-animal which allows her freedom from the repressive patriarchal society in which she lives. This is also when Pussy becomes a pirate. By stealing a black dress she begins “the occupation that [she] would later become” and makes the city into the new enclave of the pirate, because stealing itself is a “part of the city” (83). Going through these painful medical procedures is part of the masochistic metamorphosis.

The desire to become a pirate and plunder the city is a rejection of the patriarchal nature of the city and the “white liberal hands” which control the power and money in the city. This theme in Acker’s writing first appeared in her experimental writing “Journal Black Cat Black Jewels.” This radical incantation ends with the following text:

gold stars gold hands body turns gold trees light makes
 changing walls wind division windows disappear curtains
 doors no longer existgold smell gold balls gold
 raft gold ships pirates disembark female sashes under
 heavy breasts talk nonsense steal jewels from Ford Morgan
 lose jewels lose all possessions tramp through Michigan. (Colby 41)

This piece of experimental writing focuses on “the fantasy world of gold and female pirates” who steal from industrialists and bankers (42). The idea that the female pirates would steal from capitalists like Henry Ford or J.P. Morgan but then lose the jewels is an important connection to the classical pirate community. The golden age pirates did not

find large treasures all the time, instead they divided up whatever they were able to find and squandered it on women, gambling, and other forms of entertainment.

Pussy's adoption of the pirate identity is a subversion of the classical pirate utopia because she rejects the articles which were put in place to govern pirate communities, such as banning women from boarding the ships. This ban on women is part of the suppression of women in patriarchal society and so Pussy subverts this ban by engaging in sex with other women and girls from the school where she works. Pussy also takes on the title of 'King' Pussy, rather than the more feminine title of Queen, and in doing so she is subverting the power of the title of King that is imbued by the patriarchal society which views a king as the head of state, in much the same way Antigone attempts to subvert the institutional power that Creon holds. Although Pussy tells the story of renaming herself after a cat, Pussy is also an important link to the female body. By calling herself Pussy, a slang term for the vagina, she is linking language and female desire.

Eventually, the pirate utopia grows from being Pussy on her own to a group of pirate girls. Under the instructions of another pirate woman, Silver, Pussy receives a treasure map and instructions for retrieving the treasure. After gathering all the pirate girls in Brighton at the Bald Head Pub they ask, "Do we know who we are? Mustn't we go back to our past? *Where are the pirates of yesteryear?*?" (*Pussy, King of the Pirates* 190). This reflection back to the past of all the men pirates who have come before them is another utopic impulse, reminiscing back upon a golden age when pirates were able to gather together to live in a society of increased freedom and spend their time searching for booty. Here Acker juxtaposes the pirate girls, as "girls of fortune" (190) against the male pirates who have come before them, the "male rot, that drool that will never dry though it long ago died and still stinks from here to the China Seas in which ivory is growing, from here to rotting eternity, where are those bearers and carriers of nausea, those vessels of disease as if all they know how to do was steal what was most pernicious out of Pandora's box?" (190). The pirate girls both revel in the death of the male pirates and also uphold their utopian past as a "long and glorious lineage" (190). In *Kathy Acker: Writing the Impossible* Georgina Colby discusses the symbolism of the pirate girls. She says that they "represent all that the male has suppressed in the female and all that a

reactionary society fears in female sexual corporeality: menstrual blood, discharge, odour, and an active female desire as opposed to sexual passivity” (Colby 232). Acker’s female pirates embody all of these physical elements of womanhood and they “become the building blocks of a radical female agency” (232). Like Antigone’s “line of sight that defines desire” (*The Ethics* 304), the pirates are moving toward a limit which humans are not supposed to surpass.

Plagiarizing or parodying the articles which golden age pirates adhered to, Pussy and her band of pirate girls create their own pirate code, “The Rules of Piracy.” These rules are:

1. Regarding Purpose: To find that place out of which we come.
2. Regarding the Identity of All Those Who Undertake the Acts or Infiltrations of Piracy: Half-human half-beast
3. Regarding Identity: There are no pirates anymore.
4. On Pirate Methods and Methodologies: Crooked.
5. The Purpose of Pirating: Stealing.
6. Where Pirates Live Free of Authority: Caves.
7. Regarding Pirate Purpose: To find buried treasure.
8. Regarding Direction of Sailing: Buried treasure is hidden in caves at the centers of labyrinths.
9. The Pirate Banner: The black flag. (*Pussy* 207-208)

The rewriting of the rules of piracy subverts both the old articles from the golden age of piracy and also the identity of being a pirate. Rule #2 outlines the identity of those who engage in piracy; instead of piracy now being defined by whether you are male or female the parameters for piracy are now being half-human half-beast. For King Pussy she experienced the moment of animal-becoming in her interaction with the Pussycat, and in honour of this moment she has renamed herself Pussy. However, this renaming can also be read as a masochistic reinscribing of the patriarchal practice of identifying a woman solely by her sex, and in doing this she subverts the patriarchal law at the same time she invokes it. This rule is an undermining of the association with the bodily, and also ties into Acker’s Rule #3 which denies the existence of pirates, completely subverting the

position they once held in popular culture. This denial of the existence of pirate is perhaps a mirroring of the way that Acker sees the non-existence of women in the work of Sade. In her essay “Reading the Lack of the Body: The Writing of the Marquis de Sade” she writes “In the patriarchal society there are no women; there are only victims and male substitutes. And men.” (qtd. in Colby 86). The notion of the non-existence of pirates also takes a step toward becoming-imperceptible which we can consider to be “an eruption of desire for the future which reshapes the present” (Braidotti 26), and can be understood of another way of viewing the death drive and the act of approaching the limit. Thus, by yearning for what Rosi Braidotti refers to as a disappearance “by merging into this eternal flow of becomings” women can achieve the moment of the “dissolution of the subject” via the merger “with the web of non-human forces that frame him/her” (24). This means that by becoming-imperceptible and moving towards the limit, the pirate girls and their leader King Pussy can create a new world for women and other minorities which allows for a space for both desire and language outside of the phallogocentric tradition.

If we return to the rules which Deleuze lays out regarding sadism and masochism, we can see that there are connections between Acker’s pirate rules and the rules of masochism. Rule #1 in both sets of rules seems to be connected. For the pirates their first rule is “to find that place out of which we come” (Pussy 207), and in masochism the first rule is dialectical-imaginative. For the pirates, the place out of which they emerge is a lesson in dialectical opposition, for they emerge from a patriarchal world where they have been cast off to the whorehouse, and in order to oppose this they reinvent the world through their desire and language, by becoming pirates. Rule #2 of masochism deals with disavowal and suspension. For Antigone, she disavows the laws laid down Creon, and her choices lead her to the limit where she is in a state of ‘suspension’. For the women who are representative of Antigone in Acker’s work, they disavow their sex work in which they are enjoyed by men, and instead begin masturbating and having sex with one another.

Returning to Acker’s pirate rules, rule #6 “Where Pirates Live Free of Authority: Caves” (Pussy 208), is an obvious reference to Antigone’s tomb. The cave/tomb is also where

pirates search through labyrinths for treasure. This location of the cave which doubles as Antigone's tomb is the place where the limit is reached. In order to stay within this limit which can only be reached through the death drive, the pirate women decide to together, essentially disavowing and suspending the final goal, so that they may remain at the limit.

The final section of Acker's novel focuses on the quest for buried treasure. O and her friend from the whorehouse, Ange, are in competition with King Pussy, Silver, and their group of pirate girls to discover the treasure first. Rather than killing O and Ange the pirates tell them that "girls' dooty is to love other girls" and explains that their conflict in the past was caused by "living in a society that disrespects its women and hates their bodies" (*Pussy* 264). This interaction between O and the pirate girls is when "the world began," where the women have created a new society outside of the patriarchal one that held women prisoner (266). When O, Ange, Silver, and King Pussy find the treasure hidden in the cave the pirate girls forgo taking the treasure because they would "rather go a-pirating" and have to keep searching for treasures (276). If they take the treasure, "the reign of girl piracy will stop" and King Pussy ends the novel "staring out toward the ocean," symbolically looking towards a utopic horizon that they would rather keep striving toward than immediately reach through the discovery of treasure (276). Acker's novel *Pussy, King of the Pirates* creates a simulacrum from works which are part of a phallogocentric tradition of writing in which women are non-existent or placed in subservient roles. By subverting these works and the traditional figure of the pirate for women she is creating a new world in which women can take on roles traditionally reserved for men. In doing this she creates a new, radical language for women which allows them to express their desires. Like the pirate enclaves of the golden age of piracy this feminist pirate utopia is a fragile community which must always keep looking forward to the horizon, or the limit, in order to keep striving for that which is out of reach for women.

In response to Lacan's earlier assertion that feminine *jouissance* exists outside the symbolic realm and is therefore inaccessible through language, French feminists brought forth the paradoxical idea of *écriture féminine*. Earlier in this chapter, I already outlined the way that Irigaray answered Lacan's challenge to describe feminine *jouissance* in

Speculum of the Other Woman (1974). Here she takes the same figure of a woman, Saint Teresa of Avila, Lacan's silent example of feminine jouissance and looks to her writings to find the description of this extra jouissance. Irigaray makes direct reference to Saint Teresa when she writes, "*How strange is the economy of this specula(riza)tion of woman, who in her mirror seems ever to refer back to a transcendence. Who moves away (for) who comes near, who groans to be separated from the one who holds her closest in his embrace*" (Irigaray 201). In "Laugh of the Medusa" (1975) Hélène Cixous writes: "I write woman: woman must write woman. And man, man" (877). Cixous theorizes that feminine writing moves beyond the tradition of phallogentric writing through the act of women writing their own bodies (880). She wishes that women would write in order to be able to proclaim: "I, too, overflow; my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard of songs" (Cixous 876). Seemingly in direct response to Lacan's exclusion of feminine jouissance from the symbolic order, Cixous calls upon women to write their bodies and thus prove Lacan's theory wrong. In his original Borromean knot we see that feminine jouissance is unreachable through language, as illustrated in the diagram in "Knowledge and Truth" in *Seminar XX*. In this diagram when approaching feminine jouissance it is impossible to reach it, and the closest one can come is to circle around this spot. By making *écriture féminine* possible Cixous foresees a way to create a new history for women, and one in which "decensoring relation of woman to her sexuality...giving her access to her native strength" also allows woman to use language outside the phallogentric confines currently in place (880). In finding the strength to write through their bodies, and in doing so winning back their bodies, women must

invent the impregnable language that will wreak partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reverse-discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word 'silence,' the one that, aiming for the impossible, stops short before the word 'impossible' and writes it as 'the end'. (Cixous 886)

The act of writing for the feminine woman is violent; Cixous describes it as volcanic and containing the violence necessary to "shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the

law” (888). This is the violence necessary to encroach upon the symbolic realm and achieve *jouissance*, rather than circling around it, as Lacan envisioned in *Seminar XX*.

Although the *jouissance* of language and feminine *jouissance* are closely related, Lacan uses James Joyce as his prime example of the former, rather than any women writers who had been challenging his ideas about feminine *jouissance* in the early 1970s. Initially, in *Seminar XX* Lacan describes Joyce’s work as “not readable,” but also considers it an example of “how language is perfected when it knows how to play with writing” (Lacan *Seminar XX* 37, 36). Lacan hints at the way he will eventually draw together the desired *sinthome* of the analytic session and that of written language; he declares “the letter is, radically speaking, an effect of discourse,” and goes on to theorize that “any effect of discourse is good in the sense that it is constituted by the letter” (36). These thoughts on Joyce and analytic discourse later come to dominate *Seminar XXIII* and it is during these seminars that Lacan analyses the affect that Joyce’s writing comes to have on language. Although he says that Joyce is “not readable,” Lacan goes on to say that the one thing we can get a purchase on in his writing is *jouissance*, and as Lacan says “there lies the symptom” (146).

Following Lacan, women writers responded with a wide variety of reactions to his teachings. In “The Paradoxes of the Symptom in Psychoanalysis” Soler addresses the change in Lacan’s idea of the symptom from message or signifier to “symptom as *jouissance*” (Soler 87). She proposes that language itself exists to organize and regulate our *jouissance*, and this brings forth the problem women experience when surrounded by phallogentric language: how to write the experience of being a woman when all she has known is the world of phallogentric language (87). In Luepnitz’s article “Beyond the Phallus: Lacan and Feminism” she brings forth some of the criticism Lacan has faced from women. A prime example of this is Luce Irigaray’s rejection of everything masculinist. Her criticism of Freudian theory, as well as Lacan’s phallogentrism, requires “the formulation of new theories and practices—even a new language” (Luepnitz 230). The problem that Irigaray found with women writing within the phallogentric tradition was that it would lead to women repeating history. If women speak in the same language that men have been using Irigaray says, “we’ll miss each other, fail ourselves” (Irigaray 184).

Soler goes on to reiterate the Lacanian position when she says of language: “the letter does not ‘represent’ jouissance, it *is* jouissance” (92). This affirmation of this third type of jouissance and the connection with language also confirms Lacan’s assertion that this third jouissance is fixed firmly in the real. Referring to Lacan’s *Encore*, Soler makes the point that language is capable of “transforming the Real,” and is not merely limited to the function of a means of communication (Soler 90). Just as feminine jouissance is located outside of the symbolic realm, in the Borromean knot configuration the Real is also unknowable. Lacan characterizes the recognition of the Real as only being “odds and ends” which cannot be tied down to anything (*Seminar XXIII* 104). In *Encore*, Lacan says of the real that it “is the mystery of the speaking body, the mystery of the unconscious,” and it is here, in the speakingbeing, where “unconscious language regulates the jouissance of the living body” (“The Paradoxes” 229). For Irigaray and Cixous this unconscious language is different for women, and in order to stop communicating within a phallogentric language women must express this embodied unconscious language.

The fact that women’s masochism must be expressed at the level of language reveals that for women in a patriarchal society the practice of masochism is not always safe. In the works of many avant-garde women writers the characters they depict engaging in masochism often end up suffering violence at the hands of sadistic men, such as in Chris Kraus’ *Summer of Hate* (2012) and Elfriede Jelinek’s *The Piano Teacher* (1983). Even in Acker’s works there is often a failure when exploring women’s suffering and desire: Janey dies at the end of *Blood and Guts*, and in *Pussy, King of the Pirates* a choice is forced on the pirates to either infinitely suspend themselves at the limit, by not collecting the treasure, or have girl piracy come to an end, therefore it is not a success but a concession to existing in a patriarchal world (276). To hold Antigone as the feminine masochist par excellence is to dispel with the notion that women’s masochism is simply a masquerade or an enactment of men’s desire. Instead, her masochism is radical in nature and is connected with the power of language for women and an expression of the way in which the world must be remade. While Acker was influenced greatly by Cixous’ work on women’s writing, she actually positioned herself against Cixous’ belief that men are the problem, and sided with Kristeva. In an interview with Larry McCaffery Acker states “I don’t think the problem is with men...take Cixous’s argument against Kristeva, with

Cixous saying that our problems have their source in genital difference—so that the fact that men have cocks is what makes them evil...Kristeva's argument is that the real problem has to do with role models" (Acker qtd. in Colby 85). Acker thus rejects the idea that the issue is men and believes that it is a patriarchal society which is the problem.

This rejection of patriarchal society as the issue, and not men as such, also means re-examining the idea that the only way to break free of a patriarchal language and create a new one is through Cixous' concept of writing the female body. Acker critiques the association of female identity with genitals in *Blood and Guts* through the juxtaposed images of a sketch of a woman's genitals titled "Girls Will Do Anything for Love" and an image of a bound woman which is titled "Ode to a Grecian Urn." Colby interpretation of the images states that "the contours of the vulva reflect that of the tied body. The visual analogy functions to correlate the two images and the reference to Keats' 'still unravished bride of quietness' places the image in a lineage of literary metaphors that constrict female identity" (Colby 87). Returning to Butler's analysis of Antigone, "Her act is never fully her act, and though she uses language to claim her deed, to assert a 'manly' and defiant autonomy, she can perform that act only through embodying the norms of the power she opposes" (Butler 10). Butler's understanding of Antigone's masochistic defiance come across as a failure in women's masochism. For women to write their own language, located in the realm of metonymy and masochism, means finding a way to escape patriarchal norms. The psychoanalysis and theory included in this chapter have primarily dealt with the concept of heterosexual masochism, but the issue of a patriarchal society is not only a problem for women who have sex with men. The escape from a phallic language does not mean that language, the law, and desire can only be reimagined through female genitalia. The idea that only heterosexual women need to escape from phallic language, law, and desire excludes LGBTQ2S+ individuals, and ignores the history of the queer community and sadomasochistic practices. In "The Leather Menace" Gayle Rubin details the practices of S/M in the queer community and how, in our current patriarchal, heteronormative society there is a "legal vulnerability" for those who practice S/M due to the application of assault and prostitution laws (Rubin 114). By labelling anywhere S/M was practiced as a 'bawdy house' the police were able to use existing prostitution laws as a way to charge members of the queer community

who engaged in these practices. Once again, the law, language, and desire are all tied together in order to persecute those who are not part of the heterosexual, patriarchal establishment. To reinvent language should include all genders and sexual orientations, and not merely reinvent phallogentrism through the vulva.

Chapter 2

“She is the mother, grandmother, peacemaker, mediator, elder, and finally Grandmother Moon, who watches over all women for time eternal...we see her as she sees herself because we are her and she is us.” (Horn-Miller 32)

2 The Haudenosaunee Masochism of Káteri Tekahkwí:tha

After analysing how traditional Western thought has understood women’s masochism, I turn to the Mohawk Saint Káteri Tekahkwí:tha in order to think about masochism in a completely different context. While Tekahkwí:tha has traditionally been considered a product of Jesuit conversion and influence, this chapter outlines how her Haudenosaunee background was the true driving force behind her masochistic practices. At first glance, her story fits a narrative which aligns with Lacan’s primary example of feminine jouissance, Saint Teresa of Avila, but Tekahkwí:tha instead functions as the *objet a par excellence* for settler colonialism. In the discussion of her masochism, there are important cultural differences which, up until recently, had been mostly ignored in discourses about Tekahkwí:tha.

2.1 Feminine Jouissance and Káteri Tekahkwí:tha as *objet petit a*

The concept of feminine jouissance, following Chapter One, is a non-universalizable notion in which woman, being infinite, can never finish being counted. Feminine jouissance itself is experienced by woman, but which is known nothing about except for when it is experienced. Lacan placed this type of jouissance outside of the symbolic order, and his protégé Jacques Alain Miller said that a part of feminine jouissance remains a mystery, even in analysis (Ragland 8). However, as I stated in Chapter One, Lacan’s calls for women psychoanalysts to reveal to him the secrets of feminine jouissance (*On Feminine* 75) were answered by Luce Irigaray, who looked to Lacan’s own example of the concept par excellence, Saint Teresa of Avila. In *On Feminine*

Sexuality: the Limits of Love and Knowledge, Lacan makes the important connection between feminine jouissance and pain, and this is later reinforced through Teresa of Avila's autobiography and her descriptions of religious ecstasy. As Keren Ben-Hagai writes in "Pain and Jouissance," what Lacan ends up doing here is "[attributing] to pain something of the order of infinity" (Ben-Hagai n.p.). Another issue which revolves around the Lacanian concepts of pain and the feminine is Lacan's supposition that women's masochism is ironic. For this to be true, it must be reliant on a relationship where the desire of the other, for woman (the subject in the feminine position), is the desire of men within a patriarchal society. By fulfilling this role, woman's masochism is ironic because under patriarchy woman must be subservient to man. How does the desire of the other then influence a woman's masochistic desires when she is not heterosexual, white, or of the dominant culture? This chapter will examine the figure of Saint Káteri Tekahkwí:tha as a Mohawk woman who engaged in masochistic practices and has had her own words omitted in order to fit a European narrative. Although her story fits a narrative which aligns with Lacan's primary example of feminine jouissance, Saint Teresa of Avila, Tekahkwí:tha instead functions as the *objet a par excellence*, and there are important cultural differences which, up until recently, had been mostly ignored in discourse about Tekahkwí:tha.

Vera B. Palmer uses Lacanian psychoanalysis to discuss Tekahkwí:tha in her article "The Devil in the Details: Controverting an American Indian Conversion Narrative." She proposes that the act of transforming Tekahkwí:tha into a Saint is an example of ventriloquism with Tekahkwí:tha acting as the Lacanian *objet petit a*. Palmer writes:

The work of Lacanian theorist Mladen Dolar further suggests that such an example of ventriloquism belies an excess of speech and meaning that are *not* represented, a Lacanian *object petit a* that links subjectivity to the voice itself. In this space resonates the power of oral tribal narratives, allegories, and linguistic materials informing Tekakwitha's tribal life that function to unpack and bring to light the influences and possibilities in such a conversion. (Palmer 292)

For the Jesuit missionaries who knew her, Tekahkwí:tha was an empty object and her death represented the opportunity for her to be *objet a*. In death, her potentiality as a Saint was infinite for the Jesuits who knew her, and her masochistic pain was implicit in their desire to make her a Saint. Her life has been rewritten through hagiographies which place oral storytelling and Haudenosaunee tradition under erasure, but were both integral to Tekahkwí:tha's life.

Unlike Lacan's primary example of feminine jouissance, Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Káteri Tekahkwí:tha did not leave behind writings where we can find a description of the experience of feminine jouissance. Instead, our knowledge of Saint Kateri and her masochism has been reliant on the accounts of two Jesuit missionaries who knew her, Pierre Cholenec and Claude Chauchetière. In the recorded accounts of Saint Kateri's life, Cholenec includes details which are similar to accounts of and writings by Saint Teresa of Avila, including the image of Saint Teresa's Flaming Heart⁴, a key Lacanian example of feminine jouissance. Saint Kateri Tekahkwí:tha is associated with the divine light of the Sacred Heart of Jesus⁵. This light is described by Cholenec in a document found in the Archives of the Seminaire de Quebec from 1680, where he writes:

While scourging herself as usual with admirable ardor (for she exceeds in this particular all the other women, with one exception of Margaret) and that in a very dark spot, she found herself surrounded by a great light, as if it were high noon, lasting as long as the first shower of blows, so to speak, of her scourging, for she scourged herself several times. Insofar as I can judge from what she told me, this light lasted two or three misereres. (Bonaparte 206)

The divine light is tied to the establishment of Saint Káteri as a symbol of "virginity, piety, and virtue" (Koppedraayer 277), and this symbolic representation is continually repeated so in every new portrait she looks "less Mohawk...as though her cultural

⁴ In her autobiography Saint Teresa describes an angel piercing her heart with a flaming arrow of divine love. This is when she experienced the masochistic ecstasy quoted by Irigaray.

⁵ Saint Kateri Tekahkwí:tha is associated with Jesus' flaming heart, which in Catholic iconography appears as a flaming heart surrounded by thorns, or often with an arrow piercing it.

background is irrelevant” (Bonaparte n.p.). Thus, Káteri Tekahkwí:tha’s place in the Catholic Church is “founded on the premise of [her] ascendancy into whiteness” (Musser 96).

This ascendancy into whiteness relies on the domination of the Jesuit accounts of Tekahkwí:tha that ignore her cultural background. In Western culture, ocularcentrism favours the written record over oral knowledge, and therefore the hagiographies written by the Jesuits are seen as the ‘true story’ of Tekahkwí:tha’s life, even in the face of contradictory oral narratives and Haudenosaunee tradition. In the narratives of her life, Cholenec and Chauchetière both follow the template of the female saint and emphasize the purity of Tekahkwí:tha in numerous ways. She is always depicted as different and set apart from her own people and her purity is depicted not only through divine light, but also through her virginity, her rejection of frivolity, and her dedication to penance. Through this transformation she simultaneously becomes a pious figure who suffers a selfless mortification of the flesh, appearing in each subsequent image more white, and in fact more like the Virgin Mary, while also being as an example of an Indigenous woman who can serve to bring more Indigenous people into the Roman Catholic Church, one of the early institutions of settler colonialism. However, the Tekahkwí:tha most people are familiar with today has undergone extensive revision to make her palatable to the settler gaze. The subject of this revision is connected to her sexuality and, of course, feminine jouissance. The figure we know today is that of a pious virgin, and any mention of masochistic practices is limited to the generic ‘mortification of the flesh.’

The revision of Tekahkwí:tha began immediately after her death, and the move towards an ascendancy to whiteness begins in the descriptions of her body which are recorded by the Jesuits who knew her. Here, Cholenec describes Tekahkwí:tha after death:

Due to the smallpox, Katharine’s face had been disfigured since the age of four, and her infirmities and mortifications had contributed to disfigure her even more, but this face, so marked and swarthy, suddenly changed about a quarter of an hour after her death, and became in a moment so beautiful and so white that I observed it immediately (for I was praying beside her) and cried out, so great was my

astonishment. I had them call the Father who was working at the repository for Holy Thursday. He came, as did the Indians, on hearing of this wonder, which we were able to contemplate until her burial. I admit openly that the first thought that came to me was that Katherine at that moment might have entered into heaven, reflecting in her chaste body a small ray of the glory of which her soul had taken possession. (Bonaparte 217)

In comparison, Chauchetière does not mention ‘whiteness’ in his description of Tekahkwí:tha after death, saying that her face “appeared more beautiful than it had been when living” (Greer 17), but it nonetheless is a movement towards purity and, as Greer describes it, “God had removed the marks of disease, suffering, and racial inferiority, transforming the Mohawk woman into a radiant corpse exuding a saintly aura” (17). By examining Figure 1, which was painted by Chauchetière approximately 10 years after Tekahkwí:tha’s death, it becomes evident that the process of rehabilitating Tekahkwí:tha’s image was already underway. Her face appears clear and unmarked, matching Cholenec’s description of her face after dead, and yet she also retains aspects of her Mohawk culture, wearing leggings, a long skirt, and long tunic, which are traditional Haudenosaunee dress. In comparison, Figure 2, printed in 1927, depicts Tekahkwí:tha in similar dress, but compared to the original portrait her face appears more innocent and completes her ascendancy into whiteness. Both images also feature a blue cloak or blanket, reminiscent of the Madonna, and which is more prominent and covers over her traditional dress in the 1927 version.



Figure 1 “Catherine Thegakouita” by Father Chauchetière (1590)



Figure 2 "Kateri Tekakwitha" (1927)

The virgin narrative relies on two different points: Tekahkwí:tha's vow of chastity and her aversion to marriage. In reality, Tekahkwí:tha did not take her vow of chastity until the age of 19. While this may seem plausible today, in the 17th century Haudenosaunee girls began having sex at the onset of puberty, and it was at the behest of girls (Mann 276). Premarital sex was considered normal, and actually considered to be an "important part of every young person's development" (276). In addition, sex and marriage were not intrinsically connected and it is well documented that many women resisted marriage. Unlike their European counterparts, Haudenosaunee women were able to get divorced easily; it was not financially restrictive, and frequently occurred. Some women, such as the Seneca, also practiced polyandry, and therefore when Barbara Mann describes sex as "freewheeling and apt to seep out all around the edges of matrimony" (276), she is describing a society where intimacy for women was thought of in a completely different mindset than the European colonizers' ideas on the subject. The revision of Tekahkwí:tha's image to a pious virgin therefore involves approaching her actions from a Western mindset, rather than from that of the Haudenosaunee society she was raised in. There is also an importance difference between the writing of the Jesuits Chauchetière and Cholenec on the topic of Tekahkwí:tha's chastity. Cholenec erases any history of Tekahkwí:tha being "impure" and is extremely focused on her purity and chastity and the theme of "the triumph of the spirit over bodily impurity" (Greer 173). Though not to the extent of Cholenec, Chauchetière also focuses on her purity, and also exalts her other virtuous qualities, such as her austerity, her charity and industry, and her strong character (173). The transformation of Tekahkwí:tha into a Catholic Saint was pursued by Cholenec to the extent that he actually fictionalized her vow of chastity. The accounts of her virginity differ in the recollections of Cholenec and Chauchetière, and Greer interprets this as proof that Cholenec had taken it upon himself to "revise the record of events" (178). Chauchetière wrote:

If it had occurred to anyone to have her take a vow, the vow of chastity would not have been wanting, though she did not fail to live up to such a vow, which makes me believe that she received the merit of it. The priest was sorry after her death not to have let her make it. (178)

In comparison, Cholenec wrote in his biography of Tekahkwí:tha that during the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, 1679 “Catherine Tekakwitha took communion and promised Jesus Christ ‘perpetual virginity,’ asking him ‘to be her only spouse’” (177). He called this vow her “greatest glory before God” (177) and, Greer claims, that Cholenec used this fictionalized incident to distinguish Tekahkwí:tha from the other Indigenous converts at Kahnawake.

Another key point that Cholenec uses to prove Tekahkwí:tha’s purity to the theological experts he was writing for is her resistance to an arranged marriage made by her paternal Aunt. In this incident, rather than staying to discuss marriage Tekahkwí:tha ran away into the fields. It is assumed by her Jesuit biographers that she was looked upon as “an ill-favored slave who would become a burden on the cabin” (Bonaparte 98). Both Bonaparte and Greer agree that the Jesuits who immortalized Tekahkwí:tha’s story have misinterpreted her role in her family and Haudenosaunee society. Greer points out that matchmaking was common among clan matrons and they “sometimes pressured teenage girls to comply with their arrangements,” but, as Tekahkwí:tha did, they were free to reject the match (46). In addition to their inability to understand the intricacies of Haudenosaunee marriage practices, their idea that Tekahkwí:tha’s family was trying to rid themselves of her is rooted in a European, patriarchal understanding of marriage. If Tekahkwí:tha had married then she would have remained part of her family’s longhouse and her husband would have eventually become part of it as well. As Greer points out, this would have been a benefit for Tekahkwí:tha’s family because any game a husband would kill would belong to Tekahkwí:tha’s longhouse.

The assumption that she was virginal and chaste comes also from the idea that marriage is a precursor to sex, one which is not culturally accurate. By the time she took a vow of chastity at the age of 19, Tekahkwí:tha would have most likely been sexually active for several years. And there are at least two documented recordings of her engaging in sexual conduct with men in her community. One accusation came from her aunt, who accused her of intimacy with her uncle, and she was later accused of ‘adultery’ while at the mission St. Francois-Xavier. However, both these accusations were dismissed by the Jesuits that knew her. For them, her sexuality was only valuable in terms of virtue and

virginity. In the debate about both Tekahkwí:tha's virginity and masochism it is important to understand that "the body is an important locus of cultural and spiritual definition" (Palmer 288). Over the last 300 years readers have been led to believe that Tekahkwí:tha is a product of Jesuit training and Catholicism. While there are several points of similarity between Catholicism and Haudenosaunee beliefs, there are important differences which have been overwritten. Both cultures held place for virgins, but nevertheless viewed and defined them in very different ways.

In his hagiography, Cholenech designates Tekahkwí:tha 'the first Iroquois virgin,' a label intended to point out to the reader her purity and association with other European female Saints. Greer cites the Priest Lafitau's mention that there were groups of virgins amongst many Indigenous nations, including the Haudenosaunee, and these women were accorded special status (Greer 176). He provides a brief description of these women in his work and states that "I cannot possibly say what their religious functions properly were. All that I have been able to get out of the Iroquois is that they never left their cabins, that they were occupied in small tasks purely to keep busy. The people held them in respect and left them in peace" (Greer 176). In her chapter on Tekahkwí:tha, "Kateri Takakwitha's Torturous Path To Sainthood," Nancy Shoemaker also repeats the idea, from Father Lafitau, that the Haudenosaunee had societies of virgins: "Virgins had certain ceremonial roles, and Iroquois legends told of there having once been a society of virgins" (Shoemaker 64). Although it is possible that a society of virgins had once existed, and this claim is lent credence by the existence of other societies, such as the false-face healing society, this claim is only found in Father Lafitau's book on Indigenous peoples, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times* (1724). Even so, the state of virginity amongst the Haudenosaunee is viewed differently than European Christians. For Christians, the state of virginity requires "complete abstention from coitus" and virgins, such as nuns, "seem to radiate a spiritual potency from the core of their untainted beings (Greer 176, 177). In contrast, for the Haudenosaunee "celibacy was usually a temporary state; lifelong renunciation of sex was not only a potential health hazard but also could be hard to square with an individual's responsibilities to others" (175). The society which Tekahkwí:tha grew up in had only just been introduced to the

concepts of sin, virtue, and concupiscence via missionaries from France, and these concepts did not translate into any existing Haudenosaunee philosophical concepts.

2.2 The Mohawk Reclamation of Káteri Tekahkwí:tha

Recently, Tekahkwí:tha has been reclaimed as a Mohawk woman by scholars such as Mohawk historian and journalist Darren Bonaparte and settler historian Allan Greer. Contrary to the established narratives that Tekahkwí:tha was simply a product of Jesuit influence, or that she was not really Mohawk because her mother was born Algonquin, they provide historical evidence to establish that Tekahkwí:tha was very much a part of the Mohawk culture she was raised in, and that culture had a more profound impact on her masochistic practices than is usually assumed.

The presumption amongst scholars that Tekahkwí:tha was an outsider amongst the Mohawks and other Haudenosaunee due to her mother being born Algonquin is faulty in its logic because of the Haudenosaunee tradition of adoption. Bonaparte explains the importance of this and why it is a non-issue:

Some have also drawn attention to the fact that the mother of Kateri was an Algonquin captive, which they presume diminished her status among the matrilineal Mohawk. They ignore the importance of the adoption ceremony, wherein an adopted person took the place of someone who had recently died, and was thereafter treated as if he or she had been that person all along. If captives of European descent were treated thus, then surely this would have applied to an Algonquin woman! Her children, therefore, would be considered Mohawk, and would be members of the clan that had adopted their mother. Kateri's Algonquin heritage would not be an issue, because it simply did not exist. (Bonaparte 94)

Thus, Tekahkwí:tha would have been considered Mohawk from birth because her mother was adopted as Mohawk and became part of the Turtle clan. The adoption of Tekahkwí:tha's mother was not something new or unusual to the Haudenosaunee, but rather was part of our laws. These laws of adoption are exemplified by the elastic form of the longhouse. In Kayanesenh Paul Williams' *Kayanerenko:wa: The Great Law of Peace*

(2018) he writes, “the extendability of the longhouse became the metaphor for the flexibility and generosity of the law, designed to bring new people under its protection while remaining true to the original architecture” (59). When Tekahkwí:tha was approximately 4 years old her parents died and she was adopted by her Aunt, and she lived in the longhouse of her extended family until her death in 1680 at the approximate age of 24. In addition to the formal adoption of Tekahkwí:tha’s mother as a Mohawk, Turtle clan, the importance of her ‘adoption’ by her aunt after her mother’s death is underestimated by the Jesuits, and even misconstrued. Through a comparison of the terms for both mother and aunt in Haudenosaunee languages, the interconnectedness of these two relationships is revealed; *Ihst’a* is the Mohawk word for mother and *Isten’a* the word for Aunt. According to Mohawk scholar Kanatawakon David Maracle, “*Ihsta’a*: this term is similar to that given for ‘aunt’ as it is based on the matrilineal tradition that a woman’s sisters were also considered to be a mother to her children” (Williams 130). The importance of co-mothering within Haudenosaunee communities was not recognized by the missionaries, and even today Haudenosaunee communities have much more co-mothering than is found in settler North America. The influence of Tekahkwí:tha’s own father should not be underestimated either. Although Haudenosaunee communities are matrilineal the idea that only the maternal relatives count as ‘real relatives’ is considered false by Williams. He states, “the law does not support this view. While it is clear that paternal relatives were not considered as close as maternal ones, there was a real relationship with one’s father’s family, part of that wide web of relationships that protected and helped each individual” (131).

Growing up, Tekahkwí:tha’s responsibilities included very typical Haudenosaunee activities for girls and women. She is one of the first wampum belt weavers named in Chauchetière’s writings and he wrote that, “People who knew her from childhood said that she was intelligent and skillful, especially with her hands, making such objects as the little savages make” (Bonaparte 98). Her skills in a variety of arts were described by Chauchetière in his hagiography:

When she had nothing else to do, she amused herself with small jewels. I mean to say, she decorated herself, as other little girls of her age, simply to pass the time

away. She put glass beads around her neck, glass bracelets on her arms, rings on her fingers, and ornaments in her ears. She made ribbons and bands such as the savages make from the skin of eels. These they color red and prepare very efficiently for hair-ribbons. She wore large and beautiful belts which were called glass necklaces. Twenty years later, when she performed harsh penances to chastise her body, she wept much for these acts, saying that she had loved her body more than she should have done. (Bonaparte 97-98)

The activities which Tekahkwí:tha grew up learning are not unimportant, and wampum hold an important political place in Haudenosaunee society. Described by Chauchetière as “the belts that the elders use in conducting the affairs of the nation” (Greer 37), wampum belts are an important part of politics and diplomacy for the Haudenosaunee. Many wampum belts representing important early treaties still endure today, such as the Two Row Wampum which was established in 1613 between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee. The other work which Tekahkwí:tha was involved with was also central to the way of life for the Haudenosaunee, and not just frivolous adornment with beads, as it is often described by the Jesuits. Despite the judgements by Chauchetière that these are “foolish pursuits” (Bonaparte 96), the work of beading and sewing clothing was an act of carrying on “ancient Iroquois traditions” (Greer 40), and, even with new materials being brought over from Europe, were styled in a uniquely Haudenosaunee style. In addition to sewing and beading, Tekahkwí:tha also “made excellent baskets and boxes, as well as the buckets that the Indians use to ladle water” (Greer 41), and large casks for “storing corn, beans, dried fruit, and other staple foods” (41-42). This work was not only essential for survival, but also made Tekahkwí:tha an essential part of her Mohawk community. Preparing corn by grinding it, making soup and bread, and serving her community, along with storing their crops are parts of Haudenosaunee life which go all the way back to the Creation Story. Sky Woman also brought the medicines and foods with her from Sky World and planted tobacco, strawberry, corn, beans, squash, and other herbs, fruits, and medicines. The tradition of planting, harvesting, and preparation of food was all under the exclusive control of women. The continuance of Haudenosaunee farming culture is therefore a direct link between Tekahkwí:tha and *ukwehuwe* (the original people).

However, when Chauchetière describes Tekahkwí:tha's role in the community she is made to sound like a "selfless and humble servant" (Greer 43), but in Mohawk society food was the domain of women and, according to Greer, the "gesture of serving may well have contained an element of asserting female power over male appetites" (43). A similar hypothesis about food is proposed by Nancy Shoemaker and she states in her article on Tekahkwí:tha, "In Iroquois society, one could similarly acquire power by controlling one's own body through fasting and sexual abstinence" (Shoemaker 64).

The idea of power for women was completely normal within Haudenosaunee society, and misunderstood by the Jesuits who interpreted Tekahkwí:tha's life hagiographically. The Haudenosaunee are a matriarchal society where women hold their own power in society. Clans are passed down according to who your mother is; the clan mothers are responsible for choosing a Chief; they have the power to influence wars, and, of course, are in charge of agriculture. The continued misinterpretation of Haudenosaunee life is prominent throughout Chauchetière and Cholenec's writing about Tekahkwí:tha and is designed to make her life fit into the template of a European Saint, thus making her palatable for a European audience.

2.3 Haudenosaunee Understandings of Pain

To return to Lacan's discussion of feminine jouissance, the challenge he put forth in the 1970s to women psychoanalysts to define feminine jouissance is actually tied to the idea of women being frigid. As he states "if she simply experienced it and knew nothing about it, that would allow us to cast myriad doubts on this notorious (fameuse) frigidity" (Lacan 75). Thus, Lacan implies the only way to dismiss the idea that women are not frigid is for us to confirm the existence of feminine jouissance, even if women do not understand it. In much the same way, we are faced with the choice of understanding Tekahkwí:tha as a frigid virgin who ran away from the prospect of marriage, or as a sexual being who may or may not have known how to express it in terms of the European symbolic order. Since there is no writing from Tekahkwí:tha herself the only way to fully understand her experience of masochistic pain is through Haudenosaunee tradition. This includes revisiting both her early life, and her life with the Jesuits. In her early life we are told she

behaved like all Iroquois girls did: “She helped gather firewood, worked in the cornfields, and became skilled at various decorative crafts...and she arrayed herself in typical Iroquois finery and engaged in other fineries” (Shoemaker 53). Hence, the conclusion among more recent scholarship that she was raised in a very typical Haudenosaunee way, and was not directly influenced by the Jesuits until much later.

While Shoemaker makes it clear that it was an easy transition for the Haudenosaunee to take up the practice of mortification of the flesh under the influence of the Jesuits, it is clear that these practices, especially flagellation were directly approved of by the Haudenosaunee. The movement has long been attributed to the influence of the Jesuits in the literature on Tekahkwí:tha. While the Society of Jesus “frowned on extreme mortification of the flesh,” and the Jesuits such as Chauchetière would have themselves suffered by sitting in uncomfortable chairs, individual suffering for sins was a foreign concept to the Haudenosaunee precolonization, and they would have most likely learned about these concepts from the Jesuit’s stories of Jesus’ suffering (Greer 117). As many scholars have mentioned in their discussions of Tekahkwí:tha, the Haudenosaunee were “expert torturers...but they also had experience withstanding pain and discomfort deliberately inflicted on their own bodies” (Greer 118). Stories of torture as part of the Condolence Ceremony can be found throughout the literature on early encounters with the Haudenosaunee. In Daniel K. Richter’s “War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience,” he recounts Jesuit missionaries encounters with the Haudenosaunee from the mid to late 17th Century. In recounting the Condolence Ceremony, Richter describes how men, women, and children would be captured in war and the mourners could either “select a prisoner for adoption in the place of the deceased or they could vent their rage in rituals of torture and execution” (533). The possibility of adoption is, as mentioned previously, how Tekahkwí:tha’s mother became Mohawk, Turtle Clan. Much like the masochistic theater which Lacan and Deleuze write about, for the Haudenosaunee there was certain mode of behaviour expected from both tormentor and captive. Here, it is described in Jesuit records:

The tormentors behaved with religious solemnity and spoke in symbolic language of ‘caressing’ their adopted relative with their firebrands. The victim was

expected to endure his sufferings stoically and even to encourage his torturers, but this seems to have been ideal rather than typical behavior. (Richter 534)

In Palmer's discussion of Tekahkwí:tha she also discusses the Condolence Ceremony, and the cultural importance it holds for both Tekahkwí:tha and the Kahnawake community. She believes Condolence "recognizes humans' destructive nature when afflicted with loss and it allows their wounds to be mitigated by the power of compassion and restoration" (Palmer 288). Stories of self-inflicted torture were also reported by early Jesuit missionaries to the Five Nations, before Christianity became more widely adopted by Haudenosaunee communities. One recorded example of this is provided in a 1656 Jesuit text:

Not long ago, a man of the [Cayuga] town of Oiogouen had a vision one night of ten men plunging into the frozen river; they entered the water through one hole and came out another. The first thing that he did on waking was to prepare a great feast to which he invited ten of his friends... Thereupon he recounted his dream to them; they were not at all taken aback, but instantly volunteered to fulfill it. Accordingly, they went to the river and pierced the ice, making two holes fifteen paces apart. The divers stripped. The first man led the way, jumping into one of the holes and emerging, most fortunately, from the other one. The second man followed suit and then the others, until the tenth, who paid the price for all the rest: he could not find his way out and perished miserably under the ice. (Greer 118)

In his analysis of this incident, and other similar ones amongst 17th century Haudenosaunee communities, Greer acknowledges that before Catholicism became an influence the Haudenosaunee were already using self-inflicted pain, in the form of exposure to the cold air and freezing water, as a method of connecting with the sacred (118). One point which Greer does not touch on, however, is the importance of the Cayuga man's dream in the story. In Haudenosaunee culture the importance of dreams cannot be understated, and it is surprising that Greer does not comment on this important point. Even in the Creation Story, the most foundational story for Haudenosaunee beliefs,

many versions include the presence of dreams, and emphasize the importance of listening to the dreams and recounting them. In a version of the Onondaga Creation Story told by John Arthur Gibson, and recorded by John Napoleon Brinton Hewitt, the chief announces he has dreamed a dream and initiates a guessing game until the contents are revealed. The importance of revealing one's dreams, especially during certain times of the year such as midwinter or the Green Corn Ceremony, are well known and there are many famous Haudenosaunee figures who have followed their dreams, such as Cornplanter giving up his position as chief, and Deganawida, the founder of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy whose birth was foretold to his mother in a dream.

In addition to the value which Haudenosaunee culture continues to place on dreams, there are also many ethnographies which recorded the importance of dreams for the Haudenosaunee, Huron, and other Eastern Woodlands peoples during the 17th century. Dreams were of such great importance that when someone recounted a dream it was a communal effort to both interpret it and take action to satisfy the demands of the dream. Anthony F.C. Wallace compares the Iroquoian perspective on dreams to that of Freud, and provides a description from Father Ragueneau recorded in 1649:

the Hurons (and he might have added the Seneca) believe that our souls have other desires, which are, as it were, inborn and concealed. These, they say, come from the depths of the soul, not through any knowledge, but by a certain blind transporting of the soul to certain objects...Now they believe that our soul makes these natural desires known by means of dreams, which are its language. Accordingly, when these desires are accomplished, it is satisfied; but, on the contrary, if it be not granted what it desires, it becomes angry. (Wallace 236)

Much like Freud's 'royal road' to the unconscious, the Haudenosaunee beliefs around dreams reveal that through the dream world we can come to know our soul's unconscious desires. One particular type of dream which was common during the 17th century was a nightmare of torture and personal loss, usually dreamt by a warrior. Wallace provides numerous examples of the response to this type of dream. Usually the dreamer would recount the dream to friends and have them engage in acts of torture in order to avoid

becoming a prisoner of their enemies and being tortured to death. These enactments based on the contents of the dream were real torture and often warriors endured burns from fire brands or being tied up and dragged through the street (Wallace 240).

Throughout the territory of the Eastern Woodlands peoples Jesuits encountered Huron, Algonquin, and Haudenosaunee converts “lacerating themselves, exposing their bodies to ferocious cold, or simply refusing to have a decaying tooth removed in order to savor the pain—but nowhere was the ascetic movement as strong as it was at Kahnawake” (Greer 117). This movement endured at Kahnawake from the late 1670s and early 1680s (before Tekahkwí:tha moved there) and ended a few years after she died (Greer 117). The notion that these penances were taught to the Haudenosaunee by the Jesuits becomes less likely knowing that pain and torture are intricately connected to their spirituality via the dreamworld. However, some scholars, such as Shoemaker continue to connect acts of self-mortification, fasting, and also virginity to a general trend of the lives of women saints. She states that “refuting other scholars’ claims that bodily abuse was an expression of women’s hatred of their bodies, Rudolph Bell in *Holy Anorexia* and Caroline Walker Bynum in *Holy Feast and Holy Famine* argued that women seeking a sense of identity and self-assertion tried to control their world through the only means available, by controlling their own bodies and by controlling the symbols of women’s domestic authority, such as food distribution” (Shoemaker 64). While Haudenosaunee women were responsible for all areas of agriculture, from planting to cooking, these women held much more power in their own societies than their European counterparts, and it is well known that early American feminists would later base their own ideas on Haudenosaunee women’s power (Wagner 29). In drawing attention to the similarities between Catholic saints and the practices of Tekahkwí:tha, Shoemaker continues the narrative started by Chauchetière and Cholenec. The problem with this is that many Haudenosaunee people were engaging in the very same practices, and an entire community of them surrounded Tekahkwí:tha at Kahnawake.

Shoemaker does acknowledge many of the similarities between Haudenosaunee thought and Christianity, but, as Palmer points out:

from a Native, and specifically an Iroquoian, perspective, the great problem with working exclusively with the hagiographic narrative record of Tekakwitha's life is accounting for the radical vacuum where an account of grief and mourning should be. The omission of any reference to the affective component of Tekakwitha's response to her own losses of loved ones and beloved community elements eviscerates that which made her Iroquoian in the first place and brands the conversion narrative from the outset as a largely alien artifact. (Palmer 290)

The hagiographies of Tekahkwí:tha's life are designed to treat her as an empty object and write the life of a woman saint over the Haudenosaunee life she led. This discounts the immense losses she suffered at a young age, her mother, father, and brother, as well as the cataclysmic events which caused her village to move twice, eventually leaving Mohawk territory for the St. Lawrence River valley.

Prior to her death, Tekahkwí:tha was seen as a threat to both the Indigenous men in her community and also the Jesuits. The descriptions of her power by other Indigenous people who were present at Kahnawake describe her as magical and a sorceress (or likened to a shaman). The role of a shaman in Haudenosaunee culture was to perform specific ceremonies in order to cure illnesses. The most common way for someone to gain the powers of a shaman was to fast and dream in the woods in a cabin (St. John 63). The rituals performed by shamans included dancing, singing, and performing painful feats such as "chewing hot coals" (63). For a shaman, "the ability to handle these coals without getting burnt depended on powers received in a dream vision" (63). While scholars such as Shoemaker compare this type of behaviour when demonstrated by Tekahkwí:tha to Catholic saints, there is a deep-rooted Haudenosaunee source of this behaviour.

Even if Tekahkwí:tha would also become a Christian convert, Haudenosaunee culture was fairly open to adopting aspects of other cultures. The sign that something has been approved of in oral storytelling, for example, is the presence of the dogwood, also known as red willow. Known in many versions of the Creation Story as being the first plant that Sky Woman saw growing on Turtle Island, and also as the oldest plant in the

Thanksgiving address, dogwood was an incredibly important plant with medicinal uses, but was also regarded as having magical properties (Wonderley 18). It is pervasive throughout Haudenosaunee storytelling and its magical properties are powerful, being used for things such as shooting a cannibal bird with an arrow made of red willow, defeating giant lizards, or being used to construct an ax with a red willow handle in order to kill a witch. Often, the Haudenosaunee would adopt a story from Europeans and make it part of their own culture. The common signal that a story had become part of the culture was the presence of red willow, especially in the form of arrows, whips, or tea. In Anthony Wonderley's analysis of red willow in Iroquois storytelling he recounts a story which was adopted into Haudenosaunee oral narrative, and in doing so points out the important addition of red willow to the story. In the original Brother's Grimm version of the tale, a naughty child is punished by God and becomes ill. After her death, her arm keeps emerging from her grave and will not stay buried. The solution in this European version is for the mother to go to the grave and strike the child's arm with a rod. After this she was able to rest in peace (Wonderley 19). The Oneida version of this story is nearly identical, involving a naughty child who is never punished and after death her hands are also sticking out of her grave. Since the child was 12 years old, the mother is instructed to take 12 red willow whips and whip her hands with each one, and after doing so the child is able to rest (19). Importantly, Wonderley points out that the addition of red willow is not intended as a punishment, but rather it is a medicine intended to "soak up an offending condition (fatigue, nastiness) like a sponge" (19). The descriptions of Tekahkwí:tha's power by other Indigenous people who were present at Kahnawake characterize her as magical and a sorceress (or likened to a shaman), and, interestingly, an account given by Jesuits describe her and her companion, Catherine Tegaskouita, whipping each other with willow shoots, with Tegaskouita whipping Tekahkwí:tha when she was too ill to do it herself. Due to her poor health, it would be reasonable to understand Tekahkwí:tha's penance of whipping with red willow as an attempt at restoring her own health and well-being.

Tekahkwí:tha was seen as holding such a high degree of power in her community due to her penitence that Indigenous men began to form their own groups to challenge the group of women followers she had begun to accumulate, and the Jesuits had to talk her out of

leaving the village to set up her own separate community of women. The community of both women and men at Kahnawake were so dedicated to penance through self-mortification that it was seen as an empowering ritual, and in this way, sadomasochism serves as a type of therapy where, as in Freud's repetition compulsion, the repetition of past trauma is a way to work through it. Although Tekahkwí:tha has become the most well-known member of the Kahnawake Christian community who practiced self-mortification, she was not the first one to engage in this practice. As mentioned previously, these practices became widespread in the territory of the Haudenosaunee, Hurons, and Algonquins during this time period. When Tekahkwí:tha arrived at Kahnawake the use of whips and exposure to the cold were the most common penitential acts. The year before her arrival, a pregnant woman "divested herself of her clothing, and exposed herself to the air at the foot of a large Cross that stands beside our Cemetery" (Qtd in Shoemaker 56). Tekahkwí:tha seems to have begun her practices of self-mortification with more traditional Haudenosaunee instruments of pain, such as whipping herself with willow and burning her feet with coals, but would later move on to Jesuit inspired torments, which she was given instruction on using from Cholenec. Cholenec's own accounts of his relationship with Tekahkwí:tha are filled with contradiction, and he writes in different places that he both instructed her in self-mortification while also writing that he discouraged it. As Cholenec recounts:

At night, when everyone was asleep, she strewed these thorns upon her mat and then lay down on it, having only her blanket over her body. She had the strength not only to roll herself all night long upon the thorns, but to do this for the three following nights also, the pain being unimaginable, as she afterwards confessed to me. It left her so worn out and emaciated that her face resembled that of a dead person. (Bonaparte 207)

He goes on to say that "although in my heart I admired her, I pretended to be displeased and reprimanded her for her imprudence, and in order to prevent her from renewing it, I commanded her to throw these thorns into the fire, which she did with great submission" (Bonaparte 208). This interaction demonstrates the close relationship between Tekahkwí:tha and Cholenec, but also how, out of all the Haudenosaunee converts at

Kahnawake, he already viewed her as different from them, even before her death. The strange relationship between them is reflective of the polymorphous characteristic of all humans: mirroring, in a way, the connection Freud demonstrated between a ‘clever seducer’ and an ‘average uncultivated woman,’ who he says will “find every sort of perversion to her taste, and will retain them as part of her own sexual activities” (Freud 191)⁶. Although it is not known whether Tekahkwí:tha was engaged in a sexual relationship with the Jesuit, masochism is its own perversion which Freud lists in the same section of “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality” as his theory on polymorphous perversity. The fascination which Tekahkwí:tha had with learning more about penitential practices is found in Cholenec’s writings about her, when he writes that she suspected there was “something ‘over and above’ these practices that remained hidden from her” (Bonaparte 189). Cholenec ended up giving her an iron girdle to “quench her extreme thirst for suffering” (189), although he also had to chastise her in the past for going too far with her self-inflicted tortures. This resulted in Tekahkwí:tha wearing the girdle of iron to do everyday chores, such as carrying wood, and Chauchetière recorded an injury that she received as a result of this when she fell on the ice and “pushed the spikes of her girdle well into her flesh” (191). This injury was hidden from the Jesuits, and Tekahkwí:tha laughed it off when her companion checked on her after the fall. Tekahkwí:tha was not the only member of the Kahnawake community using the Jesuit instruments. Cholenec claimed to have introduced things like the girdle, hairshirt, and whip in order to “moderate and regulate penance” practices the Haudenosaunee were already engaged in, “not to stimulate more bodily penance” (Greer 123). He was unsuccessful in controlling how the members of the community behaved, and Greer believes that Cholenec saw himself in a power struggle (123).

Although Cholenec’s record of her life attempts to paint himself as a close instructor of Tekahkwí:tha in her penitential practices, she hid incidents like this from him, and it has been documented that she frequently engaged in self-mortification with other Haudenosaunee members of the Kahnawake community. When she arrived in the

⁶ Freud’s notion of polymorphous perversity will be discussed again at greater length in Chapter 4.

community it was a woman named Kanahstasi, who was married to one of Tekahkwí:tha's cousins, that taught her about acts of penance, and her close Oneida friend Wari Teres engaged in self-mortification alongside Tekahkwí:tha (Bonaparte 192). According to the Jesuit Thwaites, when Wari Teres revealed that she too used rods to whip her hands, Tekahkwí:tha used an opportunity when they were alone to allow each other to whip one another with rods. They continued their "harsh devotion" and found an empty cabin in which they could continue their mutual chastisements of each other, following the church service (Bonaparte *ibid*).

Tekahkwí:tha eventually became part of a group of women who engaged in penance together, and they attempted to form what is described by the Jesuits as a nunnery. They had planned on leaving Kahnawake for Heron Island to set up their own community of women, but were talked out of it by Father Fremin (Shoemaker 61). Shoemaker supposes that these women were using "the model of the Christian society to enhance their collective role as women of the village" (61). The Confraternity of the Holy Family was formed by the Jesuits at Kahnawake, and "women appear to have been among the most active participants in this organization" (61). Although Tekahkwí:tha would have been familiar with Jesuit organizations like this, she also would have grown up being familiar with Haudenosaunee societies, such as the False Faces, a curing society, where members held special powers and helped to cure ailments in exchange for offerings such as tobacco.

For the men in the community, women's participation in extreme acts of penitence were seen as "a challenge to their own authority and status" (62). The men attempted to use the Jesuit instruments of penance on a daily basis, but were not permitted. The Jesuits saw this as an attempt to "not let themselves be outdone" by the women in the community (62). Another interpretation could be that everyone in the community looked to Tekahkwí:tha as a leader, not unlike the women who led the False Face Societies amongst the Haudenosaunee. It was not only the Jesuits who were affected by Tekahkwí:tha's death, and during the period of mourning the entire community took part in excessive self-mortification. Being in Kahnawake, away from the warfare of the

Mohawk Valley, allowed them to engage in a proper period of condolence in which to mourn the loss of Tekahkwí:tha.

After Tekahkwí:tha's death, the Jesuits used her as an example of a Mohawk Catholic, and by helping to make her a saint they ensured she would serve as an empty object through which to spread Catholicism [among the Haudenosaunee] for the foreseeable future. However, in Kahnawake today traditional Haudenosaunee beliefs and practices survive, and because "the Mohawks at Kahnawake neither replaced their beliefs with Catholic beliefs nor did the Jesuit teachings necessarily clash with Mohawk beliefs" some of the traditional practices have, over time, been combined with Catholic traditions (Horn-Miller 2).

2.4 Sky Woman as Haudenosaunee Philosophy

The importance of the Haudenosaunee Creation Story cannot be underestimated in Haudenosaunee life and the underlying philosophy of our nations. As Margaret Kovach states in *Indigenous Methodology: characteristics, conversations, and contexts* (2021), "Philosophically, Indigenous theory arises from an Indigenous epistemology and is couched within Indigenous ethics, community (including land and place), and self" (181). An aspect of Indigenous theory which Kovach emphasizes and devotes considerable time towards in her work is storytelling and 'storywork.' She writes that "The interrelationship between story and knowing cannot be traced back to any specific starting time. Within Indigenous societies, story and knowing have been tightly bound together as a legitimate form of understanding since time immemorial" (157). Thus, the Creation Story is not simply a story to tell our children to explain why and how we exist on Turtle Island, but contains and conveys fundamental knowledge and the philosophical underpinnings of Haudenosaunee culture. As the original woman, Sky Woman is a figure who is regarded as the great grandmother of all Haudenosaunee women. Therefore, our understanding of who we are as women can be traced back to Sky Woman and how she is depicted. For Tekahkwí:tha, this would have also been true. Being raised as a Mohawk woman, her understanding of the world would have been fundamentally rooted in the Creation Story.

The earliest recorded versions of the Haudenosaunee Creation Story were recorded by Jesuit missionaries living amongst Haudenosaunee communities. In her work on Sky Woman, Kahente Horn-Miller writes about the process of corruption and healing for Indigenous women. For Tekahkwí:tha, the concept of corruption was not a new idea introduced by the Jesuit missionaries, but was already part of the Mohawk culture she grew up with. What was new is the concept of shame which missionaries brought with them. As Horn-Miller states:

the trauma of colonization has led to incorrect and misleading representations ironically often taken as truth by the Iroquois themselves. Iroquois appropriation of largely inaccurate historical facts has resulted in an understanding and demonstration of culture by the people that is misguided and does not make sense at times. Clearly these irregularities have extended their roots throughout culture and language practices. As a result, ultimately the dominant society gets to authenticate identity knowledge. (97)

The appropriation of “inaccurate historical facts” also extends to our own Creation Story, and the story has not only changed under the influence of Christianity but the changes that the story underwent reflect the corruption of Haudenosaunee core values. Sky World is not only where Sky Woman originated, but it is also where the Haudenosaunee believe we go when we die in this world. Horn-Miller writes that “The conception of a good life according to Iroquois philosophy is one where everyone gets the right to be fed, the right to be happy and the right to be healed. This was illustrated in the Sky Woman Master Narrative as her life took place in the Sky World above, where everyone had food, happiness and healing” (Horn-Miller 68). The descriptions of Sky World as an idyllic paradise are present throughout various versions of the Creation Story. In the Oneida versions, both the older James Dean version and the contemporary Elm and Antone version, describe Sky World as follows:

At this time, the human family dwelt in a country situated in the upper regions of the air, abounding in every thing conducive to the comfort and convenience of life. The forests were full of game; the lakes and streams swarmed with fish and

fowl, which the earth and fields spontaneously produced a profusion of vegetables for the use of men. An unclouded sun enlivened their days, and storms and tempests were unknown in that happy region. The inhabitants were strangers to death, and its harbingers pain and disease, while their minds were free from the corroding passions of jealousy, hatred, malice, and revenge, so that their state was perfectly happy. (Dean 11)

This description sounds like the perfect world, but it leads to the question, how did Sky Woman end up being expelled from Sky World? There are many different versions of the Haudenosaunee Creation Story, but, in general, the earliest versions which were recorded do not give a specific reason that Sky Woman falls from Sky World, and in the later iterations of the story she is cast out under suspicion of infidelity.

Even in early versions from first contact between missionaries and people in the Eastern Woodlands Sky Woman's fall from Sky World takes on a tone of moral masochism. She is required to sacrifice her life in Sky World, giving up her family, friends, and community in order to create our world in the form of Turtle Island. In the earliest versions of the Huron story (the earliest Eastern Woodlands version written down 1636) and Haudenosaunee versions, such as the Mohawk version from 1644, Sky Woman is pregnant but in these versions she is not accused of being unfaithful. Instead, in these versions, much like the Onondaga version which John Mohawk studied as part of his dissertation, Sky Woman is required to sacrifice her own life in Sky World not as a punishment, but instead as an act of creation. In the Onondaga version which John Mohawk studied extensively there is a "tooth" in Sky World, rather than a great celestial tree. In his investigation into what the storyteller could mean by tooth he spoke to fluent Onondaga speakers and found out that tooth is a reference to Yellow Dog-Tooth Violet, a small medicinal plant used by our Haudenosaunee ancestors to prevent women from becoming pregnant (Hill 1-2). This powerful plant is guarded by an Old Man. Scholar Rick Hill interprets this as meaning that the Old Man did not want people using the plant to prevent pregnancy, in order for life to continue (2). This fits the theme of the Creation Story, bringing new life into the world.

When the pregnant Sky Woman is about to fall from the Sky Dome, the Old Man sits with her on the edge of the hole and “talks kindly” (Hill 2) with her, explaining that “She will be the one that brings life into the world below, and will start a process that will add to the universe the missing elements—the Original People, our ancestors” (2). Hill explains that the Old Man was suffering from an unfulfilled ‘Dream Wish.’ His dream had instructed him to “have a great feast, uproot the ‘tree’ and start a process of creation and recreation in the world below” (2) and Sky Woman was an important part in fulfilling this dream. When the dream is factored in, the moral masochism that Sky Woman seems to suffer from in the Creation Story seems to be less a case of what Freud would describe as “an unconscious sense of guilt” (Freud 280), and more a case of a cultural obligation to fulfill the dream wish of the Old Man. Therefore, the ironic pleasure of women’s masochism which Lacan theorizes does not apply to the case of Sky Woman’s moral masochism because, rather than a contemporary woman wanting to subject herself to masochism at the hands of a man, an irony in the sense that feminism has historically fought against patriarchal control, the original Creation Story was unadulterated by patriarchy.

When later versions of the Creation Story are compared to the very earliest ones, the addition of the plot line of Sky Woman’s infidelity is introduced. The versions where Sky Woman is kicked out under suspicion of being unfaithful begin to appear by the late 17th century, approximately 50 years after Jesuits and Dutch missionaries began recording the Creation Story. These narrative elements change as the audience changes, due to the influence of the Catholic Church and Haudenosaunee openness to sharing stories with other cultures. In the Oneida version, and the Hewitt versions, all recorded in the late 19th century and afterward, Sky Woman is almost always under suspicion of infidelity. In the earliest Creation Story, the Huron version, recorded in the notes of Jesuit missionaries, their writing is filled with interjections comparing the twins, for example, to Cain and Abel, and the fall from Sky World to the expulsion from the garden for Adam and Eve. It is well known that Haudenosaunee communities were active in cultural exchange, often adapting European stories to become their own and adding Haudenosaunee elements, such as the presence of red willow, so it is not hard to imagine the influence Christian missionaries immediately had upon tellings of the Creation Story. This small change in

the story has a major impact on Sky Woman. If we take away the idea of punishing her for infidelity then we can understand Sky Woman leaving Sky World in a completely different light, as a self-sacrificing creative act which is more culturally appropriate.

In both the Onondaga version and the Mohawk version written down and translated by Hewitt, Sky Woman is tested before she can marry a chief from another village. These tests include being tempted on her journey between villages by Red Dragon and Aurora Borealis, and when she reaches the Chief she is instructed to prepare corn mush for him. The Chief instructs her to remove all her clothes in order to prepare the mush and when she does so “she was able with fortitude to suffer the burns without flinching when the mush splattered on her while cooking” (*Iroquoian Cosmology* 274). If she had flinched when the drops of hot mush fell on her, he would have said to her: “I do not believe it is true that it is thy wish that thou and I should marry” (274). When the two dogs come out and eat the mush and lick it from Sky Woman’s body, they cut the skin all over her body with their sharp tongues and make her bleed. Once again, if she had shown pain or flinched then the Chief would have rejected the marriage. The reason that Sky Woman is so easily able to pass this trial is because she had been forewarned of it by her father. Although her father was dead and buried in a burial-case, she often visited him and he gave her importance advice and instructions. As opposed to being dream-like in nature, her conversations with her father make sense in a Haudenosaunee world view because they believed in the dualism of body and soul. According to Hewitt, the Iroquoian psychic philosophy of the soul was extensive, and they had many beliefs and rules about what souls could and could not do. It was believed that the “soul abode in and about the corpse, whether it lay in the grave or on a scaffold, promenading by night through the villages, entering their lodges and cabins to share in the feasts by eating what remained in the pots” (“The Iroquoian Concept” 109). Hewitt’s research finds that Iroquois shamans and ancients generally believed that the desires, dreams, and even memory of the soul are all incited benevolently by Tharohyawako, the Sky-god, and were “to add to the welfare and happiness of the human race” (110), thus explaining why individuals made such an effort to fulfill the dream wish. For Sky Woman, the soul of her father speaking to her fits into this type of cosmology in which the desire of the soul is benevolent and of help to their own body, and perhaps by extension, their children. In contrast, the idea of

unconscious guilt promoted by Freudian psychoanalysis is not present within Haudenosaunee cosmology. This unconscious guilt is at the root of civilizations, according to Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), where he purports the thesis “to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization and to show that the price we pay for our advanced civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt” (134). Rather, for the Haudenosaunee interpreted the presence of a soul, through the “seeming detachment of the intellectual faculties, dreams, visions, apparitions, longings, and desires” (“The Iroquoian Concept” 108), and instead of believing this a unique characteristic of humans, “they inferred, in accordance with their subjective philosophy, that not only they themselves but animals also and things inanimate by nature were endowed with souls” (108). If the Freudian unconscious sense of guilt was absent from their set of beliefs surrounding the soul, and it was instead spurred by the benevolent Tharohyawako, masochistic practices, while manifesting in similar ways, have a different root cause unrelated to simple guilty punishment or subjection.

Even after Sky Woman passes these painful trials and marries the Chief, she continues to endure suspicion in Sky World. In many versions of the Haudenosaunee Creation Story she is cast out under suspicion of infidelity. In Hewitt’s Onondaga version of the story, for example, she becomes pregnant and while in this version she is not directly accused of infidelity, her husband asks how she became pregnant even though they haven’t shared a sleeping mat. The answer is provided in this version, that through Sky Woman’s magic she becomes pregnant simply by sharing breath with the Chief. When the child is born and the Chief becomes ill he blames Sky Woman, leading to her being expelled from Sky World. This is a familiar plot point in the story, but, in this version, after she is gone the chief admits that he had her thrown out due to his own jealousy of her and the two figures Red Dragon and Aurora Borealis. These events that lead to Sky Woman’s expulsion from Sky World actually show a corruption of those in Sky World, always depicted as an idyllic, perfect world, and not as a result of the actions of Sky Woman. This corruption is reflective of the corruption of the Creation Story and Haudenosaunee philosophy itself, representative of the Catholic influence of the Jesuits, who introduced ideas about shame surrounding sexuality. Hence, Choleneq’s preoccupation with Tekahkwí:tha’s virginity.

If we look at the earliest Creation Story, the Huron version, recorded in the notes of Jesuit missionaries, we can see that their writing is filled with interjections comparing the twins, for example, to Cain and Abel, and the fall from Sky World to the expulsion from the garden for Adam and Eve. It is well known that Haudenosaunee communities were active in cultural exchange, often adapting European stories to become their own and adding Haudenosaunee elements, such as the presence of red willow, so it is not hard to imagine the influence Christian missionaries had upon tellings of the Creation Story.

In addition to the strong possibility that infidelity was included because of the influence of European colonization, bringing in the influence of patriarchy and politics, it also makes little sense in a Haudenosaunee context. At the time of colonization, Haudenosaunee communities had different sexual norms in comparison to Europeans and were introduced to sexual activity before marriage and would engage with multiple partners. As for parentage, jealousy is a human weakness in the Chief which we can all understand, but in a matriarchal society it is the identity of the mother which matters for passing on clan membership. The jealousy of the Chief in these Hewitt versions has a patriarchal tone to it.

The comparison to Cain and Abel also takes on new importance when we consider the way post-contact versions of the Creation Story have also shifted away from having Sky Woman's identity as a grandmother and the important role she plays as a representation of evil in the good vs evil dichotomy. The focus on Sky Woman as grandmother in the Creation Story is often omitted or not focused on in contemporary tellings. In the complete story Sky Woman and her grandsons continue the creation of Turtle Island. An example of this is appears in the Hewitt versions where Sky Woman as grandmother is constantly interfering in Sky Holder's work in creating a world that will make humans happy. She smells the familiar smell of corn (which she had prepared up in Sky World) and when her grandson refuses to give it to her, she purposely attempts to ruin it by throwing ashes on the corn. Instead, the dichotomy has now shifted to focus mainly on the brothers as adversaries, Sky Holder as the good brother and who continues the creation of our world on Turtle Island, and Flint as the evil brother who interferes with

his efforts. The twins were always present in the story, but in modern tellings they have taken on a greater importance.

2.5 Concluding Remarks on Feminine Jouissance

I set out to show that feminine Jouissance and masochistic behaviour is only ironic under certain conditions, namely for women who exist in a patriarchal society in which their subversion is taken for granted. For Haudenosaunee women this is not the case. At the time of early colonization, the Haudenosaunee served as a role model for early feminists such as Matilda Joslyn Gage and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Wagner 29). The inspiration for the early suffragettes came from the Haudenosaunee matriarchal system and these women believed that the Haudenosaunee recognized the “power and importance” of women (28). Therefore, when Tekahkwí:tha serves as an example of feminine jouissance she removes the mystique of feminine masochism. Lacan’s examples of feminine jouissance are ‘mystics’ such as Hadewijch d’Anvers, Saint Teresa of Avila, and Saint John of the Cross. Saint Káteri Tekahkwí:tha can easily be grouped with these other figures, just as the Jesuits sought to make Tekahkwí:tha another woman saint. What happens when Tekahkwí:tha’s feminine jouissance is examined, however, is that instead of believing we know nothing about this type of jouissance, and connect it to an unknowable God, the cultural and historical influences which led to this behaviour are uncovered. Tekahkwí:tha did not leave behind an autobiography, as Saint Teresa did, but instead came from a culture rich in philosophy and traditions which would have been part of who she was and provide an explanation for her masochistic actions. The irony which Lacan sees in women’s masochism extends from an untranscendable cultural and biological destiny; this destiny as Western discourse can be understood as tragic rather than ironic, for the tragic hero, such as Antigone, embraces the necessity of her suffering and it is this affirmation that is the only victory against Necessity. Antigone is a legendary and wholly literary figure, and her masochism cannot escape the failures inherent to Western culture; for Tekahkwí:tha, a historical figure, she is made legendary by the Jesuit’s hagiographies, an act of overwriting which imparts her life and masochistic actions with a Western sense of guilt. Through a reevaluation of the dominant discourse of masochism, especially women’s masochism, a limitation is

revealed in understanding Tekahkwí:tha through the same theoretical lens as Antigone, for her masochism operates within a completely different cultural milieu. Although there are no written records directly from Tekahkwí:tha, her masochism can be understood through the Haudenosaunee culture she was a part of. Her world was one where societies operated, shamans engaged in painful acts as medicine, and where women held a high degree of power. Rather than shrouding her masochistic jouissance in mystery, the mystery is dissipated through cultural understanding.

Chapter 3

“When Rita Joe first come to the city—she told me...The cement made her feet hurt.” (Ryga 130)

3 Sadomasochistic Liberal Readings of Indigenous Pain

This chapter continues to examine masochism from different viewpoints, and is a psychoanalytic examination of the ways in which settlers read narratives of Indigenous pain. The stereotypical depictions of Indigenous women in literature and non-fiction writing are a part of the settler colonial structure which aims to dispossess Indigenous peoples of land, and are therefore a form of political warfare. As part of a pleasure-humiliation discourse, the ability of settlers to read narratives of pain and suffering to enjoy masochistically is dependent on the actual pain and suffering of Black and Indigenous bodies. However, this enjoyment is also contingent upon the ability to disavow and distance oneself from the racist ideas underlying the fantasy. The racist Indigenous fantasy means that Canadians do not have to say that they believe Indigenous people are subhuman and that Indigenous women are “squaws;” instead Canadians can believe that someone else out there believes it for them and there is a safe space of removal from the racist fantasy for the settler reader to enjoy it in a “masochistic” way. This masochistic enjoyment is inseparable from the sadism of the settler colonial state, and a new Oedipal drama is configured wherein Indigenous men are rendered impotent and Indigenous women face sexual violence. With sadism and masochism inherently part of the structure of settler colonialism, Indigenous suffering is political.

3.1 Reading and Writing Indigenous Stories

The idea that there were not any Indigenous writers or thinkers publishing work in Canada prior to the 1970s and 80s is a stubborn one which has only increased in prominence with the death of Sto:lo scholar and writer Lee Maracle and declarations that her “autobiographical novel *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* (1975, 1990), was one of the first Indigenous works published in Canada” (Canadian Encyclopedia n.p.). While *Bobbi Lee* was truly groundbreaking, and Maracle’s work opened many doors for generations of

Indigenous women writers who would follow, the presumption that she was “one of the first” actively erases the work of women who were writing throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, such as E. Pauline Johnson, Rita Joe, and Jane Johnston Schoolcraft. It also opens a space where settler writers can speak for Indigenous people and tell our stories instead of hearing them directly from our own people. Critiques of the way Indigenous peoples, and, more specifically, Indigenous women are portrayed by settler writers have existed for at least 130 years. In 1892 Mohawk performance artist and writer E. Pauline Johnson published her essay “A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction” in the Toronto *Sunday Globe*. In it, she heavily critiques the way Indigenous women are portrayed in (settler) literature. Johnson critiques renderings of the Indigenous woman in literature as a two-dimensional caricature who suffers the loss of her humanity, the loss of any affiliation with a real nation, and, finally, the loss of her life. She writes:

she must not be one of womankind at large, neither must she have an originality, a singularity that is not definitely “Indian.” I quote “Indian” as there seems to be an impression among authors that such a thing as tribal distinction does not exist among the North American aborigines. (“A Strong Race” 2)

Johnson’s critique immediately brings us to the point that not only is the Indigenous woman in literature a caricature, but she is not even “one of womankind at large” (2). Thus, she is completely stripped of her femininity and appears to serve merely as a hollow plot device. To this end, she is also deprived of any specific characteristic of an Indigenous nation, just as Kateri Tekahkwí:tha’s canonization deprived her of such characteristics centuries previous. For Johnson, the “Indian Girl” is not uniquely recognizable as Mohawk, Ojibwe, or one of any other unique cultures; she is what is now known as “pan-Indigenous.” Johnson proceeds to discuss specific examples from Canadian literature, and describes the fate of the generic “Wanda” (the name she finds all Indigenous literary women are ascribed, which also happens to be the name of Masoch’s “Venus in Furs”). Hence, as Johnson writes in relation to G. Mercer Adam and A. Ethelwyn Wetherald’s *An Algonquin Maiden*:

Poor little Wanda! not only is she non-descript and ill-starred, but as usual the authors take away her love, her life, and last and most terrible of all, her reputation; for they permit a crowd of men-friends of the hero to call her a “squaw,” and neither hero nor authors deny that she is a “squaw.” It is almost too sad when so much prejudice exists against the Indians, that any one should write an Indian heroine with such glaring accusations against her virtue, and no contradictory statements either from writer, hero, or circumstance. (“A Strong Race” 4-5)

Johnson draws attention to the way Indigenous women have been dehumanized and treated as stereotypes in Canada, which, of course, has continued for the 130 years since the publication of this essay. Her point that the fictional Indigenous woman’s reputation is more terrible to lose than even her life in some horrible way such as drowning is an interesting point. Perhaps Johnson realized how severely damaging these kinds of stereotypes are for all Indigenous women, given how the disposability of life is inherently linked to these stereotypes, as well as the abuse and murder of Indigenous women.

These same issues are raised by Lee Maracle in her groundbreaking sociology book *I am Woman* (1988). Although published almost 100 years after Johnson’s essay, Maracle’s writing focuses on similar themes which affect Indigenous women in Canada. This thematic continuity reflects the dictates of settler colonial patriarchy, which “demand[s] that beneath the Native male comes the Native female. The dictates of racism are that Native men are beneath white women and Native females are not fit to be referred to as women” (*I am Woman* 17-18).

Between the publication of Johnson’s and Maracle’s works, Margaret Atwood published a guide to Canadian literature in 1972, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Here she traces the many depictions of Indigenous people throughout Canadian literature. When she provides specific examples of the depictions of Indigenous women characters in these stories it is always a repetition of the same negative stereotypes which Johnson pointed out in 1892, and which Maracle sees as still being forced upon real Indigenous women 100 years later. Atwood’s analysis of settler

literature which incorporates Indigenous characters is accurate, and proves useful to the analysis of the settler's enactment of masochistic enjoyment, however, I am also critical of her own lack of critique and the implicit endorsement of the settler state's collective fantasy. Atwood's most thorough description of Indigenous women characters is in her descriptions of "Indian as social victim" (*Survival* 103). In these types of stories, such as George Ryga's play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, "the Indian heroine is subject to every possible form of exploitation—economic, cultural, and sexual—and is finally raped and murdered" (103). Although Atwood concludes that Indigenous characters, and especially women, are "a yardstick of suffering against which the whites can measure their own and find it lacking; whatever their own miseries, the Indians can do them one better" (104), following this example she remains unreflective on why this is the case. Instead, Atwood immediately connects the Indian-as-victim trope with Indians as animals who were once free and provides several examples depicting Indians as once wild and free animals who are now near extinction and caged. It is impossible to read this now and not connect it to Maracle's idea that "the denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a sub-human level. Animals beget animals" (*I am Woman* 17). Thus, the literary Indian tropes which Atwood is describing in *Survival* are not innocent CanLit, but sadistic political warfare against Indigenous peoples in Canada. Minnesota Chippewa scholar Gerald Vizenor wrote in 1993, near the beginning of the ongoing resurgence in Indigenous literary scholarship, that "The Native American Indian 'implicitly acknowledged he could continue living only in the white man's representation of him...the process of literary annihilation would be checked only when Indian writers began representing their own culture'" (Vizenor 14). Vizenor is describing the same type of symbolic overwriting which Káteri Tekahkwí:tha underwent, and which Atwood describes in her analysis of Canadian literature. In the analysis of the simulation of dominance, one aspect Vizenor dwells on is translation, writing "familiar simulations have more in common with the philosophies of grammar and translations than with shadows and the silence of heard stories in the unbearable fields of tribal consciousness" (14). Connecting back to the discussion of language in Chapter One, grammar and translation are part of the signifying chain, and are thus part of metonymic, sadistic language, while the "heard stories" (orally-told traditional stories) are removed from the

signifier and work to subvert the sadistic power-structures of the dominant culture through masochistic language. Vizenor is critical of viewing Indigenous literatures through the lens of settler colonialism, and rejects the “colonial dominance of political theories in the literature of dominance,” while favouring “the wild memories and rich diversities of tribal literature” (14). Understood through this rearticulated lens which rejects colonial dominance, Atwood’s chapter “Indians and Eskimos as Symbols” reterritorializes settler ideology at the same time that she analyses how settlers use literature to think about Indigenous peoples. Bearing in mind Vizenor’s literary analysis, Atwood ironically lists works which have been written by Indigenous authors, after spending an entire chapter analysing settler literary propaganda, stating:

All the books in this chapter are by white people. What the Indians themselves think is another story, and one that is just beginning to be written. For a preview try:

Cardinal, Harold, *The Unjust Society*; Hurtig.

McLuhan, Terry, *Touch the Earth*, N.

Pitseolak, Pitseolak; OUP.

Redbird, Duke, and Marty Dunn, *Red on White*; N.

Wabashego, *The Only Good Indian*; N. (*Survival* 114)

The reader is led to believe that in 1972 Indigenous people have finally awoken to the modern world and begun to tell our own stories and write for ourselves. Notably, Atwood left the work of E. Pauline Johnson off this short list; in 1990 Atwood would revisit this omission in the article “A Double-Bladed Knife: Subversive Laughter in Two Stories by Thomas King” where she begins by discussing the chapter on Indigenous characters from *Survival*. She defends herself by saying that she did not include any Indigenous poetry because she did not know of any at that time, and addresses her overlooking of Johnson by saying “Perhaps because, being half-white, she somehow didn’t rate as the real thing, even among Natives” (“Double-Bladed Knife” 243).

Atwood's dismissal of Johnson as not being a real Native is based on ideas related to blood quantum, which is not only a dismissal of Johnson, but is a political attack on her identity which ties into the patriarchal and discriminatory rules in the Indian Act that dictate who is allowed to become a Status Indian. This preoccupation with blood quantum is part of the structure of settler colonialism which takes the authority upon itself to decide who is allowed to be Indigenous, and for those who are permitted, to ensure all traces of Indigeneity are driven from the individual (Wolfe 283) (Tuck and Yang 13). The Indian Act also disproportionately affects Indigenous women, and its patriarchal rules have been used to strip a woman of her status if she married a white man.

To return to Pauline Johnson, why is her article (not to mention her other work) still so pertinent and important today, 130 years after publication? In that period of time things in Canada did not change for Indigenous women; in fact, they have arguably gotten worse. Colonialism is a multifaceted attack on Indigenous peoples, and while women suffer, one of the other effects that the Indian Act, Residential Schools, the 60s scoop, and the child welfare system have had is the lack of a next generation of Indigenous thinkers to follow Johnson. I would consider this lack to be a symptom of the active fight against the rise of an Indigenous Intelligentsia.

Meanwhile, this oppression of Indigenous peoples in Canada was not impersonally political but sadistically cruel. In this cruel oppression, the sadomasochistic urges of 'nice' Canadians, urges which Freud says can "oscillate between, on the one hand, cases merely characterized by an active or violent attitude to the sexual object, and on the other hand, cases in which satisfaction is entirely conditional on the humiliation and maltreatment of the object" (Freud 158), are enacted against us. As colonizers, Canadians have engaged in, benefited from, and turned a blind eye to sadistic acts and the genocide of Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S+ people. Through the act of reading, the liberal settler is able to enact a performance of suffering the pain themselves. Discussing Leonard Cohen's novel *Beautiful Losers* (1966), Atwood states that the depicted suffering of Indigenous women satisfies the "the mentality of the Canadian onlooker who needs to identify with victims" (*Survival* 107). Atwood describes the Canadian settler

reader as a “victim who needs to be a victim” (107), which aligns with Freud’s description of masochism in a 1924 footnote to the “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality” as being “Sadism which cannot find employment in actual life is turned round upon the subject’s own self and so produces a *secondary masochism*, which is superadded to the primary kind” (158).

This pattern of taking subjects of colour and making them into characters who are easily identifiable with the white liberal subject who suffers is consistently followed in both settler Canadian and American narratives; this has already been discussed in the Black American context by Amber Jamilla Musser in her book *Sensational Flesh: Race, Power, and Masochism* (2014) which deals with race, power, and gender through the lens of masochism. As the examples in Johnson’s and Atwood’s work also show, the liberal subject is able to suffer in a masochistic way, while the bodies of Indigenous people do the labour. This argument is unpacked by Musser as a discourse of pleasure-humiliation which comes from talking about race. The white subject requires the existence of the black subject in order to “produce pleasure for the former through the humiliation of the latter” (Musser 99). She traces this fetishization of suffering for the white liberal subject to the need to make the suffering of the black slaves during the fight for emancipation visible by replacing the black body with the white. Musser uses the work of Frantz Fanon in conjunction with the work of legal scholar Anthony Farley, the Marquis de Sade, and Simone de Beauvoir to understand how “suffering reveals the body to be a body, [and] we can theorize becoming-black as an amalgam of suffering and becoming-biological” (99). Musser discusses this concept of “becoming-black” in combination with the work of Frantz Fanon, whose coding of “guilt and masochism as white offers ways to theorize the guilt of whiteness as the underside to the work of sympathy and empathy” (Musser 99). Through this theorization of race, pain, and guilt it can be understood that the shame and inaction which characterize the white liberal subject’s reaction to the gaze of Black suffering is similar to the shame and inaction of the settler subject before the suffering of Indigenous people in Canada.

In a similar fashion to “becoming-black,” which relies on both suffering and what Musser refers to as “becoming-biological,” the idea of “becoming-Indigenous” operates in a

similar manner, but instead of relying on the concept of “fleshiness,” Indigeneity is tied to the land due to the differing goals of settler colonialism with respect to Blackness and Indigeneity. While colonialism for Black bodies focuses on labour and the mutability of the flesh, for Indigenous people settler colonialism is concerned with who belongs on this land. Thus, where the one-drop rule was used to justify enslaving an individual, the opposite holds true for Indigeneity. You must prove your identity in order to retain your claim to land, so blood quantum is used as a means to dispossess Indigenous individuals of their land and to gradually assimilate them into the body politic of the settler state. It should be noted that this method of passing on Indian status ignores traditional rules of kinship in Indigenous nations, such as the tradition of matrilineal descent and adoption ceremonies in Haudenosaunee culture outlined in Chapter Two. Thus, the end goal of laws such as the Indian Act is to gradually remove all Indigenous peoples from their lands and therefore leave the land open for settlers. Just as Musser discusses the erasure of race where the end result is either a sadistic pleasure derived from black pain, or a masochistic pleasure in symbolic identification, depending on which subject position is identified with in a particular scenario, for Indigenous peoples there is a similar method of identification with the sufferer whereby settlers in Canada can seemingly choose to adopt an Indigenous identity, or even when they do not do this explicitly, there is often an implication that after a certain period of time one has become “native” to a place.

3.2 Literature as Political Philosophy

In her book *Neither Indian Princesses nor Easy Squaws* (2016), Saulteaux-Metis scholar Dr. Janice Acoose discusses how there was politically motivated support in the early Canadian literary canon for developing a certain settler ideology regarding Indigenous people (32). Early on, this ideology took the form of Christian patriarchy which then transitioned to liberalism, but both are of course tied to “state policies and practices” (32). The stereotypes which emerge from this religious and secular ideology are a part of the structure of settler colonialism, and are a method of unseating Indigenous peoples from these lands. Acoose traces these stereotypes about Indigenous women back to Amerigo Vespucci’s *Mundus Novus*, which was published around 1503, thus making it one of the key tools of enacting settler colonialism, along with more well-known methods, such as

the papal bulls, for example the 1455 “Romanus Pontifex” and the 1493 “Inter Caetera,” which made up the Doctrine of Discovery, the spiritual, political, and legal justification for colonization. This doctrine continued to be used well into the 19th century as a justification for the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands on Turtle Island, and the precedent this set still carries on today.

The 1493 “Inter Caetera” established the ability for Europeans to declare occupied lands as their own due to “Christian domination and superiority” over the supposed inferior ways of life of Indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Turtle Island (n.p. upstanderproject). Therefore, the stereotypes which established Indigenous women as subhuman ‘squaws’ are interconnected with the legal precedents for the dispossession of lands. In Vespucci’s *Mundus Novus* he writes that when Indigenous women “had the opportunity of copulating with Christians, urged by excessive lust, they defiled and prostituted themselves” (Acoose 33). Acoose also points out the contrasts in Vespucci’s work between personal desire and Christian morality. He describes Indigenous women’s naked bodies as “barely tolerably beautiful and clean” (33). This contradictory desire for and repulsion of Indigenous women’s bodies indicates firstly a manifestation of the perversion of scopophilia. The pleasure of looking becomes a perversion, according to Freud in his “Three Essays on Sexuality,” when “it is connected with the overriding of disgust” (Freud 157), a feature which we see is prominent in the writing of Vespucci. He is both sexually attracted to Indigenous women and disgusted by them at the same time, categorizing them as ‘defiled prostitutes.’

To understand this affective interaction and response from Vespucci in a Lacanian context, we must understand the speaking being’s renunciation of enjoyment. In “The Subject Supposed to Enjoy,” Mladen Dolar writes:

In so far as one is a speaking being, one must renounce enjoyment, yet it is only the supposition of enjoyment that allures the subject into speaking at all, and can offer the frail and elusive share of enjoyment which a speaking being may be allotted, between the lines, in his or her very subjection. It is through the supposition of the enjoyment of the Other that the subject may get his or her share

of enjoyment, but if there is enjoyment of the Other, it can be brought about only through the subject's renunciation. The paradox of belief is thus that if I am to get enjoyment, I have to renounce it. ("The Subject" xxiii)

Thus, we see the renunciation of the Other (in this case Indigenous women) as a defiled prostitute as a part of the fantasy necessary for the speaking subject to experience scopophilic enjoyment. For the speaking subject in early Lacan it is the image that captivates but, interestingly, this changes in Lacan's middle period and language itself is what poisons the speaking being. This simple change of focus from the image to the word in Lacanian theory can be seen taking place in the European experience of Indigenous women. The speaking subject, in this case Vespucci, is enamored by the image of the Indigenous women he encounters, to the point that it seems he experiences phallic jouissance just from gazing upon them.

The importance of the image is reflected in the fact that after the publication of *Mundus Novus*, several images of Indigenous women were produced, including one from 1600 titled "Allegory of America, from New Inventions of Modern Times (Nova Reperta)."



Figure 3 “Allegory of America, from New Inventions of Modern Times (Nova Reperta), 1 of 19” (1600). By Theodoor Galle, after Stradanus.

Therefore, we can see that the image which had so painfully captivated Vespucci himself, came to be an imago. Unlike the Jungian or Kleinian concept of the imago, which was more archetypal and could contain both positive and negative aspects, the Lacanian imago is disruptive and deceptive in nature. In differentiating between little other and big Other, the imago belongs to the little other, and instead of it being an accurate representation, it is actually a projection of the ego. In the work of Lacanian psychoanalyst Philippe Julien he describes the mirror stage theory in infants as a compression of both narcissism and aggressivity, writing: “Narcissism, in which the image of one’s own body is sustained by the image of the other, in fact introduces a tension: the other in his image both attracts and rejects me” (Julien 34). Although, as a speaking individual, Vespucci is past the mirror stage of development, when encountering Indigenous peoples for the first time the radical alterity of the big Other is

evident and what is present in his writing is the imago, the little other, a fantasy of the narcissistic ego of people such as Vespucci, and not an accurate representation of Indigenous women. In addition to showing the encounter between Vespucci and the naked Indigenous woman who caused him painful jouissance, located in the background between the two figures is a scene of sadistic torture. Thus, Indigenous women are not only cast as ‘defiled prostitutes’, but are also imputed in the act of sadistic torture. The radical alterity Europeans encounter when meeting Indigenous people for the first time is indicative of the way in which their symbolic order was radically altered through this encounter. The Indigenous woman is merely one individual who reveals a radical change in the symbolic order of European liberalism—these Indigenous women speak different languages, have their own customs and spiritual beliefs, and different sexual norms. Thus, the shared social order dictated by the big Other is under threat in this moment that Vespucci comes to gaze upon her and experience phallic jouissance. On a macrolevel, bringing these images of Indigenous women back to European audiences and writing about these women as if they are stereotypical prostitutes who cannot help but defile themselves is a way of clinging to the established social order, of affirming its naturalness or rightness. But it is at this moment that the fragile nature of the big Other is exposed, and the illusion which structures our reality risks becoming exposed which will lead to what Žižek would call a “loss of reality” (*Žižek Reader* 122).

By comparing the fantasy that Indigenous women are promiscuous and defile themselves to the European fantasy of despotism, first examined by Alain Grosrichard in 1979 in *The Sultan’s Court: European Fantasies of the East*, it becomes apparent that the same operational fantasy is at work. Grosrichard’s Lacanian analysis of despotism outlines the logic, and lack thereof, found in the European fantasy of despotism. An early example of this is the difference between not only despotism and democracy, but between despotism and monarchy. He critiques the connection that Montesquieu makes between geography and climate, and also corruption, to despotism as a form of government (Grosrichard 47-48), and shows how Montesquieu attempts to avoid this very critique with the idea that “Most of the European nations are still governed by the principles of morality,” and then proceeds to leave despotism as a vague threat which could come to afflict European nations should they abuse power more than their morals or climate can resist (48). Both

the fantasy of the promiscuous Indigenous woman and the fantasy of despotism are therefore founded on an inherent superiority of the European, whether moral or geographic, which both end up being tied to constructions of race.

In his introduction to Grosrichard's book, Dolar outlines the fantasy of despotism like this: "For the European subject, I don't have to pawn my own belief and offer any sacrifice; others do it for me; the fantasy takes care of it. I believe they believe. One can believe by proxy." ("The Subject" xxiii). In contrast to the European believing that there exist subjects of the despot who believe in the power of the despot and can both love and be enslaved to him, the racist Indigenous fantasy means that Canadians do not have to say that they believe Indigenous people are subhuman and that Indigenous women are "squaws"; instead, to reiterate, Canadians can believe that someone else out there believes it for them and this safe space of removal allows the racist fantasy to function. In this way, the liberal settler reader can enjoy the narrative of the defiled Indigenous woman who is doomed to misery and death. However, this suffering is always masochistic in nature, typically a moral masochism which is characterized by guilt, but simultaneously inaction.

The racist fantasy that underlies the masochistic pleasure the liberal settler enjoys from these narratives is nearly identical in terms of Black suffering and Indigenous suffering. When bell hooks writes about the devaluation of Black womanhood in *ain't i a woman* she emphasizes how sexual exploitation was weaponized in multiple ways against Black women. She states, "White women and men justified the sexual exploitation of enslaved black women by arguing that they were the initiators of sexual relationships with men. From such thinking emerged the stereotype of black women as sexual savages, and in sexist terms a sexual savage, a non-human, an animal cannot be raped" (hooks 52).

Women have to suffer doubly: first, as the victim of sexual exploitation, and, secondly, as the blamable party. hooks connects this sexual exploitation back to slavery, stating: "a devaluation of black womanhood occurred as a result of the sexual exploitation of black women during slavery that has not altered in the course of hundreds of years" (53). These passages are very similar to the language Lee Maracle uses to talk about the state of Indigenous women in Canada, published only seven years after hooks' ground breaking

work. Returning to Maracle's statement that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, she writes in *I am Woman*, "The dictates of patriarchy demand that beneath the Native male comes the Native female. The dictates of racism are that Native men are beneath white women and Native females are not fit to be referred to as women" (*I am Woman* 17-18). Maracle and hooks are identifying the same hierarchies of colonialism, and hooks expresses it in almost identical fashion, "As far back as slavery, white people established a social hierarchy based on race and sex that ranked white men first, white women second, though sometimes equal to black men, who are ranked third, and black women last" (52-53). The fact that neither Maracle nor hooks include the other (meaning Black or Indigenous) in their hierarchies points to the lack of allyship between Black and Indigenous people that has often been the case historically. In terms of political movements, the Red Power movement and the Black Power movement have been discussed in terms of being part of the same ideological continuity, and both were important allies to one another.

The hierarchies of colonialism are not accidental and not natural. They are a part of the systemic nature of settler colonialism which is designed to displace Indigenous peoples around the world from their lands. hooks has written that the "Systemic devaluation of black womanhood was not simply a direct consequence of race hatred, it was a calculated method of social control" (hooks 59-60). This "systemic devaluation" is also a well-known fact for Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. For Indigenous women, such as Lee Maracle and Leanne Simpson, understanding the purpose and methods of systemic devaluation are an integral part of their critique of the settler colonial state. Simpson, in her book *As We Have Always Done* (2017) writes:

A great deal of the colonizers energy has gone into breaking the intimate connection of Nishnaabeg bodies (and minds and spirits) to each other and to the practices and associated knowledges that connect us to land, because this is the base of our power. This means land and bodies are commodified as capital under settler colonialism and are naturalized as objects for exploitation. This has always been extremely clear to Indigenous women and 2SQ people, and it's why sexual

and gender violence has to be theorized and analyzed as vital, not supplemental, to discussions of colonial dispossession. (Simpson 41)

Why talk about the exploitation of Black and Indigenous bodies in a discussion about masochism? As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, the masochist engages in the masochistic theatre freely, and always needs to be the one in control. The violence taking place is controlled and consensual. Actual sexual exploitation is removed from sexual masochism, so when discussing the exploitation of Black and Indigenous bodies we are instead entering the realm of, firstly, sadism, and, secondly, a type of moral masochism via the removed fantasy. In Musser's work on masochism and race she quotes legal scholar Anthony Farley in his discussion of the pleasure-humiliation discourse that happens when we talk about race. For the white liberal they figuratively make themselves both white and black which is "a process which produces pleasure for the former through the humiliation of the latter" (Farley via Musser 99), and Farley describes this as a way for whites to exorcise their own demons which becomes its own form of pleasure (99). This entire process inherently relies on the existence of REAL Black bodies in REAL, nonconsensual pain, and a pleasure "born of the sight of wretched persons" (Farley via Musser 99). The fantasy of settlers in Canada is similarly Sadeian, but instead of Black bodies the fantasy is more often rooted in the fantasy of "becoming Indian."

Through literature, the settler is able to identify with narratives of Indigenous suffering on numerous levels or through numerous established tropes, with the two most important being the Indian as victim and the vanishing Indian. The works that contain these stereotypical depictions of Indigenous people allow the reader to live out the masochistic fantasy of becoming Indian.

3.3 Becoming-Indigenous Through Mythomania in Marian Engel's *Bear*

Atwood's *Survival* and Johnson's essay "A Strong Race Opinion" both discuss many examples of Canadian Literature which examine these stereotypes but, of course, their examples predate Marian Engel's 1976 Governor General's Award winning novel *Bear*,

an important piece of CanLit which allows settlers to imagine themselves masochistically in a narrative which is at its core Indigenous. This story was written by Engel with the encouragement of Haida artist Bill Reid, who introduced her to the Haida stories of the Bear Mother and Bear Princess, and he had himself sculpted a figure of the Bear Mother, called *Haida Myth of Bear Mother Dish* in 1972 (James 182). Her adaptation of the story into the narrative of a white woman who has a masochistic sexual relationship with a bear transforms the story of the Bear Mother into a modern one in which a woman from Toronto goes to catalogue books at a rural estate, where a bear also lives. There are only brief mentions of Indigenous people the narrator sees, passing by in magenta ski jackets, completely removed from the context of the story.

The woman develops an intense emotional and sexual relationship with the bear, the masochistic nature of which is evident in such passages as this: “‘Bear,’ she would say to him, tempting him, ‘I am only a human woman. Tear my thin skin with your clattering claws. I am frail. It is simple for you. Claw out my heart, a grub under a stump. Tear off my head, my bear’” (Engel 97). These masochistic urges continue to go unfulfilled until near the end of the novel, while attempting to have sex with the bear, “He reached out one great paw and ripped the skin on her back” (107). Rather than experiencing a masochistic pleasure from this pain, she reacts by screaming at him to get out and running away. The next morning, after waking up with her whole body in pain, she thinks “he ripped me...that’s what I was after, wasn’t it, decadent little city tart?” (109). This line reveals the part that she was playing within the book: that of the promiscuous Indigenous woman. However, rather than experiencing the removed masochistic pleasure that readers experience in this situation, the narrator is forced to experience real intense pain which leaves its mark forever. Unlike the literary ‘squaw,’ this white settler is able to flee from her circumstances and return to the city, while Indigenous women in literature end up ill-fated and nearly always die a tragic death, as Johnson made clear in the late nineteenth century. This story is therefore successfully rewritten as a “modern Canadian fable” (*Hazlitt magazine* via *Bear* n.p.) and removed from its Indigenous origins as the Haida story of Bear Mother.

Like the Canadian literature which Atwood and Johnson describe, the purpose of such works as *Bear* is to centre colonial power, as well as parallel “attempts to find in Indian legends mythological material which would function for Canadian writers much as the Greek myths and the Bible long functioned for Europeans” (*Survival* 110). Atwood elaborates on this point stating that for settlers in Canada, “The Indians and Eskimos are seen as our true ‘ancestors,’ so it is their legends we should turn to for source material for stories and poems” (*Survival* 110). The Canadian author Robertson Davies wrote of *Bear*, “The theme of *Bear* is one of the most significant and pressing in Canada in our time—the necessity for us who are newcomers to the country, with hardly four hundred years of acquaintance with it, to ally ourselves with the spirit of one of the most ancient lands in the world. In search for this spirit, we are indeed in search of ourselves” (*Bear* n.p.). Davies’ review of the novel reveals that the structure of settler colonialism contains an irony of belonging in which the settler themselves seeks to become native.

This story is in fact an encounter with radical alterity, similar to that described by Henry Louis Gates Jr. in his analysis of Jan Mohamed, as a “virtually impossible task” where this encounter with the bear is “neither a provisional, negotiated difference nor the Lacanian Other in whose field the self must constitute itself. Rather, it is a close encounter of the third kind, involving the disputed notion of radical alterity” (Gates 463). Thus, the task is never fulfilled in *Bear*; following settler colonial logic, to completely understand Otherness requires a negation of one’s own being. If this ‘close encounter of the third kind’ differs from both the Symbolic realm and the Imaginary realm of colonial literatures, it must be located within the realm of the Real. The big Other, usually always defined in connection to its location within the symbolic realm, has also been thought by paranoiacs to be located in the Real. In “The Big Other Doesn’t Exist,” Žižek details how “the belief in the big Other which exists in the Real is the most succinct definition of paranoia” (9). The examples he draws upon are typically paranoiac fantasies which we would normally understand as conspiracy theories. How, then does this apply to the literature of settler colonial Canada, such as the example of *Bear*? The fantasies being played out in the literature are the fantasies of the paranoiac. The ‘Red Indian’ fantasy, for example, is representative of the belief that settlers will be wiped out by vicious ‘redskins.’ The stereotype of the Indigenous woman as a dirty ‘squaw’ and prostitute is

connected directly to Žižek's concept of these paranoid fantasies being about "conspiracies, threats, and excessive forms of enjoyment of the Other" (9). The excessive sexuality perceived by Vespucci is interpreted as an excessive form of enjoyment by settlers. The idea of the 'squaw' or prostitute simultaneously functions as an expression of the paranoia surrounding Indigenous women's sexuality, but also as a way to exclude it from what is acceptable in society. Thus, the third understanding of the Other for colonial literatures is through a reconstitution of radical alterity and the Other into the Real.

For Žižek, this foray into the Real has two consequences: "the failure of symbolic function" and "the need for violence in the Real of the body itself" ("The Big Other" 13). In terms of enjoyment, this has led to "the direct intervention of pain (sado-masochistic sexual practices) [which] seems the only remaining path to the intense experience of pleasure" (13). In colonial literature then, when attempting to understand a radical alterity through the Real, there is a disjunction between the Other in the symbolic realm and the Other understood through the Real of the settler. The settler understands the Other, in this case Indigenous peoples, through stereotypes such as the 'squaw,' and enjoys masochistically through this literary experience. As I discuss in the next section of this chapter, the ultimate form of masochistic enjoyment in this relationship is in becoming-Indigenous. In *Bear*, Engels rewrites the Haida Bear Mother story, with a white woman in the place of the bear mother. Instead of reimagining the narrative as a matriarch who has a family with a bear, including two sons, she rewrites it as a (private) sadomasochistic relationship between the woman and the bear.

In the final passage of the novel, Engel's narrator is returning to the city and describes the night sky: "It was a brilliant night, all star-shine, and overhead the Great Bear and his thirty-seven thousand virgins kept her company" (Engel 115). This reference to Ursa Major also includes a reference to thirty-seven thousand virgins. Much like Grosrichard's description of the sexual-political fantasy of Orientalism, as viewed through despotism, the fantasy of Indigenous cultures is viewed through a lens which sexualizes Indigenous women, and seems to always connect back to Vespucci's experience of phallic jouissance when facing Indigenous women for the first time. Just as Grosrichard's despot has sexual

slaves, and as Dolar makes clear as well, it does not matter if this is true or not, it simply matters that we believe that this fantasy is operating for the Other in this way, so the Great Bear, in this adapted Haida myth, plays the part of Don Juan for thirty-seven thousand virgins in the Indigenous version of the seraglio.

3.4 Duncan Campbell Scott: Settler Sadomasochist par Excellence

These works are not anomalies in the Canadian literary canon, but rather, are examples of the underlying attitude of settlers toward Indigenous people in Canada, and are examples of the sadomasochism of settler-Indigenous relations and the role literature plays in this relationship. The settler sadomasochist par excellence is Duncan Campbell Scott, one of the Confederation poets and also a Canadian bureaucrat who worked in the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932. His poetry shows the inseparability of Canada as a nation and the Canadian literary canon. The close relation between Canada's nationhood and our literature means, as I stated earlier, that literature often has a political motivation, which for Indigenous peoples on this land known as Canada, amounts to no less than political warfare. As Indigenous people know, Canada used the Residential School system "as an instrument of social control" and that "[d]ominant groups perceived the school as an effective mechanism for fostering loyalty to the prevailing political, economic, and social order among less advantaged groups" (Titley 92). In less polite terms, the goal of residential schools was to 'kill the Indian in the child.' Although this phrase has often been popularly attributed to Scott, the quote originates with an American military officer, Richard Henry Pratt who said "All the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man" (Abley 36). In 1920, Scott did say that he wanted "to get rid of the Indian problem...Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill." (Scott 63). Under Scott, amendments were made to the Indian Act in 1920 which made attendance at residential schools mandatory for all Indigenous children.

What is Canadian identity if not active Indigenous erasure? This includes erasure of our cultures, languages, treaties, and ourselves as individuals being murdered. The Confederate poets, the literary movement of which Scott was a member, helped to create a Canadian literary identity. Thus, part of this identity is inherently tied up in the justification of genocide—both ‘cultural’ and ‘actual.’ In Dean Neu and Richard Therrien’s book *Accounting for Genocide: Canada’s Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People* (2003), they describe how Scott is still generally regarded as a complex figure who led a “double life” (89), stating:

In his official capacity, he was intent on seeing the complete assimilation of Native populations into Canadian society and was not above using legislation and the long arm of the law to force them into ‘civilization’—and yet in the literary world he was known as a writer who was exceptionally sympathetic to Natives and their culture (Neu and Therrien 89)

However, this attitude separates the “societal discourses pertaining to Indigenous peoples” from the genocide being perpetrated against Indigenous people in this country. But as these cannot in fact be separated, we must consider that the literary output of Canadian settler writers, such as Scott, plays an important role in the erasure, infantilization, and murder of Indigenous people across Canada.

Neu and Therrien provide an analysis comparing Scott’s work in the Department of Indian Affairs to his poetry, departing from the ongoing idea of a contrast between the two that somehow does not align. They write that,

In his work at Indian Affairs, civilization was represented by government and its offices—and therefore himself—and in his poetic treatment of Natives, Indians were represented as savage, pagan, wild, orgiastic. As a true Victorian in sensibility, the poet-accountant perceived nature as quite distinct from, and even anathema to, human beings. It is his placing of Aboriginals apart from and subordinate to civilized (i.e., European) people that directed Scott’s policy-making initiatives. Natives were to be guided, restrained, bureaucratically

manipulated and, in no uncertain terms, absorbed into Canadian-European culture.
(94)

This analysis makes the important connection that not only was Scott responsible for the forced assimilation of ‘uncivilized’ Indigenous peoples, but his poetry was grounded in the same beliefs. Much like the history of Indians in American literature, in Scott’s poetry the Indian on the side of nature is a way of reinforcing the alignment of Indigeneity with nature and, thus, of the inferiority of Indigenous people. In Atwood’s *Survival* she details this extensive American literary tradition, citing the examples of Francis Parkman’s *The Oregon Trail*, Indian Joe in Mark Twain’s *Tom Sawyer*, the Indians in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlett Letter*, and James Fenimore Cooper’s works, such as *The Last of the Mohicans*, which represent Iroquois as people for whom “no act of violence is beyond them” (*Survival* 95). Atwood attempts to separate the literary tradition of Canada from the US by differentiating between the different ways in which racist stereotypes are depicted. Rather than “good guy/bad guy” Indians, Atwood characterizes Canadian depictions as being structured by the alternate antinomy of Victor/Victim. However frivolous these categorizations are, the connection back to an uncivilized form of nature still stands, and Atwood states, “The Indian as the Victor half of a pattern in which the white man plays the Victim is of course related to the Nature-as-Monster complex” (97). The primary example that Atwood provides is that of E.J. Pratt, whose long-poem *Brébeuf and His Brethren* (1940) follows in Scott’s steps by continuing a tradition of representing Indians as “humanity in the state of Nature,” who are “agents of its unconscious barbarity” (98), but also as a community doomed because “The medicine men are corrupt and malicious, the warriors are sadistic, the ‘reeking children’ and the squaws have fleas.” (99). These examples are not anomalies in the Canadian literary tradition, but rather they are part of an unbroken tradition of Canadian warfare against Indigenous people. As Alicia Elliot would say, men like Scott believed that they were “white savior daddies” (Elliot) who needed to assimilate Indigenous people in order to save us, and this comes through in both his literary work and in his genocidal actions as a bureaucrat.

Scott's 1898 book of poetry, *Labor and the Angel*, contains two important poems, "The Onondaga Madonna" and "Watkwenies." The first, "The Onondaga Madonna," was originally published as "An Onondaga Mother and Child" in 1894. In his analysis of this poem, David Bentley writes that it "depicts a Native woman and her infant son in a manner that reflects the belief, prevalent in Canada since at least the early nineteenth century and still very much in evidence in the statement from Scott's 1931 essay on 'The Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada' ... that North America's Indigenous races were doomed to disappear" (Bentley 754). Bentley points out, as Atwood does about Canadian literature in general in *Survival*, that the attitude present in Scott's poems already has a long literary history in Canada, of which Scott is just one example in the body of literature, arts, and academia which erases Indigenous peoples. An important oversight in the analysis of "The Onondaga Madonna," but which is important to make note of due to the title of the poem, is the early conversion of Indigenous peoples to Christianity. As I outlined in Chapter Two, many Indigenous peoples, such as Káteri Tekahkwí:tha, were willingly converted to Christianity during the period of early contact between Jesuit missionaries and Eastern nations. This was often due to the similarities in spiritual beliefs between the two cultures. In references to Scott's poetics, many of his works, including "The Onondaga Madonna" make reference to Haudenosaunee peoples, who were one of the groups with high numbers of converts, and entire communities, such as Kahnawake were formed around the practice of Catholicism. However, even though adherence to Christianity was often considered a mark of being assimilated and civilized by religious institutions (Francis 53) (Goodwin 94), it was in the best interest of settler-colonialism for the early twentieth-century literature of colonial Canada to depict Indigenous peoples as lacking in religious experience.

Bentley traces the stereotype of the 'disappearing Indian' back to 1830 with Adam Kidd's *The Huron Chief and Other Poems*, John Maclean's recounting of "the songs of the Indians of the 'western plains,' and anthropologists Marius Barbeau and Diamond Jenness' beliefs in the 1930s that Indigenous peoples were doomed to completely disappear. However, while Bentley depicts Scott as a product of his time, what he describes as "an heir alike to post-Enlightenment beliefs in reason and progress, to late Victorian fears of the potentially regressive eruption of the irrational, the instinctual, the

primitive, and to fin-de-siècle...” (Bentley 754), this description (a product of his time) is merely an excuse for holding racist beliefs. While Bentley does point out that many bureaucrats, scientists, and anthropologists in Canada and the United States held similar beliefs about both Indigenous peoples in North America and Black peoples brought to North America via the slave trade, there were also dissenting voices during the same time period. The most important example is that of Dr. Bryce, medical inspector to the Department of the Interior, who, during the first decade of the twentieth century, inspected the “state of health within industrial and boarding schools on the prairies” (Neu and Therrien 104). This became national news in Canada when he reported that “approximately 24 percent of students died while in attendance and another 18 percent as a result of illness shortly after leaving” (104). While this became one of two reasons Scott gave for revamping the entire school system (the other being how his Department was forced to financially bail out several schools), he ignored the recommendations made by Bryce due to financial reasons, and instead provided only administrative and accounting-based solutions (104). John Milloy, author of *A National Crime: the Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, calls Scott’s changes “administrative fictions,” which led to “Political patronage and cheap construction materials [playing] a large role in the building of schools, and low administrative follow-up meant business as usual in terms of school conditions and mortality rates” (Milloy 99-101).

It seems that Bentley expects readers to accept two incongruencies in the work of Scott. The first is that his extreme assimilationist viewpoint in terms of his bureaucratic work and his poetic vision of Indigenous “half-breeds” can be brought to terms with each other, as an incongruence between the man and the poet. It is clear that Scott’s personal beliefs on the matter, expressed through his poetry, point in the direction of a belief in Indigenous peoples as a dying race and that “racially mixed children are flawed...[and] the weaker, mixed race will soon disappear” (Bentley 756). Thus, the reasoning from Scott’s 1914 history of Indian Affairs in Canada (1763-1912) that “intermarriage and education will finally overcome the lingering traces of native custom and tradition” (Bentley 757) are mere excuses by Scott to engage in genocidal actions through his role as a bureaucrat. However, in no way should Scott be compared to a genocider like the

Nazi Adolph Eichmann. Scott is infinitely worse. Hannah Arendt describes the actions of Eichmann in the Holocaust as “sheer thoughtlessness” which led to him becoming “one of the greatest criminals of that period” (Arendt 287-288). Arendt also says that Eichmann “commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong” (276). Neither of these statements could be considered true in the case of Scott. He was a bureaucrat, just as Eichmann was, but we know his true feelings about Indigenous people through his poetry, and thus we know the purpose or intention of the actions which he took in his commanding role in Indian Affairs. Like the genocide of the Jews in Nazi Germany, the genocide of Indigenous people in Canada was not an accident. The literature of Scott is therefore the example par excellence of sadomasochistic, settler literature which acts as political warfare and excuses settler genocide while allowing the settlers who now live on Indigenous land to enjoy the literary depiction of that genocide masochistically.

The second incongruity that Bentley assumes one is supposed to accept is that it is possible to enjoy the poetry of Scott while accepting his political motivations. Bentley writes near the end of his article:

To many people in his own day and doubtless many more today, Scott’s belief that ‘the happiest future for the Indian race is absorption into the general population’ was and is repellent. Yet to read his poems about women of mixed race and culture only in this light, to overlook their manifest pathos and sympathy, to ignore or resist their emotional power is to negate part of their work as poems and to deny Scott his just portion of the ‘sensitive discernment’ that coexisted with his ideological assumptions and at least to some extent supports his conviction, expressed a year before his death, that ‘the artistic temperament’ is the most reliable guide to ‘native qualities and also...[to] culture.’ (Bentley 767)

If we are to follow this statement regarding Scott’s later years, we can understand that his true beliefs about Indigenous people are expressed in his poetry, and not in his bureaucratic reports espousing the benefits of assimilation. Both are bad, but the poetry establishes the normalization of Indigenous erasure. To enjoy “The Onondaga Madonna”

is to enjoy the politically motivated literature which helped to establish a Canadian identity; such writing can otherwise be called a literature of genocide. Following Bentley, this poem is an example of Scott's belief in the disappearance of Indigenous peoples, and that mixed-race people are inferior.

Examining Scott's poem "The Onondaga Madonna," we can see that near the beginning he describes the Onondaga mother as being a woman "...of weird and waning race" in the second line, and continues "The tragic savage lurking in her face, / Where all her pagan passion burns and glows" (Scott 3-4). Immediately, the reader knows that this Onondaga woman is from a disappearing race, one which has either disappeared already or will disappear soon, at least in the minds of settlers. The idea that Indigenous peoples are doomed to disappear absolves the settler reader of the guilt of living on Indigenous lands, while also casting the extinct Indigenous peoples as the settler's true ancestors (*Survival* 110). Here is the poem in full:

"The Onondaga Madonna"

She stands full-throated and with careless pose,
 This woman of a weird and waning race,
 The tragic savage lurking in her face,
 Where all her pagan passion burns and glows;
 Her blood is mingled with her ancient foes,
 And thrills with war and wildness in her veins,
 Her rebel lips are dabbled with the stains
 Of feuds and forays and her father's woes.

And closer in the shawl about her breast,
 The latest promise of her nation's doom,
 Paler than she her baby clings and lies,
 The primal warrior gleaming from his eyes;
 He sulks, and burdened with his infant gloom,
 He draws his heavy brows and will not rest.

As Scott continues with the poem, we see the themes Bentley described in his own analysis being brought forward. The stereotypical description of the Onondaga Madonna as having the look of a “tragic savage” (3) supports Bentley’s description of the poem as “a thoroughly stereotypical representation of the supposed characteristics as well as the supposed fate of North America’s Native peoples” (755). In addition to being described as ‘savage’ the Onondaga Madonna is also described with the very first line: “She stands full-throated and with careless pose” (1), an allusion to Keat’s “Ode on a Nightingale.” This comparison to the nightingale, which “Singest of summer in full-throated ease” (10), is a subtle animalization of the Onondaga Madonna, and connects back to Lee Maracle’s idea that “The denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a sub-human level” (*I am Woman* 17). The interpretation that the mother in Scott’s poem is mixed race is based upon the line “Her blood is mingled with her ancient foes” (5), which Bentley points out does not indicate if her foes were European or from other Indigenous nations, but the description of her son gives an even stronger suggestion that he is mixed race due to the description of him as “Paler than she her baby clings and lies” (11), and Bentley interprets his restlessness as indicative of Scott’s belief that mixed raced peoples are “Divided within and even against himself, he is inherently dissonant and unstable both individually and socially” (Bentley 755), which connects to larger Western beliefs during this time period that “racially mixed children are flawed” (756). However, as Scott was known as an extreme assimilationist, this poem can also be interpreted as being an example of his assimilationist policy. For virtually every culture, children are seen as symbols of hope and promise for the future, however, Scott’s jarring line “The latest promise of her nation’s doom” (13) reverses this idea and introduces the idea of the mixed-race child bringing doom to his Indigenous nation, rather than hope for the future. For Scott, making sure there was not “a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic” (Scott 55) was the goal of his assimilationist techniques, an example of this being the legislation in 1920 via the Indian Act that all Indigenous children must attend residential schools. Therefore, this child could be interpreted as holding the potential for assimilation, and ending the political identity of the Indian, and any rights via treaty that accompany this legal identity. The clue to his mixed-race identity, that he is ‘paler’ than his mother, also means the child has a closer proximity to

whiteness and is perhaps easier to assimilate. Although Bentley interprets the child's restlessness as being a side-effect of Scott's racist belief that mixed-race children are "prone to 'physical, mental, and behavioral' problems" (756), it can also be interpreted as a critique of the Onondaga mother's parenting, as a long-held stereotype of Indigenous women in Canada is that we are bad mothers. This provides an ethical justification for the removal of children from their family homes to be placed in residential schools, where they will not only be stripped of their languages and cultures, but also, in the eyes of Scott, be cared for better than their own families can care for them. The restlessness of the child can also be understood as an embodiment of Scott's own fears of Indigenous survivance. While Bentley makes the point that the child represents "a threat to the peace and harmony of society" (757) due to his possible inability to be assimilated, the threat of Indigenous rebellion was very real for Scott, so the child may also serve obversely as a symbol of Indigenous survivance and resurgence.

In his article, Bentley contrasts the restlessness of the child in "The Onondaga Madonna" with the way several of the other Indigenous figures in Scott's poetry seem to find rest. One of these is "The Forsaken," a poem which cannot be overlooked in discussions of settler sadomasochistic fantasies of Indigenous peoples. The first half of the poem reads as follows:

Once in the winter
 Out on a lake
 In the heart of the north-land,
 Far from the Fort
 And far from the hunters,
 A Chippewa woman
 With her sick baby,
 Crouched in the last hours
 Of a great storm.
 Frozen and hungry,
 She fished through the ice
 With a line of the twisted
 Bark of the cedar,

And a rabbit-bone hook
Polished and barbed;
Fished with the bare hook
All through the wild day,
Fished and caught nothing;
While the young chieftain
Tugged at her breasts,
Or slept in the lacings
Of the warm tikanagan.
All the lake-surface
Streamed with the hissing
Of millions of iceflakes,
Hurled by the wind;
Behind her the round
Of a lonely island
Roared like a fire
With the voice of the storm
In the deeps of the cedars.
Valiant, unshaken,
She took of her own flesh,
Baited the fish-hook,
Drew in grey-trout,
Drew in his fellows,
Heaped them beside her,
Dead in the snow.
Valiant, unshaken,
She faced the long distance,
Wolf-haunted and lonely,
Sure of her goal
And the life of her dear one;
Tramped for two days,

On the third in the morning,
 Saw the strong bulk
 Of the Fort by the river,
 Saw the wood-smoke
 Hang soft in the spruces,
 Heard the keen yelp
 Of the ravenous huskies
 Fighting for whitefish:
 Then she had rest.

In comparison to Sky Woman's sacrifice, which is discussed in Chapter Two, this Chippewa woman must also sacrifice for her child to survive. While Sky Woman often has to survive painful trials in different versions of the story, for example being burned by corn mush in two of the Hewitt versions, she must also make the sacrifice of leaving her home and family in Sky World behind to go to Turtle Island and help create a new world. The sacrifice which Scott depicts this Chippewa woman making is not on the same scale as world-building, but she saves herself, her son, and the huskies. However, her sacrifice is giving her own flesh: "She took of her own flesh,/Baited the fish-hook" (33-34). These shocking lines do not reveal a masochism on the part of Indigenous people, but instead a sadistic desire for the suffering of Indigenous people on the part of Scott, and settler readers in general. The sadistic suffering of Indigenous peoples, not only coming close to starvation, but mutilating themselves in order to catch the fish, allows readers to enjoy their own performance of masochistic suffering when reading about this woman. Sky Woman's story teaches us not only about her sacrifice but also about reciprocity in general, but in Scott's poem the opposite message is given to readers. The final line of the first stanza, "Then she had rest" (53) is repeated again as the final line of the poem, but with a very different meaning. In the second stanza, her baby now an old man and the woman now a grandmother, she is abandoned by her family after having previously sacrificed her own flesh to save her son. When her family leaves her behind Scott describes it with the following lines: "Launched their canoes and slunk away through the islands/Left her alone forever,/Without a word of farewell,/Because she was old and useless" (63-66). These actions are the opposite of the reciprocity and the

teachings we learn from the Creation Story, and Scott depicts a degeneration of Indigenous culture which ties in with the prominent theme of Indigenous peoples being ‘savages’ from a doomed and disappearing culture. The final line of the poem, a repetition of the last line in the first stanza, “Then she had rest” (94), refers to the Chippewa woman’s death, after she is left to freeze to death in the snow. It is also a line about her being “gathered up by the hand of God and hid in His breast” (92). To rest in the breast of a Christian God is a line specifically about assimilation and the message here is that even after her family has forsaken her, the Christian God has not. This can be read as an endorsement of the forcible conversion to Christianity which took place in the residential schools for which Scott held responsibility.

Another of the poems Bentley analyses in contrast to “The Onondaga Madonna” is “Watkwenies.” This poem consists of two stanzas which show, in the movement from one to the next, submission to the settler colonial state of Canada. The first stanza in “Watkwenies” is similar to “The Onondaga Madonna” in that it depicts the Indigenous woman, a member of a Haudenosaunee nation like the Onondaga mother, as being from a “savage race” in which “Vengeance was once her nation’s lore and law” (1), and although we do not have the same description of her “savage” face as we do the Onondaga Madonna, her “Once wild hand” (5), which just slit a sentry’s throat, indicates much the same thing. However, Scott locates this stanza in the past, implying that the greatness and power of the Iroquois has since declined. As we read:

“Watkwenies”

Vengeance was once her nation’s lore and law;
 When the tired sentry stooped above the rill,
 Her long knife flashed, and hissed, and drank its fill;
 Dimply below her dripping wrist she saw,
 Once wild hand, pale as death and weak as straw,
 Clutch at the ripple in the pool; while shrill
 Sprang through the dreaming hamlet on the hill,
 The war-cry of the triumphant Iroquois.

Now clothed with many an ancient flap and fold,

And wrinkled like an apple kept till May,
 She weighs the interest-money in her palm,
 And, when the Agent calls her valiant name,
 Hears, like the war-whoops of her perished day,
 The lads playing snow-snake in the stinging cold.

In the second stanza, Scott brings us into the present and the same Iroquois woman is now an Elder, described as “wrinkled like an apple kept till May” (10). Instead of finding rest from war, this stanza instead shows how the Iroquois are now subservient to the settler-colonial state, and now answer to an Indian Agent, indicated by the sadistically ironic line “when the Agent calls her valiant name” (12). The demeaning and sadistic tone in the second stanza illustrates the sadistic attitude that settler colonial bureaucrats, such as Indian Agents, had towards Indigenous peoples. Bentley interprets the woman as being “pensive rather than troubled by her past life as a warrior and her present existence on a reserve” (Bentley 755). While the line “She weighs the interest-money in her palm,” does support this interpretation, this poem is politically motivated on the part of Scott, and does not mention the sexual abuse of women by Indian Agents, children being removed from families (they are still at home to “play snow-snake in the stinging cold” (14)), loss of traditional territories, and the many other impacts of settler colonialism. It also ignores the implication that “interest-money” is not money which has been earned, and is thus sullied in some way. Usury or collecting money as interest is an antisemitic trope, which is made anti-Indigenous here by Scott. As a bureaucrat, it is in his best interest to undermine the idea that Indigenous people are rightfully owed anything by Canada, so he perpetuates that idea that this money is dirty.

For Scott, the relegation, and often confinement, of Indigenous peoples in Canada to reserves is indicative of the decline of Indigenous people, which means that the threat posed by us is also minimized. This leaves the land open for settler colonialism to continue to expand and provide cheap land to settlers. This narrative of decline is part of the assimilationist tactics of settler colonialism, and it is only when Indigenous people are almost extinct that settlers can relate to us—as their own “ancestors.” Atwood discusses *The Last of the Mohicans* as an example of the way in which “The Indians can be

idealized only when they're about to vanish" (*Survival* 95). Therefore, in "Watkwenies" Scott romanticizes the "savage" Iroquois because for him they are now in decline, relegated to reserves, and reduced to playing games such as snow-snake instead of going to war.

This is, of course, politically motivated poetics, and in reality the Haudenosaunee were a thorn in the side for Scott. While this poem was published in 1898, The Six Nations of the Grand River had been fighting against the Indian Act since its inception, as they considered themselves allies of the crown, and not subjects to it. The issues stemming from the Six Nations refusal to fall under the Indian Act were an embarrassment to Scott, and they came to damage his reputation in the 1920s when Deskaheh travelled to the League of Nations to bring the Six Nations' case against Canada before the League (Titley 122). While he was refused, this embarrassing incident led Canada to ban Deskaheh from reentering the country and returning home, and at this time the Indian Act Band Council was forcibly put into place in Six Nations in 1924, ostensibly replacing the hereditary council (Titley 126-127).

With nations run by Band Councils reporting to the settler colonial state, and Scott's plan for assimilation via education and genocide, the disappearing Indian trope may have appeared to him and his readership to be a reality. Another of Scott's poems, "Indian Place-Names," is an idealization of the disappearance of Indigenous peoples, celebrating the names we have left behind, and treating Indigenous people as ghosts. The first lines emphasize this starkly: "The race has waned and left but tales of ghosts,/That hover in the world like fading smoke/About the lodges: gone are the dusky folk" (1-3). All that is left behind by the vanishing Indians is the names of the place, such as Toronto, Winnipeg, Mirimichi, and Manowan. This celebration of place reads almost like a contemporary land acknowledgement: it acknowledges that these lands were once ours and we had an important relationship with them, as illustrated by the lines "They lured the silver salmon from his lair,/They drove the buffalo in trampling hosts" (6-7). Most land acknowledgements at Western University begin with something like "We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Attawadaron peoples." While Scott's poem does not

name the people in this way, but simply celebrates and romanticizes the names left behind, one must ask: does naming the people who traditionally resided on this land do any better? Most Indigenous people today want Land Back, rather than land acknowledged.

In full, Scott's poem reads thusly:

“Indian Place-Names”

The race has waned and left but tales of ghosts,
 That hover in the world like fading smoke
 About the lodges: gone are the dusky folk
 That once were cunning with the thong and snare
 And mighty with the paddle and the bow;
 They lured the silver salmon from his lair,
 They drove the buffalo in trampling hosts,
 And gambled in the tepees until dawn,
 But now their vaunted prowess is all gone,
 Gone like a moose-track in the April snow.
 But all the land is murmurous with the call
 Of their wild names that haunt the lovely glens
 Where lonely water falls, or where the street
 Sounds all day with the tramp of myriad feet;
 Toronto triumphs; Winnepeg flows free,
 And clangs the iron height where gaunt Quebec
 Lies like a lion in a lily bed,
 And Restigouche takes the whemled sound of sea,
 Meductic falls, and flutes the Mirimichi;
 Kiskisink where the shy mallard breeds
 Breaks into pearls beneath his whirling wings,
 And Manitowapah sings;
 They flow like water, or like wind they flow,
 Watmoucheeching, loon-haunted Manowan,
 Far Mistassini by her frozen wells,

Gold-hued Wayagamac brimming her wooded dells:
 Lone Kamouraska, Metapedia,
 And Merlakahtla ring a round of bells.

Comparing the vanishing Indians to a “moose-track in the April snow” (10), which simply melts away, Scott represents that disappearance as a part of nature which cannot be avoided, rather than as a consequence and goal of settler-colonialism. In short, he uses this poem to naturalize the decline of Indigenous populations and the political Indian’s assimilation into the body politic. This, of course, ignores his own prominent role in these events and tacitly justifies the idea of the racial superiority of Europeans. The carrying on of these place names, and the romanticization of them, also relates to what Atwood calls “‘adopting’ the Indians as ancestors” (*Survival* 112). Although Scott is not explicitly stating this as some poets have done, such as John Newlove in “Resources, Certain Earths” and “The Pride,” there is the implication that Canadian settlers are the heirs of these places and are responsible for replacing the vanished Indians and carrying on a romanticized relationship with place. Atwood draws attention to the “danger” of adopting Indians as ancestors, which is “that you may identify with them as victims rather than as real inhabitants of a land” (112). However, by enjoying the idea of Indigenous disappearance masochistically and taking Indians as symbolic ancestors, Canadian settlers have also adopted the attitude that they are the real inhabitants. These ideas are linked together in Newlove’s poetry, which, as Atwood believes, relates “the paranoia and death, the losses and failures, as well as the pride of place and the sense of belonging and origin” (112). Thus, if you can suffer morally or symbolically for the ghosts of Indians who have ‘mysteriously’ disappeared from these lands, then you have an inherent right to belong on these lands as well.

3.5 Beyond the Imaginative Realm: The Sadomasochism of the Pretendian

Through literature, the settler is able to identify with narratives of Indigenous suffering on numerous levels, with the two most important figures in this regard being the Indian as victim and the vanishing Indian. In this chapter, I have discussed several works of CanLit

which allow the settler reader to live out the masochistic fantasy of becoming Indian. To conclude, I will approach this concept of “becoming-Indian” in its most extreme form: the pretendian, who rather than just limiting themselves to identification and pleasure through the fantasy on the written page, they Indigenize themselves in real life. In Atwood’s *Survival*, she makes the point that Indians “can be idealized only when they’re about to vanish” (95), and in this she is correct. It is when we are conceived as easily replaceable that settlers most often desire to “become native.”

In *Distorted Descent* (2019) Darryl Leroux touches on the fantasy involved with creating an Eastern Metis identity. He locates the kernel of this identity in the fantasy of the hyper-sexualization of Indigenous women, the same fantasy which Amerigo Vespucci first wrote about in 1503. Therefore, by attempting to “traverse the (fundamentally racist) fantasy,” in much the same way that Alain Grosrichard analyzed the fantasy of despotism in the 1970s, something fundamental is revealed about self-indigenizing settlers, rather than the Indigenous people affected by these racist stereotypes. Leroux is able to successfully trace the transformation of the white rights movement in eastern Canada into a Metis identity movement, both of which are anti-Indigenous and racist at their core. The racist fantasy this relies on to function is reflected in the myths settlers create about Indigenous people. In his chapter “The Bedlam of the Lynch Mob: Racism and Enjoying Through the Other,” Todd McGowan identifies the obstacle in the way of the racist achieving their fantasy as the racial other. Like any fantasy, McGowan says that “the object is unimportant. The only significance that the object of the racist fantasy has is that it is unattainable...But what characterizes the racist fantasy and differentiates it from other forms of fantasy is that the obstacle to the object...is the racial other” (McGowan 23). So, here the attention of the fantasy is focused on the obstacle. Instead of Indigenous people, as the obstacle for racist Canadians to have unfettered ownership of this land, being killed, sent to residential schools, or assimilated into the body politic, our resilience has resulted in a new form of the racist fantasy: that of self-indigenization by settlers. Several of these myths are detailed on Indigenous author Bob Joseph’s blog, and in this section I’ll discuss how the myth of the vanishing Indian contributes to this fantasy. Along with the sexualization of Indigenous women, these myths reveal the unconscious fantasies and desires of pretendians.

In the introduction to Grosrichard's book, Mladen Dolar writes, "There is a paradox that this [Orientalist] fantasy, despite its maximal distance from our world and its imaginary shape, displays a real kernel, a curious reality not to be found in the Orient" (xiv).

Therefore, the fantasy of the other, rather than revealing anything true about said other, actually works as a screen for the projection of "impasses and practices" of Western social reality. While Grosrichard's analysis of the fantasy of despotism is an "ineradicable measure of the imaginary by which all political power is maintained" ("The Subject" xvi), in contrast the fantasy of self-indigenization is one which at first glance has to do simply with identity and belonging, but is revealed to be no less political in nature.

By examining two of the myths related to Indigenization (myths of the hypersexualized Indigenous woman and of the vanishing Indian) it can be understood that these are fantasy elements of settler Canada and contribute to the creation of a false Indigenous identity. Lacan's idea that desire is sustained through "an ever more complex signifying ensemble" ("Four Fundamental Concepts" 185) can be used as a way of thinking through the change from a settler Canadian identity to a fake Indigenous one, grounded in the fantasy of the racist. In Todd McGowan's recent work on racist fantasy he proposes:

The racist fantasy is the primary example of a collective fantasy. It establishes a bond between members of the society by separating those who belong from those who don't belong through their mode of enjoying themselves. The irony is that the enjoyment of those who belong depends on their identification with the enjoyment of those who don't. (McGowan 21)

For example: in the Trucker Convoy taking place in Ottawa in early 2022 we saw a brilliant display of pretendianism with unabashed white supremacists attempting to play Indigenous hand drums and burn medicines. For those who develop a false Indigenous identity their unconscious fantasy often appears to be real, and the lengths they go to in order to sustain it (e.g. DNA testing or tracing their ancestry to one or two ancestors from the early 17th century) is preposterous to anyone who knows anything about Indigeneity, but that is simply representative of their inability to traverse the fantasy.

The development of the unconscious fundamental settler fantasy of self-Indigenization is rooted in a multiplicity of factors. However, the idea that Canada belongs to settlers is constantly being undermined by the resurgence of Indigenous peoples; beginning with the red power movement in the mid 20th century to contemporary calls for land back. Thus, pretendians look to the Other for what they themselves cannot have through colonization. In this case, what they unconsciously conceive themselves as being barred from is belonging here unconditionally, and all the benefits that supposedly entails. In her book *Red Scare*, Lenape scholar Joanne Barker writes:

The repudiation and rejection of whiteness thus serves as a ‘remedy’ for the ‘ills of the modern, neoliberal age.’ Indian identity allows whites in particular to avoid taking any substantive responsibility for, or changing anything about, current social relations or material conditions directly informed by histories of imperialist ideologies and practices. In fact, many Indigenous scholars, including Louis Owens and Rebecca Nagel, argue that it is U.S. imperialism that has produced the conditions in which cultural appropriation is made possible. (Barker 72)

Instead of merely identifying imaginatively with the “Indian as victim” for masochistic pleasure, the settler’s fantasy is played out to its most extreme form in reality. This sustains the drive for desire because the *objet a* (the Lacanian empty object of desire) is unattainable, but they can circle around this object by pretending that they are Indigenous. Each new person they convince of their indigeneity is another temporarily achieved object of desire, thus sustaining the drive and producing pleasure.

Earlier, I mentioned the inability by pretendians to “traverse the fundamental fantasy” and come to terms with the fact that they are not Indigenous and cannot become so. Their reactions to this include falling back upon DNA testing, tracing their ancestry to a single ancestor from 300-400 years ago, or weaving a complex story of indigeneity by association (things like ceremonial adoption or their great great grandfather’s brother marrying someone with Indigenous ancestry). These displays seem to fulfill desire and continue to give pleasure through the drive, the constant need to prove oneself Indigenous. The idea of tracing one’s ancestry to one or two Indigenous women from the

early 1600s may seem innocent to some people, if just done for interest's sake perhaps, but as Indigenous scholars have repeatedly shown it has a much more insidious side to it. In Darryl Leroux's *Distorted Descent* he discusses one of the most frequently cited ancestors of members of the Eastern Metis: Marie Sylvestre. Sylvestre actually has approximately 10 million descendants, most of them living in Quebec, and all of whom are white. This idea of Sylvestre as some kind of Indigenous Eve is actually rooted in the same cruel stereotypes about Indigenous women that are both a cause and used as justification for the epidemic of MMIWG. Leroux quotes a frequent online presence in the eastern Metis movement, named Marco, as saying in response to the fact that most French Quebecois who descend from one of these Indigenous women and are frequently cited as being approximately 1 percent Indigenous: "I have a hard time believing this percentage, when I imagine the first (French) colonists arriving here and seeing gorgeous hairless Indian girls, bare-breasted and sexually promiscuous...I don't believe they were abstinent" (Qtd. in Leroux 47). Thus the racist fantasy at the heart of pretendianism is revealed here. The contact zone between settlers and the Indigenous inhabitants during this time period becomes a fantasy whereby their French ancestors were tempted by these women, and in their fantasy there was no resistance; these women were always availing themselves upon helpless French men.

Many Indigenous writers have discussed the connection between people and land, but Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson puts it best when she writes:

feminist scholars have argued that Native women's bodies were to the settler eye, like land, and as such in the settler mind, the Native woman is rendered 'unrapeable' (or, 'highly rapeable') because she was like land, matter to be extracted from, used, sullied, taken from, over and over again, something that is already violated and violatable in a great march to accumulate surplus, to so called production. (A. Simpson 7)

Simpson's insight here clearly ties the idea of resource extraction together with violence toward Indigenous women, a pairing that is part of the fundamental racist fantasy that pretendianism relies on.

3.6 Conclusion: The Sadistic Enjoyment of Colonialism Across Black and Indigenous Studies

The murderability and disposability of Black and Indigenous peoples in American and Canadian settler states revolve around separate stereotypes for men and women. Both the Black man and Indigenous man are depicted as a threat to the innocent white woman, and thus are a threat to the masculinity of white men. Joanne Barker describes the figure of the murderable redskin in her book:

The Redskin has an old history of irrational and unprovoked violence against the guiltless white and of lustful brutality toward innocent white women. Often gendered as a hypermasculine warrior, this Indian has dominated colonial and U.S./Canadian writings for centuries as the barbaric savage who wantonly rapes, tortures, and kills whites without cause or purpose, even in reports involving invasions and attacks on Indians themselves. (Barker 28)

This trope of the Indian as tormentor is simply an expansion of the idea of nature-as-monster in Atwood's analysis. She compares this stereotype of the violent, scary Indian to the "cruelty and violence" of hurricanes and icebergs, and states that "Indians represent humanity in the state of Nature and are agents of its unconscious barbarity" (98). There is no further analysis completed for this example, and I interpret her focus on the literary, metaphorical understanding of the Indian as tormentor stereotype as part of the overall move to innocence for Canadian settler colonialism which is present in her work. (She states in this chapter that Canada is not as bad as the United States in how they treated Indians historically). However, this stereotype was not limited to the literary page, and has been repeatedly magnified by news accounts and reflects policies which have repressed Indigenous peoples from the nineteenth century until today (Harding 210; Anderson and Robertson 35)

Through a comparison to Musser's discussion of the threat of the Black man, in which the idea of the "menacing black penis offers the possibility of real pain" (49), we can see the similarities which exist between these two stereotypes. In the fantasy described by

Fanon in “A Negro is Raping Me,” it does not turn out to be the straight-forward comparison to Freud that one would expect. Musser writes:

The woman’s punishment for her desire to be raped occurs, not at the hands of the Negro, but within the realm of the white psyche. The fantasy is formed in anticipation of harsh societal judgement against her desires, which represent the persistent paranoid fear of white femininity being violated by black men. The woman voices what Fanon imagines to be the deepest fear/desire of white patriarchy. The woman will not actually be punished for this fantasy, but its effects are especially real to the black man, resulting in the social castration of black men. (Musser 49)

Therefore, when comparing Fanon’s “A Negro is Raping Me” with Freud’s “A Child is Being Beaten,” Musser comes to the conclusion that the woman in Fanon’s work has none of her own agency and she is there to serve as a figure who simply “parrots both patriarchal and colonial logic” (49), and the fantasy is more of a reflection of Fanon’s relationship to white masculinity, and more specifically it is about the “psychic costs of being an empty symbol of domination” (49-50). Thus, in this new form of psychoanalysis for subjects of colonialism, it is not the woman who stands in for the child who wants to be beaten, but instead it is the black man in the place of the child, with the father figure as the white man who essentially represents all European nations. The rewriting of psychoanalysis by Fanon takes into account the fact that “the nuclear family was not common in Martinique” (50), and this was due to historical conditions of colonialism. Following Stuart Hall’s similar analysis, Musser writes that this absence of the European nuclear family was a result of the “often coercive relationships between white men and black women, which produced offspring who were often raised in the absence of paternal figures and families that were frequently separated for economic benefit” (50). It is under these circumstances that Fanon rewrites the Oedipal myth, or exposes it not as a universal but a myth regarding settler colonial socialization. Instead of the son killing the father to marry the mother, the scene is recast with the white man killing the father and raping the mother. Fanon quotes Senegalese poet David Diop: “The white man killed my father/ Because my father was proud/ The white man raped my mother/ Because my mother was

beautiful” (Musser 51). Both figures then are rendered impotent through white supremacy, and we see through this new Oedipal colonial family drama that it is inevitably the Black and Indigenous women who are left exposed to the sexual violence of white patriarchal colonialism.

For Indigenous peoples, the personal and the political are inseparable under settler colonialism. Simpson posits that “Indigenous bodies, particularly the bodies of 2SQ people, children, and women, represent the lived alternative to heteronormative constructions of gender, political systems, and rules of descent. They are political orders” (Simpson 41). We are political orders, and our bodies represent an alternative to the structure of the settler colonial state. What does this mean when, as Patrick Wolfe puts it, settler colonialism is a structure, and not a single event? It means that we, as Indigenous peoples, are always under attack. Simpson “understand(s) colonialism as an overwhelmingly dominating force in [her] daily life that continually attacks [her] freedom and well-being as kwe” (44). To return this to hooks’ point that the systemic devaluation of black womanhood “was a calculated method of social control” (hooks 60), I can only repeat that this is also true of the devaluation of Indigenous women in Canada. Whether it is the rape and murder of Indigenous women, the disenfranchisement and removal from community, or the loss of important traditional roles that Indigenous women play in our communities, these things are all calculated with the end goal of settler colonialism in mind: access to, and social control of, land.

Barker also views the stereotypical representations that she examines as part of the continued exploitation of Indigenous peoples via colonialism, stating:

My concern is with how state-defined representations of Indigenous people in the United States and Canada—which I organize by the figures of the Murderable Indian and the Kinless Indian—presumes what Billy-Ray Belcourt and Neferti Tadiar address as lives not worthy of life, as lives forever defined by the fate of death, injury, and grief. I try to show how the representations reenact the social relations and material conditions of invasion, occupation, exploitation, and appropriation. They do so because imperialism’s capitalism can only expand itself

in perpetuity by reproducing social relations of gross inequality between the state and Indigenous peoples. (Barker 5)

As Barker puts it, every Indigenous life that has been affected by or lost to forces of colonialism is a political death. In her work, Acoose makes the direct connection between cultural stereotypes of Indigenous women as “easy squaws” and the genocide of MMIWG in Canada. She notes the case of the rape and murder of Helen Betty Osbourne and the serial killer of Indigenous women John Crawford, saying “Both cases revealed that the murderers believed Indigenous women were ‘easy squaws’ who deserved the violence done to them” (Acoose 36). This connection is not only limited to these two isolated cases; it is a frequent and key connection between the murders of Indigenous women, girls, and 2spirit and queer peoples in Canada.

One of the most well-known recent examples of this fantasy of, and violence against, Indigenous women, is the 1995 murder of Pamela George. In her article “Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George,” Sherene Razack states that the only facts that were known about Pamela George were the fact that she was from the Sakimay reserve on the outskirts of Regina and that she would occasionally work as a prostitute (Razack 1). In contrast, much more was reported about her two murderers, two young, white middle class men. During the trial they were referred to as “the boys,” a move to innocence seeking to diminish their responsibility, and the judge instructed the jury to keep in mind that George had been working as a prostitute the night of the murder. Her killers were found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to 6.5 years in jail; one of them would go on to serve only half his sentence before being paroled and the other served only two-thirds of his sentence before being paroled. There was an outcry from the local Indigenous community, who thought that the two murderers should have been found guilty of 2nd degree murder instead. This weak punishment by the justice system is traced by Razack to the same racist stereotypes of Indigenous women outlined earlier in this chapter. Razack traces the proliferation of these stereotypes to societal changes on the prairies after around 1885: to the Metis uprising and overall Indigenous resistance at the time, as well as the immigration of more white women to the area (4). Indigenous women were painted as “squalid and immoral squaws” which allowed the

government and North West Mounted Police to get away with their sadistic treatment (99). Razack writes that it also “enabled government officials to claim that the dissolute character of Aboriginal women and the laziness of the men explained why reserve land was not used to capacity and were pockets of poverty” (99). Once the pass system was introduced, it became a way for Indian agents to withhold food rations in order to demand Indigenous women be made sexually available to them, and the NWMP allowed this to go on, while engaging in the same behaviour. So, Indigenous women were being forced into prostitution in exchange for minimal food rations while their families were starving. Razack shows how there was an almost universal conflation of Indigenous women and prostitutes at this time, noting that the general attitude expressed (in print) at the time was that “when they encountered violence, Aboriginal women simply got what they deserved” (5). Given this historical analysis, the instructions by the judge and the light sentences these men received are equivalent to a continuance of state sponsored murder. The sadism of the settler colonial state is reenacted over and over again in the same type of monotonous repetition which I discuss through Comay’s work in Chapter One.

The impact of the sadomasochistic collective fantasy of the Canadian settler state is seen in the genocide of MMIWG, families broken apart by residential schools, the 60’s scoop, and the child welfare system. The structure of settler colonialism is designed to dispossess Indigenous peoples of land in order for settlers to control it. The impacts on those who survive are well documented. In his book *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”* Charles Taylor writes about the impact of living under these traumas and stereotypes:

A person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning one in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being. (Taylor 25)

Indigenous women have been theorizing similar ideas to what Taylor writes, based on their own lived experiences and the experiences of their kin. To conclude this chapter I would just like to quote Leanne Simpson:

I sat with the trees and this pain, trying to make sense of things, like I am now, trying to figure out why the words *squaw*, *slut*, *dirty Indian*, and *stupid* have so much power over me. I considered that I don't necessarily want to 'heal,' because I am not damaged, diseased, or unhealthy. My response to the intergenerational trauma of settler colonial violence is correct and strong and vital. (Simpson 102)

In the next and concluding chapter, I will discuss the masochism of Indigenous women through Indigenous futurism, literary erotica, and the expression of affect. These ideas will tie together to explore how an entirely different kind of masochism, one that is not "ironic," is possible in a settler colonial society.

Chapter 4

“As Indigenous women, we sometimes must
unapologetically write for ourselves.
I wrote this for us.” (Knott xvi)

4 Indigenous Women’s Masochism: from Moral Sadomasochism to Indigenous Erotic Futures

The final chapter answers back to the previous chapters, in order to reimagine how a new type of women’s masochism can exist which will not result in failure and a descent into uncontrolled, patriarchal violence. This reimagining of women’s masochism is to be found in Indigenous feminist futurism. Beginning with the work of Haudenosaunee women writers, this chapter examines how freedom from settler colonial patriarchal values allows all Indigenous peoples, and especially women and LGBTQ2S+ individuals, to explore their own desires and engage in masochistic enjoyment without the risk of reinscription into settler colonial patriarchy. This chapter then expands to examine the growing body of Indigenous erotica, and I theorize how this is not just an important step in freedom from guilt and shame, which have been connected to our sexualities, but it is a form of futurism where matriarchies are revitalized and women are empowered.

4.1 Women’s Masochism as an Expression of Indigenous Futurism

Is there a way for women and, more specifically, Indigenous women to engage in masochism without the risk of descending into an uncontrolled, patriarchal violence? Harkening back to Chapter 1 in particular, this chapter reimagines how Indigenous futurism can allow Indigenous women to escape the violence which Sade’s Juliette suffers, and which second and third wave feminist masochistic imaginings also tend toward. The solution to this descent into violence is Indigenous futurism. Indigenous futurism connects our futures to our pasts—literally embodying the Haudenosaunee

concept of Seven Generations⁷—by connecting traditional knowledge to the way that we live and express ourselves in a potential future. Jas Morgan writes in her chapter “Visual Cultures of Indigenous Futurism” from *Otherwise Worlds* (2020), that “We are the descendants of a future imaginary that has already passed; the outcome of the intentions, resistance, and survivance of our ancestors” (Morgan 332). This means that our generation is living the Indigenous futures which our ancestors worked so hard to ensure would survive. We need to do the same for future generations and our descendants, and as Morgan says, we need to do this “by using their philosophies of love and kinship to give voice to resistance” (333). Morgan recognizes that the concept of love is often denounced by decolonial scholars as being “mistakenly associating its ethic with neoliberal state-led and settler-led attempts to reconcile relations with Indigenous people” (334). While denouncing the politics of recognition as a method of placating Indigenous peoples seeking redress, Morgan writes that she is “interested in what is lost in such analyses, namely a central focus on Indigenous ways of being and knowing, like kinship, as well as the essential roles of Indigenous women, and Indigenous gender variant and sexually diverse peoples, in guiding our communities toward a truly emancipatory future” (334). For Haudenosaunee women and LGBTQ2S+ people living on Turtle Island, we now live in a Westernized society which has been colonized for hundreds of years and the influence of patriarchal Western values is greatly felt. In order to have the respect, power, and influence we deserve as Haudenosaunee women, we must embrace the traditional knowledge which our ancestors sought to preserve, and do our own part in passing this on and revitalizing communities.

For Haudenosaunee women one of the most important stories to carry on is the Creation Story. This story carries on many important aspects of Haudenosaunee culture, as discussed in Chapter Two, and as Kahente Horn-Miller discusses in “Distortion and Healing: Finding Balance and a ‘Good Mind’ Through the Rearticulation of Sky Woman’s Journey:”

⁷ The Principle of Seven Generations is part of a set of teachings which remind us to “adapt, change, go forward, but always make sure you’re listening to the traditional knowledge at the same time...we’re supposed to be listening to our grandfathers, our ancestors, but we also need to listen to the grandfathers yet to come” (Alfred xxii).

The challenges Sky Woman faces affect her both physically and emotionally, throwing off her sense of balance. As she deals with each of these challenges through critical engagement with herself and those she loves, Sky Woman learns how to think for herself, how to be respectful of others, how to endure suffering. It prepares her for what is to come. (Horn-Miller 20)

Sky Woman is the central figure in the Creation Story and both her journey and her role as great-great-grandmother to all Haudenosaunee women serve to teach us who we are as women and the important, and powerful role we play in our societies. Horn-Miller reiterates that “It is understood in our culture that to be healthy in body, mind, and spirit you have to have a sense of your own history and identity. My own version begins with Sky Woman’s descent” (20).

Artist Skawennati “makes art that addresses history, the future, and change from her perspective as an urban Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) woman and as a cyberpunk avatar” (skawennati.com n.p.). Her form of Haudenosaunee futurism retells the Creation Story with Sky World depicted as a futuristic world and Sky Woman as a brave astronaut who helps create Turtle Island. Her Creation Story film “She Falls for Ages” is reminiscent of the *Star Wars* introduction “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away” and it intricately connects our past with a futuristic world not yet possible, reminding us that the idyllic utopia of Sky World is what we should strive to achieve here on Turtle Island. In most versions of the Creation Story Sky Woman’s fall from Sky World on to the back of a turtle, which would become Turtle Island, is portrayed as being self-sacrificing and often she endures suffering and loss during many points in her lifetime. The underlying themes of self-sacrifice and suffering in Haudenosaunee philosophy do not necessarily meet the traditional Freudian definitions of moral masochism because of the lack of an “unconscious’ sense of guilt” (“The Economic” 166). Moral masochism is rooted in messianic religiosity and patriarchal values, leaving Western culture and Haudenosaunee cultures with very different belief systems and underlying values.

Returning to Chapter One, when Lacan discusses masochism and desire in both men and women he begins by asking, “what is masked over for him by his fantasy of being the

object of a jouissance of the Other—which is his own will to jouissance” (*Anxiety* 163). Lacan believes that this simply leads to man “positing himself in the function of a human wreck... What is sought out is the response in the Other to the subject’s essential downfall into his final misery, and this response is anxiety” (163). However, for the woman masochist, her fantasy is described by Lacan as “a male fantasy” (190). Rather than attempting to fulfill the jouissance of the Other, positing his own fantasy of “what there is not” (191), for women the fantasy exists as a reality whereby, “the desire of the Other is the means by which her jouissance will have an object that is, as it were suitable. Her anxiety is only anxiety faced with the desire of the Other” (191). In contrast, for the male masochist in a dyadic relationship with a dominatrix the anxiety which is sought out is not the anxiety of the woman as dominatrix, but rather God’s anxiety (163). For women in Western, or Westernized, cultures the experience of masochism is different from the way men experience masochism, and, as discussed previously, is conceived by Lacan as ironic. The Other for woman in the masochistic fantasy can simply be the male fantasy of a submissive woman, but for man the Other is revealed to be no less than God. In terms of the real masochistic theatre, for women to engage in submissive and erotogenic masochism is to seemingly accede to the lack of power and the submissive position of women in a patriarchal society, meaning that masochism is prone to failure and can have violent, devastating consequences for women. In the case of Antigone’s moral masochism, she uses her voice in opposition to Creon and seeks her own destruction through her line of desire. In this way, Antigone as a figure of masochism undermines institutional sadism, and seeks to control the masochistic theatre. However, as discussed in Chapter One, locating herself at the limit (*Atè*), attempting to go beyond the pleasure principle, ultimately fails as a form of masochistic control, in the same way that white women’s failure can descend into uncontrolled violence, Antigone goes too far and her suicide is the point beyond the limit from which she, nor any of the other characters in Sophocles’ tragedy, cannot return. Therefore, masochism for Indigenous women can only be experienced safely and unironically if we are to mold the future according to our traditional ways of being. This not only means looking to Sky Woman and the lessons she learns, the sacrifices she makes, and the pain she endures, but also looking at the traditional roles of women in Haudenosaunee culture.

For women's rights leader Matilda Joslyn Gage, who, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony, lead the fight for women's rights and suffrage in the United States, Haudenosaunee women were a source of inspiration in the fight against women's oppression. Over a twenty-year time period, Gage wrote newspaper articles on Haudenosaunee society and her "clarity of understanding of Indian nation sovereignty...is a source of wonder to Native people today" (Wagner 29). In 1878 she wrote about the Haudenosaunee:

Our Indians are in reality foreign powers, though living among us. With them our country not only has treaty obligations, but pays them, or professes to, annual sums in consideration of such treaties...Compelling them to become citizens would be like the forcible annexation of Cuba, Mexico, or Canada to our government, and as unjust. (Wagner 29)

She also understood that the Haudenosaunee are a matriarchal society, "organized to maintain a balance of equality between women and men" (29). These early feminists had close relationships with Haudenosaunee communities and Gage herself was adopted as Mohawk, Wolf Clan and given the adopted name Karonienhawi, or Sky Carrier, and Stanton's cousin was named after an Oneida Chief (32). The close connection between these women and their Haudenosaunee counterparts did not just inspire early feminism on Turtle Island, but also highlighted the immense gulf between the patriarchal Western society and Haudenosaunee society. Wagner breaks down the differences in the way women were treated into social, economic, spiritual, and political categories. At this time, in European cultures children were considered the property of their fathers, while in Haudenosaunee communities the children are considered part of the mother's clan; "Husbands [had] the legal right and religious responsibility to physically discipline wives, while in Haudenosaunee communities violence against women was not tolerated or part of the culture; and for European women their subordination had a religious basis, while for Haudenosaunee women our responsibilities have a spiritual one (Wagner 30). Therefore, women's masochism, for Freud and Lacan, is fatalistic; it is an overdetermined response to social, physical, and sexual subordination, and not actually an expression of freedom. Although, in Chapter One, Antigone is the primary example of

a masochistic woman removed from the desire of men, her masochism is ultimately a failure because although she subvert's Creon's power she dies, rather than staying at the limit where one is able to masochistically enjoy. In terms of economic freedom, Haudenosaunee women each controlled their own personal property, while European and American women had "no rights to her own property, body, or children" (30). The economic differences did not end there, and the differences between Haudenosaunee and European/American women's work were stark. In Haudenosaunee cultures, women work communally and under the sole direction of women and are responsible for both the home and agriculture, while, in contrast, European and American women were responsible for their homes individually, but still had to ultimately answer to their husband's authority (30). Spiritually, and as previously discussed in Chapter Two, Haudenosaunee peoples have the Creation Story and Sky Woman as the basis for our spirituality, while in Christianity God and Jesus are depicted as male figures, and the leadership in terms of spirituality reflect these differences (King 23-24). In the 19th century, women were still unable to speak in Christian churches and only held responsibilities which are "subordinate to men's authority" (Wagner 30). For Haudenosaunee women, we hold responsibilities in ceremony and these responsibilities are also balanced with those of men, rather than subordinate to them (30). Wagner also outlines how politically women held what can be understood as political office as Clan Mothers, and in this role they chose the Chief and followed a democratic system for making decisions (30).

In Mohawk scholar Susan M. Hill's book *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River* (2017) she discusses how for Haudenosaunee women, under the Great Law "women are recognized as leaders of the Confederacy in partnership with their male relatives. As leaders within the law, women are taught to consider the future generations in all their decisions" (Hill 53). Thus, Haudenosaunee futurism is built into the very fabric of our society. The concept of Haudenosaunee society as matrilineal goes back to the Original Instructions, and as Hill theorizes:

Similar to the society in Sky World, the pattern of matrilineal identity appears to have already been in existence when the Peacemaker encountered the Five Nations. Likewise, there are several stories within the cultural history that discuss

the formation of matrilineal clans. Some versions include this process at the time of Creation, some place it with the establishment of the Great Law. Considering the matrilineal connection of the Creation Story, it is likely that the idea of matrilineal identity came with the Original Instructions but probably had to be restored at certain times in history—much like the restoration of clans to the Oneidas by the Peacemaker at the founding of the Great Law (Hill 56)

As Hill therefore relates, the matrilineal tradition and the powers given to women have been carried on from the creation of Turtle Island until today, and it is the responsibility of all Haudenosaunee people to continue to carry on our traditions. This is Haudenosaunee futurism working in real time.

For Haudenosaunee women, pain and sacrifice are not foreign to us. It is built into the Creation Story that Sky Woman not only sacrifices herself by leaving Sky World, but as discussed in Chapter Two in many tellings of the story she also endures painful trials. The pain associated with being a woman is credited by Gibson-Goldenweiser as one of the reasons why we control the clans:

These are to be the principal ones (eyeya'takweniyoks), the women controlling the title names, because it is by means of all their suffering that people are born here on earth; and it is they who raise them. Moreover, their blood, this is what we have, we the people, for these are our mothers, the women, and this is why the families follow according to their blood lines. (qtd. in Hill 59)

In terms of existing thought on masochism, if we return to Chapter One and the three women that Deleuze outlines in Masoch, “the Grecian woman, the pagan, the hetaera or Aphrodite” (Deleuze 47) is the figure who would be most similar to the Haudenosaunee woman, just as she was most similar to Antigone, a unique figure in Western culture of women’s masochism. Deleuze writes that the figure of the Grecian woman “conceives equality merely as the critical moment at which she gains dominance over man, for ‘man trembles as soon as woman becomes his equal’” (47-48). However, for Haudenosaunee women precontact this trembling of man due to the equality of women was not the case, for both genders had roles to play and both held power. Under settler colonialism, this is

not the case not only in Canadian settler society, but also often, as women like Lee Maracle have pointed out, is now not the case in our own communities and men do not want to give power back to women (*I am Woman* 102). Therefore, in conceiving of a Haudenosaunee Masochian woman, it is more useful to look at women from our own culture rather than the Grecian woman, and see how women such as Sky Woman and Káteri Tekahkwí:tha are masochistic in their own ways, and how contemporary Indigenous women are using these influences in current understandings of masochism and erotica.

One aspect of Indigenous and Haudenosaunee futurism is reclaiming the power and respect which women deserve to carry with them. As I outlined in Chapter Three, much work has been done by Canada and the United States to degrade Indigenous women and take this from us, beginning with Amerigo Vespucci's depictions of Indigenous women as prostitutes, saying that when the women he encountered "had the opportunity of copulating with Christians, urged by excessive lust, they defiled and prostituted themselves" (Acoose 33). As a form of political warfare, this has worked to take respect, power, and even our womanhood away from Indigenous women, and, as Lee Maracle expresses it, "The denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a sub-human level. Animals beget animals" (*I am Woman* 17). For Haudenosaunee women, ethnographers such as John N.B. Hewitt (even being Tuscarora himself), do a good job on behalf of colonizers in depicting Haudenosaunee women as "falling from grace" when they did not encounter what Hill describes as an "all-powerful gynocracy" (Hill 54). The failure to meet this expectation led Hewitt to write that "there is no connection between the women of today and the women of the past" (Qtd in Hill 54). The colonial mindset of Hewitt expected to see a version of a matriarchal culture which could be held in comparison to all-power Western patriarchy, rather than a society based on equality of roles. The misconceptions and stereotypes of Indigenous women as "promiscuous, drunken whores or sexless Mother Earth types" (Akiwenzie-Damm 164) have stripped us of our sexuality, spirituality, and complexity and replaced them with shame and fear. Sometimes, when I go on a date with a white man, I feel afraid. Why? Because Indigenous women are the victims of an epidemic of genocide. In "Being an Indigenous Woman is a 'High-Risk Lifestyle'" Mary Eberts discusses how the Indian Act "has made

Indigenous women legal nullities, placed them outside the rule of law and the protection and benefit of the law and taken them from their families” (Eberts 69). While she correctly argues that the violence which Indigenous women face on a daily basis stems from the Indian Act, she also points out that there has been a multifaceted approach to cultural-political warfare in Canada over and above the Act which means that not only are Indigenous women “legal nullities” and not protected by the law, but that we are also a “population of prey” (69) because Canadian society in general views us as less than human.

Referring back to Chapter Three of this dissertation, this is where the stereotype of the “squaw” is important to deconstruct since it is at the intersection of colonial, sexist, and racist stereotyping. Eberts provides a definition here for the ‘squaw’ from Métis scholar Emma Laroque: “a being without a human face who is lustful, immoral, unfeeling and dirty” (71). Thus, as Eberts also repeats, Indigenous women are able to be murdered and raped freely and without consequence in Canada as the blame is always attached to their own imputed being. This connection between our sexuality and the stereotype of the inhuman, dirty ‘squaw’ as who we are means that we are unable to love and enjoy a free, erotic life. The same effects of colonization and patriarchy have affected Black women, and Audre Lorde said in her 1978 speech “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” that “we have been taught to suspect this resource (the erotic), vilified, abused, and devalued within western society. On the one hand, the superficially erotic has been encouraged as a sign of female inferiority; on the other hand, women have been made to suffer and to feel both contemptible and suspect by virtue of its existence” (Lorde 53). Lorde believes that women have been taught to think that in order to have strength we must suppress the erotic aspects of ourselves, and partition it off from everything but the act of sexual intercourse itself. However, when she talks about the erotic, she says, “I speak of it as an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives.” (Lorde 55).

4.2 Resistance Through Moral Sadomasochism

Kateri Akiwenzi-Damm writes in her essay “Erotica, Indigenous Style” that “the repression of erotic art is symptomatic of our oppression and signifies a deep psychological and spiritual break between a healthy and holistic tradition and an oppressed, repressed, shamed and imposed sense of reality” (“Erotica, Indigenous Style” 165). In terms of sexual masochism, shame and repression are not compatible with the masochistic theatre, which relies on performativity, control, and a calculated balance of power. In 1892, the same year Canada and the Christian churches reached an agreement on running residential schools, Mohawk poet and performance artist E. Pauline Johnson published the article “A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction” in the *Sunday Globe* where she confronts the racist literary stereotype of the pan-Indigenous, fated-for-death, doglike, and doomed for “the cold shoulder in the wars of love” Indigenous maiden (“A Strong Race” 5). She is not lovable, she is not really human, and, in response, Johnson calls for her to be depicted as the “quiet, sweet womanly woman she is, if wild, or the everyday, natural, laughing girl she is, if cultivated and educated; let her be natural, even if the author is not competent to give her tribal characteristics” (6). Without being able to comprehend Indigenous women as real women, and not a caricature, masochism as Indigenous futurism is unable to fulfill its promise.

In Johnson’s literary writing, she gives us examples of real Indigenous women, with the complexity that she finds lacking in the writing of settler authors. An example of this is the character Christie McDonald in “A Red Girl’s Reasoning,” which was published in 1913. In Johnson’s story, Christie has married a white man, Charlie McDonald, and is living with him and socializes in settler society. When she publicly admits that her parents were married only through Indian custom, and not by a Christian ceremony, it seems to shock their friends and acquaintances, with them exclaiming things like “It is shocking!” and “poor old Charlie has always thought so much on honorable birth” (“A Red Girl” 6). At first, Christie believes she has angered Charlie, but when she finds out that he believes she has disgraced him, and that he considered her to be “the child of...love? Certainly not legality” (7), she completely changes her attitude toward her

husband, and Johnson describes her response to him as “the voice of another nature in the girl—the love and the pleading were dead in it” (7). She responds to Charlie by telling him:

There was no such time as that before our marriage, for we *are not married now*. Stop,” she said, outstretching her palms against him as he sprang to his feet, “I tell you we are not married. Why should I recognize the rites of your nation when you do not acknowledge the rites of mine? According to your own words, my parents should have gone through your church ceremony as well as through an Indian contract; according to *my* words, *we* should go through an Indian contract as well as through a church marriage. If their union is illegal, so is ours. If you think my father is living in dishonor with my mother, my people will think I am living in dishonor with you. How do I know when another nation will come and conquer you as you white men conquered us? And they will have another marriage rite to perform, and they will tell us another truth, that you are not my husband, that you are but disgracing and dishonoring me, that you are keeping me here, not as your wife, but as your—your—*squaw*.” (“A Red Girl” 9)

While Christie is infantilized by her husband, her logical argument here makes sense and broaches one of the fears of settler colonialism—that the colonizers could themselves become the colonized. Her rejection of Western, Christian marriage rites in the face of his refusal to recognize Indian marriage customs is when she decides that she will refuse to forgive.

In Johnson’s story we can understand Christie’s refusal to forgive as an act of “Refusal as political practice” (Flowers 33). In Leey’qsun scholar Rachel Flowers’ article “Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women’s Love and Rage” she works to “reclaim space for Indigenous women’s rage, orienting it around a refusal to forgive, as informing an anticolonial approach to disrupting forms of violence and domination that reify settler colonialism” (Flowers 33). My analysis of Johnson’s writing will focus on the refusal to forgive and harnessing of rage as a political act, while also locating it within a

sadomasochistic framework to understand how it is both a form of moral masochism and of sadism.

Flowers states that “In both Indigenous studies and direct action there is momentum to turn away from settler institutions and re-centre Indigenous law thereby opening a space to transform Indigenous-settler relations” (Flowers 34). This same act of turning away from settler institutions (in this case, Christian marriage) is part of the key to Johnson’s heroine Christie’s act of refusal. To repeat what she tells her husband, before leaving him: “According to your own words, my parents should have gone through your church ceremony as well as through an Indian contract; according to *my* words, *we* should go through an Indian contract as well as through a church marriage” (“A Red Girl” 9). She removes her wedding ring and refuses the settler institution of marriage in favour of the recognition of Indigenous ceremony.

An important part of Flowers’ argument is the refutation of the idea that love and anger must be separate, that we should always end up with “the triumphalist narrative of love” (Flowers 33). She quotes Andrea Smith in her work, stating, “when we do not presume that [settler colonial states] should or will always continue to exist, we create the space to reflect on what might be more just forms of governance, not only for Native peoples, but for the rest of the world” (35). When considering the concept of Indigenous futurism, it is important to remember this as we create a new world for our descendants, but we must also be aware this is not a new concept. Almost 100 years before Smith wrote this, Johnson, an Indigenous woman, and more specifically, Mohawk woman, conveyed the same ideas through the words of her protagonist, Christie:

‘How do I know when another nation will come and conquer you as you white men conquered us? And they will have another marriage rite to perform, and they will tell us another truth, that you are not my husband, that you are but disgracing and dishonoring me, that you are keeping me here, not as your wife, but as your—your—*squaw*’ (“A Red Girl” 9)

Johnson not only imagines the possibility of a world different than the current form of settler colonialism, but she also stages the way that love and rage do not have to be

mutually exclusive, and thus she is also able to convey what is at stake for Indigenous women if we submit to the attempt to live a fairy tale ending. At the end of “A Red Girl’s Reasoning,” Charlie is finally able to find Christie and begs her to come back, and although he leaves when she tells him, “I have no love for you now. You forfeited me and my heart months ago, when you said *those two words*” (“A Red Girl” 12), we know she is lying about no longer loving him when she writes that she is conscious of “the vengeful lie in her soul” (13). The reiteration of the simultaneous existence of love and anger is repeated with these words from Christie, “‘You cannot make me come,’ said the icy voice, ‘neither church, nor law, nor even’—and the vice softened—‘nor even love can make a slave of a red girl’ (12). The way that Christie says “‘nor even love can make a slave of a red girl’” reinforces both her continued love for her husband, but also the pain she herself feels in leaving him. Her act of refusal to forgive is both moral sadism and moral masochism, combining in one act as a form of moral sadomasochism. This follows Deleuze’s ideas about sadism in *Coldness and Cruelty* (1967), where he writes that the formula taken from Freud for masochism—“sadism turned around upon the self” (Deleuze 106)—infers that sadism itself is much more complex, for if there are three forms of masochism, the erotogenic, the feminine, and the moral, there must also be three forms of sadism as well, corresponding to the three forms of masochism. Therefore, the third form of sadism is what Deleuze theorized as “projected” (106). Johnson’s imagining of her inability to separate love and vengeance are ideas ahead of their time and are only just beginning to be reimagined in different ways by Indigenous thinkers such as Flowers, Lee Maracle, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Glen Coulthard, and many more.

The idea that the settler colonialism may come to an end, or even be colonized, is a radical one in our world. Settlers themselves only imagine the world as they know it ending through dystopian horrors, rather than attempting to reimagine the world as better, or even just different. Therefore, Haudenosaunee futurism, and Indigenous futurism more generally, rely on the act of refusal, and the harnessing of negative emotion to operate in a way which will reimagine and rewrite our future, not only for ourselves and our children as individuals, but for all our descendants. The ability to harness the negative, allowing it to coexist with its opposite, in order to create something life changing come from Sky Woman, great-grandmother to all Haudenosaunee women. As Horn-Miller

says, “As we embody her life, and learn from our mothers, we are also passing on her knowledge” (Horn-Miller 19). We must always remember that when Sky Woman danced the shuffle dance and sang for her people, she still carried the memory of being misunderstood and challenged by her husband, and although she still sings for him, and begins to heal from her “hurt and sorrow at being misunderstood,” she does not say that she forgives him, only that she understands him (22).

In “Revenge—The Hate That Dare Not Speak its Name: A Psychoanalytic Perspective,” Irwin C. Rosen explores the neglected concept of revenge in psychoanalysis. He points out that “There is a huge discrepancy between the attention accorded revenge in virtually all forms of artistic endeavor, and the minimal attention the subject has received in the psychoanalytic literature” (Rosen 597). Rosen draws attention to the central role which revenge has played in Western culture—from appearances in biblical stories, to Greek and Roman myth, and playing a central theme in twenty of Shakespeare’s plays (599). As one key example which is pertinent to psychoanalysis, Rosen writes, “In short, *Oedipus Rex* may also have been about revenge. It is worth noting that Sophocles wrote *Oedipus at Colonnus* while he was involved in a legal dispute with his son, and that Socrates viewed *Oedipus Rex* as a cautionary tale against the parental abandonment of disabled children, a commonplace practice at the time” (602). In thinking through these filial aspects of revenge, Rosen quotes Leonard Shengold on the topic of the place of revenge in the psychic lives of its victims:

Most of the motivating push for vengeance in my patients has been expressed masochistically in the form of identification with the aggressor, with masochism mainly directed away from the accused parental figures. Sadism and revenge are aimed at self and at children who stand for self as child—mainly in action or at least in impulse.... Certainly hatred and the wish for revenge in relation to the parental or other adult aggressors has been prominent in many who are able to maintain hatred toward them, and express themselves in sadistic or murderous action. (Rosen 602-603)

Here, the need to seek revenge against the parental figure either results in masochism towards oneself, expressed sadistically toward a child as a stand in for the self as child, or there is the possibility of sadistic and murderous revenge. However, how can we think about masochism in terms of revenge when it is not physically inflicted upon oneself as masochism or upon the one we seek to avenge ourselves upon in the form of murder? For Freud, moral masochism is inherently tied to a sense of guilt, which he says is unconscious. The same sense of guilt is tied to the act of revenge by Rosen, who considers that “Revenge is a defense against feelings of shame, loss, guilt, powerlessness, and mourning. By focusing on his or her righteous, justified claim to an entitled retribution, the avenger renders its sadism ego-syntonic, superego nullifying, and id co-opting” (Rosen 603). Therefore, revenge is tied to moral masochism in ways which have not yet extensively been explored. For Freud, “the masochist must do what is expedient, must act against his own interests, must ruin the prospects open out to him in the real world and must, perhaps, destroy his own real existence” (“Economic Problem” 170). Johnson’s story, then, seems to be the optimal example of the merger of moral masochism and revenge. However, is Christie really feeling the emotions tied to masochism, such as shame, loss, and powerlessness? No, instead she is rejecting the Western notion that she has done anything wrong and also that she should not feel this mixture of love and anger. I would consider Christie’s act a form of sadism because of the refusal to forgive while simultaneously causing pain for her husband, who has wronged her. Thus, it is a form of revenge against the colonizer, but we also force ourselves to feel negative feelings of rage and anger, not get over them, and in doing all of this we reject the “real world” and our own “real existence” in it, to harken back to Freud’s statement on the moral masochist, which opens the possibility for Indigenous futurisms to occur. Although rage can take the form of vengeance against the colonizer, in doing this Indigenous women also force ourselves to feel and suffer from these negative feelings of rage and anger; thus I have termed this form of moral masochism, moral sado-masochism.

So instead of “getting over” these feelings, we continue to make ourselves feel as an act of refusal. Another example of this is found in Flowers’ critique of Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox’s discussion of *Idle No More*, and the connections made between Indigenous

women, love, and resistance. Flowers quotes Irlbacher-Fox as saying, “Being at Idle No More drum dance in Yellowknife this past week was moving in many ways. It was led, in part, by strong young Indigenous women who have moved in their own decolonization journeys from frustrated anger to empowered loving action” (Flowers 41). Flowers’ critique of this statement is based on the idea that Indigenous women’s emotions should “move in a singular, linear direction that parallels the move to decolonization: as we move from colonization to decolonization, so too do Indigenous women move from anger *to* love” (41). The separation of love and anger depicts Indigenous women as “merely reactionary to external forces and only through love can we transcend those structures” (Flowers, *ibid*). While I agree, it is important to point out that the juxtaposition of love and anger also overlooks how multifaceted we are, and that we are human beings able to experience multiple emotions and thoughts at the same time. Additionally, Flowers points out that we do not just have two ‘settings:’ anger and love, but we often feel other complex, sometimes negative, emotions, like “feelings of sadness, mourning, and remembrance” (41). However, it is often hard, or even impossible to be able to express these negative feeling when living in a settler-colonial state such as Canada, without being turned upon sadistically by settlers.

4.3 Expressing Indigenous Women’s Affect Through Aesthetic Creation

For Indigenous women the expression of negative feelings through aesthetic creation is one outlet for expression, and it must be understood as an act of radical resurgence which allows us to find a way to escape the stereotypes which deny us the same freedoms as other Canadian women. Following Glen Coulthard’s analysis of reconciliation and *ressentiment*, Indigenous women’s expression of negative affect is an integral part of an Indigenous resurgence which does not fall in line with the Canadian pacifying discourse of recognition and reconciliation. I will tie this together with Lee Maracle’s work in *I Am Woman* (1996), where she reveals that in coming to terms with feminism she also had to come to terms with the racist and sexist stereotypes which are applied to Indigenous women in order to deny them femininity and womanhood (17). On

a wider scale, Sianne Ngai discusses the suppression of affect in women of colour in *Ugly Feelings* (2005); she theorizes that these minor, ugly feelings can be expressed in relation to aesthetic works, and in comparison to an affect like anger, these negative emotions do not dissipate easily. Unfortunately, when it comes to discussing important issues, such as the murder of Indigenous women or legislative inequalities, the affective side of the issue must often be limited to aesthetics.

One example of such an aesthetic analysis is in Marie Clements' play *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (2005), which retells the events surrounding the murders of predominantly Indigenous women during the 1960s-1980s. Clements' play is based on the real-life murders of numerous women on Vancouver's Eastside by Gilbert Paul Jordan; although he was caught committing these atrocities several times, he largely went unpunished, and was able to keep murdering women until the late 1980s. The ugly feelings that everyone should feel when hearing about these events are often left out of newspaper accounts, or inquiry reports. It is often only through aesthetic performance that women can enact the refusal to forgive and can seek revenge against those who have wronged both ourselves and our sisters.

Before discussing this play directly, a substantial theoretical framing is needed. Connecting back to Chapter Three and the stereotypes which have been used against Indigenous women in a political way, it is helpful to begin this framing by thinking about Lee Maracle's *I am Woman* and her writing about "the denial of Native womanhood," which she believes not only affects women, but reduces all Indigenous people to "a sub-human level" (*I am Woman* 17). A major factor in this denial of womanhood is the stereotyping which occurs in relation to all Indigenous peoples. Maracle notes that Indigenous men have been stereotyped as "lazy drunken [Indians]," but of Indigenous women white people ask, "Do they have feelings?" (17). Women face this stereotyping at home and in their own communities as well because their own brothers expect them to not whine, cry, nag, or complain (*ibid*). The pressure to suppress these negative, ugly feelings thus comes from two fronts—our own people and the settler state. Maracle views the use of this type of language as not only suppressing affect or emotion, but also femininity.

Maracle has continued to write about issues Indigenous women face daily; more recently, in *Memory Serves: Oratories* (2015), she devotes a chapter to “Indigenous Women and Power,” and it is here that she connects settler colonialism to the disconnection from emotion which Indigenous women experience. She writes: “Western society, in general, accepts the estrangement of spiritual belief from emotional wellness and physical existence, and knowledge and intellectual development are divorced from the spirit” (*Memory Serves* 135). This estrangement stems from the institutional bureaucracy which Western nations follow which has effects on all parts of our culture. It creates “gender- and race-based inequality along the social, political, cultural, and spiritual planes,” which in turn stratifies men and women, white and Indigenous peoples into a hierarchical structure which provide greater or lesser advantages based on a given individual’s subject position in this structure (135). Expressing affect or emotion, particularly negative ones, has become an advantage that is not accorded to Indigenous women because they are located at the bottom of this hierarchical structure.

This type of disconnection from affect or emotion is also expressed in Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s *As We Have Always Done* (2017) where she links emotional problems to the dispossession of both land and bodies. This process of dual dispossession is part of the structure of the settler colonial state, and Simpson believes it is an “attack on our bodies, minds, and spirits, and the intimate trauma this encodes is how dispossession is maintained” (Simpson 41). In the chapter “The Attempted Dispossession of Kwe,” she explains how Indigenous bodies have been taken away through settler state violence which includes: “outright murder, imposed poverty, criminalization, assimilation, addictions, physical and mental illness, legislative disappearance, ongoing cognitive imperialism, racisms, and the heteropatriarchy of Canadian society” (42). The damage these violent processes of settler colonialism inflict manifest in the form of “social ills” which Simpson theorizes are the symptoms of hurt and trauma. Rather than expressing the ugly feelings which stem from these violent acts being inflicted on the individual, the affect is suppressed by Indigenous women and the trauma emerges in different ways. We could frame this type of self-destructive trauma response as a typical form of moral masochism, in comparison to the earlier discussion in this chapter on a new form of revenge-based moral sado-masochism, owing to the feelings of shame and

guilt that arise from abuse in settings like residential schools. In these cases “The moral masochist wants to submit to and be punished by his or her parents (though Freud was speaking mostly of a parental figure)... [and] the impossibility of this performance of submission and punishment leads the masochist to consciously act out suffering in nonsexual ways. The moral masochist depends on society to help him or her enact suffering upon him- or herself” (Musser 98). In these cases, the parental figure, the big Other, the law, is based on settler colonial societal norms, while in the new form of moral sado-masochism based upon a refusal to forgive is based on Indigenous social norms.

Ngai’s examination of affect in *Ugly Feelings* (2005) reveals the racialized labels which affect women of colour. Her work considers artistic creations which stem from negative feelings or affects, and considers affects such as tone, envy, paranoia, or irritation. Ngai begins with an attempt to differentiate between affect and emotion; affects tend to be “less formed and structured than emotions,” but Ngai suggests that ambient affect may be better for “interpreting ongoing states of affairs” (Ngai 27). In conjunction with Patrick Wolfe’s concept that settler colonialism is a structure, not an event, utilizing affect theory to understanding the suppression of Indigenous women makes sense because it is not confined to a single incident, but encompasses all the ongoing forms of colonial violence. Rather than seeing anger and resentment as “pathologies that need to be overcome” (Coulthard 111) negative affect should be harnessed as a form of “anticolonial resistance” (112) that begins with ownership of our feelings.

Simpson also discusses resurgence through the recognition of the dispossession imposed by the settler state and the process of ongoing settler colonialism. Going beyond land, Simpson states, “we have to think of *expansive dispossession* as a gendered removal of our bodies and minds from our nation and place-based grounded normativities. It means resurgence must be concerned with the reattachment of our minds, bodies, and spirits to the network of relationships and ethical practices that generates grounded normativity” (Simpson 43-44). This resurgence and reattachment must also include Indigenous women’s affect and feeling. They do not belong to men, or to the settler state.

Simpson also discusses radical resurgence made possible through unexpected or revisionary uses of language. In her chapter “Endlessly Creating Our Indigenous Selves,” for example, she discusses reclaiming the word “slut” as a way for women to regain “self-determination, values, and ethics over their bodies” (Simpson 84). The women with whom she is engaging in discussion name off other stereotypes which the settler colonial state has applied to their bodies and spirits: dirty, squaw, without feeling, drunks, partiers, etc. By naming these stereotypes Simpson is helping women to “cast off and cast out the internalized racism and patriarchy of the colonizer” (84). She recalls when these types of stereotypes have been applied to her, confessing that she is “thinking and feeling every time that word has been used to push me down, control me, and limit my potential” (85). Simpson’s reflections reveal the process involved with suppressing the feelings and affect of Indigenous women; the stereotypes which are named by the women (that they are drunks, without feeling, or dirty) are unconsciously internalized to such a degree that it takes a conscious effort to remind oneself that these are lies. To control the affect you portray to the world is to throw off these stereotypes and control who you are and what you feel. Maracle connects this same imposition of stereotypes to the dehumanization and loss of femininity in women, while Simpson connects the same issues back to the dispossession of land. I would contend that these two ideas work hand in hand as part of the ongoing structural genocide that works to eliminate Indigenous people within Canada.

While it could be argued that holding onto resentment, rage, or anger is simply holding onto the past, in *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014) Glen Coulthard argues that “these affective reactions can also lead to forms of anticolonial resistance grounded on transformed Indigenous political subjectivities” (Coulthard 112). Following Fanon, Coulthard theorizes that negative affect first turns against one’s own people, but eventually matters reach the point where the colonized experience a “breakdown of the psychological structure of internalized colonialism” (113). It is at this point that Indigenous people will desire the “land, freedom, and dignity” which they have been dispossessed of through the structure of the settler colonial state (113). An important point in this process is the desire for revenge, and although it is not the end point in the resurgence of Indigenous peoples, it is what Coulthard calls an “important turning point in the individual and collective coming-to-consciousness of the colonized” (114). For

Indigenous nations this type of revenge began to manifest during the 1990s, and still does today, in situations such as the Oka Crisis, Ipperwash, 1492 Land Back Lane.

As I asserted at the beginning of this section, expressing negative emotion is a radical act of resurgence for Indigenous women, and this act has firstly emerged in radical Indigenous aesthetic discourse which portrays the affect and feelings of these dispossessed women and highlights the sadomasochistic refusal-to-forgive. Alluded to above, Marie Clements' play *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (2005) is one such piece of aesthetic creation. Before Robert Pickton began murdering Indigenous women from Vancouver's Eastside another murderer was operating in the same area: Gilbert Paul Jordan. He was actively killing women from the 1960s until the late 1980s and was considered a threat to women up until his death in 2006 ("Boozing Barber"). He was initially charged with the murder of seven women, but only convicted of the murder of one, Vanessa Lee Buckner. He only served six years for Buckner's murder. Clements' play is a revenge fantasy which is based upon these events. For Indigenous people who have known women who have disappeared or been murdered, the courts do not always provide a just punishment. This is true in the case of Gilbert Paul Jordan, and Clements' response is to write the revenge of the women who were murdered. In Michelle La Flamme's article "Theatrical Medicine" she interprets Clements' play as a form of medicine. Following the traditional Indigenous teachings that she has been taught from elders La Flamme describes the Medicine Wheel as being made up of four directions which represent "the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional aspects of an individual" (La Flamme n.p.). One type of medicine is found in artistic creation, and while her nation does not have a name for theatrical performance the closest description is that of ceremony. La Flamme's interpretation of *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* understands the play as ceremony that works as medicine to honour the deceased, show the humanity of the murdered women, and promote catharsis in order to allow for the "release of trauma" (n.p.). The emotional life of the individual is highly important, and therefore has a place on the Medicine Wheel; the cultural practice of the revenge play allows for retribution to be acted out, as well as allowing the audience to bear witness to the murders of Indigenous women. Clements' play memorializes the women who were murdered by Gilbert Paul Jordan, and this memorialization of Indigenous women by

other Indigenous women is a way of undoing the stereotype of the unfeeling Indian woman. In the play we see a depiction of the events that transpired up until their murder, but the murders are never shown on stage. This interpretation of events allows us to remember the women as they were in life, while still making it clear that they were murdered. La Flamme interprets the play as a “feminist vision that suggests other women will be inspired (like the playwrights themselves) to remember and retell these stories of resistance” (n.p.). The performance also acts as a cathartic medium to work through trauma and affirmatively express negative affect through the aesthetic performance of these events.

Following Coulthard’s theorization of anger and resentment as important feelings that can work towards generating new “forms of decolonized subjectivity and anticolonial practice,” Clements’ play also holds the power to harness feelings of revenge, anger, and resentment in order to change the way Indigenous women are categorized and mistreated (Coulthard 128). The potential to achieve “affirmation and resurgence of Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices,” above and beyond the state mandated concept of reconciliation, is illustrative of the power which restoring and recognizing Indigenous women as strong, powerful women can have on Indigenous communities (129). *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* provides us with an alternative view of reality in which the murderer is killed on stage by Rebecca and the ghost of her mother, Aunt Shadie. This is the only death which is shown on stage, and in acting out this revenge it allows for the potential cathartic release of negative emotion. The reality of Gilbert Paul Jordan’s punishment is that he only served six years in prison, although he was finally considered a risk to women afterwards and the terms of his probation stated that he was not allowed to drink alcohol or be anywhere with women and alcohol (“Boozing Barber” n.p.). According to the CBC, after his release he was arrested for “breaching his probation more than half a dozen times after being found drinking in the company of women” (“Boozing Barber” n.p.). After being empowered by the complacency of the settler state for so long he was a constant risk to re-offend.

The danger Jordan posed to women, and specifically Indigenous women, makes it essential that he is killed in the play. The act of Rebecca and Aunt Shadie taking his life

is a way of symbolically showing women's resurgence and, through this resurgence, the destruction of the "structural apparatus of settler-colonial power" (Coulthard 129). The killing of Gilbert in the play is also linked to the resurgence in traditional practices because Clements associates it with the practice of trapping. When Rebecca lures the character Gilbert into his own barber chair the spirit of her mother, Aunt Shadie, describes how she would engage in the traditional practice of trapping. She says:

I used to be a real good trapper when I was young. You wouldn't believe it, now that I'm such a city girl. But before, when my legs and body were young and muscular, I could go forever. Walking those traplines with snowshoes. The sun coming down, sprinkling everything with crystals, some floating down and dusting that white comforter with magic. I would walk that trapline... (Clements 124)

This passage connects Aunt Shadie and Rebecca back to their traditional practices and is reminiscent of Simpson's concept of *kwe* as a resurgent method. Simpson writes: "knowledge is created through the combination of heart knowledge or emotion, and thought or intellect...the transformative power of knowledge is unleashed through movement, kinetics or action, our embedded practices and processes of life" (Simpson 28). This traditional knowledge, passed down from elders in the community, spreads throughout an individual's entire being. It is important to note that a major part of knowledge is the emotion that goes along with it. When we understand this, we can also understand that by denying Indigenous women's feelings we are cutting off their knowledge that makes up who they are. As part of her conceptualization of radical resurgence Simpson theorizes that *kwe*, the Nishnaabe word for woman, means more than just woman. It is an empowering concept that resists exploitation, essentialism, and conformity to the gender binary (29). It is a way for individuals to live and incorporate both emotional and intellectual knowledge into their lives.

The moment of the Barber/Gilbert's death reveals that the last thing he sees is the ghost of Aunt Shadie as a trapper, surrounded by the other women and more trappers. This reverses the invisibility of Jordan's victims in real life. Their deaths were dismissed as

unnatural and accidental and blamed on stereotypes of Indigenous women as drunks, partiers, and prostitutes. Throughout the play the audience has intimate access to the thoughts and feelings of the murdered women. It is in this final scene that they reveal themselves to the barber and make it clear that their lives and their feelings cannot be hidden or covered up anymore. The same feelings of disappearance are conveyed earlier in the play in Act 2 when Aunt Shadie describes the feeling of invisibility and the shame of not liking the way other people look at you. Aunt Shadie tells the other women, “I began to hate my reflection...I thought my silence complemented his voice...I was afraid she would begin to see me the way he saw me, the way white people look up and down without seeing you—like you are not worthy of seeing” (Clements 82). These minor, ugly feelings of self-hatred and fear of invisibility are the type Ngai discusses; these are the types of feelings that get less attention than rage, anger, or fear in our society, but they are also the feelings that do not go away easily and haunt us. The difference between Rebecca and Aunt Shadie is their ability to deal with and convey emotion.

The tragedy of Aunt Shadie is juxtaposed against the strength of her daughter Rebecca. Her pride in her Indigenous heritage is expressed when she says to Ron: That begs the question—what does an Indian seem like? Let me guess—you probably think that, if an Indian goes to university or watches T.V., it makes them the same as every other Canadian. Only less. The big melting pot. The only problem is you can’t melt an Indian. You can’t kill a stone. You can grind it down to sand, but it’s still there sifting through everything forever.” (Clements 97)

Aunt Shadie could not process the minor, ugly feelings and ended up leaving her family and destroying her life in a masochistic way. However, Rebecca shows how she is able to harbour both resentment and love at the same time. An example of this occurs in Act 2, when Rebecca says of Aunt Shadie, “I want to place my face in my mother’s palm and say...and feel my lips on her lifeline and palm softness and whisper...I love you, you fucking bitch” (80). Her ability to express these complex emotions together shows the emotional maturity that her mother lacked; it is this emotional maturity that allows Rebecca and her mother to work together to kill Gilbert. The symbolic recitation of the trapline process is emblematic of the way both Maracle and Simpson envision women

openly sharing their feelings together. Maracle sees Indigenous feminism as a way to bring back matrilineal and co-lineal structures from Indigenous nation's past, but she does not resort to essentialism in proposing this need for women's power. The impact of the patriarchal settler state has caused irreparable damage to communities, and she believes the only way to undo this is for women to come together and take the power into their own hands, and in doing so, move forward in new ways. Once this is achieved, Maracle believes that Indigenous women will finally be able to "look across my kitchen table at the women of colour who share my life and see the genius of their minds, uncluttered by white opinion. I want to sit with my grown daughters and experience the wonderment of our mutual affection." (*I am Woman* 17). This experience is only made possible once women become able to take control of their communities, their bodies, and their lands. The ability to express emotions in this context is once again tied to freeing Indigenous peoples from the structures of the settler state.

Simpson also makes similar connections in her writing; she uses the concept of *kwe* to think about how traditional knowledge is passed between generations. This type of inter-generational relationship is made more difficult when there is an emotional disconnection, or shaming of the desire to express emotion. The example of Clement's Rebecca, who is searching for her inter-generational connection with her mother, illustrates how the empowerment of women not only frees them from the internalized burden of colonial stereotypes, but also gives them the power to help engage in a radical resurgence of both Indigenous men and women. Instead of words being used to control women and "limit [their] potential" (Simpson 85) they should be used to facilitate dialogue, like Simpson does in communities across the country, and this open dialogue must allow for the free expression of women's feelings. When she speaks in communities, Simpson also describes how "good it feels" (86) when the positive aspects of women, men, and two-spirit individuals are acknowledged. This type of dialogue is probably unfamiliar to women of Aunt Shadie's generation; she describes herself as a silent accompaniment to her husband's voice, and this type of silence can be linked to the suppression of emotion. Unlike her mother, Rebecca is not afraid to tell Ron what she thinks and openly discusses her opinions on poverty and Indigenous politics.

The hope for Indigenous women's futures in *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* comes from both the killing of a serial killer of women, but also from empowered women like Rebecca. Before she kills Gilbert, Rebecca says, "Things they are a-changin'" (Clements 121). When Gilbert asks her what she said Rebecca replies, "Just a song I had in my head," which shows that she is also thinking towards a new future for not only herself, but all Indigenous women (121). In killing her mother's murderer Rebecca is committing a radical act which defies the status quo—thus demonstrating that the status quo does not work. This alternative ending to the story of the unnatural and accidental women of Vancouver's Eastside takes up the movement of radical resistance and sends the message that Indigenous futures cannot be placed in the hands of the settler state. Instead, Indigenous women must adopt a stance which allows them to be freed from the suppression of the settler state; this could be achieved by adapting Maracle's Indigenous feminism or Simpson's *kwe*. Both of these practices point to a movement of radical resurgence for Indigenous people which means both connecting to the past, but also moving communities into a better future. Simpson reminds us that "the spiritual world does not exist in some mystical realm. These forces and beings are right here beside me" (193). By connecting with other women and elders, the ability to express emotion and speak freely is made possible. The impact of realizing that Rebecca is on the journey to reconnect with her mother makes the play even more inspirational. Although her mother's physical body has been taken from her through the act of murder, she is still able to connect with the spirit of Aunt Shadie and this gives her strength and empowerment.

Aesthetic creation allows Indigenous women the freedom and ability to express ugly feelings which are usually suppressed via societal expectations. The denial of feelings is a denial of the femininity and humanity which make these women who they are. As part of the structural violence of the settler state, the denial of Indigenous women's feelings is a method of dispossession of both bodies and lands. In this way, the stereotype of a lack of feelings works hand-in-hand with the Indian Act to control women. The insidious nature of these stereotypes about women means that they eventually become normalized and absorbed into their own communities. The difficulty of challenging inequalities against women through Canada's court system is that not everyone has the resources to do this.

This is why artistic expression and the output of an aesthetic body of work which supports women is so important. When Indigenous women express simultaneously the full range of their emotions, whether masochistic or sadistic, loving or raging, and put this into a piece of work, such as Clements' *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*, they are performing an act of defiance against the settler state. This defiance is an act of radical resurgence that is one step toward the dismantling of settler state structures of repression and violence.

4.4 Reclaiming our Freedom Through Erotica

Moral Masochism and what we can call moral sado-masochism reflect only one side of Indigenous masochism; on the other side we find the erotic properly speaking. Indigenous peoples are also sexual beings, but judging by the current amount of available or published Indigenous erotic literature you may not know this. In the Introduction to *Without Reservation: Indigenous Erotica* (2003), Akiwenzie-Damm poses the question "So what is Indigenous erotica?" (xii). Her answer to this question is:

It's about the loving, sexual, 'dirty', outrageous, ribald, intimacies of humanity and sexuality that we all crave. It shows us as we are: people who love each other, who fall in love and out of love, who have lovers, who make love, have sex, break hearts, get our own hearts broken, who have beautiful bodies. It's about all of the crazy, poignant, obscene, absurd things we do just to taste, touch, enjoy, and enter another. (Akiwenzie-Damm xii)

It may seem strange to a non-Indigenous person that Indigenous women are still in the process of reclaiming our sexuality, after all the work that second, third, and fourth wave feminism has done to empower and give women the freedom we deserve. But as has been mentioned in Chapter Three and earlier in this chapter, mainstream feminism often excludes Indigenous women. For Lee Maracle, she felt that until March 1982 "feminism, indeed womanhood itself, was meaningless to me" because of the ways in which "Racist ideology had defined womanhood for the Native woman as nonexistent" (*I am Woman* 15). Hence Indigenous feminism is still working on the issues which white women have

been able to confront for the past 50 years. Gina Starblanket writes in her chapter “Being Indigenous Feminists: Resurgences Against Contemporary Patriarchy” that “Indigenous women’s issues have a long history of being marginalized from the dominant theories on decolonization and liberation from colonialism, a pattern that has the potential to be reproduced if there are not concerted efforts to disrupt it” (Starblanket 38).

Many Indigenous women have been working to disrupt both settler colonialism and the marginalization of Indigenous women. In Tenille K. Campbell’s poetry collection *Nedí Nezu: Good Medicine* (2021), she rhetorically poses a similar question to Akiwenzie-Damm’s question of “what is Indigenous erotica?” in her poem “why indigenous erotica.” Campbell begins with the lines “why not erotica/do you do it different/do you do it special” (2-4). These lines are indicative of the questions curious settlers have about the emerging body of work categorized as ‘Indigenous erotica.’ Campbell initially provides the reader with an ‘official’ and very academic sounding answer:

indigenous erotica
acknowledges the intersectional space
of political and social influences
external pressures
and internal dialogue
that occurs when indigenous people
engage in activities with sexual and sensual overtones (6-12)

Campbell’s answer to the settler question of why Indigenous erotica? has a comical formality, and the answer to the question of why Indigenous erotica is needed as its own distinct body or canon is here (satirically) cleansed for white eyes and ears. A history of labelling Indigenous women as ‘squaws’ and prostitutes, and the epidemic of MMIWG2S is described as “political and social influences” and “external pressures” (8-9), while the internalization of patriarchy and, conversely, the women who are embracing Indigenous feminism to fight against this internalization is described as “internal dialogue” (10).

Campbell then continues with a more unofficial or “informal” answer:

when we fuck

the frogs go silent
 to listen to our mating breaths
 the northern lights dance
 when we reach our peak
 the wolves howl at the full moon
 rejoicing in our orgasm (13-20)

This stanza links Indigenous eroticism and love with the land, although she does this in a hilarious way. The first three lines “when we fuck/the frogs go silent/to listen to our mating breaths” emphasizes the connection to the land and the reciprocal relationship that we have with non-human kin. The next four lines describing how “the northern lights dance/when we reach our peak” and “the wolves howl at the full moon/rejoicing in our orgasms” again describe an inseparable connection with the natural world; but they also emphasize that sex is something that is natural and not shameful or something which should be repressed.

The poem continues on:

when we fuck
 our skin glistens
 like the star people we are
 our lips moan
 ancient languages understood
 our hands trace
 petroglyphs on our bare backs (21-27)

This third stanza emphasizes the connection Indigenous people have to our cultures. In Campbell’s case she is a Dene/Metis woman and the lines “our skin glistens/like the star people we are” reinforce the idea that we as Indigenous people have our own unique world views which are not rooted in Abrahamic religions, but instead we have our own creation stories, our own stories about the stars, and our own belief systems. In Dene culture, the stars are important not only as tools for navigation and a calendar, but also carry important cultural stories. One of the stories is about Yamoòzha, “a traveller who

lives in the stars and would rid the world of bad creatures that could harm the Dene people” (Drost n.p.). The full story includes a group of constellations, including the Big Dipper, and when they see the stars it serves as a reminder that Yamoòzha is always watching and will return if anyone disobeys Dene law (Drost n.p.).

The next two lines, “our lips moan/ancient languages understood” can be understood through the context of language removed from the signifying chain, as discussed in Chapter One, as well as also Vizenor’s critique of translation in his work on simulations of dominance (see Chapter Three). Campbell is connecting the practice of language restoration, and an emphasis on the importance and continuance of Indigenous languages, with our own ways of being in the world, including our erotic lives. As has been repeated many times, language and stories make up who we are, and in Thomas King’s *The Truth About Stories* (2003) he quotes Jeannette Armstrong who says, “Through my language I understand I am being spoken to, I’m not the one speaking. The words are coming from many tongues and mouths of Okanagan people and the land around them. I am a listener to the language’s stories, and when my words form I am merely retelling the same stories in different patterns” (King 2). This sounds very much like Vizenor’s emphasis on “the wild memories and rich diversities of tribal literature” (Vizenor 14), and emphasizes that even our erotic lives are deeply connected to our culture.

The poem ends with the following lines:

when we fuck
 all indigenous and shit
 we lie in each other’s arms
 heartbeats matching dreams mingling
 mink blankets surround us
 the scent of sweetgrass embraces us
 and we are safe
 for that one moment

 that’s why

we erotica indigenous (*Nedí Nezu* 28-37)

Although the tone here contains a degree of sarcasm and humour, there is a serious and real aspect that she addresses when she writes “mink blankets surround us/the scent of sweetgrass embraces us/and we are safe/for that one moment” (32-35). While making light of this scene of sexual intercourse by using the stereotypes of burning sweetgrass and lying down in mink, the idea that the scene of our erotic acts is a place of safety is something radical. For Indigenous women, whose existence is termed as “high-risk,” the poetic representation of being able to feel safe in this scene is a way to bring living Indigenous futurism into being, making it a reality.

In her essay “Red Hot to the Touch,” Akiwenzi-Damm writes about the role of erotica in her own life:

For me, erotica became a medicine that would help to heal those broken and forgotten parts of who we are. It was an antidote to the Disney *Pocahontas*, to *Once Were Warriors*, to the residential school stories that haunted us, to the fear Native girls are taught, to the bone-chilling news about missing and murdered Native women, to the shame so many of us had learned growing up Native, growing up Native and female, growing up Native, female and Roman Catholic, to the revelations of sexual abuse by a priest in our communities, to the government-imposed labels and laws that were designed to bind us. If erotica could help to heal something in me, I knew that many other Indigenous people shared my experiences and would reach for it, too (“Red Hot” 115)

The idea of Indigenous erotica being an antidote to Disney’s *Pocahontas* means that something like Campbell’s “why indigenous erotica” is a way of taking back stereotypes of Indigenous romanticism and stereotypes about ourselves. By reappropriating these romanticized notions in lines like “the frogs go silent/to listen to our mating breaths” (*Nedí Nezu* 15-16) and “the wolves howl at the full moon/rejoicing in our orgasms” (19-20) there is humour, but there is also a seriousness about our own relationship with the land and non-human kin which cannot be captured in the first stanza, which provides the “official” (desexualized) answer to “why indigenous erotica.” This first answer is the

academic one which, while technically true, is not what Indigenous people think about when erotica comes to mind. We think about snagging⁸, we think about things that settlers might not even begin to consider, and our erotica “is what it is because it reflects the values and aesthetics of those Indigenous cultures out of which it is created” (“Red Hot” 118). Part of the Indigenous values and aesthetics which have been whitewashed from our erotic lives is the relationship with nonhuman kin, which Campbell emphasizes in many of her poems. Indigenous eroticism is filled with stories about the erotic lives of nonhuman kin, and our how our lives intertwine with theirs. An important example of this has already been brought up in Chapter Three in the discussion of Engel’s novel *Bear*, which is based on the Haida story of Bear Mother, a woman who married a bear and had sons with him. Other important stories about nonhuman sexualities include Mohawk writer Beth Brant’s trickster story “Coyote Learns a New Trick,” Inuk artist and writer Alootook Ipellie’s “The Woman Who Married a Goose,” and in the Haudenosaunee Creation Story. In the Creation Story, it is the West Wind, or in other versions it is Turtle, who comes to Iakotsitionteh (Sky Woman’s daughter) in human form and lays two crossed arrows on her stomach, the Sky World version of sex (Horn-Miller 28). The relations with nonhuman kin are therefore essential for the creation and continuance of life on Turtle Island as we know it. While the Creation Story emphasizes procreation, it is not the only aspect of our sexuality. In Chapter Two I already discussed Haudenosaunee values around sexuality, and how girls, such as Káteri Tekahkwí:tha would have been engaging in sex from a young age. In Brant’s trickster story she depicts a female Coyote who binds her breasts, dresses in men’s clothing, and stuffs her pants with a bulge (Brant 31-32). Coyote attempts to play tricks in her disguise on Hawk, Turtle, and finally Fox. After staying for dinner at Fox’s house, Coyote propositions Fox for “a roll in the hay” (34). As the trick approaches its climax, Coyote delays revealing the trick, thinking “it was fun to be rolling around with a red-haired female. And man oh man, she could really kiss. That tongue of hers sure knows a trick or two...” (34). Then it

⁸ Snagging is defined by Troy Sebastian as “human relations, not just hookup culture or sexuality, but the relations that we have as Indigenous peoples within our communities and intercommunities, intertribal, and even outside of Indigenous communities as well...part of the beauty of the term is that it’s not one easily clearly defined expression” (Sebastian n.p.)

is revealed that Fox has known all along that this was Coyote, and she tells her to take off the clothes and breast binder so they can “get down to *serious* business” (34). Brant’s lesbian trickster story shows us, much like Carter does in *The Sadeian Woman* (see Chapter One), that women are not limited to reproductive biology. Beyond biology, Indigenous erotica is “about the loving, sexual, ‘dirty’, outrageous, ribald, intimacies of humanity and sexuality that we all crave,” regardless of the heterosexual sexual norms, shame, and abuse we have faced due to settler colonialism (“Erotica, Indigenous Style” xii).

The reappropriation of our own erotica, bodies, and sexuality is not something that can stop at the literary. If we return to the work of Amber Jamilla Musser on masochism, which I previously discussed in Chapter Two, she does not end her discussion of Black masochism at the literary or theoretical either, but also explores how Black women engage in erotogenic masochism. In her conclusion Musser discusses the ‘race play’ of Mollena Williams, a Black woman who engages in sadomasochism⁹. The issues surrounding race play recall the failings of women’s masochism discussed in the latter half of Chapter One. As Williams says, “Doing race play is HARD. It isn’t some walk in the fucking park. And finding people I trust enough to do it with is almost impossible because it is hard, and they are at risk.... The one thing—the *only* thing—that separates BDSM from abuse is consent. Now, there is implied consent. However, at no point is [there] not [*sic*] control. Never.” (Musser 173). Even though Williams engages in race play, she still understands and see the dangers inherent in it, saying “Playing with real-time fears and hatreds is hot for precisely the same reason it is risky: danger. Danger of slipping into a bad headspace. Danger of believing that your top is really a racist. Danger of believing that your bottom really is your inferior and has no intrinsic value, is less than human, because of their race” (175).

These same dangers would hold true for Indigenous women in engaging in the same form of sadomasochistic race play, and perhaps that is why many Indigenous women eschew

⁹ Race play here refers to “any type of play that openly embraces and explores the (either ‘real’ or assumed) racial identity of the players within the context of a BDSM scene” (Musser 173).

engaging in sexual relationships with certain types of men. In Campbell's poem "I'm tired of thin pointy lips" she writes "I'm tired of thin pointy lips/lips that cut and hiss/their right for chief wahoo and redskins/lips that say/they don't see race/everyone is equal/and won't I be their/naughty squaw" (1-8). Her rejection here is not just of whiteness, but of a certain type of settler who denies the harmful impacts of Indigenous stereotypes, and does not understand things like the importance of Black Lives Matter, or Every Child Matters. The last two lines of this stanza "and won't I be their/naughty squaw" (7-8) imply that Campbell, like many other Indigenous women, has encountered men like this who want to engage in a form of Indigenous race play, but, as discussed in Chapter Three, racialized Indigenous women in Canada are already living a high-risk lifestyle just by existing, and this type of play only increases the danger.

To return to the example of Mollena Williams, Musser describes her relationship to race as being "complicated by her attachment to a performance of powerlessness" (Musser 176), for whenever Williams is enacting BDSM her race is inescapable and it will never not be a factor in her relationships. For Indigenous women, how then, can we engage in the same type of 'performance of powerlessness' via masochism without the danger of actual powerlessness and racism being present?

If we return in conclusion to the aesthetic realm again, and to the end of Campbell's poem, she implies a return to Indigenous relationships where trust can be built and we can be safe together. She writes:

I want thick lips
 that taste of dry meat
 and glisten with butter
 lips that kiss under pine trees
 and tell me they love me
 in accents from the land
 I want Dene lips Cree lips
 Metis lips Mohawk lips and Anishinabe lips
 I want Mi'kmaq lips and Stó:lō lips
 I want lips that are thick

with stories and sweetness
 Thick lips moose lips
 I want
 blueberry cloud lips (9-22)

Her imaginings bring us back to the lines “and we are safe/for that one moment” (34-35) from the poem “why indigenous erotica” because all these different lips bring something safe, comforting, and familiar to Campbell.

One of the key aspects of Indigenous literary erotica which Akiwenzi-Damm highlights in her writing on the topic is humour, observing: “our erotica tends to be much more playful, humorous and joyful than other erotica I have collected and read. In my opinion, humour is one of the most obvious characteristics of Indigenous literary erotica (“Red Hot” 120). How then can humour and masochism work together? In the theatre, the comedy is generally a play with a happy ending, and will incorporate aspects of comedy and romance. Can we then translate this to the masochistic theatre? We take on the roles and follow the script of the masochist who hold power in the theatre, but we do not want a tragic ending, we do not want a descent into violence. Is comedy allowed in masochism? Can masochism be camp? Can masochism be hilarious? In the work of Deleuze, he connects masochism with humour and sadism with irony, stating “the masochist regards the law as a punitive process and therefore begins by having the punishment inflicted upon himself; once he has undergone the punishment, he feels that he is allowed or indeed commanded to experience the pleasure that the law was supposed to forbid” (Deleuze 88). He summarizes it thusly: “the very law which forbids the satisfaction of a desire under threat of subsequent punishment is converted into one which demands the punishment first and then orders that the satisfaction of the desire should necessarily follow upon the punishment” (89). Therefore, the submission to the punishment or humiliation which takes place in the masochistic theatre is a form of usurping the law, much like Antigone attempts to usurp Creon’s law in her own speech, and enjoy the very pleasure which that law forbids. For Deleuze, the masochist is “rebellious in his submission; in short, he is a humorist, a logician of consequences” (89). Within the Indigenous context, can Indigenous peoples subvert the law of colonialism to

enjoy masochistically? After having already considered “why indigenous erotica,” I will now examine Campbell’s poem #687 “call me chief” from her first collection,

#IndianLovePoems:

call me chief
 he says
 lightly slapping my ass
 as he bends me over
 band hall desk
 papers scatter
 down
 yearly financials
 welfare cheques
 education pleas

call me chief
 he hisses
 grunting low and hard
 as he pounds deep
 from his mind
 slips
 old houses
 unpaved roads
 teachers who quit

call me chief
 he moans
 when I take him in my mouth
 sucking hard and fast
 as he grips my hair
 dried sweet grass crumbling
 smudge bowls abandoned

upon split bookcases

call

me

chief

In this poem, humor allows us to enter the masochistic theatre in a safe way, where Indigenous eroticism can exist while also making us laugh at popular conventions of pop culture sadomasochism. The repetition of “call me chief” (*#Indian 1*), while they have sex in the band office, is both humorous and also reminiscent of acting out a scene where we might typically hear something like “call me daddy” as a faux act of submissive. The woman is getting her ass lightly slapped (3), and is theatrically being punished by the law, but in a way that she can control and consent to. Another level of humour is present in the fact that this erotic scene is set in the band council office, a band council which more than likely answers to the Government of Canada, and which follows the rules of the Indian Act. Thus, following Deleuze’s concept of masochistic humour, this band office is an extension of “the Law” of settler colonialism and also patriarchal cultural norms. The lovers are surrounded by the physical letter of the laws of settler colonialism which control our lives as Indigenous people: “yearly financials/welfare cheques/education pleas” (8-10). Campbell’s act of engaging in erotic fantasy in this location is an act of subversion symbolic of the subversion of heteropatriarchal normativity which her poetics engages in.

Conclusion: A Theory of the Masochian Woman Through Praxis

Indigenous erotica and Indigenous sadomasochistic practices are forms of continuance and survival which are a form of Indigenous futurism. Akiwenzi-Damm writes that “to deny the erotic, to create an absence of erotica, is another weapon in the oppressor’s arsenal. When this part of us is dead, our future survival is in jeopardy” (“Erotica, Indigenous Style” 164). While the act of moral sadomasochism is a radical act of feeling affect which the sadistic settler colonial state denies us, equally important is the ability to engage in erotic masochism.

The importance of Indigenous erotic literature is connected to the idea that “story is Indigenous theory” (Million 35). In theorizing the Indigenous Masochian Woman through examples from our own cultures, such as Sky Woman, Tekahkwí:tha, Johnson’s Christie, and Brant’s Coyote, I am examining the theory that comes from our culture, our ancestors, and our lives. Dian Million questions the act of theorization by Indigenous scholars:

are we using the master’s tools? Sometimes, we do, but dangerously; we do so often without acknowledging that the universalized concepts available to us from almost all sources are theorized. We fail to question the sources of common knowledge. The struggle in our generation has been to honor our own paradigms, concepts that arise from our lives, our histories, and our cultures while knowing that these are often inextricably mixed with concepts growing from our own subjugation. (Million 33-34)

While it is useful to look at Antigone as an overlooked example of a masochistic woman par excellence, or Acker’s reconfigurations of literary women as examples of a potential utopia, these ideas come from the colonizer. The Grecian woman as the woman who instills fear into men with her equality, is often portrayed as a concubine or prostitute in the work of Masoch, from which Deleuze based his theorizations. It is not a coincidence that the powerful Indigenous women who Europeans encountered were labelled as prostitutes, and still are today. We instill fear in the men who seek to control us through

patriarchal settler colonialism. Million's questioning of theory recentres the need to centre Indigenous paradigms, as have many of the scholars I have discussed in this dissertation. If "story is Indigenous theory" (Million 35) and, simultaneously, "the truth about stories is that's all we are" (King 2), then we can understand our lives to be living Indigenous theory, our ancestors and our future descendants are our theory. Indigenous futurism is theory.

The concept of moral sadomasochism developed throughout this chapter is a way of rejecting colonial ways of understanding and instead using "refusal as political practice" (Flowers 33). This is an extension of Coulthard's rejection of the colonial politics of recognition, and takes theory from our lived experience as Indigenous women in the settler colonial state. The example I discussed in this chapter, Clements' *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* is an example of story as theory. This does not mean that I advocate for us to kill our abusers as a form of sadomasochistic praxis, but rather, that we engage in the refusal to forgive and to hate while we love ourselves and our people. This Indigenous ambivalence can be connected to existing theories of masochistic ambivalence, but at the same time it operates as a unique practice in its resistance to settler colonialism.

A theory of ambivalence has its history deeply rooted in Sadeian and psychoanalytic principles. According to Maurice Blanchot, Sade is "the man who is able to transform all defects into tastes, all repugnances into attractions" (Blanchot qtd. by Pastoreau 53). The simultaneously display of shocking sexual deeds and crimes in Sade's literature is offset by the "vast number of speeches where his heroes unilaterally apologize for their crimes and assure themselves that, in so doing, their only wish is to show the horror of evil and turn the public from it" (Pastoreau 53). This Sadeian ambivalence is located as the root of the complexity of Sade, and is undeniably part of the continued fascination with his work. The psychoanalytic concept of ambivalence was coined in 1911 by Eugen Bleuler, an acquaintance of Freud. While he initially conceived of the idea "as a disposition within the mind of the schizophrenic which allows him to express simultaneously two opposite psychic states" (55), he would later admit that ambivalence is "the normal form of psychic functioning, since each tendency in our being is the result

of negative and positive components” (55). Taking ambivalence even further in terms of the mind, Pastoureau notes that the very instincts which make masochism possible, the principle-life instinct and the death-instinct, or death drive, are a form of “universal ambivalence of our minds” (58). Thus, masochism seems inescapable; the issue then is how we come to understand masochism and if it is believed to be a fantasy of man or one in which woman can have her own form of masochism.

If we are to look at any figure in Western culture as the ambivalent example of woman, it is the character Juliette, theorized by Carter as the “Nietzschean superwoman” (Carter 98). We see that she operates within Nietzsche’s ethic, where good and evil are not separated, and that she is also happy to play both the masochist and the sadist. Carter describes Juliette as “a woman who has transcended her gender but not the contradictions inherent in it” (98). Thus, like Antigone, who tries to transcend the institutional sadism of Creon’s law with her own language of masochism, there is always an aspect of sadistic violence which seems inescapable in Western theory for women. Butler describes Antigone as operating within the same mode as the dominant powers, not completely able to transcend the law through a new form of speech. For Juliette, just as Antigone, and the characters of feminist writers like Acker there is a failure in masochism which can only be suspended at the limit. Acker avoids going beyond the limit in *Pussy, King of the Pirates* by imagining a pirate utopia free of men. For third-wave feminists, masochistic ambivalence also becomes an issue, but only insofar as it is an internal conflict for feminists due to “women’s ambivalent negotiations of desire” and the many different forms of feminism that have come to exist (Linden 119). For Indigenous women to take up the ambivalent position of moral sadomasochism means rejecting a masochism based on a male fantasy, and instead taking up our own figures such as Sky Woman.

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