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CHAPTER TWO

Whiteness, Blank Space, and Gendered Embodiment in Winnemucca's *Life among the Piutes* and Callahan's *Wynema*

I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background.

—Zora Neale Hurston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”

There is a tendency to imagine the Indians as virtual blanks—wild, unformed creatures, as naked in culture as they are in body.

—Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*

Monte said our blank books made more sense to him than anything he had ever read. This guy was really cracked. Our books were blank except on one page there was an original tribal pictomyth painted by me in green ink, a different pictomyth on a different page in every blank book. Yes, pictomyths, stories that are imagined about a picture, about memories. So, even our blank books had a story.

—Gerald Vizenor, “Almost Browne”

FAR FROM BEING neutral, passive, or insignificant, the blank spaces within books impact not only what we read but also how we read. Space on the page makes words legible: it invites the eye and organizes the layout of text, it signals the beginning and end of book and chapter, and it sets the boundaries between text and page. Blank space gives an added emphasis to the words it sets apart, such as a title or a line of dialogue, and it invites the reader to place an added value on such words. In typographical language, it is white space, not solely words, that creates a “composition.” Due to its vital function, therefore, blank space serves as a profound driving force in our relationship with print. Yet because of its

paratextual nature, relatively few literary scholars turn their attention to the blank spaces of prose and the relationships they establish between text and page. For example, Genette's foundational *Paratexts* does not address, as Jerome McGann points out, "such matters as ink, typeface, paper, and various other phenomena which are crucial to the understanding of textuality" because they often fall outside of a linguistic purview. Yet as McGann asserts, "all texts, like all other things human, are embodied phenomena, and the body of the text is not exclusively linguistic."¹

From some of their earliest colonial encounters, Indigenous peoples engaged with the blank paratextual spaces of European documents by inserting complex declarations of identity, agency, and Indigenous presence into the margins of ethnographies, Bibles, treaties, and other texts. Coll Thrush, for example, documents the indelible Roanoke presence in London from as early as 1584 when Thomas Harriot returned to Europe and provided to the English-speaking world one of the first detailed accounts of the Indigenous peoples of Virginia. As part of his "brief and true report" of his journey, Harriot attempted to write an Ossomocomuck orthography with the help of the Indigenous peoples he encountered, whose names he never credited as translators or coauthors on the title page but one of whom, nonetheless, inserted his name as what Thrush describes as a "material footprint" in the margins of the text: "King Manteo did this." In another instance, Hilary Wyss documents the creation of an "alternative text" by Native owners in the margins of the 1663 Algonquian Bible, which was translated, composed, and printed by John Eliot and, without accreditation, tribal citizens John Sassomon (Massachusetts), Job Nesuton (Massachusetts), and James Printer (Nipmuc). Yet Indigenous-authored marginal insertions, "scrawling sideways, upside down, on any bare space," stressed ownership over their Algonquian Bibles and their literacy, writing, "I, Nathan Francis, this is my writing at this time," "I, Mantooekit, (x) [*sic*] This is my hand," and "I am Matthew Seiknout, this is my Bible, clearly."² Although the paratextual absence of the Indigenous contributors' printed names obscures their role in the text, Indigenous assertions of ownership and agency into the book's blank spaces refuses to permit Indigenous erasure. In the face of the rising onslaught of colonization, their marginal, handwritten marks assert the continuing presence of Native peoples, bodies, and communities embedded within the book object.

By connecting the blank spaces of bibliography with the spatial embodiment of Native women, I extend the current scholarship on gender, writing, and space to underscore the spatial agency of early

Indigenous women's book history. Indigenous female authors entered the mainstream literary marketplace significantly later than their male counterparts, with over one hundred years between the first book published by a Native man and a Native woman, fifty years between the first male and the first female autobiography, and nearly forty years between the first novels.³ Early book history for Indigenous women reflects their struggles, under the double bind of race and gender, to enter into and control the dominant literary discourses representing their bodies, and the genres they chose tellingly reflect a close association with the body: autobiography and sentimental fiction. Yet early Indigenous women's writing extends further than their choice of genre into the blank spaces of their books, as they repurposed the margins and entered into a textual and paratextual battle for control over their stories. By taking up Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins's *Life among the Piutes* (1883) and S. Alice Callahan's *Wynema* (1891) as the first known books published by Native women, I analyze three types of blank space—strategic rhetorical omissions, paragraph and chapter breaks, and the invitation of the margins—to argue that their books re-envision blank space not as erasure but as an opportunity to form relationships and provoke advocacy from their readers on behalf of Native peoples.

Bodies, Land, and Blank Space

In addition to Indigenous ways of knowing, perceiving, and being in relation to the land, the process of colonization initiated another type of association between Native peoples, bodies, and space. In *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (2013), Mishuana Goeman writes extensively on the spatialization of Native bodies, and especially the bodies of Native women, under colonization. Colonization remaps sovereign Native space, Goeman explains, by incorporating it under colonial control yet simultaneously pressuring it to exist outside of continually encroaching settler boundaries. Meanwhile, the settler colonial imaginary reconstructs Native bodies as abnormal and relegates them to existence only within specific physical and social boundaries, criminalizing them if they step outside their assigned, degenerative spaces. Such actions work together, Goeman concludes, as colonialism does not confine itself solely to “conquering Native lands through mapping new ownerships, but it is also about the conquest of bodies, particularly women's bodies through sexual violence, and about recreating gendered relationships.”⁴

Blank spaces on colonial maps remain one of the most poignant visualizations of these settler colonial processes, as they materialize the attempted erasure of Native peoples—both their bodies and the sovereignty of their political bodies over the land—while representationally preparing settler colonials to encounter an empty and “virgin” space. So well aware were Indigenous peoples of the colonial strategy of blank space that John Ridge, father to John Rollin Ridge, wrote bitterly in the era of Indian Removal, “These treaties are valid and constitutional when an Indian sells dirt; but when he calls for protection from the encroachment of the white men, these treaties are immediately held up to the world as blank paper.”⁵ The respatialization of settler colonialism specifically targeted Native women, as immediately evident in the Euroamerican terminology of “virgin” land open to conquest, a conceptual violence that promoted a targeted sexual violence.⁶ Black women and other women of color, however, also experienced the conceptual and physical sexual violence of blank space: speaking in another context, Faith Barter examines a scene from Hannah Crafts’s *A Bondswoman’s Narrative* (c. 1853–1861, 2002) in which a white female enslaver considers an enslaved Black woman not as a human being, but as “a space to fill,” a phrase that points to the inhumanity of the systemic processes of slavery and its sanctioned rape of Black women.⁷ The blank space of colonial maps, then, extends to other manifestations of blank space in a link between text and page, space and displacement, and bodies in relation.

Yet writing offers one way to respatialize, both materially and socially, the blank spaces of colonization and other systemic processes of inequality. Of her own book, and under a subtitle that claims “The Map and the Book Are the Same Thing,” Lisa Brooks writes,

This book, then, is at once an activity in which we participate, an instrument, and a map. It is a map of a network of writers and texts, as well as a process of mapping the historical space they inhabit. It is a mapping of how Native people in the northeast used writing as an instrument to reclaim lands and reconstruct communities, but also a mapping of the *instrumental* activity of writing, its role in the remembering of a fragmented world.”

Brooks’s claims reinforce other current scholarship on gender, space, and writing, which stress both gender and space as social constructs that not only share much in common but are also used to reinforce each other. Feminist scholarship in spatial studies, for example, has highlighted the links between patriarchal power and the coding of both public and private spaces that enables agency for one gender while restricting it for

another. Yet scholars also emphasize unjust spatial practices not as a natural, fixed, or permanent state, but rather as a working system under constant negotiation. For example, Goeman writes of an awareness from her childhood of her embodiment in space, reflecting, “Unlike the maps that designate Indian land as existing only in certain places, wherever we went there were Natives and Native spaces, and if there weren’t, we carved them out.” Women writers act in that negotiation, reclaiming and repurposing blank space in what Goeman calls the “spatial configuration in Native women’s writing” and what Kinohi Nishikawa describes for Black women as black or embodied pagecraft, a Black feminist tradition of typographical experimentation and especially the use of blank space on the page to communicate trauma and vulnerability.⁸ The activism of Indigenous women writers, then, extends into the realm of blank space to challenge its colonial uses as erasure and instead to reframe blank space as an arena for advocacy.

Petitioning Blank Space: Winnemucca’s *Life among the Piutes*

Winnemucca’s *Life among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883) stages a political autobiography aimed at exposing the injustices of colonization and rectifying the theft of Northern Paiute land.⁹ Her book begins in an autobiographical style with her birth, yet instead of recording the details of her personal life, Winnemucca titles the first chapter “First Meeting of Piutes and Whites” and immediately redirects most of her narrative to first contact and the resulting warfare, in essence developing her autobiography into a war memoir.¹⁰ Aside from a short chapter on “Domestic and Social Moralities” designed to contradict racist stereotypes of Indigenous women, the remaining chapters document Winnemucca’s diplomacy in Paiute relations with the United States. She describes the constant persecution and fear inflicted by settlers on her people, including sexual violence, acts of genocide, and duplicitous politics of land theft: nearly every chapter includes the horrific sexual exploitation of Indigenous women and emphasizes the physical violence of contact with Western culture.

Early in her narrative Winnemucca relays the proximity to her people of the Donner party cannibalism, an implicit counterpoint to the supposedly superior and beneficial coming of white “civilization.” From her childhood she relates the relentless sexual harassment endured by her sister Mary and, while lying in the same bed, hearing her sister’s heart

beat in fear as men approached the house during the night. In another instance, Winnemucca tells the horrific story of two Paiute girls found gagged and tied to a bed in the basement of a trading post belonging to two white brothers, which “[w]hen my people saw their condition,” killed the two brothers and started a war. Winnemucca relates several of her own instances of fighting off attempted rape and summarizes the overall climate of sexual persecution of Indigenous women early in the book when she testifies, “The mothers are afraid to have more children, for fear they shall have daughters, who are not safe even in their mother’s presence.”¹¹ As she relays her unflinching account of colonial relations, Winnemucca positions her adult life as being in dedicated service to the Paiute, which often entailed acting as an intermediary between them and the United States. For a large portion of her life she acted as a translator and mediator in conflict zones between government agents, the military, and the Paiute, as she details in her book, and later in her life she turned her activism into lobbying, drawing from previous experiences in theatrical public performances with her family to give hundreds of speeches on behalf of her people.¹² She published only one book in her lifetime and died eight years after its publication, yet her autobiography stands as a boldly worded defense of her reputation, Indigenous women and their bodily sovereignty, and Paiute land rights.

Winnemucca’s autobiography distinguishes itself in Indigenous literary history not only as the first known book published by a Native woman with her byline, but also in its departure from the autobiographical style of earlier Indigenous male authors. While William Apess and George Copway, for example, structured their autobiographies around religious conversion, Winnemucca mentions religion only to point out Christian hypocrisy among the white people she encounters.¹³ Instead, she composes her book diplomatically around Native and white relationships, navigating the fine line between exposing white hypocrisy and racism while building alliances with her white readership. Winnemucca also centers gender as an important aspect of her autobiography, a choice that allows her to confront sexual violence and push back against gender stereotypes.¹⁴ Autobiography asserts the value of women’s lives in an American society that historically devalues them, and it documents what Sidonie Smith calls a “history of the body” and a material reclamation of the “I” of autobiography that “dramatically marks the white page.”¹⁵ Native literary critics similarly recognize the body politics at stake in early Indigenous women’s writing: in reading the narratives of Cherokee citizen Catharine Brown, for example, Theresa Strouth Gaul

identifies Brown's body as "a site where the struggles of empire were played out, both physically and textually." Specifically to Winnemucca, Cheryl Walker sees *Life among the Piutes* as foregrounding the problem of the body politic, which she defines as "the refusal of raced, classed, and gendered bodies to stay in their places in the national narrative."¹⁶ Their analyses point out the pressures Native women face while speaking out for their own bodies, as well as for the body politics of their nations. The female authorial struggle over corporeal narratives renders a fraught, complex, and ongoing process that becomes manifest in social and literary struggles of Winnemucca's autobiography. *Life among the Piutes*, then, records not only Winnemucca's embodiment within the autobiographical genre but also the numerous ways in which she puts her body on the line, risking her life as a diplomatic messenger between parties, defending herself against rape, and defying gendered and racial stereotypes.

While Winnemucca published for decades in numerous periodicals, as Cari Carpenter and Carolyn Sorisio have documented, her entry into book production began with her determination to share her story in a more detailed and extended format than she could offer with either her newspapers articles or her lectures.¹⁷ She found support and encouragement in her endeavors from a white philanthropist named Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, who sponsored the publication of *Life among the Piutes* with the editorial assistance of Peabody's sister, Mary Mann. Winnemucca met the sisters in Boston where they, well known in elite Boston circles for their political activism and social work, used their connections to organize a lecture circuit along the East Coast for Winnemucca, as well as an audience with Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Senator Henry L. Dawes. Winnemucca then produced a manuscript based in part on her public lectures with the goal of extending both her story and her reach. The social connections of the two sisters helped pave the way: Peabody and Mann supported Winnemucca's efforts with their limited resources, and they initiated a subscription to her book to help cover the publication costs and Winnemucca's expenses. Both John Greenleaf Whittier and Lydia Emerson, wife of Ralph Waldo Emerson, each subscribed for ten dollars, and Peabody found another five underwriters to cover the total publication expenses of \$600, which allowed the profit from every copy sold to benefit Winnemucca directly.¹⁸

Together, the three labored to produce the book and to time its publication intentionally before the next session of Congress in order to sway the legislative session in support of Native peoples. Indian Agent

William V. Rinehart, however, attempted to block the book's publication as part of a larger Bureau of Indian Affairs campaign to discredit Winnemucca and her public accusations of corruption against the agency and its agents.¹⁹ Winnemucca later excoriated Rinehart specifically in her testimony before the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs in 1884, in which she mentions his attempts to block her publication and triumphantly remarks,

I thank [Rinehart] for his kindness because instead of doing me an injury he has done me a favor. He tried to choke that book out of press in Boston, but my friends, whom I made, would not let it be done, and they got up a subscription and presented me with \$600 and had my book published which I am not ashamed to give every man in the world to read[,] and if I knew where Major Rinehart was I would send him a copy of my book.²⁰

Despite Rinehart's attempts, *Life among the Piutes* entered the literary marketplace in 1883, electrotyped by the Boston Stereotype Foundry and sold by Cupples, Upham & Co. in Boston; G. P. Putnam's Sons in New York; and by Winnemucca herself. The initial run of 600 books appears to be the only edition produced in her lifetime, however, and not until nearly one hundred years later did Chalfant Press produce a facsimile reproduction in 1969, followed by another facsimile released by the University of Nevada Press in 1994.²¹

While thus far I have discussed blank space as a geographical symbol, a key visual component of the printed page, and a contested space of erasure and violence, I also understand blank space as a rhetorical device. If we recognize the impact of blank space on the visual layout and thus interpretation of a text, then we can also recognize the social and contextual forces that, like blank space, profoundly shape what appears or does not appear on the printed page. In other words, I read blank space as a rhetorical strategy as well as a visual and symbolic paratextual element that influences the narrative's impact. Many scholars read *Life among the Piutes* as a deft rhetorical negotiation of both speech and silence, and they speak of the book's rhetoric as making "space" for Indigenous women's voices to be heard within an American literary corpus that has often represented their bodies as present in its narratives but given them no words or dialogue.²² Rosalyn Collings Eves, for example, assesses how Winnemucca navigated each physical space of her performances, from lecture halls to military forts, in order to create a space of rhetorical persuasion for her audiences. Similarly, Danielle Tisinger argues for

the ways in which Winnemucca carefully considered her image within her texts and during her physical performances in order to best craft “a space in the contact zone in which to open and maintain a dialogue between two disparate populations.”²³ Winnemucca’s technique, like the text on a page, arises from a white context that influences what she says in her narrative, yet she also negotiates profound moments of empowerment from within a predominantly white literary marketplace and bibliographical framework.

One of the most immediate ways in which *Life among the Piutes* negotiates space occurs from within the book’s paratext. Existing scholarship on *Life among the Piutes* often focuses on the rhetorical strategies and impact of its paratextual elements, often noting them as implicit responses to the politically motivated slander leveled against Winnemucca. For example, on both her title page and her copyright, Winnemucca uses her married name, Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, to reinforce her respectability within the social mores of nineteenth-century American culture. The title page similarly names her editor as “Mrs. Horace Mann,” establishing the book as a product of respectable married women, and Mann’s “Editor’s Preface” reaffirms Winnemucca’s status by referring to her formally as “Mrs. Hopkins.”²⁴ Although such moves come problematically from within a politics of respectability, they also implicitly respond to the attacks on Winnemucca’s morality due to her multiple marriages, her deviance from gender norms, and racist stereotypes of her “savagery” and perceived sexual promiscuity. Though Winnemucca did have multiple marriages and she indeed deviated from idealized white female gender norms through her role as a military translator, wartime diplomat, and political activist, the racist slander on her personal appearance and moral character were particularly vitriolic and offensive. After one of her successful lectures, for example, two regional newspapers targeted her personal appearance by pretending to judge her age by the “number of scales of greasy dirt” on her face, mocking her “unbound, unwashed, and uncombed” hair and muddy toes, and comparing her clothes to a horse blanket.²⁵ *Life among the Piutes* refutes such slander against Winnemucca’s body and reputation by refusing to give such rhetoric any space in her narrative, yet its paratextual elements remain shaped, influenced by, and directed at the accusations made against her.

Winnemucca bookends her autobiography with additional paratextual matter that defends her personhood and morality, speaking back to the rhetorically silenced slander. While the title page, the copyright,

and the editor's preface affirm Winnemucca's literary authority, no less than thirty-eight letters in a twenty-page appendix reinforce the veracity of Winnemucca's autobiography and her moral character. The affidavits range from "her conduct was always good" to affirming Winnemucca's "most valuable services during the operations of this year against the hostile Bannock and Piute Indians" to "She is entirely trustworthy and reliable." These paratextual elements reveal the tensions as well as collaborations embedded within *Life among the Piutes* as the letters problematically draw upon white testimonials to vouch for a Native woman's integrity. However, they also reinforce Winnemucca's authority and align the reputation of the individuals with hers to further promote the creation of white allies. In effect, the affidavits attempt to repurpose paratextual space as an invitation from the margins, so to speak, for white allies to join in what Sara Monahan identifies as the book's creation of a "web of Paiute relationships and textuality."²⁶ Siobhan Senior further points out that the documents "instruct us how to read her," as Winnemucca was "acutely conscious of being read and re-read."²⁷ By opening up her life experiences as a text, Winnemucca added to the pressures she faced as a gendered and representative embodiment of the Paiute, yet she also manages to redirect the readings of her person through a careful framing of paratextual space.

In addition to the paratextual elements that work to shape the book's reception, Winnemucca's book utilizes strategic omissions within her narrative storytelling. In her biography of Winnemucca, Sally Zanjani quickly notes that anything that might reflect badly on the Paiutes or Winnemucca herself has been omitted from her autobiography, and Malea Powell further claims, "what Winnemucca left out of *Life among the Piutes* was as important as what she put in." Zanjani's biography repeatedly highlights such textual omissions within Winnemucca's autobiography, including an odd absence of place-based descriptions, her multiple marriages, her father's death, her Christian conversion, and large chunks of her life. Mark Rifkin also remarks upon her glaring omission of the Ghost Dances of 1870 and 1890. In each case, Winnemucca's narrative silence plays to her white audience as a means of obtaining and maintaining their political sympathy. For example, Winnemucca mentions her marriage to Lewis Hopkins only in a brief sidenote in the last sentence of her autobiography, saying, "After my marriage to Mr. Hopkins I visited my people once more at Pyramid Lake Reservation, and they urged me again to come to the East and talk for them, and so I have come." Yet Zanjani documents three total marriages as well as three

other men that she possibly married or with whom she had serious liaisons.²⁸ Clearly Winnemucca omits the details of her love life to avoid judgment from her white readership and the accusations of sexual promiscuity leveled at her by her enemies. Instead, she employs blank space as a rhetorical silencing or erasure in order to maintain her authority with her readers, while at the same time framing her respectability in the earlier paratextual spaces of her book.

While the byline, copyright, appendix, and strategic narrative omissions certainly play a rhetorical role in *Life among the Piutes*, the literal blank spaces of the book, such as its paragraph and chapter breaks, receive less scholarly attention for the critical role they play in creating relationships and inducing sympathy. Winnemucca's original manuscript is not extant, and no records remain to document the extent of Winnemucca's authorial control over the layout of her text. Yet what does remain is a printed text in which Winnemucca certainly expressed pride and felt represented her story. The blank spaces of her book align with her goals and function in Winnemucca's narrative as rhetorical devices in line with the other strategies of text and paratext. Therefore, one may read the chapter and paragraph breaks in Winnemucca's narrative as rhetorical strategies that communicate the injustices experienced by the Paiutes at the hands of white settler colonials without alienating its white readership.

For instance, the first few paragraph breaks within the fifth chapter invite its readers to reflect over white wrongdoing. Winnemucca titles the chapter "Reservation of Pyramid and Muddy Lakes" and she begins with an idyllic description of the two lakes and the large mountain trout there that sustained her people. She ends the paragraph, however, by stating, "Since the railroad ran through in 1867, the white people have taken all the best part of the reservation from us, and one of the lakes also" (Figure 2).²⁹ By inserting the reader into an picturesque description and ending abruptly with a flat statement of white land theft, *Life among the Piutes* employs the blank space of a paragraph break as a rhetorical pause from the reader, bringing an affective emphasis to her understated accusation. Rather than utilize inflammatory language, emotion, or grammar, the invocation of blank space allows Winnemucca to engage critically and reflectively with her white audience without ostracizing them.

Winnemucca repeatedly calls upon blank space in tandem with restrained emotions in order to secure her white audience. In the same chapter, Winnemucca continues to end her paragraphs with flatly stated accusations emphasized by the rhetorical pause of blank space. After a conflict with soldiers in which old men, women, and children, including Winnemucca's

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RESERVATION OF PYRAMID AND MUDDY LAKES.

THIS reservation, given in 1860, was at first sixty miles long and fifteen wide. The line is where the railroad now crosses the river, and it takes in two beautiful lakes, one called Pyramid Lake, and the one on the eastern side, Muddy Lake. No white people lived there at the time it was given us. We Piutes have always lived on the river, because out of those two lakes we caught beautiful mountain trout, weighing from two to twenty-five pounds each, which would give us a good income if we had it all, as at first. Since the railroad ran through in 1867, the white people have taken all the best part of the reservation from us, and one of the lakes also.

The first work that my people did on the reservation was to dig a ditch, to put up a grist-mill and saw-mill. Commencing where the railroad now crosses at Wadsworth, they dug about a mile; but the saw-mill and grist-mill were never seen or heard of by my people, though the printed report in the United States statutes, which my husband found lately in the Boston Athenæum, says twenty-five thousand dollars was appropriated to build them. Where did it go? The report says these mills were sold for the benefit of the Indians who were to be paid in lumber for houses,

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FIGURE 2. Paragraph break on page 76 of the 1994 facsimile edition of *Life among the Piutes*. Author's collection.

baby brother, were killed, Winnemucca tells a harrowing tale of the narrow escape of her sister while being pursued by the soldiers. The event, she relates at the end of the paragraph, "almost killed my poor papa. Yet my people kept peaceful" (Figure 3).³⁰ Despite the emotions inherent in relating an instance of genocide in which soldiers burnt babies alive, including

father had all the young men with him, at the sink of Carson on a hunting excursion, or they would have been killed too. After the soldiers had killed all but some little children and babies still tied up in their baskets, the soldiers took them also, and set the camp on fire and threw them into the flames to see them burn alive. I had one baby brother killed there. My sister jumped on father's best horse and ran away. As she ran, the soldiers ran after her; but, thanks be to the Good Father in the Spirit-land, my dear sister got away. This almost killed my poor papa. Yet my people kept peaceful.

That same summer another of my men was killed on the reservation. His name was Truckee John. He was an uncle of mine, and was killed by a man named Flamens, who claimed to have had a brother killed in the war of 1860, but of course that had nothing to do with my uncle. About two weeks after this, two white men were killed over at Walker Lake by some of my people, and of course soldiers were sent for from California, and a great many companies came. They went after my people all over Nevada. Reports were made everywhere throughout the whole country by the white settlers, that the red devils were killing their cattle, and by this lying of the white settlers the trail began which is marked by the blood of my people from hill to hill and from valley to valley. The soldiers followed after my people in this way for one year, and the Queen's River Piutes were brought into Fort Churchill, Nevada, and in that campaign poor General McDermit was killed. These reports were only made by those white settlers so that they could sell their grain, which they could not get rid of in any other way. The only way the cattle-men and farmers get to make money is to start an Indian war, so that the troops may come and buy their beef, cattle, horses, and grain. The settlers get fat by it.

FIGURE 3. Paragraph break on page 78 of the 1994 facsimile edition of *Life among the Piutes*. Author's collection.

her baby brother, and nearly murdered her sister, Winnemucca ends with a short declarative sentence of restraint, followed by the blank space of a paragraph break. Both narrative text and the blank space of the paratext work in tandem to impress upon the readers an emphatic pause, asking them to absorb the inexpressible emotions evoked.

Rather than emphasize her own outrage, Winnemucca repeatedly transfers the emotion to the readers, whom she invites from the margins to react by offering the rhetorical and typographical *space* for such outrage. Winnemucca continues on the same page in another paragraph that documents the killing of her uncle, Truckee John, as part of a retaliatory killing spree by soldiers who “went after my people all over Nevada.” The root of the killing, she claims, came from white settlers who made false accusations to instigate a war in order to profit off of selling beef, cattle, horses, and grain to the soldiers. She ends the paragraph with another short, declarative statement: “The settlers get fat by it,” again invoking an inexpressible outrage and inviting the reader to absorb her emotions within the following blank space (review Figure 3).³¹ D. Jan Mennell offers one way to interpret the management of blank space in *Life among the Piutes* as the transmission of understated rage from author to reader, as readers must “construct meaning out of the text” through being “incessantly forced to listen to, read and interpret not only what is actually articulated, but also the silent spaces between and behind the utterances.” Blank space therefore functions not only as a visual component of the page, but a rhetorical and emotional component intended, in Simon Sibelman’s words, to “jolt a reader from complacent attitudes of reading as a purely mechanical operation.”³² In the process, readers find the space to pause and reflect while finding themselves encouraged into an active engagement with the textual narrative.

The blank space in *Life among the Piutes* functions not only to induce an active emotional engagement from the reader, but also to solicit social action, as Winnemucca’s petition demonstrates. Immediately following the end of Winnemucca’s narrative, Mann includes a “Note” on the next page saying, “Mrs. Hopkins has met with so much intelligent sympathy and furtherance that she has been encouraged to make the following petition to the next Congress, which a Massachusetts representative will present in the hope that it will help to shape aright the new Indian policy, by means of the discussion it will receive:—.” The note introduces a one-page petition below it, requesting the restoration of the Malheur Reservation to the Paiute, and the petition ends with a place for “[Signatures]” surrounded by blank space (Figure 4). Mann

NOTE. — Mrs. Hopkins has met with so much intelligent sympathy and furtherance that she has been encouraged to make the following petition to the next Congress, which a Massachusetts representative will present in the hope that it will help to shape aright the new Indian policy, by means of the discussion it will receive: —

“Whereas, the tribe of Piute Indians that formerly occupied the greater part of Nevada, and now diminished by its sufferings and wrongs to one-third of its original number, has always kept its promise of peace and friendliness to the whites since they first entered their country, and has of late been deprived of the Malheur Reservation decreed to them by President Grant: —

“I, SARAH WINNEMUCCA HOPKINS, grand-daughter of Captain Truckee, who promised friendship for his tribe to General Fremont, whom he guided into California, and served through the Mexican war, — together with the undersigned friends who sympathize in the cause of my people, — do petition the Honorable Congress of the United States to restore to them said Malheur Reservation, which is well watered and timbered, and large enough to afford homes and support for them all, where they can enjoy lands in severalty without losing their tribal relations, so essential to their happiness and good character, and where their citizenship, implied in this distribution of land, will defend them from the encroachments of the white settlers, so detrimental to their interests and their virtues. And especially do we petition for the return of that portion of the tribe arbitrarily removed from the Malheur Reservation, after the Bannock war, to the Yakima Reservation on Columbia River, in which removal families were ruthlessly separated, and have never ceased to pine for husbands, wives, and children, which restoration was pledged to them by the Secretary of the Interior in 1880, but has not been fulfilled.”

[Signatures.]

Whoever shall be interested by this little book or by Mrs. Hopkins's living word, will help to the end by copying the petition and getting signatures to it, and sending the lists before the first of December to my care, 54 Bowdoin street, Boston. For the weight of a petition is generally measured by its length. Several hundred names have already been sent in.

FIGURE 4. Note and petition of the 1994 facsimile edition of *Life among the Piutes*. Author's collection.

then includes instructions for the reader and mentions the several hundred other names that have already been sent in.³³ In a culmination of the use of blank space throughout the narrative to elicit sympathy and active engagement, the petition now encourages its readers to transfer their sentiment into their own written word, transforming emotions into social activism.

Here both Winnemucca and Mann call upon the ubiquitous practice of signing one's name in blank space, on a petition and in the margins, in order to enact political change. Women had long been writing their signatures within the blank spaces of a book's margins: according to Cathy Davidson's *Revolution and the Word* (2004), during the nineteenth century male and female relatives often fought over the possession of a book by competitively signing their names as owners in its blank spaces. Apparently, women often won, as Davison notes that within the more than one thousand extant copies of early American novels she surveyed, women's signatures outnumbered men's nearly two to one.³⁴ The predominance of women's signatures can be read in many ways—a defiant assertion of ownership during nineteenth-century laws of coverture, a means of appropriation, or the attempt to leave an inheritance or legacy.³⁵ The act of signing one's name in the margins, however, ultimately speaks to a personal act of human agency. The individual impresses the page with her existence, marking her life and individuality within a social sphere, if not also a political one. She also creates a record for future readers, connecting with them from within the material space of a book likely to outlast her own physical body. Joseph Rezek reads this materiality as an important aspect of a signature's legacy in his analysis of Phillis Wheatley's autographs in her *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), the first known book of poetry published in English by a person of African descent. By autographing her book on the copyright page, Rezek argues that Wheatley claimed her authority over her own book while emphasizing her humanity; furthermore, her signature ensures that her reader "felt her presence as part of their experience."³⁶ As Wheatley autographs her book's copyright page, then, she makes a powerful claim to ownership and to making a space for a material record of her body and her voice where there was no space, so to speak, from within oppressive regimes of slavery and sexism. Within *Life among the Piutes*, then, the petition's request for signatures in blank space not only affirms the support of Winnemucca's authority but also serves as an invitation for readers to contribute directly to the text, instigating a further collaborative alliance.³⁷

Winnemucca and Mann's bid met with success, for a year later, on January 4, 1884, Winnemucca appeared before the House of Representatives, presented her petition containing thousands of signatures, and pled for the restoration of the Malheur Reservation on behalf of the Paiute.³⁸ Of the signatures listed in the petition, a significant number are women, whose signatures as well as the petition itself speak to the greater public and political voice women fought for during the nineteenth century. Historically the petition stood as one of the most readily available means for disenfranchised groups to protest the legal systems in place that controlled their bodies and their lives. As early as 1783, an African American woman known only as "Belinda" filed a petition with the Massachusetts legislature, seeking financial restitution from her enslaver for her fifty years of labor, and throughout the nineteenth century, the petition became a ubiquitous tool for social reform. Women found it empowering for gaining their political voice on a number of political issues, including temperance, antislavery, suffrage, and treaty rights, and in some cases their signatures omitted, perhaps for the first time, the gendered nineteenth-century honorifics of "Mrs." or "Miss." As Lori Ginzberg summarizes, female petitioners "simply confronted their exclusion as full citizens and objected to it" by enlisting both the written word and blank space as an invitation to assert their own individual identities and bodily autonomy.³⁹

Many Native leaders also utilized the petition as a means of publicly claiming political power. From at least the eighteenth century, working on behalf of other tribal nations as well as their own, community leaders such as Oweneco, Mahomet, Samson Occom, William Apess, Henry Quaquaquid, and Samuel Ashpo brought forth petitions as a means of protecting Native spaces and recognized the form, in Joanna Brooks's words, as a way to "assert their authority and interject their own voices, perspectives, and beliefs into an often unfair and imbalanced legal process."⁴⁰ In *The Common Pot*, Lisa Brooks addresses the numerous Native petitions happening throughout the latter half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and she describes them as a request to one political body from another within the relational dynamics of "mutual obligatory reciprocity."⁴¹ Petitions harnessed the power of the collective "we," already ingrained within Indigenous social and political life, and they appealed from a position of power, as their collective body of signatures reminded government agents of their strength in numbers.

Yet Winnemucca's petition also expresses remarkable faith in the beneficial power of signatures in blank space given the history of treaty

relationships between the United States and Native nations. While women and Native nations may have found a growing political power in putting their signatures, as well as their printed words, into the blank space of petitions, Indigenous men often faced coercion and gross injustice when putting their marks into the blank space of treaties. The Northern Paiutes did not have any formal treaties with the federal government, as the United States had ended treaty relationships in 1871, but the narrative of *Life among the Piutes* retains a healthy skepticism toward signing papers.⁴² All her life, Winnemucca had seen her father treat a letter, his “rag friend,” as an agent of power, yet she had also seen through military and federal government correspondence how the power of the page could be utilized as a tool both for peaceful negotiations and for violence.⁴³ Repeatedly through her autobiography, Winnemucca relates the deception her people encountered through paper, which in one instance was used to briefly sentence her brother to prison when a group of Paiute people were tricked into signing him away. As a result, Winnemucca often gives voice to Paiute refusal to sign through scenes in which individuals speak out and say, “I am sick and tired of lies, and I won’t sign any paper” and “I am going to quit signing any paper, for I don’t know what I have been signing all these twenty-two years.”⁴⁴ Meanwhile, however, Winnemucca chooses to make her pleas with print—in diplomatic correspondence, newspapers, and her book—as well as orally in her lectures and translations. She clearly retains hope in her father’s “rag friends” and their potential as a space of possibility, despite her full awareness of their equal potential for deceit and social injustice.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, she creatively calls upon the petition, in a reversal of the historical relations of treaties, when she persuades her *white* audience to make their mark on blank space to *restore* land. Despite everything then, Winnemucca recognizes paper, its written words as well its blank spaces, as a tool that can be used to benefit her people, and she equally recognizes herself as capable of utilizing that tool in creating a space of potential empowerment.

Blank Space and White Space in S. Alice Callahan’s *Wynema*

When S. Alice Callahan takes up sentimental fiction eight years later in *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (1891), she attempts to elicit empathy from her white audience for her Indigenous characters as they grapple with war, allotment, ethnocentrism, and assimilation. In addition to being

the first known novel published by a Native woman, *Wynema* also marks an important moment in Indigenous literary history for addressing the genocide at Wounded Knee only months after it happened, ostensibly adding the novel's last few chapters in haste to an almost finished novel. *Wynema* had been picked up by H.J. Smith & Co., a publishing house in Chicago that predominantly sold subscription books; however, *Wynema* received few notices, and newspapers largely ignored Callahan's debut novel. After poor sales, the book was acquired by a Chicago-based newcomer to the subscription book business, the E. A. Weeks and Company, which reprinted *Wynema* in June 1893 with its Melbourne Series.⁴⁶ Yet after these initial runs and sparse critical reviews, the novel faded from public attention and became largely forgotten for most of the twentieth century. With less than a handful of surviving copies, *Wynema* nearly disappeared from the literary record, if not for the efforts of librarians and researchers such as Carolyn Thomas Foreman, who kept the novel alive in the historical record during the 1950s, and A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, who recovered the novel in the 1990s and published a new edition with the University of Nebraska Press over one hundred years after its initial publication.

The novel opens with Wynema, a Mvskoke child living happily as a "child of the forest," who begs for a white education first from Methodist missionary Gerald Keithly and then from the genteel Genevieve Weir, who comes to the Mvskoke community as a teacher.⁴⁷ Wynema thrives under Genevieve's tutelage and quickly learns Shakespeare and Dickens alongside her English language skills to become a star pupil. As Wynema grows up, she also educates Genevieve, who initially expresses ethnocentrism and balks at Mvskoke food, religious practices, and other cultural traditions. Though Wynema notices her teacher's prejudices, such as when Genevieve rejects the blue dumpling that Wynema devours eagerly, it is the white missionary Gerald who directly addresses Genevieve's ethnocentrism and reprimands her.⁴⁸ Rather than sow discord, however, the gentle confrontations between Genevieve and Gerald cause them to fall in love. In the meantime, Wynema meets and falls in love with Genevieve's brother Robin, and the novel likely would have ended with their marriages if not for the addition of the last several chapters in response to Wounded Knee.

By allowing the white characters to correct and educate each other, *Wynema* models a Native-white alliance that invites its readers into a similar political advocacy. However, one of the major critiques of the novel comes from the consequences of centering the conversations

of the white characters while sidelining its Native characters. Leading such criticism, Womack reads the novel as a “document of Christian supremacism and assimilation” and opines that “total whitewashing seems to be the book’s highest aim.”⁴⁹ Although Womack rightly problematizes the novel, more than a dozen female scholars have since offered interpretations that situate the novel within the sentimental genre and cite its narrative strategies as a political appeal to white female readers.⁵⁰ Beth Piatote, for example, considers Callahan’s choice of the sentimental genre as an effective vehicle for reaching a white readership, citing the genre’s capacity to make space for “experiences of love and connection within Indian families” while simultaneously depicting the horror that colonial genocide enacts on those families. Cheryl Walker also counters Womack’s reading of the novel’s whiteness by pointing out that “the text itself is outspokenly critical of the assumption that white culture is superior to the culture of the Indians, and it is far from delicate in its condemnation of professing Christians.” Melissa Ryan reads the novel as directed toward the “(re)education of white women reformers” rather than a culturally accurate representation of the Mvskoke Nation. She argues for the centering of white characters as a means to correct the reader’s own ethnocentrism and prejudices, redirecting the “self-congratulatory rhetoric of Indian reform to present her readers with a reconstructed image of themselves.”⁵¹ Instead of promoting whiteness and white supremacy, then, *Wynema*’s narrative seeks to reform it by working from within a white literary and bibliographical framework, though with admittedly uneven success.

Wynema does not have to contend with the personal slander and attacks of immorality that shape the text and paratext of *Life among the Piutes*. Nowhere in the paratext does there appear a “Mrs.” or a “Miss,” and Callahan’s book contains no petition or lengthy appendix of letters testifying to her character. The book does open, however, with a publisher’s preface and a dedication that situate the book uneasily as an Indigenous representation to a white audience. In *Wynema*’s first edition, the reader first encounters a lengthy paratextual space occupied by a publisher’s preface that attempts to build sympathy for Native peoples. It reaches out to the fellow white reader to listen to “an Indian, one of the oppressed,” and it praises the novel for representing “the Indians’ side of the Indian question told by an Indian born and bred.” However supportive it tries to be, though, the preface continually undermines itself with its own racism: it labels the novel as “worthy of respectful consideration even though they be [*sic*] the opinions of an Indian” and

diminutively describes “this little volume” as the offering a “picture of the home life of this simple people.” Thus, though the preface positions itself as advocating on behalf of Callahan’s plea for political justice, the presumably white publishers mediate Callahan’s text by highlighting first their own authority to vouch for her and then undermining Native opinions and intelligence. It also distances the white reader’s investment and complicity in white supremacy, locating “white greed” as outside of the reader’s experience and aligning the readers instead with “our Red brothers.” Like *Life among the Piutes*, then, the paratextual framing presented here fights for the rhetorical space to mediate, control, and interpret the narratives of Indigenous literature in what Watts describes as a bibliographical staging of the colonial drama.⁵²

While the preface comes before Callahan’s dedication in the first edition, the order is reversed in the contemporary University of Nebraska Press edition, prioritizing Callahan’s words in space before those of her white publisher.⁵³ Callahan’s dedication, however, remains troubled by how best to facilitate a sympathetic alliance between Native and non-Native peoples while also calling out white supremacy. The opening paratextual dedication reads, “To the Indian tribes of North America who have felt the wrongs and oppression of their pale-faced brothers, I lovingly dedicated this work, praying that it may serve to open the eyes and heart of the world to our afflictions, and thus speedily issue into existence an era of good feeling and just dealing toward us and our more oppressed brothers.” Like *Life among the Piutes*, however, such paratextual spaces exhibit a rhetorical tension in their political stance: though the book is lovingly dedicated “to the Indian tribes,” such language distances the author from an immediate racial or tribal affiliation, in contrast to a dedication such as “To my people,” or “To my Mvskoke people,” for instance. Though later in the sentence the author does claim a stake in “our afflictions,” she then asks for more “just dealing toward us and our more oppressed brothers,” ambiguously deflecting the sentence’s earlier declaration of Indigenous “wrongs and oppression” toward an unknown, more oppressed peoples. Furthermore, the dedication also deflects its declaration of “wrongs and oppression” by attributing it to “*their* pale-faced brothers” rather than “*our* pale-faced brothers,” again reinforcing a distance between the author and her tribal nation. Lisa Tatonetti describe the complex and ambivalent positionality of Callahan’s paratextual framing here succinctly: “Indians are a ‘they’ and ‘them’ of which Callahan herself is sometimes a part and sometimes not.”⁵⁴ Finally, the language of “pale-faced brothers” assigns blame to white men,

leaving white women unaccounted for in the workings of social injustice. Winnemucca's *Life among the Piutes* exhibited a similar rhetorical tension in the paratextual space of its subtitle when it announces that Winnemucca will speak of "their," not "our," wrongs and claims. Overall, the language of Callahan's dedication intends to create the paratextual space for a political statement without alienating its white readership, yet it ends up with ambivalent shifts in possessive pronouns that successfully build sympathy but unsuccessfully communicate the political intentions present.

More so than *Life among the Piutes*, Callahan's novel struggles to find its rhetorical footing. While sentimental fiction dominated the literary marketplace for women writers and readers during the nineteenth century and thus offered an appealing vehicle for social reform, it could also be a conservative genre, guiding its readers toward not only "proper" feelings but also whose bodies could appropriately display sentiment and citizenship.⁵⁵ Sentimental fiction also tended to privilege models of white domesticity, as Beth Piatote warns. *Wynema*, however, embraces the genre as one way to reconfigure literary whiteness and invoke a corporeal sympathy from her white audience.⁵⁶ Sentimental genres aim to elicit emotions and sympathy from their readers: Sánchez-Eppler describes the particular success of sentimental fiction as its ability to connect physically as well as emotionally, "to translate words into pulse beats and sobs." Rather than other genres that may hold the body in suspense or fear, sentimental fiction invites a physical response of intimacy and connection that nevertheless performs cultural and political work. Most scholars, in fact, point to Callahan's use of sentimentalism as the primary achievement of her text: as Bernardin asserts, sentimentality offered one of the few meeting grounds for nineteenth-century women from different and often antagonistic positions, and it provided them with a set of shared vocabulary and affective values with which to address "socially unspeakable issues of race and sexuality—often through a narrative focus on miscegenation—and their implications for national self-definition." Not only does the sentimental genre seek to connect physically with the body of the reader, then, but it also takes up the body as a central concern. Positioning the body as what Sánchez-Eppler calls a "privileged structure for communicating meaning," sentimental fiction links the textual body, the readerly body, and national bodies in ways that trouble boundaries and fixed categories.⁵⁷

The first chapter begins with a full paragraph describing the birth and happy childhood of Wynema. Although the paragraph caters to the racist

and culturally erroneous language of Wynema as a “little savage” who lived in a “teepee,” the narrative nevertheless communicates the deep love Wynema’s parents have for her and the peaceful, not war-mongering, life they lived.⁵⁸ The narrative also uses vivid descriptions that immediately appeal to the reader’s senses, such as the “dark, cool forest” and the river that “flowed peacefully” around their homes.⁵⁹ Such language invokes the genre conventions of sentimental fiction as it appeals to the reader’s senses, both physically and emotionally, and invites them to build an emotional connection with Wynema and her family. Picking up on the subtitle, the narrative then asks the reader to relive or imagine their own happy feelings as a child with charming descriptions of Wynema as a little girl, “quite small, and barely able to hold a rifle,” learning how to hunt with her father. The idyllic depictions quickly disintegrate over the next two paragraphs, however, into choppy, short, emotional descriptions of colonization that speak of the “rough, white hand that will soon shatter your dream and scatter the dreams” and the white man’s destruction of Indigenous “quiet habitations into places of business and strife.”⁶⁰ The paragraph breaks imitate the cultural breaks described, and the typographical white space of the one- and two-sentence paragraphs reinforces the repetition of “white hand” and “white man.” Here blank space takes on a symbolic “white” space, working in relation with the textual narrative to put race and racism at the forefront. Yet the narrative also calls up the emotional and physical sensations of sentimentality to reconfigure Indigenous humanity (even while utilizing stereotypes) as peaceful, loving family members.

The first chapter ends with a similar use of blank space to underscore the complicated and conflicted political stance of *Wynema*. After initiating a movement to build a school in her community, Wynema pleads for the white missionary Gerald Keithly to send for a female schoolteacher. When one agrees to come, the narrative ends abruptly with a single sentence, “Thus came civilization among the Teepee Indians,” followed by the white space of a chapter break. While Wynema begged to receive a Western education, only a few paragraphs before the narrative had lamented the coming of settler colonialism and the “rough, white hand that will soon shatter your dream” followed by the accentuation of blank white space. With this chapter break, however, preceded by the abrupt declarative sentence, the reader is left unsure and conflicted. Does the abruptness and blank space together signal an understated irony about whether it is really “civilization” coming? Does the blank space hint of the “whitewashing” that follows assimilation similar to the ways in which

Susan Bernardin, in another context, considers the temptation to read white space in California literary and aesthetic arts as a “visual nod to the whitewashing of California history, especially mission history”?⁶¹ Or, does it match the ambivalent political position revealed in other paratextual spaces such as the dedication?

The blank space here offers a number of interpretations for the reader, interpretations made richer by an attention to the relationship between text and space. Barbara Postema’s analysis of the use of space between comic panels yields a similar understanding of the possibilities that space generates when she claims, “Unlike the spaces between words, the space between panels does not always signify the same thing. We are faced with the necessity to *read* the spaces, as the space itself generates meaning.” Callahan wrote her debut novel when she was twenty-three years old, and without an extant manuscript we do not know her authorial intentions in regard to her novel’s layout and the placement of its paragraph and chapter breaks. Yet since the material conditions of print production already trouble any claims to an unmediated and uninfluenced book, attending to the paratext allows us to redirect our considerations from whose intent to whose voices the book puts in conversation and in relationship. In sentimental fiction, the relationships built with “pulse beats and sobs” in the narrative become additionally affective with the pause of blank space that invites the reader to absorb, reflect, and even write down their responses. Bonnie Mak pinpoints its rhetorical power when she claims, “By leaving space on the page unfilled, designers provide openings for readers to pause and consider the thoughts that they have encountered. Readers are given the opportunity in these zones to contemplate, consider, and question ideas, and may even be encouraged by the empty spaces to add their own thoughts to the page.”⁶² Although the genre conventions of sentimental literature may seek to influence its readers with physical and emotional sensations, *Wynema*’s blank space invites the reader from the margins into an additionally affective moment of critical reflection when considering the impact of “civilization” and settler colonialism.

As the novel’s plot progresses, the narrative becomes more politically direct but still retains the reflective assistance of blank space. While the main characters listen in, a minor character named Chikena tells of the wrongdoing by the U.S. government toward her people, identified in the novel as the Sioux. After a long paragraph of injustices such as starvation that led them to the Ghost Dance, Chikena stops her reflection with the sentences, “Many of our men died dancing, for they had

become so weak with fasting that they could not stand the exertion. Then the great Government heard of our dances, and fearing trouble, sent out troops to stop us.” While the reader pauses to reflect on the injustice surrounding the Ghost Dances, a sentence set off with dialogue spacing ensures that the reader did not miss the point: “‘Strange the great Government did not hear of your starving too, and send troops to stop *that*,’ remarked Robin, per parenthesis.”⁶³ Nearly a full line of blank space follows Robin’s short statement, meant to invite further reflection and empathy from the reader. Working in conjunction with the text, blank space reinforces the act of reading as a political act, shaped by the forces of sympathy and emotion as well as critical pauses.

Like Winnemucca’s autobiography, *Wynema* struggles to re-create the white space of white supremacy into a white alliance, and moreover, to express women’s stories from within an oppressive silencing, or in Tatonetti’s words, “telling the very tale that is ostensibly lost to the world.”⁶⁴ The rhetorical omissions within *Life among the Piutes* come from a place of protection, as Winnemucca silently omits any information that may damage her authority with her audience. Callahan’s novel, however, struggles with its own elisions and absences of representation and is in fact “shadowed by omissions,” including the absence of African American characters, mention of the Mvskoke internal conflict named the Green Peach War, and the Battle of the Little Bighorn.⁶⁵ I argue elsewhere for the political significance of such absences and narrative gaps, citing the immense social pressure Callahan faced from the racist stereotypes of print culture, prominently included in the text, as well as the psychological trauma induced by the racism and genocide Indigenous peoples lived through during the late nineteenth century. Callahan’s novel nearly breaks against the conventions of sentimental fiction in its effort to communicate genocide and horror within a generic space of domesticity and romance. In his biography of William Apess, Drew Lopenzina articulates similar narrative gaps as Apess runs against the emotional and literary limits of his experience, trying to convey “a shattered emotional state difficult if not impossible to articulate, and experiences beyond the pale of what Western audiences were capable of hearing and what he himself was capable of telling.”⁶⁶ Both authors claimed the blank spaces of rhetorical omission as a place in which they could inscribe Indigenous experiences, yet such space also remained fraught and contested as they struggled to speak within the predominantly white space of the literary marketplace.

Blank space, therefore, plays a meaningful role not only in a book's paratextual and rhetorical spaces but also within its materiality as "white" space. Drawing from the foundational work of archaeologist James Deetz, Bridget Heneghan points out the increasing whiteness of material objects, including ceramics, house paint, gravestones, women's clothing, and interior design, emerging in America during the late eighteenth century and spreading over the course of the nineteenth century. She argues that the increasing whiteness of such objects coincided not only with the increased technologies of mass production but also with the social solidification of race based on one's possession, or nonpossession, of whiteness. Paralleling Cheryl Harris's foundational essay on whiteness as property, Heneghan claims that whiteness in America came not only from one's claim to racialized whiteness based on the color of one's skin but also from one's ownership over white objects, such as the book. Put simply, Heneghan states, "White things radiated refinement, order, discipline: but in doing so, they also radiated race." Anne McClintock makes a similar argument in drawing connections between white commodities and white imperialism in her chapter on "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising," in which she connects a "middle class Victorian fascination with clean, white bodies and clean, white clothing" with white supremacy and its imperial economy.⁶⁷ The ownership of the more expensive white objects, then, became material proof of one's racialized whiteness as well as the evidence of whiteness as a property to be owned. Applied to the whiteness of the book's blank space, its racialized connotations structure, shape, and attempt to control the reader's encounter with the narrative. In other words, the material whiteness of the page reflects not only the white dominance of the publishing industry but also the racialized white power structure embedded and embodied in bibliographical spaces.

Lest such arguments seem overwrought in connection to paper, many bibliographers have remarked on the increasing whiteness of paper from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, not coincidentally the time during which Indigenous women writers first published their books and writers of color joined the literary marketplace in exponentially increasing numbers. In his *A History of Paper-Manufacturing in the United States*, Lyman Weeks notes that many papermakers during the late eighteenth century set aside white rags for a higher quality product, while the more common papermaking practice generated a dirty white or brownish-colored pulp that produced a typically brown,

gray, or mottled hue of paper. Papermakers then reserved white paper for writing and printing, while brown paper went to more utilitarian purposes such as wrapping paper or butcher paper. Such sorting practices, even to the point of segregated white mills for white paper and brown mills for brown paper, required significantly greater labor and cost. Yet as the industrialization of the nineteenth century continued, paper manufacturing made an even greater investment in the whiteness of printing paper, so much so that by the beginning of the twentieth century, Jan Tschichold laments the loss of paper's ecru tone and attacks the modern "detergent white offset paper which was never meant to be used for books," while derogatorily comparing its stark white to refrigerators, sanitary appliances, and the dentist's office.⁶⁸ The starkly printed contrast between white page and black ink, therefore, had less to do with its readability than with a continuing investment in white ideology.

Race and gender became deeply embedded into the page as "white" paper and the language surrounding its value. Whiteness, Jonathan Senchyne claims, had become a common expectation of paper by the middle of the nineteenth century, and its blank, white sheets signified a variety of social formations such as white femininity, virginity, purity, and, not least of all, racialized whiteness. The blank white page symbolized the "virginal," white, and receptively feminized body upon which one could write one's name, disseminate and reproduce a text, and procreate one's own immortality. Megan Benton also analyzes the modern implementation of more white space around and within text blocks as a nineteenth-century development in "feminine" type and typography, which later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century designers such as William Morris would deride using gendered terms. Furthermore, as racialized whiteness worked to establish itself throughout the nineteenth century as the normal, invisible background against which other hyper-visualized bodies should be judged and evaluated, the blank white page also works to establish the "black" text and other nonwhite bodies as highly visible and meant to be read. In this way, whiteness attempted to control the power of bodies in space: as one of the tenets of the "racial contract," Charles Mills explains, "The norming of space is partially done in terms of the *rac*ing of space, the depiction of space as dominated by individuals (whether persons or subpersons) of a certain race. At the same time, the norming of the individual is partially achieved by *spacing* it, that is, representing it as imprinted with the characteristics of a certain kind of

space.”⁶⁹ In other words, bodies and spaces become mutually constitutive in a circular process—we learn to read and define the body in terms of the spaces it occupies, and we characterize spaces by the bodies which inhabit it.

Callahan’s *Wynema*, therefore, treads carefully in the midst of such underlying connotations for blank white space and deserves attention not only for its rhetorical strategies toward a white audience, but also for its negotiations of material whiteness and cultural power. In *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*, Moreton-Robinson notes the dearth of Indigenous studies scholarship on whiteness and argues for whiteness as a category of analysis as central to understanding “how white possession and power in its discursive and material forms operate in tandem through identity, institutions, and practices in everyday life.” Both Winnemucca and Callahan constantly engage in the rewriting of white space: Carpenter, for example, points out Winnemucca’s persistent calling out of whiteness in *Life among the Piutes* as a visible, racialized identifier as well as a politically potent signifier. Rather than work within a racialized binary, however, Winnemucca “rewrites racial language so that a word like ‘white’ refers not to skin color but to one’s betrayal of family or, by extension, one’s nation.”⁷⁰ The consciousness and high visibility of a white readership shapes Callahan’s novel, and as a result, its paratextual elements walk the line between the creation of white alliances and the constrictions of the bibliographically embedded manifestations of white supremacy. Taken together, *Wynema*’s aesthetic shortcomings, as well as its rhetorical strengths, both point us to the ways in which the first known novel published by a Native woman must negotiate the predominate social and material whiteness of the literary marketplace.

Conclusion: Indigenous Female Corporeality and Book Production

Later editions of both *Life among the Piutes* and *Wynema* place a greater emphasis on representations of the bodies of its Indigenous female authors. While the 1891 and 1893 publications of *Wynema* do contain generically drawn illustrations of Native women in wooded scenery, no image of Callahan herself appears until the 1997 edition, in which Ruoff provides two images of Callahan, one as a frontispiece and the other as a very enlarged portrait of Callahan’s face, centered on the cover with the title in a large, white text.⁷¹ For *Life among the Piutes*, neither the 1969 Chaffant Press nor the 1994 University of Nevada facsimile editions

change very many paratextual elements. They each provide only short introductions to the text that situate it more as a historical document than as an autobiography; instead, their paratextual changes seem directed more toward representations of Winnemucca's body. Although the first edition includes no images or illustrations at all, the 1969 reproduction includes five photographs of Winnemucca and her family, the first two of which feature Winnemucca in a portrait image and then in a full-body-length image. The 1994 reproduction then showcases a cover image that consists almost entirely of blank space, with a reproduced head shot of Winnemucca hanging over the edge of the cover and taking up only about one-third of the space (Figure 5). Yet here the blank space that composes the main aesthetic body of the book's cover features red, rather than white, blank space.⁷² As the first Indigenous female authors of the book, Callahan and Winnemucca fought to create space for "red" writers within the material and ideological whiteness of print culture. Their focus on a white readership performs a response to the social and material conditions of race and gender in nineteenth-century America, conditions which they simultaneously chose to work within and to challenge. As a financial and political venture, the success of their books depended on, in Senchyné's words, their literal "ability to present ideas in black and white," and yet their political content seeks to create a "red" space in which to rewrite genre conventions, racial stereotypes, and gendered constraints.⁷³

Blank space prompts us to recall the multi-faceted nature of reading: it does not simply consist of a sequential or linear decoding of letters, but a broader conceptual activity of meaning-making that takes into account every aspect of the page and includes "learning how to let books speak to us in ways other than through the words they contain." As a result, a critical awareness of the impact of space upon textual narratives reminds us of the material impact of stories upon bodies and the physical and geographical spaces which bodies occupy. The paratextual reader must work not to see any bibliographical space as passive, but rather to recognize the active role bibliographical space plays in shaping the text, its aesthetics, its interpretation, and its politics, especially for marginalized writers. These marginalized subjects, and especially female subjects, bear the unjust burden of marked corporeality, yet Callahan and Winnemucca manage to re-create Indigenous female corporeality from "at the edge of visibility, troubling the space from which it has been banished."⁷⁴ Though their texts confront dismissal or a diminutive status for cultural misrepresentation, perceived assimilationist politics,



FIGURE 5. Cover image of the 1994 University of Nevada Press edition of *Life among the Piutes*. Author's collection.

and aesthetic shortcomings, yet they also speak to the revisionist ways in which Indigenous female writers find expression within constraint and reach toward empowerment from within disenfranchisement. The Indigenous woman writer's engagement with the blank page, then, reappears as the struggle for agency, authorship, and the paratextual embodiment of women's stories.