

Tracking The Life of A Postmodern Mixed-blood American Indian Woman in *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* by Janet Campbell Hale: An Impossibility to Conciliate Two Worlds

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Abstract

The fight for the redefinition of postmodern mixed-Blood American Indian woman in American contemporary society keeps on vivifying intellectual debates. The legacy to belong to two antagonistic visions of the world leads the contemporary mixed-Blood American Indian woman to not only fight for her emancipation but also to reconcile two contradictory views of the world. Such situation leads her to confront a dilemma of constructing a self that conciliates two opposite sides. This article explores the life of Cecelia Capture, a postmodern mixed-Blood American Indian Woman in Hale's novel *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* in order to apprehend the responses she provides to her biracial identity.

Keywords: Tracking – Postmodern –Mixed-blood – Indian – Woman

Résumé

La lutte pour la redéfinition de la femme postmoderne amérindienne métissée dans la société contemporaine américaine demeure une question préoccupante. L'héritage d'appartenir à deux mondes antagonistes conduit la femme amérindienne métissée à se battre non seulement pour son émancipation mais aussi pour la conciliation de deux visions contradictoires du monde. Cette situation la position face à un dilemme. Celui de se construire une identité conciliante. Cet article explore la vie de Cecelia Capture, une femme postmoderne amérindienne métissée dans le roman *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* de Janet Campbell Hale dans le but de comprendre les solutions qu'elle apporte à la question de sa double identité raciale.

Mots clés: exploration – vie – femme - amérindienne – postmoderne – métissé

Introduction

The situation of postmodern mixed-Blood American Indian women in American society remains a major preoccupation in American Indian literary productions. The question is at the core of several American Indian literary works. Writers such as Paula Gunn Allen, James Welch, and Jana Sequoya-Magdaleno to name but a few, tackle American Indian bi-racial issue. Paula Gunn explains that "Modern American Indian women, like their non-Indian sisters, are deeply engaged in the

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struggle to redefine themselves. [What is distinct] in their struggle [is]: they have to reconcile traditional tribal definitions of women with non-Indian definitions.’’(*The Sacred Hoop*, 1992:43). The statement explains that American Indian women have to fight for their definition. But what makes their struggle specific is the need to conciliate two opposite sides of their identity.

James Welch also tackles the issue of Indian bi-racial question in his novel entitled *The Death of Jim Loney*. A situation that Jim’s white lover uses to laugh at him when she states “... oh you’re so lucky to have two sets of ancestors. Just think, you can be Indian one day and white the next. Whichever suits you ” (*The Death of Jim Loney*, 2008:14). Here, the protagonist’s white lover teases him about his mixed-blood matter which embarrasses him. Jana Sequoya-Magdaleno sees that embarrassing situation in terms of ‘metacommunication’ (*Jana Sequoya*. 1993: 463), a moment of hesitation, a moment during which the mixed-Blood does not know which side to choose.

Similarly, Janet Campbell Hale’s *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* illuminates the world of a mixed-Blood Indian woman named Cecelia Capture Welles. In the novel, Cecelia, the protagonist of the novel have to not only fight for her welfare but also succeed in conciliating two worlds she embodies. Hale constructs a 1980’s story of a lost Indian generation, expatriates within America. A generation disconnects from its roots and fails to find a standpoint in the postmodern world. There lies the dilemma she faces.

The dilemma originates from their belonging to two antagonistic worlds which reject each other, a fact that Paula calls a “confusion of dualities” (*The Sacred Hoop*, 1992:134) that is to say, the mixed-Blood woman is embarrassed by the antagonism of the two parties that make her identity. As such, she is alienated, an alienation that results from her rejection by both worlds she embodies. Therefore, Jim Loney states: “It would be nicer to be one or the other [...] than being a half-breed.”(*The Death of Jim Loney*, 2008:13) For, belonging to two opposite worlds nourishes the consciousness of being rejected by both. A consciousness that raises two outstanding questions. First one is how to unify two contradictory aspects of one’s being? And the second is how to implement such combination into a postmodern context materialized by the quest for individual liberty? Answers to these questions leads to the objective of the article which is to examine the life of Cecelia, a postmodern mixed-Blood Indian woman in order to explore the responses she provides to her double identity.

In order to better apprehend the life of the protagonist in the novel, and to explore how she responds to her dual-identities, this analysis of *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* summons postmodernism concepts of ‘irrationality’ ‘dominant-dominated ratio’ ‘individual fulfilment’ ‘the refusal of metanarratives’ ‘hedonism’ and Feminism. For according to Gning Maurice quoting Jean Francois Lyotard, admits that:

Postmodernity, the currently dominant thought of our contemporary age, rejects any totalizing vision and remembers the plurality of points of view. It considers that there is no absolute truth, but infinite possibilities of interpretation of reality. It sets the stage for all excluded groups, judged and condemned from exogenous realities. This is the case of women caught in the trap of male domination. Postmodernists give particular importance to individual freedom and especially to his/her pleasures (Lyotard quoted by Gning Maurice, 2017:187).

The article is designed around four subsections. The first one entitled: Cecelia’s Feminist Spirit explores Cecelia’s feminist vision through her opposition to her patriarchal conservative mother. She refuses that her womanhood be assessed through domestic chores and child rearing. The second section named Cecelia’s Postmodernist Expression and Manifestation enlightens her postmodernist propensity. The third one entitled: The Limits of Cecelia’s Feminism and Postmodernity. This part demonstrates how Cecelia’s Postmodernism and feminism visions lead her astray. The last part introduces as Cecelia’s Postmodern Response to her bi-racial status, echoes Cecelia’s impossibility to conciliate her dual-identities.

1. Cecelia’s Feminist Propensity

Cecelia’s feminist tendency is in her rejection of her womanhood to be assessed through the performance of domestic chores and child rearing. Cecelia “rejected the formula: housework equals virtue, womanly virtue. The harder one worked, the shinier the floor, the more dishes washed, the better the woman who had done the work” (*Cecelia Capture: 93*). The statement exhibits without ambiguity Cecelia’s feminist vision. She refuses as woman that her value depends on the performance of domestic chores. The formula to which, Cecelia alludes to, is the patriarch established norms which classify social tasks according to genders. Genders social classification of tasks weaken women and give power to men to rule over them. It prioritizes man as the chief of the family and the wife as his property. In such society, the only target of women’s tasks is the welfare of her husband and kids. The role of woman in the family is therefore limited to the cooking of foods, the cleaning of the household, the sweeping of the floor. As a feminist, Cecelia rejects such vision. Her womanhood will not be assessed on the

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basis of this patriarch established norms. She will never be in such a prison like her mother. She will never be submitted to a man.

According to the patriarch social established norms, women are naturally endows with the task of giving birth and responsible for the rearing of children. Taking care of children is not a task to be performed by men. Related to her function of taking care of children, women are condemned to stay home and men go out to look for living subsistence. As a feminist, Cecelia rejects these patriarchal norms and reverses the role. She is the one who is out and her Husband Nathan stays home for the rearing and caring of kids. Cecelia's attitude to go out and gives the task to her husband to take care of kids is a revolt against the established norms. She sees herself equal to her husband. She too has the right to rule her life as she wishes. She is not the only person endows with the skills to rear kids. Her husband too can take care of them. She refuses to be jailed at home on the false pretext that she is a mother therefore she has the task to take care of kids. Therefore, she contends: "[she], Cecelia did not feel able to take care of [her children]. She thought she might never be strong and whole enough again to resume her maternal responsibilities" (*Cecelia Capture: 17*).

Cecelia's feminist tendency is also revealed through her opposition to her patriarchal conservative mother, Mary Theresa. Cecelia is totally opposed to her mother. An opposition she clearly expresses when she qualifies her mother as a "tyrant-mother" (*Cecelia Capture: 93*). Cecelia considers her mother as an absolute ruler. She rules over her children arbitrarily without restriction. As such, Cecelia sees her mother as an oppressor. As a feminist she cannot accept such offences. Therefore, avoiding to confront her mother openly she uses the way of "both consciously and deliberately [laziness]" (*Cecelia Capture: 92*). Therefore, she admits: "if she accept[s] that, she would lose all sense of herself, be completely cast adrift and at her tyrant-mother's mercy. [So, Cecelia's] laziness was a point of honor, a way of asserting her independence" (*Cecelia Capture: 93*).

Cecelia considers her mother's tyranny as a ramification of patriarchal thought. In fact, Cecelia's opposition to her mother is sustained by her refusal to accept her mother's formula of rearing her children. She tends to educate her children in a line that perpetuate patriarchal established norms. Theresa considers that a woman is said to be worthy, when she owns a man, and is able to make a happy family. Therefore, she thinks that "no man would ever have her as a [wife]. She was destined to live a solitary life. [...] She was too backward to be with real people." (*Cecelia Capture: 91*). Theresa observes Cecelia as a woman who is far away from

what a good and worthy woman is. She contends that “no man would ever have her as a wife.” Theresa’s perception of what a good wife should be, nourishes her thinking that Cecelia is not a model of woman like her sisters. She will not make a good family wife.

As a feminist, Cecelia refuses such perception of her womanhood life. She will never be what her mother wants her to be. She is totally opposed to the opinion to let a man control her life. Living with a husband, is to incarcerate her own life. Cecelia’s life was not going to be a “wasted effort.” (*Cecelia Capture*: 74). “Her life wasn’t going to overtake her that way and make her a prisoner and a cripple, miserable, mean and bitter. Her life was going to be her own. She would be free. She would guide her life through whatever hard time.” (*Cecelia Capture*: 74-75). Cecelia is attached to her own welfare rather than valuing social set up rules. Her womanhood must first of all serve her own welfare but not to provide satisfaction to a mere person known as her husband.

Cecelia’s feminist vision is also expressed through her denial of the tradition that she demystifies and profanes. Despite her mixed-blood status Cecelia disinterested by her Indian tradition. A tradition that values woman’s purity and her being virtuous. This traditional norm does not match with Cecelia’s vision of her life. She sees the quest for a woman to be virtuous is another means for men to imprison women. For, this social norm is from patriarchy. In Indian’s traditional vision, a woman’s value to her community is assessed through her virtuosity. Indian traditional ceremonies are conducted around such virtuous women. Heavy Shield Woman in Welch’s novel entitled *Fools Crow* is a vivid example of woman American Indian community looks for. After a long process of assessment, she was appointed as the Sacred Vow Woman at the Sun Dance ceremonies” (Welch, *Fools Crow*: 259). The ceremony of the Sundance is planned around such a woman of higher purity and virtuosity. The American Indian’s culture gives an outstanding value to the purity and the virtuosity of woman for she is the representation of the mother earth from which everything spring. Therefore, the purification ceremony of the community is always performed around a sacred Vow Woman.

Although, Cecelia is mixed-blood and therefore partly Indian, she does not have the merit to be such a sacred-vow woman for she does not have this sense of being pure and virtuous woman. She is rather frivolous. She picks up men here and there and uses them as play toys. Cecelia moves from man to man for the satisfaction of her sexual desires and carnal pleasures. Cecelia’s feminist vision does not match with her mixed-blood American Indian status. Meanwhile, feminist vision makes a free woman, a woman who owns her body and can use it

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as she pleases, American Indian culture sees her as a ceremonial tool. She have to be pure and virtuous. It is that purity and virtuosity that confers her an outstanding place in the community. An American Indian woman is a woman who controls her body for the fulfilment of community needs in terms of ceremony. Cecelia in that perspective cannot be seen as a worthy woman for her Indian community.

From the above developed point of views, Hale seems to have used the character of Cecelia, in order to exhibit her feminist propensity. She refuses gender role in a contemporary American society still impacted by patriarchal established norms. From such perspective, Hale's purpose may be to reverse the well-established patriarchal norms which keep on putting women at the side-walking of the society rather than being in the center. However, when staring at Hale's mixed-blood American Indian status, she is portraying the 1980's Indian lost generation. A generation disconnected from its traditional self, but not well integrated in the modern side. A generation unable to combine its dual-identities for the acceptance of feminist principles. The next step of this article is about the split of this generation from their Indians traditions through their postmodern perception through the specific case of Cecelia Capture.

2. Cecelia's Postmodern Approach of Life

The second section entitled Cecelia's postmodern approach throws light on her postmodernist tendencies such as: her tastes, her envies, her attendances, her moral integrity, her fragmentation, her lust for New Technologies of information and communication, the breaking of social norms, her quest for liberty, her self-expression instead of coherent and harmonious.

Postmodernity according to Gning Maurice:

est... porteuse de cette culture nihiliste qui célèbre la mort des valeurs classiques, des dogmes, des fausses idoles nietzschéennes et dans laquelle l'homme devient sa propre norme. En l'absence de repères axiologiques, de valeurs normatives, l'interdit perd son sens. Tout devient permis, y compris les passions les plus irréalistes. L'homosexualité, la quête effrénée de profit, de l'argent, de plaisirs de toute sorte, le désir de paraître. (Gning Maurice, 2017:197).

This perception of postmodernity exhibited by Gning Maurice enlightens the new direction of the world. Postmodernism is ... a bearer of nihilistic culture that celebrates the death of classical values, of dogmas, false Nietzschean idols and in which man becomes his own

standard. In the absence of axiological references, normative values, the prohibition loses its meaning. Everything becomes permissible, including the most unrealistic passions. Homosexuality, the frantic quest for profit, money, pleasures of all kinds, the desire to appear. As a postmodern mixed-Blood American Indian woman Cecelia embodies such perception of life. She is fond of new products, the NTICs (the first vector of postmodern culture). The family bond and the base solidarity of Indian tradition has no value for her. What matters is she. Parental authority has no control over her life. She enjoys total freedom and directs her life according to the models of her choices.

Cecelia's postmodernist attitudes is exhibited through her breaking of social norms. Engaged in a race competition, Cecelia is haunted by the idea to win the race. For, she does not want all her training be "wasted effort. Like her mother's life. Like what her mother always said her life has been." (*Cecelia Capture: 74*). Cecelia bridges her probable failure at the race with the life of her mother, who "stay [with her father and endures all sort of sufferings] because she was mother of three little girls. Those girls are the only excuse for a father, and she couldn't very well leave them with him. So, she was a prisoner until they grew up. She was their mother; she had to be a prisoner." (*Cecelia Capture: 74*).

A pretext that Cecelia sees not sufficiently enough to accept such a miserable life and sufferings her mother endures. Therefore, she adds "that was all. The only reason." (*Cecelia Capture: 74*). Cecelia sees her mother, Mary Theresa's acceptance to suffer while being next to her daughters, a sort of conformism and creative sufferings not sufficient to prevent her from being a free woman. A woman who does not control and guide her own life. A woman who accepts modern patriarchal social norms according to which a woman is valued when she is mother of a family, with the abilities and capacities to take care of her household and brings up her kids in agreement with social established norms.

Through Cecelia's statement, "that was all. The only reason." To say the only reason for her mother to accept all the sufferings of her drunken husband is linked to her motherhood. Cecelia sees it stupid to accept and endure such sufferings on the mere pretext of being a mother. For Cecelia, her mother is trapped by a patriarchal established social norms, which only values woman when she is a bearer of kids and is able to rear them. Cecelia rejects such a model of living. She breaks the social norms of a whole system of life when she admits that her life will not be similar to her mother's existence. As such, she denies the social norms of a succession of periods. She brings to light the ridiculousness of the values, norms, beliefs and identity of women and men who lived in the periods that preceded postmodern era. Here, Hale

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portrays such a period as an epoch in which people lived in jail. A society in which individual could hardly enjoy their life since they were captured by social established ways of doing, of thinking, of being. Cecelia's mother is a vivid representation of that imprisoned society. For the mere fact of being a mother, her life is sacrificed. She lived her whole life in sufferings, next to an unconscious, irresponsible, alcoholic husband. Cecelia refuses such a situation.

Therefore, as a true postmodernist, she defines the profile of her husband in proportion to postmodern tastes, likes and attractions. She does not love Jim because "he doesn't read the kind of books I like to read. He does not read at all, in fact, except for the sport page. He isn't interested in the kind of movies I like. I don't think he's even ever been to the theater." (*Cecelia Capture: 117*). For, the postmodern individual has a propensity to cherish money-generating activities, mind loosening endeavors, self-pleasing activities rather than activities that confine the body and the mind. With Cecelia, the postmodernist assumption that the self must be the central concern becomes an absolute truth.

That sense of personal welfare is so high to Cecelia that she even does not support the presence of her own son Corey. For example she has once tried to take Corey to a movie with her because she fails to find a sitter because he wiggled so, and she was bond to leave after fifteen minutes because Corey wiggled so. Back home, she grabbed him by his shoulders and screamed at him, "Do you realize you're robbing me of my youth?... You are making me a prisoner, goddammit!" (*Cecelia Capture: 117*). Cecelia develops a sort of hedonism. For her, self-pleasure is the uppermost. Her unlimited quest for self-pleasure leads her to blame her own offspring. Once more, Cecelia reveals her postmodern vision that rejects the social established norms which confine women to such roles as child rearing and performing domestic chores. What counts for Cecelia is the self. She wants a life that is rid of any external influence in which she does not care about what society expects her to be.

Cecelia's moral integrity is impacted by her likes, envies, attendances. She is a smoker, an alcoholic, a fanatic of cinema, bars and night clubs attendant, and also an adept of free sex. These tendencies reveal Cecelia's hedonism which shows her pursuit or devotion to carnal pleasures and at the same time affects her moral integrity. Her behaviors are motivated by her unlimited desire for pleasure. She longs for pleasure. Cecelia is a smoker, alcoholic, and adept of free sex. She picks up men at any opportunity for sex. She is particularly attracted by places and things that provide joy and pleasure such as cinemas, night clubs, dancing and eating. For

example, went to the townhouse, that night Cecelia got overdrunk and while going home, she picks up a man. “They went to bed together and had mediocre, adequate, drunken sex”. (*Cecelia Capture*, 18-19). For Cecelia, sex provides her “a brief respite. It took her out of herself and her misery.” (*Cecelia Capture*, 19). She even compares the welfare of sex to that of alcohol. As she says: “sex offered escape more complete than that offered by alcohol, if more brief”. (*Cecelia Capture*, 19).

Cecelia is a vivid example of today’s postmodern impatient, hedonist and lazy generation. Impatient, today’s generation is. They do not do things at the due time. This is actually the case of Cecelia at the age of thirteen years old, Cecelia thinks of herself as a woman instead of a child. She longs for her own room, she is in quest for adulthood privacy. She is really in a hurry to reach adulthood. She is also a real prototype and vivid example of the hedonist and lazy generation of postmodernity. She is consciously and deliberately lazy. A fact that also expresses her postmodern inclination. Like today’s young people, “Cecelia would not wash a dish or pick up a broom without being told. She would actually sit there reading while her poor old ailing mother scrubbed the floor” (*Cecelia Capture*, 93). This is not rare to have such children in today’s families. They never undertake to contribute to the welfare of the family. What they are looking for is the profit they can make from their parents.

As, it can be noticed, Cecelia’s postmodernist spirit that goes back to her childhood time, portrays how postmodernism is a model of life. Very early during her infant times, Cecelia refuses to let her life be guided by her mother. What she longs for is freedom. A life devoids of any external influence even that of her own mother. She is particularly fond of carnal pleasures. Cecelia is a vivid prototype of contemporary impatient, hedonist, lazy and lost generation. A generation berefts of any rationality. A generation that Hale portrays as the cartoon character who runs so fast rises in the air past the edge of the cliff, keeps on running until he suddenly realizes that he is in the air, then falls to the ground. This is a true portrayal of the life of Cecelia. Her feminist tendencies as well as her postmodernity do not prevent her from experiencing life reality.

3. The Limits of Cecelia’s feminism and Postmodernity

This third part of the dissertation demonstrates that after Cecelia’s exhibition of her feminism and postmodernity, defying social norms and longing for freedom, she is finally

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caught up by life realities. Living with her mother, Cecelia has unconsciously internalize the patriarchal way of thinking together with its norms and values, as such, she presents herself as a rational person, a rationality that assumes her good motherhood. After rebuking her son bitterly, she is said to have felt guilty. She sees herself as an “awful person. Not fit to be a mother. You don’t deserve a nice little boy” (*Cecelia Capture*, 116-117). She is caught up by the sense of being a mother. A sense of motherhood that expresses her demarcation from authentic postmodern and feminist individual who see their pleasure as the only worthwhile priority.

Cecelia’s assumption that sex provides her a brief respite and take her out of herself and her misery is debatable for she always ends up to her disappointment. Her drinking, smoking, dancing, going to cinema, sex making do not prevent her to feel herself “empty, lonely, sad and stupid” (*Cecelia Capture*, 19). She is always caught up by social realities. Therefore, the end of the novel shows a Cecelia in loneliness. Her life is similar to the cartoon character. Like it, Cecelia is now aware that she was in such a hurry for the pleasure of life that it is very late when she realizes she has gone astray.

Cecelia’s experience teaches her that social realities are distinct from dream. She has no one except Corey, and she is helpless like her kid who needed her to be strong and competent, to provide him with love and a sense of security. Unfortunately, Cecelia cannot perform such a role because of her immaturity. Therefore, she contends that: “She herself desperately needed to be given [that love], to be reassured, to have someone she could lean on. But there was no one for her” (*Cecelia Capture*, 160). What Theresa has foretold about Cecelia’s loneliness comes true. She is disenchanted by her postmodernist and feminist perceptions of life. Cecelia is regretting her chosen way of living. She now sees what her mother foretells her.

Cecelia’s running into Nathan would not prevent her from “catch[ing] up fast in a trap of her own making (and that it was of her own making made it all the harder to break out of)” (*Cecelia Capture*, 176). She has forgotten that she had longed to control her own life and had even vowed to never let a husband control her life. Cecelia gets out her nightmare to confront the reality of life and finds that she cannot live the way she understands the world. Thus, “she realized, that she had been alone and in danger and had had to take care of herself, although she had once been used to doing so. She was really on her own now, and this was just the beginning.” (*Cecelia Capture*, 176). Running to Nathan, Cecelia consciously and deliberately

knows that she was going back to the patriarchal norms and values but she could not do otherwise. As a quirk of fate, Cecelia cannot escape man's bond. She is bonded to be the prisoner of a man for she needs protection, to be reassured. She needs someone she can lean on. As such, she returns to Nathan and "She was the prisoner now, as Mary Theresa has been, of circumstance and an inability to imagine anything beyond the prison, to create anything different [from her mother] for herself. (*Cecelia Capture*, 176).

Cecelia's postmodernist and feminist propensities lead her to prison. Once in jail, Cecelia becomes conscious of her motherhood status. She calls back home to get news from her family. For, her kids and her husband Nathan. The postmodernist perception of life does not detract Cecelia from his reason. She remains the reasoned mother worries of the well-being of her children and her family. In such a state of mind, it is difficult for Cecelia to live freely as she wishes. Her postmodern identity is thus affected by social norms. However when husband tries to reason her, to be the source of her misfortunes, she rejects his vision. A way to refute her husband's control over her. This reaction of Cecelia exhibits her will to remain a postmodernist woman even if, she is constantly betrayed by her awareness of truth.

As it goes without saying, this third part of the article portrays the limits of Cecelia's feminist and postmodernist tendencies. She cannot fully live her feminist and postmodernity because she is confronted by social realities. However, as a mixed-blood postmodern American Indian woman, Cecelia's dilemma is to conciliate her dual-identities. It is this aspect of her life the last section of the article is concerned with.

4. Cecelia's Impossibility to Conciliate her Dual-Identities

This part of the dissertation demonstrates Cecelia's impossibility to conciliate her double-sides identities. It aims at checking if Cecelia as a feminist and postmodernist woman can still conciliate her Indian and her White sides. The dilemma to which contemporary mixed-Blood Indian women are confronted and that makes their struggle distinct and more challenging.

Cecelia's Indian mixed-blood racial status is from her mother's side as well as her father's side. That certainly impacts her task of conciliating her Indian side and white side. In addition to her postmodernist tendency that is probably an obstacle to the unification of her dual-self, the positions of her two parents toward their Indianness do not make the task easier.

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Her “mother people were white and ashamed of having Indian relatives, and they held themselves far above Cecelia’s mother and husband and children” (*Cecelia Capture*, 49). Her mother hides her Indianness. She was a light-skinned, green-eyed half breed who didn’t show her Indian blood at all” (*Cecelia Capture*, 61). Her father was also ashamed of being Indian. “Like many Indian people of his generation, her father seemed to Cecelia in some curious way ashamed of being Indian. He denied it vehemently” (*Cecelia Capture*, 59). This attitude of both parents do not allow her to really discover her Indianness.

That probably contributes in making Cecelia a “sidewalk Indian” (*Cecelia Capture*, 112). “She is like these hopeless displaced people who are no longer Indian, yet not white either.” (*Cecelia Capture*, 112). These displaced people are those to whom Hale alludes when she talks about lost generation. Although Cecelia prefers to be distant from them, she is part of them. Her parents have not shown her what an Indian is. However, Cecelia shows attempts to reconnect to her tribal self through “homing-in”. (*Bevis*, 1987:585). She often goes back home with her two kids. Yet, Cecelia’s homing-in is a mere visit. She takes her kids home to the reservation, tries to teach them the history of her Indian ancestors; but that is not sufficient to prove her reconnection to her tribal identity. She even “felt anxious and was sorry she had brought them there” (*Cecelia Capture*, 53). From the above mentioned ideas, it goes without saying that Cecelia is in the impossibility to conciliate her double-self. As such, she cannot take up the challenge of unification of her dual-identities for, she ignores her Indian side and is therefore disconnected from it.

Cecelia’s postmodernist propensity does not help her in the performance of the unification of her dual-self. As a postmodernist woman, Cecelia is very much concerned with her daily life. She is drawn to her liberty, the satisfaction of her carnal pleasures than reconnecting to a tradition. She ignores what the sense of performing a ceremony is. Unlike characters like Tayo in *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko, Abel in *House Made of Dawn* by Scott Momaday, and Ephanie Atencio in *The Woman Who Owned The Shadows* by Paula Gunn Allen, who perform ceremonies to reconnect with the land, and their tribal self, Cecelia proposes a postmodern perspective of ceremony based on sex. For her, the fact of having sex with Running Horse who is an Indian is “the ceremony that marked the end” (*Cecelia Capture*, 187). Cecelia has no sense of what it is to perform a ceremony since, she totally ignores Indian culture. She ignores that in Indian tradition, only women of higher virtues woman like Heavy Shield Woman in *Fools Crow* by James Welch is chosen. A postmodern frivolous woman like

Cecelia cannot be pinpointed to perform a ceremony. Claiming that making sex with a street-picked-up-Indian-man is to perform a ceremony is blasphemous.

Cecelia's divorce with Nathan is also expressive of her impossibility to connect with her white-side. Nathan is white. His request for divorcing with Cecelia illustrates her failure to be connected to her white-side. Nathan's divorce also expresses Cecelia's incapacity to become a housewife as her mother has foretold it. But more than this, it reveals expresses Cecelia's disconnection from her white side. As such, Cecelia is totally unable to unify her dual-identities. She cannot reach that goal of unification of Indian and White through her personality.

Cecelia's experience questions the real target of postmodernism. It is true that postmodernist thought gives opportunity to the traditional people to reveal their identity. It is also true that postmodernism gives voice to the voiceless, the minorities. But, at the same time, it defends no particular value. It rejects any essentialist value and prefers relativity and the multiplicity of points of view. How will traditional minorities survive in such a world? For, knowing that the continuity of these norms is based on prohibition. How will these traditional societies survive in a world where, it is forbidden to prohibit? Cecelia grows up without particular norms and values, she was exclusively concerned with her quest for liberty and does not develop any sense of community welfare and continuity. As a result she is a stranger to both worlds, and as such, she is unable to unify the two norms and values her mixed-blood status embodies. Like her name Cecelia is really captured by two opposite worlds to which she is stranger.

This last section exhibits Cecelia's incapacity to unify the two sides that she embodies. This incapacity is first of all linked to her parents' attitudes toward their Indianness. They feel ashamed of being Indian. A fact that leads them to hide their Indian side. Raised up by such parents has not allowed Cecelia to discover that part of her. As such, she can't conciliate norms and values she ignores. But, this is not the only reason that sustains Cecelia's incapacity to unite her double-identities. Cecelia's postmodernist and feminist perception of life also contribute to her failure to unify her two sides. As a postmodernist woman, Cecelia is very much concerned with her daily life. She is drawn to her liberty, the satisfaction of her carnal pleasures more than to reconnect to a tradition. She cannot reach that goal of unification of Indian and White through her personality for she is stranger to both. The only thing that Cecelia proposes is a ridiculous postmodern perspective of a ceremony based on sex. A fact that leads to the questioning of postmodernism motivations.

**Tracking The Life of A Postmodern Mixed-blood American Indian Woman in *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* by Janet Campbell Hale: An Impossibility to Conciliate Two Worlds
(Soumahila SORO)**

Conclusion

This postmodern reading of *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* portrays the life of Cecelia Capture a mixed-Blood postmodern American Indian woman. The article has evolved around four major sections. First part of the dissertation demonstrates Cecelia's feminist tendencies. It reveals Cecelia's opposition to her womanhood to be assessed through patriarchal established norms. She also denies the traditional principles. Hale uses the character of Cecelia in order to reveal her feminist tendencies. Through Cecelia, she refuses gender role in contemporary American society.

Second section exhibits Cecelia's postmodernist propensities. Cecelia's postmodernist spirit portrays how postmodernism is a model of life. Very early during her childhood, Cecelia refuses the control of her life by her mother. What she longs for is freedom. A life devoids of any external influence even that of her own mother. She is particularly fond of carnal pleasures, of New Technologies of Information and Communication, the rejection of social norms and longs for liberty. Through Cecelia, Hale portrays the life of new mixed-Blood American Indian lost generation. A generation totally disconnected from its past for family bond and the welfare of the community are not the center of their preoccupations. What they look for is their personal liberty and the enjoying of life.

The third section shows that, Cecelia's feminist and postmodernity tendency are limited by social realities. She cannot fully live her feminist and postmodernity because she is confronted by social realities. Cecelia is disappointed of her model of life. It leads her to loneliness, to fragmentation, loss of reference, loss of love, loss of security, loss of roots and loss of identity. Hale constructs the clearest, most impressive account of the mixed-blood Indian woman's world and warns them about the dangers of living such a life.

The last part echoes the response of a contemporary mixed-blood Indian woman to her double-identities. This last section exhibits Cecelia's incapacity to unify the two sides that embody her. This incapacity is first of all linked to her parents' attitudes toward their Indianness who feel ashamed of being Indian. As such, Cecelia fails to conciliate her dual-self. But, this is not the only reason that sustains Cecelia's impossibility to unite her dual-identities. Her postmodernist perception of life also contributes to her failure to unify her double-sides.

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