



**UNM Feminist
Research
Institute
Presents**

*(Un)Marked Space:
Whiteness, the Blank
Page, and
Marginalized Bodies
in Indigenous
Women's Writing*

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*SUB Cherry/Silver
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Far from being neutral, passive, or insignificant, the blank spaces within books impact not only what we read, but also how we read. Space 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. Ultimately, bibliographic space functions as a perpetual invitation for engagement—for pause and reflection, for signatures of ownership, dedication, and annotation, and for the creation of social and political relationships, especially for “marginalized” writers. Thus when Indigenous women writers entered the literary marketplace at the turn of the twentieth century, their first books harnessed the power of marginal spaces—as published authors working under the constraints of race and gender, they wrestled agency from liminal spaces, including the blank spaces of their books. Each innovative author—Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, S. Alice Callahan, E. Pauline Hopkins, Zitkala-Sa, and Mourning Dove—utilized blank spaces in tandem with the printed word to invoke Indigenous storytelling techniques, invite readers to engage with the political agenda of their texts, and critique the insertion of racialized whiteness into Indigenous books and lives.