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Abstract

This thesis intends to bring to popular consciousness the historical and ongoing injustices committed against Indigenous peoples by sharing the knowledges and experiences of a number of Dakota people in Minnesota. Part landscape analysis, part ethnography, and by most substantially relying on narrative and lengthy excerpts from interviews, I challenge the dominant notion that Minnesota is a non-Native space. Rather, *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflect the sky, with a place called *Bdote* at its center, forms the traditional territory of the Dakota *Oyate*, the Dakota Nation. More specifically, this thesis tells a story about Dakota peoples' struggle to maintain and assert their relationships to urban public spaces in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region as indisputably Dakota places.

“WE’D ALWAYS RETURN TO THIS CENTER:”

UNDERSTANDING URBAN SPACE AS A DAKOTA PLACE IN *MNI SOTA MAKOCE*

by

Kelsey M. Carlson

Bachelor of Arts, St. Cloud State University, 2012

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Geography

Syracuse University

December 2015

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My journey to write an MA thesis has not been a solitary endeavor, and there are many to acknowledge. First, I owe everything appearing in these pages to the Dakota people and the non-Dakota allies who supported and participated in this project. Thank you for sharing your knowledge, stories, struggles, and experiences with me and with all who might read this document. Your voices carry this thesis.

Thank you to Iyekiypiwiñ Darlene St. Clair. Darlene, the ideas presented here are as much a product of your labor and resolve as they are my own. But above all else, with your unwavering generosity you have helped me become a better scholar and a better human being. Am I sure glad I ignored advice for a class project junior year to switch my topic to a different Indigenous community because, I was told, “there is next to nothing written about Dakota people.” Otherwise I may have never wandered into your office.

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Interview Biographies

Kelly Branam-Macauley is an Associate Professor in Anthropology at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. She formed relationships with the Crow Reservation community in Montana as an undergraduate and has maintained those relationships since. Her work with the Crow community includes establishing and teaching at an archaeology field school for eight years in Crow homeland that included students from Little Big Horn College and Chief Dull Knife College. In 2008 she received her PhD from Indiana University, and her dissertation is titled "Constitution-making: Law, Power, and Kinship in Crow country." Kelly received a grant from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund to work with Dakota people on a project to identify Traditional Cultural Properties in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Erin Griffin is an enrolled member of the Lake Travers Reservation in Sisseton, South Dakota. She is a faculty member in Dakota studies at the Sisseton Wahpeton College in Sisseton, South Dakota. Her accomplishments include being named the American Indian Higher Education Consortium Teacher of the Year, and she received her Master's degree from Oklahoma University in anthropology in 2009. Her thesis is titled "Dakota wo oyake hena unkiyepi: Dakota voices and stories in Minnesota."

Harlan LaFontaine, also known as Sun̄kmanitu Hotar̄ka, is an enrolled member of the Lake Traverse Reservation in Sisseton, South Dakota. He is a Dakota language instructor at the University of Minnesota, and he is the co-editor of the Dakota language text, *550 Dakota Verbs*. He has a Master's degree in natural resource management.

Betsy Leach is a St. Paulite. She is a former academic with graduate training in anthropology and geology. Her work focused on cross-cultural relationships with landscape, particularly in relation to the multicultural history of Fort Snelling. She is currently the Executive Director and Community Organizer for the District 1 Community Council, a St. Paul non-profit organization.

Chris Mato Nunpa is a Wahpetun̄waŋ ("Dwellers In the Leaves") Dakota from the Pezihuta Zizi Otuŋwe, or "Yellow Medicine Community" (BIA name, "Upper Sioux Community"), in southwestern Minnesota. Professor Mato Nunpa received his PhD from the University of Minnesota in Higher Education Administration, with the Collateral Field in "American Indian Studies." In 2008, Dr. Mato Nunpa retired from his position as an Associate Professor of Indigenous Nations & Dakota Studies at Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, Minnesota. Dr. Mato Nunpa, in his retirement years, spends time with writing and is involved with various social activism projects dealing with hunting and fishing rights under the Treaty of 1805, in Remembering & Honoring Commemoration, and in Re-Naming projects, events, panels, and conferences, especially with a non-profit education group called Oceti Sakowin̄ Omniciye (OSO), or "Seven Fires Summit." Dr. Mato Nunpa has finished his first book titled WOSICE TANKA KIN ("The Great Evil"): GENOCIDE, THE BIBLE, AND THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES, and is now revising his manuscript for a potential publisher.

Wicasta Wan̄zi a pseudonym meaning one man.

John Norder is an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Reservation in North Dakota. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and the Director of the Native American Institute at Michigan State University. His research takes him to the Lake of the Woods region in northern Minnesota and southern Ontario where he studies landscape and Indian rock paintings of the Canadian Shield. He received his PhD from the University of Michigan in 2003, and his dissertation title is “Marking Place and Creating Space in Northern Algonquian Landscapes: The Rock Art of the Lake of the Woods Region, Ontario. One of his current projects involves looking at the impacts of the Kalamazoo River oil spill and the perceptions of the Native groups in Michigan.

Sisoka Duta is an enrolled member of the Lake Traverse Reservation in Sisseton, South Dakota. He received Dakota language training from Glenn Wasicuna, Cante Maza, and Scotty Brown Eyes, and he completed Dakota language courses at the University of Minnesota. He has been working as a Dakota language instructor at the University of Minnesota for eight years. Sisoka Duta also works for *Dakhota Iapi Okhodakichiye* (the Dakota Language Society) producing Dakota language materials.

Chester Spears is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Indian Reservation, Crane Clan. His maternal ancestry is Dakota from the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota. He is part of an organization called First Nations United, which organizes Fire Talks and Sacred Runs. He is working toward a degree from Normandale Community College.

Gary Spears is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Indian Reservation, Crane Clan. His maternal ancestry is Dakota from the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota. He is part of an organization called First Nations United, which organizes Fire Talks and Sacred Runs. He is the coordinator for Circle Generations at the Minneapolis American Indian Center and the security facilities manager.

Iyekiyapiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair is *Bdewakantunwan* Dakota from *Caŋsayapi*, and she is an enrolled member of the Lower Sioux Indian Community in southwestern Minnesota. She is an Associate Professor, teaching American Indian Studies for the Department of Ethnic and Women’s Studies and directing the Multicultural Resource Center at St. Cloud State University, in St. Cloud, Minnesota. She completed her undergraduate and graduate education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She is on the Board of Directors for Dakota Wicoŋ’aŋ, a Dakota language and lifeways organization, where she works on developing K-12 curriculum materials for teaching about Dakota ways of life in Minnesota schools. She is also the Board Chair for Dream of Wild Health, a regional non-profit which focuses on Indigenous foodways. During 2012-2014, Darlene was a visiting professor in American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota. During that time she was also able to complete Dakota language courses.

Waziyatawiŋ is *Wahpetunwan* Dakota from the *Pezihutazizi Otunwe*, she is an enrolled member of the Upper Sioux Indian Community in southwestern Minnesota. She is an activist, a second-generation scholar, and she received her PhD in history from Cornell University. She previously taught and received tenure at Arizona State University and the University of Victoria, and she has authored and co/edited six books. She is the founder and the Executive Director of the non-profit organization, *Makoce Ikikcupi*, dedicated to the recovery of Dakota homeland through a

project of reparative justice. She has recently completed her cob and straw-bale home and seeks to live a life based on simplicity and sustainability with her family in southwestern Minnesota.

Bruce White is a highly respected independent historian by Dakota and Ojibwe communities in Minnesota. He has a PhD in anthropology from the University of Minnesota, where he was advised by Janet Spector. The title of his dissertation is "Familiar Faces: The Photographic Record of the Minnesota Anishinaabeg." He is the author of numerous academic texts (including co-author of *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*) and historical reports. He was involved in the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Minnesota v. Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians*, that upheld Ojibwe usufructuary rights to traditional lands. He is currently contracted on a project working with the Fond du Lac Band in Duluth, Minnesota.

List of Dakota Language Terms¹

Bde Maka Ska: White Earth Lake (today known as Lake Calhoun)
Bdewakan̄tuŋwaŋ: Dwellers by mystic lake (Dakota council fire)
Bdote: the throat of waters
Caŋsayapi: the place where they paint the trees red
Dakota: the friends, allies
Haha Wakpa: Mississippi River
Haŋbdeceya: journey through the night crying to your relatives (vision quest)
Huŋka: making relatives
Iapi: language
Ihaŋktuŋwaŋ: Dwellers at the end (Nakota council fire)
Ihaŋktuŋwaŋna: Little dwellers at the end (Nakota council fire)
Kaposia: (Village site)
Kuŋsi: grandmother
Kuŋsi maka: grandmother earth (also uŋsi makoce)
Maka: earth
Makaga huŋhuŋsiya: the sound of buffalo making the earth tremble
Makoce: land
Mitakuye Owas'iq: all my relations
Mni Haha: falling water
Mni Sota Makoce: the land where the waters reflect the sky
Mni Sota Wakpa: Minnesota River
Oceti Sakowiq: the Seven Council Fires
Oheyawahi: the hill much visited
Owamniyomni: (today known as St. Anthony Falls)
Owotaŋna Wohdakapo: tell it straight
Oyate: nation
Sisituŋwaŋ: Dwellers at the Fish Ground (Dakota council fire)
Takapsicapi: the ball game, lacrosse
Taku Wakaŋ Tipi: the dwelling place of something sacred
Tiospaye: extended family
Tituŋwaŋ: Dwellers of the Plains (Lakota council fire)
Topo Wiŋta: (Cloud Man's Village)
Tuŋkaŋsida: grandfather
Uŋkaŋkaŋ: (stories)
Wacuŋniya: type of spring when you poke it with a stick, water shoots out of the earth
Wa maka ska: something moving across the earth
Wahpekute: shooters among the leaves (Dakota council fire)
Wahpetuŋwaŋ: Dwellers among the leaves (Dakota council fire)
Wicaŋpi wicohaŋ: the way of the stars
Wipazo Koakpa: (reservation community, Sioux Valley, Manitoba)
Wicohaŋ: ways of life

¹ I do not have Dakota language training, so all spelling, diacritic, and translation errors are my own.

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| AIM | American Indian Movement |
| CRA | Cultural Resource Assessment |
| CRM | Cultural Resource Management |
| CURE | Clean Up the River Environment |
| DNR | Department of Natural Resources |
| MnDOT | Minnesota Department of Transportation |
| MNRRRA | Mississippi National River and Recreation Area |
| NPS | National Park Service |
| TCP | Traditional Cultural Property |
| THPO | Tribal Historic Preservation Officer |
| UMM | University of Minnesota, Morris |
| UNDRIP | United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples |
| USPLSS | United States Public Land Survey System |

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Prologue

My pursuit for an education began with music. From fifth grade through high school, my flute gave me an intellectual and creative outlet in an otherwise unchallenging and unremarkable public school system. At the end of ninth grade I began private flute lessons, my parents mildly exasperated by the additional expense. But for the next three years, twice a month on Wednesday afternoons, I drove seventeen miles west on Highway 14 to my instructor's studio in Mankato, Minnesota. This bi-weekly voyage brought me through the "Historic Downtown," along Riverfront Drive, and past a thirty-five ton Kasota limestone caricature of a buffalo. Though always curious about the buffalo's significance, I never took the time to stop.

Fast-forward to my freshman year of college where I began the instrumental music education program on a scholarship at the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM).¹ I realized almost immediately that I was ill-suited to a professional music career. The degree required endless hours of seemingly repetitive lessons, individual practice, and ensemble rehearsals. In addition, coursework demands limited my ability to choose electives outside the music discipline. When I reached the academic year's end without having been asked to complete a single required reading or writing assignment, I knew something needed to change. Frankly, I felt intellectually stifled. My expectations for what comprised an education at a liberal arts university were not being met. So sophomore year I went rogue and decided to enroll in a Minnesota history course.

Professor Stephen Gross assigned five monographs, and he organized his syllabus around a small number of significant events in the state's chronology. The first two assigned readings—selections from Annette Atkins's *Creating Minnesota* and Gary Clayton Anderson's *Little*

¹ For a brief history of UMM's connection to Dakota history, see Wilbert H. Ahern, "Indian Education and Bureaucracy: The School at Morris, 1887-1909," *Minnesota History* 49 (Fall 1984): 82-98.

Crow—focused on the Dakota-U.S. War of 1862, an event for which I evoked no prior frame of reference. As the two texts situated the conflict in particular locations throughout central and southern Minnesota, I recalled my own experiences in those places. Anderson, for example, explained the significance of St. Peter, Minnesota, a town where, nearby, Dakota men, traders, and U.S. government representatives negotiated the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851, an event that catalyzed the conflict;² then, he focused on New Ulm, Minnesota, a small German town considered the location of the “most savage fight of the war;”³ and he began the text in Hutchinson, Minnesota, the setting for an “Incident in a Raspberry Patch,” where Dakota leader, Chief Little Crow, met a violent death while picking raspberries with his son six miles north of town the summer following the conflict.⁴

St. Peter and New Ulm sat within a forty mile radius of my hometown of Waseca. Hutchinson, a little bit farther north and west, was a frequent lunch stop or a place to refuel my station wagon on trips between home and school in Morris. Because of their relative proximity, these towns were places I frequently visited for class fieldtrips, music contests, and sporting events. At one point during a New Ulm high school track meet, for example, my coach gathered us together on the field for an impromptu history lesson. First, he gestured toward the hill behind the field where we could see the towering figure of Hermann the German, a 100 foot tall statue embodying the town’s strong German heritage. Then, he proceeded with an abbreviated history of German settlement, making no mention—to my recollection—of Dakota people or the Dakota-U.S. War of 1862.

² Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), 58-60.

³ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

The towns and nearby locations Anderson described as critical to the 1862 conflict were all places I thought I knew fairly well, so, as I read, I was horrified to learn of the injustices perpetrated against Dakota peoples. I began to realize how powerful European-American government officials, entrepreneurs, and settlers purposefully and systematically dispossessed Dakota people from their homeland. I began to learn how the dominant narratives of settlement rapidly subsumed the gruesome details of colonization and conflict. These narratives then fabricated the unproblematic, taken-for-granted landscapes of my youth. But the most appalling and emotionally jarring realization came from Atkins's text.

I remember the moment vividly. It was a warm September afternoon in Morris, a small prairie town in western Minnesota. I sat at my desk, the sun pouring in through the window as I read:

Within a month the war ended, and Little Crow and hundreds of Dakota fled westward, some to join relatives among the Lakota, some to Canada. Sibley took hundreds of Dakota men into custody and put them on trial in the field, finding over three hundred guilty of capital crimes. Through the intercession of Episcopal bishop Henry Whipple, President Lincoln reviewed the verdicts and commuted the sentences of all but thirty-six Dakota and three mixed-blood men, *who were hanged in Mankato* on December 26, 1862.⁵

My jaw dropped. I slammed the book shut. My mind raced, and my heart pounded in my chest. I pictured myself driving down Riverfront Drive and passing the Kasota limestone buffalo.

Mankato, Minnesota, less than twenty miles from where I grew up and went to high school, was the site of the largest mass execution in United States history. I now understood what the buffalo represented.

My encounter learning about the Riverfront Drive buffalo's history compelled me to take action. I was furious and I felt that it was unacceptable that any mention of Dakota peoples'

⁵ Annette Atkins, *Creating Minnesota: A History from the Inside Out* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2007), 54, emphasis added.

relationships to land in Minnesota, or even the Dakota-U.S. War itself, was excluded entirely from my experiences with K-12 curriculums. Therefore, this thesis is another step in my intellectual journey to speak out against and attempt to redress the historical and ongoing injustices committed against Dakota people in Minnesota.

Minnesota is a Dakota place. The Dakota people named it and left their marks in the landscape and in its history. Yet the relationship of the Dakota people to their traditional lands in Minnesota is little understood by Minnesotans today.

—Gwen Westerman and Bruce White, *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*

Introduction

Eagerly, I anticipated my first visit to *Oheyawahi*. Tagging along on a Twin Cities Dakota cultural landscapes tour with St. Paul alternative arts high school students, *Oheyawahi* was our final destination. Relying on careful instructions from Kevin, Darlene’s chipper digital navigator, the bus driver made his way through the frenzied interchanges buttressing the Mendota Bridge at both ends. When we filed off the bus we found ourselves on a gravel road running alongside the historic Acacia Park Cemetery at the end of Pilot Knob Road. Only a short wooden fence, inconspicuous gate, and modest sign indicated we had reached our destination—a small public park managed by the city of Mendota Heights. Darlene, our guide, then quietly but briskly led us along a broad, winding, gravel path into the park.¹

As we walked I ran my hand through the tall prairie grasses and blooming wildflowers and recalled Aldo Leopold’s essay, “Prairie Birthday.” In his brief sketch, Leopold mourns the loss of the Midwestern prairies, drawing attention to the small plots of native grasses clinging to life in the out-of-the-way and forgotten landscapes like cemeteries, roadsides, and railroad right-of-ways. Half-cemetery and half-public park, *Oheyawahi*’s prairies are currently being restored by the Pilot Knob Preservation Association so that, once again, “During every week from April to September there are, on the average, ten wild plants coming into first bloom. In June as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day.”²

I dawdled behind, stopping to see big blue stem and butterflies and birds, taking pictures of interpretive signs, pesticide warning placards, and other symptoms of a manicured landscape.

¹ Iyekiyapiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair is *Bdewakantunwan* Dakota, Associate Professor of American Indian Studies for the Department of Ethnic Studies, and Director of the Multicultural Resource Center at St. Cloud State University. She is also involved in several regional organizations, including serving on the Board of Directors for *Dakota Wicohan* and Dream of Wild Health. She was the point of contact for all of the Dakota people who agreed to share their thoughts and experiences for this thesis, and together, she and I conducted the interviews.

² Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989 [1949]), 44.

Eventually, I had to run to catch up with the group. As I finally crested the top of the hill, my gaze rose from my immediate surroundings to the horizon. I froze in place. I inhaled sharply. The entire Twin Cities Metropolitan Region sprawled below in a bizarre tangle of geometric edges haphazardly punctuating expanses of rolling, soft, green canopies. The Mendota Bridge dominated the foreground, leading my eyes over the tall trees lining the Minnesota River valley's high bluffs to Historic Fort Snelling's red roofs. To the west an undulating sea of foliage framed the flat concrete plain of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Jutting above the horizon and dwarfing the tree line to the north, monolithic skyscrapers signaled the Minneapolis Central Business District (See Figure I.1).

The view from *Oheyawahi* not only highlights the visible contrasts of concrete and canopies, but also gestures toward the complexities of landscape analysis. Carrie Breitbach explains how “The ability to draw attention to what, or who, is out of place is part of the work of landscape,” and therefore landscape analysis “defines a geography that needs to be explained.”³ The objective landscape I observed sprawled below *Oheyawahi* established and preserved an unambiguous narrative of development balanced with carefully planned green spaces—a distinct point of pride for the metropolitan community. But like Leopold says, “We grieve only for what we know,”⁴ and few Minnesotans possess the tools to see beyond constructed narratives representing the virtues of economic development and urban green space. Few Minnesotans know the broader histories and cultural practices enabling a particular dominant view from *Oheyawahi*, or, as they know it, Pilot Knob Hill.

³ Carrie Breitbach, “The Geographies of a More Just Food System: Building Landscapes for Social Reproduction,” *Landscape Research* 32, no. 5 (2007): 536.

⁴ Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 48.



Figure I.1 The view from *Oheyawahi*.

The name Pilot Knob originates from the era of federal government exploration and early settlement of the region now referred to as the Twin Cities. Historian, Bruce White, explains the distinction between the names “Pilot Knob” versus “*Oheyawahi*.”

BW: These words have differing cultural definitions. So if you say “Pilot Knob” that refers to the knob which is on top of a hill. The knob is a geographic landmark. And so typically, Pilot this or Pilot that, Pilot Hill, Pilot Knob, whatever, have a characteristic shape that can be seen from a distance. So if you’re crossing the prairie or you’re coming upstream on a steamboat, you can see that knob from a long distance. So that becomes a landmark. But *Oheyawahi* is not about a knob. It’s a term that means “a hill much visited.” So *Oheyawahi* and Pilot Knob are, I mean, you can raise the question of whether they are actually the same place. Or another way of putting it is: they are both names that refer to *features* of the same place, but they are not culturally congruent. So *Oheyawahi* is a hill. Pilot Knob is a knob on top of a hill.⁵

⁵ Bruce White, interviewed by Iyekiyapiwiñ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 7 July 2014, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Oheyawahi is, first and foremost, a Dakota place. A sacred place. For millennia Dakota people placed their relatives on burial scaffolds atop *Oheyawahi*. It is a place for Dakota people to gather, and it is a place for ceremony. It is also firmly located in the history of contact between Dakota and non-Dakota people when, in 1851, the *Bdewakaŋtuŋwaŋ* and *Wahpekute* Dakota peoples signed at *Oheyawahi* the Treaty of Mendota—a fraudulent negotiation enabling the United States government to claim twenty-four million acres of Dakota land.⁶ However, dominant historical narratives continue to reaffirm the hill as a non-Native space. Therefore, these Dakota geographies require explicating.

Asserting that “Oheyawahi/Pilot Knob” is “a place to reflect on many stories,” an interpretive pocket guide published by the Pilot Knob Preservation Association describes how, over the course of two centuries of settlement, the hill transformed.

People have dramatically altered the landscape seen in Seth Eastman’s 1847 painting [see Figure I.2]. As settlers poured into the area in the mid-1800s, Pilot Knob was developed for dairy and truck farms....Oheyawahi/Pilot Knob has been used as burial ground by people for centuries. Settlers continued this custom by establishing cemeteries on the hill—St. Peter’s in 1840 (before the northern part of the hill was bisected by highways) and Acacia Park Cemetery in 1925. At that time a portion of the knob-like top of the hill, once used by steamboat pilots for navigation purposes and the feature that gave the hill its English name, was removed during landscaping.⁷

When the hill was threatened by townhome developers in 2002, the Pilot Knob Preservation Association stepped in, drawing on *Oheyawahi*’s Dakota heritage and its significance to early state history to ensure its preservation as a public space.

Despite the Pilot Knob Preservation Association’s unprecedented efforts to prioritize Dakota claims to a sacred site, the view of the metropolitan landscape from the hill still reverberates with carefully constructed erasures of the place’s Dakota heritage, because, as Don

⁶ Gwen Westerman and Bruce White, *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012), 182–190.

⁷ Pilot Knob Preservation Association Pocket Guide, 2010 *Oheyawahi/Pilot Knob, Mendota Heights, Minnesota*, accessed August 26, 2015, <http://www.pilotknobpreservation.org/Pocket%20Guide%20Interactive.htm>.

Mitchell argues, “landscape obscures.”⁸ *Oheyawahi* is only one small public space—8.5 acres acquired from private landowners and 18.5 acres from Acacia Park Cemetery (27 acres in total).⁹ It is managed by a municipal government (not Dakota people), and it is surrounded by dominant narratives of Twin Cities economic development and progress. Working within a burgeoning nineteenth century capitalist political economy, United States government representatives and explorers, alongside powerful entrepreneurs and settlers consciously conceived strategies to marginalize, dispossess, and obscure Dakota peoples’ relationships to landscapes like *Oheyawahi*. These strategies endure. This thesis, then, aims to open a space for dialogue recognizing and confronting erasures of Dakota peoples’ claims to Twin Cities cultural landscapes.¹⁰

⁸ Don Mitchell, “New Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Paying Attention to Political Economy and Social Justice,” in *Political Economies of Landscape Change: Places of Integrative Power*, ed. J.L. Wescoat, Jr. and D.M. Johnston (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2008), 33.

⁹ Pilot Knob Preservation Association Pocket Guide.

¹⁰ Dakota people have a range of personal experiences, identities, values, etc. Throughout this thesis I recognize the diversity of Dakota experiences, but I also make the assumption that people who identify themselves as Dakota are united by a common ancestry to the first peoples of *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflect the sky, and share some elements of a common history. I will share the stories and experiences of individual Dakota people, but I do not claim to speak on behalf of all Dakota people as a unified group.



Figure I.2 Pilot Knob and Mouth of the St. Peters (Minnesota) River by Seth Eastman (1847).

The Dakota *Oyate*, the Dakota Nation, is comprised of groups of Dakota people of the *Oceti Sakowin*, or the Seven Council fires, who are indigenous to *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflect the sky.¹¹ A place called *Bdote* forms the heart of the *Mni Sota Makoce* region. Known in the oral tradition as the site of the first Dakota creation, *Bdote* more specifically refers to “the joining or juncture of two bodies of water.”¹² According to Dakota

¹¹ Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, *Remember This!: Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives* (Lincoln: University Nebraska Press, 2005), 4–5. Waziyatawin further explains that “Dakota is a term meaning *the friends or allies*....Historians, as well as most Americans, have typically used the term *Sioux* to describe the Dakota as well as the Nakota and Lakota....the Dakota are composed of the Sisitunwan (Dwellers at the Fish Ground), Wahpetunwan (Dwellers among the Leaves), Bdewakanunwan (Dwellers by Mystic Lake), and the Wahpekute (Shooters among the Leaves). Further west are the Ihanunwan (Dwellers at the End) and Ihanunwanna (Little Dwellers at the End), both considered to be Nakota, and the Titunwan (Dwellers of the Plains) or Lakota. All of these groups are members of the original Oceti Sakowin, or the Seven Council Fires of the Dakota Oyate (Dakota Nation). The Titunwan (Lakota), who are the most populous group of the Oceti Sakowin, are further divided into their own seven council fires.”

¹² Dale Childs quoted in *ibid.*, 96. Dale Childs passed away in 2001. He was a respected Dakota elder, cultural leader, and “gifted storyteller” from the Prairie Island Dakota Reservation near Red Wing, Minnesota. He held the

elder, Mato Nunpa, there are many *bdotes*. He described how Dakota people recognize *bdotes* any time two bodies of water join together, like a creek flowing into a lake. But then he elaborated on his knowledge of the central *Bdote* landscape further.

MN: I was always taught by my mother that the main *Bdote* was where the Minnesota River joined the Mississippi, but I never asked why. I just accepted that. It wasn't until I was an adult and I heard Dale Childs tell the story. Then I realized, 'Oh, that's why it's so important. That's a very important place, and that is a sacred place.'¹³

Oheyawahi, the hill we visited that summer day, overlooks the confluence of two rivers—the *Haha Wakpa* and the *Mni Sota Wakpa*, the Mississippi River and the Minnesota River, respectively. *Oheyawahi* overlooks the Dakota peoples' most important *bdote*.

Additionally, Erin Griffin described the significance of the *Bdote* landscape, connecting the Dakota *Oyate* to their homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce*:

Mni Sota is the original homeland of the Dakota, and our own oral history of the events of our creation remains the most important to us. This region was the home of Dakota people generations before us, and for generations after us it will remain our homeland. We are told that we were brought here to this land from the stars to the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. This place known as *Bdote* is our place of genesis. We have recognized *Bdote* as the center of the earth and of all things, and historical accounts tell of it as a meeting place where massive gatherings of lodges took place annually.¹⁴

Bdote, therefore, is both the spiritual and material center for Dakota *wicoħaŋ*, ways of life.

Rather than a single point marking the confluence of two major rivers, Dakota oral traditions conceptualize *Bdote* as a larger cultural landscape interconnected by spiritual beings traveling through the region's smaller waterways, lakes, tributaries, and underground streams.¹⁵

Several distinct culturally important sites comprise the *Bdote* landscape, but they are not marked

knowledge of Dakota emergence from *Bdote* (ibid., 63). For an overview of Dakota creation stories and their specific connections to *Mni Sota Makoce* as a homeland, see Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 13–29.

¹³ Mato Nunpa, interviewed by Iyekiyapiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 17 August 2014, Pezihuta Zizi, *Mni Sota Makoce* (the Upper Sioux Dakota Reservation near Granite Falls, Minnesota).

¹⁴ Vignette of Dakota *Otókahe*, the Beginning, in Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 15.

¹⁵ Iyekiyapiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair described the relationship between the waterways and spiritual beings of the *Bdote* cultural landscape in a personal conversation on 27 March 2015.

by clearly delineated boundaries.¹⁶ These sites include, but are not limited to: *Oheyawahi*, the hill introduced above; *Taku Wakan Tipi*, a site containing the contested landscape of Coldwater Spring, a protest location during the late 1990s and a recent National Park Service acquisition; Minnehaha Falls, the first parkland protected by Minnesota legislation; *Owamniyomni*, or St. Anthony Falls, the cataract catalyzing nineteenth century water-powered industry in Minneapolis; *Bde Maka Ska*, or Lake Calhoun, formerly a Dakota village site and currently a regional recreation hotbed; and *Wakan Tipi*, or Carver's Cave, which is located within the NPS Mississippi National River and Recreation Area corridor but is managed by the City of St. Paul. Though not widely publicized (or even recognized, in certain cases) as such by non-Native land managers, Dakota people *do* publicly acknowledge the above sites as important cultural landscapes. As a crucial point of analysis, they are also all located in public spaces. More specifically, the Dakota cultural landscapes described in this thesis are all currently located in urban public parks.¹⁷

In terms of spiritual significance, Dakota people believe *Bdote* is their site of creation, but the broader *Bdote* landscape also entwines the everyday, material practices of Dakota *wicohan*, Dakota ways of life—which include systems of kinship, labor, transportation, and trade. Their cultural connections to the landscapes of *Mni Sota Makoce*, in general, and *Bdote*, in particular, are defined by philosophies and actions of relatedness, responsibility, and reciprocity. However, the concerted efforts of colonizers to assimilate and dispossess local Indigenous populations severely disrupted Dakota peoples' ability to maintain “healthy and living relationships” with

¹⁶ Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 20.

¹⁷ I do not claim to provide any sort of exhaustive list of Dakota sacred sites. Instead, I refer only to sites publicly acknowledged by Dakota people. For more on the methodological rationale behind this decision, see Kelly Branam et al., “Survey to Identify and Evaluate Indian Sacred Sites and Traditional Cultural Properties in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area,” (Final Report, Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, St. Cloud, Minnesota, August 2010).

these places.¹⁸ Though many contemporary Dakota people maintain resilient connections to the *Bdote* landscape—preserving oral traditions and fighting for Dakota recognition of the place—they still suffer the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization and dispossession.

By at least the early seventeenth century, the people of the Dakota *Oyate* in *Mni Sota Makoce* began connecting to and participating in Western capitalist political economies.¹⁹ However, the early nineteenth century ushered in a period of rapid disruption to traditional ways of life in the Dakota homeland, especially for the landscape surrounding *Bdote*.²⁰ United States government explorers, along with government officials, powerful European-American entrepreneurs, traders, and settlers systematically worked to disenfranchise, marginalize, and ultimately dispossess Dakota peoples' claims to the region that would become the Minnesota Territory and the state of Minnesota by the middle of the nineteenth century.²¹

The violent period of blatant and concerted efforts to disenfranchise, assimilate, and dispossess Dakota peoples may have ended, but these practices persist in subtle, but still violent, forms.²² In the intervening centuries since Dakota removal from *Bdote*, the European American narrative took over and became dominant—where the view from a place like *Oheyawahi* strictly depicts a progressive narrative of urban expansion. And as a consequence, Dakota peoples' philosophical and material relationships—maintained for millennia with the *Bdote* landscape—remain under assault. Fitting together the development of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region with the relationships contemporary Dakota people struggle to maintain to the *Bdote* cultural

¹⁸I attribute this wording to Iyekiyaipiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair from a personal conversation on 10 August 2015.

¹⁹ Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 34–49; Gary Clayton Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650–1862* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984). I use the term “Western” to qualify “capitalist political economy,” so as not to discredit the complexities of Indigenous trade systems prior to colonization or to make any assumptions about the nature of these systems.

²⁰ Anderson, *Little Crow*.

²¹ Mary Lethert Wingerd, *North Country: The Making of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

²² Wilson, *Remember This!*; Waziyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?: The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland* (St. Paul: Living Justice Press, 2008).

landscape, therefore, is crucial. I will argue that contemporary Dakota land-claims, along with struggles for survival and cultural recognition, are deleteriously influenced by and entwined within the colonizing strategies nineteenth century government officials and settlers enacted within the context of economic development in the Twin Cities—a rapidly growing metropolitan center. These colonizing strategies—which include implementing spatial practices to obtain land and introduce private property regimes (surveying, mapping, and treaty-making), creating legal policies to acculturate and dispossess, and developing various forms of western capitalist political economies in different historical eras (the fur trade, the development of manufacturing/industry, and booster supported recreation initiatives)—served the explicit purpose to colonize Dakota people and Dakota land.

But, perhaps even more disturbing, are the ways in which colonizing strategies are rearticulated by powerful individuals and institutions in the twenty-first century. These actions are no less harmful than the overt actions of violence meted out against Native peoples during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These actions further disenfranchise contemporary Dakota claims for land and cultural recognition. Margaret Kovach, a Nêhiyâw Plains Cree scholar, recognizes that “colonial interruptions of Indigenous culture continue” and they directly impact Native lives in the present. Further, she connects this observation to the counterintuitive nature of the phrase “postcolonial theory.” She states that these colonial interruptions create a

dilemma that is distinctively Indigenous and sets us apart from other marginalized groups. It has become part of our collective experience and a burden that our pre-contact ancestors did not have to shoulder. The relationship with the settler society impacts our world daily, in the supermarket, in neighborhoods, and in educational institutions. In post-secondary education, Indigenous students experience the burn of colonial research on a consistent basis most evident in the suppression of Indigenous knowledges. Postcolonial? There is nothing post about it. It has simply shape-shifted to fit the contemporary context.²³

²³ Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 76.

For Dakota people, these “colonial interruptions” appear in the form of privileged ignorance and the discrediting of Dakota knowledges and epistemologies (while simultaneously marking them as invisible in primary and secondary education); emphasizing democratic practices assuring “equality” within the context of public spaces; and privileging recreational uses over spiritual uses of land. Throughout this thesis, therefore, I outline the historic and contemporary colonizing strategies as distinct, yet intertwining practices that have dispossessed, marginalized, and disenfranchised contemporary Dakota people from their homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce*.

Focusing on the interplay between historic and contemporary colonizing strategies as an object of analysis is critical. In a sustained critique of postcolonial theory, Linda Tuhiwai Smith asserts that “Naming the world as ‘post-colonial’ is, from indigenous perspectives, to name colonialism as finished business.”²⁴ And similarly, for Margaret Kovach, using a word such as ‘post’ to structure any form of sustained colonial critique actually “frees one from historical analysis.” She specifically explains that “this is problematic because the non-Indigenous majority are adept at forgetting...colonial history, thus maintaining its reproduction.”²⁵ Therefore, a historical lens is absolutely necessary. The actions of the colonizers both structure and rearticulate colonial influences on Indigenous peoples’ everyday lives in settler-colonial contexts. Both historical and contemporary colonizing strategies disrupt Dakota peoples’ abilities to engage in responsible, reciprocal relationships with the *Bdote* cultural landscape. In this thesis, therefore, I provide both historic and contemporary examples of just how Dakota people have endured disenfranchisement from their homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce*. Dakota people, though, assert that maintaining responsible, cultural relationships to land is vital to ensuring their own survival and the survival of the place.

²⁴ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2012), 101.

²⁵ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 75-76.

Ultimately, this thesis tells a story about Dakota people struggling to maintain and articulate relationships to an urban space, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region, as an indisputably Dakota place. So, what difference does it make and why does it matter that Dakota cultural landscapes are located in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region? What constitutes the material realities and everyday experiences of contemporary Dakota people that influence both interactions with and disconnections from publicly identified Dakota sites located within the *Bdote* cultural landscape in the Twin Cities? What happens when we prioritize Dakota relationships to the land the Twin Cities is built upon when their connections have been silenced in urban geographies more broadly, and histories and historical geographies of Minnesota and the Twin Cities in particular? These questions guide the thesis.

As much as I would prefer this thesis to take an explicitly radical perspective—focusing on the ways that Dakota people and their allies successfully work toward self-determination, or successfully disrupt systems of colonization and capitalism that have for so long subverted Dakota ways of life—instead my object of analysis must, out of necessity, turn toward the material and discursive strategies used to continuously rearticulate the structures and practices used to colonize Dakota people and Dakota land. This is not to say that Dakota people and their allies are not actively involved in attempting to disrupt the many forms in which practices of colonization are rearticulated. However, their actions are embroiled in a constant struggle for legitimacy.

Therefore, I begin in Chapter One by prioritizing and describing in detail Dakota peoples' responsible, reciprocal relationships with land. Specifically, I show how Dakota people articulate this relationship through their worldviews, language, and traditional stories. In Chapter Two, then, I discuss specific historical disruptions to Dakota ways of life. I look at the spatial practices

used to delegitimize Dakota claims to and dispossess Dakota people from Minnesota in the mid-nineteenth century. Specifically, I argue that the American federal government's project to organize its territory into a grid has contemporary effects on Dakota peoples' daily lives. This allows me to, in Chapter Three, depict the contemporary legacies of the grid through the land management practices of public spaces in the Twin Cities. Even though Dakota people provide clear evidence of their current and historic relationships to these public spaces and work within the government-mandated preservation systems, their claims are consistently delegitimized and dismissed. Finally, in Chapter Four I argue that, despite Dakota peoples' concerted and full-time efforts to preserve cultural resources, many Dakota people continue to struggle simply to survive. Cultural preservation, as a result, often becomes, out of necessity, a much lower priority.

Many Dakota people will already be familiar with these narratives, but many others are not. My hope is that many different Dakota people might find something useful in the following pages. This thesis, though, is largely written for those not familiar with the experiences Indigenous peoples have with colonization. Specifically, I write this thesis primarily for non-Native residents of, or visitors to, Minnesota so that they might learn to understand, respect, and appreciate the Dakota *Oyate's* relationship to the landscapes of Minnesota, and the landscapes of the Twin Cities in particular. My hope is that it provides new perspectives that will help destabilize ongoing colonization and its effects. Finally, I write this thesis in order to participate and further conversations in geography and Native studies on the significance of the city coupled with Indigenous spatialities and the effects of the spatial practices of colonization. Kovach argues, we must "recognize the historic Indigenous-settler relationship and by doing so reveal the

relational dynamics between Indigenous and Western science that permeates Indigenous research discourse today.²⁶

A Brief Note on Methods

I designed the research methodology for this thesis in close partnership with Iyekiyaipiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair. From June to August 2014, she and I coordinated and conducted fourteen in-depth interviews with both Dakota and non-Dakota people who we identified as actively involved in organizations dedicated to preserving Dakota cultural landscapes, sacred sites, resources, and/or Dakota language. Darlene graciously served as the primary point of contact for all of the Dakota people who participated in our interviews. Because I am not a member of the Dakota community, Darlene reasoned that more Dakota people would be willing to share their knowledge for this research project if they were contacted by someone they knew who was a member of the Dakota community and with whom they had already developed relationships.

Ten of the fourteen people we interviewed are currently or were previously involved in either K-12 or higher education. In addition, ten of the fourteen people we interviewed identified themselves as Dakota, or of partial Dakota ancestry. Because of these qualifications, the people interviewed for this thesis are more than simply research participants, consultants, or interviewees. They are authoritative voices who have devoted the majority of their professional lives to preserving Dakota or other Indigenous cultural resources and who engaged with us through conversation and storytelling. Their valuable, credible knowledges and experiences co-author this thesis. Margaret Kovach argues that these types of conversations “are of significant scholastic value, holding within them the richness of oral culture,” and the knowledges and experiences contained within the conversations are not available “through written publication

²⁶ Ibid., 76.

given the orality” inherent within the transmission of Indigenous worldviews.²⁷ Therefore, I chose to include lengthy passages from our conversations, attempting wherever possible to maintain the integrity of each person’s thought processes and the stories they told to illustrate a particular point. Often, the interviews weaved together rich, detailed personal narratives with both traditional Dakota teachings and current events. And in an effort to prioritize and support Dakota voices, experiences, and histories, I constructed the text to intervene as lightly as possible in their narratives.

The interviews were in-depth and semi-structured. They lasted between 45 minutes and 165 minutes, for a total of nearly 21 interview hours and more than 450 pages of transcript. We facilitated conversations around the following themes: relationships with land, use of and experiences visiting parks and public spaces that are also publicly identified Dakota cultural resources or sacred sites, Dakota language, and experiences learning about Dakota history and culture in various education systems. Though oral traditions are certainly an important part of Dakota peoples’ connections to places throughout the *Mni Sota Makoce* landscape, we were not told specific oral traditions, nor did we ask the Dakota people who participated in this project to recite oral traditions. Our main purpose was to understand how Dakota people are affected by, interact with, and understand the overlaying of cultural landscapes by public spaces.

Both Darlene and I vetted our interview questions and consent procedures through our respective institutions, St. Cloud State University and Syracuse University. We opted for an oral consent procedure citing the practice of filling out and signing a form as awkward, and also fearing the potential for signing a document to be perceived by Dakota people as an action mirroring historic processes of power and deception both within and beyond the academy. We also allowed participants the option to waive confidentiality. We wanted to give people who

²⁷ Ibid., 15.

participated the opportunity to attach their name to their words, thus extending ownership and agency over their transcripts and quotes. All interviews were digitally recorded and fully transcribed.

In addition, between June and August 2014, I conducted landscape analyses and ethnographies at public parks and events in the Twin Cities and rural Minnesota. For landscape analyses I recorded observations from repeated, personal site visits to Coldwater Spring, Minnehaha Falls, and Fort Snelling State Park. The purpose of these visits was to observe park users, occasionally speak with visitors or park personnel, take photographs, and look for interpretations of Dakota histories and culture, signs of Dakota erasures, and evidence of Dakota use and care for the places.

For the ethnographic component of this project I attended a workshop in St. Paul, coordinated by the 106 Group, discussing a draft of the St. Paul River Passage Plan on 5 June 2014. I volunteered for a half-day with National Park Service's Coldwater Crew removing invasive plants at Coldwater Spring on 17 July 2014. I attended a half-day sacred sites tour Darlene led for a group of St. Paul alternative arts summer school students on 25 July 2014. Finally, I participated in the "Dakota Perspective on the Minnesota River" Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) paddling trip in southwestern Minnesota on 26 July 2014. I also draw on my own field notes from site visits I conducted while an undergraduate at St. Cloud State University from December 2011 to March 2012. During this time the National Park Service (NPS) offered monthly ranger led tours of Coldwater Spring. The NPS had recently acquired the property from the U.S. Bureau of Mines, so they had closed and fenced off the property to demolish buildings. I draw from these moments of ethnography—because Kovach argues that "all we can know for sure is our own experience"—to situate each chapter within my own

personal narrative.²⁸ Together, the rich conversations contained in the interviews and my own observations, these methods rely heavily on narrative and storytelling to emphasize key themes, ideas, and theoretical arguments.

²⁸ Ibid., 49.

Everything. The Dakota language describes everything. It's a very beautiful language, especially to hear the elders speak because they're the ones who grew up with it. To hear them talking, it's very beautiful. Going around all the different places, and *this* has a Dakota name to it. It makes it more special.

—Sisoka Duta

Chapter One

Knowledge

All day he repeated the phrase like a mantra. “Dakota people have strong connections to the land,” Don said as we lined up our canoes along the steep and sandy river bank, the sky overcast and the temperature remarkably cool for late July. CURE (Clean Up the River Environment), a Minnesota non-profit organization dedicated to restoring the Minnesota River Watershed, sponsored our guided paddling trip, “A Dakota Perspective on the Minnesota River.”¹

We were anxious to get on the water, but our small group spent most of the early morning shuttling vehicles and canoes back and forth between boat landings. After leaving two vehicles downstream at the take-out point, four of us squeezed into Don’s red fuel-efficient compact car ready to return upstream so we could rejoin the other half of our crew. As we trundled along washed out dirt roads, sweltering in the rain gear we forgot to remove before sandwiching together in the backseat, Don emphatically and effortlessly weaved together stories about the region’s politics and recent agricultural history with snippets of Dakota oral traditions that explained the form and significance of the physical landscape.

The Minnesota River is a misfit stream.² The relatively narrow river meanders through an unexpectedly massive gorge. In places along the river’s course, bluffs tower nearly two hundred feet above the broad floodplain. The dirt road we traveled followed a flat, elevated terrace, the river below invisible, veiled by a narrow swath of cottonwoods, silver maples, and elms further down in the valley. Don slowed to avoid a pothole. He made a few passing comments about flooding—pointing out the impacts from the previous month’s aberrant storms and recalling

¹ The paddling trip was open to the public and took place on 26 July 2014. With the exception my husband and me, all participants were residents of the upper Minnesota River valley region and were members of CURE.

² Richard W. Ojakangas and Charles L. Matsch, *Minnesota’s Geology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 110; the authors claim the Minnesota River is a “classic example” of an underfit stream.

places where you could still see high water marks from the historic 1997 flood season (see Figure 1.1). Then, he launched into a tale describing how several thousand years ago a great deluge carved the Minnesota River valley's channel, perhaps in less than a month. "The elders know the story," he said with hints of both pride and frustration in his voice, "but geologists are still catching up."



Figure 1.1 High water mark of the 1997 flood season on an iron bridge along the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway, County Road 17, Redwood Falls, Minnesota. This bridge went over the boat landing where we began the CURE paddling trip on 26 July 2014.

Our four hour float on a rainy, late-July morning offered only a partial glimpse of the river valley. “The river and its environment changes with the ebb and flow of the water levels and the seasons,” Don explained. With more than thirty years of paddling experience, Don Robertson has accrued first-hand, experiential knowledge of the ebbs and flows along the Minnesota River’s course. He is also a certified Master naturalist, board member, and guide for CURE. With an athletic build, gnarled hands, and a weathered complexion, Don easily exemplifies the characteristics of your ordinary outdoor adventure guide, but he is also an enrolled member of the Lake Traverse Reservation in Sisseton, South Dakota.

“I never learned to speak the language,” Don said as he deftly led our paddling group into the Minnesota River’s gentle current. “My grandparents refused to speak it to keep their children out of trouble during the boarding school era.” Though always soft-spoken and matter-of-fact, you could hear his voice rise ever-so-slightly as he explained the everyday realities of cultural oppression. The loss of language between generations caused him pain, but it is conceivably through his ongoing relationship to the Minnesota River valley he feels confident firmly asserting his Dakota identity.

As Don frequently reminded us throughout our trip, “Dakota people have strong connections to the land.” But so, too, are Dakota people connected to specific sites, landscapes, and waterways, like the Minnesota River valley. About halfway through our guided trip along a section of the upper Minnesota River approaching Redwood Falls, Minnesota, Don guided our small fleet of canoes over to a soggy sandbar. Along the bank we could see a section of the prairie dotted with granite outcrops (see Figure 1.2). “The elders have kept the knowledge about these rocks,” Don began as he struggled to maintain his balance, his feet sinking more than half-a-foot into the water-logged sand,

the word in Dakota given to these rocks tells us that they are ancient. It was knowledge that Dakota people had preserved in the language before geologists came along to tell us they are some of the oldest rocks found anywhere in the world. But Dakota people already knew that. Our language tells us that.³



Figure 1.2 *Tuŋkaŋsida*. Granite outcrops on the prairie we passed on the CURE paddling trip.

Waziyatawiŋ—a prominent Dakota activist, scholar, and former academic—describes how Dakota *iapi*, Dakota language, intertwines all human and non-human relationships within Dakota worldviews. Specifically, kinship terms in Dakota *iapi* “are used to discuss all of creation,” and it is a kinship term that affords meaning to the granite outcrops along the section

³ Indeed, geologists concur. A roadside geology marker, perched next to a granite outcrop near a bend in the Minnesota River just off Minnesota Highways 23 and 67 in Granite Falls, Minnesota, proclaims “WORLD’S OLDEST ROCK / Site of some of the oldest exposed rock in the world. Geologists estimate this Granitic Gneiss was formed 3,800,000,000 years ago.” And Ojakangas and Matsch additionally assert, “The importance of these rocks to an understanding of the early history of the earth is so great that geologists from all over the world come to western Minnesota to study them in their natural surroundings;” Ojakangas and Matsch, *Minnesota’s Geology*, 3.

of the Minnesota River we paddled. Further, Waziyatawiŋ elaborates on this relationship between all things, where

the designation of a spiritual being among the Dakota differs from the designation often used by English speakers. For example, *tunkaŋsida*, *grandfather*, may apply to a human being or a number of human beings as a kinship term, but it also is applied to other spiritual beings. The term may refer to Wakaŋtaŋka (The Great Mystery), the rocks used in the sweat lodge, or the gigantic granite boulders that appear in our area of the country and whom the Dakota recognize as the oldest, most ancient beings. Interestingly, scientists have now dated those rocks from 3.6 to 3.8 billion years old, identifying them as some of the oldest exposed rocks in the world.⁴

The kinship term, *tunkaŋsida*, exemplifies Dakota relationships to land and imbues the granite outcrops along the Minnesota River valley with profound meaning. The term not only emphasizes a worldview derived from relationships between all human and more-than-human beings, but it also demonstrates knowledge and understanding of a place. Therefore, an intimate knowledge of the land, acquired over millennia and passed from generation to generation, remains preserved in Dakota worldviews and language. The enduring presence of this generational knowledge, maintained throughout the past two turbulent centuries, gives credence to Dakota ways of knowing. And, thus, the interrelatedness between the knowledges inherent in worldviews, language, and land support Dakota claims to *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflect the sky.

The story of paddling on the Minnesota River raises many important points. Namely, it illustrates the profound relationships between Dakota worldviews, language, and land. But it also introduces Dakota relationships to places in *Mni Sota Makoce* beyond the cultural landscapes located in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. In fact, we paddled along a stretch of the upper

⁴ Wilson, *Remember This!*, 62-63.

Minnesota River 120 miles west of the Cities.⁵ But if this thesis’s narrative focuses on Dakota cultural landscapes in an urban area, why include an anecdote about a paddling trip through rural western Minnesota? There are two reasons. First, Dakota people live everywhere—cities, towns, reservations in Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, and beyond.⁶ I want to make this point clear because, for numerous reasons, many Dakota people maintain relationships to their traditional cultural landscapes located in the Twin Cities, many others do not. Some know the language. Most, maybe, do not. Waziyatawin, for example, explains that “the vast majority of Dakota people still live in exile. That is, most of our people have no home in our ancestral homeland.”⁷ And the principal reason for these displacements links back to the colonizing strategies enacted in the nineteenth century to dispossess Dakota people from the region around *Bdote*—the place where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers meet and the place of Dakota creation—and eventually from the entirety of *Mni Sota Makoce* (these practices and their effects are discussed more fully in the next chapter). Nevertheless, many Dakota people maintain their stories, traditional practices, and relationships—often adapting old practices to new places or new practices to old places, like Don Robertson’s relationship with the Minnesota River.

For Don’s grandparents, their first-hand experiences with dispossession incited fear of passing on Dakota language to their children. Though he admits that he does not know the language, Don takes pride in his intimate knowledge of the Minnesota River valley’s physical landscapes, because it affords an avenue for him to reclaim an important relationship to an unequivocally Dakota place. In addition, by sharing his knowledge with others, Don begins to

⁵ I measured distance from the State Capitol building in St. Paul to the Minnesota River boat landing on Redwood County Road 101 using Google Maps. Midwesterners typically refer to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area as the “Twin Cities,” or simply, “the Cities,” as above.

⁶ Wilson, *Remember This!*, 8; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 14.

⁷ Waziyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?*, 10.

challenge and disrupt the narratives and practices of colonization—a personal narrative strategy that another CURE board member endearingly referred to as “Don-isms.”

The second reason for beginning this chapter with an anecdote located in a non-urban setting demonstrates that *Bdote* is only a node within a much larger region considered Dakota homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce*. The *Bdote* cultural landscape—a place now contained within a seven county metropolitan area—is surely the physical and spiritual center of *Mni Sota Makoce*. However, it is also a metonymic landscape that exemplifies broader struggles for Dakota sovereignty and self-determination within the context of the ongoing colonizing strategies used to marginalize, assimilate, and dispossess Dakota people and Dakota land at a much larger scale. While always gesturing toward *Bdote* as the center, this chapter emphasizes Dakota relationships to the entirety of the *Mni Sota Makoce* landscape. And, thus, the principle theme demonstrates how Dakota people are related to land throughout *Mni Sota Makoce*, and also how the land is related to Dakota people. These relationships to land both inform and sustain Dakota language and worldviews. All three of these components are vital to Dakota cultural survival.

“Remember, Kelsey, there are multiple right answers,” Darlene says as she challenges me to think differently nearly every time we talk. Recognizing multiple perspectives is—like prioritizing relatedness and reciprocity—an important philosophy within Dakota worldviews. Darlene’s frequent reminders encourage me to understand that there are “multiple right answers” to any given situation when Dakota knowledges are shared, particularly in interviews or publications. Waziyatawiñ, for example, describes how this philosophy is vital to Dakota ceremonies and oral traditions, and it deserves utmost respect:

One of the ceremonies still practiced among my people is called in our language *hañbdeceya* or, literally, crying for a vision. While this term usually makes reference to the formal ceremony in which men would go off by themselves, usually for a four-day period, fasting, praying, and singing until they received a vision, visions were given to

both men and women in a number of other ways as well. An important aspect of this concept is that when one receives a vision, it is not for others to question. Thus, I grew up with a belief that you ‘respect another person’s vision.’⁸

She further explains that

Consequently, while there might be differing stories on the same topic within any given Indigenous community, and families and individuals may differ in opinion about these stories, there is acknowledgement that there may be more than one ‘right’ version, that stories differ according to perspective, and some individuals may be more adept than others at relaying specific stories.⁹

Vine Deloria, Jr. similarly acknowledges that the “Tribal elders did not worry if their version of creation was entirely different from the scenario held by a neighboring tribe. People believed that each tribe had its own special relationship with the superior spiritual forces that governed the universe.”¹⁰ The “multiple right answers” philosophy allows for multiple points of view of a story, event, or practice, while never discrediting other knowledges.

By no means is it my intent to essentialize or romanticize Dakota peoples’ experiences or knowledges. After all, as Darlene reminds me, recognizing “multiple right answers” is an important philosophy within Dakota worldviews. However, I do make the assumption that Dakota worldviews—and the knowledges, histories, values, and practices derived from those worldviews—are unique to Dakota peoples. Though, also following Annette Watson’s lead, every person is, of course, influenced by multiple worldviews that change over time, where “different worldviews and different practices can constitute an individual’s knowledge of land and animals.”¹¹ Nevertheless, people who identify themselves as Dakota are ancestrally connected to the sovereign nations of the *Oceti Sakowin*, a confederation of peoples with a

⁸ Wilson, *Remember This!*, 46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁰ Vine Deloria, Jr., *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997), 36.

¹¹ Annette Watson, “Knowledges That ‘Travel’: Indigenous-Western Expertise and the ‘Nature’ of Wildlife Management in the Alaskan Boreal Forest” (doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2007), 18.

persistent and enduring sense of shared ways of life and common histories. Though perhaps a bit oversimplified, it is imperative to recognize some degree of difference between Dakota and non-Dakota peoples. John Western, for example, one of geography's great ethnographers, similarly constructs this dualism in his text on Barbadian Londoner's sense of identity and home. But underlying his work, and an assumption that I have similarly taken on in this thesis, is that marginalized peoples—Barbadian's in his case, Dakota in mine—"have something to tell the rest of us, and we should try to listen attentively and with respect."¹² In the narratives that follow, I draw from the knowledge and stories shared by Dakota people and Dakota scholars. Their voices deserve respect. Listen to what they know about their land, *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflect the sky.

***Mni Sota Makoce*: "The Language Describes the Land"**

Place links present with past and our personal self with kinship groups. What we know flows through us from the "echo of generations," and our knowledges cannot be universalized because they arise from our experience with our places. This is why name-place stories matter: they are repositories of science, they tell of relationships, they reveal history, and they hold our identity.¹³

Kinship terms infuse Dakota *iapi*, Dakota language. "Like inward knowing, language is so powerful because it reminds us who we are; it is deeply entwined with personal and cultural identity," explains Margaret Kovach, a Nêhiyâw Plains Cree scholar. And as Dakota kinship terms demonstrate, "Language matters because it holds within it a people's worldview." But Kovach also raises the question of causality: does language shape thought or does thought shape language? We could similarly ask: does the land shape language or does the language shape relationships with land? Kovach concludes, however, that ultimately what matters most,

¹² John Western, *A Passage to England: Barbadian Londoners Speak of Home* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), xix.

¹³ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 61.

“whatever the causal forces,” is that worldview, language, and land “live in a profound relationship with each other.”¹⁴

Don Robertson’s frequently repeated phrase, “Dakota people have strong connections to the land,” for example, intimates profound relationships between a people and a place. And, as Waziyatawiŋ reminds us, “Dakota people consider Minnesota the site of our creation and we have existed on this particular land base for thousands of years. It is Dakota homeland. No other population in the world can claim this deep connection to Minnesota.”¹⁵ Specifically, worldviews and language represent this connection. Kovach explains that Indigenous worldviews, which encompass knowledge, values, and language, “are nested, created, and re-created within the context of relationships with other living beings” in a particular place.¹⁶ Drawing on an argument made by Vine Deloria, Jr., Kovach also claims that “Many Indigenous worldviews are based upon an animistic philosophy that attests that the human entity is but one clan group within its relational family.” Emphasizing a worldview based on relatedness—or what Kovach refers to as a relational worldview—“from a tribal perspective, is one that assumes relationships between all life forms that exist within the natural world. Relationship has a broad inclusive meaning within tribal understanding.”¹⁷ Dakota worldviews similarly emphasize relationships with the earth and all things. John Norder explains that with any relationship also comes responsibility:

JN: The thing is, it’s a juggling act between the non-anthropocentric and anthropocentric, and Native peoples have always fundamentally understood that. The non-anthropocentric world for [us] actually exists, and it’s our job to respond to it in meaningful constructive, respectful, and circumspect ways, because we’re transient in this world. Yet, because of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁵ Wilson, *Remember This!*, 9.

¹⁶ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 47.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

who we are, we have a great responsibility to engage with it properly, because we're the ones who have the gifts to do so.¹⁸

This section, therefore, elaborates on the ways in which Dakota people define their homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce*, through Dakota language kinship terms that emphasize Dakota worldviews of responsible reciprocal relationships. If “Dakota people have strong connections to the land,” what, exactly, do these “connections” look like in practice, and where is Dakota land located?

The phrase, *Mitakuye Owas'in*, is the most foundational Dakota expression of kinship. It encompasses all living things, and Waziyatawiñ explains that

the term *Mitakuyapi Owas'in* is a phrase central to Dakota culture and even those with limited language knowledge are familiar with its usage and the weightiness of its meaning. Literally, this would translate as *All My Relations*, and while it translates easily enough, the worldview associated with this phrase becomes apparent only when used in the context of the extensive network of other kinship terms. This is language that reflects the sacredness and interconnectedness of all creation and is used to encompass all living beings, in essence, all the natural world. It is used in greetings, in prayers, in ceremonies, in speeches, and any other time one wants to call upon all or part of creation. Thus, uttering the phrase in English does not have the same depth of meaning, because in English, other spiritual beings are not referred to with a kinship term in everyday speech...¹⁹

According to Waziyatawiñ, Dakota language kinship terms mark Dakota communities as distinctive, particularly when comparing Dakota *iapi* and the English language. Despite its centrality as a foundational Dakota worldview, Dakota scholars do not often describe the phrase, *Mitakuye Owas'in* without simultaneously marking its difference against dominant, Western, and white ways of knowing. Kovach situates this positioning where “one must first assert the interrelationship between Indigenous language structure and worldview, and then the manner in which colonialism has interfered with this dynamic.”²⁰

¹⁸ John Norder, interviewed by Iyekiyapiwiñ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 21 July 2014, North Minneapolis, Minnesota.

¹⁹ Wilson, *Remember This!*, 62.

²⁰ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 59.

Iyekiyapiwiñ Darlene St. Clair, for example, draws on the phrase *Mitakuye Owas'iy* to illustrate how the philosophy inherent within the foundational Dakota concept challenges dominant, non-Native approaches toward the land. Again, the difference is rooted in the worldview of relatedness. In terms of Dakota people's relationship with land, she explains:

DS: Yes, of course the land is important. Land is the source of everything, really. It's not just the land, but all the things that live on the land. So one of the main foundational things...is this concept of *Mitakuye Owas'iy*, which means, "all are my relatives," or "I am related to everything," or "everything is related." And that concept, I think when I talk to non-Dakota people about this it sounds like, "Yes, isn't that really beautiful?" Or they really like that idea, but it really is a challenge to other systems of thinking about land, and what's on the land, which is oftentimes a philosophy of dominion. Like all these things were put for you to have dominion over, which is really *not* this Dakota philosophy. This Dakota *Mitakuye Owas'iy* is that we are all related. And, actually, we're just one part of this larger web. Oftentimes it can be described as a web. So it often sort of lowers the importance of humans, and makes humans, oftentimes, our traditional stories will talk about the pitifulness of humans. How humans are so dependent on everything else. And so when I think of land, I don't really think of a vista or something like that. I think of land more in the Dakota term, which we call *makoce*, which is really just part of our understanding of earth. So land is just more part of earth and it's a home, but not just for us, and that there are many things that live on that earth. But then there's things, too, that you can't see that are there. And I think that's the other thing that I think sometimes people get a little weirded out by is the spiritual nature. I think people *think* that they like that, but if you were really to think, if you were willing to interact in the world with Dakota values, or *Mitakuye Owas'iy*, as the center of how you behave and how you make decisions you would be very challenged. If that's the center of your philosophy you have to think of yourself and how you interact in the world differently. And so this is kind of the thing about... "I think your culture is beautiful," which I hear a lot, "but I don't think I really want to shift at all."²¹

For Iyekiyapiwiñ, *Mitakuye Owas'iy* is a direct challenge to other systems of thinking, particularly regarding relationships with land. But underlying this challenge is also a struggle.

Dakota people struggle to maintain relationships with the land within the framework of *Mitakuye Owas'iy* because of the disjuncture between Native and non-Native ways of understanding land. Waziyatawiñ further explains that this disjuncture is connected directly to colonizing actions:

²¹ Iyekiyapiwiñ Darlene St. Clair, interviewed by the author, 10 July 2014, Edina, Minnesota.

Waz: I think that part of the colonization process has been teaching our people to compartmentalize and to see things in a disconnected way, and the irony is that our basic philosophy, *Mitakuye Owas'in*, is about that interconnectedness and it's about that web of life, and not being able to separate those or to pull them apart. I think too often we aren't critically conscious of how that worldview is affecting our thinking.²²

According to Wazyatawiŋ, there is a clear distinction between non-Native, compartmentalized ways of knowing, and the Native, or Dakota, interconnected ways of knowing. And the actions of colonization have directly, and negatively, impacted the dynamic of relatedness between Dakota worldviews, language, and land.

While also highlighting the struggle inherent in the philosophical disjuncture between Native and non-Native understandings of land, Mato Nuŋpa describes how the phrase *Mitakuye Owas'in*, though foundational, is just one of many kinship terms describing Dakota relationships with the land.

MN: So anyway that's one thing, the earth as mother, and then the other thing, there's a phrase called *Mitakuye Owas'in*, or *Mitakuyapi Owas'in*, which means "all my relatives." That's part of the theological language, if you will, of Dakota beliefs, spiritual beliefs, and ceremonies. Again, that saying embraces all of life. Even rocks and stones that white man's science says they can't talk, or they don't have thoughts. But we've had people in the past, and maybe even now, that can have the gift of communicating with the rocks, and they give and receive teachings from that. Or even the *inipi*, the stones that are brought in, they are called *tunŋkaŋ*, which the word is a contraction for *tunŋkaŋsida*, grandfather, they come in and they talk about the grandfathers...those also would represent the grandmothers as well, but again, since it's men who are doing it, then they just say grandfathers. But it represents the ancestors and our relatives who have lived in the past, as well. So those are some of the things that white man doesn't have any knowledge of, and furthermore if he did, he dismisses it.²³

Based on the foundational concept, *Mitakuye Owas'in*, and other kinship terms, the earth is revered, and it is referred to as a relative within Dakota worldviews.

²² Wazyatawiŋ, interviewed by Iyekiyaŋiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 31 July 2014, Pezihuta Zizi, Mni Sota Makoce (the Upper Sioux Dakota Reservation near Granite Falls, Minnesota).

²³ Mato Nuŋpa, interview.

For Wicasta Waŋzi, kinship terms like *tunkaŋsida* also exemplify the dynamic of relatedness between worldview, language, and land. When asked to share words and phrases in the Dakota language that describe land, he says:

WW: I think it really varies. Besides the obvious scientific-type terminology, like *maka*, *makoce*, you often hear of it referred to as *kuŋsi maka*, grandmother earth, or in modern times a lot of people say mother earth, but I think that's a western influence, and then even the *tunkaŋsida*, for the rocks, all of the rocks [are] our elder and life, because we know they were the first ones and bled for us to create from that original sacrifice, so when you hear that "*tunkaŋ*," that's acknowledging elders and life. So anything that refers to being older than human has to do with our relationship to the earth... And there's that word *wa maka skaŋ*, for anything that has a spirit and moves across the earth. "*Skaŋ*" is movement, "*maka*" is earth, and "*wa*" makes it something, "something moving across the earth." It's kind of poetic when you think about it, but it's more specific than animal. It talks about the purpose of them and how, those sacrifices of those animals and of the earth allow us to live, and we recognize that in everything we do. Dakota people, we don't just take, so if we're cutting wood, gathering water, we're always putting something in return, and that's our relationship with *kuŋsi maka*. It's a reciprocal relationship.²⁴

In this passage, Wicasta Waŋzi begins to connect how Dakota language kinship terms are entwined within Dakota values that, thus, define actions of relatedness and reciprocity with the land.

Sisoka Duta further explains the ways these kinship terms are recognized in the Dakota language. Specifically, he explains how the terms are based on an understanding that Dakota people are given life by the earth. Therefore, Dakota people are clearly positioned as descendants of their ancestor, the earth.

S: I've heard a couple different words for the earth. You could say *kuŋsi makoce*, or *uŋsi makoce*, and they both mean grandmother earth. And you think of the earth as our grandmother because it was the one who gave life to everything on the earth including our ancestors. So then our ancestors give life to us. So then that makes the earth our grandmother, so that's another thing you could say.²⁵

²⁴ Wicasta Waŋzi, interviewed by Iyekiyaŋiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 15 July 2014, Maple Grove, Minnesota. *Tunkaŋ* is a contraction of *tunkaŋsida*.

²⁵ Sisoka Duta, interviewed by Iyekiyaŋiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 15 August 2014, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Dakota language kinship terms given to the land, and also to the beings moving across the earth, underscore Dakota worldviews of relatedness and reciprocity.

But a Dakota language kinship term like *tun̄kaŋsida*—a word for grandfather and a name given to the ancient rocks in the Minnesota River valley—also exemplifies how Dakota “knowledges are bound to place.”²⁶ Understanding the relationships between worldview, language, and land must, therefore, begin from the position that Dakota people acknowledge the earth as a relative and an elder through Dakota language kinship terms.

Dakota connections to land are based on the relationships with the earth and all the things that move across the earth, but these relationships are also formed within a specific context: Dakota land. And Dakota land is *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflect the sky. In our conversations with Dakota people and scholars familiar with Dakota worldviews, we asked people to define the extent of Dakota land. In their responses, we, once again, see the relationships between worldview, language, and land. Bruce White explains that this idea—that *Mni Sota Makoce* is Dakota land, and by extension that Minnesota is Dakota land—was the central thesis behind the development of the text he co-authored with Dakota scholar, Gwen Westerman. He explains his involvement with the project:

BW: And Sheldon [Wolfchild] later was working with Sid Beane, and a few years after that they wanted to do a history of the Dakota connection to the land in Minnesota, and so they asked me to help organize this project. And that’s what led to the writing of the book *Mni Sota Makoce*. And so as a result of that I did a lot of more research than I’d ever done before on the Dakota connection to the land in Minnesota....Gwen did most of the interviews....But I was able to follow through with some of the themes: the Dakota idea of land being a relative; of Minnesota being a homeland; and of the connections to specific places, the connections to the general landscape, to burial sites, and to springs, and to many different geographic landmarks.

When I was approached to work on the Dakota land project, Sheldon [Wolfchild] and Sid Beane, the point that they made was, first of all we want people to understand that Minnesota is a Dakota place, and we want people to understand that we are the Dakota. We are *not* the Lakota. And we are so sick and tired of having people talk about

²⁶ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 37.

the Lakota. And then there had been that mini-series on television, maybe five years ago, in which Adam Beach played Charles Eastman, and he was described as Lakota in that mini-series! And he was *not* Lakota. He was Dakota from Minnesota. And Sid Beane is related to Charles Eastman through Charles Eastman's brother. And, you know, he's disturbed that his family, *his own family*, is being described as Lakota. And the Dakota people were exiled from Minnesota, and Sid's family was exiled to Flandreau. And so there's a frustration. It's a question of power and understanding, and he's motivated to educate people. And I think that transferred into our book, then. It's a major goal of the book, to educate people about what is Dakota land, and why is this Dakota land, and why is Minnesota a Dakota place, and why is it *Mni Sota*?²⁷

The themes of relatedness and connections to a specific homeland were important for Westerman and White's text, but making Dakota peoples' claims to *Mni Sota Makoce* visible to the non-Native residents of Minnesota, was also a major impetus. The answer to the question, "why is it *Mni Sota*?" for example, informs a broader public that, indeed, Minnesota is Dakota land.

The answer to this question is contained within the meaning of the Dakota language term, *Mni Sota Makoce*. The term itself helps Dakota people articulate their connection to a specific land base. So where, exactly, do Dakota people locate this homeland? Dakota elder, Mato Nunpa, explains that the term Dakota people use to refer to their homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce*, defines the land. And it is through understanding that term that he knows when he is in Dakota land. He explains:

MN: Well, I know it because this is the land we called *Mini Sota Makoce*, land where the waters reflect the skies of the earth....So *Mini Sota Makoce*, "land where the waters reflect the skies or heavens," or you can use Dr. Charles Eastman's—that's *Mato Nunpa's* translation—you can use Dr. Charles Eastman's translation, "land of sky blue waters." And a lot of the old people, white people, they recognize that because of the product that utilizes that slogan....And of course, *Mini Sota Makoce*, that's the reference to thousands upon thousands of lakes that are here in this area, and we know that we must be in Minnesota or Wisconsin or Michigan, but Minnesota and Wisconsin for sure.²⁸

²⁷ White, interview.

²⁸ Mato Nunpa, interview. The "product" Mato Nunpa refers to is Hamm's Beer. See YouTube for their 1956 national campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yHsoW6CTjM>.

The term, *Mni Sota Makoce*, clearly describes the landscape. The land where waters reflect the sky constitutes the territory of the Dakota people, and the term itself refers to that specific and unique landscape found in the center of the North American continent.

For Sisoka Duta, Dakota land is distinctly defined by all Dakota language terms that refer to the landscape. When asked: How do you know when you are in Dakota land? He answers:

S: Well, that's a good question....That's a tough one. This is the area we've traditionally lived in, and I guess maybe you could say that we know this is our land because the language describes the land, and when you go to different places we don't have words for certain things. So that's obviously not where we're from. So that's one way you could say, "This is definitely Dakota land, we have a word for everything here." Whereas, if I go to the desert there's not words for certain things, so that's not our land. And when I go to other peoples' land it's important to recognize, "yeah, this is yours. This is where you're from." And I think when they come here they do the same. That's good. But definitely that's for sure how I would recognize it. But today now we have these borders, this line on a map, like, "this is your land, and this is our land." So that's another way you can tell, today, but I would say that even though there's the city of St. Paul and Minneapolis here, I still consider this our land, even though all these people are here, and I know one day they will all recognize that. Not right now, but eventually in the future they'll come to realize that this is our land, and you're on it, and maybe they'll start to respect that fact, and honor the way we did things, maybe go back to that.²⁹

For Sisoka Duta, an important distinction is that the Dakota language defines Dakota land and territory, but it is not a place marked by sharply delineated borders. The fluid transitions of the landscape define the territory.

Though he does offer a glimpse into the extent of Dakota land—when asked the same question, how do you know when you are in Dakota land— Wicasta Wanzi echoes Sisoka Duta's sentiment that Dakota land is not clearly delineated by a surveyed, mapped, grid. The extent of Dakota land is fluid because it is dependent on relationships with other Native Nations.

WW: I saw something, [a] similar question like this that was going around to the different communities in Canada, and I was really intrigued by their responses. People were saying it was wherever our ancestors had traveled when they brought that pipe. So some of the stories were talking about the Catawba all the way in the Carolinas, the tribes in Louisiana, and then west to the Rockies, and then north up to past Alexis First Nation,

²⁹ Sisoka Duta, interview.

which I think is in British Columbia, but they're a Nakota-speaking group. And so there's a huge area. But generally when I think of Dakota *Makoce*, I think of from the Great Lakes, west to the Rockies, to the southern plains, up to those northern lakes in Canada. I don't think it's a physical space that can be defined by political boundaries because our people were always having *hun̄ka* ceremonies, making relatives with other nations, and Dakota means "everyday ways of peace," or "friendly." So our ancestors weren't going around making war, they were always trying to make relatives. That's why we married in with so many other tribes, and it was really fluid, the way we moved, and because we moved according to *wican̄pi wicohan̄*, or "the way of the stars." We moved in a cycle that followed the migrations of the elk, the buffalo, various other animals. So that's why we have summer villages, winter villages.³⁰

Iyekiyapiwiñ Darlene St. Clair also explains that Dakota *iapi* and place names also help define and give credence to Dakota claims to *Mni Sota Makoce*, the traditional homeland of the Dakota people. She begins by saying, "Of course, there's plenty of evidence in place names both in Dakota and in English of Dakota tenure in this place, throughout the region." But she, like Wicasta Wañzi and Sisoka Duta, describes how Dakota understandings of land and territory predate the territorial practices of the European-American colonizers:

DS: So the term *Mni Sota Makoce*, sometimes people talk about it like it means Minnesota. And in my understanding it doesn't mean Minnesota, it means this territory, this part of the landscape where the skies are reflected in the waters, and that doesn't end at the Minnesota border. That land is western Wisconsin, in the southern part of Canada, it's in eastern North and South Dakota, it's in northern Iowa. So there's this region. To me, in my understanding, that's *Mni Sota Makoce*. *Mni Sota Makoce* existed before there was a Minnesota. And so sometimes even Dakota people talk about *Mni Sota Makoce* as being the same as the boundaries of the state of Minnesota—that is not how I understand it. So that's another important concept. Of course, both colonial and state borders came long, long, long after we had lived in this place for a long, long time. And then so there's tons of place names, and some of the place names are badly pronounced Dakota words, and some of the place names are English translations of Dakota places, like Sleepy Eye or something like that. And then we see in the landscape, hills that are described today as mounds that are either burial mounds or effigy mounds. So we see that Dakota people altered the landscape. And that did other kinds of markings. That's some of where that "they paint the trees red," the markings.³¹

What Darlene is referring to at the end of the passage here is her home reservation, the Lower Sioux Indian Community near Redwood Falls, Minnesota, which is referred to in Dakota as

³⁰ Wicasta Wañzi, interview.

³¹ Iyekiyapiwiñ, interview.

Caṅsayapi. *Caṅsayapi* translates to “they paint the trees red,” and refers to specific Dakota actions contained within a Dakota language term that describes tenure in a specific place.

To conclude this section I want to share a lengthy passage from our interview with John Norder, a fabulous storyteller with a fantastic sense of humor. In the following passage, he contextualizes Dakota peoples’ unique position on the North American continent and how that location contributes to the current relationships with the land. He begins from the proposition that raising awareness about Dakota connections to the landscapes of Minnesota not only raises visibility about Dakota peoples’ struggles and claims to their homeland, but it also has the potential to expand the knowledge and understanding of the processes of the physical landscapes during a time of rapid change. He says:

JN: I think greater awareness is key because the Dakota seem to be the “forgotten Sioux” in way too many situations. Literally I said the history book in some senses was really accurate, because it seems like after 1863 the Dakota people had gotten completely forgotten. Everybody knows about the Ojibwe people being in the state. And AIM really had a lot to do with that, because that was basically who the people were—they were either Lakota or they were Ojibwe. Never the twain shall meet. This is what I always think of as my role being a Dakota person, being sort of the great mediator, but at the same time the cost is visibility. But I think it’s important that they be known to still be existing in the state. I mean, even I didn’t know how many Dakota reservations there actually were in the state until about ten years ago....And so I just thought that they’d either been pushed into South Dakota or North Dakota. So the awareness is important, that they’re present, and they actually represent the majority of the state in terms of historic occupancy of the state.

Part of the reason why it’s important is because from an archaeological standpoint it’s important that they not be brought in, they shouldn’t be brought to the table by Ojibwe people who recognize that the stuff isn’t theirs when they start digging something up. It should be an actual thing for agencies in the state to know they have to bring both peoples to the table. And that it’s a discretion between, when it’s done right, the Ojibwe have their migration, they know that they’re not local here, their origins aren’t here. So it’s kind of a no-brainer, but they [government agencies] still defer to them somewhat because they’re primarily the more vocal, they’ve been historically the more vocal in the state. So it’s important there, it’s important in terms [of] contemporary stuff in the state simply because nobody knows anything about it for starters, but it’s a new way of informing the way you view the landscape outside of the lake areas.

Everybody basically thinks that it’s Buffalo and farms, if you think about anything, that’s once you get into the plains. Now, Dakota people straddled that, and they

had a very unique role in that transition zone and the way the landscape should be known. People could learn a lot from that. You have a lot of studies and things that are thinking about AIM and talking about climate change—beat a dead horse there—but there’s a lot of focus on traditional ecological knowledge which is something that I’m involved in a lot. And the Dakota people have lived in a great eco-tone between the woodlands and the plains. There’s a lot to be learned from Dakota people’s in terms of how they’ve exploited those things, and the importance of an environment that actually fluctuates, and is moved back and forth with the change of climate in the state. So there’s potential to really garner a lot of knowledge, if the knowledge is there. And it contributes to a lot of possible discussions, so the fact that Dakota people aren’t brought to the table in those things, and Dakota knowledge is not considered to be really sort of present, there’s a lot that people are missing out on in terms of thinking about things in terms of environmental understandings of changes that are occurring now. So I think that there’s a lot of plusses.

The negatives are standard. If it’s not done carefully then the intellectual property of the communities could easily be abstracted and stolen and run away with to not be used for nefarious purposes, but basically taken and then Dakota people aren’t really important again anymore. The knowledge has been removed, but bringing them in and making them active would help mediate that, but just the risk of being made invisible again is very, very high, if it’s done badly. That would be probably one of my biggest concerns. Because it’s like, I always love to say “I’m Dakota.” It’s like going, “Oh, so you’re, like, Rosebud right?” It’s absolutely not. But even people like that, once again, the haves and the have nots. The Lakota are more recognized than Dakota. If you open the table and you say we don’t want to be talking to the Ojibwe, it opens the door for possibly a lot of the more vocal Lakota people to come in, and once again you can supersede that. Being made invisible is something that can happen within the Indigenous community as well as outside of it. We’re just too nice. We are the original Minnesotans—the super polite ones.³²

The way Dakota scholars and Dakota language instructors define Dakota land through language and worldviews shows that Dakota people have a strong connection to the place, *Mni Sota Makoce*. Dakota people are connected to land through the Dakota language and through Dakota worldviews. But there is also a problem with visibility. Few Minnesotans know of these connections, and, as I will now argue, this ignorance was systematically and intentionally structured during the colonization era and reproduced in more subtle forms into the present. One of the practices to disenfranchise Native land claims throughout North America took the form of colonizing Indigenous knowledges.

³² Norder, Interview.

Colonizing Indigenous Knowledge: “They never taught that in a history book!”

Dakota historians often begin with the basic supposition that every perspective will be different. Rather than that being proof of an error in an account, it is accepted as a reality. It is quite easy, for example, for the Dakota to accept that the Anishinaabe might have a different perspective on a specific Anishinaabe-Dakota battle, just as it is perfectly acceptable that perspectives of the maple tree or robin witnessing the same event might also be radically different. All these Dakota concepts of history are based on its orality and the worldview inherent in the language. These ideas, however, are often alien to the academic perspective, which usually discounts unverifiable information, attempts to keep biases in check, and ultimately attempts to draw a conclusion about what ‘actually’ happened in the historical past based upon a thorough examination of the available written documents.³³

JN: It’s sort of like the idiots with the Forest Service who, for eighty years said, “Only you can prevent forest fires.” Now we know better. We actually do want forest fires because it’s part of the natural cycle. And Native peoples have known that for millennia on this continent, but it’s like, “Did somebody talk to them?” “No.”³⁴

Throughout the CURE paddling trip Don Robertson made clear his frustration with what he viewed as the Western scientific community’s inability to recognize Dakota knowledges, particularly knowledge regarding the region’s geology. The point, however, is not to separate Indigenous knowledge and Western science into two completely distinct categories or attempt to prove the validity of one against the other. Arun Agrawal argues that any attempt to do so “is bound to fail because different indigenous and western knowledges possess specific histories, particular burdens from the past, and distinctive patterns of change.”³⁵ Knowledge cannot be limited to only two categories. Indigenous or Western. But there is an apparent relationship between the two broader categorizations, as Kovach explains:

the term *Western* is used as a descriptive term for a particular ontological, epistemological, sociological, and ideological way of thinking and being as differentiated from Eastern thought, an Indigenous worldview, and so forth. It is understood that

³³ Wilson, *Remember This!*, 42.

³⁴ Norder, Interview.

³⁵ Arun Agrawal, “Dismantling the Divide Between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge,” *Development and Change* 26 (July 1995): 421; Similarly, Annette Watson and Orville Huntington also argue that “such ‘Western–Indigenous’ dichotomies falsely indicate entirely separable spaces within which to produce accounts of reality, in Annette Watson and Orville Huntington, “They’re *Here*—I Can *Feel* Them: The Epistemic Space of Indigenous and Western Knowledges,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 9 (May 2008): 259.

Western thought is not monolithic or static, that it holds within it rich diversity and contributions....and by necessity [we] must examine Western colonialism and its influence on Indigenous knowledge. The purpose is not to propagate unhelpful binaries, but to point out that Indigenous approaches to seeking knowledge are not of a Western worldview, a matter that colonialism (and its supporters) has long worked to confuse.”³⁶

The distinction between Indigenous knowledges and Western scientific knowledges, therefore, is analytically useful. Particularly because the philosophies and methods derived from Western thought are often complicit in both the ideologies driving colonization and the practices enacted in the name of colonization.

Indigenous knowledges, characteristically, recognize the agency of and relatedness between all things: spiritual beings, non-human animals, vegetation, physical features, and humans. Methodologically, it is also “pragmatic and ceremonial, physical and metaphysical. Indigenous cultures have sophisticated and complex cultural practices to access that which comes from both the ordinary and the extraordinary.”³⁷ Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botanist, asserts that “the world speaks to [her] in metaphor.”³⁸ She thus highlights the contrast between Indigenous and scientific knowledges in a brief anecdote about “plant language:”

In the old times, our elders say, the trees talked to each other. They’d stand in their own council and craft a plan. But scientists decided long ago that plants were deaf and mute, locked in isolation without communication. The possibility of conversation was summarily dismissed. Science pretends to be purely rational, completely neutral, a system of knowledge-making in which the observation is independent of the observer. And yet the conclusion was drawn that plants cannot communicate because they lack the mechanisms that *animals* use to speak. The potentials for plants were seen purely through the lens of animal capacity. Until quite recently no one seriously explored the possibility that plants might ‘speak’ to one another. But pollen has been carried reliably on the wind for eons, communicated by males to receptive females....If the wind can be trusted with that fecund responsibility, why not with messages?³⁹

³⁶ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

³⁸ Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

Western science traces its lineage to Enlightenment humanism, whose practitioners called for a distinct divide, elevating humans to a position above all other beings and fashioning the singularity of their ability to think and know.⁴⁰ Further, Annette Watson and Orville Huntington explain that humanism's emphasis on human rationality and reason, coupled with humanity's elevated position, "became a political problem" because it expediently limited authority to "the Euro-American educated leisure classes [and] justified colonial and imperial power/knowledge, as well as gendered power relations."⁴¹ Humanists effectively enabled Indigenous knowledges to be situated as inferior to the knowledges produced under the guise of objective Western science. There are multiple approaches to understanding the world that cannot easily be separated into two opposing categories of Indigenous knowledge versus Western science. We aren't looking for who is right or wrong or who has the most accurate explanations of the earth's processes. Rather, we must ask: why is the credibility of Indigenous knowledge continuously undermined and discredited? This section begins to address this question.

Raised in an academic family, Dakota scholar and activist, Waziyatawiŋ, grew up positioned to learn perspectives from these "two worlds." She says, despite moving through more than a dozen schools growing up, "I did very well academically....I could do things. I could do what the teachers asked. I could do what was expected, but I knew—it's why I went into history—that there was this big gap between what I was learning about our own people."⁴² At home she heard and learned traditional Dakota stories from her relatives, especially her grandmother. Because of her exposure to multiple worldviews, early on in her life she already began to confront the contradictions between Dakota and non-Dakota approaches to knowledge.

⁴⁰ Watson, "Knowledges That 'Travel.'" Watson's dissertation disentangles the distinctions between Indigenous knowledge and western science, challenging the necessity of their separation while acknowledging their difference.

⁴¹ Watson and Huntington, "They're *Here*—I Can *Feel* Them," 258.

⁴² Waziyatawiŋ, interview.

She explains how, “In listening to my Kuṅsi Elsi—who frequently said, ‘They never wrote that in a history book!’—I learned there were differences between how we presented our interpretation of our past and how we were (mis)represented by others.”⁴³ She then describes how she began to recognize the harm in these absences and misrepresentations:

For Indigenous students who have been exposed to an oral tradition growing up, there is a conscious sense of alienation and a realization that discrepancies occur between the way Indigenous people are depicted in written texts, or absent from texts, in contrast to how we are depicted in the oral stories about our own people. It was while in high school that I first went to my father and asked why the ‘Sioux’ I was reading about in high school were so different from the people my grandmother talked about.⁴⁴

There is power in relegating Indigenous knowledges as inferior. Discrediting worldviews and language, alongside dispossessing people from the land, were clear steps taken to eradicate Native claims throughout the North American continent—including Dakota claims to what is now the state of Minnesota. Sandy Grande, a scholar of Indigenous education, asserts that powerful institutions deliberately focused their colonizing efforts on destroying Indigenous peoples’ knowledge, where “From the time of invasion to the present day, the church and the state have acted as coconspirators in the theft of Native America, robbing indigenous peoples of their very right to be indigenous.”⁴⁵

Drawing on insights from several Indigenous scholars, Margaret Kovach explains that Indigenous knowledges derive from diverse sources such as “traditional teachings, empirical observations, revelations...dreams, visions, cellular memory, and intuition.”⁴⁶ To highlight the distinction between what “counts” as knowledge, I present two passages from interviews to illustrate the struggle to legitimize Indigenous knowledge against the colonizing agendas

⁴³ Wilson, *Remember This!*, xi.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁵ Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 11.

⁴⁶ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 57.

derived from Western thought. For Wicasta Wan̄zi, the distinctions between Dakota knowledges and Western science are most apparent based on the teachings of his elders, ceremony, and the knowledge contained in Dakota *iapi*. He explained a portion of his journey learning about

Dakota worldviews:

WW: I started out hearing them from my grandmother growing up. She's from Sioux Valley, or *Wipazo Koakpa*. And then after that from a young age I was experiencing it on my own, just going out in nature. I'd have my own thoughts, but then also speaking with elders when I started learning Dakota language. And even before that, I started getting really interested in what wasn't being passed on, so I found out most of my friends were sixty and older. I wasn't hanging out with people my own age, but I learned a lot of really fascinating history about specific places—just how things came to be, or just the history in our language, how words break down differently. They call them folk etymologies, that's the linguistic jargon for disassembling our stories, like *han̄bdeceya*, they say it's a vision quest, but fluent speakers like Albert White Hat will translate that as “journey through the night crying to your relatives,” which is really a lot more descriptive as to what's going on. And so I guess from listening to elders, I've learned some from books, but I've had to learn how to filter that out and decipher what's being exaggerated or embellished. Some things are totally distorted from the Western bias if they're written by explorers or fur traders, so a lot of it also more recently has come through ceremonies, which isn't really validated in academia, but to Dakota people you can really understand it, and it manifests in front of us in many different ways.

Wicasta Wan̄zi then describes specific examples where Dakota peoples' knowledge is later validated, but only in conjunction with scientific studies:

Science found out that the buffalo on the prairies, their feet, there's a word in Dakota, *makaga hun̄hun̄siya*, and it means “the sound of buffalo making the earth tremble,” but it's also scientific because that changes the electrons in the water and causes the thunders to come. They find out that the buffalo stimulate the aquifers. And all the fracking scientists just found that out, but we already knew that. It's contained in our language, and that's the different things I've learned from our language. Once you start learning the language it leads you on a journey of just rediscovering who you are because of the different definitions of words, how things break down. Even when I got my Dakota name, what it means to me could be totally different than someone that just translates the words, but I think that's how our names are. It's all based on relatedness, or *wotakuye*....And it's really descriptive. Some of these places, I forget the name of how they say it in English because I'm not from Minnesota originally, but it's like, *wacuñniya* in Dakota, I think they call it Waconia, or something, here. And it literally is like a type of spring where if you poke it with a stick, water would shoot out of the earth, and I don't know what they call it in English, but we have Dakota words that describe the earth in such a way that science needs dissertations and peer reviewed journals to confirm that

that's true, but we have age old ancestral connections to some of these geographic features.⁴⁷

There is a clear struggle to validate Indigenous knowledges—to accept Indigenous knowledge on its own terms rather than verifying it with science and peer review. Because, as Vine Deloria, Jr. argues, “Regardless of what Indians have said concerning their origins, their migrations, their experiences with birds, animals, lands, waters, mountains, and other peoples, the scientists have maintained a stranglehold on the definitions of what respectable and reliable human experiences are.”⁴⁸

John Norder studies rock art in the Lake of the Woods region in northern Minnesota. In the passage below he regales us with a story about how he teaches a variety of people about the precarious distinction between Indigenous knowledge and Western science. The Dakota philosophy that there are “multiple right answers” abounds throughout his narrative.

JN: When I meet people who are open to it I always start them off at the point. So I show them images from a [rock art] site. So we sit there, and it's the metaphor, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” So let's look at any picture that might be hanging up in the room right now, it's worth a thousand words. What are they? And they'll look at the picture and they're like, “Well, it has this.” “Okay, so let's sit down.” We'll take a look. “Write down all the words that come out to you.” Alright, now we've all looked at it, we've all generated our little word lists. No one's going to write a thousand words. “Now, let's put them all together.” “How many of you have the same list? None of you. What does that mean?” They're like, “I don't know.” They're looking, “Well, let's think about it. What it means is that you guys don't have a single frame of reference that you're actually on the same page with, yet you all think you're non-Native, and you all think that you're kind of part of this homogenous U.S. culture. Well, guess what? It's not homogenous. We all perceive things in very different ways. And that difference is very important.

Because, let's sit down and let's write those words, which one do you think is the most important word for you when you look at this place?” And everyone picks once again. Some people actually start picking similar words then. So you have some people pick common themes and things like that. And the thing is, once again, even though you get some commonalities, you still get a lot of difference and a lot of variability. So from a perspective of an individual point of reference, we can never agree. “So is it important for you to agree on this?” And they're like, “Oh, I don't know.” “Well?” You know, some

⁴⁷ Wicasta Waŋzi, interview.

⁴⁸ Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies*, 7.

people are going to be more invested and some people aren't. "If this was actually a picture of your house and we were doing this. How would you want it to be referenced? Well, would you expect people to reference the same way?" And, "no." And so we keep going through and cycling through this thing, and the overall goal, or the point is that we can never agree on the meanings of what an individual image or an individual rock art site or any of these things are going to be. Therefore, it's not important.

And so that kind of flips things on their head. But the thing is, then we come back and we say, "Even though it's not important, the place is though. This is a place that was constructed. You know that it means something to somebody. There's a reason why somebody took one of these pictures, or painted this image, or something like this. So you know this. Now, why would they put it in these various places?" Well, then we look at the canvas, and then we get into the phenomenology of texture and orientation and all the things that rock art people who quote, unquote "deal with landscape" early on, which is they then looked at the canvas. So we talk about, "why did they pick this particular place to do this?" And that's when you get a whole suite of other interesting observations, and some people are very focused on just sort of like, "Oh, they like the color of this stone, there's like a crack or crevice here, there's overhang that can protect the image, it's on water, it's up on a cliff." There's all these sort of kind of key dimensions in things, so they recognize this.

Now you point out to them, so you think that there's going to be rock art everywhere. And, "Well, there could be, but there isn't." And that's one way to sort of switch over and pull in archaeology, and I pull up all of the maps and stuff like that. And one of the things in the study that I did, that I'm still doing forever, and ever, and ever, is I did a survey for rock art sites. One of the things I did that nobody else had ever done was I also identified all the places where somebody *could* put rock art but didn't. And so I got a huge, huge sample size of places that could be used but never were, so I said "Here. Okay, so here's all the canvases that are available in the area that I'm working with. These are the ones that they've picked." So you've got map one, dots everywhere, map two, dots that are in these lines, running across the landscape. "What does that mean?" And they're floored. And it means that people constructed all these places for a particular way of orienting themselves in the world. And so even though you've got these individual sites, and they pick these particular canvases, the canvases are everywhere. They're all available. You can take as many pictures as you want. You can do whatever, but you're only ever going to pick certain types of pictures you're going to put up on your wall. Just as the rock art sites only picked certain types of canvas to put their images on.

And so then it bridges them into the idea of a larger landscape. And it really does get them to think very differently about things, gets them to look outward. So I say, "When you're at a rock art site, what's one of the things that's really important?" And they, rather than say the images, they turn around. "What's important is what you can see from the site, because those are the things that are looking at the site from the outside, and you need to look out to see those things." So we do this great reversal, and there are some Canadian rock art researchers who have been talking about this for a long time, and they're considered to be sort of the idiots of the field. And even though they speculated on it, they totally had it right. And so you get people to reverse thinking about these things. When you're thinking about place, you have to think about what's around it. And

that helps people a lot when we sort of said, “you work out from a point, you work up to, looking away, and then just sort of thinking about it and seeing it.” And if I had the time, I would take them on various walking tours and we could sit there, do mapping this, and mapping that, just sort of getting a good strong sense of what’s in place. Same way I do whenever I go someplace new. Drive around.⁴⁹

Place provides the canvas for ways of life. It is the context for the worldviews and language of a people, of a nation. But there are endless interpretations, endless perspectives. There are multiple right answers. The teachings of Indigenous peoples are valid and reliable. They deserve to be treated with respect.

Conclusion: “We remember with our minds”

“After all, there aren’t two worlds, there is just this one good green earth.”⁵⁰

Minnesota is Dakota land. The evidence that Minnesota is Dakota land is contained in Dakota worldviews and Dakota *iapi*, Dakota language, and even within the land itself. But what makes Indigenous knowledges legitimate? Sisoka Duta encourages us to think about evidence of Dakota tenure in *Mni Sota Makoce*. He turns to teachings he learned about Dakota peoples’ knowledge of the stars:

S: I always think about what Jim Rock talks about, how we had these star maps, and we mapped the stars, and we have different stories that go along with all the different constellations. And he said that would’ve taken at least one whole cycle of the stars. I don’t know if that was 24,000 years or something, so we had to have been here for at least that long to have that. And who knows how long before that, just mapping the stars. That doesn’t just happen overnight. And all the other tribes that have done that in their own places, and then I know that was painted on Carver’s Cave. But that was blown up and destroyed. But they’ve done that all over—destroy evidence that we were here. So we’ve had to [have] been here for a long time.⁵¹

Margaret Kovach contends that Indigenous knowledges are sophisticated systems of thought because “As members of tribal communities, we descend from societies that were/are highly

⁴⁹ Norder, Interview.

⁵⁰ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 47.

⁵¹ Sisoka Duta, interview.

organized in accordance with a collective belief system.”⁵² Dakota peoples’ systematic mapping and recording of the stars, for example, would certainly be emblematic of a highly sophisticated collective belief system.

Indigenous nations throughout the world have developed their own methods for observing and learning from their relatives, the more-than-human beings who move across the earth. These observations are based on thousands of years of residence in a particular place. One of these methods is the rigor inherent in the oral tradition. Dakota elder, Unkaŋna Eli Taylor, explains that memory and the oral tradition is a gift for the Dakota people from the Creator, because “He didn’t give us pen and paper...we remember with our minds.”⁵³ But more than simply a gift, there is also rigor built into the process of learning oral traditions. Waziyatawiŋ explains that

the training process for those belonging to an oral tradition is extensive. In addition, if stories are being relayed (sometimes for thousands of years), that is testimony in itself to the tenacity and commitment Indigenous people have in regard to their own history. Also, communities have their own stringent requirements for determining who has authority to speak about what topic, whose stories are reliable, what kind of upbringing and training of individuals is necessary, and who is the most knowledgeable about a specific topic.”⁵⁴

Similarly, Wicasta Waŋzi describes that rigor for oral traditions also comes, in part from responsibility for preserving the stories that contain the knowledges and teachings about the world and living as a good relative:

WW: One of our responsibilities as Dakota people is *owotaŋna wohdakapo*, or “tell it straight,” so whenever we have a story, we can’t add to it, change it, or leave anything out, so our stories take days and days and days to tell those *uŋkaŋkaŋ* stories and so that’s what’s left out of the written word, is it’s always being manipulated, things are being left out, discarded, that they think aren’t important but may be really important.... And so a lot of that symbolism’s starting to come back through dreams, through communication from spirits. Because that’s the power of our ways we don’t worship anything. We just talk to our relatives. So it’s just like me sitting here with you guys whenever we’re in a

⁵² Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 44.

⁵³ Quoted in Wilson, *Remember This!*, 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

sweat or another ceremony, it's no different. So we get a lot of our help and information from those ceremonies, too. That's even more valid than books, or some people's perspectives because of colonization and the way we're mis-educated.... Our understanding of what being Dakota is has really changed in the past 150-160 years, so I really look up to our ancestors that tried to retain everything they had—like those stories of the people. Like the Thirty-eight, you hear of one of them taking the stockade and making a pipe out of it out of one of the limbs of the stockade and just holding onto it until that last breath, I think is really powerful, and I'm glad they did that for us.⁵⁵

Robin Wall Kimmerer also describes how the oral tradition teaches contemporary Native basket weavers how to responsibly and respectfully harvest sweetgrass. But to her, the observations made by Indigenous peoples of their natural environment closely resembles “science.” An elder once told her, “Our teachings...are very strong. They wouldn't get handed on if they weren't useful.”⁵⁶ And so sweetgrass basket weavers had observed over time that stands of sweetgrass that were regularly harvested tended to flourish compared to those that were left alone. This knowledge was then passed on through the generations. Kimmerer then juxtaposes this observation to more “conventional” and “scientific” theory: “If we use a plant respectfully, it will flourish. If we ignore it, it will go away. This is a theory generated from millennia of observations of plant response to harvest, subject to peer review by generations of practitioners, from basket makers to herbalists.” She then continues, “My colleagues might scoff at the notion of basket makers as scientists, but when [traditional harvesters] take 50 percent of the sweetgrass, observe the result, evaluate their findings, and then create management guidelines from them, that sounds a lot like experimental science to me.”⁵⁷ Indigenous oral traditions are rigorous, they are valued, and they are based on millennia of observations taught by both human and more-than-human ancestors within the context of a specific place. The oral

⁵⁵ Wicasta Wanzi, interview. He is referring to the Dakota 38 hanged in Mankato, Minnesota, in 1862.

⁵⁶ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 157.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

tradition values multiple perspectives, evident by the philosophy that there are “multiple right answers.”

Despite the fact that Kimmerer recognizes methodological similarities between Indigenous knowledge and Western science, the difference lies in a power differential. The production of verifiable knowledge is intimately linked to the ideologies and practices of colonization. Waziyatawiñ argues that “As an institution of colonialism, the academy has used the veil of objectivity to normalize and codify their own vision of the world, so that other visions may be characterized as subjective.”⁵⁸ For her, sharing knowledge is imbricated in structures of inequality and subjugation. Knowledge is a site of colonization:

As a Dakota, I do not expect all non-Dakota to subscribe to our notions of truth, reality, or history. However, it is only this simple if we are sharing with others in an atmosphere of equality as we might with Indigenous Peoples worldwide, and this is generally not the context in which the validity of our stories is discussed. Our written history has not been dominated by those who viewed us as equals. Our written history has been dominated by our colonizers, our cultural perspectives systematically suppressed, and our stories subjugated in favor of those of the colonizers.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Wilson, *Remember This!*, 45.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

The United States is a nation defined by its original sin: the genocide of American Indians.

—Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy*

Chapter Two

The Grid

The year is 1998. The setting is a quiet, working class neighborhood in south Minneapolis perched on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. A little more than a mile downstream, Historic Fort Snelling overlooks the convergence of the Mississippi with the Minnesota River at *Bdote*, the place of Dakota creation. Carol Kratz, defiant, jaw set, fist raised, stands in front of her home on her small property in the city. She wears army fatigues and dark sunglasses, but her intimidating attire and posture is betrayed by a pair of slippers on her feet and her short, tightly curled, salon-styled white hair. For forty-three years, Kratz, with her family, resided on Riverview Road—her backyard abutting Minnehaha Regional Park in Minneapolis. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), however, had been planning for years to expand and redirect the narrow and pot-holed Highway 55/Hiawatha Avenue. The rerouting project threatened everything on the eastern side of Riverview Road. Desperate to stop the demolition, and together with other local residents, Kratz filed petitions and lawsuits and even tried to overthrow the mayor and city councilors, but eventually only she, her ailing husband, and her home remained in MnDOT's path. For forty-three years, her modest dwelling on Riverview Road was her home. And she fought aggressively to protect it.¹

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), though, is a formidable opponent. After forty-three years of residence and after nearly a decade of appeals, lawsuits, petitions, and protests, Carol Kratz departed permanently from her property on the fringe of the

¹ Mary Losure, *Our Way or the Highway: Inside the Minnehaha Free State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 6-8.

Minneapolis grid on 9 December 1998. “That was the hardest thing I ever did in my life,” she remembers, “was to sign my house over to MnDOT.”²

Forty-three years might, at first, sound like a long time. Perhaps a significant portion of one’s adult life. So much so that such a person is willing to stand up to powerful institutions: like Carol Kratz standing up to MnDOT to attempt to save her home, the place where she raised her children and where she hoped to spend the rest of her life with her husband. But Dakota people have called *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflect the sky, their home for millennia. And they recognize *Bdote*, just over a mile downstream from Riverview Road, as their site of creation. That’s thousands of years of ancestry, of knowledge and observations, connecting the oral traditions of a people to a place.

Kelly Branam explains the relationships between the sentiments Dakota people and people everywhere have to the land where they come from:

KB: I think land is extremely important. It is important to all the Minnesotans, too. They want development and they’re expanding the Mall of America in Bloomington which a lot of people are like, “Woohoo!” But I’m just like, “What mounds are they going to destroy? What destruction are they going to do?” I think that Dakota people that were exiled from Minnesota, that have remained exiled from Minnesota, this is still an extremely important place. Just because they’ve been exiled doesn’t mean, you know? And I wouldn’t want to say that it’s universal—connection to land and to homeland—but we have so many cross-cultural examples of the importance of homeland and creation and connection to that. This is why there’s so much craziness going on in Israel. Because all of these communities, *that* is the homeland for a huge portion of the world. People have connections. And I think a lot of Minnesotans, non-Native Minnesotans, this is their

² Quoted in Losure, *Our Way or the Highway*, 22. After Carol Kratz moved out of her home, other protesters moved in. A detailed discussion of the subsequent Highway 55 protest is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, though the protesters ultimately failed to stop the highway rerouting, their actions—including their yearlong occupation of the space and their efforts to involve Dakota people—fundamentally influenced each subsequent land management and policy decision regarding the spatial control of urban green spaces and Dakota cultural landscape preservation in the vicinity between Minnehaha Regional Park and the Fort Snelling historic district. Chapter 3 focuses on these specific policies and Dakota peoples’ responses to them in greater detail. For more background on the Highway 55 issue see John A. Hotopp et al., “A Cultural Resource Assessment of the Proposed Reroute for Trunk Highway 55, 54th Street to County Road 62, Hennepin County, Minnesota” (The Cultural Resource Group, Report Prepared for the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul, April 1999); and Bruce White, “Highway 55 and the Camp Coldwater Settlement: An Independent Investigation” (Turnstone Historical Research, St. Paul, February 2000).

land and their property and if the state was going to come take it away, they'd fight for it. And yet sometimes they don't make the connection with Dakota people. "Why are they fighting for their land?" "Wouldn't you?"³

If we can respect Carol Kratz's decision to fight the rerouting of a highway so she might remain in her home, we can also learn to respect Dakota peoples' decisions to fight the forces of colonization and all of its attendant manifestations. *Mni Sota Makoce*, with *Bdote* at the center, is still the homeland of the Dakota people. They continue to fight for it. Bruce White, similarly, shares a story about respecting Dakota peoples' claims to their homeland:

BW: My mother was a Minnesota historian. She had worked for the Minnesota Historical Society, and so I got a lot of Minnesota history when growing up. And she always subscribed to the Minnesota Historical Society magazine. And the Minnesota Historical Society had a children's magazine in the 1950s called the Gopher Historian. And so we would get that in various foreign countries where we had lived. And I can't say that I read it a lot, but it had cartoons and things. I remember very specifically, though, getting the 1862 issue of the Gopher Historian, which was from 1962, obviously. And then it had this great article by someone who asked the readers who were children to imagine what it would be like if the earth was colonized by people from Mars, and they had their land taken from them, and they were banished, and all the things that happened to the Dakota people. And wouldn't they consider taking up arms to fight against the Martians? *And this was 1962*. Obviously Martians were a big deal because they had them in the movies. But to have a—I think he was a lawyer—non-Native person write this story and ask his fellow non-Natives to consider what it would be like to be in the position of the Dakota. And the analogy he could think of was about aliens from outer space. I thought that was a very effective lesson for young people to think about. And I'm really curious how that went over among people at the time. But it made an impression on me. It started out with a drawing of people in a suburban community and being lined up by Martians with glass globes over their heads...⁴

The conclusion of the Dakota-U.S. War of 1862—a conflict initiated by group of young Dakota men in retaliation to oppressive assimilation and reservation policies sanctioned by federal, territorial, and state governments—ushered in a period of rapid, tyrannical actions to remove Dakota people entirely from the state of Minnesota.⁵

³ Kelly Branam, interviewed Iyekiyaipiwiŋ by Darlene St. Clair and the author, 23 July 2014, St. Cloud, Minnesota.

⁴ White, interview.

⁵ For a review of these actions and their contemporary effects, see Kelsey Carlson and Gareth John, "Landscapes of Triumphalism, Reconciliation, and Reclamation: Memorializing the Aftermath of the Dakota-U.S. War of 1862," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 32 (August 2015): 270-303.

The Dakota-U.S. War was an effort by Dakota people to resist their spatial restriction to reservations, and it also served as a catalyst for the ultimate expulsion of Dakota people from the newly drawn boundaries of Minnesota, as mandated by Governor Ramsay in 1863.⁶ But the main point here is to show that, for Dakota people, the traumas associated with removal from that event persist. “People have these remembrance days, or events, because it was not so long ago,” Harlan LaFontaine explains,

HL: One hundred fifty years is not that long ago. That’s like two generations or three. And you hear people all the time, “Well, we’ve been around since, whatever, 18...” Or a business established in 1935. Or somebody says, “My family has been here for three generations.” And I guess, for them, that’s a long, long period. But it implies ownership, and “We have a right to this because we’ve been here.” But it’s *just* three generations.⁷

Waziyatawiŋ, who is one of the organizers for an 1862 remembrance event, describes how historical trauma is related to Dakota expulsion from their homeland. She begins by introducing how much of her scholarship was about “trying to change the way the war was thought about as being something that happened in the past, like some kind of unfortunate event, or unfortunate conflict, to how it impacts Dakota people today and pointing out that the injustice is ongoing.” But then she returns to the significance of the worldview of relatedness, showing how Dakota peoples’ daily lives were impacted by dispossession:

Waz: You can’t have relationships if you don’t have contact. And so I think that what we’ve been missing in the last, I would say, since our disconnection from our homeland in 1863, or 1862 for many, is the daily connection. And it really became apparent, I think, through the Dakota Commemorative Marches, because I realized that even though Minnesota was my home I had never in my life spent seven days, all day, walking the land. Never. And that was a life changing or life transforming experience. I was overcome with the beauty of the land, but also overcome with the way the land has been affected by colonization, and that was also politicizing as a consequence for me.⁸

⁶ Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 194. “Governor Ramsey stated in a public message in September 1862 that the ‘Sioux Indians of Minnesota’ must be ‘exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the State.’”

⁷ Harlan LaFontaine, interviewed by Iyekiyaŋiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 24 July 2014, Roseville, Minnesota.

⁸ Waziyatawiŋ, interview.

So not only did Dakota people resist the forces of colonization in the mid-nineteenth century—fighting to retain their right to the homeland their ancestors occupied for millennia—but they continue to resist contemporary efforts to exclude the basic recognition of Dakota peoples’ connections to *Mni Sota Makoce* in the past and into the present.

Carol Kratz’s house sat on a slight curve. Riverview Road is not quite perfectly perpendicular to its intersecting streets. Instead, it follows the gentle bend of the river bluff, the Mississippi River meandering fifty feet below the cliff edge. The road and the river, with their seemingly untidy and imperfect geometries, gnaw at the eastern boundary of the City of Minneapolis’s otherwise flawless grid of impeccably surveyed ninety degree angles where streets and avenues converge at predictable intervals. The grid is a familiar imprint on the US landscape, and it becomes particularly more prominent as you move across the continental United States from east to west.

For many, the grid is an often taken-for-granted, yet quintessentially defining feature of American landscapes.⁹ In this chapter, however, I argue that the grid must always be struggled over and rearticulated at multiple scales, particularly by federal, state, and local governments. Controlling land implies power relations. In addition, I demonstrate how ordering and organizing territory into a grid serves two specific, yet overlapping, purposes: (1) to legitimize competing land claims, particularly between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and (2) to transform land into property, an alien practice compared to the Indigenous, relational worldviews of land introduced in Chapter One. Therefore, the story of how Carol Kratz’s property came to be at the edge of the Minneapolis grid—and simultaneously situated within Dakota peoples’ *Bdote* cultural landscape—resonates with the historical geographies of nearly two centuries of spatial practices used by representatives of the US federal government to colonize and appropriate land

⁹ See JB Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

in the region now referred to as the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region. But Carol Kratz's efforts to save her home also serves as a starting point to tell the story of contemporary Dakota peoples' struggles to reclaim their relationships to the *Bdote* region and to resist the grid.

Historical Geographies of the Grid

Edward T. Price argues that "Attracting settlers and getting the land in production were the immediate aims of colonial land distribution."¹⁰ Whether they are Native nations or other colonial powers, actively dispossessing competing sovereign claims to land on the North American continent defines the colonization era from the late sixteenth century into the early twentieth century. Louise Johnson asserts that colonization "is not something that occurs at one time or in one place, but is an ongoing process of dispossession, negotiation, transformation, and resistance."¹¹ The specific actions for dispossessing "others" from the land, like exploratory mapping, treaty-making, and surveying, were, to some degree, experimental until the late eighteenth century when they were officially codified in U.S. federal land policy. Here, I focus largely on the spatial practices developed within the United States Public Land Survey System (USPLSS) because it was systematically applied to nearly the entire continental United States, with the explicit purpose to make the land, people, and resources contained in each parcel legible and valuable. Michel Foucault argues, for example, that a spatial entity, like a town, city, or a nation, is not defined and controlled "on the basis of the larger territory, but on the basis of a smaller, geometrical figure...namely the square or rectangle, which is in turn subdivided into

¹⁰ Edward T. Price, *Dividing the Land: Early American Beginnings of Our Private Property Mosaic* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 343.

¹¹ Louise Johnson, quoted in Nicholas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 114.

other squares or rectangles.”¹² But the lines of the USPLSS grid have their roots in earlier territory-claiming practices.

Drawn based on decrees made in the Treaty of Tordesillas, the first foreign boundary was imposed on the American continents in 1494, dividing territory between two sovereign powers, Portugal and Spain.¹³ For the next two hundred years, additional lands would be claimed and divided on the North American continent for those and other European sovereign powers as well. In addition, individual charter companies would carve small territories in the form of land grants on the Atlantic coast. These boundaries were relatively fluid and were poorly surveyed and enforced. The need for clearly demarcated borders would not emerge until the years following the French and Indian War.¹⁴

After the first Treaty of Paris in 1763, Britain sought to rationalize its claim to the North American continent by stating that its “borderline would begin at the sources of the Mississippi and run down the center of that river,” essentially to the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁵ At the time, Dakota peoples’ seasonal rounds centered on the watersheds of the Upper Mississippi River, and they were also important participants in the French fur trade. The Treaty of Paris, however, transferred colonial occupancy—from the Mississippi headwaters east through the Great Lakes—from the French to the British. The French, therefore, lost their control over the fur trade. As a result of the changing colonial occupancy, the first Treaty of Paris was one of the first

¹² Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978* (New York: Picador, 2007), 16.

¹³ Mark Monmonier, *No Dig, No Fly, No Go: How Maps Restrict and Control* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

¹⁴ Price, *Dividing the Land*; Hubbard, *American Boundaries*.

¹⁵ Bill Hubbard, Jr., *American Boundaries: The Nation, the States, the Rectangular Survey* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 39.

foreign land decisions to have a significant impact on the Dakota *Oyate* (Nation) and their livelihoods.¹⁶

Powerful control over the interior of the continent changed yet again following the American Revolution and the second Treaty of Paris in 1783, which relegated the British to the territory north of the Great Lakes. From that moment forward, the U.S. federal government became the dominant colonial land negotiator in the region. Twenty years after the second Treaty of Paris, the United States negotiated the 1803 Louisiana Purchase from France, which granted the entirety of the Mississippi watershed to the United States. The totality of the landscape west of the original colonies was subsumed, at least to begin with, under the public domain of the U.S. federal government.¹⁷

The United States Public Land Survey System (USPLSS)—also known as the Township and Range System or more generally as the Rectangular Survey—was created for two main reasons. The first reason was to provide the federal government with a method for organizing its public domain, and thus the land and resources within it, into legible and marketable territory. Second, the federal government was in debt. Bill Hubbard, Jr. explains that since the value of the Continental dollar (the non-standard currency used during the American Revolution) kept dropping, “many in Congress came gradually to realize that a currency backed up...by a vast fund of sellable land...would be a dollar people could trust.”¹⁸ Needing a method to organize this “vast fund” of land provided the impetus for the Land Ordinance of 1785, which established an early system for dividing the public domain into six-mile square townships that could then be

¹⁶ For more information on Dakota peoples’ involvement in the French fur trade and how their relationships changed after Britain claimed the region, see Roy W. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux: United States Indian Policy on Trial* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967); Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*; Anderson, *Little Crow*; Mary Lethert Wingerd, *North Country: The Making of Minnesota* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*.

¹⁷ Hubbard, *American Boundaries*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

sold—boundaries for capital. As Price asserts, “Land was a source of revenue the states were not inclined to forego.”¹⁹ The Rectangular Survey, therefore, was officially enacted as the method for apportioning federal lands in 1796, and would undergo only slight modifications into the nineteenth century. Hubbard also contends that the survey had lasting utility beyond the initial transfer of property from the federal government, because “what began as ‘the only way you can buy land from the government’ became ‘the easiest way to sell land to each other’ and finally ‘the most natural way to apportion my own land’—in short, a habit of mind...of the culture of the place.”²⁰

Though Hubbard’s analysis of the United States Public Land Survey is a fairly systematic and uncritical treatment of the history and legacy of surveying practices in the United States, he does briefly refer to the difficulties the surveyors faced, particularly in regard to the apportioning of Native lands. He explains how, following the Land Ordinance of 1785, surveyors began to test the rectangular survey on the ground in the Ohio territory, but soon encountered resistance from local Native tribes. Treaty-making—a practice brought to the continent from Europe and subsequently used throughout the colonial period—therefore became a useful ally to the Rectangular Survey because

all of this land was still legally in the hands of Indian tribes, [and] Congress presumed that treaties would be negotiated and the land gradually opened not just for squatters already hiding out on unauthorized claims, but for the broad movement of settlement onto land purchased from the national government. And so...Congress appointed a committee ‘to devise and report the most eligible means of disposing of such part of the Western lands as may be obtained of the Indians.’²¹

Treaty-making as a practice constituted one of the first substantial methods for securing the interior of uncharted landscapes, and it was supported by the construction of military outposts.

¹⁹ Price, *Dividing the Land*, 185.

²⁰ Hubbard, *American Boundaries*, 276.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

The first USPLSS surveyors operated from a base at Fort McIntosh in the Ohio Territory and were often accompanied by Continental soldiers, but their safety was never guaranteed, and “persistent attacks from Indians” significantly slowed their progress. The military garrisons, therefore, served a specific purpose in negotiating land claims on the American frontier. According to Hubbard, “forts like these were set up not to continually fight Indians but to induce them to sign treaties,” and thus enacting a more permanent form of security for the survey.²²

Subsequent to the initial Ohio survey, establishing forts as early footholds in “unsettled” regions within Indian country throughout the period of westward expansion became a useful method to move the grid westward. William Cronon, for example, describes early nineteenth century Chicago—before it became an “American metropolis”—as a “polyglot world of Indian, French, British, and American cultures tied to a vast trading network” where the “land offered clues about where and how best to earn a living.”²³ But with the construction of Fort Dearborn in 1803, the negotiation of a treaty in 1804, and the admittance of the state of Illinois to the Union in 1818, government bureaucrats in the region started putting new “patterns on a prairie landscape.”²⁴ As more settlers arrived, the grid expanded. These foreign “patterns on the prairie” enabled government representatives to more strongly assert the land claims of the United States, which subsequently put increasing pressures on the local Native nations to move west.

In 1832, Sac chief Black Hawk led a contingent of local Native peoples in an insurgency, attempting to reclaim their ancestral homelands and gathering places in the Mississippi valley along the western border of Illinois. Black Hawk’s claim was that “‘land cannot be sold,’ [and] as long as he and his people continued to use it, he said, they would retain their ‘right to the soil’;

²² Ibid., 224.

²³ William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 26.

²⁴ Ibid., 23.

not even they themselves had the power to alienate it, since their lives and the lands were one.”²⁵ In Cronon’s introduction to nineteenth century commodity chains in Chicago, not only does he show how treaties, forts, and surveys intended to actively dispossess and disenfranchise Native peoples from the soon-to-be metropolis, but he also underscores, in however romanticized a way, that Native people also resisted spatial dispossession and fought for their homeland.

A few years later and a few hundred miles to the north and west, Lieutenant Zebulon Pike—sent on behalf of the federal government and acting within the tradition of securing a fort within Indian country in order to negotiate further land cessions—arrived within the homeland of the Dakota on 22 September 1805. The next day, on the island at *Bdote*—the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers and the highly symbolic location as the site of Dakota creation—Pike and “leaders of two local Dakota villages” met to “conclude a treaty between the United States and the ‘Nation of the Sioux Indians’...for the purpose of the Establishment of Military Posts.”²⁶ According to David A. Lanegran and Anne Mosher,

The extreme northern part of the upper Mississippi River Valley was still considered wilderness throughout the period. Although the United States government had made attempts to explore and assess the land, it was not until 1805 that the government made a deliberate attempt to control the land....[After Pike’s negotiations] The United States then built a military installation at the confluence of the Mississippi and the St. Peters [the early colonial name for the Minnesota River] for the following reasons: (1) to protect the United States/Canadian Border; (2) to curtail warfare between rival fur trading companies present in the region—the Northwest and Hudson Bay companies; (3) to maintain surveillance on the Selkirk colony at Fort Garry (near Winnipeg) because supply caravans for the colonists were routinely routed through Minnesota; (4) to keep peace between the Chippewa and the Sioux Indians.²⁷

Though the construction of Fort Snelling would not begin until 1819, the eventual completion of a permanent military post would mean a constant American presence in the region surrounding

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁶ Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 140.

²⁷ David A. Lanegran and Anne Mosher-Sheridan, “The European Settlement of the Upper Mississippi River Valley: Cairo, Illinois, to Lake Itasca, Minnesota—1540 to 1860” in *Historic Lifestyles in the Upper Mississippi River Valley*, ed. John S. Wozniak (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 20.

Bdote.²⁸ In addition, establishing Fort Snelling would place greater pressures upon Dakota communities to sign future treaties that would enact land seizures within their traditional homelands and also introduce them to unfamiliar concepts of land ownership. Westerman and White describe the problem with implementing such ideologies:

The Americans assumed the Dakota would be operating out of the American narrative, with its distinctive view of land as subject to possession and therefore sale. The Dakota at this time, however, are unlikely to have embraced this view—or even to have fully comprehended it. They would have had to change the entire self-understanding of their identity and the land in which they lived. The historical record does not support such a conclusion.²⁹

From the Ohio to the Minnesota territories, worldviews clashed, treating alternatively the land as a relative and the land as a grid.

“Today [Dakota people] hold approximately 3,200 acres out of what used to be millions of acres, making our four Dakota communities tiny dots on the map,” Waziyatawiñ begins.³⁰ In an unrelenting indictment describing “How Minnesotans Wrested the Land from Dakota People,” the Dakota scholar and activist describes specific events in Minnesota’s settler-colonial history that meet the criteria for actions qualifying as genocide under the United Nations Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. “Thus, we must be clear,” she continues,

that there was nothing benign about the actions or the goals of those Americans and Europeans who arrived in Dakota homeland. On the contrary, the first populations to invade these lands did so with complete disregard for the welfare or humanity of the Peoples who already dwelt here. Americans simply wanted the land and they did not care what they would have to do to obtain it.³¹

What began with exploratory mapping and establishing a military garrison called Fort Snelling on the bluff overlooking *Bdote*, rapidly became a mission to appropriate Dakota land into the

²⁸ Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*; Wingerd, *North Country*.

²⁹ Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 163.

³⁰ Waziyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?*, 11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

public domain through treaties and other dispossession policies. Written into these policies, according to Waziyatawiŋ, “Ethnic cleansing became a means to not only dispossess Indigenous Peoples, but also to eliminate the populations that would continue to contest or threaten the new White landlords.”³²

Furthermore, these ideologies persist into the present. In an interview Waziyatawiŋ explains how these ideologies are then naturalized and sterilized:

Waz: Most fundamental are the ideas of invasion, occupation, colonization. And that’s where the disjuncture occurs. That Americans are raised with the manifest destiny ideology which justifies invasion, which justifies the dispossession of Indigenous inhabitants, and reframes it as something righteous, as something divined by God. It’s something that they’re entitled to, and in carrying out something that should be celebrated. For our people, on the receiving end, invasion—having your homeland invaded is never a good thing. Having occupiers in your land who are trying to eradicate your culture and your way of life and to dispossess you is never a good thing. But our people, too, have been brainwashed, indoctrinated, with the manifest destiny ideology so that many of our own people have even come to believe in the righteousness or inevitability of invasion, occupation, colonization, and genocide. So from my perspective it’s not an Indigenous versus a non-Indigenous split. There are white people who very openly understand and accept the premise that invasion, occupation, colonization are crimes against humanity. That they’re wrong. And that white people takeover of Dakota homeland was wrong. Land theft is wrong. There are Dakota people who will say, “This was an advanced culture. It was inevitable. Of course *our* people. It happened. We just have to accept it and move on.” And they wouldn’t put any judgment on whether that is bad or good or whatever. So you can find a whole range of perspectives among white people. You can find a whole range of perspectives among Dakota people, so I don’t see it anymore as a Dakota/white issue. It’s about critical consciousness, and I think understanding things in a broad historical and in a global context. Because if you understand the harms of colonization in Africa, in Asia, in other places, you’re going to understand the crimes of colonization here, as long as you aren’t invested in maintaining colonial privilege. So I think that a broader perspective and a global perspective help to a point.³³

According to Eric N. Olund, the combination of federal land policies and federal Indian policies enacted the “confiscation of 97.5% of the original Native land base within the present-day United States,” which “emphasizes the violence of sovereignty and discipline in the

³² Ibid., 53.

³³ Waziyatawiŋ, interview.

imposition of colonial governance.”³⁴ That the Rectangular Survey can be described as a violent spatial practice becomes particularly apparent when examined in conjunction with federal treatment toward Indigenous peoples. Nicholas Blomley states that “the development of accurate surveys was a priority in many colonial territories, serving to organize, control, and record the settlement of ‘empty’ lands, a process which in the New World often involved wresting control from indigenous peoples.”³⁵ Further, Blomley argues that “the grid...is a pervasive form of disciplinary rule, backed by sovereign power.”³⁶ Not only was the survey a spatial practice for organizing the territory of a still-expanding federal government, not only did it provide a mechanism for accumulating wealth and granting private property rights to its citizens, the survey was a subversive and violent practice for wresting territory from a marginalized “other.” Within this framework, the federal government initiated a long tradition of dispossessing the “Indian problem” in order to settle and capitalize the American territory.

Sandy Grande argues that this Indian problem “has been consciously and historically produced by and through the systems of colonization: a multidimensional force underwritten by Western Christianity, defined by white supremacy, and fueled by global capitalism” as an explicit “means of gaining access to Indian labor, land, and resources.”³⁷ Grande further explains, for example, how the Doctrine of Discovery—a philosophy derived from a series of medieval papal bulls—infuses federal land policy. Citing the case of *Johnson v. McIntosh*, the first case tried in the infamous Marshall trilogy, “a set of cases that established the legal template for virtually all future deliberations of tribal status,” Grande shows how Chief Justice John

³⁴ Eric N. Olund, “From Savage Space to Governable Space: The Extension of United States Judicial Sovereignty over Indian Country in the Nineteenth Century,” *Cultural Geographies* 9 (April 2002): 135.

³⁵ Nicholas Blomley, “Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (March 2003): 128.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

³⁷ Grande, *Red Pedagogy*, 19.

Marshall invoked the Doctrine of Discovery to decide whether “a land title, given by the Indians under British supervision at an open public sale, was superior to a title derived from the United States through a sale by designated land officers.”³⁸ She cites Marshall’s decision at length:

On the discovery of this immense continent, the great nations of Europe were eager to appropriate to themselves so much of it as they could respectively acquire. Its vast extent offered an ample field to the ambition and enterprise of all; and the character and religion of its inhabitants afforded an apology for considering them as a people over whom the superior genius of Europe might claim ascendancy. The potentates of the old world found no difficulty in convincing themselves that they made ample compensation to the inhabitants of the new, by bestowing on them civilization and Christianity....But, as they were all in pursuit of nearly the same object, it was necessary, in order to avoid conflicting settlements, and consequent war with each other, to establish a principle, which all should acknowledge as the law by which right of acquisition, which they all asserted, should be regulated as between themselves. This principle was, that discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects, or by whose authority, it was made, against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession.³⁹

As a result, Grande illustrates how the ideologies inherent in discovery legitimized the colonizers rights to the land, “reducing the legal claim of tribes to a mere ‘right of occupancy,’” and thus “establishing the enduring ‘landlord–tenant relationship’ that persists today between the federal government and Indian tribes.”⁴⁰

Olund cites a Nez P erce chief who discusses the implications of these spatial practices: “they asked us to divide the land, to divide our mother upon whose bosom we had been born, upon whose lap we had been reared.” For this Native leader, federal boundary-making practices were comparable to the “homicide of his own mother.”⁴¹ Wicasta Wanzi connects these historical actions to contemporary Dakota peoples’ understandings of the implications of dividing the land for capital gain. Once again his statement suggests a fundamental clash of worldviews. He explains:

³⁸ Ibid., 37-38.

³⁹ *Johnson v. McIntosh* quoted in Ibid., 38.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 38.

⁴¹ Olund, “From Savage Space to Governable Space,” 142.

WW: I think part of being Dakota is recognizing our history goes all the way back to the beginning. It doesn't just start when we first met the white people. We have to remember the countless generations of people before that, and the way that our worldview has always been changing. It never stayed the same. So that idea of not developing on the land, that's not just some nostalgia from the 1800s, that's rooted in our relationship to the land. How could you rape your own mother? That's what I think of when I drive past these huge mounds of dirt out here and see all that, the quarries and whatnot.⁴²

Sisoka Duta, likewise, describes the disjuncture between Dakota and non-Dakota understandings of the grid and its purpose in controlling land and territory, effortlessly weaving together historical actions and their contemporary effects. He argues that:

S: Dakota people knew exactly where their territory was, and so they would name these rivers, from this river to this river, and this lake. They knew exactly where their lands started and where the Ojibwe land started, so people knew where they were. They knew their geography, so they didn't really have to draw a line on a map. I know people would go raiding into the Ojibwe territory, raid their camps, and vice-versa. They would attack us back, so I don't think people ever thought to draw a map, though. It's just not really the same. Like where there's a set boundary because if they attack us and we lose some land, we could attack them back. But we've been migrating, so I don't think people thought of it like, "This is ours and it's permanently ours." Nobody ever thought of it that way, to my knowledge.

From what people have told me we used to even live up by Duluth, Lake Superior, and then I don't even know how far that would go, nobody knows. We might've lived all over this country. And then some people are saying that we descended from the people who built the mounds along the Mississippi. I know people have told me that. So maybe we used to live down there. There's people who speak a similar language to us that live on the east coast. Maybe we used to live way over there. So there's no way to tell, really, where exactly we used to live. So I don't think our people thought of it like there were permanent lines on a map.

We just moved around, and people would go where the food was. They'd move on so they didn't use everything up, and then years later they'd come back to the same place. But today it just seems like, "This is mine, and this is. You can't come over here." Which, I think that took some getting used to for Dakota people, because I know they said that Dakota people used to cross through the Twin Cities and go ricing up north, and there would be white people like, "Where did these Indians come from?" So our people probably didn't see it that way. They thought, "Well, there's rice up there, and that's where we've always gone ricing, so we're going to go up there and get our rice, and we don't care who was there." Whereas the white people were like, "This is my land, and nobody can come here unless I say so."

And you still see it that way. I see it on the news, people acting crazy, like, "This is our land, and nobody can come here." Look at those people trying to cross the border. People get crazy about that. I always laugh about those people because it's like, "Your

⁴² Wicasta Wanzi, interview.

people came here from Europe. You're immigrants, and now you're saying these brown people, who are actually descended from Indian people, who've lived here forever, they can't cross this invisible line into territory their ancestors have lived for millennia?" It's just really weird to see that. I don't understand those people. So I don't get the lines, myself. I guess it's part of this nation-state model that's come out of Europe. So that's the way we live now. I don't think we need to build giant walls, though. This is what we're stuck with, so this is what we have to do now. But let's not be building giant walls, electric fences, and shooting people for crossing the line. Things must be really bad where they're at, so they want to get over here. Let them come over. This is where they're from anyways. I don't think the walls work, myself. You look everywhere they're building walls. It's like a war zone. Just stop building the walls.⁴³

Though Bjorn Sletto asserts that the “notion that indigenous people don't have boundaries” is a romanticized conception of Indigenous reality,⁴⁴ nevertheless, imposing the grid to render marketable and legible the land and resources within the expanding U.S. territory clashed fiercely with Indigenous peoples' worldviews of the land as a relative.

Not only do Western concepts—and the material practices that derive from them—for ordering land, like treaties, territory, borders, and property, fundamentally conflict with Indigenous worldviews, they served the explicit purpose to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands. All of the spatial practices described above coalesce within the framework of private property, specifically property defined using Joseph Singer's description of the ownership model. He asks:

What is property? One might think this was a simple question. Property is about rights over things and the people who have those rights are called owners. What powers do owners have over the things they own? Owners are free to use the property as they wish. They have the right to exclude others from it or grant them access over it. They have the power to transfer title—to pass the powers of ownership to someone else. They are also immune from having the property taken away from them without their consent, or they must be adequately compensated if the property is taken by the state for public purposes.⁴⁵

⁴³ Sisoka Duta, interview.

⁴⁴ Bjorn Sletto, “Special Issue: Indigenous Cartographies,” *Cultural Geographies* 16 (April 2009): 150.

⁴⁵ Joseph Singer quoted in Blomley, *Unsettling the City*, 2.

The purpose of the United States Public Land Survey System, likewise, translated land into property and ideologically wrested control over Indigenous lands.⁴⁶

Blomley contends that—like capitalism, which presents itself as the preeminent economic form—the “centrality of the ownership model similarly renders other modalities of ownership invisible.” He explains how:

Native claims to land are also illegible if they fail to adopt the geographies of the ownership model. English colonists in the New World took as given that enclosing, fencing, house construction and agricultural activity were clear acts that signaled private ownership. The rightful appropriation of land in the New World for English settlers turned on certain culturally accepted practices, such as house building and agricultural ‘improvement’ and the building of fences. This conferred definitive ownership....The absence of these spatial markers was then taken as empirical proof that native people had no claim to land.⁴⁷

However, as described in the previous chapter, Indigenous peoples do, in fact, present clear evidence of their claims to their traditional homelands through their worldviews, language, and oral traditions. Kelly Branam argues that

KB: that’s one of the major effects of the treaties, or a major misconception of Americans, that because Indigenous peoples didn’t quote, “own the land,” then it was free for taking, that somehow Indigenous peoples didn’t have connections to land because they didn’t quote, “own it.” And I think that that is really skewed. How can Indigenous peoples *not* have connections to land?⁴⁸

But the disjuncture between the ownership model of property and Indigenous land claims, according to Blomley, demonstrates that

While some colonial notions of property may have seemed strange to the established residents, the latter were not people without property. Indigenous relations to land, though diverse and varied, are distinct. Although indigenous conceptions of property entail rules for the allocation and conveyance of rights of access and use, and developed concepts akin to title and possession, it has been argued that these differ ontologically from nonnative forms of ownership.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Hubbard, *American Boundaries*.

⁴⁷ Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*, 9.

⁴⁸ Branam, interview.

⁴⁹ Blomley, *Unsettling the City*, 111.

Colonizers' arrogance toward and ignorance of Indigenous peoples' relationships with the land justified the discrediting of Indigenous claims and justified the colonizers' land seizures.

Histories of the Minneapolis-St. Paul region published in the decades immediately preceding the turn of the twentieth century abound with rhetoric that attempts to contend with and legitimize Dakota dispossession from the region, while simultaneously extolling the region's progress and development. A publication from 1881 on the *History of Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul*, for example praises the recording of local history:

The recounting of events which have transpired in our own neighborhood is the most interesting of all history. There is a fascination in the study of the intermingled facts and fiction of the past, which is heightened by a familiarity with the localities described. The river which flows through our native village acquires a new interest when, in imagination, we see the Indian canoe on its surface and the skin-covered tepee on its banks, as in days of yore. Log cabins, straw roofs, and the rude 'betterments' of the hardy pioneer, are the next changes on the scene, followed soon by mushroom towns, some of which perish as quickly as they sprang up, while others astonish us by their rapid growth; cities are built, and moss and ivy, the evidences of age, accumulate. The log cabin and all the steps of first settlement are things of the past; the place which knew them shall know them no more forever.⁵⁰

But what is perhaps most ironic in this passage, an introduction to a text on the region's history written in 1881, is that, despite its air of long-sedimented settlement, this region "was still considered wilderness" less than eighty years prior.⁵¹ The majority of the region was still legally considered the Dakota peoples' territory until 1851.⁵²

Willis A. Gorman, Territorial Governor of Minnesota from 1853–1857, likewise constructs an air of rooted longevity to the region when admiring the 1854 completion of a suspension bridge spanning the Mississippi River near St. Anthony Falls—the only substantial cataract along the entire course of the Mississippi. He proclaimed:

⁵⁰ George E. Warner and Charles M. Foote, *History of Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul, Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), iii.

⁵¹ Lanegran and Mosher-Sheridan, "The European Settlement of the Upper Mississippi River Valley," 20.

⁵² Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*.

This is a wonderful enterprise when we consider that we are standing at the Falls of St. Anthony, 2200 miles from the mouth of this great river, and when but yesterday...we were crossing its turbid waters in a log canoe, and pushing as with the palm of our hands the red man of the forest and prairie, farther and farther back from the habitations of civilized men.⁵³

However, as Warner and Foote recall,

The great event of 1851 was the treaty with the Dakotahs, whereby they sold their birthright, and were to be henceforth intruders when on their native soil. Up to 1851, '2 and '3, their dead might be seen on platforms in West St. Paul, and settlers there found the near presence of the Indian dead so offensive, that complaint was made to Governor Gorman, who ordered their removal.⁵⁴

Minnesota historians throughout the last century-and-a-half agree that during the early to mid-nineteenth century, settlement rapidly radiated out from Fort Snelling. Indeed, David A. Lanegran and Ernest R. Sandeen assert that the region's "population had increased threefold during the 1870s, going from slightly over 18,000 to almost 47,000...and in 1890 it reached 164,738." They attribute such "rapid development of [Minneapolis] in this period...to [the] establishment of new forms of economic activity and discovery of new resources in the rural areas served by Minneapolis."⁵⁵ According to a late-nineteenth century publication by the Minneapolis Board of trade, "the development has been so rapid that it seems almost incredible, but when the causes that have wrought such marvelous results have been pointed out the story is believed with much greater ease."⁵⁶ However, rapid change required the rapid dispossession of the Dakota. Rapid dispossession required a purposefully constructed amnesia of this violent

⁵³ Quoted in Lucile M. Kane, *The Waterfall that Built a City: The Falls of St. Anthony in Minneapolis* (St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1966), 40.

⁵⁴ Warner and Foote, *History of Ramsey County*, 194.

⁵⁵ David A. Lanegran and Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Lake District of Minneapolis: A History of the Calhoun-Isles Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004 [1979]), 19.

⁵⁶ W. F. Rodger, *Minneapolis through a Camera, 1857-1896* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Board of Trade, 1896), unpaginated.

removal, because, apparently, “the whites wanted their land, and it was useless to contend against their superior forces.”⁵⁷

The USPLSS survey and its attendant spatial practices certainly impacted Dakota peoples’ livelihoods. The survey, for example, came to St. Paul in 1847—a time when Dakota people were still integral members of the territorial population.⁵⁸ Though the impacts of the Dakota removal and reservation treaties are well documented by historians and Dakota scholars,⁵⁹ the specific connections detailing the direct impacts of the land surveys on Dakota peoples’ livelihoods remain absent. Rod Squires, an emeritus geography Professor at the University of Minnesota, and Harley R. Schneider, a professional surveyor, both attempted to collect and catalog historical documents regarding the early Minnesota surveys.⁶⁰ However, their

⁵⁷ W. W. Clayton, “A History of the State of Minnesota” in *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota*, ed. Alfred Theodore Andreas (Chicago: Chicago Lithograph Company, 1874), un-paginated.

⁵⁸ Fletcher, “Outlines of the History of Minnesota,” 187; An excerpt from this history of St. Paul outlines the need for the survey in the region: “The title to all lands in St. Paul was still vested in the United States, but the increase of population, the increasing value of lands and frequent transfer of claims showed the importance of a survey, and the laying out of a town. Ira B. Brunson and brother, Benjamin W. Brunson, of Prairie du Chien, (the latter is now clerk in the St. Paul post-office), were employed for that purpose, and the former entered on the work in August [1847], and the tract now known as St. Paul proper, was laid out, containing about ninety acres. The recorded plat shows that the proprietors were, Louis Robert, David Lambert, Henry Jackson, Benjamin W. Brunson, Charles Cavilier, Henry H. Sibley, J. W. Bass, A. L. Larpenteur, William H. Forbes, J. W. Simpson, Henry C. Rhodes, L. H. LaRoche, J. B. Coty and Vetal Geurin, but the plat could not be entered this year, and was not entered until April 28th, 1849....The surveys for the United States were made in the fall of this year. James M. Marsh run the town lines in October, and in the following month the sub-divisions were made by Isaac N. Highbee...The public lands in this region having been surveyed in September of this year [1848], the lands where St. Paul now is, were offered for sale to the highest bidder. H. H. Sibley, Louis Robert, and A. L. Larpenteur were selected as trustees to enter the lands for the various claimants, and the latter had fears that speculators would compete in their purchase, and thus run up the price. In this however, they were happily disappointed.”

⁵⁹ See Wilson, *Remember This!*; Wazyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?*; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makece*.

⁶⁰ Rod Squires, “An Inventory of the Public Land Survey Records in Minnesota: The Special Instructions” (Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul, May 2008); Rod Squires, “The Public Land Survey Records in Minnesota: An Inventory and Description of the Deputy Surveyor Contracts” (Final Report, Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, January 2012); Harley R. Schneider Correspondence, 1975-1976, P2494: 1, Minnesota History Center Gale Family Library.

projects were never completed, and neither had as their objective an effort to understand the effects of the surveys on Dakota disenfranchisement and removal from the lands of Minnesota.⁶¹

Conclusion

In the end...the history of the relationship between the U.S. government and American Indian nations is often characterized as being one of cultural domination, a critical examination reveals the principal relationship as one of exploitation—that is, the imposed extraction of labor and natural resources for capital gain. For example, while the Indian Removal, Dawes, and Termination Acts can all be viewed as legislated attempts to destroy Indian *culture*, in the end they all provided greater access to Indian lands and resources and, as such, proffered the federal government a windfall in capital gains. Similarly, while manual labor and boarding schools attempted to extinguish Indian-ness by imposing culturally imperialist curriculums, they also profited from child labor as well as helped to establish a permanent Indian proletariat...exploitative relations between the U.S. government and American Indian nations persist.⁶²

Dakota people in Minnesota continue to be exploited by government-controlled and government-mandated re-articulations of the grid at smaller scales. According to Reuben Rose-Redwood, when a state shifts from an expansionist colonial power to one that has a well-established and fixed external boundary, the government is still required to defend and maintain the legitimacy of its interior boundaries.⁶³ The notion that a state needs to constantly legitimize the internal grid of its land holdings is a significant mechanism of power that the state of Minnesota, alongside the federal government, has employed to delegitimize Dakota claims to their cultural landscapes in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region.

Differences in worldview regarding relationships to and control over land are particularly salient in contemporary cultural landscape preservation efforts (these will be discussed more fully in the next chapter). But it is here that we might revisit the Highway 55 controversy. The

⁶¹ These research collections are an underused resource that could contribute even more information about the nuances of the connections between surveying and its impacts on Dakota peoples' livelihoods during the nineteenth century.

⁶² Grande, *Red Pedagogy*, 26-27.

⁶³ Reuben Rose-Redwood, "With Numbers in Place: Security, Territory, and the Production of Calculable Space," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102 (March 2012): 295-319.

re-routing of the highway was contested by local residents—spear-headed by Carol Kratz—the environmental group, Earth First!, and members of various Indigenous communities, who all came together to set up a year-long protest encampment within the vicinity that became known as the Minnehaha Free State.⁶⁴ This encampment fought the demolition of a neighborhood and also invoked environmental preservation rhetoric, but the strongest resistance to the re-routing came from members of the Mendota Dakota community.⁶⁵ They claimed that four oak trees arrayed in a diamond-shape aligned to the four cardinal directions, along with a nearby free-flowing spring were part of the larger *Bdote* cultural landscape, which accorded their right to preservation. Joel Wainwright and Morgan Robertson, geography graduate students at the University of Minnesota at the time of the encampment, argued that Dakota peoples’ claim to this cultural landscape was a direct affront to the internal territory of the state of Minnesota, where “in territorial claims, scientific practices are often cited as a source of an objective reading of the state’s historical geography” and therefore become legitimating processes because “territorialization is never completed, but is an iterative process which states must continually perform.”⁶⁶ In order to maintain control over the grid, government representatives also delegitimized Dakota knowledge, worldviews, and understandings of space.

Wainwright and Robertson draw on the scientific claims of a *Cultural Resource Assessment of the proposed reroute for the Trunk Highway 55 (CRA)* that was conducted in response to a Dakota lawsuit filed against the rerouting. The state used this document, based on

⁶⁴ Losure, *Our Way or the Highway*.

⁶⁵ The Mendota Dakota are descendants of a small community of Dakota people who were allowed to remain in the town of Mendota following the Dakota U.S. War of 1862. They are not enrolled in any of the four Dakota reservation communities in Minnesota, nor are they federally recognized. For more information about their history see Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*; Losure, *Our Way or the Highway*.

⁶⁶ Joel Wainwright and Morgan Robertson, “Territorialization, Science and the Colonial State: The Case of Highway 55 in Minnesota,” *Cultural Geographies* 10 (April 2003): 201.

rudimentary investigations of the site, as a discursive tool to reject and disenfranchise Dakota claims to their cultural landscape. The CRA concluded that

the four bur oaks located on the centerline of the proposed location of T.H. 55 [Trunk Highway] lack historical significance and should not be considered eligible for preservation for four reasons: (1) inconsistent archival documentation of Dakota cultural connection to the sacred landscape, (2) no archeological evidence, (3) geographic location of the four oaks as too far removed from the sacred landscape, and (4) a dendrochronology survey indicated that the four oaks were too young to have existed during Dakota occupation of the site.⁶⁷

Western space-making practices pre-determined the boundaries of Dakota space. But perhaps the most glaring oversight revealed in the CRA is the dismissal of Indigenous testimony.

Wainwright and Robertson explain that ethnographic accounts are a legally required component of cultural resource assessments, but the way the Dakota testimonies were incorporated into the document further disenfranchised their claims. They show how the document's authors had already "determined what counts as indigenous geography by defining the scale of the conflict, and [limited] what counts as indigenous history by consulting only colonial records" so the Dakota voices were used "in a way that renders them powerless."⁶⁸ Drawing upon the scientific discourse of the CRA, the state defended its internal boundaries and ultimately allowed the re-routing of Highway 55 to proceed as planned. The four oaks were removed, and development encroached further toward the spring and the center of the *Bdote* cultural landscape. This decision literally paved over Dakota sacred space, further discrediting the legitimacy of Dakota access to the landscapes of their homeland.

Non-Dakota understandings of space frequently conflict with Dakota cultural landscape preservation efforts. Wicasta Wanzi describes how Western boundary-making does not allow for flexible, relational Dakota concepts of space. He says:

⁶⁷ Hotopp et al., "A Cultural Resource Assessment," 59.

⁶⁸ Wainwright and Robertson, "Territorialization, Science and the Colonial State," 209.

WW: I read about one of my ancestors being scaffolded at *Oheyawahi* in 1858, and that was really fascinating to me. I'd gone there probably thirty times before that, but going there after that it was a totally different emotional experience. Going there just being able to understand why it was used as a place for scaffolding and for bringing our dead, but also to have ceremony. When I heard about [elder] Chris Leith talking about it being a place for the dead and a place for ceremony, I thought, "That's kind of funny." But to Dakota people it makes a lot of sense that we'd be having that cycle of death and rebirth there with that ceremony. But the connections to the places aren't just to the physical places—they're even where the highways are, where trees are. It extends beyond the physical boundaries of a park or property space or surveyed land. That hill, for me, it extends all the way into the water and into the islands. And when you're standing there, I even think the sacred place extends all the way to the horizon. You can see for miles, and I just always wonder what it looked like before it was touched that way.⁶⁹

Similarly, Bruce White, one of the founding members of the Pilot Knob Preservation

Association, describes his frustration trying to explain the boundaries of the *Oheyawahi* cultural landscape to the members of the Mendota's City Council.

BW: One of the things we were able to do to help preserve Pilot Knob, also known as *Oheyawahi*, was to get it nominated to the National Register of Historic Place as a site of traditional cultural importance for the Dakota. And those concepts of landscape and boundary are things that come up. And boundary, in particular, is a key point in relation to the National Register—coming up with a boundary. I don't know if we came up with the right "ideal" boundary for Pilot Knob, because I think that what we tried to do was preserve what we could. So the boundary is kind of arbitrary.

But I remember very specifically when we first came into the city council, and I had a USGS map on the overhead. And then I was pointing out to the council members the area of the hill. So, potentially, the hill is the whole thing, whereas the knob is just here at the top. You might say that the hill starts at the lowest point on the bluffs above the Minnesota River, or you might say that the base of the hill is down on the river, and then it rises up to the highest point where the knob is located. And so defining the boundaries of the hill are harder than defining the boundaries of a knob. And I remember going in and showing the city council people this map. And then one of the city councilmen said, "Okay, now, could you mark out the boundaries of the sacred area?" And I was just kind of thunderstruck, because, of course, I've heard enough people say, "What are the boundaries of the sacred?" Does the sacred have boundaries? And as it happens, Pilot Knob Hill is surrounded by freeways. So the freeways kind of mark out a hill. And you can say, "Well, it is roughly in the area." And yet across the freeway, 55 and 110 come off and 55 goes one way and 110 goes to the left. Well, on the north side of that freeway is a Catholic cemetery. And without that freeway there you could arguably say that, yeah, that Catholic cemetery is part of *Oheyawahi* also. And we know that the Dakota camped all over that hill, during the treaty of 1851, and potentially in the area of the other side of the freeway. There's a lake. It's actually there. There's another Catholic

⁶⁹ Wicasta Wanzi, interview.

cemetery down 110, Resurrection Cemetery, and there's a lake in that cemetery which was a camping place for the Dakota. Anyway, so the boundary question. I think it's almost impossible to answer in a precise way. But you need a boundary for a National Register site. You have to come up with a boundary.⁷⁰

Dakota and non-Dakota understandings of space contradict. Dakota space is relational. Non-Dakota space is bounded and parceled into legible grids of property. Thus the land and its resources are catalogued and controlled by the dominant society as capital rather than respected as relatives. Because of these contradictions, the next chapter describes the challenges contemporary Dakota people face as they struggle to access and maintain responsible, reciprocal relationships with their traditional cultural landscapes in the public spaces of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region.

⁷⁰ White, interview.

No one is free to perform an action unless there is somewhere he is free to perform it.
—Jeremy Waldron, *Liberal Rights*

Chapter Three

Public Space

The sky was surprisingly clear and the weather relatively mild for a Minnesota afternoon in mid-December—the winter solstice was only a few days away. At 2:00 pm the sun was struggling to shine through a stand of scraggly trees overlooking the entrance gate to Coldwater Spring, the National Park Service’s (NPS) newest acquisition to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) corridor. A small group surrounded an NPS ranger. Most of the bystanders were listening intently to his introductions and instructions. Some, with binoculars hanging around their necks, were more focused on the skyline and the tree-tops. Still others, standing next to empty plastic gallon jugs, looked impatient and somewhat disgruntled at having to be shepherded as part of a tour group. But the NPS had officially fenced off the twenty-seven-acre property the month prior in order to begin “restorations” to this new stretch of parkland, which included tearing down a dozen large buildings—the remnants of a U.S. Bureau of Mines research facility—and effectively turning the site into a hazardous demolition zone (see Figure 3.1). The date was 17 December 2011. After months of reading about the history of the area and following the contested politics of this small parcel of land in south Minneapolis for my undergraduate senior thesis, it was my first official visit to Coldwater Spring.

Because we were essentially entering an active construction site, we were instructed to remain together as a group. In addition to the tour guide, two NPS rangers and a few volunteers were on duty to help enforce this rule. After some brief remarks, one of the rangers unlocked the gate and counted participants as we filed into the property. Paraded past derelict buildings from the U.S. Bureau of Mines, we were told about plans for demolition, plans for prairie restoration and the war against buckthorn. The ranger also provided a brief interpretive history of the

research facility itself, describing the uses of each building as we passed. About thirty minutes into the tour we approached the property's most famous attraction, a springhouse located near the southwestern boundary of the property. The birders took a moment to pause from their glassing, and the people carrying the plastic containers seemed to grow more anxious. The ranger explained how this was the last free-flowing spring in Hennepin county, how it served as a camp for the military personnel charged with constructing Fort Snelling in the early 1820s, and how it functioned as a source of freshwater to the fort for several decades after its completion.

“I would just like to add something!” a woman from the back of the crowd spoke up. She lived nearby, she was Dakota, and she could not let the tour conclude without letting the group know that this is Dakota land, sacred land, and had been for thousands of years. The tour guide thanked her for sharing and then continued unfazed with his version of settler-colonial history. Shadowed by a volunteer, the woman then walked over to the springhouse, disappeared for a few moments, and then left. This seemed to provide a signal for the container-toting new-age-environmentalists free reign to rush to the spring to gather their water.



Figure 3.1 Dilapidated U.S. Bureau of Mines buildings. Photos taken 17 December 2011.

The first phase of their “improvements” complete (i.e. demolishing buildings and thinning out unsightly trees), the NPS officially opened the park to the public on 1 September 2012. “It is unrecognizable,” Darlene exclaims, “it looks like Home Depot went in and had a field day! It’s really something else. You *have* to see it.” So we pull into the parking lot, the NPS Arrowhead obnoxiously broadcasting its possession of the space on a flashy new entrance sign. We step out of the car. But my mind is still fixated on the entrance sign, and I recall a previous conversation with John Anfinson, who, at that time, was Chief of Resource Management with the NPS but has since been promoted to MNRRA Superintendent. “This is exciting,” he says with a beguiling smile,

JA: I go back and look up my pictures from my family albums at home, and there’s always a picture of us, the six kids of my family in front of some national park sign, like Yellowstone, or Glacier, or the Grand Canyon, or Mesa Verde. If you look on the web for the National Park Service signs there’s picture after picture of people with *their* pictures in front of these signs. So the old monument entry sign to the Bureau of Mines, we’re going to refurbish that monument and we’ll have the National Park Service arrowhead on it....And my guess is there will be many families that get their pictures taken here for the first time in a National Park. Then maybe they’ll go out to other National Parks to the east and west and get their pictures taken by other signs. With our thirty-five islands we didn’t have that kind of thing, now with this land we have an entry gate. We have a point of entry. We have an identity that people will recognize. So I hope people and their families will be getting their pictures taken at this national park unit like they would in some other more familiar one in the country.¹

“Well, Anfinson,” I think to myself, “it seems like you got your wish” (See Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

¹ John Anfinson (National Park Service Superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, PhD, and former employee of the Army Corps of Engineers), interviewed by the author, 7 March 2012, St. Paul, Minnesota.



Figure 3.2 (Before) Fenced off entrance to Coldwater Spring. The old monument entry that John Anfinson refers to is at the center of the photo. Photo taken 18 February 2014.



Figure 3.3 (After) Refurbished Coldwater Spring entrance, complete with NPS arrowhead. Photo taken 13 July 2014.

Darlene is already heading toward the path. “Check that out,” she says gesturing east, snapping me back into the present. I turn around and follow her gaze. A chaotic mass of end-of-season wildflowers, grasses, and weeds surrounds a set of concrete steps leading from the parking lot to absolutely nowhere—nowhere but an expanse of restored prairie. The steps are the only remnant and an odd homage to the property’s previous owner, the U.S. Bureau of Mines research facility (see Figure 3.4). We continue farther into the park, and even though the NPS is intentionally “reconstructing” an oak savanna habitat, I can’t help but think how barren the place looks. Along with the buildings, most of the trees were taken down as well. Now, little saplings, none more than ten feet tall, are strategically interspersed in their place.



Figure 3.4 The former entrance to the main building of the U.S. Bureau of Mines research facility and (on the left) a Ranger-on-Call Station. These steps also appear in the photo on the left in Figure 3.1. Photo taken 13 July 2014.

When we finally reach the springhouse, I instantly see why Darlene refers to this place as a model for Home Depot landscaping. “That looks like Kasota limestone. At least they quarried locally,” I think to myself sardonically as we come upon giant paving stones directing the flow of the spring through the “daylighted” creek bed (see Figure 3.5).² Little shrubs, spaced at perfect intervals and surrounded by mounds of distractingly colorful mulch, line the creek bank and the path. But other than the obviously-human-sculpted landscaping and the “steps-rising-nowhere,” Coldwater Spring appears like pretty much any other natural area in the city. But then I see them: small, green placards that say “Ranger-on-Call” (see Figure 3.4) There are no signs

² “Daylighting” refers to a practice of freeing streams from culverts.

or pamphlets available to interpret the park’s physical and cultural features for you, only a phone number and a recording. Again, I recall a conversation with John Anfinson as he describes his plans for telling Coldwater’s story. “We don’t want to make it a heavy hand on the land with big signs everywhere,” he explains,

JA: We have a program now called Ranger-on-Call, and you might go out anywhere in our national park corridor and see a little post with a sign on it, and it’s got a number on it, and you can call it with your cellphone and then you can get interpretation on your cellphone or your iPad or whatever you have. I think national parks—and the state parks, city parks, parks everywhere, people doing interpretation—are taking advantage of the new technologies to have less signage but more content available to people. So we’re going to do some of that....We’ll try and interpret the site with what we know. The American Indian piece of that site we are not going to interpret specifically. We’ll interpret it as it relates to the history of Fort Snelling that we know. But what is the American Indian perspective on this land and how should that story be told, *that’s* going to be a difficult one to get to because we need to work with *all* the tribes. We don’t know who will speak for them. We will work on it. We’ll talk to the tribes of Minnesota and the tribes outside Minnesota, and try and get some guidance on how we proceed in that, but we won’t presume to try to tell that story.³

True to form, the introductory recording vaguely asserts that “archaeologists have discovered evidence that American Indians have lived in this region for some 10,000 years,” but then it quickly moves on to the site’s significance as the location of Minnesota’s first American settlement, the critical role it played in Fort Snelling’s development, the “fascinating research” conducted during the Bureau of Mines era, and the park’s plans for prairie restoration. Further down the trail, another recording, somewhat elusively, claims that the spring itself “*may* have been a water source for Native Americans.” And another—however ironically the last and most out-of-the-way Ranger-on-Call station at Coldwater—even is so forthright to mention Dakota people, but only through their connections to nearby places like *Bdote* and *Oheyawahi*, but certainly not to Coldwater itself (see Figure 3.6).⁴

³ J. Anfinson, interview.

⁴ Ranger-on-Call Audio Tour: <http://www.rangeroncall.com/>



Figure 3.5 The Coldwater Spring springhouse. The photo on the left was taken 18 February 2012 during demolition, and the water in the foreground flowed underground through a culvert. The photo on the right was taken 13 July 2014 after the creek was “daylighted.”

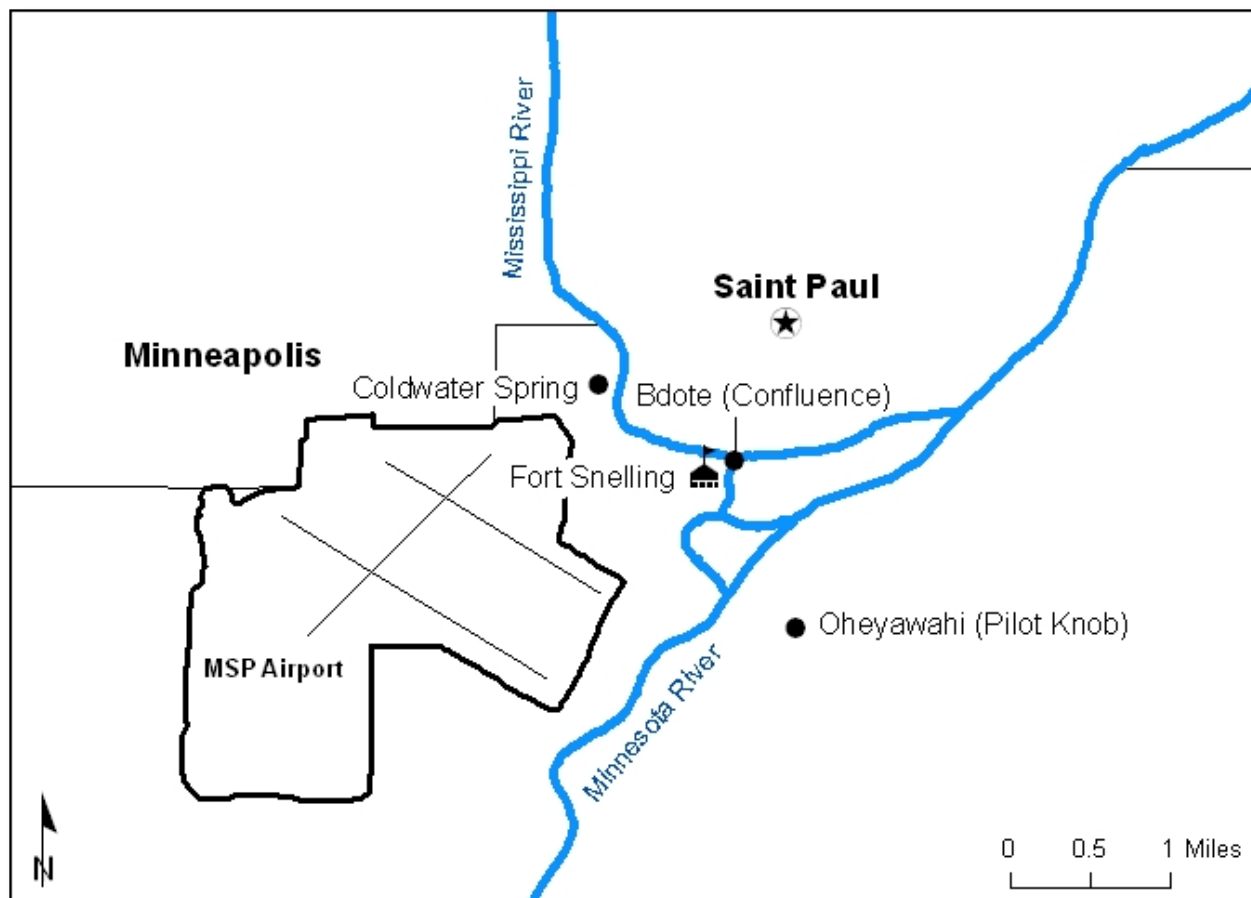


Figure 3.6 A portion of the *Bdote* cultural landscape—Coldwater Spring and Fort Snelling (cartography by the author).

Coldwater Spring is a Dakota place known as *Mni Owe Sni*, and it also falls within the larger landscape of *Taku Wakan Tipi*, the dwelling place of a sacred being. During a press conference on 26 February 1999, at the height of the Highway 55 controversy, Dakota elder Reverend Gary Cavender, explained the connection between *Taku Wakan Tipi* and *Bdote*:

In our Creation myth we the Dakota, the Seven Fires of the Dakota, came from the belt of Orion—the seven planets of the belt of Orion, the seven stars—and arrived at the convolution of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, and so in some respects it is our Eden, and the land around there is sacred as well. There is that sacred spring that is in negotiation, that sacred spring is the dwelling place of...the God of Waters, and in that spring there is an underground river that goes into the big river, and that is his passageway to get out into the world. To block the sacred passageway would be courting

drought and things of that nature that have to do with water, because after all, this is the God of the water.⁵

At the time, the highway rerouting threatened the integrity of the water flow from the west into Coldwater Spring. Though Coldwater has since been preserved as a means of stabilizing the watershed and maintaining the last free-flowing spring in Hennepin County, the National Park Service continues to ignore, and often outright denies, the veracity of Dakota relationships with and knowledge of the place. Even when those relationships demonstrate direct connections to the Fort Snelling historical narratives, as Wicasta Wan̄zi demonstrates:

WW: I think some of the things that have to happen, though, like Coldwater Spring, you hear how they say, “Oh, it’s not a sacred site.” And there’s all of these official documents on how it’s not a sacred site based on the written word, but the written word’s only good when it serves the purpose of the *wasicun̄* from their perspective. How many of our stories have ever been told through the written word? What’s funny about Coldwater, too, is the soldiers at the fort were dying of scurvy and other diseases, and the Dakota women led them to Coldwater. They had them drink the water and dig roots, and then they had vitamin C and other nutrients to actually be healed. And so *our* sacred site actually healed the people that destroyed us and the sacred site, which is an interesting parallel.⁶

Rather than recognizing Dakota peoples’ knowledge and relationships to a place like *Taku Wakan̄ Tipi*, or Coldwater Spring—knowledge that enabled the survival of American soldiers—the National Park Service, instead, constructs a historical narrative eliding Dakota recognition. “Coldwater Spring was home to Minnesota’s first American settlement.”⁷ Full stop.

Prior to the Highway 55 rerouting, the Coldwater Spring landscape was managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Gary and Chester Spears argue that, because of the controversy, Coldwater Spring remained under federal jurisdiction in order to ensure maximum control over the land. Gary Spears begins by saying that “the Department of the Interior did nothing” with the property since the early 1990s “until Native people made it an issue, and then they countered us

⁵ Reverend Gary Cavender quoted in Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 213.

⁶ Wicasta Wan̄zi, interview.

⁷ Ranger-on-Call Audio Tour.

by transferring it to the National Park Service, so they could exclude us again further in our land.”⁸ His brother, Chester Spears, then describes how a group of Native people decided to occupy the land in 2008.

CS: It didn’t get a whole lot of media coverage because there was the Republican National Convention going on at exactly the same time [in St. Paul], so it was early September. And we had maybe about 100 people stay there for about four days, exercising federal law— which, if the federal government abandoned it over a year or longer, then it would go back to Native Americans. The same law that applied in 1971 with AIM [the American Indian Movement] at Alcatraz, the same law would apply over at Coldwater Spring off of the Hiawatha Avenue area. So it was used pretty well because the Minneapolis police were ignorant to what we were applying, a federal law, and then so the Department of Homeland Security had to educate them, and basically asked them to leave. [The Minneapolis police] couldn’t intervene with us because it was a lot more serious of an issue. There was actually a federal law that prevented them from just coming in. I guess they were treating us like trespassers but...Homeland Security knew federal law. They said this federal law does apply. They said that we had a right to be there. And so, at that time, [the Minneapolis police] had to leave the area. We then managed to stay on and it stayed open. But when it reached back to the Department of the Interior there, they came back with a plan, and put the National Park Service in charge [later that year]. The National Park Service, since then, has excluded everything about Dakota history there. They don’t want us really actively doing anything there. We’re open to walk in there, but we don’t have any say whatsoever. We were at a meeting...and they told us it was “open to the public,” but we also were restricted in talking about spirituality....They basically excluded us. They looked like they were open to the public, but when we get there they restricted our freedom of speech.⁹

Gary Spears then concluded that “It all countered our situation by bringing in the National Park Service. The Department of the Interior put them in place so they would be able to re-control the area, and take it back over. That was the plan in place.”¹⁰

Over the last few years, I dragged my mom, dad, and husband along with me to Coldwater Spring numerous times. They saw it during the NPS Ranger-led tours when the buildings were being torn down, and they have been back since the park officially opened to the public. And we all returned, together, on brilliantly sunny June afternoon (see Figure 3.7). Over

⁸ Gary Spears, interviewed by Iyekiyaipiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair, 3 September 2014, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

⁹ Chester Spears, interviewed by Iyekiyaipiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair, 3 September 2014, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

¹⁰ G. Spears, interview.

the previous two weeks it had been raining constantly. But on this particular the day the grasses looked lush, the wildflowers were blossoming, and the water flowing from the spring was lavishly tumbling over its channel of Home Depot paving stones. My mom, invigorated by the gorgeous weather, piped up as we walked along the path, “I *like* this! This is really nice. I don’t see why people have a problem with it...” Clearly, it is not so much the space itself that is the problem. Rather, it is how Dakota people, their worldviews, and their histories are continuously disenfranchised from the place by the current land managers, the National Park Service.



Figure 3.7 Visiting Coldwater Spring with my family. Photo taken 21 June 2014.

The controversy surrounding the Highway 55 rerouting made much more visible—to both the public and to public land managers—Dakota peoples’ struggles to reassert and reclaim their relationships to specific (though not discrete) cultural landscapes in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. However, in the nearly two decades since, Dakota peoples’ claims—and thus

their attendant worldviews—have been marginalized and disenfranchised. These current struggles, therefore, are dependent on understanding, recognizing, and legitimizing the Dakota worldviews introduced in Chapter One, namely, that all land is a relative. And these struggles are also dependent on understanding the historical context of dispossession and disenfranchisement discussed in Chapter Two—which outlined how colonizing practices, like the grid, disrupted Dakota peoples’ responsibilities to their lands in *Mni Sota Makoce*, the land where the waters reflects the sky. “Indeed,” Sandy Grande asserts, “over the centuries, the forces of conquest, genocide, removal, colonization, imperialism, detribalization, urbanization, and relocation have deeply altered indigenous communities worldwide.”¹¹ These colonizing forces have specifically impacted Dakota people where, according to Waziyatawin,

Because of the Dakota diaspora, most of our nation is still born into exile hundreds of miles away from our beautiful homeland. We cannot relegate this reality to the depths of a single historical event or period in history. Instead, every generation of Dakota people has experienced this injustice since 1862. The injustice continues through the present day along with other devastating consequences of living as colonized peoples.¹²

Despite a laundry list of “devastating consequences,” Dakota peoples continue to persist, always struggling for the right to simply *be* Dakota—for the right to live. Despite a spate of colonizing forces, their contemporary responsibilities to re-establish reciprocal relationships with and to preserve their lands throughout *Mni Sota Makoce* are not diminished.

This chapter, therefore, focuses specifically on Dakota peoples’ perspectives on and responses to preservation and development. They continue to demonstrate their relationships to these specific, though not discrete, cultural sites within the *Bdote* cultural landscape—a

¹¹ Grande, *Red Pedagogy*, 2.

¹² Waziyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?*, 61-62.

landscape contained within the seven county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.¹³ However, government officials (at multiple scales) persistently attempt to contest, discredit, and subjugate these Dakota social actions and their attendant worldviews. As indicated in the previous chapter, contemporary oppressive actions have their roots in the historical, spatial practices developed—and eventually legally codified in federal land policy—to dispossess and disenfranchise Indigenous peoples’ claims to land across the North American continent. The legacies of these policies are rearticulated and rematerialized *in place* by the government land managers currently in control of Dakota cultural sites in the Twin Cities. Methodologically, therefore, I follow Don Mitchell’s assertion of the dialectic where

Social action is structured through law, and social action creates abstract or differentiated spaces in proportion to the power possessed by each side in a struggle. So social action—including oppositional work by social movements—always operates simultaneously to influence the production of law and the production of space.¹⁴

Thus, dispossession is always a site of struggle. Dakota peoples’ varied forms of resistance to dispossession (whether or not successful) always informs the practices and policies for producing contemporary colonized spaces, which, in turn, provides the spatial context for renewed forms of Dakota resistance to colonization and oppression.

“Recreation is another Form of Development”

Lying almost completely flat, balanced on my hip and elbow, and covered in soil and fresh mulch, my eyes sharply focus on the tangle of tall prairie grasses surrounding me. I seek the stems of white and yellow clover—my clippers deftly assailing the invasives we are tasked with removing for the day. Upon successfully clearing a grassy patch from unwanted clover, I gather

¹³ *Bdote*, the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, is the location of the *Bdewakantunwan* Dakota creation story. The broader *Bdote* cultural landscape links the waterways, and the spiritual beings that travel through those waterways, to the confluence.

¹⁴ Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 29.

my clippings together and stand up from my prairie jungle, no longer dwarfed by the swaying foliage. Glancing up at my surroundings, I slowly remember where I am. The sounds of the city begin to re-infiltrate my consciousness.

Less than fifty-feet away behind a row of freshly-planted immature trees, cars pass at a steady clip along the multiple lanes of the recently rerouted Highway 55/Hiawatha Avenue. On the other side of the highway, every ten minutes a “clang, clang, clang” announces the arrival of the Blue Line light-rail as it scrapes along its track on an elevated platform clearly visible above the row of thinned-out bur oaks and scraggly shrubs (See Figure 3.8). Less frequently, the roar of a jet engine dwarfs all other noises as a passenger plane makes its ascent out of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. We have plenty of time to decode the airline decal on the tail of the plane as it passes over our heads.

Pointing in the road’s direction, “Those trees over there were planted intentionally,” one of the regular Coldwater Crew volunteers tells me as I drop my clippings on the edge of the gravel path and pick up my empty five-gallon pail. “All of this,” he continues, his arms gesturing wildly, “was designed by Alan Robbins-Fenger. He’s a landscape architect or something. And his plan is that those trees will create a natural sound-break from the highway.” I nod as I begin walking up the path toward a giant mound of fresh mulch.

The light-rail clangs past. It is mid-morning on a weekday, so the park is fairly empty. A middle-aged woman approaches on the wide trail next to where we are working. She is walking her bicycle. Amused by her attention to park regulations, I chuckle to myself as I recall the image of a crossed-out bicycle on a sign near the park entrance that says, “WALK BIKES PLEASE.” The woman stops. She greets us and says, “Thank you for what you are doing, the place looks really great.” I assume she is a local, and I wonder how much she knows about the

history of this place. One of the other volunteers then gives her a brief update on what we've been doing, and explains to the visitor how she might "get involved." I smile as she passes, set down my bucket, and begin filling it with mulch.



Figure 3.8 The passing of the Blue Line Light Rail past Coldwater Spring. Photo taken 13 July 2014.

My bucket overflowing, I venture a little bit farther down the path searching for an untended section. Stretching, I take one last look at the development surrounding me. I glance at the other volunteers hunched over, clippers poised, submerged in their own tufts of prairie grass, before finally spying another clump of the small clusters of yellow and white flowers that need my attention. I resume my position, diving off the path and back into the tangle of prairie grasses

to participate in the Coldwater Crew's manicuring of the Coldwater Spring landscape. And the sounds of the city fade.

Bdote is an important place, but it is also an exceptionally powerful place. For many Dakota people, it makes sense, then, that the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, grew outward from the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. In a conversation with Bruce White, Chris Leith, the late spiritual leader of the Prairie Island Dakota community, explained the connection between the *Bdote* landscape and urban development. Bruce summarizes:

Bdote was a "vortex" in the landscape. The very presence of Fort Snelling, the airport, and the complex freeway system there reflected the powerful energy of the site. Leith cautioned, however, that powerful spiritual places should rightly be left alone, not because they would be damaged by what was built upon them, but that in the long run the nature of the place would damage what was built there.¹⁵

Despite the obvious built environment, there is another form of development occurring on Dakota peoples' traditional cultural landscapes.

Preserving green spaces in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has been an important part of the region's development since the late-nineteenth century.¹⁶ Before the turn of the century, for example, the Board of Park Commissioners, created in 1883, had "built their lasting monument in the miles of boulevard, the acres of green lawn, the rows of trees and hedges, shrubbery and small plants, and the many lakes of transparent water, all of which have transformed the waste places into beauty spots for all classes of people."¹⁷ And apparently, "Residents identify with the recreational landscape, and, for many, life without this attractive public open space would be unthinkable."¹⁸ Preserving urban green spaces as public parks,

¹⁵ Bruce White "Rediscovering the Dakota Sacred Place Paradigm in Minnesota," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Uncasville, CT, June 2012.

¹⁶ Theodore Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System, 1883-1944: Retrospective Glimpses into the History of the Board of Park Commissioners of Minneapolis, Minnesota and the City's Park, Parkway, and Playground System* (Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1945).

¹⁷ Rodger, *Minneapolis through a Camera*, un-paginated.

¹⁸ Lanegran and Sandeen, *The Lake District of Minneapolis*, 26.

however, implies that they are *maintained* as urban green spaces and that they are preserved precisely so that local residents and tourists might use them and benefit from them.

Perhaps the flagship of Twin Cities urban park system, more than 850,000 people visit Minnehaha Regional Park each year (see Figure 3.9).¹⁹ Initially, at least in terms of settler-colonial history, the land surrounding Minnehaha Falls was designated state park land. In 1889 it became “Minnesota’s first state park, and only the second state park in the nation.”²⁰ David C. Smith, a Twin Cities resident and park booster, explains that, in fact,

Attempts to acquire Minnehaha Falls for a park were nearly ancient in the short history of white settlement of the region. As early as 1868 the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce had passed a resolution to request Congress to permit St. Paul, St. Anthony and Minneapolis to purchase from Fort Snelling the land surrounding Minnehaha Falls for a park.²¹

Minnehaha Creek, which flows over Minnehaha Falls within the park, however, is also an important and powerful waterway in the *Bdote* cultural landscape.

¹⁹ https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/parks__destinations/parks_and_lakes/minnehaha_regional_park/

²⁰ David C. Smith, *City of Parks: The Story of Minneapolis Parks* (Minneapolis: The Foundation for Minneapolis Parks, 2008), 46.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 43. It is interesting to note that Smith, in his About the Author section, is described as “a Minneapolis resident who has enjoyed the city’s parks for more than thirty years. He has played basketball, tennis, softball and baseball on park courts and fields. He walks, bikes, skates, and swims in city parks and has coached youth sports in park leagues. In his travels around the world—he was a student in London, a Peace Corps Volunteer in Columbia and Nigeria, and a Foreign Service Officer in Washington, D.C., Madrid and [Lusaka]—he has never encountered a park system so well planned or so heavily used.”



Figure 3.9 Visitors crowd the Minnehaha Falls overlooks on a Saturday evening near sundown. Photo taken 21 June 2014.

That Minnehaha falls is both surrounded by a dense, metropolitan, built environment, and is itself developed and heavily trafficked, deters, and often prohibits, Dakota people from engaging in responsible, reciprocal relationships with the place. John Norder, who has had a relationship with Minnehaha Falls since he was a child, describes what he envisions for Dakota use of the site, and he explains some of the issues with such heavy development and traffic. He says,

JN: For one thing, ugh, it's hard. [Minnehaha Falls] is in the city. I'd like to be able to drink from it. That's not going to happen. I even knew that when I was a kid. Not that I didn't try anyway. It would be nice to experience it away from people to have a stretch that was just left alone. No paths, nothing. It would be great if they could set the falls aside rather than being just a safety hazard, so you shouldn't go walking behind them. Not that that ever stops anybody. That it be left to recharge and left alone because you

can tell when the place is tired from too many people. And the last time I went to Minnehaha Falls and the creek, it was very tired. These places, in the context of the city, *need* to be set aside away from people. We can go to them for ceremony, and we can take, but we can also bring back, and we can rejuvenate as well. It's a two way street for the people who know what they're doing. I would like to be able to see places like that, that are here, where you could actually do that. Minnehaha is one of them. It's very tired. There are not very many places that are not exhausted by people here. Like I said, when I was living on the south side of the river, it was well before they did all the massive amounts of development: I-494 didn't exist at the time through there, they hadn't built the bridge—it was just the Mendota Bridge across the river. There were places that you could actually go down that were really quiet. You could never be alone, and there were always traces of stuff, but going out on the islands wasn't as touristy as it's subsequently become. People generally didn't go down into the river because it was really just sort of the nature of people to go drive down onto the islands and crap like that. And it's just like, wow. I know they have all this pressure to constantly develop these places along the river for tourist dollars. It's part of how parks maintain themselves. At the same time, would it really be that hard for them just to put it out of circulation? That would be what I would like to see, particularly for Minnehaha Falls, it's a very important place. It's one of the places I like to go to. I'm drawn back there. It's one of the well springs for the city, before the city was here. It's never going to decline and disappear unless they do something catastrophically dumb, but it's not as vigorous a place as it could be. It would be great if they could do something like that.

This is where you can actually get people on your side, to a certain extent. One of the things that is appealing to non-Natives is the idea that you can go and encounter some place that's pristine. You put a road through, you make it accessible to anyone, then it's no longer a pristine location because it's guaranteed that less responsible individuals are going to come in and dump crap around and then there's going to be just disruption caused by the presence of people. You can't go there and have your pristine experience. So that's kind of the one side. The other thing is that the more you make these places accessible to people, the more you drain the landscape itself. One of the things that's revitalizing about it is not that people can go and have access to the water. They think that that's great and that's wonderful, but even people will weaken and sicken if a place is simply used too much. Everything in moderation, including accessing these places. It's a really smart adage that everybody should know and it's the same thing for using a place. Actually, this is one of the adages in the Southwest in terms of talking about rock art conservation. One of the things they do is you have these areas that have high concentrations, so that, literally, you turn your head and you cannot *not* see like a rock engraving or a painting or something somewhere. What they do, sometimes, is they will sacrifice some things. They will create a public trail because there's demand, and they know that what they're doing is they're going to sacrifice everything along that trail to human activity. And the idea is that they can subsequently preserve everything else. Similar strategies could be adopted here in various creative ways. But the idea here is everybody wants to have their own little private beach. Everybody wants to go down to the river to enjoy this, so the idea is that they suddenly make things more and more accessible so people can kind of spread out, and that's the road to ruin right there. That's not a conservation program where you're thinking about it even from a naturalist

perspective, because basically what you're doing is: you're buying into the pressure. For God's sake, promote the state park system and get them out of the city. Let the city itself and the lands within it be left and managed, because there aren't that many of them. That's where if we are going to try to really urge that an argument be made. These places are just as important as the state park, or as the national park system in that every time we do something new we're sacrificing more of the very little that remains for, quote unquote, "everybody to use."²²

For example, prior to the NPS "revitalization" of it, Coldwater Spring was an infrequently trafficked and forgotten landscape. Iyekiyaipiwiñ Darlene St. Clair highlights the significance of the transition from an out-of-the-way and forgotten landscape to one that is heavily managed and heavily used. And it's not just Coldwater Spring. She explains:

DS: Most of these places I've been going to for a number of years, but not twenty-five years, like, ten years, and they've changed, all of them have changed really dramatically, especially *Wakañ Tipi* and *Taku Wakañ Tipi*. When I first started going there, they were really terrible to look at, but I always felt like that wasn't important. Most of these places were, at one point, either federal government things, or industry or something, so I always thought that this was a colonial imprint on these places. A stamp. Like, "This is *our* place." So even though I saw those things as having this colonial stamp on them, the fact that, by the time I was going there, they were abandoned in those purposes, so the [Bureau of] Mines were done even though the building was still there, there weren't people driving there and working there every day. Similarly with *Wakañ Tipi*, I think that was a railroad building, and that was not really being used as such. It was kind of an empty building when I first started going there, and so I never had a really big problem with the buildings there. They were ugly, but you also saw evidence that they were being taken over by nature. You'd see trees starting to grow out of their roofs, a seed would fly in and there'd be enough soil and sun and wind that a tree would start growing out of the roof of one of these buildings, and I always found that scene—even though the buildings were ugly—I always found that scene kind of comforting. Even if no one takes the building down, it *will* be taken down. There was never anyone there. They weren't easy, you always felt you were going to put your foot through rebar. It did feel kind of dangerous, in a way, but there was never anybody there, or rarely, and so I did not mind the fact that they looked crappy. I knew that eventually those buildings would be taken back by nature, and I still enjoyed the places.

Now, all of them, *Oheyawahi*, *Wakañ Tipi*, *Taku Wakañ Tipi*, they're all manicured. And there are all these signs, to me that are signs of management. It's a managed nature. It's not real. When I go to *Mni Owe Sni* [Coldwater Spring/*Taku Wakañ Tipi*], I always think it's the Menards version of nature, or the Home Depot version of nature. And I think as time goes on, maybe it will look less managed, but to me it just looks like people are still seriously thinking that they get to control the place. That even though there's not a Bureau of Mines building there, the philosophy that "We're humans

²² Norder, Interview.

and we can control this place,” that philosophy hasn’t changed. It’s just the way it looks—it looks different—and so I guess that’s the thing that I find the most frustrating. And it’s a really difficult argument to make with many non-Dakota people because, if you saw the before and you saw the after, it looks “nicer!” And I put that “nicer” in quotes because it’s that managed look that we see that people say, “This is what looks nice. This is the nature that I like. This managed nature.” And that’s what they look like, to me. All of these places have gone through this change in the last ten years of making them park-like settings. *Mni Owe Sni* and *Wakan Tipi* are really literally parks—National Park Service. And *Bdote* is literally in a state park. *Oheyawahi* is—I don’t know if they would call it a park, but it’s certainly a park-like setting. Mounds Park is in a park. So they all have been now surrounded by parks, in my mind. And to me, recreation is what people do in a park, and to me, recreation is just another form of development. I don’t go there, and “Oh, my eyes are bleeding, this is the worst thing I’ve ever seen!” It’s not that, but the story is really not any different. It really has not substantially changed, and it’s difficult to convince other people to see that the subtext of the story is the same, even though the narration may look a little different. They’ve changed the narration, but the subtext is the same. And that’s a real challenge. And I also don’t want to be contrary, like, “I’m against everything!” But I do feel like I get concerned about what’s going to become of these places, and my main concern is to encourage and allow for Dakota access of the places.

Because I believe that Dakota access of these places is crucially important for Dakota people if we are going to continue as a people. But Dakota access to these places, I think is also crucially important to the places. And it doesn’t mean that Dakota access makes it so that no one else can ever go there, but I would like to see institutions that have control over these places consider Dakota interests as really one of the most important interests in the place, and I don’t think that’s the case. We still are struggling to get these institutions to recognize them as being even important to Dakota people. So I see that there’s a continuum. You convince people that these are important to Dakota people, or there’s a Dakota interest in these places. You impact interpretation so that the broader public can start to see these as Dakota places, and then hopefully policy changes so that Dakota interests are held in higher regard. That’s kind of the direction I think we can move in. That’s where I’m hoping we can go.²³

“Neoliberal urban reform calls for the constant increase of urban order,” Mitchell argues.

Specifically, he claims that these practices “constrict” and “sanitize” public spaces, which thus prioritizes “the importance of aesthetics over the needs of some people simply to survive.”²⁴

Public parks like those “managed” and “restored” by the National Park Service in the Twin Cities, could certainly be considered efforts to order, constrict, and sanitize delinquent spaces like those Iyekiyapiwiŋ introduces above.

²³ Iyekiyapiwiŋ, interview.

²⁴ Mitchell, *The Right to the City*, 9.

Waziyatawiñ describes some of the contradictions between Dakota uses of sacred places and public land managers' efforts to transform disorderly space into orderly space. She begins by explaining her wish for what Dakota cultural landscapes should be, but she then describes the current park management practices at these sites and their effects on public consciousness.

Waz: Well, ideally, we would have free, unfettered access to these places where we'd be able to go without a permit, without permission, without feeling like we're trespassers, and where we wouldn't have to have the violence of colonization shoved down our throat, or right there in our faces, where we could be ensured of the integrity of the place being preserved, good water, no toxic chemicals, no graffiti, no drug use, no concrete and cement structures. That they were pristine. That would be my preference.

[Turning these landscapes into parks] is just another form of violence. I think that it's all about colonial occupation and control, and as Dakota people, particularly when we're talking about sacred sites, or sites of significant historical interest, that all of those sites should be under Dakota jurisdiction. Dakota people should care for those places and have access to those places, and in the Twin Cities Metro Region it seems like colonizing society will not tolerate that option. So parks are about white access. It's about recreation for white people, and I think it demonstrates that, even in the twenty-first century, Dakota people, just the expendability of our population, that our needs, our connections, our lives can be ignored even for the recreational purposes of white people.

In some ways I think the transference to the park status is more insidious. When they were—and I'm thinking about Coldwater in particular—going there when it was Bureau of Mines, abandoned buildings and whatever, you can look at the buildings, you can look at the graffiti and the broken windows and the structures and very quickly assess, "Okay, this is a site under occupation," that "this is colonization." Having a park there now, it's no less colonized, but it's prettied up, and I think it makes it harder for people to recognize the destructiveness and the violence of colonization, and I've only been to Coldwater once since the park has been done and it was breathtaking. It just felt like another assault. And the way that they did it by just kind of bulldozing over everything, and then replanting trees. You just can't help thinking, "What is wrong with these people?!" I think it makes it harder to recognize the violence when they pretty it up the way they do.²⁵

The interests of recreational users are typically those most privileged by public parks in the Twin Cities because those users are predictable and orderly. Their interests most closely align with local, state, and federal park mandates, and, consequently, their interests also fall within the dominant paradigms for ordering space.

²⁵ Waziyatawiñ, interview.

Darlene and I met Betsy Leach at a workshop in St. Paul, coordinated by the 106 Group, and the workshop was organized to discuss a draft of the St. Paul River Passage Plan.²⁶ Betsy is currently the Executive Director and Community Organizer for the St. Paul District 1 Community Council, and many of her responsibilities deal with the conflicts over the use and apportioning of public space, particularly public parks. In our conversation with Betsy, she described the complex urban dynamics that create conflicting uses in Twin Cities public spaces. The designation of public parks, in particular, is clearly bound up in arguments for development. She explains many of the competing uses of property in St. Paul:

BL: [The St. Paul River Passage] plan really is focused on people who are on the river and looking into the neighborhoods using the river as a recreational opportunity. And so it's all about view sheds, what you can see from the river, and it's like, "Yeah, what about the people in the neighborhoods? What are they seeing and what access do they have to the river? And I think that there's potentially going to be some conflict between what the plan says and what is realistic for neighborhoods to think about especially in terms of development, because we've got issues with the railroad, we have issues with the Metropolitan Council. One of the things that we were also involved with a couple of years ago was there's a Park and Ride at Lower Afton and Hwy 61, and there are Indian mounds there, and so they're a part of the complex from Mounds Park [*Wakan Tipi*], but they're not recognized as a part of that. There are a lot of people who claim, "Yeah, they're not burial mounds." Well you have to assume that they are burial mounds, and this Park and Ride was put in without any consent to the neighborhood, without any consideration. It was just kind of an afterthought. They needed some place to put cars. So they put it there. And so between some transit things that are going on there and the overflow traffic, those mounds were endangered at one point with the expansion of a parking lot. And so we've got things like that that we have to deal with as well. We're trying to do what's right for those cultural resources, what's right for the community, which is to remove the damn parking lot. And what we wanted to do is to restore the area around there so it'd be green space and could be recognized as some park land, but how does that fit into the Great River Plan? I'm not sure. So it takes a lot of negotiating different desires of neighbors and different desires of the city and trying to think about what's best for everybody and the moral issues.

But parks, specifically, they're kind of free spaces for people to do things, within reason. But they're also natural spaces, to varying degrees anyway, natural spaces. One of things that's interesting about St. Paul is the difference between Como Park and Battle Creek Park, and, okay, Como Park is a city park, and Battle Creek is a county park. I mean that's one thing. But Como Park is always held up as the jewel of the system in St.

²⁶ "Great River Passage: A Master Plan for Saint Paul's 17 Miles of Mississippi River Parklands" (St. Paul City Council, April 2013).

Paul, and I'm thinking, "Yeah, it's a nice park, but it's a certain type of park. And the nice thing that we have in the City of St. Paul is that there's a range of different kinds of parks. Battle Creek Park is a much more natural park, and so if you're a person like I am that likes to be out in the woods and likes to see nature, not in a zoo format. I'd much rather be spending time at Battle Creek Park than at Como Park, for example. And the things that the city park system does provide a range of those opportunities. So there's that kind of aspect that parks provide for people. There're all kinds of studies about people's mental health and their closeness to parks and that kind of thing, and I truly believe that, but also the value of property and the relation of parks to property values, and so St. Paul has a pretty good system to assist that.

It's pretty selective in neighborhoods, because Como is different than my neighborhood in Hamline/Midway, so there are those kinds of things, and then there's the more active things that parks do with kids and with seniors and keeping people socially engaged. And in different parts of the city, the parks and the rec centers are the only gathering spaces that people have. But when you privatize it or when you do a partnership or whatever you want to call it, as much as those organizations try, they're still in there to make money. They've got to make money. So they're supposed to provide space for communities, but you get conflicting schedules and conflicting messages that are there. So it's just complicated. Because I think, again, with the folks who are river enthusiasts and want to be on the river and everything is recreational, that it's not taking into account the other things that come as a result of this river being in a place where we live and work. So there are those things. I think with the river itself and the idea that it's a working river and it's a recreational space, too, and if people are boating and what it is that they want to be seeing when they look from the river versus the people who are living in the neighborhood and they want to expand their house, or whatever. Those kinds of things are all conflicting.²⁷

Betsy argues later in her interview that, "we're supposed to be a democracy," and parks "belong to everybody." However, those who own property and those who have fiscal interests in the public spaces are often those with the most powerful voices. Betsy is certainly sensitive to and understanding of Dakota peoples' relationships to public spaces in the Twin Cities. But the principle struggle is that the conflicting worldviews between Dakota and non-Dakota relationships with land are clearly contradictory seems not to fully rise to consciousness for those in power. Taken together, through Iyekiyapiwiŋ, Waziyatawiŋ, and Betsy's statements here, we can clearly see the complexities of the competing, powerful, and propertied claims for urban public spaces.

²⁷ Betsy Leach, interviewed by Iyekiyapiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 25 July 2014, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Wicasta Waŋzi says that “it is difficult to not be able to access these sites” for ceremonies, and he says, “How cool would it be if we could have a sweat in the center of Lake of the Isles on those islands there? Because that’s a sacred site, *Topo Wiŋta*...that was Cloud Man’s village.” But then he questions, “Why aren’t we allowed access? They can have marathons there, but we can’t have ceremonies there? It doesn’t make enough money for them, I guess.” Wicasta Waŋzi suggests that recreational public spaces, in particular, are exclusionary. But he more specifically explains how Dakota people are discouraged from accessing their cultural sites in public spaces in the Twin Cities because of issues of surveillance and policing. He says how one deterrent “is parking. You get a ticket or get towed,” but ceremonial uses are even more closely patrolled and prevented. “They’ll blame it on our fires,” he says,

WW: for a sweat lodge or some of our other ceremonies. It’ll be disturbing the peace. Singing or drumming becomes disorderly conduct. They’ll just make up these charges that don’t really apply to what’s going on. If someone’s sitting in a park playing a guitar, they don’t hassle them, but if you’re playing a hand drum or powwow drum, you’re pretty surely going to get messed with, which is pretty terrible. I have an instance of that. We were playing a big drum in a park under one of those gazebo things, and there was no one around, there weren’t houses, and it was, like, one o’ clock in the afternoon. So you’d think everyone was at work, and then two cop cars roll up, and they were really threatening and wanted to take our drum and the sticks, and we wouldn’t let them, because we’re supposed to protect that stuff. And so it became really like a standoff and way more heated than it should’ve been, but it was really the police kind of instigating it just by not wanting to listen to why we weren’t letting them just confiscate stuff. And then they didn’t even listen to, whenever we’d bring up our treaty rights, they’d act like we’re just idiots—like it’s not even valid. And they’re supposed to uphold the law, but they don’t.²⁸

Erin Griffin describes other aspects of Twin Cities cultural landscapes that make it difficult for Dakota people to be able to visit with the sites. She first emphasizes that

EG: It’s scary to drive in the city! And some place like Fort Snelling [State Park and *Bdote*] is hard to get to if you don’t know what you’re doing or where you’re going. When we tried to drive there this last time I was using my app on my phone, and I don’t even know where it took us, but it didn’t take us there. We were a good fifteen minutes from Fort Snelling. So just for that simple fact of not being able to navigate a huge city

²⁸ Wicasta Waŋzi, interview.

like that, especially if somebody grew up in a place like this [Sisseton, South Dakota], where we have some main streets and that's it, it's going to be terrifying to drive through traffic, and then get lost, going eighty miles an hour.²⁹

But for Erin, the very nature of public spaces—that there are frequent visitors—is what most discourages Dakota uses of their cultural landscapes in the Twin Cities. She argues that

EG: I don't think access is a problem because you can easily just walk in there. I think that the fact that it's a public place is a huge deterrent. Because you're going to have people watching, and not everybody likes that, and not everybody's nice about it either. I know there's always a problem when we cross that Mendota Bridge for the [Dakota Commemorative] March. The last time I was on the March was 2010, and we were crossing the bridge, and I was walking next to a woman pushing her baby in a stroller, and then some woman was riding her bike. Mind you, we have this huge procession of a hundred people plus. Some woman comes plowing through our entire line on her bike, and, of course, we have the pipe and the elders right in front. She plows right past them, and comes right at this woman and her baby stroller. I can't remember what she said, I'm sure I wrote it down somewhere, but something to the effect that we needed to get out of *her* way. That's an extreme situation, but I imagine there are other similar situations that people have gone through in places like that. So I think definitely just having a population that's using these places as parks—biking, hiking, camping—and because if it's a state place they probably think that they have just as much right to be there and entitlement to that place.³⁰

Many Dakota people are made to feel distinctly *out of place* when interacting with their cultural landscapes in the Twin Cities, and the land management practices of public parks make no efforts to be inclusive of Dakota needs. In fact, as I outline further in the next section, they often explicitly exclude Dakota relationships and claims to public spaces in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region by prioritizing certain demographics of recreational users and misconstruing cultural preservation policies.

²⁹ Erin Griffin, interviewed by Iyekiyaipiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair and the author, 31 July 2014, Sisseton, South Dakota.

³⁰ Ibid.

A key point of distinction is to recognize that Dakota peoples are not just another special interest group. They have a right to perform and practice ceremonies on their sacred lands.³¹

According to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),

Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.³²

The crux of the matter here, legitimizing Dakota claims to access their traditional cultural landscapes in the Twin Cities is not solely about rights to use, it is about rights to use, *in private*, these sites for explicitly ceremonial purposes—rights for which Dakota people are currently denied in Twin Cities public spaces.

For John Norder, conflicts over and misunderstandings of religious freedom also come down to fundamental contradictions over divergent understandings of space. He says that

JN: You don't go out and do land-based religion in front of people. It's simply not on people's radar. And mostly because it's not on peoples' radar, when you either talk about it or you do things. Sometimes it is fine, sometimes people ask questions and it's a great moment, you can educate people and they're open to it. And other times they're really skeptical, and they kind of think that you're kind of a flake or something. There's the whole New Age backlash. Thank you, crystal growers. And then there are places that you want to go to and you want to have these moments. Okay, I'll periodically swear because it just irks the crap out of me. So I'm at Taylor's Falls [State Park] and there are these idiots on the Pothole Trail. The St. Croix River is spread out below me and I can feel the Zen moment coming on. I like to use metaphors like that because people can understand it. But I can feel the spirit coming up through the land, and I can feel it coming in, and then, like nails on a chalk board, like two cars ramming head on, I smell beer. And the whole thing just immediately shuts down, withdraws, pushes away, and I'm just like, "Really? Do you have to do it here, kids?" And I'm a very spiritual person. I have various

³¹ Cf. Eric Freedman, "Protecting Sacred Sites on Public Land: Religion and Alliances in the Mato Tipila–Devils Tower Litigation," *American Indian Quarterly* 31 (Winter 2007): 1-22; Roxanne T. Ornelas, "Understanding Sacred Lands," *Great Plains Research* 17 (Fall 2007): 165-171.

³² United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 61/295, "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," Sept. 13, 2007, http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

gifts. I have various responsibilities with them. I take them very seriously, but at that particular moment, of the five curses that I know, I wanted to use all five of them. Because you've got these teenagers or early college kids, and all of twenty yards away on the other side of a rock, and they got their bottles open and they're finishing up and they're dumping the beer on top. And it's like, "Oh my god!" So you have these experiences, and there's absolute disregard. I couldn't even begin to think about how I would approach them, so I called the main office and narked on them, and got them kicked out of the park. There are always ways of dealing with people. And rule number one is: play it smarter. As I was leaving they were having a conversation and being asked to leave, and I'm like, "Yes!" Sometimes it works out.

But you have those moments where you try to experience a place, and people don't get what it means to experience a place. I'll be talking to somebody in another context, where, yeah, we're all camping and stuff like that, and yes they have beers out, and they're talking. We're talking really at two different things. "I'm here to camp at this spot because this is my piece that I've rented." And I'm like, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no." You have the honor of being in a place, and the place has all this stuff around it that you are to appreciate. And all he's thinking about is the piece of land that his RV is parked at, and you can never get around it. No matter how many times I try to explain it to people.³³

Dakota people—because of the appropriations of traditional cultural landscapes as public space—are constantly encountering misunderstandings and dismissals of their worldviews within the spaces themselves. Wicasta Wanzi explains how this could be potentially harmful for Dakota people and their ways of life.

WW: I think the problem is, in the parks or those land areas, we don't have the ability to protect ourselves from outsiders. So you'll see things like protection of ceremonies documents that have been passed by some of the elders that I've learned from. And I've asked them about that. They said the reason isn't to keep white people out, but it's to keep us protected. And to keep our ways intact and from being manipulated by outside belief systems or opinions. And so I think that's been good that we've been able to keep, for the most part, the original life way intact. Some of these ceremonies do require privacy. I couldn't imagine having a big audience at these things. I could just imagine a thousand *wasicuns* showing up in spandex on bikes watching at a Sun Dance. For us, there's protocol to what needs to be covered. We have different worldviews.

And so a lot of Americans are afraid and say that we're getting special privileges to have devil worship, or "Why don't you guys allow Pagans or Wiccans or New Agers?" And it's because we have responsibilities and protocol, and so going back to it, it's just doing what we've always done, organizing ourselves based on extended families. Our ceremonies are family ceremonies, they're not public ceremonies. Nowadays they've become these public spectacles. I've heard some of my elders say that the Sun Dance was the greatest performance art because it's been manipulated and changed so much today.

³³ Norder, Interview.

It's still powerful, but it's still a family ceremony. It's rooted in families coming there, not individuals. You don't come there as an individual to make a name for yourself. You come there for healing and to encourage life to keep going on as it has. It's not anything special, or extra-curricular, it's just ordinary life, ordinary ways of being Dakota, or everyday ways of peace as my elders say Dakota means.³⁴

The layering of public spaces over a Dakota place fundamentally interrupts Dakota peoples' ability to be in those spaces and further disrupts their attempts to reassert their responsible, reciprocal relationships to their traditional cultural landscapes. Non-native land management practices and land and historic site preservation policies further exacerbate the contentions between Dakota and non-Dakota worldviews.

Cultural Landscapes: Sacred Sites and Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs)

Within Dakota worldviews land is described as a relative—*all* land is a relative (see Chapter One). But over the last few decades—particularly following the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the early 1970s and the passage of the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act—Indigenous peoples across the continent have begun to make substantial efforts to actively and publicly reassert their relationships and their claims to specific culturally important landscapes. Often these cultural landscapes are referred to as sacred sites. But just like English language terms fail to encapsulate the complexity inherent in Dakota relationships with land, so, too, does the English language term “sacred” fail to translate Dakota peoples' relationships with specific (though never discrete) cultural landscapes.

Dakota scholars describe their discomfort with, the contention over, and the limitations of the English language term, “sacred.” Just like all land is a relative, Erin Griffin asserts that, “all of the land is sacred, whether it's one place on a map or not.”³⁵ Harlan LaFontaine also explains how he simply cannot “differentiate [the distinction between them]—the sacred sites versus the

³⁴ Wicasta Waŋzi, interview.

³⁵ Griffin, interview.

land.”³⁶ He continues, “Land itself would be sacred. I hold that in high regard, high esteem. It’s definitely in that category of sacred. Memories are there.” And after identifying specific places that are considered Dakota sacred sites, Sisoka Duta is sure to qualify his statement by saying, “When you say ‘sacred,’ I’m not sure that has the same meaning to our people as it does to the *wasicuŋ*.” He then goes on to clarify:

S: When you say the earth is our grandmother that means you respect your grandmother. Like if my grandmother was here I would make sure she is okay. If she wants some water or coffee, or if she needs anything, you take care of her. But that’s not how we treat the earth, today. So these places were significant, but they’ve been so degraded now. We held those places special, but everything was special.³⁷

From Dakota peoples’ perspectives, their use of the English language term, “sacred,” is much more inclusive than the meaning suggested by the term’s dictionary definition. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary, for example, consigns the meaning of sacred to that which is solely “relating to religion” and deities, fully separating sacredness from other parts of life—the sacred is neither “secular nor profane.”³⁸

On the other hand, like Sisoka Duta explained, everything is special. Everything is sacred. And Dakota peoples’ understandings of the term, “sacred,” encompasses all parts of life, including relationships, memories, and even events—banal or significant. Waziyatawiŋ, for example, begins by acknowledging that Dakota people do, in fact, recognize specific sacred places, because “there *are* particular places that our people deemed sacred, that have a kind of profound importance or are relatively more important because of events that occurred there, that kind of thing.” Then she counters,

Waz: But I also believe that we’ve gone too far in terms of just trying to distinguish between sacred sites and non-sacred sites, because it’s all our mother. It’s all essential, all

³⁶ LaFontaine, interview.

³⁷ Sisoka Duta, interview.

³⁸ *Merriam-Webster OnLine*, s.v. “sacred,” accessed 20 October 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sacred>. Also, “Dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity.”

necessary. And it's the *wasicuŋ* way of looking at the land where you have these compartments and you separate things.³⁹

“Everything is sacred,” Kelly Branam similarly learned from her own conversations with Dakota people. She then explains specifically how the term was deployed during those conversations:

The metaphors and examples provided to elaborate the definition [of sacredness] varied. Not, it should be noted, because there are serious inconsistencies in the meaning of the original term. Instead, people offered different explanations in the manner of patient teachers explaining in as many ways as possible a new idea their students are trying to integrate into their worldview.⁴⁰

Even though Dakota people use the word “sacred” from the English language, their understanding of the term implies a difference in worldview.

Dakota scholars elucidate this difference in worldview even further by drawing on the Dakota language term “*wakaŋ*”—the term most closely related to the English, “sacred.”

Iyekiyapiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair demonstrates that there are

DS: different ways of interpreting *wakaŋ*. Sometimes people will say “sacred or holy,” but sometimes people say “mystery,” because we just don’t know and understand everything. And that’s okay. I hear people in the *wasicuŋ* world, they think everything can and should be knowable to them.⁴¹

Understanding Dakota peoples’ evocations of terms like “sacred” or “*wakaŋ*” not only have philosophical and linguistic distinctions, but the terms also evoke spatial distinctions. Kelly Branam, for example, explains how sacredness can be both everywhere while also “pooling” in specific places. This understanding is related specifically to Dakota worldviews that simultaneously revere that which is mysterious, *wakaŋ*, and that which people experience in their everyday lives:

The ‘everythingness’ of what is sacred was articulated to us in many ways. One consultant, quoting a Dakota elder, stated that ‘sacredness is like rain. It falls everywhere, but it pools in places.’ In this framework, sacred is especially present in those pools. The

³⁹ Waziyatawiŋ, interview.

⁴⁰ Kelly Branam et al., “Survey,” 14-15.

⁴¹ Iyekiyapiwiŋ, interview.

concentration of *wakan* in one place doesn't diminish the existence of *wakan* in another. Other features of sacredness that emerged in consultation include the idea that *wakan* is relational and interactive. A place can have sacredness activated through use. The more people over time who interact with the sacredness of a place, the more the *wakan* pools there. A place that was important in the past will still be important generations later, and a place that people go to in order to interact with the sacred can become a pooling of *wakan*. Another way that 'sacredness' was explained by consultant, Tom Ross, was in the idea that sacredness is experienced, and it is necessary for life. 'Sacredness is what people need to live' and sacred places are where people go to do those things.'⁴²

Critically, sacredness (or *wakan*) cannot be compartmentalized linguistically, philosophically, or spatially. The sacred does not have boundaries in any sense of the term.

Wicasta Wanzi further describes the "everythingness" and "everydayness" of sacred land. First, he asserts the primacy of the role of the Dakota language in specifically defining the sacred places within the *Bdote* cultural landscape. He explains how the Dakota language directly names "what is there, what used to live there, something happened there, and that something might be powerful there. I don't think one is more important than the other, so that's why I'm saying all that area is sacred." Then he continues,

WW: Anywhere that someone's done ceremonies is a sacred place to our people. Well, to us *every* place is sacred. That's why we didn't build fences, dams, bridges, roads. Those things are all terrible and obstruct a lot of the natural power of places. But I think a lot of the places we think of as sacred places, today, there's a vortex of power around them—swirling energy. A lot of our sacred sites they're finding out have to do with physical spots on the earth, like *Bdote* being part of that old ocean rift. The Mississippi River used to be under that Lake Agassiz, or something like that. And that's all in our stories. Our language has these words....And I think some of those experiences could make a place sacred. Finding someone's humanity there. If someone had a dream there...it would be a sacred place to them, but also a place where the people had lived, that would be sacred to the *Tiospaye* [extended family], because the people have had that established history there.⁴³

Within Dakota worldviews, sacredness is simultaneously located everywhere and at particular sites—pooling and swirling in especially significant places like the confluence, *Bdote*, and Coldwater Spring, *Taku Wakan Tipi*. Sacredness is simultaneously mysterious and banal.

⁴² Kelly Branam et al., "Survey," 16.

⁴³ Wicasta Wanzi, interview.

But the “everythingness” and “everydayness” inherent in sacred land is a position that is not easily in accordance with sacred land preservation policies, as described by John Norder.

JN: The landscape is not just these single sites. It’s all of them together. Once again, it’s not a single site. You always have to think of it in terms of its larger whole. Everything is interrelated. Even when I see the pains that people go through to try to protect single locations, it’s very tiring to see, because it’s still missing the point. At the same time, it’s the road that people have to take in order to get something done. You have to go for them point, by point, by point, not landscape as a whole, but trying to pull together and rescue the points in it. And if that’s how it has to be done, then that’s how it has to be done.⁴⁴

As a result of the divergent Dakota and non-Dakota understandings of sacredness—and by extension the conflicted spatialities of the sacred sites themselves—preserving cultural landscapes is fraught with difficulties. Bruce White describes these difficulties:

BW: And so the question of the boundary of Coldwater came up in the TCP [Traditional Cultural Property] study for Coldwater. And so, where’s the boundary for the sacredness of Coldwater Spring? And I think the answer was: it starts where the water comes from and it ends where the water goes into the river. So that’s a comparatively large area. But that’s the Dakota definition. The Dakota definition of the Coldwater Spring cultural and historical property would include all of the Bureau of Mines Property and much, much more. It would include the historical society below and then the MNRRA corridor on the river, and then it would include where the water—where does the water come from? Well, in one sense it comes from that hill. That hill which is *Taku Wakan Tipi*, that hill which is called Morgan’s Mound. And I’ve made the case that Morgan’s Mound and *Taku Wakan Tipi* are not the same place either. Again, you have to consider what we are referring to here. So my belief and many Dakota I’ve talked to is that Coldwater Spring is really part of *Taku Wakan Tipi*, the dwelling place of the spirit *Taku Wakan*, and that it’s wrong to separate the spring from that hill. It does seem as though the cultural resources strategies of agencies are to minimize connections, to cut things into the smallest parcels possible, and then to say, “Okay, this little square inch of land, is this sacred? And is this sacred? Now, prove to me each of those little places is sacred.” Whereas, if you viewed the whole thing as a thing together, then it’s easy to show that they’re all sacred by their connection. And so how do you fight that battle?

Bdote is a landscape. And it’s a much wider area, and that’s the thing that connects these various sites. That was the point made by Dakota and other Native people in 1998 and 1999, “This whole area is sacred.” You can’t just carve out this little spot and say, “Okay, well then, we’ll just build a highway here,” without considering its effect on the whole area. But it was almost impossible to convince any of them, the Historical Society least of all. I’m interested in hearing things in that way. I think that today it would be easier to make the case. Everything that people have said over the last fifteen years has made it easier to make the case for protecting sacred landscapes in general and

⁴⁴ Norder, Interview.

Dakota places in particular. I think the Park Service is really an anomaly now. And the attitudes of John Anfinson are really so out of step with the rest of the world that eventually somebody is going to recognize that in the Park Service. I'm hoping.⁴⁵

Despite Bruce's optimism, Dakota people must still work within the existing non-Native preservation frameworks to secure recognition and preservation of their sacred sites. However, these frameworks most often further marginalize and disenfranchise Dakota worldviews, ultimately leaving Dakota sacred sites unrecognized and unprotected. Essentially, working within the conventional preservation framework does not guarantee protection.

Waziyatawiŋ expresses her frustration about the unwillingness of the National Park Service to recognize Dakota peoples' relationship with a place like Coldwater Spring. She explains how, "It's always about someone else's control, someone else dictating the hours you can go, what you can do when you're there, whether or not you have to have a permit or pay," she continues,

Waz: Again, it was a response when the federal government was determining who should have jurisdiction over this site with the defunct Bureau of Mines. It was a perfect opportunity for the federal government to do the right thing and just turn over the land to Dakota people. *And they couldn't do it.* Twenty-seven acres. They couldn't do it. It was too much. And I think that, for me, I feel a real sense of hopelessness around some of that—realizing that you can have Dakota people, activists, tribal councils, come forward to say, "That's a sacred site. We want that sacred site. We will take care of the site." Different communities putting in their requests, and the federal government comes back, that you need *one* Dakota entity to say that they will oversee this site, and *everyone* has to be in agreement. Good grief! You know? They worked for two centuries to divide our people, to fractionalize our people, to make sure to pit us against one another, and then they want us all to come together as one entity for these projects! It's all excuses. It's all about how to maintain control, maintain dominance, to keep Indigenous people subjugated, and to do whatever they want with the land while saying that they consulted with Indigenous populations. So I was so disgusted by all of the efforts with Coldwater. The deceptiveness. Just the total disregard for Dakota claims to the site, for Dakota oral tradition, for Dakota spirituality. It became hard for me to continue to invest in what I felt like was just banging my head against the wall.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ White, interview.

⁴⁶ Waziyatawiŋ, interview.

An excerpt from my interview with John Anfinson shows just how convoluted the process of transferring the twenty-seven acre Coldwater property became after the conclusion of the

Highway 55 rerouting protests. He says:

JA: When I started with the National Park Service in June or July of 2000, it might've been later in June 2000, [transferring the land at Coldwater Spring] was one of the first projects that I started working on. So I was trying to understand this: On one level it was all about history, because it was about Fort Snelling and the history of Fort Snelling, and so that was easy for me to get that history; it was also about nature, and the nature of the spring, and the potential with what this land would be like; but at that time, where we are now [with the NPS as the land manager for the site] was not even in the picture at all. The idea then was that the Metropolitan Airport Commission was going to buy that land for five million dollars. And then they would own it and take down the buildings and maybe put parking on there, maybe do other things. We didn't really know. I think the idea was that the National Park Service would get two-and-a-half million out of a five million dollar sale of that land from the Department of the Interior to the Metropolitan Airports Commission. Two and a half million would go to the National Park Service to build a visitor center and do stuff for us. The other two-and-a-half million would go for land acquisition purchases by the United States Fish and Wildlife Refuge in the Minnesota Valley.

It appeared to me, in the early discussions I had for the Metropolitan Airports Commission, we had lawyers involved from Washington on our side, because the land had been transferred to the Department of the Interior when the Bureau of Mines shut down. It wasn't under any other departments. It wasn't under Fish and Wildlife officially, it wasn't under the National Park Service, USGS. It just had reverted to ownership to the Department [of the Interior] overall. So there was an attorney involved from Washington. And, like I said, I really got the impression that the Metropolitan Airports Commission did not want to have to buy. And then when 9/11 occurred they backed out and said, "Look. Look what's happened to the use of airports. It has gone way down. We can't afford this." And no one questioned that, and they backed out. And it left it completely in limbo. And I think it was at that point that a government representative stepped in from Minneapolis and got a legislation passed that said that this land can be transferred to a government entity or university. And we began a whole new process of looking at what government entity or university might want this land.

And so we started working on that aspect of it. Even in the early phases some of the Camp Coldwater interests were involved. They were vehemently protesting the idea of parking lots on this property—which, from a natural resource perspective, we would've had something to say about, and probably wouldn't have agreed with it either. So we had already had started developing covenants that protected the cultural and natural resources of the site that would have gone with any transfer. We had actually drafted an environmental assessment before 9/11. And so we had already started seeing the hints of the Camp Coldwater group and the overflow from the Highway 55 protest now being transferred to this property, since the highway was built and was being built. They, I don't know if you want to say, retreated to this property or came out of this

property because that's the piece they could then work with more specifically. So we began to get wrapped up in some of the Highway 55 issues with the American Indian aspects of it.

One of the first things we did is we set up a meeting with the four recognized Dakota tribes in Minnesota down at Shakopee, and we went and briefed them on the new project, the new direction, let them know that we were going to do a thorough cultural resources review of the property and its significance. The regional ethnologist from our Midwest region in Omaha was with on that. And the ethnological aspects of what we would look at, I talked about the National Register [of Historic Places] aspects, including Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) as a designation under the National Register, and the sacred site aspect under Executive Order 13007 on sacred sites, and briefed them on that. And then said we were going to pursue these and any help from them we would really appreciate and their thoughts on that we'd appreciate. And on the sacred site aspect in particular there was already a letter on record on the Highway 55 to a state senator saying the Dakota believed it was culturally and historically important and sacred, but it was to the state. It wasn't to us, and it wasn't on this project. So we asked them, "if you believe this is a sacred site, pass a resolution, send us a letter from the tribe, and we'll consider it sacred under Executive Order 13007." And you don't really have to provide any documentation for that. So we asked for that, and we said we'd pursue the Traditional Cultural Property National Register route as well.

Well, we got a letter back, signed by all four recognized tribes, the chairs. And it said they believed the site was culturally and historically important, *but didn't use the word sacred*. They took the word sacred out. And so we called and asked, "Was that intentional?" And the answer was yes, and we didn't explore why. It was their decision and we figured during the processes they could change their mind at any point. They still can change their mind at any point and take that position. So we began moving forward on an ethnographic study that looked at Coldwater from an ethnographic position, just a cultural position, separate from the National Register, separate from government regulations. We looked at it from a Traditional Cultural Property perspective. Was this place a site that was important for more than fifty years to the past, present, and future identity of a people, of a community, specifically? And we continued to be open to discussions on the sacred site aspect. So we explored those and had lots of input. We conducted interviews. The questions were developed along with the regional ethnologist and myself, and then we asked for input from the tribes on who they wanted interviewed, so we'd know who they wanted interviewed. And then we hired a firm to go do those interviews and to go do the study.

Again, it was up to the Dakota to identify who they wanted us to talk to, and we knew some others to talk to. Who they chose and not chose was their decision. We couldn't really look into it, and we couldn't pick randomly whoever we wanted, or whoever. There's somebody who was the loudest voice out there, that didn't mean that they were the best voice to talk to from an ethnographic perspective or a historical review perspective. So we went with the people that were given to us for the most part, and that's what we did. But then there's also a history to this, really looking at, can you identify over this history of this property use by American Indians? And there were really three aspects of that we did. We did a contract on the ethnography, we did a contract on archaeology—and the archaeology was trying to find remains of use of the site,

historically, whether it was American Indian, European, or early settlement. And then we did a history of the site. So we had really three studies done, three separate contracts looking at the site. And through that work we can't document substantive use by American Indians of the site for sacred reasons or ceremonial reasons.

They certainly came there during the history of Fort Snelling up until about, probably, I would say 1853. So Fort Snelling: there's initial encampment in 1819; then they move to Coldwater in 1820; they build a fort from there and move in about 1823-24. Camp Coldwater is a squatter community that forms around Coldwater Spring and near the fort, for the protection of the fort. And then traders locate there, and this community grows. And the Dakota are constantly coming and going here, and hanging around. There are blacksmith shops at Coldwater, so they're getting more metal tools, metal equipment, guns, they bring those to the blacksmiths to get fixed. So they're coming to negotiate with the commandant at Fort Snelling with the American government. So the Dakota are there a lot, quite frequently. And then the 1851 the Treaty at Mendota is signed. But the Dakota don't actually leave until 1853 for a reservation on the Minnesota River. They then will come back in 1862-3 as a result of the Dakota Uprising. 1862 to an internment camp down in the river bottoms below Fort Snelling. So that's the era that we know the most about. The Dakota probably used Coldwater Spring. It was a clear, free-flowing spring of significant size, and there were many others. Not just that one. We just don't have much documentation on that.⁴⁷

According to John Anfinson, there are two principle criteria necessary to legitimize Dakota sacred sites like Coldwater Spring. The first requires the nearly impossible task of achieving consensus from *all* Dakota tribal governments. They must pass a universal legislation specifically employing the English language term "sacred." Recall from above, Waziyatawiq's assertion about why this might prove difficult as a result of the legacies of colonization. Second, confirmation of use *must* appear in the colonial, non-Native written record. Harlan LaFontaine argues that

HL: I know that they've made attempts to make connections between the oral history piece and this Coldwater Spring issue. But nothing's ever written down. If it's not written down it can't be documented—just like universities sometimes say that oral history is just not the same as primary source material. Scott Anfinson, who is with the state archaeologist, probably says there is nothing written down, so we can't even go there.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ J. Anfinson, interview.

⁴⁸ LaFontaine, interview.

Kelly Branam, similarly describes the issue about requiring documentation from the written record, and Dakota absence in that record is connected to the structural violence of land seizures and assimilation policies.

KB: A lot of white people that I talk to about this, that when something is public space, that asking people to do their sacred ceremonies in a public space is not okay. And so the structural violence that happens with the Section 106 process is, “Well, you still have to be using this site. You still have to show us that this place is still important.” Well, that means that I have to pray in public, right? And I was reminding people that the American Indian Religious Freedom Act wasn’t passed until the 70s, and then it was modified again in 1990. Do you think Dakota people in 1950 were going to go out and pray at *Taku Wakan Tipi*? So much so that white people then report about it in the newspaper? So *you* have evidence? No, not going happen. “Well, it’s public. They can go.” And I’m like, “I think there might still be laws on the books that you can kill Dakota people if there’s more than three of them in a group!” We haven’t gotten rid of these laws, you know? Religious freedom didn’t happen until this point in time. **AND YOU EXPELLED THE DAKOTA PEOPLE!** But yet, this is their land, and it’s public. So that’s something that I really try to talk about with my Cultural Resource Management students is that white people are like, “It’s public space. That’s mine.” But a lot of public spaces, national parks, were taken from Native people. And when things are taken from you, you don’t think that they’re yours anymore. It’s painful!⁴⁹

The specific procedures and requirements for preserving a “property” as a sacred site (under Executive Order 13007) or as a Traditional Cultural Property (a designation under the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act and the National Register of Historic Places) are not extraordinarily important here.⁵⁰ Instead, we need to consider how—by their very nature as “properties” and as procedures developed by non-Natives—they contradict and exclude Indigenous worldviews.

Kelly Branam, later in her interview, recalls a conversation with Sheldon Wolfchild, the former Tribal President of the Lower Sioux Indian Community, at *Wakan Tipi*—a Dakota burial

⁴⁹ Branam, interview.

⁵⁰ For more details on the specific preservation procedures and guidelines see Sebastian C. (Bronco) LeBeau II, “Reconstructing Lakota Ritual in the Landscape: The Identification and Typing System for Traditional Cultural Property Sites” (doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota 2009); Kelly Branam et al., “Survey”; and Giorgio Hadi Curti and Christopher M. Moreno, “Introducing Traditional Cultural Properties (In Need of Critical Geographies),” *Human Geography* 7 (no. 2 2014): 1-10.

site known in English as Carver's Cave. *Wakan Tipi* sits in the shadow of the St. Paul central business district, railroad lines run directly through the property, and it is also a "recently restored" public park managed by the National Park Service called Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. Kelly explains how that visit in that particular place with Sheldon helped her think about the differences between Dakota peoples' relationships to place and the contradictions between their worldviews and public space, because "public doesn't mean Dakota access." She further explains:

KB: When we were talking about, if we know where these places are, we can protect them, that was the Minnesota Historical Society and Scott Anfinson's reasoning for doing this [survey of Dakota sacred sites], anyway. And Sheldon said, "Kelly, it's like looking at the heavens and saying the heavens are sacred. Your ideology says the heavens are sacred, and then your government is saying, 'Well, you have to carve out a square of the heavens to protect, and you have to tell me that's the most sacred.'" That's what we're asking the Indigenous peoples to do. I get it. Development has to happen. But you're asking people to carve out a piece of sacredness and then tell the U.S. federal government, or the state of Minnesota that this is the most sacred place to us. And then you have to prove it, and then you have to hear them say, "Well, I think you're lying." And "You know what? I'm not going to play. You call me a liar? I'm not going to play. I'm not going to play, and I'm going to make it extremely difficult for you to do anything because I'm not going to play this game." You're asking me to cut out a part of my heaven." And I think about that conversation and that visit to *Wakan Tipi*, probably more than any of the others. Because then we're really close to *Bdote* there, too. And so the energy and talking about that, it was another one of the elders said, "Of course the airport is there. Of course the train tracks are there, of course, because there's all this special energy there. Of course." And then the question comes, but it's a double edged sword, "How can we maintain Dakota relationship to this site and the non-Indian maintenance, their relationship to the airport and all that stuff, too?" Because, often, preservation is all or nothing. It's like you can't touch it, but then "If we can build a building on top of it, well, then can't we build a building on all of these sacred sites, and you still can maintain the relationships?" So it's really hard when you talk to Dakota people and they say, "No, *Taku Wakan Tipi* is still really important to us. Even with the veterans hospital there, and even with all this change." And then you look at *Oheyawahi*, and you say, "I don't want anything built there." But *Taku Wakan Tipi* has a hospital on it, and it's still sacred. "Can't we build condominiums here?" And that is, "No, you can't build condominiums there!" But that comes into the federal language of integrity and do places still have integrity, which are archaeological terms placed on an Indigenous resource.⁵¹

⁵¹ Branam, interview.

Waziyatawiñ argues that public lands, in particular, are contested sites where settler society has routinely “silenced, suppressed, or denied Dakota accounts” and ways of knowing through bureaucratic preservation practices.⁵² Dakota people have consequently found themselves caught up in seemingly impossible conflicts with state and federal land managers over terminology, boundaries, and worldview.

Conclusion

In mid-June last summer a series of storms saturated the southern half of Minnesota. One evening during a particularly nasty storm, under the supervision of my mother, I made trips back and forth between the garage and the basement, headlamp clicked on and ankle deep in water, herding two cats and a dog, trying to keep furniture and storage boxes out of the deluge. Seventy miles farther north, newscasters reported a record-setting daily rainfall total of nearly four-inches in Minneapolis, flooding roadways and threatening homes in the Minnehaha Creek watershed, a tributary system that empties into the Mississippi River a few miles south of downtown.

After flowing through a flat plain in the western suburbs and draining the region’s renowned chain of lakes, Minnehaha creek spills over a fifty-three-foot cataract before emptying into the Mississippi River. Because of the storms, the falls were running at their highest level in years, attracting the attention of a young thrill seeker from Tennessee. The young kid, a professional kayaker with a support team, scouted the line on Minnehaha Creek and decided to paddle over the falls. The media, shifting their focus from the inundated urban environment to this daredevil stunt, followed Hunt Jennings in his descent over Minnehaha.

Sitting poised in his boat, Jennings released his grip on the vegetation anchored to the shoreline and paddled into the current, briefly hesitating at the barrier keeping him from

⁵² Waziyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?*, 11.

plunging over the falls—a thick chain stretched between the two banks less than ten feet from the cataract. He lifted the chain, shifted his weight, and maneuvered the boat into the section of rapids churning just above the falls. He is slightly off his line, hitting the apex of spewing water before leaning back, pointing the bow of his boat over lip. He drops fifty-three feet into the plunge pool, disappearing beneath the foaming surface.

After spending the afternoon desperately searching for a battery-powered sump-pump at every home improvement store in the southern suburbs of the Twin Cities, I asked my parents, for the sake of research, of course, to take a brief detour to Minnehaha Falls, ultimately convincing them with my plea that this was the highest the falls had been running in years. The weather had calmed over the past few days, but we still navigated through flooded streets—when crossing the bridge over the Minnesota River we noticed the once familiar chain of islands had completely disappeared, the massive oak trees lining the banks looked like shrubs, and the water level was lapping at the road’s surface. To reach the park we had to navigate through streets where entire lanes were still submerged under more than a foot of water. By the time we reached Minnehaha Falls Park it was nearing dusk on the summer solstice, a Saturday, but the place was still packed with cyclists, dog-walkers, photographers, tourists. People were queueing up along the falls overlook to sneak into any opening to catch a quick glance of the madly rushing Minnehaha (see Figure 3.3). While attempting to cram myself into a space on the overlook to take a few pictures I listened to the conversations around me. “Did you hear what happened to the kid who kayaked over the falls?”

A Dakota woman who runs a website called “The *Bdote* Memory Map” responded to the flooding with a post on her Facebook page implicitly referencing the power of the spiritual

beings that travel through the waterways at places like Minnehaha and Coldwater Spring.

Modestly, she wrote: “The water is asking us to pay attention.”

Hunt Jennings rolled his kayak out of the thundering current beneath the waterfall with half his paddle, his face bloodied. Pumping his fist in triumph, Jennings had captured the attention of the general public, ignoring park rules and ignorant of the disrespect he showed to the waterfall and the Dakota people who know of the meaning and power residing at *Mni Haha*.

Dakota people, in their interviews, frequently referred to the rapidly changing weather patterns and the increasing visibility of traditional Dakota cultural landscapes located in Twin Cities public parks, which negatively affected their ability to interact with and access their sacred sites in the region. They considered recreation as just an alternative form of development and colonization, but more importantly they described how recreating in these spaces was blatantly disrespectful to the sacred being dwelling in those waters. These are places where the sacred and the profane intertwine.

Minnehaha Falls is the oldest public park in Minnesota with nearly a million visitors annually, but its history and significance stretches beyond this recreational landscape further back in time. It is a Dakota place. Non-native preservation policies and an emphasis on recreational, middle-class users, however, structures public spaces like Minnehaha Falls that are not amenable, and often outright exclusionary, to Dakota peoples’ responsibilities to their traditional cultural landscapes located in urban public parks in the Twin Cities. Dakota peoples’ access to and use of their traditional cultural landscapes requires recognition of their unique needs and responsibilities to these places. Iyekiyaipiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair argues:

DS: With the sacred sites issues, institutions have built up around these important places, and I worry that these institutions will make it difficult for Dakota people to use these places and visit these places and interact with these places as a Dakota person. I’m not worried that these institutions prevent Dakota people from *recreating* in these places, but

to use them as a Dakota person, I think these institutions hamper that. And I think they're intrusive. So I see colonial intrusion into our Dakota relationship with these places. So I think the other thing that I'm really concerned about is making sure that people's understandings of these places aren't placed in a historic past—that these places were important to Dakota people a long time ago and they should be protected because of this historic significance. I also want Dakota people to continue to use these places, and have their relevance be contemporary. I think that's the part that I don't see happening, even in the best circumstances. I think Dakota people are still placed in a historic past. And if that happens, if we say "These places were important to Dakota people a long time ago. These important historical events happened here to Dakota people, and for *that* reason they should be preserved." That doesn't give an argument for why Dakota people should use those places today. That's an argument for *preservation*, but not an argument for *access*. And so that's what I think about is, we have to make sure that Dakota people are using these places because that's our argument for *contemporary* access. There's really something important everywhere you go. It's not like I can say "This is important and this is not important." But there are some places that are especially important, and they may be especially important because of a spiritual reason. They may be especially important because of a historical reason. They may be especially important because there's a resource that's gathered there. There are lots of reasons why places are especially important, but it's a lot easier to say if something *is* sacred rather than "is something not sacred." And I think that dualism that we have in Western philosophy of "it's either this or that," we come in conflict with that a lot.⁵³

Sisoka Duta explains how, for him, his family, and his community, the landscapes within the *Bdote* cultural area are important historically, but he also makes a concerted effort to emphasize their contemporary relevance and significance as well.

S: Just being part of the land and trying to learn about all the different things that we can use, that's a lifelong goal. Just the other day, or maybe a week ago, I went to gather chokecherries along the river. They're just sitting there and nobody takes them, so I don't know if that's legal, or not, but I did and nobody stopped me. But just to think, that's what our ancestors were doing a long time ago, gathering edible things along the river, or wherever they were. You think about that when you're doing these activities, like, "this is what we've always been doing." That's what makes it so special.

Well, when we were little we didn't know anything about that, we just knew we were outdoors. We didn't know the history of the places, or why they were special, but as you get older you start to realize these things, like, yeah, these are special and our ancestors have been going to these places. Then you start to realize that, and now when you go to them, you're like, "This is where my ancestors walked and prayed and had ceremonies." It becomes more special because of that. And then you realize that, and then you say, "I want to take my children here." You don't really tell them, like "...sit down and let me tell you the whole history of this place." Because they can't do that. So you just take them there, and they, it was like what we were saying earlier. These people, they

⁵³ Iyekiyapiwiñ, interview.

want to know everything. You can't know everything before you go, so you just go there and experience it. And that's like with the children, you just take them there, and then they'll just soak it all in. And that's probably what my parents were doing, just taking us to these places. We didn't have to know the complete history, just know that we were going there, and it was special. And as we got older we learned how special it was.

And so that's now what I'm doing with my children. I take them to these different places, and the only difference, I would say, is now that I know more about my spiritual beliefs, when we were younger we would go to church. And so we didn't know about the spiritual traditions. We didn't go to these places and leave offerings or say prayers, but now that I know those things I can pass that on to the children. Maybe we can offer some *cañsasa* when we go to these places for our ancestors, for the spirits, or maybe leave some food behind, or say a few words. I was quite surprised, the other day, this was when we were picking chokecherries along the river, we had the whole family along. Wife and kids. And I was walking ahead and I turned back, and I saw my son, he had this leather pouch with him, and he was leaving sage behind and picking plants, and I didn't even know he was doing that. But he was doing that the whole way when I didn't tell him to do it. He just did it. I thought that was pretty awesome that he was doing that.

Dakota people do maintain their cultural practices whenever possible, but it is a struggle. The dominant mode of use in the parks—namely recreation, and the expectations of behavior and the crowds that come with it—make cultural practices difficult at best. Even more challenging, and often the only options for redress, land preservation policies like the sacred site and Traditional Cultural Property processes are more than flawed.

Dakota relationships to their traditional cultural landscapes are both ideologically and spatially constrained by the dominant uses of public space—where use is confined to specific places to recreate, and historical narratives exclude Dakota histories. For Dakota people, however, their relationships to their traditional cultural landscapes in the Twin Cities are defined by and dependent upon Dakota *wicoħaŋ*, ways of life—where place and cultural practice overlap and intertwine.

WW: These sites are all really close in general proximity. Land-area-wise, they're in a small area, but they take a long time to get to if you're driving. But I think about some of those ones on the river, you could hit them all up in like an hour if you were on a canoe. And the way our ancestors used them, they weren't places just to go to pray, or places of worship, they were places of life. So people might've gone there to gather food. They might've gone there, you hear of by St. Anthony Falls of the women going there to

birth babies. There's specific spots that relate to specific events in life. There's birthing spots, there's spots for the dead. And so a lot of those spots we need to be able to reconnect to them, and it's impossible if there's a downtown on top of it, or if we're just not allowed to access Lake Calhoun. If you even want to go out on the lake you have to either have to have a boating permit or you have to rent a canoe or various other avenues of paying the *wasicun* to access our water, our land. Our actual treaty rights, or I'd say our Dakota rights as Dakota people, because those treaties are between two sovereign nations, and we never gave our sovereignty away. And then some of my ancestors are on some of those treaties, and so I take those treaties to still be legally binding according to Article XI of the constitution saying that treaties are the supreme law of the land. So I think of Minnesotans as illegally occupying Dakota territory. It's their citizen responsibility, kind of like voting, to provide that place for Indigenous people, and honor those treaty rights, and to know the treaty rights. I don't think anyone in this library could tell us about any Dakota treaties besides the people in this room. So that's really pathetic when you think that this state, at one time, was Dakota *Makoce*, and no one knows about that. No one can tell us anything or just even scratch the surface, or even tell us maybe one of the council fires. There's just so little known about us that to even access the sacred sites, it takes so much teaching by Native to non-Natives that it really just wears you out. And maybe you don't even want to do what you were doing because you're so worn out from having to educate and re-educate, and it's just a vicious cycle of intergenerational trauma.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Wicasta Wanzi, interview.

Our contemporary problems suggest deep-rooted pain.
—Waziyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?*

Chapter Four

Survival

Every few weeks during the summer of 2014, it seemed, her car broke down. “I think I’ve realized something,” Darlene said as we stepped out of the car, ready for another interview. “Betsy...” the name she gave to her red Subaru Forester, “Betsy keeps breaking down because she doesn’t like leaving the reservation.” But a few hours later, Darlene, without a backward glance, purposefully drove away from our painful visit to a Dakota reservation community in western Minnesota, and Betsy faithfully complied—she didn’t mind leaving the reservation that day. The layered deep green terraces of the densely-wooded Minnesota River valley receded into the distance, and I struggled to choke back tears. I was incapable of processing what had just occurred.

Darlene and I had been working together all summer, doing interviews and ethnography, and this was our last road trip before I had to return to school. Certainly, all of the interviews we conducted were emotional to some degree—after all, we were asking Dakota people to describe their oftentimes fragile connections to their traditional homeland, and we were also asking about the struggles associated with cultural preservation of specific sacred sites within that homeland. But up until our trip to western Minnesota, the majority of our interviews had been relatively formal and straightforward—perhaps because the majority of them had taken place in public spaces, like public libraries and coffee shops, in different locations throughout the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region. On that Friday afternoon during our trip “out west,” we were scheduled to meet with the former Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Lower Sioux Indian Community in the coffee shop at Jackpot Junction Casino—an imposing structure at the center of the small reservation located about two hours west of the Twin Cities. Several minutes past our

scheduled meeting time, Franky showed up clearly distraught and anxious, but he was determined to share his thoughts about Dakota land, cultural preservation, and the proper protocols for doing research related to Dakota sacred sites. Five minutes later, he received a phone call.

Upon returning to the table, Franky shared with us that one of his teenage *Takapsicapi* (lacrosse) players had been taken away from his family and placed, against his and his family's wishes, into foster care with a *wasicun* family. With tears streaming down his face, the former THPO described how he was concerned for the young man because, the previous year, the boy had been part of a group suicide pact with other young Dakota men on the reservation, a plan with tragic consequences for one of the boys.

Though visibly upset, Franky was determined to continue the interview. Then, another phone call and a conversation with his wife, who was the manager of the casino coffee shop. It appeared the situation was rapidly deteriorating, but Franky kept returning to our table to talk. Darlene then gently encouraged him to go ahead and take care of the situation. This young man's life was certainly more important than our interview.

Back in the car, we had packed up our things and we were ready to head back to the Twin Cities. But as we pulled out onto the main road, we saw Franky standing on the lawn of the reservation community building, gesturing authoritatively as he spoke to one of the representatives of the tribal government. He was fighting to save a child's life.

The event I just described remained prominently etched in my mind as I returned to school at Syracuse University. And as I began to comb through interview transcripts, I realized that this story details a recurrent theme implicitly described by many of the Dakota people that Darlene and I interviewed. Though not always so explicitly traumatic, Dakota people experience

daily challenges to simply survive, challenges simply *to be* Dakota. Unsurprisingly, struggles to survive take priority over struggles for cultural preservation.

Even though the majority of the Dakota people we interviewed make their living in education or by doing advocacy work to preserve traditional ways of life, struggles to simply survive frequently take precedence. Though an extreme example, Franky's story illustrates how challenges to live, or to be Indigenous, impede and intervene in daily life. Many Dakota people care deeply about sacred sites, language, and cultural preservation, but they often face more pressing demands. Time and energy must first be devoted to taking a construction job to be able to pay bills and keep food on the table for their families before work can begin on the second volume of a Dakota language text. Building a sustainable home becomes more important than activist and non-profit work. Navigating the bureaucratic maze of tribal social services to save a child's life takes precedence above all else.

Conflating Social Reproduction and Survival

Keeping in mind that, over time, Dakota people have responded to the colonization of their homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce*, in a variety of ways, this chapter raises questions about how social reproduction and survival may be useful frameworks to understand Dakota struggles to access and preserve culturally significant sites in the Twin Cities region.

With the image of Franky's giant tears streaming down his face still firmly etched in my mind, when I first learned in Professor Jamie Winders's feminist geography seminar that social reproduction describes the "work that maintains us," I immediately associated the term with struggles Dakota people expressed to simply survive.¹ However, as the semester went on, I realized that theories of social reproduction are firmly situated within the domestic labor debates,

¹ Jamie Winders, Seminar on Feminist Geographies, 26 August 2014.

thus placing social reproduction within or against capitalist relations of production and capitalist institutions such as the workplace and the home. As a result, it subsequently became quite difficult to attempt to understand the experiences of Dakota people involved in cultural preservation in the Twin Cities within the various proposed frameworks on social reproduction we read about in class. The weekly readings all seemed to maintain such a strict reliance on western models of a capitalist home and economy.

Social reproduction theory is a body of work that predominately takes the relations within a capitalist economy as its starting point in order to propose political possibilities for female domestic workers and people engaged in work in the home.² What might it look like, then, to take instead biological and cultural survival as a starting point? With the exception of Cindi Katz, few scholars have explicitly discussed how social reproduction might look different for different groups of people, specifically marginalized peoples, outside the structures of the capitalist home as a site of social reproduction.³ What, though, about groups of people, families or individuals, who do not have such a clear relationship with production as members of the labor force? Is there a difference between social reproduction and survival when people purposefully position themselves outside of or have precarious relationships with production and wage labor?

² Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1975); Susan Hanson and Geraldine Pratt, "Reconceptualizing the Links Between Home and Work in Urban Geographies," *Economic Geography* 64 (October 1988): 299-321; Isabel Dyck, "Integrating Home and Wage Workplace: Women's Daily Lives in a Canadian Suburb," *The Canadian Geographer* 33 (December 1989): 329-341; Kim England, "Home, Work, and the Shifting Geographies of Care," *Ethics, Place and Environment* 13 (June 2010): 131-150.

³ Cindi Katz, "Sow What You Know: The Struggle for Social Reproduction in Rural Sudan," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81 (September 1991): 488-514; Cindi Katz, "Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction," *Antipode* 33 (September 2001): 709-728; Cindi Katz, "Bad Elements: Katrina and the Scoured Landscape of Social Reproduction," *Gender, Place and Culture* 15 (February 2008): 15-29; Cf. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," *Signs* 18 (Fall 1992): 1-43; Tera W. Hunter, "Domination and Resistance: The Politics of Wage Household Labor in New South Atlanta," *Labor History* 34 (April 1993): 205-220.

Though simply surviving biologically does, in fact, comprise a portion of the definition of social reproduction, it must also “encompass the daily and long-term reproduction of the *means of production*.”⁴ Katz further defines social reproduction, at “its most basic” and in its dialectical relationship with production, as “the biological reproduction of the labor force, both generationally and on a daily basis, through the acquisition and distribution of the means of existence, including food, shelter, clothing, and health care.”⁵ She goes on to argue that “Social reproduction is secured through a shifting constellation of sources encompassed within the broad categories of the state, the household, capital and civil society.”⁶ Isabella Bakker and Rachel Silvey similarly refer to social reproduction as a biological process that assures the survival of the human population but more specifically assures the survival of the “commodity labour power”—which also “involves institutions, processes and social relations associated with the creation and maintenance of communities.”⁷ According to these definitions, social reproduction is dependent on its dialectical relationship with capitalist production. Does social reproduction, as a conceptual framework, though, make space for cultural survival—the relationships and practices necessary to be Dakota or to be Indigenous?

Addressing similar questions about the relationships between survival and social reproduction, focusing on what is required to simply survive tends to bring a stronger focus to the experiences of marginalized people. However, this work often still emphasizes the relationship of the marginalized population to the capitalist economy. Laura-Ann Minkoff-Zern, for example, describes the relationship between survival and social reproduction in her

⁴ Cindi Katz, “Social Reproduction,” in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, eds. Derek Gregory et al. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 696-697.

⁵ Katz, “Vagabond Capitalism,” 711.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Isabella Bakker and Rachel Silvey, “Introduction: Social Reproduction and Global Transformations—From the Everyday to the Global,” in *Beyond States and Markets: The Challenges of Social Reproduction*, eds. Isabella Bakker and Rachel Silvey (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.

discussion of food insecurity for the transnational agricultural working class in California.

However, her discussion situates the transnational agricultural workers firmly within a Marxist approach to production and social reproduction. She argues,

In the case of the California farmworker, the ability to purchase sufficient food directly benefits their employer, the grower. Furthermore, programs that allow farmworkers to access food from the market at reduced prices or through charity programs not only act to reproduce the worker, but also encourage farmworkers to consume more products from the growers themselves, contributing to agribusiness profits. This follows Marx's explanation that the worker circulates his or her wages back into the capitalist system to purchase food and shelter, as a means to survive, reproducing him or herself at the same time as reproducing the system.⁸

Minkoff-Zern's focus is on how—for transnational agricultural workers and the relief programs that help sustain them—survival and social reproduction are clearly tied to their labor and production for exploitative agribusiness. She then concludes, “By enabling agribusiness to continue business as usual,” the endeavors of food banks and other programs to address food insecurity “ultimately result in supplementing farmworker exploitation.”⁹ The practices of survival and social reproduction for transnational agricultural workers are, therefore, firmly situated within the structures of a capitalist economy. Social welfare and other institutions are treated as important sites for capitalist reproduction.

In her early work on children's environmental knowledge in the Sudan, Katz was interested in how children's activities of both labor and play changed as a result of the growth of a state-sponsored, capitalist agricultural development program in the region. She was specifically interested in the moment of interaction between the changes taking place in her study community as shifts occurred between production for local extraction of use-values and production for a larger, capitalist market exchange. Katz then described the ways in which

⁸ Laura-Ann Minkoff-Zern, “Subsidizing Farmworker Hunger: Food Assistance Programs and the Social Reproduction of California Farm Labor,” *Geoforum* 57 (November 2014): 92.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

The transformation of the local production system and its attendant processes of socioeconomic differentiation, environmental degradation, commoditization, and deskilling, are emblematic of the erosion of the countryside as a viable arena of noncapitalist relations of production and reproduction. Capitalist hegemony is neither achieved nor maintained without struggle, and the community as a whole was responding to the changes imposed upon them in a range of ways.¹⁰

In this study, we see a community that was actively produced as marginalized within a capitalist system, but Katz also alluded to the political potential that “inheres in the everyday practices by which knowledge is produced, deployed, and exchanged, and to reformulate or subvert that knowledge in a way that recognizes the oppositional potential of these very practices of social reproduction.”¹¹ Oppressive capitalist systems, for Katz, also contain possibilities for moments of resistance.

Thus, Nik Heynen draws from Katz’s work to approach the idea that social reproduction and survival look substantively different for marginalized peoples—where practices of social reproduction have the ability to become mechanisms for resistance. Heynen demonstrates how the Black Panther Party’s (BPP) survival programs, specifically the Free Breakfast Program, responded to the “historic unwillingness of the U.S. government to provide viable welfare services to unemployed African Americans and other minorities living in inner cities.”¹² As a result, “the BPP’s survival programs were both initiated to sustain the social reproduction of their black community, starting at the scale of the individual body but also for the sake of building a political base that could be used to resist the hegemonic repression of the U.S. government and capitalist interests more broadly.”¹³ There appears to be a slippage, however, in Heynen’s argument. The practices of the Black Panther Party’s survival programs appear to refer

¹⁰ Katz, “Sow What You Know,” 510.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 509.

¹² Nik Heynen, “Bending the Bars of Empire from Every Ghetto for Survival: The Black Panther Party’s Radical Antihunger Politics of Social Reproduction and Scale,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99 (April 2009): 410.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 415.

to a fundamentally different approach to social reproduction, but he fails to elaborate on what that might look like. The Free Breakfast Program intended *not* to biologically sustain black youth so that they might participate in wage labor; rather, its intent was to biologically sustain black youth bodies as an act of resistance to the oppression propagated by the dominant structures of the capitalist economy. It seems that the survival of black youth would socially reproduce actors for a resistance movement *rather than* socially reproduce bodies for capitalist production. The question for theories of social reproduction, then, is what and for whom does the biological and cultural survival of marginalized bodies socially reproduce?

Historian Julie L. Davis, similarly to Heynen, describes local resistance programs developed by the American Indian Movement (AIM) in Minneapolis and St. Paul. However, she does not employ social reproduction as an analytic. Her main goal is to outline the development of AIM's Indigenous Survival Schools in the Twin Cities, but she situates their formation within the larger historical framework of practices of colonization and assimilation. She focuses particularly on how the survival schools were a direct response to federal policies of termination and relocation in the mid-twentieth century alongside social welfare policies that removed, with astonishing frequency, Native children from their homes. The survival schools therefore resisted the "ongoing Euro-American colonialism in Native people's encounters with child welfare workers, the juvenile justice system, and the Twin Cities public schools."¹⁴

Operating until 2008, the AIM Survival Schools aspired "to nurture the identity development of Native youth through an educational system grounded in traditional Indigenous knowledge, infused with a contemporary political consciousness, and anchored by a commitment

¹⁴ Julie L. Davis, *Survival Schools: The American Indian Movement and Community Education in the Twin Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 51.

to family and community.”¹⁵ Describing what it meant to promote the AIM education system as one that specifically addressed the survival of Native youths, Davis elaborates how

Indian values are intact and can be a life source for students if they can learn to identify them for themselves and consciously build upon them. This was what it meant to be ‘survival’ schools: providing a cultural grounding that their founders believed young people needed to survive and thrive in the modern world.¹⁶

Though the AIM Survival Schools were often criticized for not providing a rigorous education, Davis emphasizes that the schools offered a place for Native youth to escape the violence and discrimination of the streets, social welfare agencies, and public schools in the Twin Cities. She argues “that by attending one of the survival schools, some students simply *got* a basic education who otherwise would not have done so,” and that the schools “prioritized other goals and emphasized other outcomes than academic achievement.”¹⁷ The biological and cultural survival of Native youths was, according the school founders, students, and parents, directly linked to the practices of encouraging Native family values and cultural preservation.

Davis also develops ideas about how Native people, in the mid-twentieth century in the Twin Cities, resisted the structures of the formal wage economy:

Some young Indian people without a family to support preferred to take on short-term work to make the next month’s rent or earn gas money for a trip back to the reservation, rather than seek to maintain a steady job. Many Native people viewed a job as a temporary means to a particular, practical end rather than a long-term commitment in pursuit of material consumption or socioeconomic mobility. This put Native people at a disadvantage with employers looking for a stable workforce....For many Indian people, responsibilities to family, friends, or neighbors took priority over obligations to employers. If someone became ill, needed a ride, or asked for help with a move, providing that assistance was more important than going to work or getting there on time. This led employers to stereotype Indian people as lazy and unreliable workers, and made them unwilling to hire other Indian people in the future.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., 129.

¹⁶ Ibid., 136.

¹⁷ Ibid., 197.

¹⁸ Ibid., 61.

According to Davis, some Indigenous people in the Twin Cities developed their own sense of an urban Indigenous community that reflected their more traditional relationships to the economy back in their home communities or reservations. These people believed in emphasizing Indigenous values of relatedness because it was crucial to both their biological and cultural survival. Values of relatedness, however, do not easily operate within the structures of the dominant capitalist economy. The survival schools, perhaps, did not intend to socially reproduce Indigenous bodies to participate in capitalist production. Instead they socially reproduced Indigenous bodies to ensure the survival of Indigenous ways of life and community.

Federal, state, and local agents of a settler colonial society instituted policies and practices with the intent to eradicate Native ways of life and Native bodies by imposing new economic forms and developing systems of education to remove children from their traditional families. Thus, the introduction of patriarchal hierarchies, the commodity form, and private property regimes led to significant changes for Indigenous communities. These various forms of federal assimilation policies, “proponents believed, would encourage Native people to reject their commitment to collectivism in favor of individualism, private property ownership, and the patriarchal nuclear family.”¹⁹ Colonial missionaries subverted Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing.²⁰ Yet Indigenous knowledge survived. Indian agents displaced Indigenous women from agricultural production.²¹ Yet Indigenous methods of agricultural production survived. Indigenous children were forcefully removed from their families and stripped of their own familiar languages and ways of life at federal boarding schools.²² Yet Indigenous families and

¹⁹ Ibid., 17.

²⁰ Grande, *Red Pedagogy*.

²¹ Devon Abbot Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

²² Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Grande, *Red Pedagogy*; Diane Wilson, *Spirit Car: Journey to a Dakota Past* (St. Paul:

their ways of life survived. Throughout the 1970s Indigenous women were sterilized by the Indian Health Service.²³ *Still*, Indigenous communities survived. These were practices and policies that purposefully planned to destroy Indigeneity. These are not practices and policies relegated to the past. Their legacies and effects persist, so much so that contemporary Indigenous peoples struggle daily to simply survive. They struggle simply to be Indigenous. But in struggling to survive, Indigenous peoples resist—they do not socially reproduce their bodies to solely participate in a capitalist economy, an economy so contradictory to their own values, worldviews, and ways of life.

Devon Abbot Mihesuah describes the difficulties that Indigenous peoples face to simply survive by recognizing that “Natives suffer from diabetes, alcoholism, suicide, and infant mortality at higher rates than the rest of the U.S. population, and Indians report more spousal and child abuse than before” colonization.²⁴ Rather than emphasize the structures of social reproduction imposed upon Native peoples, however, a focus on survival—though the realities of simply surviving biologically and culturally rarely describe situations of comfort or equality—instead looks at the unique and local responses to various structures of colonization and assimilation as forms of resistance. In defining Indigenous strategies for survival, Davis explains how

Indigenous people did not give way passively to U.S. colonialism. As they faced the forces of chaos and change, they devised creative ways to maintain the integrity of their way of life for as long as possible. Individuals, families, and political and spiritual leaders weighed options and made decisions in an effort to shape their own futures during these troubled times.²⁵

Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006); Diane Wilson, *Beloved Child: A Dakota Way of Life* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011); Davis, *Survival Schools*.

²³ Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies*; Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*; Waziyatawin, *What Does Justice Look Like?*

²⁴ Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, xi.

²⁵ Davis, *Survival Schools*, 18.

Indigenous people actively responded to these changes to ensure the survival of their families, and when possible, the survival of their traditional cultural practices and identities.²⁶ Davis, for example, also claims that “Within Indian people’s shared historical experiences of colonialism and cultural loss they found the deep roots of their current struggles.”²⁷ Relationships with land were disrupted, traditional gender roles and labor practices were questioned, challenged, and subverted, and boarding schools initiated practices for accelerating assimilation. These examples all refer to challenges to simply *be* Indigenous—to simply survive both biologically and culturally.

Most often, scholars emphasize marginalized peoples’ social reproduction within a capitalist economy, and survival strategies are treated as secondary and reactionary. Beginning with survival strategies, rather than social reproduction, as a starting point would instead prioritize the agency of the marginalized group. Their oppression by and their relationship to the formal capitalist wage economy is then either unnecessary or secondary. Participation in and navigation of the wage economy would then be treated as a tactic for survival but not as comprising the totality of the practices of social reproduction of a particular group. For example, clearly, contradictions exist between Dakota worldviews and ways of life with the practices of a capitalist political economy—whether the contradictions concern knowledge, space, or social reproduction. Wicasta Wanzi explains how these contradictions affect his life.

WW: Any time we try to do anything as Dakota people in public we’re kind of persecuted here in Minnesota. Even if it’s something good, or just honoring people, you’re always facing some sort of strange dissent. Any time you see an article about Native people in the *Star Tribune* there are always racist comments. It doesn’t matter what it’s about. And I just don’t understand that, especially being part white myself. So I can see both sides of the story. I was raised by my mom who is non-Native, so it’s funny, because I get both sides of the story, but I can see which one’s healthier. Clearly Dakota *wicoħaŋ* [ways of life] are much healthier for the earth, for people. Just psychologically,

²⁶ Wilson, *Remember This!*

²⁷ Davis, *Survival Schools*, 51.

it keeps *me* sane that we still are able to do our ceremonies even if I have to drive five hours each night on weekdays, and then have to work the next morning at seven in the morning. But those are the sacrifices we've always been making. They might've changed in the way that we're making the sacrifices, but at least we're still doing it, and it's still keeping that example for kids and for the youth to keep these things alive.²⁸

What Wicasta Waŋzi suggests in this passage is that Dakota people face numerous obstacles on a daily basis—obstacles constructed within the dominant systems of colonization and capitalism—that continue to disenfranchise and delegitimize their ways of life. However, even though he is required to participate in the wage economy as an educator, Wicasta Waŋzi nevertheless makes an effort to prioritize cultural practices. For him, it is a worthy sacrifice.

Simply Surviving and Dakota Cultural Preservation

The best way I can think of to describe the events of the past few days is to use the horribly vague term, “surreal.” Everything that has happened has culminated in a bit of an identity crisis. Today we [Darlene and I] found out that one of our interviewees is fighting to keep a young child out of harm. It was a very real, very emotional, and very scary moment. What the hell can I do? There are CHILDREN who are in pain—children. Children who are bearing the brunt of historical trauma as a result of colonization. What can my research possibly do to keep CHILDREN out of harm? What can I do to help make any real changes for CHILDREN who constantly face daily pain and emotional trauma—children who don't even know why they experience and feel the pain that they do?²⁹

After witnessing Franky's obvious pain and fierce commitment to changing the cycles of harm for the young people in his Dakota community, after reflecting on that experience, I realized just how many Dakota people, in their interviews had implicitly addressed struggles to simply survive. Most commonly they described how their struggles to survive made it difficult to engage with cultural preservation work in the Twin Cities. For example, throughout his interview, Harlan LaFontaine, weaved together stories about natural resource management and current events—like the immigration crisis and raising the minimum wage—to situate the

²⁸ Wicasta Waŋzi, interview.

²⁹ The author's personal fieldnotes, 1 August 2014.

experiences of contemporary Dakota people as both mired in and separate from the structures of a capitalist political economy. In terms of the latter, and in direct reference to cultural preservation efforts of traditional lands in the Twin Cities, he says,

HL: Dakota people, like other people [referring to immigrants and other marginalized peoples], are just busy surviving. I'm busy surviving. I can't, you know? Sometimes I can and sometimes I can't. But sometimes I can do language and go out walking, but sometimes I'm stuck just doing a job that I don't necessarily like, but I'm surviving. Part of the same holds true for [other] Dakota people too—they're busy surviving.³⁰

Throughout the interview, Harlan made it clear that he was most passionate about being able to spend his time walking around his Dakota homeland identifying plants, animals, and natural features in the landscape in the Dakota language. Though often a necessity, participating in wage labor is ancillary to his identity and personal politics—it is treated simply as an immediate means to provide for his family.

Sisoka Duta similarly describes the numerous demands on his time, but he also describes the contradictions inherent in participating in contemporary preservation work. He explains how Dakota people are simultaneously positioned as contemporary citizens of a consumer society, but they also aspire to live responsible, reciprocal relationships defined by Dakota worldviews.

S: It's really sad to see when you go places and you see a lot of pollution and people destroying the earth, and just wonder why. Why are they doing that? Isn't there a better way? But then we don't really have anybody to blame but ourselves, so I'm part of the problem just as much as anybody. I use gasoline just like everybody else, and I heat my house with natural gas, so those are things that are destroying the earth. I buy things that are made out of plastic, so I can't really go around saying, "Oh, look at what *you're* doing." Because I'm the one who is causing problems, so unless I change myself then nothing is going to get better, so I mean it's really interesting to hear all the people running around saying, "Oh, this is sacred! We need to protect this!" Then you see them driving off in a car, going to McDonalds, or wherever, and it's like, if you thought everything was so sacred, then why are you acting like that? That's my thought. I don't ever say that though because I would have to say that to myself first. I don't like to sit there and point fingers at other people. It's not right.

Take for instance *Wakan Tipi*, or sometimes it's called Carver's Cave. If I felt such a great connection to that place I would be over there, and I would make sure it was

³⁰ LaFontaine, interview.

clean. I would be picking all the litter up and taking care of the area. If people felt that way, like “Oh, let’s protect the sacred places.” Why don’t they go over there and protect them, then? I’m busy doing other things, too. So I really can’t be over there saying like, “You guys are destroying the sacred places,” because that wouldn’t be right. I’d have to go over there myself and protect them, then. And I don’t really even have the time to do that. I’m trying to work on the Dakota language, and that’s hard enough as it is—full time job. But I really see that as the key though, is this language.

If people can learn their language again then maybe they’ll start to see the importance of these different places that they have a special meaning. If they can say them in our language and they understand what it means, then, well, they’ll say, “Yeah, this is a special place.” But we all speak English now, so the word Coldwater Spring doesn’t mean as much as *Taku Wakan Tipi*. If you know what *Taku Wakan Tipi* means then you’ll understand this is a special place, but Coldwater Spring, that doesn’t mean anything. That’s just a name. So if people learn the language they’ll say, “Yeah, this is a special place.” And if we all do that then we’ll be able to protect these places. But right now it’s just a few of us, and we have to protect our language and ceremonies. That’s what most of us are doing right now is trying to hold on to what we can and trying to wait for everyone else to get caught up.³¹

Sisoka Duta argues that it is extraordinary difficult to live a healthy, responsible life as a Dakota person in contemporary society. And it is also a “full-time job” to work on cultural and language preservation. He concludes, though, that those efforts are vital to Dakota peoples’ survival.

“It should be our inherent right to be able to walk in our homeland, be able to pray in our homeland, to be able to put prayer stakes for our ancestors in the ground in our homeland,” Waziyatawiñ insists. However necessary Dakota cultural preservation, the contemporary structures of a settler-colonial, capitalist society do not make it easy for Native people to do the things necessary to be Native people in their homeland. If not for these structures and violent actions, Waziyatawiñ wonders what Dakota peoples’ lives would be like “if we hadn’t been forced out of our homeland and our people had just been left alone, had just been allowed to continue a way of life.” But instead, what she feels is “a deep sense that all the generations since have missed out. We’ve lost.”³² Harlan LaFontaine similarly explains how it has been difficult to

³¹ Sisoka Duta, interview.

³² Waziyatawiñ, interview.

maintain traditional cultural practices and how cultural loss is tied to an assault on both knowledge and land. He says:

HL: I think a lot of knowledge has been lost, through no fault of our own. The history of all the boarding schools, before that confining people to tracts of land, permanently. And then that wasn't even permanent. They were tossed out [of Minnesota]. Today I see that knowledge as an intriguing piece. I think others have picked up on that, too. How did Dakota people survive? And I just wanted to present it in a way so that it would be a reminder, that people say that Dakota people, there was a presence here, that there was a knowledge that Dakota people were a presence with generations of learning, with the ability to more than survive with the land. And that's because of historic pieces, but there was an almost sudden stop to that.³³

Wicasta Wan̄zi references how Dakota peoples' use of land for ceremony, particularly in public space, is marginalized. Dakota children, in particular, are the ones impacted most by marginalization.

WW: Around the Twin Cities I haven't seen any of the sites really able to be used. I've heard at Coldwater Spring you can apply for permits, but they haven't granted any, is what I've heard. We've been tempted to just build a sweat at *Taku Wakan̄ Tipi*, but we fear it will just get burned or destroyed, or we'll get a ticket or something, like a trespassing ticket....But that's something I've battled with since I've lived here. Where can we go for ceremony? Even bringing out a pipe in public you get looked at weird by mainstream white society, and it's not really even friendly looks or looks of curiosity. It's a judgment. So as Dakota people here in Minnesota, there really isn't any safe place to have ceremonies, even on the rez it seems. I've heard of some of crazy stuff happening to people that have had sweats, of people just taking them down or burning them down, and that's because of colonization.

But I think the citizens of Minnesota, the colonial citizens, or illegal squatters as I like to call them, it should be their responsibility to provide, at least make a place for that. When I think of colonial society, I think of everything that we have here in Minnesota has been taken out of the mouths and hands of Indigenous children. The land, look at how the prairies have been turned into corn, all the mining that goes on, those are irreversible things that'll take years and years and years to change and bring that health back again. So how could we as Dakota people, "where can we rice?" We have nowhere to get wild rice. The Minnesota River is too polluted. We have no land in northern Minnesota. But I think they have a responsibility to provide that to us, whether it's unused public land, parks, private property, funds to buy private property and turn over the land ownership. I have no clue. But those types of things should be going on, in my opinion. And I don't think it would just benefit Indigenous people, I think it would benefit non-Indigenous people as well because they could learn to appreciate a wilderness area, so to speak. You hear of everyone going to the Boundary Waters because it's untouched, but what if we

³³ LaFontaine, interview.

had more than the Boundary Waters in Minnesota? What if we had that down by Winona, or in the bluff region, or just various other regions, like *Mahkato*, or Mankato? Why is it named that? Cause of that blue earth paint, but who knows where the blue earth paint is nowadays? There's all of these very specific places for specific things, but we've lost that wisdom of what's there and why is it there. What's it used for?

It's starting to come back, but I think we need allies or people that are willing to be humble and give, whether it's time, flesh, money, land. All sorts of things, everyone just needs to give, is the way I see it. For too long people have been just taking from Dakota people and now we see a lot of the racist sentiment because of casino profits, which doesn't really equate to anything because if you look at the community I don't think those casino profits could ever compare to the loss of culture, identity history, self-worth, land, the list goes on-and-on. I don't usually talk about genocide, I use the word omnicide because genocide is human-centric, but as Dakota people, humans are the least important, so everything else is being destroyed around us. We're the last ones, and so I think of the water, the plants, the stones first. To us, those stones can talk, so we don't just crush them up with bulldozers, we really revere them.

Another sacred site that's constantly moving is Red Rocks in St. Paul. It's been taken from *Kaposia*, and it's relocated at some church now, but that's a sacred site, wherever that rock is. And I always thought, what if Dakota people had a pickup truck, and we stole that rock? What would they do? They've got a historical marker, they'd document their theft of it, but what if we took it back? Would they be pissed? Would we get arrested? We're just repatriating it without paperwork. So I've thought about that. What makes that rock sacred? And it's still there, you can go visit, put out tobacco, but it's not oriented to the sun like it's supposed to be, but that's another example. It's like, if we wanted to have a ceremony with that rock, which was used for the *Wakan Wacipi*, we'd have to do it at that church unless we took our rock back, so what do we do? I kind of think of it, we have our hands tied, too, so if we try to do anything we get arrested, we get fined or something bad happens, it's usually never good, and it's just really difficult because how do we teach the younger generations about being Dakota or being Indigenous, or even non-Native people? How can they even begin to humanize us because of the caricatures that they portray us as in history and in the media if they can't see a real representation of who we are? They think we're just powwow and beads, but that's just the surface.

When Dakota people tried holding a sweat lodge ceremony at Coldwater spring "it was interrupted by police," Wicasta Wanzi continues,

WW: Everything is always met with police resistance. I've seen prayer ties at places, but I haven't seen any active ceremonies being held, maybe some minor things, like people bringing a pipe out, but I think there's more complex ceremonies that people would like to hold on public property in the Twin Cities, but are unable to because of that issue of land ownership, and public land not being available. I know of a sweat we had on, this guy from Canada, he had a sweat at a state park in Wisconsin. The DNR [Department of Natural Resources] actually burned it up. They just didn't want it there, so they just burned it up. And so people don't even take the time to build the sweat out on these

places because of fears of things like that, or who knows what will happen. No one wants to risk getting a ticket. We're already pauperized enough, so it's difficult to have activism unless you come from a per cap community,³⁴ or maybe you're college educated, have a good job and can afford to fight their system. But a lot of our people are still dealing with alcoholism and a lot of these symptoms of oppression, and so it takes a lot of the younger people that are being educated to resist, but I think there's a new generation of Dakota people that are going to start making more of an effort to access these sites for, I don't want to say traditional, but for our sacred responsibilities as Dakota men and women to have these relationships with the spirits of that land.³⁵

Though largely framed negatively, indicating that survival is a direct impediment to cultural preservation, the efforts to keep Dakota relationships alive is also simultaneously an effort to resist the structures of a capitalist economy.

Dakota people also acknowledged that reclaiming traditional cultural practices is also vital in a time of economic and ecological uncertainty and that bringing back the teachings of their ancestors will be vital for future survival. Sisoka Duta says,

S: Just to hear older people talk about what life was like when they were younger, that's pretty special. Because they lived in a time when there wasn't all the technology we have today, and you had to live off the land, or live with the land, and it's just really fascinating to hear what life was like for them. We've become so dependent on things today. In my opinion, it makes us weaker as people. And if I'm thirsty I go to the sink and turn on the faucet and get some water, or if I'm out somewhere I just stop at a store and buy some water, or I get a free water from a restaurant or something. But if you think about how, a long time ago people had to walk all the way to the river or stream or wherever they had to get water from. Dig a well. And they had to wait to get that water, and they were strong for that—waiting. It made their bodies stronger, and nowadays, everything is so convenient for us and we get it so fast that it actually makes us weaker. So just to hear stuff like that, how they had to live, and I think one day that's what we'll have to go back to. The path we're on now is not sustainable. Eventually we're going to run out of resources, and we'll have to start living more simply again, so it's important to hear what they have to say cause we're going to have to use that knowledge again in the future at some point.³⁶

For that very reason Waziyatawiñ, at the time of her interview, was working on building a sustainable cob home with her family on reservation land in western Minnesota, and this project

³⁴ Per capita payments received from tribal services or businesses, like casinos.

³⁵ Wicasta Wañzi, interview.

³⁶ Sisoka Duta, interview.

is intimately tied to economic and ecological unsustainability of the current system. So, she explains how she is writing about “the concept of collapse” because:

Waz: The current ways, on all fronts, are really unsustainable, and that the end time for those systems is coming. Capitalism—that relies on the paradigm of infinite growth—is not sustainable over the long term. The reliance on fossil fuels is not sustainable over the long term. I think the nation-state model is not sustainable over the long term, so really thinking about, if that’s the case, what will that collapse of the systems and institutions look like? And then, most importantly, from my perspective is: what are the implications for Indigenous populations? Because, especially in the United States and Canada there are still some populations that rely heavily, for example, on hunting and fishing or what we might consider traditional ways of life. But most of us, the vast majority, I think, are very much dependent on all of the systems and institutions that are going to be collapsing. And at the same time, the harm to the natural world, to the planet, for all kinds of reasons is going to lead to different kinds of catastrophes and emergencies that I think our people are really unprepared for. So I’m interested in exploring or laying out the arguments for what’s happening on those fronts, but then also encouraging our own people to think creatively and strategically about how we might address those coming challenges.

I became very concerned, I think it was about 2006 when we were just leaving—I taught for seven years down at Arizona State University. And one of the reasons why I was so anxious to get home was because there was a very real recognition that down there the way of life is so unsustainable. Water is such a huge issue in a desert environment where you have a huge metropolitan population and more and more people coming all the time. Swimming pools, and golf courses, and fountains in the middle of the desert. You knew it was a place you didn’t belong. Humans living that way did not belong, and I couldn’t wait to get back home where there was water. But also recognizing that the water here is threatened, the water here is endangered, and there are water shortages here. I’ve been very human focused in lots of ways with my historical research especially focusing around 1862. Thinking about the impact of those wars on our ancestors, on our people today, on the dysfunction within our families, all of the consequences of colonization that have been extremely painful. But I hadn’t spent a lot of time talking about what’s happened to the land. So in 2008, when I wrote *What Does Justice Look Like*, I did examine that there, and I talked about the harmful consequences of colonization, on the devastation to the land in the last century-and-a-half, where our people lived here for thousands of years in a sustainable way, where we could live thousands of years *more* practicing those ways of life. So there’s been definitely an evolution of thought and thinking about, if I’m going to critique those ways I also have to critique my own involvement. I have to think about “How am I living today?”

If we espouse the beautiful ideals of *Mitakuye Owas’iŋ*, which is foundational to Dakota worldview and cosmology, then none of us are living that way today, none of us. And there’s very little talk within Dakota communities about that hypocrisy, about that contradiction. There’s a lot of rhetoric, but I don’t see a lot of action. And so I want to be more self-reflective and self-critical about that, but also think about, if we believe that we have to live differently, and we have to understand that the devastation to our homeland

is connected to us. It's very real for us. It has real consequences for our lives and for the future generations. And I don't think our people are living that way or really thinking about those things today. So I, as part of my own self-reflection and thinking about how do you shift thinking, how do you shift the culture, we decided to engage in this project here, and we've essentially called it "Maḵoḱe Wašte, Wiconi Wašte," which is "Sweet Land, Sweet Life," and it really is trying to reconnect the ideas of living with the land, trying to heal some of the wounds from colonization, trying to work towards restoration and regenerative healing of the land and living a good life—that if those two are separated, it's going to be very hard to live a good life, so we're consciously and purposely trying to bring those things together.³⁷

When describing her activist and academic work, she explains that "it's not how our ancestors lived, and it's not how I want to live. But that's part of the reason why I'm out here, you know? I can't live that way."

Throughout much of her interview, Waziyatawiŋ talks about feeling disillusioned with the educational system and even activist work. She described several vivid memories of protesting in the Twin Cities where she would be chanting, yelling, and holding signs but people would just walk by, refusing to acknowledge her presence, let alone her message. Further, and more specifically referring to systems of education, she explains:

Waz: [Education is] about power. And that was a hard and long lesson for me to learn. I was raised by educators and really believed in the power of education to transform the world. And I still get sucked back into that because it's such a nice ideal. Now, though, knowing and experiencing that that's not the case—that education doesn't mean anything for some people—I have to be more strategic and more intelligent about where I expend my energies.³⁸

For much of her life, Waziyatawiŋ believed that education could be a site of possibility for decolonization. Because of her negative experiences trying to work within "the system," however, she decided to largely leave behind her academic work to "practice what she preached"—living sustainably and trying to practice as many traditional Dakota ways of life as

³⁷ Waziyatawiŋ, interview.

³⁸ Ibid.

possible to support the basic and cultural survival of her family in an era of dramatic political and climate change. She thus describes the rationale behind building a cob home:

Waz: I've had to really think about, well, what do we do as Dakota people, then, within our homeland when the environment has changed so drastically? We don't have the same resources we used to. And now because we live in this context of imminent collapse we have to not only think about survival, we have to think about regeneration. We have to think about resurgence. We have to think about detoxification. We need to think about replenishing all of these things that our ancestors did not have to think about. So I was trying to think about earth homes. What would an earth home look like in this context? What can we use that is plentiful here? Well, here we *do* have lots of clay, sand, and straw. When you're building by hand or trying to create a structure by hand....That's what all homes should be, and frankly around most of the world—especially the non-industrial world—everyone makes their own homes by hand. And that's our right. I think that all human beings should have a right to a home. I think our method is more democratizing, and more in line with Dakota values, but it's not replicating Dakota tradition because we can't in today's context.³⁹

Dakota communities, families, and individuals responded to, and continue to respond to, the pressures and practices of colonization and assimilation in a variety of ways to ensure the survival of their families, and when possible, the survival of traditional cultural practices. For Wicasta Wan̄zi, Harlan, Sisoka Duta, and Waziyataw̄iŋ, their efforts to simply survive have had direct influences on their ability and willingness to participate in preservation and activist work.

Conclusion

It's all too likely that these bright young teenagers have heard little about boarding schools, land theft, mass child abductions, the reasons why so few Native people can speak their language. It's possible they were never taught their own family history, because all too often these stories have been swallowed up into silence as generations of children bore pain that was too great to speak of. These young people do not yet know that they are on the front line of a war against history, against the invisible legacy that has been passed from one generation to the next. Nor do they know that beneath the epidemic levels of alcoholism, violence, poverty, and disease lies what scholar Andrea Smith describes as a 'soul wound' that they will inherit.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Wilson, *Beloved Child*, 22.

Initially, I viewed struggles to survive as an exclusively negative barrier imposed upon Dakota people that limited their ability to engage in cultural preservation and activist work. As such, struggles to survive might then be understood as parts of dominant structures that fall under the purview of social reproduction—practices that are somehow imbricated within capitalist practices and institutions.

Take education, for example. Federal Indian policies on education are certainly bound up in frameworks of colonization and assimilation perpetrated against Indigenous communities. However, education is also a site of survival and resistance. According to Brenda Child, boarding schools helped Native families deal with financial insecurity during the Depression era. She describes how “Hundreds of Indian families across the United States sought out boarding schools for their children as a strategy of family preservation rather than a commitment to assimilation principles, making the 1930s the decade of highest student population in the once detested Indian schools.”⁴¹ Sisoka Duta also explains the contradictions inherent in education.

S: History books said, “Oh, the Indians, they crossed the Bering Strait during the Ice Age.” They said how Indians settled North and South America and it had arrows pointing downwards. We learned Manifest Destiny and how there was a right, “We had a right to the land, and we went west.” They didn’t even talk about how the Indians really fought back. I know they talked about the Trail of Tears and how sad that was, but nobody really mentioned what happened here in Minnesota. It was kind of abstract information. It went really fast. It was just a day or two. We didn’t really have one course dedicated to Indian history. That was at the schools I went to. Now it seems like it might be a little bit different. Somebody on Facebook was posting their class schedule and they went to the same high school that I did. They’re going there now. They’re going to the same high school. He has an American Indian history course. And I was like, “Wow, that’s different.” They didn’t have that when I was there. And maybe it is a little bit different, but I don’t think it’s enough.

I think the children when they’re younger should be more exposed to it. Not the graphic details, but like “this is who we are, we’ve been here.” Maybe some kind of curriculum about that, focusing more on, here’s the Dakota people, here’s the Ojibwe people, and not just like a little one-day or two-day thing. Focus on it for a couple weeks

⁴¹ Brenda Child, *My Grandfather’s Knocking Sticks: Ojibwe Family Life and Labor on the Reservation* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014), 176.

or something, and do that more and more as they get older, and then when they start to get older they can learn more of the history about what really happened.

I teach my kids what happened. They ask questions. They want to know. But they want to know the truth. They don't want to learn some lies. So just tell them the truth about what happened and then when they get older they will know more. Maybe they'll have a better appreciation for Dakota people. And I think our own people will benefit from that. You see them dropping out of high school, committing suicide. They don't know who they are. They're lost. A lot of times they don't want to learn because they go to school. They're ashamed of who they are because they look in these books and they see that these are the people that lost. These are the people we conquered. And they see them like they're less than the other people. That's what they start to learn when they get older. They're like, "Well, what is there for me, then?" They don't learn about all the great people we had in history that led our people through all the tough times. If they learned a more complete picture I think our younger people would benefit from it a lot. They would be proud of themselves, and they would do better in school. You see the young people who do know those things, they do succeed. They go on to do great things. And I think not only would our own people benefit, but I think the other people would benefit because they would realize that we are highly intelligent, skilled people who did a lot of great things. Look at all the food we cultivated, that we eat today that people don't even know came from our people, and all the medicine—all the things that our people contributed to the world. And you don't learn about those things until you get to college. I think if our people learn they would understand that we're not just redskins, we're not just Indians or chiefs, we're Dakota, Ojibwe, and we have our own ways, and it's diverse—over 500 different tribes. They would respect us.⁴²

Davis recognizes that “the government worked to eliminate Indigenous people—physically, politically, economically, socially, and culturally—through military conquest, treaties, removal, reservations, and assimilation policies.”⁴³ The policies enacted by federal, state, and local government agents were intended to decimate Indigenous bodies and ways of life—colonizing practices are closely linked to Indigenous peoples' contemporary struggles to simply survive. Indigenous people have been marginalized and continue to face oppression and pressures to assimilate. However, in struggling to survive, Indigenous peoples resist—they *do not* socially reproduce their bodies to participate in a capitalist economy, an economy so contradictory to their own values, worldviews, and ways of life. Instead, survival and social reproduction constitute efforts to persist as Indigenous peoples within and for their own

⁴² Sisoka Duta, interview.

⁴³ Davis, *Survival Schools*, 17.

culturally specific knowledge systems and economies. Finally, it is important to remember that different communities, families, and individuals adapted to and resisted assimilation policies so they might continue to survive.

Just like the Dakota worldview assures that there are “multiple right answers,” there are, similarly, multiple right responses. As a result, Indigenous peoples, their languages, and their ways of life, persist. Sometimes this persistence, as with Franky, necessitates personal sacrifice and rapid response to protect the children of his community from harm. As with Harlan, Waziyatawiŋ, Sisoka Duta, and Wicasta Waŋzi, it means struggling to find ways to orient one’s work and daily practices to meet the dual demands of bodily and cultural survival.

That's what I think about when I think of those places [in the Twin Cities]. All of those places I think of as just one sacred place, and that's Dakota *Makoce*. That would be the hearth of our people. We've always left that area, but it's always been our foundation. We'd always go back. We'd always return to this center.

— Wicasta Wanzi

Conclusion

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Region is Dakota land, and that region is defined by the *Bdote* cultural landscape—a landscape marked by the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, the site of Dakota creation. Dakota worldviews and the knowledges contained in their language inform both their historic and contemporary relationships to and understandings of this place. Beginning in 1805, though, representatives of the US government began appropriating the land around *Bdote*. They constructed a military garrison. They surveyed the land. They laid down a grid. Settlers arrived by steamboat and population in the region boomed. Homes, churches, businesses, and industries rose along the river banks and outward along the river bluffs. And Dakota people watched their land transform. Eventually, they were relegated to reservations along the upper Minnesota River by order of the Treaties of 1851. Dakota people resisted the subjugation they experienced on their own lands. As a result, in 1863 Governor Alexander Ramsay ordered their expulsion from the state of Minnesota. In their places, public spaces “open to all” were constructed.

Many Dakota people remain in exile. Some, perhaps, have never been to *Bdote*. Others may have never even heard the name *Bdote*. Over the last few decades, however, many Dakota people, as is their tradition, have returned to their center, to the landscape that holds their creation story. They have returned to *Bdote*, remembering their responsibility as good relatives to care for the place—although some, like the Mendota Dakota, never left. In the century-and-a-half since removal, however, Dakota people, their histories and claims to the region included, have been routinely silenced and suppressed by the dominant society. Generations of Minnesota students grew up learning nothing about the people whose land they had inherited, even as they picnicked, canoed, and hiked through the center of it.

Margaret Kovach argues that “what cannot be seen is often not acknowledged, and what is not acknowledged is dismissed.”¹ Because of Dakota peoples’ prolonged invisibility in Minnesota, structured by dispossession and oppression, their contemporary claims to their cultural sites within the *Bdote* landscape are dismissed by land managers and policymakers. When policies have been developed to provide redress, they’ve proven inadequate—perhaps even counter-productive. These actors then employ the methods and ideologies of Western science to further discredit and disenfranchise Dakota peoples’ claims.

But the evidence substantiating Dakota peoples’ claims survives in the worldviews, language, and oral traditions maintained by the people, despite generations of trauma. Wicasta Waŋzi, someone who witnesses the struggles of Indigenous youth on a daily basis, assures us that

WW: the more that’s known about our way of life, the more it’s taken out of the darkness, the healthier the communities will be, because our kids will be able to be Dakota again. Our families can be Dakota. And then also the people from outside of our culture can see how beautiful Dakota culture is, and appreciate us, and maybe try to use that to find out about themselves, where they come from, who they are.²

Dakota people persist. Out of respect for the trauma they have endured, we must listen to and acknowledge their claims. This thesis has been written to help bring those voices and claims to a different audiences—an audience of people like me who grew up in the middle of this landscape and among these people, knowing nothing about either. Harlan LaFontaine, then, encourages us: “Let’s keep talking about land. Let’s keep thinking about land through the words.”³

¹ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 32.

² Wicasta Waŋzi, interview.

³ LaFontaine, interview.

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- Westerman, Gwen, and Bruce White. *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012.
- Western, John. *A Passage to England: Barbadian Londoners Speak of Home*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- White, Bruce. "Highway 55 and the Camp Coldwater Settlement: An Independent Investigation." Turnstone Historical Research, St. Paul, February 2000.
- White, Bruce. "Rediscovering the Dakota Sacred Place Paradigm in Minnesota." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Uncasville, CT, June 2012.
- Wilson, Diane. *Spirit Car: Journey to a Dakota Past*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006.
- Wilson, Diane. *Beloved Child: A Dakota Way of Life*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011.
- Wilson, Waziyatawin Angela. *Remember This!: Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives*. Lincoln: University Nebraska Press, 2005.
- Wirth, Theodore. *Minneapolis Park System, 1883-1944: Retrospective Glimpses into the History of the Board of Park Commissioners of Minneapolis, Minnesota and the City's Park, Parkway, and Playground System*. Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1945.
- Wingerd, Mary Lethert. *North Country: The Making of Minnesota*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Curriculum Vitae
Kelsey M. Carlson
 December 2015

Department of Geography
 Eggers Hall 144
 Syracuse, New York 13244

Phone: (315) 443-2605
 Email: kcarlson@syr.edu

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Geography, Maxwell School of Syracuse University
 Advisor: Don Mitchell

Thesis title: **“We’d Always Return to this Center:” Understanding Urban Space as a
 Dakota Place in *Mni Sota Makoce*** Defense date: 17 November 2015

GPA: 3.967/4.00

Bachelor of Arts (Summa Cum Laude), Geography, University Honors Program, Saint Cloud
 State University **Awarded: June 2012**

Senior thesis title: Coldwater Spring Contested: American Wilderness and Imperialism
 within a Dakota Homeland

GPA: 3.89/4.00

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Dakota (Indigenous) cultural preservation, public space and the right to the city; territoriality and
 nationalism; survival and social reproduction; political, historical and cultural geographies;
 critical geography; social theory; qualitative methods

FELLOWSHIPS:

**Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) Fellowship, National Science Foundation
 (NSF), Grant No. DGE-1247399**
 30 March 2015

Syracuse University Graduate Fellowship
 Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

PUBLICATIONS

Carlson, Kelsey and Gareth John. “Landscapes of Triumphalism, Reconciliation, and
 Reclamation: Memorializing the Aftermath of the Dakota-U.S. War of 1862.” *Journal of
 Cultural Geography* 32, no. 3 (October 2015): 270-303.

John, Gareth and Kelsey Carlson. *Affective Participation: From Triumphalism to Commemoration in the Aftermath of the Dakota-US War of 1862. Social & Cultural Geography*, in press.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

\$200.00 Political Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers, Student Paper Award (Master's)
Spring 2015

\$500.00 Roscoe-Martin Graduate Award, Maxwell School of Syracuse University
Fall 2014

\$200.00 NAISA (Native American and Indigenous Studies Association) Travel Grant
Summer 2014

\$391.76 Graduate Student Organization Research Grant, Syracuse University
Summer 2014

\$300.00 Historical Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers, Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov Award for Master's Research
Summer 2014

\$556.65 Travel Funding for AAG Annual Meeting, Department of Geography, Syracuse University
Spring 2014

\$3800.00 Maxwell Dean's Summer Research Award
Summer 2014

\$750.00 Roscoe-Martin Graduate Award, Maxwell School of Syracuse University
Fall 2013

Semi-finalist, Student Research Colloquium, Saint Cloud State University – paper competition
Spring 2012

\$800.00 Student Research Award, Office of Sponsored Programs, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2012

\$500.00 Travel Grant, Louis E. Leipold Fund, Department of Geography and Planning, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2012

\$500.00 Travel Grant, Office of the Dean, School of Public Affairs, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2012

Excellence in Leadership Award, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2012

\$1000.00 Ruben L. Parson Scholarship, Department of Geography and Planning, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2011

\$175.00 Student Research Award, Office of Sponsored Programs, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2011

\$400.00 Travel Grant, Louis E. Leipold Fund, Department of Geography, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2011

\$250.00 Travel Grant, Office of the Dean, College of Social Science, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2011

\$1000.00 Department of Music Scholarship, Saint Cloud State University
Spring 2010

Runner-up, Orchestra Concerto Competition, Saint Cloud State University
27 January 2010

\$4500.00 Morris Scholar Award, half-tuition scholarship, University of Minnesota, Morris
Fall 2007 – Fall 2008

\$750.00 Instrumental Private Lesson Stipend, Clyde Johnson Fund, University of Minnesota, Morris, Fall 2007 – Fall 2008

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Grading Assistant, GEO 171: Introduction to Human Geography, Instructor: Dr. Don Mitchell, Department of Geography, Syracuse University
Spring 2015

Grading Assistant, GEO 362: The European City, Instructor: Dr. John Western, Department of Geography, Syracuse University
Spring 2015

Teaching Assistant, GEO 272: World Cultures, Instructor: Jesse Quinn, Department of Geography, Syracuse University
Fall 2014

Teaching Assistant, GEOG 379: American Wilderness, Dr. Mikhail Blinnikov, Department of Geography and Planning, Saint Cloud State University
May 2012

Senior thesis research: Coldwater Spring Contested: American Wilderness and Imperialism within a Dakota Homeland
2011 – 2012

Teaching Assistant, HONS 220: Parks and People, Dr. Mikhail Blinnikov, University Honors Program, Saint Cloud State University
Fall 2011

Geography Tutor, Academic Learning Center, Saint Cloud State University
Fall 2011

Junior year independent research project: Commemoration, Power, and Memory in American Indian Landscapes
Spring 2011

Dean's List, Saint Cloud State University
Fall 2011
Spring 2011
Fall 2010
Spring 2009

Dean's List, University of Minnesota, Morris
Fall 2007

PRESENTATIONS

“Reproducing Injustice: Dakota Struggles to Simply Survive,” Circuits of Justice Graduate Student Workshop, Pennsylvania State University
7 November 2015

“Drawing Borders to Dispossess and Placing Dakota People in the Present: Alternative Borderlands in *Mni Sota Makoce*,” accepted panel session “The Making and Unmaking of Colonial Space: Dakota, Lakota, and Plains Metis Conceptualization of the Canadian-American Borderlands,” Chair: Darlene St. Clair, St. Cloud State University, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
6 June 2015

“Dakota Cultural Landscape Preservation in the Twin Cities: How Basic Daily Survival Precludes Claiming and Accessing Urban Public Space,” accepted member of paper session “Geographies of Indigenous-Settler Relations I: Envisioning Futures, Addressing Pasts,” Chair: Heather Castleden, Queen's University, Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois
22 April 2015

“Drawing Borders to Dispossess and Placing Dakota People in the Present: Alternative Territorialities in *Mni Sota Makoce* (Minnesota),” Political Geography Specialty Group Pre-conference, DePaul University
20 April 2015

“Landscapes of Triumph and Trauma: Commemorating the Aftermath of the 1862 Dakota-US War,” co-presenter Dr. Gareth John (St Cloud State University), Department of Geography, Colloquium Series, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Mankato, Minnesota
7 November 2014

“Sacred Place in Urban Space: The Problem of Access to Dakota Sacred Landscapes in Minnesota’s Twin Cities,” accepted member of panel session “Contesting Boundaries in the Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes, Part I,” Chair: Darlene St. Clair, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Annual Meeting, Austin, Texas
29 May 2014

“Landscapes of Triumphalism and Reconciliation,” co-presented with Dr. Gareth John (St. Cloud State University), Material Culture and Geography I paper session, Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, Tampa, Florida
8 April 2014

“Coldwater Spring Contested,” MNSCU Undergraduate Research Conference of Scholarly and Creative Activity, Minnesota State University – Mankato, nominated for participation by the Department of Geography and Planning, and the School of Public Affairs office of the Dean, Saint Cloud State University
23 April 2012

“Coldwater Spring Contested,” semi-finalist student paper competition, Student Research Colloquium, Saint Cloud State University
17 April 2012

“Coldwater Spring Contested,” South Dakota State University Geography Convention
29 March 2012

“Coldwater Spring Contested,” Indigenous Place Mapping and Naming paper session, Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, New York City, NY
27 February 2012

“Coldwater Spring Contested,” Geo-Odyssey Lecture Series, Gamma Theta Upsilon, Department of Geography and Planning, Saint Cloud State University
20 February 2012

“Commemoration, Power and Memory in American Indian Landscapes,” participant, poster competition, Student Research Colloquium, Saint Cloud State University
19 April 2011

“Commemoration, Power and Memory in American Indian Landscapes,” Environmental Science, Medical Geography, Historical Geography poster session, Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA
15 April 2011

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Member, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) | 2014 – present |
| Member, Association of American Geographers (AAG) | 2010 – present |
| Member, Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) | 2011 – present |
| President, Kappa Lambda chapter | 2011 – 2012 |
| Treasurer, Kappa Lambda chapter | Spring 2011 |

SERVICE

Graduate Student Organizer, Circuits of Justice Graduate Student Workshop, Pennsylvania State University

Fall 2015

Peer Facilitator, NSF GRFP Personal Statement Writing Workshop, Syracuse University

9 October 2015

Graduate Student Representative – Department of Geography

Junior Grad Rep Fall 2014

Senior Grad Rep Spring 2015

Future Professoriate Program (FPP)

Participant Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

Member Fall 2014 – present

Volunteer Note-taker, Student Disability Services, Saint Cloud State University

GEOG 270 Intro to Cultural Geography Fall 2010

HIST 434 Soviet Russia Since 1917 Summer 2010

ENGL 215 American Indian Lit Summer 2010

WORK EXPERIENCE

Temporary Office Service, supervised by Ms. Carolyn Zanko and Dr. Dahui Li, Department of Finance and MIS, University of Minnesota, Duluth

February 2013 – May 2013

Work Study, office assistant, supervised by Ms. Barbara Hartkopf, Department of Geography and Planning, Saint Cloud State University

August 2010 – August 2012

Trip Leader, Outdoor Endeavors, supervised by Mr. Ivan Bartha, Saint Cloud State University

October 2011 – July 2012

Gymnastics Coach, Granite City Gymnastics, supervised by Mr. Thomas Rodine, Waite Park, Minnesota

September 2009 – September 2010

Math Skills Center, tutor, supervised by Ms. Stacy Martig, Saint Cloud State University

August 2009 – May 2010