BEYOND "BUSINESS AS USUAL": USING COUNTERSTORYTELLING TO ENGAGE THE COMPLEXITY OF URBAN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the discursive and material terrain of urban Indigenous education in a public school district and Title VII/Indian Education program. Based in tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory and utilizing counterstorytelling techniques from Critical Race Theory informed by contemporary Indigenous philosophy and methodological theory, this research takes as its focus the often-unacknowledged ways settler colonial discourses continue to operate in public schools. Drawing on two years of fieldwork in a public school district, this dissertation documents and makes explicit racial and colonial dynamics that manifest in educational policy and practice through a series of counterstories. The counterstories survey a range of educational issues, including the implementation of Native-themed curriculum, teachers' attempts to support Native students in their classrooms, challenges to an administrator's "no adornment" policies for graduation, Native families' negotiations of erasures embedded in practice and policy, and a Title VII program's efforts to claim physical and cultural space in the district, among other issues. As a collective, these stories highlight the ways that colonization and settler society discourses continue to shape Native students' experiences in schools. Further, by documenting the nuanced intelligence, courage, artfulness, and what Gerald

Vizenor has termed the “survivance” of Native students, families, and educators as they attempt to access education, the research provides a corrective to deficit framings of Indigenous students. Beyond building empathy and compassion for Native students and communities, the purpose is to identify both the content and nature of the competencies teachers, administrators, and policy makers might need in order to provide educational services that promote Indigenous students’ success and well-being in school and foster educational self-determination. This research challenges educators to critically interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions about Native identity, culture, and education and invites educators to examine their own contexts for knowledge, insights, and resources to better support Native students in urban public schools and intervene into discourses that constrain their educational experiences.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this introduction I situate myself with respect to my work, address the specific problems my research seeks to address, the purpose of my study, the research questions I have asked, and the scope of my work. As this research project is methodologically based in a form of critical storytelling, it feels appropriate to begin this dissertation with a story, and as Cherokee author Thomas King (2003) suggests, "'You'll never believe what happened' is always a great way to start" (p. 1)…

Counterstory #1: Pilgrims and Indians[1]

You'll never believe what happened. I visited a school last November, a time when most elementary curricula in this area included Thanksgiving-themed curricula and units on Pilgrims and Indians. Zeik, one of the students involved in the district's Title VII program,[2] relayed an experience he had in his second grade classroom. His teacher, Ms. Billings, had organized a unit on the Mayflower and his class was learning about Pilgrims. Zeik shared that Ms. Billings had been reading the class a book and he didn't like the pictures of Native Americans that he had seen. He recounted the images, which included a Native man with his face painted, and another of a woman with feathers in her hair. Zeik said that he raised his hand in class and said to his teacher, "Not all Native

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[1] "Indian" is a complex, and yet highly circulated term (Indian Education, Indian Country, urban Indian, etc.). This story addresses some of the complexity of that term, especially as it relates to a young child. I recognize the term holds diverse connotations, ranging from a source of identity and pride to an offense. Some scholars have gone to task on the word (Vizenor, 1998; 1999; 2014), while others use it because it is the referent commonly used in homes and homelands. I utilize Indian when people use it as a self-referent or as it is used in the literature, but I also use Indian when I am speaking of society's dominant representation of Indigenous peoples, which should hopefully be clear throughout the story and this dissertation.

[2] The Title VII program is a federally funded "Indian Education" program. It is designed "to meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students, so that such students can meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards as all other students are expected to meet" (20 U.S.C. § 7102(a)).

people wear feathers. That is only for Chiefs who earned it. And painting your face is for special times."

I am not sure if Zeik yet knew the Pilgrims encountered Wampanoag people, and not generic Indians. Knowledge of specific tribal diversity or community knowledge is often an effective base from which to critique generic representations of Indians. I would learn later that he didn't learn anything about the Wampanoag from his teacher. Although Ms. Billings had been taught in her preservice teaching program to use a "multiple perspectives" approach and "critically" examine the perspective underlying a resource (including what she termed a "white man's perspective"), she had not heard of the Wampanoag people until our interview. When I asked Zeik why he chose to speak up, Zeik commented that he just didn't like the pictures.

For Zeik, the images of the Indians in the book must have been a stark contrast to his daily experiences with actual Native people who looked, according to Zeik, "just sort of normal I guess." Zeik's comment that feathers are "earned" and "painting your face is for special times" suggested to me that he understood particular aspects of the pictures (the feathers and the paint, for example) as something more than inherently stereotypical. His remark that they were earned and special implied that he saw them as part of a cultural and community context in which those items have a particular meaning. I also learned that Zeik had a particular distaste for the book's use of the word Indian, a word and image that this 7-year old boy already held in contempt at his young age. It's not that Zeik never heard the word Indian. It was used frequently in the Longhouse, by many in the Title VII program, and by elders in the community who often preferred it as a referent. The Title VII program Zeik was involved in was also officially called "Indian

Education." Yet for Zeik, the word Indian had different connotations. Perhaps it was because his family mostly used their tribal affiliation[3] or the word Native, or because the Title VII program, despite the official name "Indian Education," used "Native" in its programming (e.g., Native Youth Group and Native Youth Center). Either way, Zeik didn't like that the book the class read that day used the term:

> I don't like being called an Indian. I'm not an Indian. I'm a Native American. It's like being called a girl gets annoying [because of his ponytail], but being called an Indian gets *really* annoying. Being called an Indian kind of messes with who I am. They use Indian and make them look not smart and I'm Native American and I'm smart. So when they call me Indian they're kinda trying to say I'm not smart.

Zeik's comments reminded me of someone else who had a particular distaste for the word *indian*[4]. Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor (2014) states,

> My argument about Indians all along has been that we just have to change the name, the actual language of reference. Leave the inventions of the Indian to the people who created it, and then we can easily humiliate them for their silly behavior. They invented an Indian, an image that makes them feel good, or not.

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[3] In many instances, there are only a few students or community members from a specific tribal nation, so though I purposefully utilize the tribal affiliations of Indigenous scholars, authors, and artists I draw from, I refrain from doing so in this project for confidentiality reasons. Instead, I use the words Native and Indigenous interchangeably, usually to avoid repetition. I recognize that any such terms (Native American, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native, Indigenous) glosses over and collapses the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of Native peoples and nations; yet I reach for an overarching term, recognizing limitations in such a task, not only in this instance with Zeik, but referring to the experiences of Native/Indigenous students in the district.

[4] Vizenor purposely chooses to represent *indian* in lowercase letters and italicized. In *Fugitive Poses* (1998) he states,

> The simulation of the *indian,* lowercase and in italics, is an ironic name in *Fugitive Poses.* The Indian with an initial capital is a commemoration of absence—evermore that double absence of simulations by name and stories. My first use of the italicized *indian* as a simulation was in *The Everlasting Sky.* The Natives in that book were the *oshki anishinaabe*, or the new people. Since then, Natives are the presence, and *Indians* are simulations, a derivative noun that means an absence, in my narratives. (p. 15)

> The invented name, in my view, has nothing to do with Natives… I created the word *postindian*, a theoretical language and a new idea so that people could say, "No, I'm not Indian, but if you insist, you could say I'm *postindian* because I'm not the Indian that's been invented for popular culture. I came after the invention, and the invention is not me. I'm a young person. I'm not obligated to all that stuff. I didn't participate in it. I'm not an invented Indian, but if you like, you could say I'm *postindian*. I'm a different kind of person imagining myself after the popular cultural indulgence in the invented Indian." (p. 111)

At only seven, Zeik's comments illustrate that he had already experienced a hostile climate: one in which people try to make Indians look "not smart"; one in which people used language as a form of resistance. That context and those experiences impacted how Zeik read and experienced Ms. Billings' curriculum about Indians.

Zeik told me another story, however, that indicated he understood the issue as more complex than semantics or an issue of swapping words:

> My teacher one time asked [the class] "What do you do when you have a problem?" and I raised my hand and said I try to fly high above my problems like an eagle and [the girl] next to me said "That's such an Indian thing to say." …So I guess if she said that's such a Native American thing to say, I'd feel a little better, but not really.

When asked what he prefers, Zeik said his tribal affiliation or Native American as opposed to Indian. However, his observation that in that context, the girl's use of Native American would only make him "feel a little better, but not really" shows that he understood his peer's statement to say more than the particular word she chose to use.

Zeik had already perceived dynamics that suggested whether she said Indian or had said Native American, he still wouldn't have liked what she was trying to tell him. Zeik's experiences afforded him particular insights into classroom dynamics and the curriculum.

In an interview with Ms. Billings, she recounted to me the story in a similar way to how Zeik had told it. She explicitly praised Zeik's insight and courage to speak up in class, a supportive attitude that not all teachers express when their curricular choices are questioned.[5] She stated that she had planned on saying something similar to the class about the images in the book, that this was a historic piece and not all Native people look like that, but that Zeik had "beat her to the punch." Ms. Billings said that the curriculum she worked with often had flaws, but she had found through her years of teaching that having a conversation about the images or curriculum was just as useful, if not more so, than spending time trying to find the most accurate books. Like many teachers I had worked with, however, she also expressed difficulty finding good curriculum, a comment that was always difficult to hear given the wealth of resources available to teachers.

This comment was not surprising as most teachers I had worked with so far expressed a similar sentiment. It also illustrated that being a "good" teacher in this district didn't necessarily require an ability to detect bias and Eurocentrism in the curriculum. Numerous teachers I had been referred to as "good" teachers didn't have this ability. Ms.

[5] Native students who participate in the district's Title VII program have responded in various ways to what they have experienced as inaccurate, stereotypical, offensive curricula or hurtful comments by their teachers or peers in schools. Some students have spoken up publicly, like Zeik, to address inaccuracies or bias, carving out important social, cultural, or academic space in their classroom. Others withstand these moments by resisting silently, choosing to process moments privately with friends, family, or program staff outside of their classrooms. To recognize Zeik's choice to publicly confront the curriculum as a courageous act for a 7 year-old is not necessarily to privilege his particular sort of advocacy or response. Zeik's teacher, Ms. Billings, welcomed his advocacy and was very responsive to his concerns in the classroom. Others have experienced much less supportive responses from educators when made aware of curriculum bias. One Native parent in the area has published several stories regarding incidents in which she was not supported which can be found on Oyate's website under "Raven's story" or "Qala's story" (http://oyate.org/index.php/resources/45-resources/living-stories).

Billings was indeed a good teacher, a great one even. In a Title I school with increasing mandates to standardize curriculum, for example, she still managed to teach project-based science units on catapults, create space for music weekly, and take students to see plays. Further, Zeik was in one of the lowest reading groups at the start of the school year, and with her help, reached the spring benchmark.[6] Zeik also loved Ms. Billings, and rightfully so; she is caring, engaging, and effective. Yet despite being a good teacher, Ms. Billings' inability to detect particular discourses at play in her curriculum impeded the cultural dexterity she needed as a teacher to provide curriculum that supported Native students specifically. Regardless of her intentions, Ms. Billings' curricular decisions positioned Zeik in a way that required him to withstand the bias he found in the curriculum, or to do extra work educating his peers and his teacher. Zeik's courage to correct what he viewed as an inaccurate image in his book reflected what some scholars of color have termed the "hidden tax," or "uncompensated labor" many Native and other students of color experience.[7]

After seeing the text—a *National Geographic* book titled *Pilgrims of Plymouth*—I could see why Zeik spoke up. On the pages he was concerned about, an Indian was dressed in buckskin and furs, his hair in a mohawk, a red cross painted across his face. He stood stoically next to a Pilgrim. Both were standing in front of a log cabin, posing, the Pilgrim standing in the doorway, the Indian standing with his foot resting on the bench outside. Perhaps they were accurate, historicized portrayals of Wampanoag life at the

[6] I should make clear that I do not define meeting academic benchmarks as the sole indicator of what "success" looks like in Indigenous education; nevertheless, it is important that our students achieve in these conventional metrics. I also believe that developmentally, reading happens at different rates for students, yet the consequences of falling behind has material consequences.

[7] Brittany Cooper's (2015) article in Salon for an example of her refusal to perform uncompensated labor (http://www.salon.com/2015/02/25/black_americas_hidden_tax_why_this_feminist_of_color_is_going_on_strike/).

time (though the routine use of Indian instead of Wampanoag suggests otherwise). To Zeik, however, these represented narrow images that he felt compelled to address. What concerned me, however, was not the mohawk, buckskin, or face paint, but the caption above that read, “The Pilgrims got help from their Indian neighbors” (Goodman, 2001, p. 10). I was more concerned about the “settler grammars” and “colonial logics” (Calderon, 2014) that positioned the Indians as colonization’s helping hand.

On the next page, another Indian was kneeling down next to a Pilgrim in a field, a feather dangling from her long, flowing hair, dutifully showing him how to grow corn. Above them was an image showing Pilgrims and Indians trading tools and fur, while the image alongside showcased a lone Indian sitting upright in a canoe, helping the Pilgrims find the best places to fish. Again, I was struck, not by the feather in the young woman’s hair, or the Indian in buckskin in the canoe, but the narrative:

> The Pilgrims traded with the Indians. They gave the Indians tools and cloth. They got animal furs in return. The Indians showed the Pilgrims the best places to fish. They also taught them how to grow corn. (Goodman, 2001, p. 11)

It was hard in these benignly portrayed and mutually helpful relationships to see that many of the colonists viewed the Indians as savages or heathens in need of civilizing or conversion. Where were the accounts of “white man’s savagery”? (Parker, 1916, p. 261). “The antidote to feel good history is not feel-bad history,” historian James Loewen notes but it is at least “*honest* and *inclusive*” (1998, p. 80, emphasis added).

Flipping to the next page, a detailed image of a Pilgrim settlement was spread across two pages that included a fenced garden with various vegetables and herbs, a man dutifully carrying a bale of hay, and another man tipping his hat to a Pilgrim woman as

she wheeled her wheelbarrow. Everywhere in the photo there were busy Pilgrims working in the garden and in the fields, chopping wood and building fences. There were no Indians represented on this page for young Zeik to comment on: no feathers, fur, or face paint to critique. Yet *this* two-page layout as opposed to the prior two was what I found most offensive, violent even. Underneath this image of bustling Pilgrim life was a caption: "The Pilgrims worked hard and their settlement grew" (Goodman, 2001, pp. 12-13). The passive language indicating that "their settlement grew" erased the context of dispossession through disease, encroachment, and colonial violence that made that growth possible. Beyond misinformation, this text was actively *producing* ignorance, which in this case, established the Pilgrims as the new natives (Calderon, 2014). A benign settlement and relationship was being constructed during what was a tumultuous time for Native peoples.

Zeik already had experience and a knowledge base to from which to challenge narrow or stereotypical representations. Nonetheless, as a seven-year old child, he was still vulnerable to Eurocentric narratives offered through mainstream curriculum: narratives that attempted to instill in him a "settler land ethic and identity" (Calderon, 2014, p. 91). He would need more than a critique of the way images of Native people were represented in curricula to resist internalizing the Eurocentric stories and frameworks reproduced in his school. Schools need to stop telling *all* children such problematic and Eurocentric narratives, but for young Native children, the stakes are higher. At stake are not only missed opportunities for them to learn about the courageous resistance and contributions of their ancestors and other Indigenous peoples, but the

curriculum positions young Native children to potentially internalize settler colonial narratives premised on and contributing to their own erasure.

I thought about the missed opportunities embedded in the unit's orientation; this unit was clearing facing West, not "facing East" (Richter, 2001). I also considered the value of situating this history within a context of current relationships and tensions. What if students learned about the efforts of Plymouth 400, for example, an organization based in Massachusetts whose purpose is to create interactive exhibits that examine how events, such as the Mayflower voyage of 1620, shaped America? Working toward a 400-year commemoration of the voyage (emphasized in the title Plymouth 400), the organization's aim is to "highlight the cultural contributions and American traditions that began with the interaction of the Wampanoag and English peoples, a story that significantly shaped the building of America" (Plymouth 400: 1620 – 2020, n.p.)

A unit that began with these contemporary efforts would be an interesting entryway into examining relationships and tensions between Wampanoag people and settlers, past and present. Plymouth 400, for example, has explicitly sought Wampanoag involvement in the exhibit's creation; however, some Wampanoag citizens and tribal leaders have been hesitant to participate, some even refusing. Students could inquire into the legitimate reasons for hesitancy or refusal. Conversely, students could explore why some Wampanoag people, such as Paula Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag), felt participation was important. Peters produced Plymouth 400's first exhibit that opened in 2014, "Captured: 1614," that commemorates and details the capture of twenty Wampanoag men from Patuxet. This exhibit is part of Plymouth 400's broader efforts to include Wampanaog voice and perspective, "Our Story: A Wampanoag History." Situating

parallel accounts that “faced East” (Richter, 2001), a curricular standpoint (Au, 2012) that would have positioned Pilgrims as encroachers on Indigenous land might have, at the very least, unsettled the unexamined assumptions that routinely frame curriculum from the standpoint of the West through narratives of expansion and progress.

A few weeks later, Zeik showed me a packet that he had worked on at school. On the cover was a brightly colored Mayflower ship. Inside were several worksheets from a *Scholastic* book called *50 Month-by-Month Draw and Write Prompts.* The first worksheet asked students to “draw and write about the Mayflower.” In the next worksheet titled “Land Ho!” two Pilgrims looked out over the edge of their boat. Students were prompted to write in the voice balloons “what you think the Pilgrim boy and girl are saying to each other?” Zeik had colored the Pilgrim’s faces with a light peach color. The male Pilgrim had blonde hair. “Shude [should] we land here?” he wrote in the voice bubble of the female Pilgrim. I donte no [don’t know]?” he replied in the male Pilgrim’s thought bubble. I asked Zeik why he wrote that. He responded that the Pilgrims were confused if they should take someone else’s land.

The worksheets were disheartening. I was sad that the same old story is still being taught in schools despite a wealth of material available that provide guidance in teaching different narratives.[8] It was the final worksheet, however, that was the most jarring. Whereas I was already concerned that Native students might internalize settler colonial discourses, this worksheet literally asked Native students in the class to imagine themselves as settlers, to *be* settlers. “If I Were a Pilgrim…” the title of the worksheet

[8] For example, *1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving* (Bruchac & O’Neill, 2001); *Thanksgiving: A Native Perspective* (Seale, Slapin, & Silverman, 1998); or *Rethinking Columbus* (Bigelow & Peterson, 1998); along with numerous online resources such as *Teaching Tolerance’s* (n.d.) lesson “Thanksgiving Mourning” which features “The Suppressed Speech of Wamsutta James.”

read, followed by the prompt, "Imagine that you are a Pilgrim. Then draw a picture of yourself as a Pilgrim." Perhaps there is value in simulation activities, in understanding another's perspective, but it would be hard to see the appropriateness of a worksheet that asked a Black student to imagine herself as a plantation owner, a Jewish student as an SS commander at Auschwitz, or a Japanese student as a director of an internment camp. Somehow, the Pilgrim and Indian myth told in schools didn't connote such violence. Further, the worksheet seemed to presume a white subjectivity.

Like most attempts at Indigenous erasure, this one was incomplete.[9] In the given box, Zeik had drawn a blue sky with swirly rain falling from above. Standing in the middle on a bed of green grass, outfitted in black and wearing what appeared to be a Pilgrim hat, was a little brown-skinned boy. That Zeik had to draw himself as a Pilgrim at all made me upset, but I couldn't help feeling proud that he had colored his skin brown. He would not be erased. What a complicated form of resistance I thought to myself. But for Zeik, it was not that complicated. It was quite simple in fact. When I asked, he told me he identified with the Native people rather than the Pilgrims.

"Then why did you choose to draw a Pilgrim in the box?" I asked him.

He looked at me as if I was crazy. "I didn't have a choice," he said. "The worksheet *said* draw a Pilgrim."

"Why did you draw your skin brown?" I asked him.

Again, he stated quite frankly, "Because my skin *is* brown."

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[9] As Seneca scholar Arthur C. Parker (1916) stated, "The white race in its endeavor to take possession of the continent has experimented with three great plans of dealing with the aborigines [extermination, segregation, and absorption] and none of them has so far entirely succeeded" (p. 252).

Introduction and Overview

This story, through which I offer an alternative view of some typical elementary curriculum, foreshadows both the content and style of the dissertation that follows. In this story, I am both witness and participant. I am an actor in the stories I write—in some stories more central than others. For example, I praised Zeik for his courage and insight in bringing his experience to the attention of his teacher. I shared resources with his teacher. I asked questions of teachers and administrators throughout this study in an effort to educate and provoke reflection. I advocated for children in need. In these ways I have tried to live responsibly within the stories that follow and my research process generally.

The stories told in this dissertation are also, themselves, an act. I tell this story and the ones that follow to make visible what might otherwise go unnoticed in practice. I tell this story to, as Kanaka Maoli scholar Julie Kamoea (2003) offers, "make the familiar strange." It is my hope that this and the other stories, as they are both lived and written, complicate the practices I have witnessed and taken part in, and perhaps even beyond making the familiar strange, I hope they might make the familiar "uncomfortable" (Kaomea, 2003). "I feel it is time to begin to tell more uncomfortable stories; and to tell different stories," Kaomea states (p. 23). That is what my project is intended to do.

As this story also demonstrates, sometimes Native students have keen insights into classroom dynamics that are not always visible to their teachers. I employ storytelling as a way of documenting these insights, and to understand, represent, and intervene into the field of Indigenous and teacher education. Storytelling can be a useful heuristic for considering teacher practical knowledge as stories can attend to both

microsocial and interpersonal dynamics of educational experiences, while also examining the ways macrosocial and discursive dynamics affect those interactions. Tanana Athabascan scholar Dian Million (2014, p. 37) cites Douglas First Nation's scholar Peter Cole to point out the value of stories:

> storytelling is a way of experiencing the world rather than imposing
> decontextualized denotative 'truth' claims
> story is about historicizing culture enculturing history contextualizing
> like poetry and drama storytelling is itself interpretation
>
> *paddle paddle stroke paddle*

Rather than seeking truth, this dissertation is an attempt to develop counterstories (Delgado, 1989) to what appear to be familiar stories of Indigenous education in school, what Castagno and Brayboy (2008) term "business as usual." These stories are based in Lumbee scholar Bryan Brayboy's (2005) conception of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), which is an extension of Critical Race Theory (CRT) that allows me to "address the complicated relationship between American Indians and the United States federal government and begin to make sense of American Indians' liminality as both racial and legal/political groups and individuals" (p. 427) (which I discuss further in Chapter III). My hope is that these stories might sensitize teachers to complex dynamics so that they might provide educational services in ways that foster self-determination and sovereignty for Indigenous students, and minimize negative unintended consequences. Perhaps a teacher reading the story "Pilgrims and Indians" might rethink their own approach to Thanksgiving or a Mayflower-related unit; reflect on the taken-for-granted perspectives or subjectivities that underlie or are presumed by the activities; contemplate

the costs of those assumptions for Native students; or recognize the need to develop what Wayne Au (2012) has termed a curricular standpoint of the oppressed.

Given this premise, this field study surveys the cultural, social, and political terrain of urban Indigenous education in a public school district. This includes efforts to implement a Title VII program (both officially and colloquially termed "Indian Education" by the US Department of Education), as well as various ways Indigenous education is enacted in classroom and school settings. This study explores both constructive aspects of Indigenous education in this context, as well as various constraints and consequences that get reproduced, many of which are unintended yet nevertheless impede educational self-determination. Of particular concern in this study are the various discourses and dynamics that Indigenous students, families, and educators navigate, the cultural and personal costs of those dynamics, and an analysis of what educators might need to understand in order to better serve Indigenous students and families in urban public schools.

Personal introduction. Before outlining my research in more detail, I would like to make a more personal introduction. As Franz Fanon (1963) has stated, "for the native, objectivity is always directed against him" (p. 77). Given this, my work is unapologetically subjective.

Cama'i. Gui Leilani Sabzalian. Oregon-mi suullianga. My name is Leilani Sabzalian and I am from Oregon. I thought it appropriate to introduce myself in Alutiiq, one of my family's heritage languages, because I believe that wrapped in this brief introduction is a glimpse of the complexity of urban Indigenous identity. I have learned to introduce myself in Alutiiq, though I am not a native speaker. I learned this greeting

online with the help of Native language teachers in Alaska. I am indebted to teachers such as Alutiiq scholar April Lakonten Counceller, who generously shared her knowledge with me, a small example of her steadfast commitment to Alutiiq language and people. I am Alaska Native, though I was born and raised in Oregon, not Chignik, Alaska, where my grandmother was born. I was raised not by my Alutiiq family, but adopted by a White family after being placed in numerous foster homes and a long ICWA battle.

My experience, which I learned later in life is not exceptional but rather a common experience, might help clarify why I believe language and stories are so important. Learning the word "transracial," for example, connected me to stories and a community of Native adoptees with similar experiences. The knowledge and community that emerged through naming my experience enabled me to move away from viewing my experiences growing up through a lens of my own cultural deficits, to situating my experiences within a broader strategy of cultural assimilation. Similarly, Vizenor's (1994) notion of survivance has helped shift my understanding of my biological family's experiences away from lenses of pathology, tragedy, or victimhood—perhaps understandable given experiences with mission schools, alcoholism, abuse, and homelessness—and instead prompted me to recognize the courageous acts of women in my family caught within harsh and compromising circumstances. My grandmother's decision to leave Alaska was the best "x-mark" (Lyons, 2010) she could make given her upbringing as an orphan in a Baptist mission school and then later a servant. Her decision to leave Alaska might be condemned by scholars such as Duane Champagne who refer to families like ours as "ethnic Indians," as people who "choose" to abandon their tribal

identities, and are quite possibility a “threat to Indigenous rights” (Champagne, 2014; 2015). At best, he notes, we can be good “allies” in this work. However, I see my grandmother as a woman making the best decision she could for her future given the circumstances. Stories, too, have been healing. When my mother recounts the story of taking my adoptive family to court for years, the story of her commitment to me has been an antidote to the feelings of abandonment I grew up with. The story of how we met inexplicably—even miraculously—12 years after that court battle, while I was an undergrad in Portland and she was homeless, reminds me of the roles spirit and chance play in my life and in this work.

I introduce myself in this way because, as Quechua scholar Sandy Grande (2004) states, “…just as language was central to the colonialist project, it must be central to the project of decolonization” (p. 56). I take this to mean there is value in reclaiming Alutiiq, as well as value in reclaiming English as a “Native language” (Weaver, as cited in Lyons, 2010, p. 158). I tell my students this explicitly because one of my Native students, three years after her involvement in my youth group, admitted to me that she almost didn’t return after the first meeting. Hearing my greeting made her feel embarrassed she didn’t know her own language. And so I tell her and my students, I can say a few words in Alutiiq, but I learned them online; in fact, many of my elders live online. I can filet salmon, but I didn’t learn this through a seamless transfer of intergenerational knowledge; my uncle sends me videos from Alaska. My identity as an Alutiiq woman is enmeshed in what Renya Ramirez (2007), member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, has termed an urban “native hub.”

I also believe in this moment honest introductions are essential for Indigenous scholars. I have written numerous introductions, each one shifting as I engaged with the literature. At one point, I abandoned a personal introduction because Andrea Smith's (2014) work on the "self-confessing subject" led me to believe my introductions and stories were a form of self-confession that would be read in terms of authenticity and "only be read for [their] truth" (p. 210), rather than for what new perspectives I might offer. I chose, however, to follow Sandy Grande's (2004) lead in claiming my identity so directly in these "postcolonial" times (p. ix). In contrast to Smith's (2014) assertion, I situate my introduction not as a "self-confession," but within a longstanding context of Indigenous relational protocols (Brayboy, 2002), typically reflected in questions such as "Where are you from?" and "Who are your people?" It is my responsibility as an Indigenous scholar to answer these questions. I answer them honestly, perhaps providing too much information, as a reminder to those engaging in this work that colonization has interrupted and complicated our lives in different and complex ways, and that efforts to theorize and enact decolonization should address this complexity.

Statement of the Problem

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) in their comprehensive literature review of culturally responsive schooling (CRS) for Indigenous youth question why, despite longstanding critiques aimed at improving Indigenous education in the 1920s (*The Meriam Report,* 1928), and echoed again in the 1990s (*Indian Nations at Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action,* 1991), "policy makers have not taken the suggestions seriously and have continued schooling in a 'business as usual' fashion" (p. 981). They also recommend in their work that

more explicit and sustained attention must be paid to tribal sovereignty and self-determination, the racism experienced by Indigenous youth, and Indigenous epistemologies if educators and scholars hope to move away from the essentializations, generalizations, and easy anecdotes that seem to derive from much of the literature and instead move toward engaging in genuinely culturally responsive learning for Indigenous youth. (p. 943)

This dissertation explores these issues by examining some of the discourses that enable and constrain urban Indigenous education in a public school district. I also document the ways Native students, families, and educators negotiate those dynamics, which oftentimes, as Zeik's story has shown, includes courage, artfulness, and Vizenor's "survivance." The purpose is to understand how urban Indigenous education in this area might be used to further educational self-determination and sovereignty for Native students. Before outlining the practical and theoretical problems my research attempts to address, I want to first clarify my use of some particular terms: discourse, self-determination and sovereignty, survivance, and urban.

Discourse. In Chapter II, I further discuss the term "discourse" as I critically read and analyze one of the stories I wrote with respect to microsocial and macrosocial dynamics. My use of the term discourse draws upon Rosiek and Atkinson (2005), who in turn draw upon Foucault to suggest discourse "refers to systems of symbols, signs, and meanings through which a particular topic or issue is understood by a given social group" (p. 2). As an example, Dakota Sioux scholar Phillip Deloria (2004) opens his book *Indians in Unexpected Places* with a photo:

> I love the image. It's entitled *Red Cloud Woman in Beauty Shop,* Denver 1941. An Indian woman in a beaded buckskin dress sits under a large salon hair dryer. She is receiving a manicure, and one hand soaks in a small dish while a manicurist works on the nails of the other. Glass bottles and an electric timer peer over her near shoulder…I have shown this photograph to many people over the last few years, and, almost always, someone chuckles. (p. 4)

Discourses, as I use them in this project, are the cultural expectations that prompt those chuckles, the backdrop of symbols, signs, narratives that set "expectations and anomalies" (p. 4) for interpreting and responding to that image in particular, and as this study will show, Indigenous peoples more generally. These are not individual interpretations and responses, but often collective, historical assumptions that make Red Cloud Woman appear "strange" or "unfamiliar"; they are what make the beauty parlor an "unexpected" place to find her. Deloria later states,

> If the laughter is not overtly racist in nature, it nonetheless suggests that broad cultural expectations are both the products and the tools of domination and that they are an inheritance that haunts each and every one of us. To chuckle at Red Cloud Woman without malice is perhaps possible. To separate oneself from the history that produced the chuckle is not, and that history contains a full share of malice and misunderstanding. If we ignore the humor of the anomaly and focus instead on *expectations*, we might find the grin wiped from the face of America. (p. 4)

Like Deloria's assertion, this discursive focus does not seek to interpret teachers as racist, but instead to understand the context in which those chuckles happen, the

expectations and cultural discourses that enable and constrain Native students' experiences. My understanding of whether a discourse constrains Native students' experiences involves several judgments: whether or not I believe something is doing harm to Native students, or narrowing their classroom experience somehow; whether a teacher's cultural assumptions are merely mistaken; or whether those assumptions appear to fail internally by professing to "appreciate" diversity, for example, but instead actually foster a hostile or degrading climate. Further, my understanding of whether or not particular discourses, as they manifest in policy or practice, "harm" students or narrow their experiences, is related to whether I see them impeding Native students' sovereignty and self-determination.

Sovereignty and self-determination.

> "Sovereignty! Sovereignty! Sovereignty!" writes Laura Harjo. "It's the battle cry for social justice in Indian Country, but have you ever repeated a word over and over, to the point it starts to look strange to you, and all meaning is liquidated? The discourse surrounding the term sovereignty transforms it into a strange and meaningless word." (as cited in Teves, Smith, & Raheja, 2015, p. vii)

Teves, Smith, and Raheja do not give up on the term sovereignty, but rather locate it as one of many "highly contested" terms in Native studies that needs examination.[10] This section isn't meant to come to closure on the term, but rather make apparent the scholars I draw from to inform my use. As Chickasaw scholar Amanda Cobb (2005) states, "Our understanding of sovereignty must be flexible and negotiable but not so flexible that the term can mean anything" (p. 116). My use of the term sovereignty is

[10] They are not alone. Wunder's (1999) edited collection *Native American Sovereignty* is premised on the fact that "Sovereignty for Native Americans is defined in many ways" (p. v). Lenape scholar Joanne Barker (2005) says the term is both "confused and confusing" (p. 1).

fluid and flexible in this project, a stance that I hope does some constructive work, but that I will reevaluate if it appears to depoliticize the word to the extent it becomes "meaningless" or a "metaphor," as Tuck and Yang (2012) pointedly note has happened with respect to the term "decolonization."[11] Below I will outline the various ways I use sovereignty and self-determination, and the scholars I draw from to do so, highlighting the inherent nature of sovereignty, its legal/political foundations, the affective basis for Indigenous resurgence, and scholars who foreground ideological underpinnings. I then outline self-determination as the struggle toward sovereignty.

Inherent sovereignty. First and foremost, I view sovereignty as *inherent* (Brayboy et al, 2012; Cobb, 2005; Lomawaima, 2008; Lyons, 2000). As Kickingbird, Kickingbird, Chibitty, and Berkey (1999) state,

> Sovereignty is inherent; it comes from within a people or culture. It *cannot be given* to one group by another. Some people feel that sovereignty, or the supreme power, comes from spiritual sources. Other people feel that it comes from the people themselves. (p. 2).[12]

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[11] For exampe, Barker (2005) notes that some "find the links betweeen sovereignty and particular cultural practices, such as certain aspects of basket weaving or food preparation, to flatten out, distort, or even make light of the legal importance and political substance of sovereignty" (p. 21). As Teves, Smith, & Raheja (2015) note, "Scholars have criticized Stuart Hall's version of cultural studies [centering ideological struggles] for diminishing the importance of the political economy. Similarly, the term *intellecutal sovereignty* has been criticized for watering down the concept of sovereignty so that it no longer signifies a political movement for land and self-determination" (p. 10). Vine Deloria Jr. has critiqued "intellectual self-determination and sovereignty," yet has also stated,

> "Sovereignty" is a useful word to describe the process of growth and awareness that characterizes a group of people working toward and achieving maturity. If it is restricted to a legal-political context, then it becomes a limiting concept, which serves to prevent solutions. The legal-political context is structured in an adversary situation which precludes both understanding and satisfactory resolution of difficulties and should be considered as a last resort, not a first instance in which human problems and relationships are to be seen. (as cited in Brayboy et al, 2012, p. 119)

[12] Even in a context of federal encroachment, Native peoples recognized this, such as Joseph Brandt's (Mohawk) appeal to President George Washington in 1794:

> We are of the same opinion with the people of the United States; you consider yourselves as independent people; we, as the original inhabitants of this country, and sovereigns of the god, look

Despite an understanding of sovereignty as inherent, claims to sovereignty take place in a highly politicized context constrained by imbalanced power relationships, which depend upon "recognition by other sovereigns" (Kidwell & Vellie, as cited in Cobb, 2005, p. 119).

Political sovereignty. Characterized in federal Indian law as "domestic dependent nations,"[13] Native nations are among other recognized sovereigns, such as states and other nations, which have a variety of "practical powers" according to Lumbee scholar David Wilkins.[14] Though often limited through a paternalistic relationship with the US, this legal/political basis for sovereignty is what distinguishes Native peoples and nations from other racial or ethnic minorities, recognizing Native peoples distinctly as citizens and descendants of tribal nations and Indigenous governments (Calderon, 2009; Cook-Lynn, 1997; Lomawaima, 1991; St. Denis, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012). This political grounding is also the basis for the federal government's "trust responsibility" for Native students via the Title VII program (Title VII 20 U.S.C. § 7101).[15]

Asserting sovereignty rooted in this legal basis has and continues to be an effective form of advocacy for Native rights (Barker, 2005; Deloria, 1998; Wilkins,

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> upon ourselves as equally independent, and free as any other nation or nations. (as cited in Kickingbird, Kickingbird, Chibitty, and Berkey, 1999, p. 1)

[13] See Chief Justice John Marshall's ruling in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*.

[14] These practical powers include

> . . . the power to adopt its own form of government; to define the conditions of citizenship/membership in the nation; to regulate the domestic relations of the nations' citizens/members; to prescribe rules of inheritance with respect to all personal property and all interest in real property; to levy dues, fees, or taxes upon citizen/members and noncitizens/nonmembers; to remove or to exclude nonmembers of the tribe; to administer justice; and to prescribe the duties and regulate the conduct of federal employees. (as cited in Cobb, 2005, p. 122)

[15] As I note later, the Title VII program serves enrolled tribal members (citizens) or those whose parent or grandparent is enrolled in their "tribe, band, or group" including Alaska Native villages (descendants) (US Department of Education Title VII Student Eligibility Certification).

1997). It has also been a useful curricular orientation in this research as it explicitly intervenes into teachers' "multicultural" framings of Native students and communities by centering issues of politics, nationhood, and governance over narrow understandings of culture.[16] Though political sovereignty is effective, it is also not without its complications. Some students, for example, may not be recognized by their nations for various reasons, and some nations not recognized by the federal government. Some also argue that this understanding of sovereignty foregrounds Western constructions of nationhood and recognition (Alfred, 1999; Coulthard, 2014).

Sovereignty as resurgence. "To argue on behalf of indigenous nationhood within the dominant Western paradigm is self-defeating" states Kahnawá:ke Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred (1999, p. 58). Scholars like Alfred argue that not only does the US have disproportionate plenary power to limit, even terminate tribal sovereignty, but as Alfred and Corntassel (2005) state, "institutional approaches to making meaningful change in the lives of Indigenous people have not led to what we understand as decolonization and regeneration; rather they have further embedded Indigenous people in the colonial institutions they set out to challenge" (pp. 611-612). They argue Western underpinnings preclude an articulation of sovereignty as it relates to the ability to "regenerate authentic Indigenous existences" (p. 610) based on "axes of land, culture, and community" (p. 608). Alfred and Corntassel survey constructs such as "peoplehood" (Holm, Pearson, &

[16] "Politics" and "culture" are neither mutually exclusive, nor easily separable. As Cobb (2005) states, "Government and culture are not separate ideas; each is manifested in and reflective of the other" (p. 123). Nevertheless, educators throughout my research often make this distinction. As a result, in my stories I try to recenter Indigenous culture within the context of politics (i.e., the Hopi nation's efforts to repatriate sacred Katsina Friends), which educators appear to problematically separate and teach decontextualized and narrowly as "culture" (e.g., replicating cultural "crafts").

Chavis, 2003)[17] and "radical Indigenism" (Garroutte, 2003) as promising examples, ultimately offering several mantras for " pathways of action and freedom" for Indigenous resurgence, such as *Land is Life, Language is Power, Freedom is the Other Side of Fear, Decolonize your Diet, and Change Happens one Warrior at a Time* (p. 613). In this project, Alfred and Corntassel's suggestion that resurgence begin on an "individual basis" and radiate outward guides some of this work as the program seeks to empower Native students embedded in a set of familial and communal relationships.[18]

Intellectual and pedagogical sovereignty. Other scholars, however, don't feel it is necessary to give up the term sovereignty. Amanda Cobb (2005) suggests, "Sovereignty is, in effect, cultural continuance" (p. 121), and rather than abandoning the word, argues that "we must use the term sovereignty and the discourse surrounding it as a critical tool to strengthen tribal cultural, political, and economic autonomy" (p. 122). As Grande (2004) states, "the task is to detach and *dethink* the notion of sovereignty from its connection to Western understanding of power and relationships and base it on

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[17] Holm (Creek/Cherokee), Pearson, and Chavis (2003) suggest "peoplehood" as a matrix of language, sacred history, place/territory, and ceremonial cycle as a concept that goes "beyond the notion of race and even nationality" (p. 16) to "better reflect Native American knowledge and philosophies" (p. 17). "A people, united by a common language and having a particular ceremonial cycle, a unique sacred history, and knowledge of a territory, necessarily possesses inherent sovereignty. Nations may come and go, but peoples maintain identity even when undergoing profound cultural change" (p. 17)

[18] Alfred and Corntassel (2005) state,

> Indigenous pathways of authentic action and freedom struggle start with people transcending colonialism on an individual basis – a strength that soon reverberates outward from the self to family, clan, community and into all of the broader relationships that form an Indigenous existence. In this way, Indigenousness is reconstructed, reshaped and actively lived as resurgence against the dispossessing and demeaning processes of annihilation that are inherent to colonialism. (p. 612).

In another piece, *Wasasé*, Alfred (2005) quotes Anishinaaabe spiritual leader Eddy Benton-Benai who states, "Personally, I am sovereign. So sovereignty isn't something someone gives you. It's a responsibility you carry inside yourself. In order for my people to achieve sovereignty, each man and woman among us has to be sovereign" (p. 268-269). Though highlighting both the inherent and indidual nature of sovereignty, this individualism is rooted in an understanding of indivduals nested within communties or peoples.

indigenous notions of power" (p. 53), outlining the intellectual, pedagogical, and spiritual basis for sovereignty.[19] Some scholars—in particular Native feminists in particular—have decoupled notions of nationhood from Western constructions to include land, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual dimensions for example (Teves, Smith, & Raheja, 2015). An elder explained sovereignty to Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson (2015) as "the place where we all live and work together," an understanding of sovereignty and nationhood "that at is core is about relationships—relationships with each other and with plant and animal nations, with our lands and waters and with the spiritual worlds" (p. 18).[20] Distinct from a notion of "nation states," Simpson theorizes individual and collective sovereignty that "begins at home because family—the people we live with, love, and carry with us through our lives—is the microcosm of the nation" (p. 22).

As this project is located in schools, I find it particularly useful to draw from scholars whose conceptions address the ideological and representational dimensions of sovereignty, such as Osage scholar Robert Allen Warrior's (1994) "intellectual sovereignty" and Cow Creek Sioux scholar Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's (1996) "American Indian intellectualism," Ojibwe scholar Scott Lyon's (2000) "rhetorical sovereignty," and Seneca scholar Michelle Raheja's (2010) notion of "visual sovereignty." Though an emphasis on ideological articulations of sovereignty (intellectual sovereignty in

[19] As a spiritual project, Grande articulates sovereignty as "a restorative process" and "a profoundly spiritual project involving questions about who we are as a people" (p. 57). This understanding informed both my own process of engaging this work, as well as the ways the Native community thoughtfully envisioned the community center in the story "My People Don't Wear Medicine Wheels."

[20] Simpson (2015) continues,

> Indigenous thought, which is as diverse as the land itself, roots sovereignty in good relationships, responsibilities, a deep respect for individual and collective self-determination, and honoring diversity. When indigenous peoples use the English words *sovereignty* in relation to our own political traditions, we use it to mean authentic power coming from a generated consensus and a respect for dissent rather than sovereignty coming from authoritarian power or power-over style of governance. (p. 19)

particular) have been critiqued for individualism and potential lack of politics and community responsibility (Deloria, 1998), I draw from those who connect ideological struggles to land, culture, and continuance. Though Lyons (2000), for example, "question[s] the end game of a project promoting Indian intellectuals studying Indian intellectuals," he also recognizes the importance of "a process devoted to community renewal through the paying of attention to the American Indian intellectual tradition" (p. 457). Though Jack Forbes (1998) offers he "would rather see 'intellectual sovereignty' defined as a state we achieve through a steady struggle for self-determination, a result of many cumulative decisions that we make for ourselves as we move toward self-governance and intellectual self-direction" (p. 15), he believes that empowering a "Native intelligentsia" (p. 13) is an important methodological approach to reclaiming the production of knowledge about and for Indigenous peoples. Further, though accused of such, these scholars don't appear to expressly position their work outside of the needs and concerns of Native communities or nations. As Forbes (1998) states, "Scholarship, after all, is a form of community development. Its results should help people" (p. 19).

Self-determination. Like sovereignty, self-determination is utilized in multiple ways. It appears to be understood that we are currently in an era of self-determination (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001), though some contend with so much progress made by tribal governments since the 1970s, and more explicitly between 2000 and today, that our current moment might be better understood as the "Nation to Nation" era (National Congress of the American Indians, 2015). Whether through efforts to regain economic sufficiency, political autonomy, or the opportunity to participate in decision making processes such as the Indian Child Welfare act (1978) and where to appropriately place

Native children, among other expressions, (Gross, 1999), I draw from scholars, such as Brayboy and colleagues (2012), who posit that self-determination is akin to expressions of sovereignty in action. "We take sovereignty to be the inherent right of tribal nations to direct their futures and engage the world in ways that are meaningful to them. Self-determination is the engagement of sovereignty; put another way, self-determination is the *operalization* of sovereignty" (Brayboy et al, 2012 p. 17). Importantly, for scholars such as Brayboy and colleagues (2012) and Deloria and Wildcat (2001), like sovereignty, self-determination is more than political and economic; it is also educational. Further, Wildcat's caution that a re/indigenization of self-determination would "entail a reordering of values and signal an effort to live in a manner respective of the power, places, and persons surrounding us" (p. 140) is instructive educationally, orienting our engagements with self-determination to particular places.[21]

Given these frameworks, I view sovereignty in terms of the processes of schooling and education for Native youth, as well as the purposes and outcomes, and self-determination as an integral part of that personal and communal struggle, which is intimately connected to "survivance" (Vizenor, 1994).

Survivance. In Chapter III, I outline the ways survivance operates as a guiding orientation for the ways I seek out and craft stories. Colonization is not the only story of Native students' experiences in the district, and so in the stories I look for moments where Native students, families, and educators engage in practices of "survivance." The term survivance stems from the work of Gerald Vizenor and has gained traction since the publication of *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (1994), though its

[21] It will become clear, however, that educational self-determination for Native students is heavily constrained by the ways dominant and abstracted notions of Indianness guide curriculum and support for Native students, as just one example.

etymological roots stem from an old English word for survival (Kroeber, 2008). However, arguably before Vizenor reinvigorated the word with a sense of "renewal and continuity into the future rather than memorializing the past" (Kroeber, 2008, p. 25), survivance has been the predominate story of Native America since contact, As an "active resistance and repudiation of dominance" (Vizenor, 2008, p. 11), but always more than merely reactionary attempts at survival, Vizenor coined the longstanding Native praxis of creatively confronting colonial contexts, of Native people "holding on to ancient principles while eagerly embracing change" (Deyhle, 2013, p. 3). "The postindian warriors are the new indications of narrative recreation, the simulations that overcome the manifest manners[22] of dominance," Vizenor states (p. 6). Vizenor has been cautious to define the word, but in the preface of a later edition, offered that survivance is "an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry" (1999, p. vii).

For Vizenor, survivance is a form of "native presence" often enacted narratively. Vizenor (2007) states,

> The stories of *survivance* are elusive, obscure, and rightly imprecise by ordinary definitions, translations, and catchword histories, but survivance is invariably true and just in native practice. The nature of survivance is unmistakable by native

[22] "Manifest manners," Vizenor (1994) states, "are the simulations of dominance; the notions and misnomers that are read as the authentic and sustained as representations of Native American Indians" (p. 6). These are similar to the "cultural debris" Cherokee scholar Thomas King (2012) outlines when depicting "Dead Indians." King states, King (2012) states,

> North America no longer sees Indians. What it sees are war bonnets, beaded shirts, fringed deerskin dresses, loincloths, headbands, feathered lances, tomahawks, moccasins, face paint, and bone chokers. These bits of cultural debris—authentic and constructed—are what literary theorists like to call "signifiers," signs that create "simulacrum," which Jean Baudrillard…succinctly explained as something that "is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none." (p. 53-54)

> stories, and the stories create a sense of native presence, natural reason, active traditions, narrative resistance, and continental liberty, clearly observable in personal attributes, such as humor, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage. The character of survivance necessitates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry. (pp. 12-13)

This project engages survivance narratively, through a process of storytelling and representing moments of "native presence" throughout the work. I look for moments where students or families are engaged in more than mere resistance, more than merely responding to colonialism, but instead engaging in processes of redefinition, adaptability, fluidity, or creativity grounded in both cultural traditions and individual experiences. By reading and representing Native students and families as knowledgeable about their lives, for example, I re-present (Enoch, 2002) Native students and communities who are typically pathologized by educational discourse.

However, as my work engages this fluid concept narratively through representation, it is also a performative praxis of research. Beyond merely reacting to the educational (and colonial) contexts at hand, this work is my attempt to wrestle with how to best serve Native students and families and work with teachers in ways that are future oriented, a "counterimagining" (Kroeber, 2008, p. 29) of what education is and could be for Native students in this area. Further, these research acts of survivance are my way of "assert[ing] a Native gaze on a racially contested landscape" (Deyhle, 2013, p. 6), of refusing to let the dominant narrative of what is happening in the schools I research in be the only story, of creating space to imagine what could be.

This praxis is akin to Lyons (2010) notions of "x-marks," which were lived and enacted dreams of a future, a gift "promised to *and by* our ancestors when they put their x-marks on treaties" (p. 170). Lyons states with regards to x-marks,

> The x-mark is a contaminated and coerced sign of consent made under conditions that are not of one's making. It signifies power and a lack of power, agency and a lack of agency. It is a decision one makes when something has already been decided for you, but it is still a decision. Damned if you do, damned if you don't. And yet there is always the prospect of slippage, indeterminacy, unforeseen consequences, or unintended results; it is always possible, that is, that an x-mark could result in something good. Why else, we must ask, would someone bother to make it? (p. 3)

Unangan scholar Eve Tuck (2014) likened the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) to an x-mark, an act of "Indigenous futurity" prompted by "Alaska Natives desires for the proliferation of land and people, yet also made in a context of competing "settler desires to alienate Native peoples from land" (p. 262). Despite the immense constraints of working in the colonial context of public schools, my research is an attempt to engage in a future-oriented praxis for Native students and future generations of Native students. This work is imperfect but open-ended, and my hope is that by engaging in this lived and relational work, new relations and possibilities will emerge.

Urban. Urbanization is, as Amerman (2010) notes, "both a new and an old phenomenon for many American Indians" (p. 12). Cahokia and Tenochtitlán, for example, are historical examples that disrupt the ideas that Indigenous peoples eschewed "cities." More recently, however, the urbanization of AI/AN people stems primarily from

a wave of WWII veterans relocating to urban areas instead of back to their reservations, and the Bureau of Indian Affair's relocation program among other factors[23] (Amerman, 2010; Fixico, 2000; Lobo & Peters, 2001).

The term urban has varied meanings depending on the discipline. Even within disciplines, like any term, it is contested. For sociologists, "urban education" connotes schooling contexts explicitly characterized by concentrated population density, i.e. big cities. For the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), the new "locale codes" "are based on an address's proximity to an urbanized area (a densely settled core with densely settled surrounding areas)."[24] A large city (250,000 or more) might be considered "urban" for sociologists, perhaps even a "mid size city." Implicitly, the term is also characterized by both race and poverty levels, often referring to schools with a high concentration of students of color and/or poverty. For scholars of Indigenous education, however, though the term can have overlap, urban often has different connotations. Urban, as in *urban Indian, urban Native,* or *urban Indigenous*, is often tied to location, experience, and/or identity of a Native person living—or in this case being educated—outside of tribal homelands or a reservation, though this distinction is complex, contested, and not always clear.[25]

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[23] The Great Depression, the Johnson-O'Malley Act (JOM) of 1934, Termination, *Brown v. Board of Education,* and later opportunities for secondary and postsecondary education also affected urban Native migrations.

[24] The new NCES urban-centric locale codes for cities are:

> 11-City, Large: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.
> 12 – City, Midsize: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
> 13 – City, Small: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 100,000. (n.d.)

[25] Some, such as Lobo and Peters (2001), posit it as a location and an experience. Lobo asks, "Is urban a person or a place?" (p. 73). She responds that "Urban is a place, a setting where many Indian people at

Given this premise, each level within the locale codes of "city" and "suburb" would constitute "urban Indigenous education." I use "urban" broadly to refer to Indigenous education outside of "American Indian areas."[26] In the 2000 US Census, 64% of American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) lived outside of "American Indian areas" (Ogunwole, 2006). In 2010, that number grew to 78% (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012).[27] Although there are rural areas outside of American Indian areas, and the education of AI/AN students in rural public schools is an important issue (NCES, 2012), this study presumes urban Indigenous education to take place within the locale NCES locale codes of either city, suburb, or town.

The city in which I research has roughly 60,000 people, and is characterized as "City, Small" through NCES locale coding. It is adjacent to a city of 160,000 (NCES locale code "City, Midsize"), which is also a university town. Though they are separate

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some times in their lives visit, 'establish an encampment,' or settle into. Urban doesn't determine self-identity, yet the urban area and urban experiences are contexts that contribute to defining identity" (p. 73). The National Urban Indian Family Coalition, though noting the complexity of defining the term, refers to it as an identity using the following definition: "individuals of American Indian and Alaska Native ancestry who may or may not have direct and/or active ties with a particular tribe, but who identify with and are at least somewhat active in the Native community in their urban area" (p. 7). Some take issue with it as an identity as Amerman (2010) notes:

> "Urban Indian" is another somewhat problematic term. Some American Indians who live in cities take issue with the label, perhaps feeling that it carries with it the implication that they have somehow permanently turned their backs on their reservation brethren and reservation culture. (p. 194).

Roger Fernandes, a member of the Lower Elwha Band of the S'Klallam Indians from the Port Angeles area of the state of Washington who was born in Seattle, shares his understanding of the term:

> I am what we call...used to call urban Indian, but it was pointed out to me by a Native elder that when you say "urban Indian," you're putting the emphasis on the wrong thing, that you are an Indian wherever you go, so you should actually be calling yourself an "Indian from an urban area" (Wisdom of the Elders, 2013).

Others, however, proudly embrace the term and identity: "We are urbans! It's wonderful to live in both worlds. Navajos are not just my people. Urban Indians are my people!" (Leleand Leonard (Diné), as cited in Amerman, 2010, p. 195).

[26] The US Census defines "American Indian areas" as including "federal reservations and/or off-reservation trust lands, Oklahoma tribal statistical areas, tribal designated statistical areas, state reservations, and state designated American Indian statistical areas" (Norris, Vine, & Hoeffel, 2012, p. 13).

[27] This number reflects AI/AN "alone or in combination." The other statistics were 67% for AI/AN alone, and 92.1% for AI/AN in combination.

cities, the university and the need to find work contribute to connecting the two cities through constant movement between the two. The adjacent town is also one of ten cities over 100,000 with the greatest population of American Indian/Alaska Native in combination proportions (though is only ranked 24th for cities with highest population of American Indian/Alaska Native alone) (Norris, Vine, & Hoeffel, 2012, p. 12). Though perhaps not "urban" according to sociologists, this context is "urban" for the purposes of urban Indigenous education.

This district is also classified as "low density" according to NCES (2012), a designation given to districts and schools where "less than 25 percent of the student body is AI/AN" (p. 5). This context is particularly important as roughly 90% of Native students attend public schools, with half of those attending low-density public schools (NCES, 2012). [28]

In a setting such as this, where Indigenous students make up roughly 2% of the student population and might be the only or one of a few Native students in a given class, Indigenous education initiatives aren't driven necessarily by a sense of urgency, or what H. Samy Alim (2012) has termed "demographobia," that might compel efforts to support other underserved populations.[29] It is even safe to assume that most educators here view their work not as "Indigenous education," but simply as "education," perhaps with the

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[28] The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) states, "Nearly 90 percent of the 620,000 Native American students attend public schools with their non-Native peers" which are funded by states and subject to state standards and assessments (NIEA, 2008). This is compared to 7% attending BIE schools. As a result, for this project will focus on Indigenous students attending public schools on non-tribal lands in an urban area. This urban context is particularly important for Indigenous education given the Urban Health Institute (UHI) estimates that "66% of the AI/AN population lives in metropolitan areas (over 2.7 million)" (NICWA, 2005).

[29] H. Samy Alim (2012) has used the term "demographobia" to name "the irrational fear of a changing demographic." He links this fear to the "end of white identity politics," but this fear might also be linked to educational efforts that aim to understand how to serve increasing student populations (e.g., Latin@ students or migrant student populations). At 2% of the district population, however, Native students don't compel that irrational fear.

assumption or hope that the education offered all will work for Native students. I maintain, however, that despite the small number of Indigenous students in this district, the education of Indigenous students should still be framed as Indigenous education, or even more explicitly as an educational "trust responsibility" (Charleston, 1994), one of the many "promises which were given in exchange for land,"(Deyhle & Swisher, 1997, p.114).[30]

Given this premise, my research both examines and intervenes into the ways the district implements Indigenous education, attempting to move beyond "business as usual" schooling approaches for Native youth. My research stems from several practical and theoretical problems, including my need to bridge the literature on urban/Indigenous education with this context; our collaborative attempts to develop the Title VII program's possibilities; and the ways I see those attempts ignored, marginalized, or insufficient as an educational intervention as Native students continue to spend the majority of their day in mainstream public school classrooms. Moreover, I want a way to interrupt into the narrow, simplistic, or pathologizing discourses that often circulate around Indigenous education.

A need to contextualize urban Indigenous education. A vast literature base exists for how to better support Indigenous students (Barnhardt, 2009; Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Cajete, 1994; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001;

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[30] Deyhle and Swisher (1997) outline trust responsibility:

> In exchange for nearly 1 billion acres of land, certain services, protection against invasion, and self government were to be provided in perpetuity, or "as long as the grass grows and rivers flow." More than 400 treaties solemnized the transactions—lands in exchange for promises—between sovereigns for nearly 100 years (1778 to 1871), thus creating a special relationship between Indian people and the federal government.
> The foundation of this is one of trust: the Indians trust the United States to fulfill the promises which were given in exchange for land. The federal government's obligation to honor this trust relationship and to fulfill its treaty commitments is known as its *trust responsibility* (Pevar, 1992, p. 26). (p. 114)

Demmert & Towner, 2003; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998; Lipka et al., 2008; McCarty, 2003; McCarty & Lee, 2014). In their comprehensive review of culturally responsive schooling (CRS) for Indigenous youth, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) highlight numerous promising practices of "successful efforts at CRS" (p. 979). The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) in Hawai'i, Rock Point, and Rough Rock community schools on the Navajo reservation, or the comprehensive work in Alaska, all offer promising practices to reflect on and adapt to this context. McCarty and Lee (2014) also illuminate the "possibilities, tensions, and constraints" of critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies as they are put into practice, as their research highlights valuable cases of "Native American educational sovereignty in action" (p. 107). My own experience teaching at a Native Hawaiian public charter school in Hawai'i that was premised on land-based education and Native Hawaiian language, culture, and values also convinced me that culture, rather than merely an add-on to existing curriculum, could be a meaningful orientation to educational processes and outcomes.

Both the literature and my experiences were valuable, yet I struggled to apply my experience and the literature to the setting in which I was working. It became apparent that many of these promising practices were, as Dorer and Fetter (2013) note, "particularly pertinent to tribally owned, private, or charter schools that are characterized by relative flexibility, autonomy, and cultural homogeneity in their schools (p. 7).[31] Castagno and Brayboy (2008) acknowledged the role of cultural context warning: "When

[31] McCarty and Lee's (2014) work addresses public school contexts, but noted "each is a 'special' case of public schooling" (p. 117). They continue,

> …these are relatively small schools serving small minoritized student populations via charter and magnet structures. However, we propose that culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy requires precisely this kind of non- homogenizing attention to local communities' expressed interests, resources, and needs. This responsiveness exemplifies community-based accountability. (p. 117)

the techniques developed for KEEP were then attempted in a Navajo schooling context, similar results did not ensue—thus adding confidence to the conclusion that pedagogy and curriculum *must be developed with the local culture in mind*" (p. 979, emphasis added). In the context of this district, however, there were at least 60 Native "cultures" represented in the Title VII program, a fact that eerily echoed Jeffries and Singer's (2003) observation that "What works beautifully on the Navajo Reservation falls flat on the Rosebud Reservation and may be inapplicable in an urban setting representing 60 different cultures" (p. 54).

To address this, I began investigating the literature on urban Indian/urban Indigenous education (Amerman, 2010; Bang & Medin, 2010; Bang et al, 2013; Bang et al, 2014; Friedel, 2011; Gray 2011; Martinez, 2010; Powers, 2006). The work of Indigenous educators in urban areas offered promising insights, alternatives, and frameworks to orient my work specifically toward educating Indigenous youth in a highly intertribal context where many youth live far from their respective lands and nations, a context that complicates CRS or cultural-based education (CBE) approaches. For example, working with the American Indian Center (AIC) in Chicago, Ojibwe educator and scholar Megan Bang challenges the idea that urban Native youth are landless, illuminating the possibilities in urban Indigenous land-based education when diverse youth work with elders and educators to "re-story" the land as Indigenous (Bang et al, 2014), or has worked to "repatriate" Indigenous technologies by "shifting the ontological assumptions that technologies are Western" (Bang et al., 2013, p. 717). I also looked to NAYA Family Center for guidance, an urban Indian agency whose mission is "to enhance the diverse strengths of our youth and families in partnership with the

community through cultural identity and education" and "impacts the lives of over 10,000 individuals from over 380 tribal backgrounds annually" (NAYA website). NAYA offers a variety of social, cultural, economic, and community supports; however, much of the work of both organizations is based in well-established urban Indian centers. Though both stemmed from small, community-driven efforts, the American Indian Center in Chicago was over 50 years old; NAYA for 40 years. These were important models to pursue, but our program didn't yet have a home.

Title VII as a site of possibility. In 2012, I approached the Title VII program in the district to propose forming a Native Youth group. I spent that fall identifying Native youth (a complicated process I outline in the story "From Explicit to Encoded Erasure"), visiting schools, and asking students what they would want from an after school program. We began meeting weekly in the winter, started offering homework hours and drumming classes through the program, and received a grant for a summer science program that year. My experience with the youth group and the Title VII program instilled hope for Title VII programs as a promising site for CRS in urban public school districts.

A colleague and I co-taught a Native summer science camp where we led youth through geocaching and GIS map activities to identify and map native plants in the area and get to know the land. Based in Unangan scholar Eve Tuck's (2009) desire-based framework, we led the youth through identifying and rendering visible the damage-based narratives that often frame Native youth, opening up space to envision critical and creative alternatives. We dressed students in caps, gowns, and Pendleton[32] stoles so they

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[32] Eighth Generation, a Seattle-based company, is currently the first and only Native owned company to design and distribute wool blankets. This company was not yet around at the time of writing. "Pendleton" has become the stand-in brand for woolen blankets (like "Band-aid" has become the stand in for "adhesive

could envision themselves as college graduates. We organized a photo project at the annual pow wow, based in the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center's (NIWRC) project, Native Love,[33] designed to empower Native people to redefine Native love.

Given the promises of this site, my research initially aimed to better understand how the Title VII program supported educational self-determination, what McCarty and Lee (2014) term "Native American educational sovereignty in action" (p. 107) or what Goodyear Ka'opua (2014) terms "sovereign pedagogies"; yet it became clear that we while were creating promising opportunities in the margins, those gains didn't necessarily impact (and were sometimes even thwarted by) the central processes of schooling. As hooks (1990) notes, the margins are a site of resistance. "Marginality [is] much more than a site of deprivation…it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance" (p.

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bandage"). This new Native-owned company and their use of "wool blankets" has invited me to reflect on the use of "Pendleton" as a stand in, a change I will make in the future.
Our parent committee chose the Pendleton stoles for a few reasons. For one, we were gifted the stoles and they were beautiful. Pendleton blankets and fabric have long-been associated with Native Pride. Blanketing, specifically Pendletons when a person or program can afford them, is an important spiritual and cultural practice. As Cherokee scholar and blogger Adrienne Keene comments:

> In many Native communities, Pendleton blankets are associated with important events, and have been for hundreds of years. They are given as gifts at graduations, at powwow give-aways, as thank you gifts, in commemoration of births and deaths, you name it. In addition, I've always associated the patterns with Native pride–a way for Natives to showcase their heritage in their home decor, coats, purses, etc. There's something just distinctly *Native* about Pendleton to me. (Keene, 2011, n.p.)

She also notes the complexity of the blankets, including the price, for example. Referring to a $700 coat offered by a company in Portland, she says "It almost feels like rubbing salt in the wound, when poverty is rampant in many Native communities, to say 'oh we designed this collection based on your culture, but you can't even afford it!'" Yet ultimately, though it's hard for her to watch hipsters walk around in Pendleton at times, feeling that it borders on appropriation ("To me, it just feels like one more thing non-Natives can take from us–like our land, our moccasins, our headdresses, our beading, our religions, our names, our *cultures* weren't enough? you gotta go and take Pendleton designs too?") she ultimately decided that she wanted to keep associating Pendletons with Native important events or accomplishments, and pride. It was this association—between Pendletons and Native pride—about which our parent committee felt strongly.

[33] More information about the project can be found at the NIWRC website (http://nativelove.niwrc.org/nativelove-youth/).

149). Like hooks, I saw possibilities from the margins. We worked from the margins to develop critical literacy and leadership skills, connect with other Native students and communities and form meaningful connections with the Longhouses on campus. This is not to glorify our work, but to offer that the Title VII program became a valuable educational counterspace (Solórzano et al, 2000; Yosso et al, 2009), a site of resistance. As hooks continues,

> …I was not speaking of a marginality which one wants to lose—to give up or surrender as part of moving to the center—but rather as a site one stays in…It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds. (pp. 149-150).

Yet valuing the margin didn't mean I could condone the marginalization and erasure of Native students in classrooms and schools. Despite the momentum we were building as a program and our increasing visibility to Native students and families in the district, many teachers and administrators were still unaware that the Title VII program, a federal program, existed and offered services to Native students. Further, our work in the margins constituted a few hours a week with students; Native students still spent the majority of their day in their regular classrooms and schools.

Title VII program marginalization. Though the district's formal commitment to Indigenous education encompassed the Title VII/Indian Education program, the fact that educators and administrators in the district were unaware such a program existed constrained those efforts. Prior to our efforts with the youth group, and to encourage a more collective commitment to the program, the district's Title VII program was routinely run by one coordinator who was paid less than full time and responsible for

"Indian education" in the district. This often meant advocating at discipline hearings, attending IEP meetings, or hosting culture nights, an immense amount of work for one person who was not positioned to be successful and not supported institutionally. Furthermore, as an appendage to the school day, culture was structured as an add-on to existing curriculum, a design that was fraught with assumptions, challenges, and perhaps even undermined CRS/CBE practices (Hermes, 2005). As Hermes notes,

> Adding "culture" to a preexisting system of schooling sometimes results in the teaching of culture as content, sometimes in essentialized ways (Hermes, 2001). For example, teaching beadwork or Native dance without a deeper cultural context can intersect with mainstream stereotypes and students' notions of equating a Native identity with these traditions. The teaching of a Native culture-based curriculum must go much further to create systemic change. To reflect the epistemology of the indigenous people, changes are needed in the organization of the school day, the language of instruction, the content, the pedagogy, and the approach. (p. 10)

Further, the program was tasked with disproportionate and unrealistic goals with regards to staffing and actual face time with Native students. Increasing Native students' attendance, school readiness, achievement scores, and graduation rates appeared an impossible task for one coordinator who spent less than a few hours a week with Native students. In this district, that framework for Indigenous education appeared impossible, assigned to an individual responsible for serving 150-250 Native students across twenty schools.

As a result, one contribution of my research has been to raise the visibility and profile of this particular program. As part of a small but committed collective, our work in the parent committee has successfully contributed to the development a Native Youth Center, advocated for the program coordinator to be assigned full time FTE, and established a community council (beyond the required parent community) to support the program. I say this not to laud my part in this work. Any contributions I have made should be credited to the small collective with whom I worked. As a researcher, however, I want to be explicit about my commitments. Though my work will hopefully contribute to the field of teacher knowledge (a promissory note that will potentially impact Native students in the future), perhaps more importantly, my work has been explicitly committed to the Native youth and families currently in the program, the development and visibility of the program, and direct support the Title VII Coordinator.

In my methodology chapter, I will outline Lumbee scholar Bryan Brayboy's (2005) nine tenets of TribalCrit theory. His last tenet, however, has been crucial to this work:

> …there must be a component of action or activism—a way of connecting theory and practice in deep and explicit ways…TribalCrit must be praxis at its best. Praxis involves researchers who utilize theory to make an active change in the situation and context being examined. For TribalCrit scholars who embrace this line of thinking in their work, we must expose structural inequalities and assimilatory processes and work toward debunking and deconstructing them; it also works to create structures that will address the real, immediate and future needs of tribal peoples and communities…The research must be relevant and

address the problems of the community; there is little room for abstract ideas in real communities. (p. 440)

Through our sustained efforts and with new administration, we are currently in a climate of professed and actual support, yet the program in an adjacent district has recently been shut down. My experience has shown me that district administration and political climates can change at any given moment, and although we are gaining program visibility and support, that support is highly reliant on administrator's sympathies and skills. Further, the success of the Center remains marginalized within the district. Though the program has provided youth with valuable educational experiences in the center, students have still felt underserved by mainstream educational practices. Due to the marginalization of the program, the limits of educational counterspaces to redress what happens daily in the classroom (especially as not all Native youth take part in these spaces), along with using my research to supporting the current Title VII Coordinator's desire to develop classroom activities for students and teachers to sensitize them to Native issues, my research scope expanded to include Indigenous education as a both a practice within the Title VII program, as well as in mainstream schools and classrooms.

A need to address context and complexity in teacher knowledge. I also wanted a practice of inquiring into and representing meaningful efforts to implement urban Indigenous education that resisted oversimplification. Some of the literature on how to support and teach Native students, perhaps inadvertently, relied on and reproduced essentializations about Native students. Despite the intention of such scholarship, which often includes explicit caveats that Native students come from distinct rather than monolithic cultures, expressions such as *Teaching the Native American* (Gilliland, 1995)

risked reducing Native students to, as Lomawaima and McCarty state, "one-dimensional proportions" (as cited in Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 954). As Castagno and Brayboy (2008) note,

> Much of the learning styles literature risks either implicitly or explicitly making broad generalizations and essentializing what is actually an incredible range of variation. This work and *the way it is often read* perpetuate racist beliefs and schooling practices. (p. 961, emphasis added)

I want to acknowledge the important role this scholarship has played. As Deyhle and Swisher (1997) note, "This thinking challenged prevailing beliefs of cultural deprivation as an explanatory model for school failure" (pp. 150-151). However, Deyhle and Swisher also reflect on their own research, stating that,

> While we were careful to caution readers of the diversity among tribes (more than 500 different tribes speaking more than 200 languages), we presented research that was generalized to suggest that there is an American Indian learning style. Although this research has been useful in focusing attention on differences in learning styles, we are convinced that it has also been used to stereotype students into specific group styles and to ignore both individual and tribal differences. (p. 151)

To redress this, Deyhle and Swisher focus attention on "tribal-specific research," which I believe can be an important contribution within particular educational settings. As I work in a highly intertribal context, however, I reached for a different sort of practice. Further, as I work in a context where narrow assumptions are made on occasion about Native students (evident in one administrator's comments that Native people are "circular"

thinkers), I moved away from attempting to describe Native cultural difference to a mode of representation that aimed to represent both complexity and context.

Purpose and Goals of the Project

The purpose of this project is, first and foremost, to provide a corrective that can counter the deficit theory that often frames discussions of Native students. Schools have long viewed Native students in need of "fixing," at first through explicitly assimilative and forcible means (Adams, 1995), and later through cultural or economic deficit frameworks "that emphasize what a particular student, family, or community is lacking to explain underachievement or failure" (Tuck, 2009, p. 413). Even more pernicious, argues Tuck (2009), are "damage based frameworks" that look to "historical exploitation, domination, and colonization to explain contemporary brokenness, such as poverty, poor health, and low literacy" (p. 413). As explained in the methodology section, this project will document the complex dynamics Native students and families face in urban education environments to counteract these deficit framings by representing the nuanced intelligence Native students, families, and educators employ in making difficult, sometimes impossible, decisions.

Beyond building empathy and compassion for students and communities, the purpose of my project is to identify the content and sources of the knowledge that teachers, administrators, and policy makers need in order to provide educational services that promote Indigenous student well-being and minimize negative consequences.

The dissertation focuses on the implementation of a Title VII program in a West Coast school district as a site where educators are responsible for explicitly thinking about how to best serve Indigenous students and communities. It also addresses several

educational experiences within classrooms and schools, an expansive scope that serves to remind the district of its responsibility to enact Indigenous education, not just within the Title VII program, but also as an embedded responsibility within classrooms and schools. The study will generate a series of case studies—or counterstories—that problematize over-simplified conceptions of how to best serve Indigenous students and communities. The narratives produced will also identify constructive alternatives to these misunderstandings of culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students. Ultimately the intention is to both contribute to the research literature on Indigenous education and to produce a collection of narratives that can be used in teacher education programs to provide material through which student teachers can begin to appreciate the discursive dynamics Native students, communities, and service providers navigate in the education process.

Research Questions

In this dissertation—Beyond "Business As Usual": Using Counterstorytelling to Engage the Complexity of Urban Indigenous Education—I ask:

- What are some of the discourses within the Title VII program and the Oakfield[34] School District that enable and constrain Indigenous education, self-determination, and sovereignty?
- In what ways do Indigenous students, families, and their allies navigate these discourses in their efforts to access educational service?
- What do educators and other service professionals need to know about these dynamics in order to provide educational services in a way that

[34] Pseudonyms will be used throughout this study in place of identifiable information such as places, schools, and names.

fosters educational self-determination and sovereignty and minimizes the negative unintended consequences?

It is my hope that in asking these questions, the answers and analysis will benefit educators working with Indigenous students in public schools, teacher educators who prepare educators, and policy makers whose decisions impact Native students in public schools. Identifying the way individuals are constrained by limiting discourses and highlighting the way students, families, and allies courageously and constructively traverse these discourses will contribute to the literature on culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy in the field of education, and the literature on self-determination and survivance in education.

Scope of the Study

This field study surveys the ways Indigenous education has been implemented in various ways throughout an urban public school district. At times, this entails activities within the Title VII program and recently established Native Youth Center (which I detail the process of its establishment in the story “My People Don’t Use Medicine Wheels”). Other times, because Native students spend the majority of their days in schools and the classroom, I write about the ways Indigenous education is enacted in these spaces, outside of the Title VII program’s purview. This is not meant to be an exhaustive or comprehensive portrayal as there are 22 schools in the district; rather, it is meant to provide various glimpses into the types of education Native students are receiving in classrooms, education that, at times, constrains the Title VII program’s ability to serve Native youth, especially to meet the lofty goals of increasing graduation, attendance, and achievement rates.

As such, these counterstories illuminate Indigenous education in various iterations in the district, ranging from a 5th grade unit about Native Americans; a 5th grade teacher's exploration of how to better serve one Native student in her classroom; an administrator's struggle with supporting Native students' desire to wear Pendleton stoles to graduation; the district's system of reporting and collecting demographic data that supports civil rights yet encodes Indigenous erasures; an elementary school's initial attempt at addressing Native Heritage Month; my ongoing work with one teacher to shed colonial discourses that frame Native people as desirable exotic Others; and our community efforts to create a Native space that respects Indigenous difference while fostering a sense of community and solidarity.

I have pursued and represented what might appear to be scattered snapshots of the types of education Native students are receiving in this district (and the types of education offered about Native people) to support the claim that "colonization is endemic to society" (Brayboy, 2005), detailing the various ways colonization *continues to* shape educational experiences for Indigenous youth in schools. Expanding the scope has been a way of attending to one of Brayboy and Castagno's (2009) recommendations for policy and practice regarding Indigenous education:

> Educators must pay more attention to the ways colonization, racism, and power matter in educational settings and work towards more effective and longer-term pre-service and in-service training that helps educators understand and strategize about their role as agents for social change and greater educational equity. (p. 49)

These stories are my attempt to take up this recommendation by surveying the ways "colonization, racism, and power matter" in this particular district, with the hopes it

might provide educators a heuristic to examine the ways these discourses may play out in their current or future educational settings.

Outline of Chapters

Rather than a formal literature review, in Chapter II I begin with a story. I then engage in a brief analysis of that story by attending to two levels of educational intervention—a focus on microsocial and macrosocial dynamics. Though not intended to draw a rigid dichotomy, I engage the ways such units of analysis support and impede teacher agency and responsibility. This overview is used to justify the practice of counterstorytelling I propose which attempts to intervene at multiple levels, keeping in mind individual, interpersonal dynamics, as well as the social, discursive dynamics. I posit that without the situatedness of stories, the analyses I present in this chapter run the risk of being decontextualized, and that it is through stories that we can best understand the nuances of teaching and learning.

Chapter III details my methodology of counterstorytelling. I begin by situating counterstorytelling as a longstanding Native practice. I then explain how I came to view Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) and counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1989) as an appropriate theoretical framework and methodology for this study.

In Chapters IV through X, I present the findings of my research, which are a series of counterstories, each one presented as its own chapter. Each counterstory stands on its own, detailing a particular experience with pedagogy, practice, or policy in the district. Taken together, however, I believe they support the assertions of scholars such as Castagno and Brayboy (2008) who argue that colonization continues to shape the experiences of Indigenous youth in schools.

In chapter XI, I discuss and analyze the stories with respect to teacher practical knowledge, highlighting instances where concrete and conceptual knowledge was evident or could have been developed. I then suggest that while teachers need these knowledges, they must also move beyond teacher knowledge toward a relational practice of educational engagement with attention to ethics and politics. I suggest care, courage, and connection as a useful framework to guide the negotiation of relentless colonial discourses in order to better serve Indigenous students.

In the final chapter, I review the purpose and scope of this study. I provide the limitations of this work, as well as several implications for school districts, teacher education programs, state policy, and research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

I begin this chapter with another counterstory, "Spirit and Pride," which will provide context for the literature review. This story details a critical literacy activity with the Native youth group we started in the district. I believe this story portrays both the promise of educational counterspaces (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso et al., 2009), while also reminding mainstream educators of their responsibility to support Indigenous students in their classrooms, as I highlight an instance where taken-for-granted discourses constrained student support and impeded a young Native student's self-determination.

Following the story, I provide two frameworks for analyzing the story—one which examines the story through a lens of microaggressions, attending to the moment through an interpersonal lens; the other a discursive examination, moving the interaction beyond the scope of individuals to the macrosocial, discursive dynamics that might have shaped their interactions, making certain actions or reactions impossible. I evaluate the merits and limits of both units of analysis, in the end proposing storytelling as a way to account for the complexity of those multilayered dynamics, while also providing a means for intervention, laying the groundwork for justifying storytelling as praxis in my methodology chapter. I also recognize the precedents set for this work by narrative researchers by situating my work in conversation with those engaging narrative works within the field of education and teacher education.

Counterstory # 2: Spirit and Pride

"Let's go now! Let's go now and protest!" yelled one student.

"Yeah!" said another. "Let's make posters and stand out front!"

"I appreciate your enthusiasm," I said. "I'm glad you feel passionate. And I want to go there too…but how are you going to respond when someone asks why you're there?"

"It's so wrong!" said one student.

"Yeah!!!" echoed the others.

"But what's wrong about it?" I asked. "How are you going to respond when someone says: 'But I am honoring you.' Or 'Quit being so sensitive.' Believe me. I'm half tempted to take you there, but you need to be prepared."

The Native youth in my after-school youth group—a mix of 9th through 12th graders—were responding to a series of photos I had printed out from the Spirit Halloween website. I showed them the costumes for sale—Naughty Navajo, Chief Big Wood, and Pocahottie—along with their descriptions. "Put the wow in pow wow…" and "Is that an ear of corn in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?" they read.

We read the descriptions in small groups. The youth were outraged, but they also laughed goofily and incredulously like teenagers. They were confused and angry, but struggled for the words to express what they were so upset about. And so we began the process of understanding what exactly makes the Halloween costumes on the Spirit website so offensive. We talked about the way they sexualized women (a word offered by one of the parents). We talked about how they represented men, too. Could men be sexualized they wondered? We talked about how the "costumes" weren't the same as regalia. How feathers in headdresses were earned, not just worn by whomever. "My people don't even wear headdresses," said one kid. We discussed how the costumes all looked the same—brightly colored feathers, brown suede and buckskin, beaded fringe.

“And my people don’t wear fringe and beads like that,” said a girl whose tribe is from Northern California. “We use shells.”

After searching a bit online, we found Spirit’s response in defense of their use of Native “costumes.”

> “All of these accessories and outfits may only be a simulation of how these noble people lived, however, showing them deference and respect by keeping their memory alive in the traditions of America… is a great thing.”

“Lived?!?!” shrieked one student. “This makes us seem like we no longer exist.

“Listen to this part!” said one.

> “… don’t look at it as disrespectful. Let them in on the knowledge that for a thousand years, before there were cities and highways and the Internet, there was a race of people living amongst the animals and trees.”

“Living among the animals and trees?!?!” said another.

And so we began to write. The kids identified themes: the idea that there are many nations/cultures, not just one; that Natives were depicted in the past, as if extinct; and the way the website treated women and men like sex objects. After brainstorming and writing and revising, with the help of parents and volunteers, the youth wrote their letter. They were exhausted and proud. The letter read:

> Dear Spirit Halloween Store:
>
> We are so thrilled that you are in the business of bringing Halloween spirit to people in our community. Thank you for sharing so many ways for people to express themselves this holiday.

We believe, however, that you have a few misconceptions about us as Native people and Native culture that we would like to address.

First, there is no one Native culture. There are over 566 federally recognized nations in the US, among other Native groups. Each nation has their own beliefs, traditions, languages, and can't be categorized as one group that wears fringe and feathers.

Second, we feel that your costumes exploit not just Native women, but all women. Did you know that Native women are more likely to get sexually assaulted or raped than other women? We believe costumes like this objectify Native women and perpetuate violence toward them. You should help us by not selling costumes that portray our Native women like sex objects.

Finally, when you talk about us in the past tense on your website, we do not feel honored. You make it seem like we no longer exist. We are here, we have always been here, and we will always be here.

It's important to us that you think about what you are teaching to the young children in our community. We do not feel like a "noble race of people" when you continue to sell these costumes. In fact, we feel degraded. We would like to know what you are going to do about our concerns. We trust that you will address this by next Halloween.

Sincerely,

The Oakfield Native Youth Group

We wrapped up for the day and agreed to send it off to Spirit Corporate Headquarters and post it on their Facebook page as well as ours. Spirit Halloween Store

immediately deleted the letter from their Facebook page and we never heard a response from corporate headquarters. There was mixed reaction to the letter from our community via our program's Facebook page. Some supported our efforts wholeheartedly, asking where they could send a letter of support. A few thanked the youth and expressed admiration that they were asserting their pride in such a way. One parent criticized the letter, calling it a "sad shame" that the youth had to "make a big deal out of it." This parent said after reading the letter her son no longer wanted to be a part of the program. These responses illuminated the fact there wasn't a singular "Native" opinion to an issue. Like any community, there was internal diversity and disagreement.

The next evening I received an email from Celeste, one of the students in the youth group. Celeste didn't normally send or answer my emails, so it was unusual to get an email from her. The first words of her email read, "I need help," followed by several paragraphs in an urgent tone explaining what had happened that day. Celeste had felt inspired by our project and decided to propose the topic of cultural appropriation in her art class called "social injustices":

> "… I brought up the Native American Stereo Types [sic], and the whole costume thing," she said.
>
> "The teacher kind of put it down, saying that these stereo types [sic] don't offend her, so we are over reacting [sic]. This is what they really wore, and there's no way anyone could get anything authentic to wear on Halloween… We are honoring them as they once lived. Cowboys don't get offended when kids dress up like them, why should Native Americans?

> I felt so... flabbergasted in this conversation. I just couldn't find the words to fight back. What can I do to help people understand? I don't want to get anyone in trouble, because I like this teacher... but I don't want to sweep this under the rug either."

Celeste left our youth group feeling so empowered, only to be shut down and silenced at school. I wrote her back immediately, telling her she could call me if she needed, and offered to meet with her. I let her know I could speak to her teacher if that would be helpful, or coach her if she wanted to meet with her teacher again by herself. I told her how proud I was of her for using her voice and trying to take on such important work. It is tough to speak up about these issues and say things in a way others can actually hear them. I attached some links to blogs and infographics for her to look at. Addressing these sorts of issues takes practice and sometimes it is often helpful to see the ways others use their voice so that we can find our own. She thanked me, and said she'd get back to me.

The next week, our group met. We talked about the letter and how we felt. There was still confusion, even disagreement, about the project. One young man, Donovan, said he spent a lot of time thinking about it, and disagreed with what we did. "What if we're proud? Why *shouldn't* we be able to dress up like Native Americans?" he asked. "That's the problem," said another. "You *are* Native, so what you're wearing now is Native. My mom always asks little kids, 'What do you think Natives wear?' They always respond feathers, etc. And then she says, 'I'm Native. What am I wearing?' 'Jeans,' the kids say. 'That's right', she says. 'We wear jeans. We're Native and we wear jeans.'"

The group discussed this back and forth. Some of the themes surfaced in the form of questions: Is it the same when *we* dress up? Can Natives actually *dress up* as Native? What does that even mean? It was clear to me that the students wanted to be able to show Native pride, but they deliberated whether that pride could only be expressed with feathers and beads. They wondered aloud to each other if it was okay for non-Natives to wear those things. I hoped that I was helping create a space for students to critically reflect on these issues and come to their own conclusions. I thought I was creating that space; however, Donovan's comments and clear ambivalence made me question whether the space felt open to him and his questions a week earlier.

When the conversation died down, Celeste took the opportunity to share her dilemma with the group. She told them how excited she was to propose the project, and then how crushed she felt when her fellow students and her teacher, Sharon, didn't recognize her issue as legitimate. She reported to the group that her teacher made the following comparison:

> My heritage is Irish and German and French, but, people dress up for St. Patrick's Day, and I personally wouldn't be offended by somebody dressing up like a leprechaun or whatever.

Celeste commented, "With the empowerment of Native and whatever we're calling ourselves [laughter]…writing to Spirit and talking about the changes in our community, talking about our past, our present, and our future …I really felt like I needed to become a part of that; that I needed to share with the world that we are here." Yet throughout this process, Celeste made excuses for her teachers and classmates. "…I don't want to put down this teacher," she said, "because she's a beautiful person and I'm pretty

sure she thinks she's doing right, but I don't really have the guts to tell her that she's kind of offending me." Celeste excused her teacher's behavior because of her good intentions. She was in the process of developing a critical consciousness, but also learning how complex it is to navigate using that critical lens with folks she cared about. Yet this desire to protect her teacher came at her own expense. Rather than helping her develop her cultural identity and critical consciousness, her teacher served as a barrier to doing so.

The youth offered support to Celeste, and she smiled and thanked them. One of the interns for the program also spoke up to support her. "You know, I go back and forth on this issue of cultural appropriation. I sometimes wonder what the big deal is. But I then remember how much racism and sexism there still is. It may not seem like it here in this town. You can walk around here and feel pretty good. But on the reservations, it's still a big issue. Being Native there isn't always a good thing. Native women still get raped. In my home community, they are still raped and often missing… and no one looks for them. And the stereotypes and costumes reinforce that idea, that it's okay to be violent against women."

Celeste thanked her and everyone else for their support and said she would think about how she wanted to move forward. There were a number of directions Celeste could have gone. She could have listened to her teacher's suggestion that she take up a more "important" issue, such as "women's issues" more broadly (not seeing how sexualized portrayals of Indigenous women *is* a women's issue). Or she could have done double the work, pursuing her idea during her own time while also completing a project her teacher found acceptable. Celeste ultimately picked a new direction for her art project. Similarly, although the youth group considered doing more than simply writing the letter to the

company, considering several different options, we ultimately got wrapped up in different projects and lost momentum over winter break.

Two months later, when interviewing Celeste and her mom for my dissertation, I brought up the conversation about the Spirit Halloween store. I asked her why she did not follow through with her idea for the project in her art class. She caught me off-guard:

> "I know, and I wanted to," she said. "But then we had that *other* conversation in group, about how something someone said made me feel that…that it's not as important as women being raped on the reservation. And I'm like, dude, I don't know anything about that. I didn't even know what a reservation really was because I haven't been raised in that setting…"

The conversation we had in youth group was *supposed* to empower her. She was *supposed* to see how little acts of violence, like stereotyping, could lead to greater acts of violence. She was *supposed* to see herself as connected to the violence that happens here and everywhere. But she didn't. She stopped, feeling like her issues were not as important. She situated herself even lower now on a continuum of authenticity and identity. And what's most disconcerting … I hadn't picked up on it.

In that moment I was reminded how insidious settler colonial discourses are; how they are always at play, even when as teachers we might try to make them visible or resist them. I didn't blatantly minimize Celeste's concerns as her teacher Sharon did when she made the analogy to St. Patrick's Day and leprechauns. Not only didn't her teacher understand the hurt Celeste felt by the disavowal of costumes that she clearly thought were racist caricatures, she also didn't consider cultural appropriation a part of more important or pressing concerns, such as "women's issues." Yet although I was conscious

of these issues and explicitly tried to create space for these types of conversations that too often get overlooked or trivialized, I didn't track the ways discourses of identity, authenticity, and belonging were affecting Celeste. Given Celeste's frustrated attempts to pursue her project, I thought the real issue affecting her would be how her teacher minimized her concerns, so I reached out and offered some informal professional development around these issues.

But when Celeste told me the activity I organized and the conversation in our youth group made her feel less authentic, like her experiences as a Native weren't the "real" and violent ones from the rez, I was disappointed. I didn't pick up on the unintended consequences of my own lesson. I have spent so much time as a Native woman in this field, living and breathing Native education, thinking critically about how to best support Native students. But during that lesson, I failed to keep in mind that for these students, there is often a lot at stake with the lessons we plan, the questions we ask, and the answers we give. Intimately interwoven with these are underlying questions of identity and belonging. I was reminded by my student how settler society discourses can encapsulate and distort even conversations between Indigenous people and make it difficult to hear and support one another. It reminded me how much work lay ahead, how complex these issues are that we face, and most importantly, of Celeste's courage and resilience to negotiate these dynamics while even taking care of her teacher and me in the process.

This conversation also made more apparent to me the courage and resilience Celeste showed while negotiating these dynamics, largely without effective adult guidance. Through it all, she retained a compassionate frame of mind, regarding both her

teacher and me with generosity and forgiveness. "I mean your intentions were pure," Celeste said. "But… in trying to teach me…a lot of time in teaching one thing, another thing splits through it."

It's important to note that Celeste and I have met frequently since this incident and our meeting that day in the youth group. She is still in my youth group, recently took part in a summer academy for Native students that I taught in, and is an active member of our new community center. Despite what I think is a fairly vibrant relationship with Celeste, I had never heard her experience of my lesson and of the things that "split through" it until our interview when I explicitly asked her to recount the events. This had me thinking of all of the moments in teaching and learning that I might be missing, despite trying to track students' relationship to the content, to me, to each other, and to their future. And yet, in an ongoing relationship with a student like Celeste, I have come to understand that despite occasionally missing moments that were jarring for her, like the one she conveyed to me, my ongoing presence and responsibility to her as a mentor and teacher, in many ways, counteracts those slips. Though Celeste ultimately never created a project for her art teacher on cultural appropriation, she didn't let it go. At the Native summer academy, armed with new Native Studies literature and a community of Native peers who respected her as an artist, she created a powerful piece on Pocahontas that she believed represented visual sovereignty. She didn't let up on her desire to create the piece she had envisioned; unfortunately, the students and her teacher at the time didn't get to witness her creativity and resolve. She also declared that summer to the academy staff and her peers at graduation that one of her new goals is to create art with a purpose, and she hopes to utilize her artistic skills to raise awareness of issues facing

Native people. As an outstanding artist and emerging leader, I look forward to witnessing the work she creates. She also hadn't let up on her care and concern for her teacher. When I spoke with her recently and let her know I was going to meet again with her teacher to discuss these things, she said, "Just make sure she knows I love her."

It was not until the summer before the following school year that I met with Celeste's teacher to follow up on our earlier conversations. Sharon had a new boyfriend of color that was educating her on some "hard facts" of racism. She said that she was learning a lot and had requested we schedule another interview, because she wanted to talk about her curriculum for the next year. She felt so strongly at one point during the interview that she began crying:

> When you feel something here [pointing to her heart], it's not about prestige or money or whatever…it's because it's the right thing to do. I'm going to cry…I feel really [laughs]…I want to say it's more than this relationship, but he's really opened my mind and heart to it. Because it's totally so wrong, but I have cried a lot this summer. It's so intense. And now I'm feeling better. I can see things without feeling so personally attacked. At first I felt so personally attacked, and ashamed. I felt so much shame and guilt.

We discussed how guilt and shame were often roadblocks, and that what people need are allies and committed action. She was ready to move past the shame and create space for these ideas and discussions in her classroom. Celeste's teacher, through her new relationship, was gaining an intimate sense of what racism looked like and wanted to address it in her curriculum. Yet even during this follow up interview, she couldn't grasp the way costumes—the issue Celeste brought to her attention the previous school year—

might be offensive and racist. She was persuaded that they honored Native Americans, and was even caught up in the romance and mysticism of Native culture. “Could this ever be an honoring,” she asked. “You know what I mean? When I hear Native Americans like Chief Seattle…there’s a part of me that, you know, I wish I could put war paint and breast plates [signaling to her chest] and honor it…”

Despite her good intentions, and despite the new understandings of race and oppression unfolding before her, she couldn’t relate the concern Celeste brought to her attention to what she understood about Native people. Celeste’s concern was in direct competition with her teacher’s imagination that was still bounded by colonialist discourses that limited Native Americans to great chiefs, regalia, and war paint. Thus her desire to respect Indigenous people was discursively distorted into a caricature of putting on war paint—a gesture that would not only be silly, but would also be purely symbolic and not require any effective material solidarity with Indigenous survivance struggles.

Later in the conversation, still not understanding how this issue was offensive to Celeste personally, and Native people more generally, Sharon stated, “Take this for what it is. You can confront me. And it’s okay…” She shared how she recently discovered her great grandmother was Native American, and how she was also Irish, among other heritages. Since Irish was “most prominent for her” as she put it, she repeated to me a version of what she had told Celeste and also told me in our previous interview months earlier: “If somebody dressed as a leprechaun, and I’m just giving you an analogy. For me personally, that wouldn’t offend me.”

I realized through this process that coaching a teacher to become sensitized to the challenges and tensions that Native students face would first mean unsettling the colonial

discourse that she was so deeply embedded and invested in. I naively thought that by countering her leprechaun analogy with a quip that Native people, unlike leprechauns, are real, it would unsettle her view and cause her to rethink her stance. By making visible her own conflation of mystical creatures and people, I thought she would reflect on her own logic and come to understand how Celeste felt hurt by it. But after meeting with her repeatedly and hearing the same rebuttal, despite sincere intentions, I could see that the discourse she was firmly rooted and invested in would take more to unsettle. We plan on working together this school year and I am hopeful. Despite a lack of knowledge around these issues, she demonstrates a clear commitment and a tolerance for discomfort. In our most recent exchange, she shared that she is "humbled and honored to do this work…Challenging conversations and ugly truths, hoping to open perspectives."

Engaging the Story

Rather than a conventional literature review, in this chapter I engage the counterstory *Spirit and Pride* as a way of thinking through my approach to research on teacher knowledge. I begin by putting the story into conversation with two approaches to developing teacher knowledge I have seen, which include an understanding of teaching and learning as an intimate and interpersonal act (rife with individual microaggressions and acts of compassion), and a broader macrosocial view of education (attending to the cultural discourses that shape possible experiences). By developing a multilayered framework for analyzing Celeste's case and exploring the case from multiple vantage points, my intention is to offer an expanded understanding of the knowledge educators need in order to responsibly educate Indigenous students without claiming there is one right way to think about such things. I offer this analysis and review not as an exhaustive

unpacking of the dynamics of the story, but as a way of justifying my methodology of storytelling (which I further explain in Chapter III). In the end, I suppose if I claim one thing about teacher knowledge and experience, it is that it is narrative in nature, and thus, we need stories to make sense of and transform our actions within educational experiences.

I begin with an examination of the role of the teacher and student in this case, and highlight the possibilities and limits in looking at individuals within the case. I then move to the broader sociological context that supports and limits their particular viewpoints, and consequently shapes the thoughts, habits, and actions available to them. From there, I propose a practice of counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1989) that attempts to intervene at multiple levels, keeping in mind individual, interpersonal dynamics, as well as the social, discursive dynamics. I posit that without the situatedness of stories, the analyses I present here run the risk of being decontextualized, and that it is through stories that we can best understand the nuances of teaching and learning. I hope that thinking through the case in this way will enable future pedagogies that attend to issues of intercultural conflict and individual and collective responsibility.

Zooming in: Analysis at the scale of the individual.

Celeste. It is no surprise that some students, especially those from underrepresented and underserved communities, don't feel that they belong in school. When a student such as Celeste doesn't feel that her voice is heard, this can feed a sense that she doesn't belong. This case study illustrates, however, the courage, resilience, and survivance (Vizenor, 1994) shown by many Indigenous students and Celeste in particular, reflecting the burdens, struggles, and critical hope they shoulder throughout

the schooling process. Celeste is not a victim of the teacher's actions or inaction, though she may have been hurt by it. Celeste navigated dynamics of which we weren't even aware, and moved through this story and her experience with courage, knowledge, and strength, and she took care of her teacher, and me, in the process.

Celeste and I have worked together for several years. As one of the founding members of our Native Youth Group, we have grown close and shared stories, laughter, and friendship. I have learned a lot from her in this process, specifically about kindness and compassion. As a light-skinned young Native woman, she has experienced tensions from both within and outside of the Native community about her identity and authenticity. As I have watched her grow into herself and seen her negotiate hurtful dynamics with humor and grace, I carry with me her reminder that sometimes people learn best through kindness, compassion, and humor.

In our first interview after the events in the case study transpired, she wanted to make sure I was "nice" to her teacher and to let her know that she "loves her." One read could be she is afraid to confront her teacher, worried about the consequences for her personally or academically as a result. But after some discussion, it was clear that Celeste cared deeply for her teacher, and like many people in caring relationships, didn't want to hurt her feelings. Much like my own son, who already at the age of 7 has been hurt by teachers and students in his school, but cautioned me to make sure no one got "in trouble" if I brought the issue up (these were his friends and beloved teacher after all), Celeste demonstrated this same concern for her teacher. As she stated in her initial email to me, "I don't want to get anyone in trouble, because I like this teacher... but I don't want to sweep this under the rug either." She was caught in the complex space between

critique and care, between care for herself and for her teacher. Moreover, because this issue was so important to Celeste, yet not something that her teacher deemed as worthy of a social injustice project, Celeste stated, “I'll just have to do two projects.” Celeste shouldered the burden of both caring for and educating her teacher and classmates, as well as demonstrated a willingness to take on twice the workload to engage in a project that was meaningful to her. That is a heavy load for our youth to carry and we must recognize their strength and survivance when they do so.

In my response to her panicked email—where Celeste outlined her dilemma that her teacher didn’t understand her concerns; that she wasn’t offended, so Celeste shouldn’t be either; and that dressing up was actually a way of honoring Native people as they once lived—I let her know I was proud of her for trying to use her voice, that it took courage to do so, and that I could help her connect with her teacher if she wanted. Celeste was no victim: she was brave, creative, and brilliant, and I wanted to recognize and encourage that in her. Yet to focus on Celeste, to view how she weathered a particular storm, or admire her character or resilience, is not enough. To focus on Celeste as a student, on what she was able to shoulder, on how she tolerated or overcame a moment, might get problematically uploaded into discussions about student resilience, or what currently in the education world is being termed “grit” (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007).

Influenced by psychological frameworks, these framings view intelligence as one aspect of student success, but also seek to uncover other factors such as passion, effort, and perseverance, what some researchers call “individual differences that predict success” (Duckworth et al., 2007). Pedagogies based in psychological framings

encourage educators to foster these particular individual attitudes and habits—resilience or grit, for example—to build students' character in order to achieve educational success.

To focus on the individual student is seductive. When weighing the time, energy and collective efforts it would take to confront complex systemic issues to better support an individual student against the more immediate and satisfying project of adequately equipping that student to tolerate such a system, it is easy to see why targeting efforts toward supporting students makes sense. It is individual students who negotiate the daily dynamics of school, and who will continue to negotiate those dynamics throughout their schooling and professional endeavors. To focus on Celeste, on how to better equip her with the critical voice and analytic tools she may need now and later, or to figure out what constitutes "grit" or resilience and to nurture that trait in her, might appear more manageable, especially when locating these challenges in larger social processes can leave a teacher or researcher with feelings of despair.

In my first conversation with Celeste's teacher Sharon, her initial reaction was to redirect the focus onto her student. When reflecting back on the moment, Sharon said,

> I didn't understand her project, and I don't know that it went over very well. She was going to protest people dressing up for Halloween. And I didn't quite understand what the big deal was. [laughter] And so maybe I did a total faux pas, but I remember that because I thought it was surprising. And then I was like, you know, because not everyone's costume is going to be offensive…I wasn't sure what…I didn't really get what her point was…

Sharon then offered her wish that Celeste could better articulate her concerns, suggesting this issue might have turned out differently as a result. She suggested that it

would help if Celeste could "tease out what it is that might be so offensive." Neither Celeste nor Sharon remembers exactly what was said that day to each other. Both agree, in retrospect, that there were missed moments, to both speak and listen. Celeste said she admittedly fumbled, and couldn't find the right words. She shared in her email to me, "I felt so... flabbergasted in this conversation. I just couldn't find the words to fight back." Maybe Celeste could have framed her issue in a way her teacher could have better understood. Maybe a teenager shouldn't have to be so articulate or feel the need to fight back in such a way. Without knowing, I will read both the student and teacher generously, and assume that both were doing their best to speak and listen to each other.

What seems worth noting, despite any miscommunication, is the way Sharon at first wanted Celeste to shoulder the responsibility for explaining herself. In a later interview, she suggested that Celeste might voice her concerns to classmates who dress up in such a way and educate them:

> I think it is important is to encourage students to be able to communicate their feelings to each other and if they see somebody dressed up like this, then maybe they can go out and say, "Why are you dressed like that? What is your intention? I feel hurt because my ancestry is Native American and to me it feels like you're making fun of…" Or whatever their thought is about that. I think it would be a conversation that you could have about that that could empower both, or it could, I think… It would be challenging…

Sharon's suggestion that Celeste's conversation with her peers "could empower both" didn't seem to account for the emotional and social costs of such peer education. Sharon's suggestion is also supported by some of the multicultural education literature,

however, that focuses on developing the agency of students of color to cope with culturally hostile environments. Cultural psychologist Derald Wing Sue (2007) and colleagues have advocated for "arming children of color for the life they will face" (p. 283). However, it is not enough to prepare students for hostile environments. We are in a historical moment where students may need these survival skills, but teachers must also learn to listen, must also transform classroom spaces and schools so that they are less hostile and do less harm. We need to ask what it would have taken for Sharon to hear Celeste's concerns and support her exploration of her Indigenous identity.

Sharon. Like many teachers, Sharon is a caring and loving individual. She loves art, she loves kids, and she has a passion for social justice, evidenced by her arts-based inquiry class "Social Injustices." Like many well-intentioned teachers, Sharon cares for her students, and was dismayed to learn that she had hurt Celeste. Though she at times resisted the ideas that Celeste was trying to express, she also reflected back on that moment and acknowledged that she should "honor her feelings, because if she's offended, it doesn't matter what I think… She's offended, period, right?" In general, as any teacher who cares for a student, she doesn't want to be a teacher who hurts or minimizes her student's feelings.

Sharon's good intentions, however, do not change the fact that Celeste felt invalidated. Nor do her good intentions provide her with the means to revisit the issue with Celeste or avoid similar invalidations in the future. A different kind of teaching practice would require different insights, understandings, and conceptual vocabulary that enables teachers to recognize the possibilities for harm and support in these interpersonal interactions.

One conceptual tool can be found in the literature on "racial microaggressions" (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solorzano, 1998; Sue et al., 2007), what Rowe (1990) had earlier termed "micro-inequities." As Sue et al. (2007) share, "Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (p. 271). As Sharon did not overtly intend to hurt her student, but nevertheless minimized her experiential reality, her action could be viewed as a microaggression.

The literature on racial microaggressions is adept at highlighting the "thousand tiny cuts" that students experience in schools. Solórzano et al (2000) document the "feelings of self-doubt, frustration, as well as isolation" that students may feel. Sue (2010) documents the individual psychological damage of these acts, as well as the "systemic and macro level" harm they produce due to "the secondary but devastating effect of denying equal access and opportunity in education, employment, and health care" (p. 16). The denial of Celeste's concern as a legitimate issue to take seriously in a social justice class could be considered one of these tiny cuts, a small burden that Indigenous students like Celeste shoulder, and that might take their psychological or emotional toll over time. The fact also that Celeste had seen students in her school dress up as Indians on Halloween the year prior, or the fact that teachers and administrators accepted this behavior, were also microaggressions. If white privilege (McIntosh, 1988) is the cumulative effect of advantages in one's knapsack a white person may be aware of, microaggressions are the rocks that weigh down that knapsack, often only visible to those who carry the load.

The literature on microaggressions often gives teachers a non-threatening way to understand these interactions, situating the action (and in some sense culpability) outside the realm of consciousness. The lack of support and recognition, the negative space created when a central and real issue to Celeste was minimized as tangential and even unimportant to her teacher, was a moment that pained Celeste, and wasn't registered by her teacher until the interview far after the moment occurred. As Sue et al. (2007) state, "Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities" (p. 271). This lens is useful in highlighting for teachers the ways their actions can have negative effects on their students regardless of consciousness or intent.

The generalized knowledge that teachers might hurt their students, intentionally or unintentionally, could raise awareness for them that the teacher/learner relationship is significant and powerful, yet often opaque and delicate. Student/teacher relationships can be nurturing, empowering, and transformative, but it is not an overstatement to say many students experience damage and loss as a result of these relationships as well. Students, especially those from underrepresented populations, will have experienced many of those "tiny cuts." Microaggression literature can help teachers understand the "racial battle fatigue" students of color face (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). Given constantly shifting cultural dynamics, the microaggression literature might suggest to teachers they will inevitably have blind spots, and perpetuate, in some form, microaggressions in their practice. This awareness might prompt educators to seek out what they don't know and to educate themselves on changing dynamics. A teacher informed by the microaggression literature might consider ways to make herself approachable to her students; she might

look for pedagogical pathways that invite her students to raise their concerns. Given the inevitability of such moments (whether from schools, a teacher, or society at large), a teacher might deeply consider and be ready to enact what responsibility to those inevitable moments and her students looks like. Further, she might build students' "critical race vocabulary" to "name their pain" (Matthias & Liou, 2015, p. 615).

Another intervention might be found in the work of Mary Rowe (2008), an economist who studies "big issues," but had begun to notice these "little issues" and "little acts of disrespect" which she termed "micro-inequities" (p. 2). Rowe states,

> In 1973 I began writing about "micro-inequities." I defined them as "apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator, which occur wherever people are perceived to be 'different.'" (p. 3)

Despite the pervasiveness of micro-inequities, people of color *continued* to succeed. Wondering how, and after observing numerous recruitment, mentoring, and networking relationships unfold, she recognized an equally pervasive process was occurring: these mentors engaged in what she termed "micro-affirmations—apparently small acts, which are often ephemeral and hard-to-see, events that are public and private, often unconscious but very effective, which occur wherever people wish to help others to succeed" (p. 4). Micro-affirmations, she continues,

> are tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening. Micro-affirmations lie in the practice of generosity, in consistently giving credit to others—in providing comfort and support when others are in distress, when there has been a failure at the bench, or an idea that

> did not work out, or a public attack. Micro-affirmations include the myriad details of fair, specific, timely, consistent and clear feedback that help a person build on strength and correct weakness. (p. 4)

Micro-affirmations as an interpersonal practice can affirm students' experiences. They can counter the tiny cuts with tiny affirmations, tiny remedies of care that heal. They also place the onus of changing behavior on individuals in charge. Affirming Celeste in my email is perhaps a form of micro-affirmation, a curative or medicinal words for the pain she experienced in the classroom. Our work in the Native Youth Center routinely involves countering the trivializing messages youth receive from school or society. These micro-affirmations are part of an ethic of caring (Valenzuela, 1999) that grounds our work. Yet, as Castagno and Brayboy (2008) offer, "caring is certainly not enough. In other words, we might think of caring as a necessary but not sufficient quality of effective teachers for Indigenous youth" (p. 970). After all, caring can also be "racist, limiting, and oppressive" (Bartolomé, 2008, p. 3).

Without attention to discursive dynamics that shape interpersonal interactions, even what are intended as micro-affirmations can reproduce hurtful discourses and become microaggressions: an educator in one story I write who "affirms" her Native student by referring to her as "Pocahontas" is engaging in a microaggression, despite her intent to engage in a "micro-affirmation"; Sharon's use of the word "honor" is undergirded through racist depictions of the tragic noble savage; even our own practice where the volunteer attempted to affirm Celeste's concerns that these issues are real and that sexual violence is *real* in Native communities (a micro-affirmation), became internalized as a metric of authenticity (a microaggression).

Another intervention that stems from the research on microaggression is spatial, what Solórzano and colleagues term the creation "counter-spaces" (Solorzano et al., 2000; Yosso et al., 2009). As Solórzano and colleagues state, "these counter-spaces serve as sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained" (p. 70). Counterspaces create the space for our micro-affirmations. They are sites that "position [students'] cultural knowledges as valuable strengths….and [b]uilding community in social counterspaces cultivates students' sense of home and family, which bolsters their sense of belonging and nurtures their resilience (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 677). Such spaces are important interventions and sources of social and emotional support for students of color. The Title VII Native Youth Group was such a space for Celeste, one where she gained critical skills and was able challenge deficit notions of her own people.

Yet Celeste's counterspace, a space that nurtured and supported her identity, a space highly important to Celeste, was a space her teacher wasn't even aware of until our interviews. Further, it did little to interrupt the discursive space of her classroom and school, a space where Celeste spends roughly seven hours a day. The creation of a counterspace as an appendage to a fixed educative space, though from my experience and the literature is clearly beneficial to students (Solórzano et al, 2000; Yosso et al, 2009) doesn't by itself interrupt "business as usual" (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008) in the classroom. Further, without a district's systemic commitment to supporting Native students, counterspaces alone (though important in protecting and equipping Native students) might do little to intervene into the central processes of schooling as that space might reinforce the idea that a Native student's unique cultural, educational, or emotional

needs can be met "over there." The margin of the counter-space *can* and *did* have a profound impact on Celeste, yet as observed in this case, efforts must also be made to attend to the center.

Examining the interaction between Sharon and Celeste as a microaggression, as an unconscious and unintentional action, gave me an opportunity to highlight for Sharon the way her teaching practice fell short of meeting that particular student's needs in that moment without invoking blame, an approach that appears to invite less resistance. By couching the interaction in a microaggression framework, sharing that we all have blind spots and that we have the potential for missing teachable moments or inflicting unseen damage, we were able to discuss how teaching and learning in community and through dialogue and reflection might help expose us to what we might not know and see due to our sociocultural location. It also seemed to open the idea that sometimes our students are best-positioned to point out those things that we can't see and know.

From the individual to the social. Although microaggressions appears to have been recently formally introduced to counseling, education, and equity work as a way of understanding practice, the hostility and willful avoidance described by this literature is not a new discovery. People of color have been pointing out the interpersonal operation of racism and whiteness for a long time. As Richards and Villenas (2000) note,

> Despite an understanding of whiteness as power and privilege theorized by scholars of color for over a century, including Du Bois some seventy-five years ago, it is only in the last decade that Euro-American scholarship on whiteness has begun to emerge. (p. 256)

Zeus Leonardo (2004) also notes,

> Ruminations on whiteness are not new to many people of color and have been available for white readership. Black women know that their skin color does not match store-bought bandages, Latinos know their language is not spoken by management in most business places, and Asians know that their history rarely achieves the status of what Apple (2000) calls "official knowledge" in schools. White audiences have had access to these traditions of criticism for over a century. As such, radical writings on the topic of white privilege are new to white audiences *who read mainly white authors.* (p. 142)

What the racial microaggression literature offers is a formal, research-based acknowledgment that despite the fact "the civil rights movement had a significant effect on changing racial interactions in this society, racism continues to plague the United States" (Sue et al., 2007). This literature also provides language to describe the often-daily interactions between White people and people of color, or in this case, between a non-Indigenous person and Indigenous person. It shows that in these small interactions, there is still a lot at stake, and their cumulative effects take a toll, those "thousand tiny cuts." Sharing with Celeste's teacher the way her dismissal of her student's concerns not only hurt Celeste, but also closed off an opportunity for Celeste to pursue a personalized and meaningful project, was revealing to Sharon. She said that it was humbling:

> You know what's so interesting is that I *thought* that I knew… that's the other thing I would tell you. I thought I was good, you know...

The microaggression literature gives a clear diagnostic, and an imperative to make the invisible visible, yet more than a diagnostic is needed to interrupt oppressive colonialist dynamics.

What seems to be missing from this literature is a broader sociological framing that shows how these deeply engrained beliefs that underlie microaggressions are engendered and sustained. There is always the danger in discussing racial microaggressions that the structures, cultures, and discourses sustaining racism and colonization will go unquestioned, and that racism will be reduced to a series of interpersonal interactions, implying that the way to combat racism is to improve the interpersonal relationships between people.

Some microaggression scholars (Sue, et al 2007) do allude to larger, societal structures that communicate messages to people. They nod to institutional and cultural racism, as well as what they term environmental microaggressions, “racial assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic and environmental levels” (p. 278). An administration, school board, or teaching staff made up of predominately White people, or a school that uses a Native “chief” as its mascot are forms of environmental microaggression that communicate a macromessage that one might not belong or be successful in that environment. Matias and Liou (2015) refer to these as *macro*aggressions, and draw on Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) to define macroaggressions as “large-scale, systems-related stressors that are widespread, sometimes becoming highly publicized, race-related, traumatic events” (p 610). Cheryl Matias reflects,

> Growing up in public schools in Los Angeles, I felt irrelevant because my perspectives of the world were excluded in the Eurocentricity of history curriculum. In my pain of being deemed irrelevant by de facto I questioned

> historical "facts." As a brown-skinned American, where was I in this history? For me, this was a systematic racial *macro*aggression… (Matias & Liou, 2015, p. 610)

Those who theorize microaggressions within Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano et al, 2000; Yosso et al, 2009; Matias & Liou. 2015), foreground "the permanence and endemic nature of race, racism, and White supremacy" (Matias & Liou, 2015, p. 609). Solórzano (1998) for example, examines racial microaggressions through a macro CRT lens. He maintains that racism should be a central component of education scholarship, that there are "structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of scholars [and students] of color," (p. 123), but that a focus on racial microaggressions is important as they have been a "persistent, and underresearched social problem" (p. 121).

Many who take up microaggression frameworks, especially as I have experienced them in equity trainings for example, do not necessarily offer conceptual tools that show how the moment that occurred between Celeste and her teacher is more than an aggregation of poor individual decisions. That police officers often read young Black boys to be older than they are and as suspicious (Goff et al., 2014) may be a microaggression, but given the longstanding systems of racist violence, it *cannot* be understood in individual terms. Microaggression frameworks also do not explore *why* police officers overestimate the age of Black boys, or unpack what made it difficult, perhaps impossible, for Sharon to hear Celeste's concerns.

Expressions of the view that Native people are disappearing or that the "authentic" ones have disappeared, experimentation with "exotic" Native culture as a way of expressing one's own cultural identity, efforts to extract and document Indigenous

knowledge and cultural practices without consent can all be read as microaggressions that ignore or erase the experiences of Indigenous peoples. However, these acts are not invented by the people committing them. The bias that shapes these acts are the product of global social processes that have long and complex histories.

The diagnosis of such moments provided by microaggression theories locates the local source of damage done by educators to Indigenous students. However, it does little to identify the broader social processes that compel such hurtful interactions. For example, it does not explain how Sharon kept returning to the leprechaun analogy that functioned to invalidate Celeste's critique of the Spirit Halloween Store, even after she acknowledged the inappropriateness of such an analogy. What is missing is a discussion of the ideological and discursive context that determines what features of human experience are and are not legible to us; in this case the contextual influences that made it so difficult for Sharon to listen to Celeste.

Zooming out: Analysis at a macrosocial scale. As I suggested earlier, we should read Sharon generously as an educator. My interactions with her over the course of the year led me to believe that it wasn't Celeste's inability to articulate her argument that caused the missed moment, nor was it simply that Sharon willfully disagreed; rather, Sharon was resistant to what Celeste was saying because it was too difficult to think outside of the stories available to her about what it means to for someone to be Indigenous, to express their Indigeneity, and to appreciate and respect Indigenous peoples. She was operating from a different set of assumptions that initially made what Celeste, and later I, had to say unhearable. The question that bears asking is: what made Sharon unable to "hear" Celeste?

It is here that some scholars zoom out to explore macrosocial dynamics such as institutional racism that shape interpersonal dynamics. Antonia Darder (2012), for example, makes a distinction between individual racism discussed in the previous section ("individual whites acting against blacks" for example) and institutional racism ("acts by the total white community against the black community") (p. 39). This second type of racism "originates in the operation of established and respected forces in society and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first" (Darder, 2012, p. 39).

Leonardo (2004) also distinguishes between individual and institutional forms of racism, and argues that individual and institutional conditions must be understood within larger macrosocial contexts. For example, he critically interrogates the widely circulated concept of "white privilege" popularized by a list of individual behaviors published by Peggy McIntosh (1988). McIntosh's list, like the concept of microaggressions, identifies "daily effects of white privilege" in her life; small moments, gestures, and interactions that are invisible or taken for granted by White persons, but that underscore the persistence of a system of racial privilege and hierarchy in our daily lives. Her list of 50 privileges she has includes things like:

> #4: I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
>
> #24: I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.
>
> #25: If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

> #46: I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin. (McIntosh, 1988)

Leonardo (2004) argues that this list, intended to educate whites about the operation of white supremacy in their daily lives, can ironically serve to obscure the full scope of such social forces by directing attention only to the individual acts that reproduce oppression. He extends McIntosh's framework by providing a second list of macrosocial features of racial oppression "if only to capture a reliable portrait of white supremacy" (p. 146). His list includes anti-miscegenation laws, red-lining and housing laws, segregation schooling practices, anti-immigration laws, the development and implementation of IQ testing, forced sterilization, and militarization practices in "third-world" countries, among numerous other acts of violence.

With this list, Leonardo shows us how the individual benefits of White privilege are directly linked to broader racial ideologies and policies. As he explains, "Privilege is the daily cognate of structural domination" (Leonardo, 2004, p 148). To demonstrate this, he connects McIntosh's concept of privilege (the micromoment) to the broader social, historical, and political context that enabled that privilege (the macrosocial). He writes:

> Whites have "neighbors ... [who] are neutral or pleasant" (McIntosh, 1992, p. 73) to them *because redlining and other real estate practices, with the help of the Federal Housing Agency, secure the ejection of the black and brown body from white spaces*. Whites can enter a business establishment and expect the "'person in charge' to be white" (McIntosh, 1992, p. 74) *because of a long history of job discrimination*. Whites are relatively free from racial harassment from police officers *because racial profiling strategies train U.S. police officers that people of*

> *color are potential criminals*. Finally, whites "can choose blemish cover or bandages in 'flesh' color" to match their skin (McIntosh, 1992, p. 75) *because of centuries of denigration of darker peoples and images associated with them, fetishism of the color line, and the cultivation of the politics of pigmentation*. We can condense the list under a general theme: whites enjoy privileges largely *because they have created a system of domination under which they can thrive as a group*. (p. 148, emphasis added).

Leonardo's analytic of extending and connecting a particular moment to a broader context and structure enables us to see how viewing Sharon's interaction with Celeste as solely a racial microaggression is to overly individualize the moment, uprooting that moment from its roots in White and colonial supremacy. Borrowing his framework, we might extend this analysis to the scenario between Celeste and Sharon by observing that Whites think it is acceptable to dress up as Native Americans *because policies of genocide and dispossession as well as historical narratives of a "vanishing" race create a context in which whites rarely have sustained encounters with contemporary Native Americans.* Or we might observe that Whites think it is acceptable to dress up as Native Americans for Halloween to "honor" them *because the image of Native American as "tragic noble savage" has been used for centuries to naturalize the violence done by Whites to Native Americans.*

Social discourse as the unit of analysis. There are many theoretical vocabularies that are used to analyze macrosocial influences on microsocial interactions, ranging from Marxism and critical theory that emphasize the material (economic) aspects of oppressive social systems (Darder, 2012), poststructuralism and postcolonialism that emphasize the

discursive and semiotic aspects of oppressive social systems (Foucault, 1972, 1979, 1980; Said, 1978), or settler colonial studies that links discourses of erasure to material accumulation of and justification for land theft through strategic erasures (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2011). Although the history of settler society assault on Indigenous peoples involves physical and spiritual violence, economic theft of land and property, as well as symbolic annihilation, for the purposes of this study, I will use discursive analysis to highlight the way teachers are socially positioned to be unprepared to respond constructively to Indigenous student needs and teach Native-related content. For this section, my use of the word discourse is informed by Rosiek and Atkinson (2005) who state,

> Discourse, as we use the term here, refers to systems of symbols, signs, and meanings through which a particular topic or issue is understood by a given social group. Following Michel Foucault, John Dewey, and Mikhail Bakhtin, among others, we are convinced that professional and cultural discourses shape not just the way teachers describe their experiences but the way they have those experiences as well. Professional discourses shape teachers' beliefs about curriculum and pedagogy. Broad cultural discourses provide the means by which gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and (dis)ability distinctions are made, and these distinctions in turn shape the way students and teachers respond to one another. (pp. 2-3)

For example, contemporary discourses about educational achievement shape the way we think about children's behavior and inner lives, as well as our responsibility to them. Additionally, these discourses shape the way we schedule the school day, the kind

of educational technology we purchase, the arrangement of classrooms, and even the design of school buildings.

Edward Said's application of poststructuralist discursive analysis to the dynamics of colonialism is an example of the ways discourses can be of value to this study. In his foundational work, *Orientalism,* Said (1978) describes how the concept of the Orient was and continues to be a discourse used by the West to define colonized peoples (in this case the Orient) against understandings of the Western Self (or Occident). "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said, 1978, p. 88). Though Said acknowledges there *does* exist an Orient, the real and existing Orient is not necessarily what produces European's imaginative understanding of the Orient. This imaginative understanding of the Orient, in fact, doesn't require any real or tangible encounters with people from the actual Orient. The representation of people from the "East" as exotic, romantic, backward, dangerous, and savage was generated within the discourses of European society and served interests internal to European society. Among other things it was used as a backdrop for the European West to identify itself as the opposite of these things—e.g. normal, rational, progressive, safe, and civilized. These binaries provided means for surveillance and control within Europe, with "Oriental" becoming a pejorative used to harass individuals and nation-states alike into certain behaviors and policies. Additionally, orientalist discourses were used to rationalize imperialistic and genocidal policies on non-European nations.

Central to Said's analysis of Orientalism is the notion of power. He states,

> … ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created—or, as I call it, "Orientalized"—and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony… (Said, 1978, p. 89)

Said is careful to articulate his use of power, however, distinguishing it from "some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world," and describing it as a "*distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts" (p. 90). He states,

> …it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do). (pp. 90-91)

The power of the category of the Orient can be seen in the way it was used to position non-Europeans as an object of inquiry or study, despite the fact these inquiries paid very little attention to the empirical details of life in non-European settings, and instead circulated familiar stereotypes of, say, Middle Easterners. According to Said, the

concept "Orient" is instrumental less as a "veridic discourse" than as a constant "flexible *positional* authority" (p. 90). The unbalanced power dynamic at the heart of this discourse is made apparent when Said observes that it was not conceivable to European colonists that peoples of the "Orient" would have a reciprocal study inventorying the exotic delights and pathologies of European peoples. In fact, they were not rendered as fully human subjects at all, but more as objects in a broader narrative of European conquest, domination, and conquest.[35]

With Orientalism as a discursive framework to draw from, the interpersonal exchange that transpired between Celeste and Sharon, the resistance Sharon exhibited, Sharon's desire to "honor" Native culture, or the knowledge Sharon had about Indigenous peoples might all conceivably be connected to this longstanding discourse.

That Sharon couldn't hear Celeste's concerns could have stemmed from her assumptions about Indigeneity, assumptions deeply rooted in Orientalist discourses that were not necessarily rooted in *actual,* empirical encounters with Native people. Sharp (2009) emphasizes how colonialism and colonial discourses—like Orientalist accounts—popularized "how ordinary people came to learn about the world" (p. 85). Sharon admitted her own schooling experiences and interactions with curriculum, as well as other popular accounts in mainstream media were her sources of knowledge about Indigenous peoples: how she came to know them.

[35] Critiques of Said's conception of Orientalism argue that it is ahistorical, that it ignores resistance by both the colonized and from within the West, and that he doesn't adequately account for gender differences (McLeod, 2000). As McLeod (2000) notes, "the various criticisms of Said's work collectively give the impression that colonial discourses are multiple, precarious and more ambivalent than Said presumes in *Orientalism*" (p. 50). Despite the critiques that Orientalism may overreach in its description of representation without accounting for ambivalence, or not account for resistance or gender, it is still a useful theoretical framework through which to examine the case.

Having little contact with actual Native people throughout her life, Sharon's knowledge about Native people stemmed from these Orientalized discourses that produced ideas of Native people as exotic and romantic, as well as in the past. Sharon marveled at the "cultures and arts" of Native people, and was enamored, for example, with the spirituality of Native culture with little thought paid to how she came to view Native people as "spiritual." Viewing one's White self as acultural (ordinary, natural or normal) in contrast to cultural "others" is a common discourse of Orientalism and Whiteness, and a challenge in educating pre-service and in-service White teachers. Moreover, as Sharon shared later in the study, she has been drawn to Native rituals, ceremonies, sweats, and drum groups, much like those in Europe were drawn to partake in the Orient and its exotic culture as a means for self-renewal and reflection.

Sharon's knowledge of Native people, as a result of this Orientalized discourse about Native people, constrained her ability to hear from an actual Native person what constituted an injustice, stereotype, or oppressive practice. Reflecting back, in the discursive frameworks available to her, Sharon was unable to hear Celeste because she didn't have the conceptual capacity to hear her. To Sharon, Indigenous identity and culture are not cultural rights and property but open to all, and to dress up as a Native person and use those symbols would not be cultural theft or appropriation, but a way to honor Native people and show deference or respect. Traces of this discursive resistance can be seen in Sharon's counterexamples:

> I just feel like I… you know what I'm saying, you know granted, we don't know if they're dressing up for Halloween, if they're dressing up like a Native American, if they are honoring it. Maybe they're just wanting to look cool or

> whatever. But I think sometimes it's not… because you don't know the intent behind somebody dressing up. Like I have some… well they're called Gypsy… but I like to dress up like that, you know, different things. But I don't know if I'm offending anyone, you know what I'm saying? To me it would depend on why they are dressing up this way. You know…

To Sharon, intent matters. Intent in this instance is not simply an excuse wielded to shield one from responsibility (e.g., the common trope I didn't *mean* to hurt you), but intent actually provides justification for the practice. The intent to honor Native culture (rather than "just wanting to look cool," condones the practice of dressing up like an Indian. Given this framework, it would be hard for Sharon to hear Celeste. For Sharon, honoring was an important way to show respect:

> But, to me, the issue is I think some of the traditional dress, the beadwork, the feathers, the patterns, *beautiful* artwork, the way they did this for ceremony… I want to honor some of the artwork on in the event time period, and you know why they dressed that way. You know it was perfect… You know there was a ceremony behind it. And I wouldn't expect people, Native people, unless they're doing a ceremony, to go back to that. But I also think that the artwork, and I like the spiritual connection… I think it's beautiful, so that honoring…

In another example of discursive resistance, Sharon attempted to equate the practice of dressing up like an Indian with dressing up like a mythical creature. She explained, "My heritage is Irish and German and French, but, people dress up for St. Patrick's Day, and I personally wouldn't be offended by somebody dressing up like a leprechaun." Her equivocation ignores justification that perhaps makes sense in a flat

race-neutral world, absent of power, where symbols can be freely exchanged and don't bear deep, cultural meanings.

In another instance of discursive resistance, Sharon suggested that Celeste take on more important social justice issues, such as "women's issues":

> I don't want to fight every little thing, so I would want something that… If I'm going to do a social justice/social awareness piece, I want to make sure that it gets to my heart of things, and maybe those things do matter, but do you know what I'm saying, but there are varying degrees of things to get upset about, you know, like *women's* issues, or whatever issue that is calling to you, you know.

Sharon, didn't understand how her framing of "women's" issues erased Indigenous women's concerns through the deployment of a universal white female subject that underpin her conception of women.

Attention to discourses can help situate teacher knowledge and actions within a broader context, helping explain resistance to alternative perspectives. For example, despite pointing out to her that leprechauns weren't real, unlike Native Americans, and that there wasn't a group of leprechauns upset about this issue, (which at the time Sharon seemed to understand), she rearticulated the same argument six months later. Sharon fell back into the same core logics that she had used earlier to justify her opinion. Her falling back into the leprechaun justification was understandable, maybe even inevitable, given the way dominant discourses portray, reproduce, and ignore particular aspects of Indigenous life. This was not a matter of Sharon returning home after our conversation, willfully clinging to her logic, then reasserting the same opinion as a testament of her defiance or stubbornness. Rather, it is to say that given a context that objectifies,

romanticizes, demeans, ignores, and relegates Native people to the past, unexamined popular media and commonsense become not excusable or tolerable, but at least socially understandable. This discursive saturation and coding makes it difficult for an individual to think outside of these daily framings and narrowings of Indigenous life.

What the discourses about Native people and culture evoked for Sharon—beauty, honoring, war paint, for example—shaped how Sharon understood the educational interaction between her and her student. Importantly, the discourse of Indigeneity also conjured words about oppression, guilt, and shame, but these were all phrased with respect to history. In one interview she stated,

> What's really hard…you know what I'd say…it's hard to feel that you've hurt somebody else and as a race, white people have obliterated Native people. You know our history sucks, right. So it's not fun to hear that. So to take ownership for that. It's hard to identify when it wasn't maybe *you* that actually killed the Native Americans. But it's good for us to look at our history in a real view instead of what we're being taught.

In another interview six months later, she offered more comments on the historical travesties committed in the past:

> I think that the government needs to acknowledge the great travesty that's happened in America when we stripped people of their culture their identity.

Sharon wanted to teach what she referred to as the "real American history." She wanted to teach about boarding schools, where "the government wanted to brainwash, train everybody to be white, and they took the children from their" homes. This tendency

to see colonization as an "event" that happened in the past is also symptomatic of another discourse.

Settler colonialism. Another theoretical frame that can help us think through this case can be found in the literature that treats settler colonialism as a discursive phenomena (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Calderon, 2014). Indigenous scholars and social theorists have also taken up Foucault's concept of discourse to analyze how some postcolonial discourses do not adequately reckon with the specificity of colonialism within the US nation state. According to Wolfe (2006), settler colonialism, far from an event that occurred in some distant past, is an ongoing "structure" (p. 390) based in a "logic of elimination" that is "inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal" (p. 387). Wolfe asserts that "settler colonialism destroys to replace" (p. 388). Veracini (2011) notes that one distinction between settler colonialism and other forms of colonization is that settler colonialism "covers its tracks" (p. 3). It "operates towards its self-supersession," making it "paradoxically… most recognisable when it is most imperfect—say, 1950s Kenya or 1970s Zimbabwe—and least visible in the settler cities" (p. 3).

Settler colonialism establishes itself as natural, normal, invisible, erasing and concealing itself to get what it wants, and what it wants is land. "Land is the ultimate pursuit," state Tuck and Yang (2014, p. 814). Tuck and McKenzie (2015) elaborate: "Settler colonialism wants Indigenous land, not Indigenous peoples, so Indigenous peoples are cleared out of the way of colonial expansion, first via genocide and destruction, and later through incorporation and assimilation" (p. 66). Because settler colonialism "is premised on the securing—the obtaining and the maintaining—of

territory" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 402), claims to Indigeneity need to be continually erased, and claims to land, settler sovereignty, and "settler futurity" (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013) to be continually asserted, a continual structuring of absence and presence. "All of this elaborate track-covering is needed to achieve the settler's ultimate aim," Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) note, "which is to resolve the uncomfortable and precarious dis-location as usurper, and replace the Indigenous people as the natural, historical, rightful and righteous owners of the land" (p. 77). Indigenous difference must be eliminated so that settlers can replace them as the "new native" (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013).

On the one hand, actual Native people must be removed (through violence, forced removal, or assimilation), but symbolically, settlers reach for Indigeneity as a means to justify their conquest, presence, the acquisition of territory, and to set themselves apart from their own former homelands. This requires a continual pattern of erasure and elimination, as well as claims and entitlements. As Tuck and McKenzie (2015) note,

> The settler colonial discourse turns Indigenous peoples into savages, unhumans, and eventually, ghosts. As a structure and not a past event, settler colonialism circulates stories of Indigenous peoples as extinct, disappeared, or maybe as never having existed at all. The goal of settler colonialism is to erase Indigenous peoples from valuable land. (p. 66)

However, as Wolfe (2006) notes, "The erasure of indigeneity conflicts with the assertion of settler nationalism." He continues,

> On the one hand, settler society required the practical elimination of the natives in order to establish itself on their territory. On the symbolic level, however, settler

> society subsequently sought to recuperate indigeneity in order to express its difference—and, accordingly, its independence— from the mother country. (p. 389)

The practices of "recuperating Indigeneity" and "expressing difference," that underlie the practice of dressing up and "playing Indian" (Deloria; Green, 1975) must be considered according to this ultimate purpose. Beyond merely stereotypical representations, erasure and recuperation serve a structural purpose—the contradictory performance of Indigenous erasure through the performance of settler as the "new native" serves to continually reassert settle entitlement to land. Native people as history needs to be continually asserted and performed. Like the Spirit Halloween website that sells Indian costumes has insinuated (if not overtly stated), and like many people believe today, Native people are history. Sharon was enacting a broader discourse that makes Native presence and the structures of settler colonialism practically invisible, or as Veracini (2011) notes, "putatively 'settled' and 'postcolonial'" (p. 3). As Tuck and McKenzie (2015) argue, people in settler societies are not usually taught about the distinctions in colonialisms, and in the United States, colonialism is often framed as something that occurs abroad. Tuck and McKenzie (2015) state,

> In the United States, for example, school children are more likely to learn about colonialism in India (what many would characterize as a form of extraction colonialism) than they are to learn about settler colonialism. People living in settler-colonial societies are unlikely to ever hear their societies described in those terms. They are even less likely to think of their societies as continuing to be

> organized around settler colonialism in contemporary time, not just as a part of the founding story of their nation. (p. 154)

Sharon participated in colonial dynamics, even as she consciously felt she was working against them by drawing attention to colonization. She wanted her students to understand social injustices as they related to Native people by showing films on the Trail of Tears and boarding schools, yet she couldn't see her own complicity in the reproduction of colonial dynamics. She deeply sympathized with the ways Native people were wronged in history, yet couldn't see the ways her attention to historic "events" as well as her own participation in the erasure of Indigenous life made her complicit in the ongoing structures of colonialism. Sharon felt deeply disturbed by the wrongs of the past, but couldn't understand "what the big deal was" today.

The fact that Sharon's discursive understanding and Spirit's justification for selling Native American costumes were so closely related illustrates the ways these words, actions, and justifications do not reside in individuals who merely personally invented these practices or dynamics. That there is a vast market for such products illustrates the pervasiveness of these discourses (though that Spirit has a section dedicated to justifying its sale of Indian costumes) shows that discourses are not all-encompassing; that they are "dominant, not omnipotent" (Lyons, 2000, p. 453).

Spirit's justification of the sale of its costumes included the caveat that dressing up as such will enable kids to "live out a slice of American history," and though "these costumes may only be a simulation of how these noble people lived" it is a way to show them "deference and respect by keeping their memory alive in the traditions of America."

> So when your kids want to don a traditional costume with frays and a feather, don't look at it as disrespectful. See it as a way to teach your little one about American history. Tell them about the rich tradition of the natives of this continent before the European invasion: the deep respect for nature, a rich, textured oral history, tribal society, etc. Let them in on the knowledge that for a thousand years, before there were cities and highways and the Internet, there was a race of people living amongst the animals and trees. It will set their imagination on fire while instilling in them a sense of respect for Native Americans as well as a desire to learn more about them.[36]

Thomas King (2012) states regarding those who take up these sorts of practices, "if you ask them what in the hell they're doing, they will tell you with a straight face that they are trying to preserve the culture of North American Indians so it won't be lost" (p. 74). As a people already gone or on the verge of extinction, the justification follows that non-Natives *need* to dress up to keep the memories of Indigenous peoples alive. Sharon's initial insistence that dressing up *honors* Native people mirrors Spirit's justification that Halloween is a chance to honor them "as they once were."

As Said (1978) has noted, at first the Other was viewed as backwards, dangerous, and uncivilized, but later became an object of admiration and exploration. Western culture wanted to dabble in the "exotic." Deloria (1998) took this up in his book *Playing Indian*, that contextualizes Halloween in a longstanding Western tradition of taking up exotic Indian identities as a form of self-expression. If only for a night, Halloween is not merely an incident, but a contemporary practice within a stream of history that

[36] Spirit appears to have removed its justification for Indian costumes online; however, a screenshot is available at Cherokee scholar Adrienne Keene's webste *Native Approriations* (http://nativeappropriations.com/2012/10/so-you-wanna-be-an-indian-for-halloween.html).

commodifies cultures and traditions, erases tribal differences, and ultimately narrows imaginative and real possibilities for both Native and non-Native people. It is a structure that continues to rehearse the erasure of contemporary Indigenous life and reassert settlers as the “new native” (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013).

Returning to the interaction between Celeste and her teacher, we can see the ways the teacher was asking, demanding, that Celeste understand her *own* experience from a non-Indigenous perspective, from her teacher’s point of view. Discourses have consequences on educational interactions and experiences. Students can internalize their teachers’ discursive understandings, constructing their subjectivities through resistance or compliance, for example. Celeste resisted Sharon’s discursive understanding of Indigeneity, engaging in twice the work to pursue her idea, but she also internalized discourses of authenticity in the youth group conversation. Though we have since surfaced that moment, making it visible and subject to critique (Duncan, 2002), it is important to highlight those cultural assumptions; the worlds constructed around them can be radically different and have consequences. The fact that the interaction was laced with a power imbalance between a student trying to express disagreement and a teacher responsible for evaluating her work complicated these dynamics.

Limits of discursive analyses. Looking at experiences with attention to discourse provides a useful tool for examining the way language, thoughts, and actions can be constrained by much broader sociological forces. This literature highlights the macrosocial forces that were at play in the moment. Attention to discourses situated the misunderstanding with a long stream of systemic and symbolic violence against Native peoples that continues to shape experiences today. By focusing on discourses, the

problem is located not necessarily within the individual, but within the system of meaning in which that individual lives. Since the pattern of Indigenous erasure is a deeply entrenched discourse, Sharon's understandings and actions may be understandable within that system of meaning. Saying it is understandable, however, does not make it justifiable. Discourses give us a broader and more historical lens through which to view our thoughts and actions, but they can have the seductive lure of innocence, of making it difficult to locate responsibility on someone or something. It is difficult when thinking of institutional racism in a school, for example, to think of who to blame, who to hold accountable, or what to fix. In a system of "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), where does one locate responsibility? Examining the broad and discursive dynamics that enable institutional racism, that accountability and responsibility feels almost unlocatable. Moreover, like the microaggression literature, this literature has the feel of a diagnostic, of describing the forces at play with little guidance as to how one might perform in them differently, or be accountable to their actions and others within them. By locating the analysis in the discourse, how can we be accountable for the impacts of those discourses in a way that simultaneously keeps those discourses in mind, that doesn't reduce accountability to an act between individuals?

If we examine the literature on microaggressions, we are urged to be more sensitized to how our actions (intentional or not) might affect others. It also lets us see that these moments often take place outside of our consciousness. The microaggression literature is intended to raise awareness of implicit bias, an awareness that might prompt individuals to critically examine their own subjectivities, such as developing a more critical sociocultural consciousness (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). It is possible that if Sharon

had developed such awareness, fostered through the suggested activities such as "autobiographical exploration, reflection, and critical self-analysis to develop that sense" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 22), that this particular moment would not have occurred. However, the instance between Celeste and her teacher Sharon was one of many microaggressions that took place between Native students and their non-Native teachers in this particular school district. The story I shared highlighted one particular instance, but these moments were and continue to be pervasive, though the content and character of the moments varies. It's clear that the story between Celeste and Sharon was part of a larger story.

If we begin, then, with the sociological and discursive framings as points of intervention, this can help us see that we must begin to change the context in which we operate. The discursive literature gave us a glimpse into the broader social, cultural, economic, historical, political factors at play, the broader stories that gave shape to the way that particular story played out in the classroom. Discursive frameworks let us see that our thoughts and actions are always mediated through discourse, and depending on the discourses we are subjected to, that there are limits to what we can think and do. These limits are difficult to resist and transcend as they are so pervasive and not always within the realm of our consciousness. Their pervasiveness also highlights the futility of changing one person's mind or consciousness as these discourses appear to saturate and envelop our communities. Moreover, there is not necessarily agreement about which discourses are at play during a given moment. Race and class, for example, are often competing metastories that people suggest mark our daily lives, and the stakes of these claims are real. When a school district looks at how to fund and support equity initiatives,

some might claim that racial discourses leave out the “poor, White students,” yet others might claim a focus on poverty alone will dilute anti-racist initiatives and policies and undermine the needs of children of color, even those from middle class families.

Though discursive frameworks are good at situating the analyses off of individuals and into larger discursive categories, they also can become a diagnostic with little instruction for how to move forward. The difficulty in this broader framing is not just a matter of the sheer scope of the project (it is difficult to think of changing one mind, let alone the context that produces thoughts for a mind to think), but it also does little to address what was an interpersonal act, the tiny little cut made on the heart/body/mind of the student in such an interaction.

Toward a Narrative Intervention

Given both the possibilities and limits of these framings, as a teacher conceptualizes her practice, she might feel that interpersonal relational work is not potent enough to address macrosocial economic or racial dynamics. Yet conceptualizing how to change power-laden and historically embedded discourses might feel too overwhelming and doesn’t necessarily account for the teacher/student relationship at hand in sufficient ways. Attending to interpersonal dynamics locates responsibility within the teacher for this relationship, yet doesn’t address the need for systemic and comprehensive change. A discursive focus, however, locating the source of oppression within discourses and institutions, might absolve an individual of her responsibility to constructively work within those educational systems and systems of meaning.

I suggest here that one way to intervene into these seemingly paradoxical dynamics is through critical and constructive counterstorytelling (Barone, 1992; Carmona

& Luschen, 2014; Delgado, 1989; Senehi, 2002). Stories can be multidimensional, enabling a reader to view dynamics and interactions with attention to place and context, while also attending to the intimate aspects and personal costs of relationships as well as the larger, macrosocial factors that influence them. As a result, I see stories as a prime site for both analyzing teaching practice and reflecting on and envisioning pedagogical alternatives. Well-crafted stories can preserve the situatedness and contextuality of the moments that took place between Celeste and her teacher, while also trying to understand how those moments are shot through with larger stories of race and colonialism, for example. I believe stories can preserve the context and enable complex reflections that might help a reader to think through what it means to serve a Native student in particular that he or she might be working with, as opposed to a generic or universal Indigenous student.

Million (2014) advocates for the "the power of our everyday stories, the theory of stories as theory, and Indigenism as theory" (p. 32). As Million states,

> Story has always been practical, stategic, and restorative. Story *is* Indigenous theory. If these knowledges are couched in narratives, then narratives are always more than telling stories. Narratives seek inclusion; they seek the nooks and crannies of experiences filling cracks and restoring order. Narratives lay boundaries. Narratives give orphans homes. Narratives both make links and are the links that have been made. Narratives are our desire to link one paradigmatic will to knoweldge to discursive and material projects that have consequences. Narratives serve the same function as any theory, in that they are practical vision. Not least, Indigenous narratives are also emotionally empowered. They are

> informed with the affective content of our experience. The felt experience of Indigenous experience in these Americas is in our narratives and that has made them almost unrecognizable to a Western scholarship that imagines itself objective. (p. 35)

As Million later states, "Theoretical narratives mobilize boundaries of what can be felt, thought, and acted upon" (p. 37). Neither zooming in to analyze personal microaggressions nor zooming out to engage in social discursive frames captures the full complexity of the educational dynamics I wish to describe. I want to document and convey personal and macrosocial dynamics, and the complex weave of the two, in educational experience. To do this, I turn toward narrative approaches to social science research.

Narratives as intervention. The way I aim to address the inadequacies of over-relying on either a microsocial or macrosocial unit of analysis is to engage this work narratively through a form of counterstorytelling. As Million (2011) asks, "How are we or how do we become conscious subjects rather than objects of these discursive strategies that have grievous outcomes in our daily lives? It is, perhaps, to be alive to the motion of it" (p. 320). She continues,

> It is to constantly ask, What are the politics of meaning making that we are always a part of? In practice, it appears that Indigenous people's discourses and negotiations in producing the truth of their experience work most often aspositions that renegotiate and reposition colonial truths while reconstituting new positions. These positions we take are not static. (p. 320)

I ground my work in the scholarship and commitments of Native/Indigenous scholars as an explicit part of my methodology (Brayboy, Gough, Leonard, Roehl, & Solyom, 2011). I also recognize, however, that in the field of teacher education, there are precedents for this sort of work. In this chapter, I situate my work with respect to narrative research and conceptions of teacher knowledge.

As I am concerned with how teachers "practically" respond to the complex dilemmas I pose and portray in my stories, I will begin this section with an overview of how to develop "teacher practical knowledge," highlighting the work of Lee Shulman who laid the groundwork for thinking of teacher knowledge as professional, and advocated for a "scholarship of teaching" approach. I then move to the field of narrative inquiry, drawing on Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly as exemplars of those who make sense of narrative teacher knowledge through a practice of narrative inquiry. I follow with a brief overview of narrative research as a form of educational research that is particularly effective in highlighting the interplay of teachers' "personal practical knowledge" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) as it relates to broader sociocultural discourses. As exemplars of critical and counterhegemonic narrative research, I then focus specifically on Jerry Rosiek's collaborative work Zachary Dean Sconiers, Paokong John Chang and Nancy Dibble, to highlight the ways counterhegemonic narratives of teaching practice are politically and culturally relevant as thoughtful and reflective representations of counterhegemonic possibilities within educational systems that seem designed to reproduce hegemonic thinking.

Teacher knowledge as narrative. Narrative researchers[37] argue that teacher knowledge exists in narrative form, and that narratives as a mode of representation can be effective in transforming teacher narratives, and subsequently their practice. It is this set of scholars that I am in conversation with here.

Teacher practical knowledge as professional and complex. The work of Lee Shulman offers a precedent for developing teacher knowledge narratively through the use of stories or "cases." Shulman's career marks numerous contributions to the field of teacher knowledge. Shulman's (1986) delineation of the "domains and categories of content knowledge" for educators, which he classified as content knowledge, curricular knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge was a substantial contribution for considering the complex and context-specific knowledge professional educators might need. Expanding on Ernest Boyer's (1997) work, Shulman also has been a proponent of developing a "scholarship of teaching" approach to teacher education, advocating that educators, rather than technicians, be considered professionals.[38]

Given the complex knowledge teachers needed in what he regarded as professional practice, Shulman became concerned with how to develop educators' professional knowledge, which he characterized at its core as "judgment under uncertainty" (Wilson, 2004, p. 6). To develop this knowledge, Shulman looked to the ways other disciplines developed professional knowledge, most notably the fields of

[37] It always feels important when talking about narrative research to recognize the ways poets and writers of color have long argued for the experiential and embodied knowledge embedded in their stories, or Indigenous peoples have long argued that Native stories, rather than being mere objects of analysis, are formal knowledge sytems whose value is equivalent (if not privileged) to Western ways of knowing.

[38] "A professional," Shulman (2004) notes, "is capable not only of practicing and understanding his or her craft, but of communicating the reasons for professional decisions and actions to others…a reflective awareness of how and why one performs [which] complicates rather than simplifies action and renders it less predictable and regular" (p. 211).

medicine and law. In order to develop medical professionals prepared to make informed judgments in diverse, changing, and uncertain contexts, he observed that the field of medicine utilized case studies to develop a deep knowledge of practice and problem-solving capabilities. Shulman also noted that "case method" was well established in the field of law, a "vehicle for professional education" whose value lie in "teaching theory, not practice" (p. 207). As a "complement" to the propositional knowledge required in the field of education,[39] Shulman argued that *case knowledge* be a useful type of professional knowledge.[40]

Shulman proposed various "case methods" for developing case knowledge in teacher education,[41] including case reading and discussion and case writing by teachers.[42]

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[39] He outlined three types of propositional knowledge: *"principles, maxims,* and *norms*" (Shulman & Wilson, 2004, p. 206).

[40] In this article, to complement the three types of propositional knowledge he delineated (prinicples, maxims, and norms), he offers three types of cases:

> *Prototypes* exemplify theoretical principles. *Precedents* capture and communicate principles of practice or maxims. *Parables* convey norms or values. Naturally, a given case can accomplish more than a single function; it can, for example, serve both prototype and precedent. (p. 207)

I make no such distinctions in my own work. For more on Shulman's classifications, see his essay "Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching" (1986).

[41] Shulman's (2004) case approach to teaching was much more comprehensive than reading or writing teaching cases. In his article, "Just In Case," he outlines a practice of case writing, case commentary, case conversations, and eventually case conferences and case literatures within the "discourse of the larger pedagogical community" (pp. 470-471). Although the stories I have written were shared in my research with various participants, I did not have the time or resources to develop a community of teachers with which I utilized the cases; a future practice I see promise in and hope to engage.

[42] Shulman advocated a structure for case writing, which involves a specific instance of teaching content, "revolve around a plan that goes awry," and resolves "the tension in some fashion, either by describing the actions that were taken to relieve the difficulties, or by sifting through emerging insights about why the problems occurred as they did" (p. 468). Shulman believed that a coherent "structure of cases" was essential for teachers to develop the ability to reflect, not just on others' experiences, but transfer that framework of reflection to their own lived experiences. Shulman (2004) states,

> I am convinced, however, that if teachers are to learn from experience—whether their own or vicariously through the case-based experiences of others—they must learn to parse the flow of experience into the structures of cases. They must learn a syntax, a grammar of cases, which provides a set of terms within which they can organize and analyze their understanding of experience. If they can see the structure in cases they read, they can begin to see the structure of cases in their own lived experiences. (p. 468)

Shulman (2004) argued that "too much of teacher education is unbearably generic, offering vague general principles and maxims that purport to apply broadly to a vast range of situations." In contrast, cases are "*situated* in place, time, *and* subject matter" (p. 464).[43] "If the case is faithful in its particularities," he continues, "it cannot ignore the subject- and situation-specificity of teaching, because we are always teaching some *subject matter* to some *student(s)* in some context" (p. 464). Moreover, cases account for the "uncertainty" of teaching, "take advantage of the natural power of narrative ways of knowing," and are an effective way of "parsing experience so that practitioners can examine and learn from it" (p. 465). Cases provide a means for educators to connect the experiences embedded in the stories with their own, and develop their "reflective awareness" (p. 211). Working with cases allowed teachers to learn from others/their own experiences and develop new theories of practice based on reflective analyses of those experiences (Shulman, 2004). "Because of their complexity, contextuality, and richness," Shulman argues, "cases provide excellent opportunities for learners to 'criss cross the landscape' of theory and practice" (2004, p. 467).

Shulman's work justified a practice of preparing teachers that addressed complexity and context. It should be noted, however, that although Shulman was instrumental in advocating narrative modes of representation for communicating insights that were content and context bound, he was primarily concerned with the cognitive

[43] Shulman, is careful to suggest that while there is not a singular best case method approach, "instructional cases of subject matter" (p. 468) are extremely important to developing teacher knowledge. As I share later, some of my stories address content, however, they follow the work of narrative researchers such as Chang and Rosiek (2003) who propose that narrative research is needed "that generates new counterhegemonic understanding of teaching practice" (p. 252). As a result, not all of my cases rely on dilemmas embedded in teaching particular subject matter.

problems of teaching. His work did not address specifically the ideological and political dilemmas of teacher knowledge.

This does not mean critical scholars have not picked up this idea. Villegas and Lucas (2002), for example, have advocated for the use of teaching cases to help prepare prospective teachers to be culturally responsive by giving them "exposure to 'a slice of life in culturally diverse contexts,'" and providing "vicarious experiences in culturally diverse settings" (p. 134). Further,

> The particularity of cases supports the development of sensitivity to diversity while discouraging generalizations and stereotyping…In addition, a well-designed case can include different perspectives, actions, and reactions by people from the same cultural background, thus illustrating diversity within cultural groups. (pp. 134-135)

Other scholars, such as Django Paris (2014) have taken up Shulman's theory of "pedagogical content knowledge" to advocate for what he terms, "a new form of PCK, pedagogical cultural knowledge" the "contextualized cultural knowledge" teachers need to engage with the "new American mainstream." Teachers need this new PCK, he offers, to sustain the "cultural and linguistic dexterity" students bring with them and need in a changing society.

Shulman's advocacy for the development of the scholarship of teaching and the use of teaching cases to develop that professional knowledge greatly influenced the field

of teacher knowledge research that utilizes narratives as a mode of understanding and representing teacher knowledge.[44]

Narrative inquiry. The field of teacher knowledge that recognizes teachers as professionals who make complex decisions in practice also prompted Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly to inquire into the narrative dimensions of teacher knowledge, a theory they termed "personal practical knowledge" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1984). "Surely," Clandinin reflected, "teacher knowledge was more than knowledge of theory that could be applied to practice" (Clandinin, Schaefer, & Downing, 2014, p. 17). Through their collaborative work, they begin to articulate a more explicit stance of teacher knowledge as narrative situated within a narrative theory experience. In theorizing their approach to developing teachers' personal practical knowledge, Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) had conceptualized teacher knowledge and experience as narrative. They state,

> To state this in its most direct way, we believe that we all live inside stories. We mean this quite strongly. We believe that there is more of a sense of a person living inside a story than there is of a person living inside a theory or living inside an ideology. Indeed, to live inside a theory or to live inside an ideology is to live inside a story of oneself. (p. 672)

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[44] Scholars utilize the terms "narrative research" in diverse ways, some claiming that narrative inquiry is distinct from other modes of narrative research as representation. As Claindinin (2007) states discussing a distinction her and Connelly developed,

> The distinction was between narrative methodologies that begin with the telling of stories—that is, in the told stories of participants—and those that begin with living alongside participant—that is, the living out of stories…The difference between *telling* and *living* is often a difference between life as lived in the past (telling) and life as it unfolds (living). (p. xi)

For others, narrative research entails both a form understanding the world (experience is narrative), as well as a mode of representation (narrative as reflection or intervention into the experience. I do not make a sharp distinction between telling/living stories. I utilize the term "narrative research" to mean both a narrative as a form of experience and representation.

Heavily influenced by a Deweyan thoery of experience, Clandinin reflects on how that shift led them to understand

> knowledge to be situated in a narrative understanding of experience. Teacher knowledge as personal practical knowledge was now a narrative conception of knowedge. For us, we now understood teacher knowledge as a narrative composition composed in each teacher's life and in his/her practices. Teacher knowledge was composed in, and lived out in, practices. Practice was an embodiment of a teacher's knowledge. (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 25).

Given this view of teachers' experiences as narratively lived and understood and foundational to teaching, Clandinin and Connelly sought ways to effectively understand and transform those experiences. They theorized teacher knowledge utilizing the metaphor of "teachers' professional knowledge landscapes" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995; Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). For Connelly and Clandinin (1995) the landscape as a metaphor aptly illustrated the "notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of components and influenced by a wide variety of people, places and things" (pp.4-5). They also theorized the types of stories lived and told, whether secret, sacred, or cover stories, or teacher stories, stories of teachers, school stories, and stories of school (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) to make sense of the narrative dynamics of educational experiences.

Because their theory of teacher knowledge posited it as "central to student learning" (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997, p. 666), they concurrently explored the value of what they termed "narrative inquiry" as a form of understanding and transforming that knowledge. As Clandinin and Connelly (1990) state, "narrative names

the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study" (p. 2). As Clandinin and Murphy (2009) later state, "We see narrative inquiry, then, as the study of people in relation who are studying the experiences of people in relation" (p. 600).

As a relational approach to inquiry, narrative inquiry involves "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20), what Clandinin and Huber (in press) later term the "three commonplaces of narrative inquiry, temporality, sociality, and place" (p. 3). Their theory of inquiry as a collaborative endeavor is less concerned with the representation of narratives, but rather with the ways those stories are lived out experientially in the lives of participants, what Clandinin (2007) later distinguishes between stories lived or told. Through the collaborative storying of educational experiences with teachers, they believe new stories can be lived and translate into new "personal practical knowledge."

Clandinin and Connelly made substantial contributions to justify narratives as a way of inquiring into, representing, and transforming teachers' experiences as meaningful educational research, especially within positivist context that increasingly demand research conform to "gold standard" approaches. However, to date, the research emerging out of their version of narrative inquiry has lacked the critical and political content of other narrative researchers as well as scholarship emerging from critical race and TribalCrit theories.

Narrative modes of representation. Narrative researchers (Barone, 1992, 2001a, 2001b; Eisner, 1995; 1997; Polkinghorne, 1988) have attempted for the past few decades

to justify the use of narratives as a legitimate form of inquiry and representation within educational research. These scholars have asserted that more than merely a static snapshot of reality, stories are a way of both experiencing the world and of transforming that world through storying new experiences, whether lived, literary, or imagined. Though they have taken up diverse fields within and outside of education (curriculum research, educational administration, psychology, nursing, social work, and medicine among others) and the genres vary (case studies or experiential narratives) along with diverse stylistic elements (such as epic narratives that seek a singular meaning and closure, versus novelistic narratives that aim for polyvocality and multiple interpretations) (Rosiek & Atkinson, 2007) these scholars have worked to keep narrative and story central to processes of meaning-making and production.

Thomas Barone's work has been central to this field. In an early article that aimed to make the case for "critical storytelling," Barone (1992) advocated a practice of storytelling that was honest and responsible, which he termed critical. Regarding honesty, he states,

> Like all good art, honest stories are powerfully observed, carefully detailed. They must tend to generate in the reader awareness of the locations of (actual or fictitious) characters' thoughts, beliefs, desires, and habits, in the webs of contingencies that constitute their life-worlds. (p. 151)

He suggests that honest stories can invite both "solidarity" and "empathy" if written by writers who "see the truth and dare to use it at all costs" (p. 152). Moreover, stories must be critical. Rather than disengaged and disinterested, the stories must be "responsible" and adopt an "openly political stance" (p. 152), or as he later draws from

Lather (1986) to state, "*openly ideological*" (2009, p. 592). The critical storyteller aims to examine the social, cultural, and political influences in our lives, to make those dynamics visible, to "prick the consciences of readers by inviting a reexamination of the values and interests undergirding certain discourses, practices, and institutional arrangements found in today's schools" (p. 152).

Barone and Eliot Eisner (2012) have collaborated to advocate for arts-based methodologies, which include narrative research. In contrast to more orthodox methods that seek certainty, "arts based research does not yield propositional claims about states of affairs. It tries to create insight into states of affairs" (p. 3). These insights are potentially wielded toward "the promotion of (at the least, momentary) disequilibrium—uncertainty" (p. 16), to diverge and "disrupt certainty" rather than serve purposes of confirmation. These disruptions invite us to revisit our world anew, with new insights, in order to transform present and future possibilities. Further, echoing Barone's (1992) earlier stance on storytelling, Barone and Eisner (2012) suggest these works can be simultaneously (perhaps paradoxically) empirical and fictional:

> …works of fiction may indeed, through their recasting of the empirical particulars of the world, achieve extraordinary power to disturb and disrupt the familiar and commonplace, to question and interrogate that which seems to have already been answered conclusively, and to redirect the conversation regarding important social issues. (p. 101)

This resonates with Nel Noddings' assertion that "truth" is not a requirement if the goal is be to "try looking at it this way" (Chang & Rosiek, 2003, p. 254), a justification for fiction I review in the next section as well.

The purpose of arts-based/narrative research is not to converge on a particular conclusion, understanding, stance, or action, but to diverge, to be generative through its interrogations and disruptions. Barone and Eisner (2012) state, “arts based research - like art itself - may interrogate an entrenched ideological stance regarding social phenomena without obvious attempts at imposing a ‘correct’ alternative ideology” (p. 128). Rather than prescriptive outcomes, Barone and Eisner view the possibilities of arts-based (and narrative) research as generative, possibilities that echo Stone-Mediatore’s suggestion that the stories “open up an imaginative space for us to recognize alternative identities and ways of life” or Barone’s earlier work that they might “lift the veil of conventionality from my eyes as they subtly raise disturbing questions about the necessity and desirability of comfortable, familiar . . . discourses and practices” (as cited in Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006, p. 66).

Barone offers that critical storytelling should be responsible and political and can be generative through its invitation to reexamine what appears commonsense. In the next section, however, I look specifically to researchers who have used narrative critically with explicit attention to discourses of race and colonialism. This is important, as I respect but do not valorize experience without question, especially research done by a teaching and researching workforce that remains predominately White (Feistritzer, 2011) and within a discursive context where racialized discourses can constrain the experiences of not only White educators/researchers, but also scholars of color. Though I value stories and experiences, I also believe particular insights and standpoints can be earned or achieved (Harding, 1998), which is a recognition of potential complicity I feel somewhat

lacking in the field of narrative research. As Leech Lake Ojibwe scholar Scott Lyons (2000) states with respect to his theory of rhetorical sovereignty,

> At stake in this discussion are the peoples defined by the writing itself; thus one important tenet of rhetorical sovereignty would be to allow Indians to have some say about the nature of their textual representations. The best way to honor this creed would be to have Indian people themselves do the writing, but it might also be recognized that some representations are better than others, whoever the author. (p. 458)

Even within our *own* communities and nations we recognize that Native stories and experiences don't *necessarily* further self-determination and sovereignty. Because discourses such as settler colonialism are so pervasive and invisible, I seek out scholars who specifically take up the complex dynamics of teaching and supporting students within those colonial and racial dynamics. I have not yet felt that a critical mass of scholarship generated from the field of narrative research is explicitly committed to the communities that I am a part of, or to the students and their families/communities/nations my work seeks to sustain, at least not yet. Within a pervasive context of erasure, marginalization, and degradation of Indigenous lives, both in and outside of schools, I am concerned with developing educators' "personal practical knowledge," but I reach for practices that are explicitly committed to use narratives—whether as mode of inquiry, representation, or both—as an intervention into the dominant, hegemonic narratives reproduced in schools.[45] Though numerous discourses may be "hegemonic" given one's

[45] This is not to say that Clandinin and Connelly have not used narratives to further these ends. In the final line of their article in *Educational Researcher* before thanking the scholars they responded to, Clandinin and Murphy (2009) state, "We, too, see the possibility through narrative research to change the dominant narratives, to shift the taken-for-granted social, cultural, and institutional narratives" (p. 601). This

particular subjectivity, I mean in particular discourses of settler colonialism, racism, and white supremacy. In the next section, I review Jerry Rosiek's collaborative work with three colleagues that seeks to understand and intervene into teachers' "professional knowledge landscapes" by attending to the ways that practical knowledge is enacted within particularly fraught discursive contexts.

Critical and counterhegemonic narrative research. The field of narrative research has grown tremendously and it is beyond the scope of this study to review it. Rosiek and Atkinson (2007), in their exploration of narrative genres, suggest that the two primary justifications within the field of narrative research are ontological and pedagogical. They state, "The ontological argument claims that the lived reality of teacher experience has a narrative form. In other words, teachers and perhaps humans generally live a storied existence" (Rosiek & Atkinson, 2007, p. 503). The pedagogical claim is that because we live storied lives, narratives are not only more accurate, but more effective at

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statement is important, but in the general body of narrative inquiry research, I have yet to see consistent and comprehensive attention to critical and political issues; which is not to say that I have reviewed all of the narrative research, have an authoritative view of what counts as critical, or that my own narratives aren't complicit in reproducing particularly oppressive dynamics. As an example, however, I offer my first experience at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference. I had recently taken a class on narrative inquiry, and so I wrote a paper that critically reflected on my own experiences as an educator within a context of cultural difference. My story included my own complicity in the Peace Corps as a form of colonialism despite my subjectivity as an Alutiiq and Indigenous woman. At the roundtable, two educators before me shared their narrative inquiry into their own Peace Corps experience, lauding the experience as foundational to their understanding of cultural diversity and awareness. Though they were only two of numerous narrative inquirers, their stories have seemed to me a trend, rather than the exception, of narrtive inquiry that valorizes individual experiences without critically examining the way those experiences might be complicated by cultural discourses. In an tertiary context where the majority of researchers continue to be White, seeking degrees within instiutitons that often reproduce whiteness, I don't inherently trust the field of narrative inquiry, despite its valuing of personal experiences and stories. Though I am wary of reducing experiences to critical stances that presume we are all dupes to our own experiences (e.g., "false consciousness"), especially as I take an Indigenist standpoint that my experiences might afford useful (though not universal) insights, I am wary of the ways narrative researchers lacking critical stances and perspectives can actually wield narrative inquiry to reproduce social injustices. As such, as my methodology chapter shows, I align myself with Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars, TribalCrit, and a long line of critical scholars, such as Mills (2007), who argues that antidotes to "white ignorance" often rest in "black knowledge," which at the very least, includes "...the self-conscious recognition of white ignorance" (p. 151) (as cited in Calderon, 2014, p. 86). I will remain hopeful, however, about the critical direction of the field.

communicating information. They not only "enable humans to process larger amounts of discreet information than they could in lists or schematics, [but]…in affective or aesthetic terms; narratives evoke emotional responses and permit the representation of aesthetic qualities in ways that more didactic styles of writing cannot" (pp. 503-504). Narrative, further, as a mode of inquiry and representation, seeks to honors the lived experiences of those involved.

Yet as the story of Celeste and Sharon shows, their stories and experiences were *both* locally and discursively produced. Narrative researchers such as Rosiek and Atkinson (2007) claim that in stories it is possible to narrow the focus to one's experience to see how broader narratives play out. They state,

> Beginning with a respect for ordinary lived experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only a valorizing of individuals' experience but also an exploration of the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences were constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted—but in a way that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved. (p. 42)

As such, narrative researchers honor personal, lived experiences, but also attend to the macrosocial elements embedded in each person's storied experience.

Through this work, the researchers and teachers developed "sonata-form case studies" as one approach to documenting and intervening into the field of teacher knowledge (Sconiers & Rosiek, 2000; Dibble & Rosiek, 2002; Chang & Rosiek, 2003). Importantly, the narratives the teacher-researcher collaborative inquired into and produced sought to examine, understand, and develop teachers' "professional knowledge landscapes" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) *explicitly* with regards to issues of equity,

race, coloniality, and the ways subject matter intersects with cultural difference. As Sconiers and Rosiek (2000) state of their introduction to the sonata-form case study, “Our goal was to produce case studies that would enrich and enhance practitioners’ perceptivity (Eisner, 1991) in a way that would help their teaching practice be more culturally responsive (Ladson-Billings, 1995)” (p. 396).

Their case studies emphasized both the “general and the particular,” taking up Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s call that teacher research “emanate from neither theory nor practice alone, but from critical reflection on the intersection of the two” (as cited in Sconiers & Rosiek, 2000, p. 396). The inquiries and development of sonata-form case studies were part of a larger teacher/researcher collaborative project. Because this work involved teachers’ experiences and collaborative and personal reflections on that experience, they reached for a mode of representation that would honor both the lived and reflective aspects of that process, developing sonata-form case studies as fictionalized empirical accounts. As Dibble and Rosiek (2002) state,

> … sonata-form case studies are written as hypothetical fictions. They are based on real experience, but they represent a teacher's conception of the possibilities in that experience. The case studies are designed to juxtapose conflicting discourses that shape teaching practice and describe possible ways of navigating these conflicts from the perspective of the teacher. (p. 3)

Dibble and Rosiek justify their use of fiction, as the purpose is to surface “possibilities” rather than necessarily to document empirical realities. They state,

> Suffice it to say here that fiction is not a synonym for "lie," nor is it the opposite of truth. In this instance a fictionalized narrative is used as a means of

documenting *possible* ways of looking at key elements of real teaching situations that a teacher recognized only after reflecting on his or her experience. (p. 3)[46]

Chang and Rosiek (2003) engaged the same fictionalized approach; however, they also advocated for the research designed to develop counterhegemonic narratives to disrupt wisdom embedded in practices that reproduce hegemony. They state,

> If we believe some teacher knowledge exists in the form of stories, then analyzing the stories already shaping teacher practice is only one part of a spectrum of possible research agendas. Another, equally important undertaking would be finding ways to produce new stories that could better shape teaching practice. Unless we believe all the narrative understanding of teaching we could possibly need is already in existence, research that generates new narrative understandings is justified.
>
> The need for research that generates new narrative understandings is especially acute when considering aspects of teaching influenced by hegemonic patterns of thinking in our society (Gramsci, 2000; Freire, 1998; Fine, 1993; Liston & Zeichner, 1996). If our conception of the curriculum is adversely influenced by an ideology so pervasive that few if any practitioners may be thinking outside of it, then looking only to existing practices for wisdom will simply reproduce that

[46] My stories, as I share in the next section, are not fictionalized, but reflect empirical work (fieldwork, observations, interviews, my own teaching and reflections); yet as I also share in the next chapter, I do not rely on rational empiricism to justify this use. I could equally have fictionalized these stories and used sonata-form case studies. Perhaps that would have been a useful intervention, as Dibble and Rosiek (2002) state that eventually "the field of teacher practical knowledge research will need to coalesce around some common, albeit evolving, questions and tentatively agreed upon modes of representing its insights" (p. 2). My use of stories is akin to Noddings' (1995) call to "try looking at it in this way" (as cited in Dibble & Rosiek, 2002, p. 3); in the next section, I offer that by "this way," I mean my experience as counterstory to dominant cultural expectations and practices in the school district.

> hegemony. Given these conditions, narrative research would be needed that generates new counterhegemonic understanding of teaching practice. (p. 252)

Rosiek's collaborative work addressed these concerns. Sconiers and Rosiek (2000) examine the tensions in an inquiry-based science unit with regards to racialized issues of trust; Dibble and Rosiek (2002) explore the ways a teacher's racial identity mediates her counseling of Mexican-American students to pursue science; and Chang and Rosiek (2003) highlight the cultural tensions and conflicts "between Hmong culture and the culture of science" (p. 279)—especially as science is one of the "array of cultural forces that are adversely affecting the Hmong community" (p. 251)—and how those conflicts inform teacher knowledge. This case is particularly useful to my work as it highlights the ways discourses can distort understanding even between individuals of the same cultural group, in this case a Hmong teacher and student.

These narratives are not meant to prescribe solutions to the dilemmas of teaching within a context of racialized and colonial discourses, but are more akin to Tejeda's (2008) conception of "dancing with the dilemma," what Richardson and Villenas (2000) term as "*dancing* with, within, and against whiteness" (p. 268). The metaphor of dancing suggests that rather than a solution to uncover or an endpoint to reach, being within, moving, and engaging the "complexities of [the] endeavor" (Richardson & Villenas, 2000, p. 268) is an important practice in and of itself that doesn't necessarily seek closure. As Chang and Rosiek (2003) state of their work, "The case study examines this tension, but does not resolve it" (p. 251), and Dibble and Rosiek (2002) offer what living with these tensions means for teacher knowledge:

> The teacher's journey to this understanding involves reflection on the structure of the science curriculum, on her personal history, and dwelling on uncomfortable feelings that contain kernels of insight that eventually grow into deeper understanding. *The authors consider the whole of this process, and not just some specific conclusion that can be represented in the form of summary propositions, to be the content of the practical knowledge the case study conveys*. Fittingly, therefore, it ends not with the teacher articulating a neat solution to a profound challenge, but with the teacher demonstrating a greater appreciation of difference in the classroom and its implications for teaching high school science. (np, emphasis added)

Critical and reflective narratives are not meant to provoke easy resolutions; rather, they invite reflections on the ways our subjectivities as teachers—and practices that stem from those subjectivities—are shot through with various discourses that complicate our understanding of both our teaching and our students' experiences in schools. Rather than deploying narratives that *solve* dilemmas, it is my interpretation that these narratives are meant to provoke radical commitment to reflection and to critical work within and against these dominant and pervasive discourses. It is from this line of research that I base my work.

Storytelling as an embedded praxis, not metatheory: A complement to CRS. Given the ongoing shift in social, cultural, and political dynamics, I don't intend to posit a new meta-pedagogical framework that might address both the interaction between Celeste and her teacher in this context, but also presume to address the interactions between all Indigenous students and their teachers everywhere. The assumption that one

framework can serve all Native students everywhere is one I am trying to resist. I also believe there are many current frameworks that effectively help teachers think through conceptually and practically what it means to serve underrepresented or marginalized students. Django Paris's (2012) conception of "culturally sustaining pedagogy," for example, is an important contribution to the field. Acknowledging the groundwork laid by culturally relevant pedagogies (Ladson Billings, 1995), Paris questions "the usefulness of 'responsive' and 'relevant'—like the term 'tolerance' in multicultural education and training, neither term goes far enough" (p. 95). These theories, he suggests, "do not explicitly enough support the *linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality* (Paris, 2009; 2011) necessary for success and access in our demographically changing U.S. and global schools and communities" (p. 95). Instead, he offers a conception of pedagogy that moves beyond responsiveness to a notion of *culturally sustaining*:

> The term *culturally sustaining* requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. Culturally sustaining pedagogy, then, has as its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers. That is, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling. (p. 95)

I believe changes in stance such as this are meaningful. Indeed, if teachers read and reflected on this piece, it could have transformative consequences for how they

theorize their students, the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the aims of school. Other contributions—revolutionary/critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; McLaren, 2003; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008); culturally responsive pedagogy (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Gay, 2010); culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2014); anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2000); or multicultural education (Nieto, 2014)—are also important contributions that theorize curriculum and pedagogy within a context of cultural difference, explicitly geared toward serving cultural, racially, and linguistically diverse students, and as Nieto (2014) argues, *all* students in general. Other scholars, such as Grande (2004) and McCarty and Lee (2014), have moved forward this body of work by interrogating the Western assumptions that underlie these theories by, for example, foregrounding Indigenous aims of self-determination and sovereignty. Indigenous scholars invested in understanding, implementing, and justifying cultural-based education (CBE) and culturally responsive schooling (CRS) have also made invaluable contributions to this field (see Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, Brayboy & Castagno, 2009, and Demmert & Towner, 2003 for comprehensive reviews of this work).

I believe that conversations within and between these frameworks have pushed the field in new and productive directions. My project now is indebted to each of these frameworks and the shifts in my own practices and theorizing they have generated. I am offering counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1989) not as a new framework to supplant these, but as a means of thinking through this work as it is lived in schools. Frameworks open up possibilities for us to think through the values, theories, and principles that might ground and guide our work. Stories, on the other hand, provide us with the context,

experiences, anomalies, complexities, and messiness to expand and stretch the possibilities within those theories.

I see stories as a potential pedagogical intervention into the ways serving Indigenous students has been narrowly framed, and a mode of analysis that honors the experience of individuals (teachers and students for example) while also attending to the discursive dynamics of the situations they find themselves in. I hope that the stories I craft can keep those multiple dynamics at play without getting us lost in the macrosocial literature that dehumanizes people and reduces us to subject locations that play out particular discourses, but also doesn't hyperlocalize phenomena and erase the macrosocial influences in each of our lives. I hope that stories can evoke not just a description of a discourse, but highlight the tensions and strains of working within and against them as well, so that teachers might imagine their current and future pedagogies differently.

Moreover, since in the predominately White context of this study many of the non-Native teachers admit to having little interaction with Native peoples (aside from the Native students they serve), these stories provide a chance for teachers to consider the range of dynamics Native students and communities navigate, a consideration I hope is destabilizing and unsettling, and invites a sense of respect and responsibility toward Indigenous students' experiences and knowledge.

I also hope that these stories and their attention to discursive dynamics situates teachers' practices temporally within the historical and present-day narrative of settler/Indigenous relationships and within longstanding efforts by schools to assimilate Indigenous students. This positioning, I hope, calls on teachers to be responsible not only

to the students before them, but for the histories of their subject positions. I hope a discursive analysis embedded within and accompanying each story will explore the ways various concepts (settler colonialism, whiteness) manifest in this district, as well as contribute to envisioning different relations and conceptions of self-determination and sovereignty in this space.

What can teachers do in the face of institutional white supremacy and settler colonialism? How are schools structured to support and reproduce these discourses? How do Indigenous students, families, and educators navigate these discourses? In the end I have no prescription for these questions, but offer counterstories as a way of making sense of Indigenous education as it is enacted in this district. The stories are the conclusion as I hope they provide the means through which to make visible dynamics that are often not visible to those who reproduce them, enabling new stories to emerge, be considered, and be lived and told. In the following chapter, I explain in more detail my methodology for counterstorytelling.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

There are many ways to justify the use of stories, storytelling, and counterstorytelling[47] in education as a transformative methodological and pedagogical approach. Before I do so, I will first acknowledge a much longer genealogy of storytelling, locating the roots of storytelling within Indigenous traditions. I then outline Native writers such as Zitkala-Ša (Dakota) and Arther C. Parker (Seneca) who have used counterstorytelling to "write back" (Smith, 1999) to narratives that were explicitly used to further assimilationist ideologies. Next, I situate Zitkala-Ša and my own work within the field by providing a brief overview of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), and narrative modes of representation that I draw from. I follow this with a description of counterstorytelling that I use, and share how frameworks of desire (Tuck, 2009) and refusal (Tuck & Yang, 2012) have shaped which stories I have chosen to tell or not to tell, and how I wrote them. I end by detailing the particular methods I used to collect and analyze data to write the stories, and the limitations of my approach.

Acknowledging Indigenous storytelling traditions.

> My mother told me, "Baby, doesn't she know that our stories are our theories? And she thinks she's smarter than you because she can't tell stories?" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 426).

[47] I will utilize the spelling "counterstorytelling" following Delgado (1989), except when the literature utilizes it otherwise.

I begin with the acknowledment that recent theories advocating for storytelling as a methodology and mode of representation might respectfully be premised with the recognition that these modes of inquiry and representation have been rooted in Indigenous traditions since time immemorial. Some scholars, such as Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), respectfully make this acknowledgment:

> Narrative inquiry is an old practice that may feel new to us for a variety of reasons. Human beings have lived out and told stories about that living for as long as we could talk. And then we have talked about the stories we tell for almost as long. These lived and told stories and the talk about the stories are one of the ways that we fill our world with meaning and enlist one another's assistance in building lives and communities. (p. 35)

I acknowledge Indigenous storytelling specifically, not only because it is my responsibility as an Indigenous woman and scholar to acknowledge my ancestors, relatives, and fellow scholars who engage in this work, but also because I believe the recognition of and serious engagement with Indigenous knowledges, methodologies, and stories, by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, will provide generative insights and contributions to the field of social science research as a whole. Thus, like Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), I aim to situate something that "feels new" (p. 35) within a much deeper historical context.

Indigenous scholars have made important inroads for this work. In particular, Q'um Q'um Xiiem scholar Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) from the Sto:lo Nation has articulated a theoretical framework of "storywork" undergirded by Sto:lo principles to create space for stories within education. She draws on the works of Native writers before

her such as N. Scott Momaday, Gerald Vizenor, Leslie Marmon Silko, Paula Gunn Allen, Greg Sarris, Craig Womack, and Thomas King (Archibald, 2008) to highlight how contemporary Native authors have been influenced by Indigenous oral traditions, and how those traditions have been influenced by their own personal relationships with lands, languages, histories, and peoples that span generations. Her work importantly advocates for the recognition and respectful use of Indigenous stories traditions within education.

I am not, however, a "traditional storyteller." Though I am always hesitant to use the word "traditional" in this way, I intend it to mean, generally, one who carries the responsibility of imparting intergenerational, place-based, communal knowledge to the next generation. This role is often earned or appointed, requires meticulous training, and entails great personal and communal responsibility for holding, remembering, and communicating important events and worldviews (Drabek, 2012). I utilize narratives because I believe stories are powerful. They help people make sense of the world and provide a complex-rich affective, imaginative, and discursive space to examine life and the futures that can stem from it (Delgado, 1989; King, 2012; Vizenor, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Chang & Rosiek, 2003). Indigenous peoples have long understood the power of narratives to impart collective, traditional, place-based knowledge and values. I want to be clear, however, that my process of storytelling is not centered around "traditional" storytelling. Instead, I want to situate myself within an Indigenous tradition of "writing back." I do so not only to recognize the ways Native writers have been asserting their sovereignty and survivance via the written word, but also to remind the field of narrative research that the use of narratives is not an inherently innocent or trustworthy practice. I will first show several ways that narratives have been explicitly

wielded to *further*, not disrupt, assimilative educational policy and practices. I will then show how writers such as Zitkala-Ša have reworked those narrative scripts to further Indigenous survivance, self-determination, and sovereignty.

Narratives are not innocent. Narratives have been actively used as a means to erase, destroy, or displace Indigenous presence, peoples, and their stories. Narratives aren't inherently trustworthy because they are narratives. It is the content of the stories and how those stories intersect with people, place, politics, and ethics, among other relations, that determine their effectiveness.

The field of Critical Race Theory acknowledges that dominant ideologies are also narratives (Atwood & Lopez, 2012), what Delgado (1999) refers to as "majoritarian" stories. Though often veiled as "truth" or "science," dominant discourses are particular stories about the world that are presumed to be universal and objective, concealing their storied subjectivities, much the way settler colonial discourses erase themselves from view (Veracini, 2011). But beyond the subjective and partial narratives that hide behind seemingly neutral and universal Eurocentric narratives is a longstanding practice of using constructed narratives, *because* of their affective and aesthetic potential, to dispossess, subjugate, and assimilate Native peoples. Prior to contact, stories were told about exotic "Others" that said more about those telling the stories of the Orient than the actual people living there (Said, 1978). Yet in educational philosophies and reforms as well, stories have long been used to put and keep Indigenous people in their place.

As early records of Indigenous education shows, stories have been strategically used to further assimilative agendas. Boarding schools, like Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, established surveillance systems to monitor and regulate Native

students actions and thoughts. Stories were integral to establishing these surveillance systems inside of the homes, hearts, and minds of Indigenous students who attended or graduated from boarding schools such as Carlisle. When Carlisle produced various publications such as *Indian Helper* and *The Red Man*, a character—the "Man-on-the-bandstand"—was created "who combined characteristics of God, Uncle Sam, and grandfather with those of prison officer, spy, and dirty old man" (Fear-Segal, 2007, p. 207). The Man-on-the-bandstand had ubiquitous power and was always watching the children. His persona and the stories he wrote created a system of surveillance that would monitor Indigenous students, attempt to regulate their thoughts and actions, and police them to act the ways they were taught in boarding schools (Enoch, 2002; Fear-Segal, 2007). In narrative research terms, this might be thought of as effective character development, or creative, inventive fiction. Yet fiction wielded through particular ideologies or discourses can harm, not help, Native children.

When the Man-on-the-bandstand told "A True Story of Three Indian Lads Who Tried Running Away from School," depicting three runaway boys who each ended up with frostbite, the Man-on-the-bandstand as a rhetorical device was literally used to keep Native children in their place—to quell the resistance that motivated so many students to run away. These stories were also selective. They did not detail resistance, though students expressed resistance in various ways, including marching off beat, running away, and even burning down schools. "Rarely discussed publicly, arson was a common occurrence at all Indian schools and one of the most dramatic ways the children found to express their resistance" (Fear-Segal, 2007, p. 225). My grandmother was taken as a young orphan to a Baptist Mission on Woody Island in Alaska, a school that burned

down twice. I never had a chance to talk to my grandma about her experience because my own mother became a foster child, as did I a generation later, but I find solace imagining sometimes that she and her little friends lit the school on fire. I understand that the implementation of boarding and mission schools was a complex and contradictory experience for Native people, whose experiences ranged from appreciation to contempt, hatred, and resentment of the experience (Adams, 1995; Child, 1998; Lomawaima, 1994). Still, I see why the Man-on-the-bandstand omitted Indigenous resistance. As Salish and Cree Stó:lō scholar Lee Maracle (2014) states, "If your imagination isn't working—and, of course, in oppressed people that's the first thing that goes—you can't imagine something anything better. Once you can imagine something different, something better, then you're on your way" (p. 10). The Man-on-the-bandstand used partial and strategic stories to frame Indigenous students' experiences of school, both lived and imagined.

Mariana Burgess (who denied the role but is thought to be the behind the Man-on-the-bandstand) knew the power of narratives when she wrote the short novel *Stiya, A Carlisle Indian Girl At Home* (1891). Her novel described the return home of a young Pueblo girl who, upon returning to her reservation from boarding school, found it repugnant, her own people and family pitiful and backward. With Burgess' expertly crafted prose, the malicious ideological function of narrative comes into focus. Burgess writes,

> Was I glad to see them as I thought I would be?
>
> I must confess that instead I was shocked and surprised at the sight that met my yes.
>
> "*My* father? *My* mother?" cried I desperately within. "No, never!"

I thought, and I actually turned back upon them.

I had forgotten that home Indians had such grimy faces.

I had forgotten that my mother's hair always looked as though it had never seen a comb…

I rushed frantically into the arms of my *school*-mother, who had taken me home. (as cited in Fear-Segal, 2007, p.227).

This rhetorical strategy was designed precisely to disrupt "tribal tyranny," as Burgess reports in the preface. Burgess crafted stories designed to impart on the Native child leaving boarding school repulsion for their home community, and to remember the "civilized" lessons taught in boarding school.

Burgess strategically deployed narrative strategies, "anticipat[ing] the situations a returning student would encounter and then [writing] the script for how they should respond" (p. 227). Much like a narrative strategy of evoking a world one can imagine, feel, and see, Burgess evoked a world for these Native children, a world specifically designed so that they might see their families as "savage," and renounce their own families, homes, and nations. *Stiya,* like the "Man-on-the-bandstand," was a narrative strategy of surveillance, a "portable bandstand, capable of carrying Carlisle's message back to the children's homes" (Fear-Segal, 2007, p. 228). To gain creditability for her narratives, Burgess purposely invoked the pen name *Embe* (perhaps a play on her initials MB) which "obscure[d] her social identity and offer[ed] her a way of passing herself off as an Indian" (Gould, 2005p. 13). Embe enabled Burgess to claim an authentic voice as she wrote *Stiya*, "speaking as an Indian, from inside Pueblo society" (Fear-Segal, 2007, p.

227). Never mind that on the cover, Stiya was represented by Lucy Tsinah, an Apache student at Carlisle.

In a parallel narrative account, Thomas J. Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, gave a public address in Albany about his plan for a nationalized school system for Native children. In his talk, "A Plea for the Papoose," Morgan rhetorically placed himself inside the papoose where he spoke figuratively as an Indian infant about his dreams for education: "These helpless little ones cry out to us," Morgan states before transitioning into the first-person voice of a young Indian baby:

> If you leave us here to grow up in our present surroundings, what can we hope for? Our highest conception of government will be obedience to the word of the chief; our patriotism will be bounded by the confines of our reservation; our lives will be at the mercy of the "medicine man"; our religion will be a vile mixture of superstition, legends and meaningless ceremonies; our highest pleasures will be the excitement of the chase, the recital of stories of bloodshed, the frenzy of the dance, and the gratification of our passions…Without assistance we can not understand your philosophy nor adopt your ways, and we cry to you in our helplessness…We are surrounded on every side by the resistless tide of population; a tide we cannot withstand or compete with. Our only hope is your civilization, which we cannot adopt unless you give us your Bible, your spelling book, your plow and your ax. Grant us these and teach us how to use them, and then we shall be like you. (Morgan, n.d., as cited in Prucha, 1973, p. 244).

It is no mistake that Morgan chose a "baby in the papoose" to make his claims. Not only did he preface his address with the general love and appreciation most have for

babies, but the metaphor of babies enabled Morgan to tease out and propose his longstanding claim that Native people are, underneath it all, humans, capable of civilization through cultivation. "Indian nature is human nature bound in red…" Morgan states (Prucha, 1973, p. 241). "No amount of culture will grow oranges on a rose bush, or develop a cornstalk into an oak tree," (p. 242), but underneath it all, babies were "helpless innocents for whom I plead would, if they had words in which to express their thoughts, appeal to us with a pathos inexpressibly touching to save them from the doom that awaits them if left to grow up with their present surroundings" (p. 243).

It goes without saying that the words uttered by that Indian baby in the papoose said more about Morgan's educational philosophy than any notion of what young Native children wanted or needed. I use these examples—the Man-on-the-bandstand, *Stiya*, and the baby in the papoose—to point out the ways narrative strategies can be (and have long been) deployed to serve particular agendas. I believe the field of narrative research should attend to this history as a reminder that narratives are not salvation, but have been used to further settler sovereignty by undermining Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. Narratives have been deployed to reach into our Native nations, communities, and homes, designed and crafted explicitly so that our people would not see ourselves as we always were, but would imagine new, Whiter, more civilized selves and futures. This was what Marianna Burgess aimed for when she wrote *Stiya.* Her goal was to alienate our people from ourselves, to disrupt "tribal tyranny." Her goal was to use fiction so that we might imagine ourselves as White.

Yet I also believe in the power of stories, in providing literary space so one might consider what was previously unexamined or taken for granted in order to have ground

upon which to imagine new possibilities. I believe that stories can account for context and emotion in a way other forms may not. Aside from the ways storytelling has functioned as a longstanding, intergenerational, place-based practice, Native people have also seen the power of the written word and have used narratives to "write home" and "write back" (Miller & Riding In, 2011; Smith, 1999).

"Writing back": Native counterstorytelling. There has always been Native resistance and counterstorytelling. Native people, aside from preserving Indigenous stories, languages, songs, dances, and using oration as a form of resistance, have also long used the written word as a form of counterstorytelling to contest imposed fictions. These written accounts exemplify what Lyons (2000) has termed "rhetorical sovereignty" and "setting the terms of the debate," or what Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) calls "writing back." When Zitkala-Ša began writing columns in the *Atlantic Monthly* in response to Richard Henry Pratt's *Indian Helper* and *The Red Man* columns, she too deployed creative narrative strategies to, according to Jessica Enoch (2002), expose "the hypocrisy and injustice that she witnessed as a teacher at Carlisle" (p. 133). Zitkala-Ša was "a Native American educator who intervened in a dominant and a dominating educational narrative" (Enoch, 2002, p. 139). Enoch described the narrative techniques Zitkala-Ša used as "flipping the script" by inverting the civilized-savage binary that Pratt frequently deployed. As Enoch states, "Zitkala-Ša used her essays to erase this script and inscribe her own version of this narrative" (p. 124).

In one rhetorical inversion, Zitkala-Ša flipped the narrative deployed to justify and promote boarding schools—that Indians are savages in need of civilization—by "telling stories of home that are not filled with barbarism and impropriety. Instead, her

tales of Indian home life are marked by descriptions of art, etiquette, and social code-a cultural world Carlisle chooses to ignore" (p. 126). Zitkala-Ša aimed to civilize the savage narrative about Indigenous peoples.

This mode of representation, where Indigenous authors rescript the "savage" narrative of their lives and homes, has been effectively utilized by other Indigenous scholars, artists, and storytellers. For example, Nle7kepmx, Nsilx and Métis author Nicola Campbell wrote *Shi-shi-etko* (2005), which depicts the last four days a young First Nations girl has with her family before going off to residential school, highlighting what life would have been before it was "cut short."[48] A similar approach is taken by Cree author Larry Loyie (2005) in *As Long as the Rivers Flows*, which depicts a young First Nation boy's last summer with his Cree nation before heading to residential school. Both narratives portray compelling stories of home and of the lives that would be "cut short" as Garcia writes; the lives that would withstand and resist oppression; the lives that would survive (or not survive) those schools. This approach invites the reader to imagine life trajectories that could have been, had they not been interrupted.[49]

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[48] In *Shi-shi-etko* (2005), rather than evoke the oppressive aspects of the residential schooling system, Campbell evokes what those schools intended to take away—Shi-shi-etko's language, a paddle song, knowledge of the creek where she grew up. As Cora Garcia (2012) writes,

> The brilliance of this book is in the depiction of a life that should have continued, but was cut short. The moments in this little book are the substance of the lives of all growing children – walks with mom, special lessons from grandparents. By depicting everyday moments with which young readers will relate, Campbell successfully coveys the real impact of the residential school system. Children and adults alike will be able to appreciate the meaning of losing such warmth, stability, and belonging in the world. (n.p.)

Sharing what compelled her to write the story from the perspective of life before residential schools, Campbell stated, "I remember thinking of the first days of residential school, how a child would be feeling, how a family would feel, and about everything that would be considered important to pass on to the child," (O'Reilly, 2009, np). *Shi-shi-etko* (2010) was later made into a short film, shot in traditional Sto:lo territoryin Halq'emeylem with English subtitles.

[49] I am not speaking of Campbell's work, but there is some risk in this approach, evident in the ways "noble savage" narratives may also be considered narratives that detail what life could have been had it not been cut short.

Though I aim to highlight Native courage, resilience, and survivance, my approach is more akin to another reversal that Zitkala-Ša utilized. Zitkala-Ša used an array of strategies to disrupt hegemonic educational practices and philosophies directed toward Native people at the time. She effectively relayed stories of her "savage" home that were "civilized." In an alternative binary reversal, however, Zitkala-Ša flipped the "white = civilized, Indian = savage script" to show that actually, "it was during her boarding school experience that she suffered the 'extreme indignities' of a savage and cruel white culture" (Enoch, 2002, p. 126). Describing in painful detail her experience in the story "The Cutting of My Hair," for example, Zitkala-Ša writes of anticipating the "paleface woman" who sought her out to cut her hair. Zitkala-Ša had run and hid from this woman, and wrote,

> What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.
>
> I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder. (Zitkala-Ša, 1992, n.p.)

In this rhetorical reversal, Zitkala-Ša made "savage" the script deployed by supposedly "civilized" teachers. Importantly, Zitkala-Ša did not portray herself as a victim to this cruelty, but attested to her resistance.[50] Her narrative strategy accounted for "loss and despair, but also the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and communities," as Tuck (2009) notes (p. 417).

Arthur C. Parker used this similar strategy when he wrote in *The American Journal of Society* in 1916. In an article titled "The Social Elements of the Indian Problem," Parker outlined "The seven stolen rights" that were "essential to the life of a man or a nation" (p. 255). Akin to Zitkala-Ša's reversal, Parker's rhetorical strategy makes visible the hypocrisy of US policy, observing the irony that the American Republic deemed freedom and liberty as essential American principles, even as they infringed on Indigenous freedom:

> The fathers of the American Republic had suffered the hand of oppression. They could not endure the torment of being governed by a hand that wrote its laws across the sea. The will of the mother-country was not the will of her children and there was a revolt. Patrick Henry expressed the feeling in the hearts of his compatriots when he shouted: "Give me liberty or give me death." Benjamin Franklin wrote: "Where liberty dwells, there is my country," and Thomas Jefferson in his Summary View of the Rights of British America laid down the principle, "The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time." In how

[50] Zitkala-Ša's stories detail numerous creative forms of resistance, such as the time she took her "revenge on the devil" in the Bible by "scratching out his wicked eyes," or the time she was ordered to mash turnips to which she responded by mashing them to a pulp. "The order was, 'Mash these turnips,' and mash them I would!" she thought to herself. "As I sat eating my dinner, and saw that no turnips were served, I whooped in my heart for having once asserted the rebellion within me" (Zitkala-Ša, 1921, np).

> many instances do all these thoughts paraphrase the expression and the actions of the freedom-loving red men, who are now governed, not by their own kindred, but by a hand that reaches out far across the country. (p. 260)

Parker also points out the hypocrisy in representations and omissions in history books that glorify conquest and ignore the “white man’s savagery”:

> None of these popular writers tell of the white man's savagery, once he held the power over the red man's soul and body…We are not allowed to know that Indians were hunted as wolves and that the states of Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Jersey, and even New York offered bounties for Indian scalps. The Pennsylvania schedule was as follows: "For every male above ten years captured, $150; for every male above ten years scalped, being killed, $134; for every female or male under ten years captured, $130; for every female above ten years scalped, being killed $50." Historians tell the white youth that Indians scalped their enemies and killed defenseless women, yet no mention is made that white men plundered, murdered, raped, and tortured Indians. (pp. 261-262)

I do not claim that my use of narratives will be as skillful or effective as those of Zitkala-Ša or Arthur Parker; however, like them, I hope to use narratives strategically to invite educators to rethink some of the problematic “scripts” that I have seen undergird Indigenous education. These scripts no longer fall along the blatant fault lines of civilized/savage binaries deployed when Zitkala-Ša and Parker wrote, but there is still a need to make visible and explicit the ways curricula and pedagogy is not “civilized” in the way it purports, whether through multicultural education that “celebrates” difference,

or policy and practice that only supports particular "safe" forms of cultural difference (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). I seek to make visible these dynamics to enhance what Wahpetunwan Dakota scholar Waziyatawin Angela Cavender Wilson (2006) calls the "sensibilities" necessary to detect anti-Indianism in policy and practice: "Indeed, anti-Indian educational and ideological hegemony is so firmly established, most Americans cannot recognize it even when it appears before their eyes" (p. 68).

Drawing on Zitkala-Ša's and Parker's examples, I hope to call in to question the ways a unit which aims to "appreciate" Native Americans might actually perpetuate the romanticization and objectification of Native life and culture; or question the use of a data system that is designed to better identify and support minority student demographics for civil rights enforcement, but actually quietly encodes Indigenous erasure; or push an administrator to do more for Native Heritage Month than coordinate an assembly at an elementary school, that although attempts to focus on a contemporary Native dancer, might actually reinforce what Cherokee author Thomas King (2012) terms the "Dead Indian."

I aim to use narratives to write back to the ways Indigenous education has been framed, ignored, or marginalized; however, unlike Zitkala-Ša and Parker, I am not writing about educators *explicitly* trying to further assimilative ideologies, but rather, those who sincerely believe they are teaching in ways that respect and support Indigenous cultures.[51] Despite good intentions, it appears these educators often unwittingly reproduce

[51] It should be acknowledged here that many in the boarding school sincerely believed they were helping Indigenous students by (at times forcibly) assimilating them. Their conception of support was explicitly assimilative. Contemporary educators rarely have such explicit curricular hostility to Indigenous culture. Nonetheless, neoliberal multicultural curriculum is often colonialist and assimilative in its effects, despite the intentions of educators. And when challenged, educators and institutions often respond with resentment, withdrawal, and even hostility to criticism.

discourses that marginalize, erase, or demean Indigenous life. My aim is to help educators develop sensibilities, to sensitize them to dominant discourses that shape policy, curricula, and pedagogy regarding Indigenous education.

It is grounded in the survivance of writers like Zitkala-Ša that I use counterstorytelling as a mode of "writing back," while also heeding Solórzano and Yosso's (2002) caution that while

> Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform…[they] need not be created only as a direct response to majoritarian stories. As Ikemoto (1997) reminds us, "By responding only to the standard story, we let it dominate the discourse (p. 136)." (p. 32)

For this reason, I have also engaged in a process of writing into my narratives modes of Indigenous survivance as I have witnessed it. I have also taken opportunties to write specifically for the community that I work with, and not solely to raise awareness for teachers hoping my writing will eventually serve Native students at a later date. At times, these forms of writing home have been informal—Facebook posts based in #DearNativeYouth and #NativeLoveIs projects, or various written "micro-affirmations" (Rowe, 2008) to my youth group, "tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening" (p. 4).

In the following sections, I aim to justify my use of counterstorytelling. I reached for storytelling as a methodology for practical reasons because, as Vizenor (1990) so blatantly asserts, "there isn't any center to our world but a story" (154). It is also because I believe that particular stories that have been marginalized can be potent in

denaturalizing taken-for-granted ways of thinking, that storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool, and that the process of narrative inquiry in crafting the stories had transformative effects on me personally as a researcher and educator. Before detailing the specifics of how I developed counterstories, I will provide an overview of CRT and TribalCrit.

Critical Race Theory and Tribal Critical Race Theory

> ...the patient in the dentist's chair is the one who knows when it hurts. (Delgado, 1990, p. 100)
>
> Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter. (African proverb, cited in Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 41)

The field of Critical Race Theory emerged from the field of critical legal studies (CLS) (Brown & Jackson, 2013). As Brown and Jackson (2013) state, "CRT seeks to reveal that conceptions of racism and racial subordination as understood by traditional legal discourse are neither neutral nor sufficient to overcome the effects of centuries of racial oppression on people of color" (p. 14). Education scholars Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) picked up this legal framework and applied it to the field of education in their groundbreaking article "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education," challenging the neutrality of the field of education, and arguing that race is central in educational policy, practice, and decision-making.[52] Other education scholars began contributing to the emerging field at the turn of the 21st century—Solórzano, 1997; Lynn, 1999; Taylor,

[52] Ladson-Billings (2013) acknowledges that although this seminal piece may have been the field of education's "public" introduction to CRT, there were "less public foundational moves," such as Kimberly Crenshaw's profound influence on her scholarship, as well as the influence of other scholars. In her article "Critical Race Theory—What it is Not!"(2013), Ladson-Billings also shares the work of Derrick Bell, Patricia Williams, Linda Greene, as well as "Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda, Charles Lawrence III, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Cherly Harris, to name a few" (p. 35). In another piece (1998), she also notes that Lani Guinier's legal writings and "'exposure' placed critical race theory and its proponents in the midst of the public discourse" (p. 10).

1999; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; and Delgado Bernal, 2002 (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 36).[53] Following the work of Delgado and Stefancic (2001), Ladson-Billings highlighted central tenets of CRT that include: the "belief that racism is normal or ordinary, not aberrant, in US society; interest convergence or material determinism; race as a social construction; intersectionality and anti-essentialism; and voice or counter-narrative" (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 37).

TribalCrit. Important extensions of CRT within the field of education began to develop, including LatCrit (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001), AsianCrit (Chang, 1993; Museus 2013), and the framework used for counterstorytelling in this project, TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005; 2013). Brayboy (2013), though indebted to the ways CRT shaped his own theorizing,[54] had also met its theoretical limits. Premised on a "'black-white' binary," CRT did "not address the specific needs of tribal peoples because it does not address American Indians' liminality as both legal/political and racialized beings or the experience of colonization" (pp. 428-429). In contrast, TribalCrit "begins by recognizing the unique, liminal position of American Indian tribal peoples in education and in their relationship to the US government" (Brayboy, 2013, p. 92). This central claim is TribalCrit's first tenet: that "colonization is endemic to society" (p. 429). Colonization is the "heart of Tribal Crit" (Brayboy, 2013, p. 92).[55]

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[53] Ladson-Billings (2013) notes that the introducation of CRT in education faced challenges and coherency. She states, "just because a scholar looks at race in her work does not make her a critical theorist" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 36).

[54] He noted, for example, "Its organic nature—that is, CRT emerged from scholars of color and was often rooted in community knowledges and experiences of people and communities of color—offered me a new set of possibilities to think about" (Brayboy, 2013, p. 91).

[55] By colonization, Brayboy means "the idea that European American thought, knowledge, economic structures, and power structures dominate and frame present-day society in the United States" (Brayboy, 2013, p. 92).

Brayboy (2005) acknowledges that race shapes the experiences of American Indian students, yet it is "colonization and its debilitating influences [that] are at the heart of TribalCrit; all other ideas are offshoots of this vital concept" (p. 431). Like CRT, Brayboy (2005) outlines nine central tenets[56] of TribalCrit, mentioned briefly below:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.

[56] See Solorzano and Yosso (2002) for the "central tenets" of CRT; Delgado & Stefancic (2001) for "hallmarks."

9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (pp. 429-430).

TribalCrit tenets direct me to pay attention to Native sovereignty and self-determination, to the pervasiveness of colonization, and to the value of Indigenous epistemologies. Furthermore, as Brayboy states, with an Indigenous lens, problematic words such as culture and power can "take on new meaning" (p. 429). I utilize TribalCrit to make visible the taken-for-granted racialized and colonial discourses Native youth, families, and educators navigate, and denaturalize the ways Eurocentrism plays out in educational policy and practice. In the next section, I draw from other CRT scholars who have outlined counterstorytelling methodologies and methods to engage in this work.

Counterstorytelling

An explicit goal of CRT is to make apparent the ways dominant discourses—"master narratives" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), "stock stories" (Delgado, 1989), and "majoritarian" stories (Delgado, 1993; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002)—are themselves stories—interpretive views of reality, partial and constructed—rather than universal, neutral, and "objective" accounts of the world. Further, these dominant discourses provide dominant groups "with a form of shared reality in which [their] own superior position is seen as natural." (Delgado, 1989, p. 2412).

One methodology used to denaturalize and decenter a dominant discourse is to privilege marginalized voices that challenge the partial, self-serving, and seemingly neutral nature of stock stories. Delgado (1989) states, "The cure is storytelling (or as I shall sometimes call it, counterstorytelling)" (p. 2414), a practice of "naming our own

reality" or using our "voice"[57] (Delgado 1990, p. 95). This may mean using Indigenous knowledges and stories to assert alternative worldviews; it may mean using those voices to confront the quiet workings of colonialism by making them visible.

Stories, whether parables, chronicles, or counterstories, have been foundational to disrupting master and neutral narratives in both legal and educational discourse. As Atwood and López (2014) highlight, "Counterstories seek to challenge the assumptions of power and Eurocentric notions of normativity" (p. 1144) and the "taken-for-granted assumptions of racial neutrality with/in the world" (p. 1145). According to Delgado & Stefancic (2012), counterstorytelling is "writing that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority" (159). Counterstories can be "destructive" (Delgado, 1989), disrupting, decentering, and destabilizing dominant narratives; indeed, situated alongside stories that critically interrogate and contest dominant narratives, dominant narratives may seen to be "merely that—dominant, not omnipotent—which is far from saying all things are said and done," as Lyons (2000) points out (p. 453).

Counterstorytelling intervenes into more traditional and post-positivist social science research by highlighting the ways the world is "always/ already rife with racism" (Atwood & López, 2014, p. 1145). Drawing on Brayboy (2005), I extend Atwood and Lopez's (2014) assertion to position counterstories as capable of illuminating the pervasiveness of both racialized and colonial discourses that students and families

[57] "Voice" has become a problematic term in the social sciences. Like many scholars, I reach for ways to privilege experiential knowledge while also trying to avoid positioning these voices as singular or monolithic. As Delgado argues

> …the claim of most Critical Race Theorists is not that there is a single, monolithic nonwhite voice; there are indeed many of them. It is, rather that all people of color speak from a base of experience that in our society is deeply structured by racism. That structure gives their stories a commonality warranting the term "voice." (1990, pp. 97-98)

navigate. When a teacher cannot hear a student's concern about cultural appropriation because deep down she longs to "put war paint and breast plates and honor" Native culture, this reflects not merely a romantic understanding of the racialized Other as a racialized being, but is evident of a longstanding desire to "go Native," as Yup'ik scholar Shari Huhndorf (2001) puts it, or to "play Indian" (Green, 1975), both being discourses rooted in colonialism. When students learn about Indigenous people solely in the past (or ethnographic present), this is not merely a racial reality, but should be situated as a technique of settler colonialism premised on Indigenous erasure of land and life that continues into the present. Using storytelling enables me to seek out and produce stories that make visible the ways educational discourses are not neutral, but rather are informed by and reproduce particular racial *and* settler colonial discourses.

Before I draw attention to what I hope my stories do, I should make clear what I do not intend or assume the stories will do. Privileging voices that have been marginalized because they "reveal things about the world that we ought to know" (Delgado, 1990, p. 95) is imperative. Yet I follow the work of Atwood & López (2014) who take up the work of CRT critically and posit: "It should be stated that counterstories do not aim to provide a truer understanding of truth, but rather, *to complicate our understanding of 'truth' as such.*" Instead, of truth, "CRT scholarship is searching for *honesty*" (p. 1145, emphasis added).Beyond providing a more honest account of what Indigenous education looks like in the district, I draw from Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) who state counterstorytelling can "build community," "challenge perceived wisdom," "open new windows into the reality of those at the margins," "construct a

world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone," and "provide a context to understand and transform established belief systems" (pp. 328-328).

For the purpose of this project, I will group this framework into Delgado's (1989) assertion that stories have both a destructive as well as creative, constructive function, (though it will become clear these overlap as the "destructive" function of decentering dominant ideologies actually constructs/creates pedagogical opportunities). To negotiate this tension, I will briefly touch on the destructive (decentering dominant ideologies) as well as constructive (community, healing, strategizing) aspects of stories and storytelling, then look to the field of narrative research and inquiry to highlight the pedagogical function of stories.

Counterstorytelling as destructive. As Delgado (1989) states, stories have "destructive" potential; "they can show that what we believe is ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel. They can show us the way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion. They can help us understand when it is time to reallocate power" (p. 2415). Zitkala-Ša knew this when she aimed to savage the supposed civilized narratives of boarding schools. She aimed to make them look "ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel." It is within this constructive/destructive dialectic that I position my stories as a potential tool to make visible, "unlearn," and "unsettle" particularly hegemonic discourses (Kumashiro, 2000; Regan, 2010).

By making visible these discourses as they are manifest in policy and practice, I hope to denaturalize Eurocentric assumptions embedded in various taken-for-granted educational policies and practices while also illuminating some of their consequences. This aim is disruptive, geared toward "unsettling" settler colonial narratives (Regan,

2010), or "unmasking, exposing, and confronting continued colonization within educational contexts and societal structures, thus transforming those contexts and structures for Indigenous Peoples" (Haynes Writer, 2008, p. 2).

Counterstorytelling as constructive: Community, healing, strategy. Stories also serve a creative function, fostering a sense of "community" (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). As Solórzano & Yosso (2002) state, counterstories can "open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position" (p. 36). As Delgado (1989) claims, stories are often a form of "psychic self-preservation" or "therapy," and reduce isolation (p. 2437). Sharing stories can help people to become "acquainted with the facts of their own historic oppression," preventing them from "self-condemnation" or internalizing images "that society thrusts on them." "So stories—" Delgado states, "stories about oppression, about victimization, about one's own brutalization—far from deepening the despair of the oppressed, lead to healing, liberation, mental health" (p. 2437).

On the surface, this appears to stand in contrast to the "desire-based" framework (Tuck, 2009) that I draw from, which cautions researchers and educators against focusing solely on "damage" and the "pathologies" in our community. Delgado's use of victimization could be read in that sense; yet I take the circulation of stories within what he terms an "outgroup" as an important relational, communal, and healing praxis. The current Title VII Coordinator, Melvina, and I have worked closely with each other for over two years. I asked her about values of stories that we tell in the Center and that I

write (she has read all of my stories). She laughed, and said that they help her feel that at least she's not crazy.

Counterstorytelling as pedagogical. Because I intend these stories to help preservice and in-service teachers, it is important to outline the pedagogical value of storytelling explicitly. Not only does this project suggest that teachers should provide opportunities for their students to engage in counterstorytelling as a curricular endeavor, but also that stories as a form of narrative representation can be effective pedagogically. Stories and language *do* something to us and to the world (Garroutte, 1999), not merely represent it. "[O]nce a story is told, it cannot be called back," states Thomas King (2003). "Once told, it is loose in the world" (p. 10). Stories can engage us in aesthetic and affective ways, and have the power to imprint identities (Kawagley, 1999), and to "reinforce our identity, our unity as a people, and help shape our sense of purpose in life" (Drabek, 2012, p. 208). Stories can also invite us to question our identities, our understanding of the world, our commitments, and our actions. They can, as Nick Simpson shares, "go to work like an arrow":

> This is what we know about our stories. They go to work on your mind and make you think about your life. Maybe you've not been acting right. Maybe you've been stingy…People don't *like* it! So someone goes hunting for you—maybe your grandmother, your grandfather, your uncle. It doesn't matter. Anyone can do it. So someone stalks you and tells a story about what happened long ago. It doesn't matter if other people are around—you're going to know he's aiming that story at you. All of a sudden it *hits* you! It's like an arrow, they say. Sometimes it just bounces off—it's too soft and you don't think about anything. But when it's strong

> it goes in deep and starts working on your mind right away. No one says anything to you, only that story is all, but now you know that people have been watching you and talking about you. They don't like how you've been acting. So you have to think about your life. (as cited in Basso, 1996, pp. 58-59)

I am not telling stories in relation to my listener in this particular way, and though there is a chance the story may "bounce off," I hope these stories still go to work on some of the unexamined commonsense that appears to be pervasive.

Expert storyteller Ellen White notes, "The story was told in a way so that the story became a teacher" (Ellen White, 1993, as cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 138). A worker reflecting back her understanding to her in an interview offers "…the story isn't telling the children what to think or feel, but it's *giving them the space to think and feel*" (as cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 134, emphasis added). And as Lorna Mathias (1992) says, "…a good story can reach into your heart, mind and soul, and really make you think hard about your relationship to the world" (Lorna Mathias, 1992, as cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 140). I hope these stories invite teachers to think about their relationships to place, to Indigenous students and families, to settler colonialism, to self-determination and sovereignty. I hope they provide teachers an opportunity to reflect and wonder: "Could I have been overlooking something all along?" (Delgado, 1989, p. 2440)

In this particular context, form matters. I believe the way to communicate this knowledge, however, is not through a set of general principles or best practices, but through the circulation of stories. This focus on narrative curriculum doesn't diminish the need for supportive curriculum that emphasizes statistics about languages, drop out rates, etc.; however, the knowledge teachers need to implement effective programs for

Indigenous students must be contextualized. I believe counterstories can be an effective way to do this. I hope the stories are generative, rather than reductive, and provide theoretical and imaginative space to reconsider inherited commonsense about Native people and settler society that often frame curriculum and pedagogy.

These stories are not meant to be prescriptive, but instead offer pedagogical space for "dancing with the dilemmas" (Tejeda, 2008), of "dancing against whiteness" (Richardson & Villenas, 2000), of the nuances and complicity of teaching within and against a context of racism and colonization. As Tejeda states,

> Colonialism was no single set of practices uniformally imposed on all colonized peoples, and the processes and practices through which colonial domination has extended from the past into the present are wide and varied. Hence, to negotiate and resist colonial domination in contemporary contexts, we need to inquire into and enunciate against its workings from a diversity of conceptual locations, from what I have termed a "theoretical heteroglossia" that moves to combine a diversity of theoretical orientations toward a unified analysis and understanding of neocolonial contexts that can effectively inform socially transformative action in those contexts. (pp. 30-31)

As "settler colonialism wants Indigenous land, not Indigenous people" (Tuck, 2013) and uses "wide and varied" techniques to reach its aims, including the pernicious tendendcy to "cover its tracks" (Veracini, 2011), providing a prescription of what to do in a particular instance is not as important as developing an educator's "sensibilities" (Wilson, 2006) to begin to detect anti-Indian and settler colonial discourses in practice. There is no formula for how to recognize and potentially disrupt anti-Indian and settler

colonial discourses; rather, akin to Cochran-Smith's (1999) argument that teachers develop an inquiring stance (Cochran-Smith, 1999), these stories are meant to sensitize educators to the terrain. This requires an onus on the part of the listener who I hope "hears" and "feels" the stories, rather than merely "listens" (Brayboy, 2005).[58]

Indigenous and CRT scholars appear to share assumptions with narrative researchers that stories are both pedagogically and politically valuable (Atkinson & Mitchell, 2010; Chang & Rosiek, 2003; Sconiers & Rosiek, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). These researchers also presume that stories are not prescriptions for what teachers should think and feel, but are offered as a *space* to think, to feel, to reflect, to imagine, and to act. Leaving a story's message open to interpretation, negation, or disregard feels risky when real lives and lands are at stake. I can only offer stories with the hopes they sensitize teachers so that teachers might tune in and work alongside Indigenous peoples to reckon with the relentlessness of the structures and discourses as they play out in policy and practice—that teachers develop this inquring stance to further commitments to Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. I can only offer these stories, as Cherokee author Thomas King (2003) offers in his book *The Truth About Stories*:

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[58] As Brayboy (2005) states,

> Hearing stories means that value is attributed to them and both the authority and the nuance of stories are understood. When stories are heard, they lead the hearer to explore the range and variation of possibilities of what can happen and has happened (Basso, 1996, 2000; Battiste, 2002, Burkhart, 2004; Medicine, 2001, Williams, 1997). Stories often are the guardians of cumulative knowledges that hold a place in the psyches of the group members, memories of tradition, and reflections on power. Hearers ultimately understand the nuances in stories and recognize that the onus for hearing is placed on the hearer rather than the speaker for delivering a clearly articulated message. Additionally, one must be able to feel the stories. You tell them, hear them, and feel them—establishing a strong place for empathy and for ''getting it.''(p. 440)

I believe Brayboy is discussing the stance of a researcher employing TribalCrit to "hear" the stories she collects as "data," but I extend his claim to position teachers with a similar responsibility to "hear" these stories, as well as those told from their students.

> Take [this] story…It's yours. Do with it what you will. Make it the topic of discussion group at a scholarly conference. Put it on the Web. Forget it. But don't say in years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story.
>
> You've heard it now. (p. 60)

Survivance, Desire, and Refusal

The counterstories I have told have been informed by three important frameworks—Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor's (1994; 2008) conception of *survivance,* Tuck's (2009) articulation of *desire,* and Tuck and Yang's (2012) concept of *refusal.*

Survivance. "The theories of survivance are elusive by definition, but the nature of survivance is unmistakable, a narrative resistance that creates a sense of presence over absence, nihility and victimry" (Vizenor, 2008, p. 1). In *Manifest Manners* (1994), Vizenor offered survivance as a semantic combination of resistance and survival, yet as more than either alone. As Watanabe (2012) notes, "…survivance should be understood as more than the potentially dangerous, precipitous act of (metaphorically) hanging on by the skin of your teeth, i.e., surviving, and more than the fixed state implied by the (also metaphorical) digging in of your heels, i.e., resisting" (p. 157). Rather than absence or victimry, survivance is a sense of "Native presence" that stands outside of the dominant Indian in the Western cultural imagination, refusing to emulate him, or merely react to him.

Survivance represents continuity of dynamic Native traditions and lives, informed by our very real lands and languages, but not overly determined by root metaphors of

authenticity and traditionalism that have stifled Native creativity. Stories premised on survivance refashion words and language to make them potent, or to deflate worn out ideas that bring us down. Survivance stories go to work on the concepts that try to consume us, sometimes through teasing, sometimes through attack, sometimes through speaking of something else altogether. As I understand its meaning, survivance avoids positioning Native people as "tragic Indians" but respects and affirms "tragic wisdom" (Lee, 2000, p. 89). Survivance prompted Ojibwe scholar Megan Bang and the elders she worked with to find asema, native tobacco, growing in the streets of Chicago; survivance is what made those native plants grow through the cracks in the concrete. "Asema—sprinkled throughout the city, in emergent unforeseen places, because Land is always re-becoming itself" Bang and her colleagues (2014) write. They continue, "*This is true for us*" (p 2). Acts of survivance seek to recognize that truth. Survivance is the little boy who colored his skin brown and the teenager who will do twice the work. This survivance lens orients me to look for the ways Native youth, families, and educators resist and refashion dominant discourses to further their humanity and future possibilities by asserting an active sense of "Native presence."

Desire. This coincides with a desire-based framework (Tuck, 2009), which rather than documenting "pain or loss" to compel change ("damage-based research"),[59] is "concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (Tuck, 2009, p. 416). Desire-based research is an important "antidote" to

[59] As Tuck (2009) states, "In damaged-centered research, one of the major activities is to document pain or loss in an individual, community, or tribe." Underlying this framework is a theory of change that assumes that by exposing and representing pain and damage that students experience in schools, it will prompt education reform that will better serve them. Tuck continues: "common sense tells us this is a good thing, but the danger in damage-centered research is that it is a pathologizing approach in which the oppression singularly defines a community" (p. 413).

damage-based narratives that position Native students as damaged/at-risk. As Friedel (2014) shares, "Indigenous youth constructed as 'at-risk,' both culturally and morally, a notion prevalent in a wide swath of research, leads to pedagogical interventions that rarely honor youth's actual lives" (Friedel, 2014, as cited in Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 200). When taken up uncritically, these research representations can lead to interventions that posit the problem with fixing our children, rather than the oppressive systems that they somehow, despite disparate outcomes, still contest and engage with courage. Thus, a desire-based framework has informed the activities I engage in with youth, as well as called on me to be cautious in how I represent youth's lives. I draw from Tuck (2009) to "resist all-too-easy, one-dimensional narratives of damage in order to expose ongoing structural inequity." This does not mean I will avoid researching or representing the challenges that Native youth experience in schools, as they are a crucial part of better understanding Indigenous education; rather, I hope to "account for the loss and despair, but also the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and communities" (p. 417). I have positioned Native students and families as sources of knowledge, and look for instances where their positionality and experience enable them to provide valuable insight of which teachers should be aware. This is not to glorify Native students and communities or position them as "all knowing." It is a chance to take seriously the knowledge, insight, stories, and instances of survivance (Vizenor, 1994).[60]

[60] Tuck's (2009) desire-based research has framed not only the stories I tell, but also the ways I teach Native youth (even the Facebook posts I share from our program website). We drew from Tuck and Yang's (2014) pedagogical example to make damage-based frameworks visible for our students (e.g., Diane Sawyer's "*Hidden America: Children of the Plains*" which tells the story of Pine Ridge through the lens of oppression, reducing the diverse experiences on the reservation in South Dakota to a one-dimensional experience of tragedy: poverty, alcoholism, drug addiction, and crime), and then respond constructively following the lead of the Todd County high schoolers on the reservation that created the video "More Than That." The activity where we had youth dress up in caps, gowns, and Pendleton stoles so that they can

Refusal and a focus on the discursive. "And so it was," wrote Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2007), "that I wrote an ethnography that pivoted upon refusal(s)" (p. 73). Refusal, as Simpson theorized it in her work on Mohawk nationhood, was multilayered. Among several ways, Simpson drew attention to the ways Kahnawake people "had *refused* the authority of the state at almost every turn"; or "how refusal worked in everyday encounters to enunciate repeatedly to ourselves and to outsiders that 'this is who we are, this who you are, these are my rights'" (p. 73). Reflecting on her interview with a gentleman on citizenship, she recognized his refusal, and theorized her own when she wanted him to tell her more and he refused, recognizing

> …it was enough that he said what he said. "Enough," I realised, was when I reached the limit of my own return and our collective arrival. Can I do this and still come home; what am I revealing here and why? Where will this get us? Who benefits from this and why? (p. 78)

From Simpson's theorization of refusal, Tuck and Yang (2014a) developed it as a methodological framework for research, claiming that "Refusal shifts the gaze from the violated body to the violating instruments" (p. 241). By refusing to focus on the "wounded bodies, strange fruit, [and] interesting scars," my research aims to look beyond individuals (both violated and violating) to the discursive terrain people navigate as they aim to support Indigenous students or teach Native-focused curriculum, foregrounding the ways a discourse such as settler colonialism, far from being a historic event, still plays out in public schools today (Brayboy, 2005; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wolfe, 2006).

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envision and imagine their futures as college graduates ("Cultural Expression as Sovereignty"), we also based in a desire-based framework, and what Adrienne Keene coined "positive representations."

Refusal in this study has taken various forms. Refusal, Tuck and Yang (2014a) suggest, is generative, perhaps in the way some poets claim that limits generate creativity.

Refusal asks me to deeply consider whether the circulation of the stories outside of this community will be beneficial to those I work with. Refusal calls on me to make important ethical choices when families "overshare" as part of the "intimate work" of research (Tuck & Yang, 2014a), inviting me to deeply consider which stories I should tell, and which to keep private or in the community.[61] Further, my engagement with the literature on refusal has compelled me to interview families and students I work with less, and focus more directly on interviewing teachers, principals, and other administrators.

Drawing from Tuck and Yang's (2014a) methodological example,[62] I have attempted to shift my research gaze upon discourses that work to erase Indigenous presence and limit Indigenous expression, however varied or diverse. For example, I do not focus on Indigenous "culture," but discourses that romanticize, narrow, and constrain Indigenous culture to what Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) call the "safety zone." I will not focus on the damage to Indigenous bodies and psyches by schools—the "lynched

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[61] Although there are some stories I have chosen not to share, I will likely not know if I made ethical choices until after my research circulates and the consequences unfold within my community and other places. Though I have thought deeply about ethical issues before and during my research, it appears that ethics also entails a retrospective dynamic where I am responsible for what unfolds as a result of the process as well; not all of which can be predetermined.

[62] In their essay, Tuck and Yang (2014a) analyze a photographic series from artist Ken Gonzales-Day titled *Erased Lynching.* By intentionally omitting the lynched body from the photographs, Gonzalez-Day redirected the gaze off of the "wounded bodies, strange fruit, interesting scars." As they show, "Refusal shifts the gaze from the violated body to the violating instruments" (Tuck & Yang, 2014a, p. 241). Gonzalez-Day explains his work as

> …a conceptual gesture intended to direct the viewer's attention, not upon the lifeless body of lynch victim, but upon the mechanisms of lynching themselves: the crowd, the spectacle, the photographer, and even consider the impact of flash photography upon this dismal past. The perpetrators, if present, remain fully visible, jeering, laughing, or pulling at the air in a deadly pantomime. As such, this series strives to make the invisible visible." (as cited in Tuck & Yang, 2014, pp. 240-241).

In their analysis of his work, they offer refusal as generative, as an orientation that "helps move us from thinking of violence as an event and toward an analysis of it as a structure" (p. 241).

body" (Tuck & Yang, 2014a)—but the "violating instruments," discourses that engender and sustain the erasure of Indigenous students. Refusal compels "a deliberate shift in the unit of analysis, away from people, and toward the relationships between people and institutions of power" (Tuck & Yang, 2014b, p. 815). As an example of this, in attempting to trace discourses such as settler colonialism, my research attempts to refuse to focus on the bodies damaged by school, and instead on the ways schools and the discourses they are subjected to continue to perpetuate this active process of erasure, colonization, assimilation, and dispossession, and what educators need to understand in order to competently work against the grain of these discourses.

Research Questions and Design

In the following section, I will outline more specifically the design of my research, including the research questions and particular methods. In this dissertation, I asked the following questions:

- What are some of the discourses within the Title VII program in the Oakfield[63] School District that enable and constrain Indigenous education, self-determination, and sovereignty?
- In what ways do Indigenous students, families, and their allies navigate these discourses in their efforts to access educational service?
- What do educators and other service professionals need to know about these dynamics in order to provide educational services in a way that fosters Indigenous community and identity and minimizes the negative unintended consequences?

[63] Pseudonyms will be used throughout this study in place of identifiable information such as places, schools, and names.

Context. Oregon has roughly 3.9 million people, including approximately 110,000[64] American Indian and Alaskan Natives, a 27.5% increase from the 2000 Census (US Census, 2012).[65] There is a strong Native presence in the state, as Oregon has nine federally recognized tribes[66] with approximately 27,000 Native citizens who are on Oregon's tribal rolls (Pepper et al., 2014). Though the area I work in is nearly two hours from any of the reservations, and the nearest Indian Health Services (IHS) facility is an hour away, there is a notable Native community here, including two Longhouses, two[67] Title VII programs, a tribal office, and a vast network of informal Native spaces throughout the city. Nevertheless, the state, county, and town in which I research could be characterized as predominately white[68]—not as a "natural" occurrence, but because Oregon has a longstanding racial and settler colonial history predicated on establishing

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[64]This number increases to roughly 135,000 when combined with Native Hawaiian and other Asian Pacific Islanders. Native Hawaiians are not included in the Title VII, part A, "Indian Education" (20 U.S.C. § 7101), but included in Title VII, part B, the "Native Hawaiian Education Act" (20 U.S.C. § 7201).

[65] See Horse Capture, Champagne, & Jackson's (2007) *American Indian nations: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow* for a short discussion on this increase in identification.

[66] The nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon are: Burns Paiute Tribe; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw; Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; Confederated Tribes of Siletz; Confederated Tribes of Umatilla; Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; Coquille Indian Tribe; Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians; and The Klamath Tribes. The Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribes of the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation has BIA headquarters in Western Nevada, but the reservation spans the Oregon/Nevada geopolitical border (BIA Federal Registry, 2014). There are no state recognized tribes, unlike California.

[67] There were three Title VII programs; however, this last year one was shut down, perhaps due to its status as a "consortium," which I was told the Department of Education discourages. The parent committee plans to submit a grant to start the program again next year.

[68] Approximately 88% of the State is White and 1.4% American Indian/Alaska Native. In the county of 356,000 people, 90% are White and 1.4% identify as AI/AN. In the town, 86% are White and 1.4% are AI/AN. (US Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts, 2010 - 2014).

itself as a white homeland through racial exclusionary legislation and the Oregon Land Claim Donations Act which encouraged white settlement and Indigenous dispossession.[69]

The district in which I study consistently enrolls around 11,000 students who attend any of 22 schools spread out over 15.7 square miles. The district's Title VII program has consistently served approximately 150 students (1.4%) in a district of nearly 11,000 students, but program enrollment has increased dramatically since I began this study and currently serves over 260 students.

Participants. Participants for this project included Native students and families involved in the Title VII program. It included close work with the former and current Title VII Coordinator, as well as a range of teachers, principals, administrators, and staff in the district. Participants also included students in schools and classrooms that I observed.

Data collection and management. My method of counterstorytelling resembles Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraiture methodology where the practice of data-collection is concerned.[70] Lawrence-Lightfoot's (2005) distinction that rather than listening to a story, a researcher must "listen *for* a story" resonates with my approach to

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[69] Though Oregon banned slavery, it had a series of racial exclusion laws that excluded and dissuaded Black settlement. The Oregon Donation Land Claims Act (1850), in contrast, encouraged white settlement by "grant[ing] to every white settler or occupant of the public lands, American half-breed Indians included, above the age of 18 years, being a citizen of the United States, or having made a declaration according to law of his intention to become a citizen" 320 acres to individuals, and 640 acres to married couples (Robbins, 2015, n.p.). This act benefitted whites, deterred blacks, and dispossessed Indigenous people. As Robbins states,

> By the time the law expired in 1855, approximately 30,000 white immigrants had entered Oregon Territory, with some 7,000 individuals making claims to 2.5 million acres of land. In effect, the Oregon Donation Land Law benefited incoming whites and dispossessed Indians. (Robbins, 2015, n.p.)

[70] This is in part because although my stories are not fictionalized, I do want to rely on empiricist truth claims to justify my methodology as I see critical race methodologists use of "composite stories" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) or fictionalized case studies such as Chang and Rosiek's 2003 "sonata form case study" as viable lines of inquiry and representation that I may pursue in the future.

counterstorytelling. She states listening *for* a story is “a much more active, engaged position in which the narrator searches for the story, seeks it out, and is central in its creation” (p. 11). Thus, my data collection process has been an active and iterative process of being shaped by and shaping the stories I choose to share. Lawrence-Lightfoot acknowledges that all social science researchers, whether quantitative or qualitative, shape the research, from deciding which questions to ask or the process of inquiry to pursue, but the researcher in portraiture “admits the central and creative role of the *self* of the portraitist” (p. 11). Like Lawrence-Lightfoot, I have listened *for* stories and have played a central and creative role in that process.[71]

Data for this study specifically has included policy documents; archival records; interviews with students, parents, teachers, and administrators; direct observations of public meetings, events, and classrooms; participant-observation of meetings, events, and classrooms; examples of student work; and other physical artifacts.

Archival data and records. My archival research has included historical documents on Title VII programs and Indian education in general, documents pertaining to Title VII programs and funding in the district specifically, and any district plans that explicitly/implicitly focus on Indian education. I also looked closely at student enrollment and achievement data to help me better understand how the district identifies students as Indigenous and how they follow them according to these definitions; to help track specifically the tension between American Indian/Alaskan Native “only” and “in

[71] I, depart, however, from Lawrence-Lightfoot’s conception of authenticity and her methodological quest for a “central” story. As Lawrence-Lightfoot explains, “the portraitist’s standard, then, is one of *authenticity*, capturing the essence and resonance of the actor’s experience and perspective through the details of action and thought revealed in context” (2005, p. 12).

combination" data; and to understand the way the category of "mixed-race" can obscure Indigeneity and the ability to track enrollment, achievement, retention, and graduation.

Observation/participant-observations. I am actively involved in the program as the Native Youth Group coordinator and a member of the parent committee, roles which have afforded me a unique perspective into the program. Though some scholars (e.g., Yin, 2009) are careful to warn against researcher bias and manipulation as well as the challenges to both participating and observing due to time/task constraints, I see my unique position as a member and researcher of this program as potentially useful for both the program and the research project. I have no intention of being an "external" observer and negate, abandon, or deny my situatedness in the program. Rather, my situatedness is a resource (Hill Collins, 1986; Harding, 1998). We are always a part of the phenomena we study (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009), exemplified in Leslie Marmon Silko's (1997) statement,

> A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow outside or separate from the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. (p. 27) (as cited in Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006, p. 37)

Nevertheless, I have observed classrooms formally and informally, including being a teacher and reflecting on my own teaching in the youth group, classrooms, and university summer bridge program. Through the course of this study, I have taken part in numerous Title VII parent meetings; participated in a focus group with Native students and families that sought to understand their experiences in the district (implemented by a

grant the district received); given multiple presentations in teacher's classrooms, including 2nd, 4th, 5th, 9th, and 10th grade classrooms; observed teachers in 2nd, 5th, 9th, and 10th grade students in action; attended an assembly for Native Heritage Month; and attended numerous program events, including potlucks, college nights, literacy nights (which my youth group coordinated), drum group, craft and culture nights, tutoring session, program pow wows, and the grand opening and naming event for the Native Youth Center. I give a brief overview of a few sites specifically where I have collected my data.

Title VII parent meetings. As a member of the parent committee—a group made up primarily of several mothers in the program—I have come to understand the priorities of families and the time, money, and resources allocated to their concerns. The committee meetings have also enabled me to understand the extreme pressures put on the Title VII Coordinator as each month she has shared her hopes for the program as well as constraints she negotiates.

Family/community nights. I have both participated in and helped coordinate family/community nights, as both a parent of a child in this program and a service-provider within it. These events have included program potlucks, college information sessions (which I presented at through my university role as academic advisor), and planning sessions for the center, including community design nights. Later, these events included the grand opening of the Center and the naming event. These events have given me informal opportunities to connect with families and learn their hopes for the program.

Youth group meetings. As the coordinator of the youth group, I have been a part of creating spaces that I hope foster Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty; I

have also been influenced by the dynamic youth I have been privileged to work with. This space has provided a particularly fruitful site for seeing nuances and contradictions between the ways Indigenous students see themselves and the ways they have been framed/viewed by educators (e.g., an administrator lamenting that the youth don't know themselves culturally, while some of the youth feel intimately involved in and committed to their own cultures). This is not to say the youth are not outside of reinscribing dominant discourses, as I have noted insider/outsider dynamics that have played out in the group and the ways students perform their identity (e.g., pulling out enrollment cards). My time with the youth group has also given me insight into the ways Native youth are often pressed to perform from the district (e.g., being asked to make dreamcatchers for the school board, or be the opening drum at a non-Native event), the ways these expectations enable and constrain particular types of Indigeneity, and the ways youth reappropriate these forms of performance for their own empowerment and self-expression.

Interviews. I have utilized interviews to complement my field work. These interviews have been "guided conversations rather than structured queries," for though I used them in "pursuing a consistent line of inquiry," they were "fluid rather than rigid" (Yin, 2009, p. 106).

I viewed the interviews as not just a chance for participants to share their thoughts, stories, and worldviews, but as an opportunity for meaningful exchange. Drawing on Okolie's (2005) concept of "interventive" in-depth interviewing, when appropriate, I will used the interviews as an opportunity to help participants "make connections between personal troubles and wider socio-historical and structural issues"

(p. 259). As Okolie states, interventive interviewing "stresses that the researcher frames the interview questions in a theoretically grounded manner that not only seeks factual information, but also informs the subjects in a theoretically framed manner in order to help conscientize them" (p. 254). Though I believe this strategy needs to be employed with sensitivity, as it can be interpreted to reinscribe a power-down relationship where I as the researcher am positioned to save/emancipate the participants, Okolie articulates this approach with caution and care. He calls on researchers to actively view participants as capable active agents in their own resistance: "anti-racism researchers, unlike dominant researchers should not study their subjects as pathologies, as problems needing solutions" (p. 259). The research should not "re-victimize" the participants, but create a space for praxis. My interview with Celeste, where she relayed her experience in the youth group activity that I had not recognized at the time, provides an example of this. When she told me her experience that day in the youth group positioned her on a continuum of authenticity and she questioned her own Indigeneity as a result, I could not merely *collect* this data; I had to intervene and affirm her.

Data Analysis

Data analysis has been iterative and ongoing throughout the study (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I began this research with the understanding I would analyze documents and field notes, transcribe interviews, code for themes developed early on, and remain open to the emergence of new themes. In the early part of the study, following Miles and Huberman (1994) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), I analyzed my interviews throughout the course of the study, using them to frame new lines of inquiry based on what emerged for future interviews. However, as stated in my section on data

collection, I began listening *"for* a story," (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005) blurring the line between data collection and analysis.

The study involved two levels of analysis. The first was the documentation of the macrosocial and cultural influences on Indigenous student and family experiences of the Title VII program. The unit of analysis for this part of the study was the cultural discourses that students, families, and teachers find themselves working within. The second level of analysis examined this data at a more individual level. I sought to identify the insights, understanding, and knowledge that might enable practitioners to respond constructively to Indigenous students and families in these moments of conflict. Where such examples were not empirically present, I sought to highlight the lack of knowledge and reflect on what kind of epistemic orientation might help an educator in the situation to better serve students.

The mode of representation used in this study is a series of counterstories providing the aforementioned analysis. These have also been followed by a cross-case analysis that seeks to identify themes or a typology of kinds of insights that enable educators to better serve Indigenous students.

To analyze the stories, I read into the stories theories and literature from diverse fields such as Native Studies, history, and settler colonial studies to illuminate the discursive terrain students, families, and educators navigated. By reading and writing theory into the stories, I engaged in a process of analyzing particular tensions, complexities, or discourses, helping me to challenge practices that support "majoritarian" stories about Indigenous peoples. At times I did this by reading a curriculum, pedagogy, or policy within a particular field or against a particular framework—for example,

reading an educator's Native American unit as an extension of longstanding practice of "salvage ethnographies" (Gruber, 1970) within cultural anthropology that reproduced the "positional authority" (Said, 1978) of the West to describe the Other is a form of analysis. At other times, my analysis has been imaginative. I did this by reading into my experiences the curricular or pedagogical possibilities that I believe particular discourses had foreclosed. In some stories, I infused these possibilities througout the narrative. At other times, I imagined alternative possibiliites in specific sections, drawing on the work of Susan Dion (2008) to infuse what she terms "disruptive daydreaming" into the story. Dion draws from Simon (1992) to describe disruptive daydreaming:

> Education and disruptive daydreaming share a common project: the production of hopeful images. That is, the production of "images of that which is not yet" that provoke people to consider, and inform them in considering, what would have to be done for things to be otherwise. (as cited in Dion, 2008, p. 11)

Disruptive daydreaming is congruent with CRT scholars who claim that stories offer space to imagine a different sort of future from the telling of the present, "showing us that there are possibilities for life other than the ones we live" (Delgado, p. 2414).

This writing of theory into my experiences with curriculum and pedaogogy is meant to unsettle what have become commonsense ways of thinking and doing Indigenous education in this context. It is akin to what Grande (2008) offers in her chapter "Red Pedagogy: The Un-Methodology" as engaging theory "in motion." She states,

> …the social engagement of ideas *is* my method. Specifically, I learned that my research is about ideas in motion. That is, ideas as they come alive within and

> through people(s), communities, events, texts, practices, policies, institutions, artistic expression, ceremonies, and rituals. I engage them "in motion" through a process of active and close observation wherein I live with, try on, and wrestle with ideas in a manner akin to Geertz's (1998) notion of "deep hanging out" but without the distinction between participant/observer. (p. 233)

This imaginative exercise is a form of theorizing, a way of knowing, a way of acting. As Million (2011) states, "we need to visualize, speak, and practice toward a future that *we do dream and create*" (p. 316). Million elaborates that "intense dreaming" is

> a strategic comprehension that may have the power to change a paradigm or reinvest a political movement with a new vision to act. This is the power of intense dreaming, of the intensification when boundaries shift and other views become available. Theoretical narratives mobilize boundaries of what can be thought and acted upon. I hold on, then, to the idea that theories are active, embodied, narrative practices that inform mobile abstractions, "traveling or migrating" across certain kinds of seemingly reified knowledge domains, reorganizing boundaries as they go, claiming something—is something else. On that note, theory may also colonize. (pp. 321-322)

By reading theory into the experiences, such as Lomawaima and McCarty's (2006) theory of the "safety zone" and "acceptable" cultural difference, I could make sense of educational practices that accepted and embraced particular forms of Indigenous difference (e.g., a craft night making dreamcatchers for the school board), while resisting others (e.g., a parent advocating for their child's absence for ceremonial purposes, or students' desires to wear regalia to graduation).

Coding for themes. The unit of analysis for this part of the study are the cultural discourses that students, families, and teachers find themselves working within. The themes that prompted me to follow stories and also emerged from them came from my experiences (personal and professional), my engagement with the literature, and the experiences of those I work with. They have been generated, perhaps, by what Dolores Delgado Bernal (1998) terms "cultural intuition." As Calderon (2011) explains of her work, these include "personal experience, (which consists of collective experience and community memory), existing literature on a topic, professional experience, and the analytic research process itself" (p. 109).

I have also tried attending to what is spoken and unspoken: silences and pauses in meetings, the absence of an issue from a discussion, and the ways people talk around issues but not directly about them all have a presence. The method of analysis for the data has included a critical discursive analysis of the interviews and interactions, attempting to interpret both the meanings that are present to the participants, as well as the discursive silences. This has included my interpretations of the meanings behind words as well. Drawing on the work of Mazzei and Jackson (2012) I tried to "plug in," using my contextual awareness to help say the things that might not be said.[72]

[72] Mazzei and Jackson's (2012) methodological tools prompted by Deleuze to "complicate voice" and "refuse to the let the participants speak for themselves" feel complicated depending on who the participant is. Their study "plugs into" Cassidy, a "traditional-age white student who had attended public school in an affluent suburb" (p. 748). In this sense, the complication of voice seems more inclined to disrupt oppression. I worry, though, that even though Indigenous peoples can perpetuate colonialist, sexist, and racist discourses, that disrupting marginalized voices might have disproportionately consequences, especially for groups who have just recently had the chance to share and express those voices. Nevertheless, I think Mazzei and Jackson provide a useful tool for "expanding the frame" of data to include "both audible and silent 'voice'" (p. 748).

Ethics

IRB. This project has followed all ethical guidelines as stated by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as the school district. All participants have given their informed consent verbally and in writing, and have been informed they could withdraw from the project at any time. I took care to keep participant information and data confidential; however, because my research will be conducted, in part, with Indigenous students and families, a group historically marginalized, exploited, and hurt by research projects, I have aimed to go above and beyond the required IRB protocols. To do this I drew on Indigenous researchers who have engaged in defining individual and communal ethical protocols. (Though as my section on refusal demonstrated, this process has been iterative, and in future research I might engage in a different practice, beginning with the question).

Indigenous ethics protocols. Scholars such as Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), Smith (1999), Weber-Pilwax (2001), Wilson (2008), Kovach (2009), and Chilisa (2012), Tuck (2009), and Tuck and Yang (2014a; 2014b) have informed my sense of ethics. Kovach (2009) reminds me that while institutional ethical protocols are more associated with liability concerns, Indigenous ethical protocols are "more relational." As Marlene Brandt-Castellano suggests, "Indigenous ethics can never be limited to a defined set of rules; they are about knowing who you are, the values you hold, and your understanding of how you fit within a spiritual world" (Kovach, 2009, p. 146). Thus, this research process has been deeply personal and spiritual, inviting me to question and reflect on my commitments to people and place, past and present. As Marie Battiste suggests, "one of the most critical aspects of Indigenous research is the ethical responsibility to ensure that

Indigenous knowledges and people are not exploited. Research is about collective responsibility: 'we can only go so far before we see a face—our Elder cleaning fish, our sister living on the edge in East Vancouver…—and hear a voice whispering, 'Are you helping us?' (Kovach, 2009, p. 36).

Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) have offered me four "Rs" for considering ethics in Indigenous research: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. This framework has called on me to ensure Indigenous peoples and knowledge are respected, that the research is relevant to the community, that it is a two-way process of learning and knowledge-sharing, and that the research is conducted in a responsible manner and the researcher remains accountable to the community throughout the process. I did not have a tribal review board (Lomawaima, 2008), though I have shared my research questions, purposes, and methods with the Title VII parent committee (of which I am also a part). This committee is an inter-tribal committee responsible with advising the Title VII Coordinator and district about the program. This committee is a requirement of Title VII programs, a way of institutionalizing a commitment to Indigenous voices and perspectives within the program.

Usefulness. My research has also been informed continually by the question whether or not it has been helpful or "of use" (Fine & Barreras, 2001) to those I work with. Intertwined in my ethical framework, but important to reiterate, is the notion that this research project must serve the community I am working with. "The primary distinguishing characteristic is that Indigenous projects are designed as service to an Indigenous people or community" (Miller, 2011, p. 15). As Swadener and Mutua (2008) note, "decolonizing research is performative—it is enmeshed in activism" (p. 33). This

performance is a “continual interrogation of not only the process of the research but also its outcomes/outputs” (p. 33). Ultimately, the goal of my project, as an Indigenous woman and researcher, is to be of service to my community—to engage in something relevant and useful. Service takes many forms; even a simple narrative of past events that reframes it in more productive ways can be useful. Though the aim of this project is to serve my communities—the local community I work in, the broader community of Indigenous scholars working in this field, and the even broader community of Indigenous peoples globally engaging in efforts at self-determination and survivance—the ways in which that service has played out has been negotiated throughout the research process. As Battiste and Henderson (2000) state, “Research must do more than avoid harm to participants, it must benefit those involved” (Max, 2005, p. 79). The goal of this project is to do just that.

I take seriously Brayboy’s (2005) last tenet that “there must be a component of action or activism—a way of connecting theory and practice in deep and explicit ways.” Brayboy draws on Deloria (1969/ 1988) who states, “Abstract theories create abstract action. Lumping together the variety of tribal problems and seeking demonic principle at work is intellectually satisfying. But it does not change the real situation” (as cited in Brayboy, 2005, p. 440). As such, I have taken up Brayboy’s call

> that no research should be conducted with Indigenous Peoples that is not in some way directed by a community and aimed toward improving the life chances and situations of specific communities and American Indians writ large. The research must be relevant and address the problems of the community; there is little room for abstract ideas in real communities. (p. 440)

I have not always known what this meant as a researcher, but have had to tune in to the community I work within. Some of the bigger contributions of our work together have included advocating for and creating a Native Youth Center and raising visibility of the program. Smaller contributions have included my voluntary work with Native youth (campus visits, trips to the river and coast, or the Longhouse, etc.), though this work has served me deeply as youth often teach me much more than I teach them.

Avoid deficit theory. Indigenous communities have been continually subjected to deficit thinking that views their knowledge, culture, and experiences as obstacles to be overcome, rather than valuable, appreciated, and capable of contributing meaningfully to schools and society. Narrative inquiry provides a frame for me to attend to the voices of my research community in sensitive and thoughtful ways, while also attending to the broader discourses that impact those voices. This is important because as I will discuss later in my ethical framework for my research, the research and representation must contend with and intervene in the ways Indigenous communities have been negatively theorized (Chilisa, 2012; Daniels, 2005). As Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) state,

> Beginning with a respect for ordinary lived experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only a valorizing of individuals' experience but also an exploration of the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences were constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted—but in a way that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved. (p. 42).

My representations must foreground the experiences of participants, but also situate those in relation to discourses. However, I must also be cognizant of the consequences of my representation of their experiences. As Fine and Weis (2002) share

regarding representing the voices of their participants, some of which played into stereotypes or could exacerbate deficit thinking, “To ignore this data is to deny the effects. To report the data is to risk their likely misinterpretation” (Fine & Weis, 2002, p. 277). Fine and Weis’s dilemma—to risk producing “voyeuristic dirty laundry” but also not deny, by omission, atrocities imposed by the State—will be relevant in my work of representing Indigenous communities.

Locate responsibility. A consequence of deficit thinking with regards to teaching and learning is that the communities with the deficits are responsible for their own failures, and subsequently need to change in order to be more successful in schools and society. However, by shifting the frame to one that acknowledges Indigenous resistance, survivance, and culturally-grounded knowledge, the deficit shifts from Indigenous communities to service provider knowledge. By no means do I hope to use this study to degrade educators in unproductive ways. However, as professionals, it is important to acknowledge that student success is related, in part, to our practice as teachers. And our practice is dependent on the degree of cultural knowledge we have of the communities we work with and the systems, discourses, and dynamics they navigate. It is our responsibility as educators to be aware of these dynamics. A new frame that acknowledges that Indigenous students and communities are navigating dynamics that service providers are often blind to, and that they often engage these dynamics in thoughtful and courageous ways will locate the responsibility for attending to the dynamics and listening to Indigenous students and families on the teachers themselves. This is a necessary intervention into theories that attribute lack of achievement to members of historically underserved communities.

Limitations

The use of stories as a way to develop “sensibilities” (Wilson, 2006) and enhance a teacher’s “professional knowledge landscape” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) is not an educational magic bullet. Although Delgado (1989) outlines the destructive potential of stories, he also acknowledges they require engagement from the listener, “a type of willing death”:

> Artfully designed parables, chronicles, allegories, and pungent tales…can jar the comfortable dominant complacency that is the principal anchor dragging down any incentive for reform. They can destroy - but the destruction they produce must be voluntary, a type of willing death. Because this is a white-dominated society in which the majority race controls the reins of power, racial reform must include them. Their complacency - born of comforting stories - is a major stumbling block to racial progress. Counterstories can attack that complacency” (Delgado, 1989, p. 2348).

There is potential for resistance to the sort of engagement I hope for with my stories. I believe using a storytelling methodology provides context, nuance, and can attend to both the interpersonal and discursive dynamics and relationship at work in a given moment. Yet I do not presume my methodology to exist outside of a historic and present climate of resistance. My dissertation does not point to anything new; people have been pointing out the racialized and colonial context Indigenous people navigate since contact. Preservice teachers have been exceptionally resistant to these messages. As Teresa Strong-Wilson (2007) notes,

> "White" teachers, research tells us, are among the most recalcitrant of learners when it comes to social justice education (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Roman, 1993; Rosenberg, 1997; Sleeter & Grant, 1987) so much so that the term "white teacher" has become virtually synonymous with resistance; resistance to acknowledging the significance of constructions of race to identity formation and of perceiving themselves as white and therefore implicated in systems of domination: "whites must be seen to be white [for their power to be maintained], yet whiteness as race resides in invisible properties and whiteness as power is maintained by being unseen." (Dyer as cited in Byrne, 2006, p. 24) (p. 115)

As DiAngelo (2011) notes, "white expectations for racial comfort" often strain the ways white individuals respond to efforts to raise awareness about race and racism that challenge their racial comfort, stating "common white responses include anger, withdrawal, emotional incapacitation, guilt, argumentation, and cognitive dissonance" (p. 55). It is quite possible that my stories will invite such responses from educators, as I aim to make visible not only the ways education is complicit in reproducing racialized discourses, but also reproducing colonization in schools (an assertion that even people of color may find themselves resistant to if they "equivocate" social justice with decolonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012).[73] However, as Atkinson and Mitchell (2010) note,

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[73] Tuck and Yang (2012) term this particular "settler move to innocence" "colonial equivocation" which "homogenizes… various experiences of oppression as colonization" (p. 17). They do not deny that people of color are oppressed, yet are careful to distinguish between oppression and colonization:

> The impossibility of fully becoming a white settler - in this case, white referring to an exceptionalized position with assumed rights to invulnerability and legal supremacy - as articulated by minority literature preoccupied with "glass ceilings" and "forever foreign" status and "myth of the model minority", offers a strong critique of the myth of the democratic nation-state. However, its logical endpoint, the attainment of equal legal and cultural entitlements, is actually an investment in settler colonialism. Indeed, even the ability to be a minority citizen in the settler nation means an option to become a brown settler. For many people of color, becoming a subordinate settler is an option even when becoming white is not. (p. 18)

sometimes when narratives "seemingly fail to reach an audience as intended, [they] actually engage the audience in more meaningful ways" (p. 3). They continue:

> …when various interpretive frameworks are made visible across the context of a narrative text by the readers' or listeners' responses to it, they can be examined for how they collude, collide, exclude, and compete for meaning and at the same time generate more narratives. (pp. 3-4)

There may be resistance to "hearing" the stories, with some who consider "listening" as "part of going through the motions" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 440). That resistance is a limitation to any social science research that runs against the grain of hegemonic thinking. Yet narrative researchers such as Atkinson and Mitchell (2010) may position that limitation as a strength; a "multiplicity" of "divergent interpretations" which generate "new narratives" might actually offer "dynamic pedagogical possibilities" rather than asking "why didn't they get it?" (pp. 2-3).

Another limitation is that I am not in a setting where I can choose which stories to tell in relation to my listener, a common protocol in oral storytelling (Archibald, 2008; Basso, 1996; King, 2012; Kosbruk, Partnow, & Leer, 2007[74]). Although these stories were written to address particular issues in this community at this moment (which I feel have the potential to resonate with other issues elsewhere), there is a way writing often gets lifted up out of the historic, social, political context in which it was conceived and

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[74] As Patricia Partnow (2007) explains in her preface and commentary of a story told by Ingnatius Kosbruk (Alutiiq) of Perryville,

> While in training, Ignatius had been quizzed daily by his teacher to ensure that he had the details of his story correct. Part of learning a traditional narrative from a mentor, for Ignatius as for other Alutiiq storytellers, was understanding the message it held for him and communicating that message to a living audience. This required a delicate balance, for he was not allowed to change the story to suit contemporary fashion or personal whim; instead, he had to study it until it flowed naturally and truly from his being. This process meant that each telling resulted in a version that was inspired by and responded to a specific situation while remaining true to the story as originally learned. (p. 243, in Kosbruk, Partnow, & Leer, 2007)

intended. I do not intend these stories to be cast as universal explanations, as they address concerns in this context.

Finally, I have spent a substantial amount of time with elementary-aged students (in drum group and in classrooms), as well as with high schoolers (in my youth group, drum group, and the classroom), but I have not documented stories pertaining to middle school students' experiences in schools. I taught one Native science summer camp (funded by the school district) that targeted middle school students, and although a few of those students became my youth group students the following year (indicating that the summer science camp was an important outreach and recruitment tool for the program, which unfortunately was only funded for one year), I have not worked with middle school students explicitly as part of this project. This feels an important gap to attend to as middle school is an important transitional age for youth in terms of both cultural and academic identity development. I will note, however, that the middle school near the Center has had two principals in two years, and the most recent principal hadn't heard of the Title VII program.

Summary

I have sought to justify my use of counterstorytelling to better understand urban Indigenous education, situating it as Brayboy (2005) does within a longstanding Indigenous tradition of storytelling and "writing back" (Smith, 1999, p. 37). Drawing from TribalCrit, and using counterstorytelling as a methodology, based in both desire and refusal, I have written stories that I hope make visible some of the ways colonization continues to be quietly buried within policy and practice in an urban school district. My hope is that these stories sensitize educators to the nuances and complexity of urban

Indigenous education, compelling in them a sense of responsibility to take up the work of "unmasking, exposing, and confronting" (Haynes Writer, 2008) these discourses in their own educational setting, and reflecting on what creating educational opportunities that fostered self-determination and sovereignty might look like.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAX MUSEUM

"I tried to get her to see what Winona LaDuke *actually* wore," said Melvina, the Title VII coordinator in the district.

We were in the Native Youth Center closet and Melvina was thumbing through some of the regalia. She lifted up a tan, buckskin dress that was on a hanger and showed it to me.

"When Erin came to get help with her outfit for the wax museum, she originally wanted to wear regalia, something like this buckskin dress. Winona doesn't wear things like that. Sometimes she wears this nice vest that has some floral embroidery on it, but she doesn't wear regalia like this when she speaks. So we did a Google Search and looked at the images, and I showed her that in each one, she was wearing a button-up shirt and jeans or slacks."

Melvina and I were discussing one of the Native students in the program, Erin, and her upcoming class presentation. Erin was in 5th grade, and her teacher, Ms. Carter, had organized a "living wax museum,"[75] an auto/biographical activity designed to engage students in research and writing. In the curriculum, students investigate the biography of an influential leader that they admire, researching major life events, important achievements, and contributions their leader has made to society. Students transform this biography into an autobiographical monologue, which they prepare to present in the culminating activity while outfitted in the attire of their influential leader. At the final

[75] In this piece, I do not explicitly take up the fact that museums have particularly troubling historic and ongoing relationships with Native peoples and nations. Repatriation is intimately tied to sovereignty. Reclaiming the bodies, bones, and baskets of our relatives is real and important work. That I am helping a teacher in this research project put a Native person on display, and that I offer advice on *who* she puts on display, but do not critique the very *act* of displaying itself, especially as it is situated in a historical context of theft, commodification, and voyeurism, does not escape me. This was a longstanding school-wide project, however, and I was asked to "make it better." I am still thinking about this issue.

presentation, dressed as their leaders, students remain still, like displays in a museum, until participants "bring them to life" by dropping a coin into the can in front of them. As they come to life, students perform their prepared monologue, highlighting for the museum-goer their own notable roles and accomplishments.

Erin's teacher, Ms. Carter, and I had met while I was in the hallway at her school once, waiting to meet another teacher. I let her know how I was involved in the Native Youth Center, and so we struck up a conversation which led to a discussion on a unit she was teaching about Native Americans. She outlined some of the curriculum she had designed and taught so far. She introduced students to various Native stories and legends, taught them about Yup'ik masks, then students created their own creation tales and stories that explain phenomena, and made masks to accompany their legends. The class also learned about some of the historical conflicts between Native people in the Plains and the early settlers. Listening to her unit, I felt that familiar appreciation for the inclusion of Indigenous life in the curriculum, and simultaneously felt a concern for what students would take away. I had seen a persistent pattern in the district of erasing contemporary Indigenous life and issues. I also have had the experience of teachers withdrawing from me when I had drawn attention to these dynamics. So when Ms. Carter kindly asked if I had any suggestions, I was cautious. I didn't want to alienate her, but I did want to be helpful and provide what information I could.

In my effort not to alienate teachers with this information, I usually make it a point to bring contemporary resources as examples or gifts for the teachers when possible. I have found that sometimes a book, such as *Children of Native America Today* (Dennis & Hirschfelder, 2014), which depicts contemporary children's lives in various

Native nations, provides teachers with an opportunity to both glimpse the diversity of contemporary Native America, as well as indirectly invite teachers to reflect on their own curriculum and representations of Native life. I could instead say directly to teachers, "You should include contemporary Native people in your curricula," which at times I do depending on the context., In my experience, however, some educators embody what DiAngelo (2011) terms "white fragility," "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (p. 57), as any challenge I pose to their portrayal of Indigenous life might also challenge their "entitlement to racial comfort" (p. 61). As a result of these interactions, I have found educators appear less threatened and more inclined to critically self-reflect when offered alternative forms of representation to consider, rather than explicit critiques or suggestions. The images in this particular book, for example, depict children dancing in regalia, riding horses, or gathering traditional foods like wild rice or sap, alongside images that depict children in jeans and sneakers, getting a piggyback ride or riding in golf carts, and eating ice cream or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. And in many of the pictures, the children, as children often do, are smiling. My hope is that in offering diverse, contemporary images, the one-dimensional portrayals of static and stoic Native life prevalent in a considerable amount of the curricula I have seen will appear a stark oversimplification and demeaning portrayal by comparison.

There are limits to this approach, one being the way projects of inclusion such as this, which take up the aim of "humanizing the object into a subject" (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 814), are premised on liberal multiculturalism to include Indigenous life while leaving in tact unexamined, dominant "whitestream" (Grande, 2004) curricula. Certain

portrayals that aim to humanize Native America might also result in little more than non-Native teachers or children thinking that *they* (Native Americans) are just like *us* (non-Natives) (a "we are all the same" logic that Grande rejects because "it not only denies the 'difference'[76] of indigenous cultures and belief systems, but also tacitly reduces indigenous peoples to the status of whites-without-technology" (2004, p. 65). Nevertheless, because we are speaking of the education of children, of both enabling Native children to have diginity in the representation of their Native lives, and non-Native children to see beyond the static and stoic portrayals that come to eventually shape how they interact with Native peers, the project of inclusion is impartial, but also important. Any individual intervention, such as the introduction of contemporary Native life through images of smiling children in a book, is of course insufficient in combatting not only erasure, but the contemporary consequences of longstanding polices of physical and cultural genocide. Yet, as Cree singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie states in the foreword to the book *Children of Native America Today*, "…Indians exist. We are alive and real. We have fun, friends, and a whole lot to contribute to the rest of the world through our reality…" (as cited in Dennis & Hirschfelder, 2014, p. 4). Though it appears to be an inclusive, humanist project, it is also about Native students being able to see themselves in the future. As Sainte-Marie continues, "Native children, like all children,

[76] A considerable amount of scholarship has focused on articulating what exactly the "difference" between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous is. For the purpose of this project, I draw from the work of Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred and Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel (2005), premised on land and a shared experience with colonialism:

> Indigenousness is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centres of empire. It is this oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world. (p. 597)

should also know that there is tremendous good work to be done in which they can share. They have a future" (p. 4). The erasure of contemporary Native life limits the futures of these Native students, and so getting teachers to reconsider the lives and futures they reproduce through their curricular representations is important. As impartial as this approach is, I have found that when teachers see diverse and contemporary images, or hear the words of Native youth in a book such as *Rising Voices: Writing of Young Native Americans,* something in them shifts. They may not know how to move forward, but at the very least, they start to feel uncomfortable with continuing with the old routines that they have always done.

This visit with Ms. Carter, however, was unplanned, and so I was unprepared. She seemed eager to discuss her curriculum and get some advice and resources for her unit, which was still in progress, and so I provided a few words of encouragement, and then despite my concerns, decided to pose the fairly benign inquiry I had been asking other teachers.

"What were students learning about Native people today?" I asked her.

"That's a great question," she said.

It had never occurred to her that her unit might only attend to Native people as existing in the past. For her this wasn't an explicit or intentional orientation, but more an inherited and taken-for-granted framing. We also discussed how the contemporary related to her teaching of Yup'ik masks. She was teaching Yup'ik masks as opposed to the more generic "Native American" masks I had seen in a teacher's classroom at a nearby school, but she still taught the masks as a fairly abstracted cultural practice, detached from contemporary Yup'ik life. Teaching masks devoid of context was problematic, some

some educators, such as Hirschfelder and Beamer (2000), cautioned against the use of masks at all, termed the practice a clear “no-no.”

“Teaching something as sacred and culturally specific as masks is complex,” I offered. “Some might even say inappropriate.”

“Yeah, I knew that masks were sacred,” she said. “Some people burn them after they use them,” but she admitted she knew little else.

Like most activities, however, it is not the activity itself that is inherently problematic, but rather how that curricular activity sits with respect to the particular historic, social, cultural, political, and discursive context it is taught within. The revitalization of Alutiiq mask making in Alaska, for example, is gaining momentum. The learning and replication of traditional Alutiiq masks by groups of Alutiiq and Alaska Native children is different, and conceivably appropriate, precisely because of the ways the activity fits within its respective context. As Alutiiq scholar and museum director Sven Haakanson, Jr. (2002) states in the newsletter *Sharing Our Pathways,*

> The carving of masks for dances and storytelling nearly disappeared entirely from practice in the Kodiak Island region. However, this has changed. Over the past ten years, Alutiiq people have rediscovered, relearned and are now recreating traditional masks to be used in dances, given as gifts and to be sold. This spring, the Alutiiq Museum, thanks to support from the Rockefeller Foundation’s Partnership Affirming Community Transformation (PACT) grant and a partnership with the Kodiak Island Borough School District, is bringing a traveling mask exhibit and carving workshop to villages on Kodiak. We will spend an entire week working with students and adults, showing them how to care

> for and use carving tools and how to carve traditional Alutiiq masks. Our goal with this program is not to just exhibit masks, which were historically taken away as curiosity pieces, but to inspire individuals into once again taking up this practice and revitalizing the art of mask making. (n.p.)

To engage in mask making as a form of reclamation against the ways masks were "taken away as curiosity pieces" has a distinct underlying purpose from the way Ms. Carter's teaching of Yup'ik masks outside of their contemporary, cultural context was little more than preparation for students to make their own masks, masks that would eventually accompany their own invented legend. I inquired into her teaching of Native stories as well.

> "How did you teach about Native stories?" I asked.
>
> "I just told them various Native American legends from different regions in the United States. Students are then going to make their own legends."
>
> "Did you acknowledge that some stories are not myths but actual accounts of the world?" I asked.
>
> "I stay away from more foundational stories like creation stories," she said. "But I never really thought about that."
>
> "Stories are an interesting way to examine power," I offered. "Sometimes scientific stories are only catching up to Native accounts of phenomenon."

Significant was the fact that Ms. Carter positioned the stories she taught to particular tribes, an important intervention when the tribal specificity of particular stories gets erased through the homogenous term "Native American" legends I have seen other teachers use. (This is the same problematic framing employed when someone offers up

"Native American" wisdom, but won't situate the quote or insight with respect to the particular people and place it belongs to, much the way Gerald McDermott's trickster stories strive for authenticity yet simultaneously come from "nowhere" (Iseke-Barnes, 2009). Yet the positioning of Native stories as little more than legends or myths might serve to invalidate what some people consider knowledge and truth. Making that dynamic explicit, that some narratives are (at times wrongfully) considered more or less valid than others, seems an important accompaniment to any teaching of Native stories, especially as many contend that stories are not myths, but articulations of Indigenous knowledge. I have seen this approach before, where students listen to Native legends, and then students create their own "porquois" stories of how particular phenomena came to be (such as Verna Aardema's (1975) *Why Mosquitoes Buzz In People's Ears*).[77] Yet without care, this approach can position Indigenous accounts of the world as little more than inventive fictions from individuals, rather than longstanding, community-based, place-based, and culturally specific expressions of Indigenous knowledge, values, and worldviews. Of course Native individuals do invent and tell stories, but the bodies of knowledge that exist in particular stories are real and important, and should be respected. We didn't have enough time to get into all of this, so we continued our conversation, which was mostly driven by my curiosity about her unit and approach. I asked her how her curriculum addressed the tribal nations in Oregon and in the region. Ms. Carter said she didn't really address the Native people of this region much, but typically students in Oregon study the Native nations and peoples of Oregon in 4th grade. I encouraged her, despite the fact 4th

[77] A sample lesson, "Porquois Stories: Creating Tales To Tell Why" can be found at the website ReadWriteThink (http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/pourquoi-stories-creating-tales-324.html).

grade teachers usually addressed it, to continue to think locally and regionally about Native people when possible.

Ms. Carter's inclusion of Native curriculum was aligned with both Common Core reading and writing standards, as well as Oregon art standards, signaling both the opportunities for curricular innovation possible with such broad goals (as well as the vulnerabilities of an "anything goes" mentality with regards to Native curriculum as the quality of the curriculum is highly dependent on teacher knowledge, interest, and skills). Ms. Carter was thoughtful and reflective during our conversation, reminding me that often times, teachers rely on taken-for-granted curricular framings when they have little opportunity or time to think outside of them. Teachers need time to be in conversation and dialogue about these issues, to be presented alternatives, and to reflect on their own curricular and pedagogical choices in light of them. We didn't have much time, however, as this was unplanned and the other teacher arrived. I thanked Ms. Carter and let her know I was happy to work with her in the future if she would like. I offered to come with Melvina and present to her class during the unit, as well as offered to host her class at the Native Youth Center adjacent to the school. She thanked me for giving her some questions to consider. "I just wish I had talked to you earlier," she said. She appreciated the prompts to consider framing her unit around "here and now" rather than in the "past and over there." She was looking forward to connecting about more resources and we planned on being in touch soon.

The Possibilities of Presence

Ms. Carter reached out to me shortly after our conversation, an action that was naturally welcome, but contrary to my expectations given my experience with other

teachers. It was then that she explained that she was organizing a wax museum activity and wanted to offer some present-day Native role models as options for her students during the activity. She wasn't familiar with any contemporary Native leaders, but wanted to take seriously that idea of starting with the present, and asked if I could provide her with any contemporary Native leaders.

I provided her with a list that included some of the following names along with some informative videos and links for her class:

Winona LaDuke (Anishinaabe)

Susan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne & Hodulgee Muscogee)

Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Couer d'Alane writer)

Chris Wandolowski (Kiowa)

Al Smith (Klamath)

Shoni Schimmel (Umatilla)

Oren Lyons (Turtle Clan/Haudenosaunee)

Buffie St. Marie (Cree)

John Herrington (Chickasaw)

The Thompson Trio (Lakota lacrosse players)

Supaman (Crow)

A Tribe Called Red (Mohawk, Cayuga and Nipissing Anishnabe)[78]

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[78] Teachers routinely tell me they do not know much about contemporary Native America. Though I was happy to help this particular teacher, this ongoing statement speaks of the ways ignorance is structured (Calderon, 2009) but also willfully maintained as finding information can be as easy as "liking" a Facebook page or searching for Native media outlets. Indian Country Media Today Network, Indigenous Peoples Issues and Resources, FAIR Media (For Accurate Indigenous Representation), We R Native, News from Native California, or other contemporary media outlets can provide teachers with news, stories, and links to give a sense of the contemporary issues circulating in Indian Country.

Ms. Carter later thanked me and said that she showed her students the list. Erin, one of the Native students in her class, was very excited to learn more about Winona LaDuke. She also looked forward to bringing her students to the Center so they could learn more about the program. She saw the visit as a great opportunity to connect some of her Native students to the Title VII program, which she felt was especially important, as she believed there were 5 or 6 Native students in her class.

I admired Ms. Carter's effort to offer her Native (as well as non-Native) students contemporary Native role models. She wanted to break out of the pattern of more typical portrayals of Native leaders at the wax museum, leaders she referred to as the "regulars"—Pocahontas, Chief Joseph, or Crazy Horse. There is nothing wrong with studying historic Native leaders and their contributions to their respective nation and society more broadly; in fact, it is important to do so. However, by purposefully offering current Native leaders, Ms. Carter created curricular space for Native people to exist in the present, and for Native students to see themselves in both the present and the future. Historic role models should be studied, yet in an environment where even the teacher couldn't identify a single contemporary Native leader or role model, activities that only reach for the past unwittingly reproduced that very ignorance. Ms. Carter recognized this gap in her understanding and responded professionally by reaching out for assistance—an act I am coming to understand requires more courage than we might reasonably expect. By doing so, she provided Erin the opportunity to learn about and look up to a contemporary Anishinaabe leader.

Though Erin was not Anishinaabe, it was clear that the curricular space Ms. Carter created fostered an opportunity for Erin to see herself in the curriculum, and to

nurture a sense of pride in her own Native culture. Erin's enthusiasm about the project was infectious. She talked incessantly about Winona LaDuke, rattling off facts from her life or the impact she has had on the world. Conversations with Erin's teachers also illustrated the way Erin's engagement with her leader opened up space in the classroom for Erin to discuss her own culture. Erin was fairly light-skinned and not always viewed as Native by teachers or classmates, despite her commitment to her culture, community, and nation. Ms. Carter knew how important drum group was to Erin because she frequently mentioned her involvement in the Center or the Native summer camps she had been involved in. But, as her student teacher, a White male from the local university noted, these conversations didn't always come up easily among youth and Erin seemed to want to express pride in her culture to her classmates. He explained how her research into Winona LaDuke's life fostered these conversations they thought she craved:

> It gave her an opportunity to talk about her own experiences too with her friends. You could tell that it's important to her, but there's not always that avenue to have that conversation, you know, in the middle of something else you're doing.

He suggested that it was Erin's focus on Winona LaDuke that "lent itself to that…. as they're talking about their people, because that just happens naturally when you have a massive research project. Well my guy did this, did you know that I…[drum, etc.]."

Ms. Carter witnessed conversations and understandings open up for both Erin and her peers:

> It opened up avenues for her to talk about her own heritage and pride. I would overhear her explaining the concept of regalia, the different types of dance…I

> mean all those conversations…It was just nice for them to have someone more modern for the kids to identity with and talk about.

Though the inquiry into Winona LaDuke's life provided Erin with both a role model and the curricular opportunity to express pride in her own culture and community, the act of including contemporary Indigenous life was not without its challenges. Erin's visit to the center in search of a buckskin dress or other form of regalia to wear as Winona LaDuke illustrated these particular challenges, challenges which were more than incidental. Erin's desire for buckskin is evidence that the "Indian as historic" discourse, what King (2012) has coined the "Dead Indian," is not just a nostalgic desire in non-Indigenous teachers' minds; it can also show up in the minds of Indigenous children. This means teachers need to not only broaden their own understanding of Indigenous identity, but they also need to be prepared to teach a broader understanding to children—sometimes even Indigenous children themselves. This latter work can be complicated, as Erin soon illustrated to us.

The Dilemmas of Presence

Erin told us that she needed her outfit to look "Native American-y" and to go with her background, a powwow scene that she had created. Initially when Erin approached us, we assumed that perhaps she was feeling pressure from her teacher to look a particular way. Melvina had routine inquiries at the Center from teachers about feathers and chokers, for example, and I had frequent experience with teachers' conceptions of what made something look "Native American," warranting our initial suspicion. Yet in a later conversation with her teacher, I learned that it was *Erin* who wanted to wear the buckskin dress and who wanted to make sure she looked visibly Native American.

"She said, 'What am I going to wear?'" recalled Ms. Carter. "I said, 'I bet she wears business clothing…."

"That's what we told her at the center, too" I said. "But she said that it was not Native American-y enough. Did you say it wasn't Native American-y enough or was that her?" I asked.

"No, that was her… I said, 'I would imagine a casual business suit, or a business suit. She's an attorney, Erin. I don't think she walks around in Native... what you're thinking of as Native American…"

Ms. Carter was trying to steer Erin away from a depiction of Winona LaDuke that she viewed as stereotypical. She saw these same stereotypical representations in the ways Pocahontas was portrayed every year at the wax museum performance—buckskin dress, single feather sticking out of the back of the child's head, and a braid or two. Ms. Carter was trying to thoughtfully guide Erin toward what she considered a more accurate representation of Winona LaDuke, the same careful guidance Melvina had offered when Erin visited the Center by showing actual images of Winona LaDuke.

I wanted to ask Ms. Carter about the nuances in trying to both support Erin's desire to look "Native American-y" while also delicately questioning her idea of what constitutes Native American attire. The markers of Indigeneity that Erin was reaching for, such as the buckskin dress, were not inherently problematic. Buckskin, for example, is a traditional, not stereotypical, form of regalia for some Native peoples and styles of dancing such as Northern or Southern Women's traditional. And yet Erin's reach for buckskin was complex, seemingly driven by the same nostalgia and narrow understanding of authenticity that I have witnessed non-Native educators reach for: the

administrator who invites a traditional Native dancer to perform at an assembly for Native Heritage Month (as opposed to a tribal chairwoman in a pants suit). Erin sought markers that didn't necessarily reflect Winona LaDuke's appearance, but a more generic representation of Indianness. I was hoping to discuss these issues with Ms. Carter in more depth, but as we were speaking, the student teacher interjected and his comments threw me off.

> It's like a baseball player…regardless of whether he's African American or Latino or whatever. When he plays baseball, he wears a baseball uniform. He might wear a poncho or something outside, or sag his britches or whatever else… or wear a suit, but when he plays ball...when she's in the courtroom, she wears court attire.[79]

This White student teacher was trying to support Ms. Carter's remarks, making connections between the professional arenas of law and baseball; yet what he reached for in his analogy triggered something in me. A Latino athlete could wear his poncho, or a Black athlete could sag his pants, he offered, but it wasn't appropriate on the baseball field. The markers he associated with Latino and Black youth struck me as the same lingering shadows that trailed Indigeneity—markers that prompted some Native youth to reach for the buckskin if they wanted to appear visibly Native—and made it difficult for others to shed the buckskin even if they wanted because it was such a pervasive shadow. I thought too about whether the markers were equivalents. The poncho, like the buckskin

[79] I should make clear that Winona LaDuke is not an attorney, despite both teachers' depiction of her as one. She graduated from Harvard with a degree in Native Economic development, received a Master's in urban development from MIT, and a second Master's in Community Economic Development from Antioch University. She was a former principal, has been an active environmentalist, founded a non-profit dedicated to land recovery, has been a strong proponent of women's rights, was a vice presidential candidate who ran with Nader, authored five books, was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, and was recognized by *Time* magazine as one of America's 50 most promising leaders under 40…but she was not a lawyer.

dress, has deep roots in Indigenous culture, and importance and cultural meaning within some Indigenous and Latino communities. It is by no means inherently a stereotypical cultural item, though it gets mobilized as a tokenizing representation each Cinco de Mayo on college campuses around the country as students enact caricatures of Mexican culture. Indeed, this was the marker that the student teacher himself associated with Latino culture as he connected his hypothetical Latino athlete to the poncho. Sagging britches, on the other hand, do not have as longstanding cultural roots as buckskin dresses or ponchos, but that doesn't mean they don't operate as a form of meaningful cultural expression for Black youth or others who take up that particular style. Sagging pants have been associated with drugs, gang activity, and prison, and there is speculation as to whether they stem from prison culture where inmates are provided ill-fitted clothing. Yet for some youth, sagging pants as a personal statement might serve as a powerful means of counter-culture expression. There are active bans across the country that deplore and try to police the practice, some claiming that the very act creates a pipeline to prison or even death (though society has made it clear that even black men in more "suitable" attire are not safe in public).

I understood what this student teacher was trying to say. His analogy was intended to support Erin by questioning her immediate reach for mainstream signifiers of Indigeneity. Yet even though his remarks were supportive, the casual cultural markers he used appeared reproductive of the narrow notion of cultural representation we were all intentionally trying to disrupt.

> "She *did* push [to wear regalia], and I let her," continued Ms. Carter. "I also have a, not the feather wand, I can't remember what you call it with the crystal on the

end, and that was made by a Native American woman up in Alaska who gave that to me as a gift, and she really, really wanted to hold that, so I let her have that."

I noted how interesting it was that it was Erin who reached for the visible tokens of Native identity, the buckskin dress and the crystal wand. I told her that we faced similar dilemmas in the program, wanting to support Native students as they try to express themselves in visible ways, while also trying to gently unsettle their reach for stereotypes. I told her about the similar advice to Erin at the center, questioning her desire for the buckskin dress, and offering a variety of pictures of Winona to highlight how she typically dressed. The same discourses that entangle how non-Native teachers make Indigenous people visible in narrow and stereotypical ways can also shape the ways Indigenous students represent their own Indigeneity.

"And then I blew it," she said. "And let her hold it [the wand], but she was so…

The night of the event she held it and she had her pose. Man she was polished."

Visibility In a Context of Erasure

I understood where Ms. Carter was coming from. Perhaps the wand, which had little to do with the actual life of Winona LaDuke, did contribute to the reproduction of a more generic, stereotypical representation of Indigeneity. Ms. Carter's willingness to be self-critical is important and helpful, but I didn't necessarily agree with her that she "blew it." She was caught in the complex space of nurturing a young child's self-esteem and cultural pride, while also questioning whether and how she might be critical of the images and ideas that child brings to the classroom. This complexity was amplified too as Erin, the Native student, was the one reaching for what appeared to be hardened, static

portrayals of Indianness, incongruent with the rich, complex Indigenous life she was actually leading.

We knew Erin as a strong participant in the Center as well as her own nation as a tribal member. We knew Erin to be comfortable in jeans or picking up a shawl and dancing around the drum. We knew her as an active practitioner in her culture, and in the context of the Native Youth Center, she showed little ambivalence about her identity. She knew who she was and where she came from. Yet in the context of her school, Erin still reached for symbols that weren't culturally-specific or place-based, markers that also weren't true to the accurate depiction of Winona LaDuke for the project. Her own teacher admitted that Erin didn't "look" Native American in the way she had expected, but through engagement with her, she came to see that her understanding was narrow, and that there were important dimensions that couldn't be seen: a political identity (expressed through citizenship in her tribal nation), as well as cultural identity (expressed through participation in her own nation's cultural practices as well as those at the Center). Both teachers also recognized the ways narrow understanding of Indigeneity contributed to the ways Erin wasn't always assigned the identity of "Native American" by her peers, and perhaps this motivated her to be visibly Native American in her depiction of Winona LaDuke.

Melvina also theorized that perhaps Erin's resistance to the pant suit and desire to be more "Native American-y" had to do with this constant misrecognition, a dynamic she had seen circulate around many Native students with light skin throughout her career in Indigenous education. For a student like Erin whose phenotypical appearance didn't always invite questions about her cultural identity (a question often reserved for those

who appear “exotic” and “Other” evident by their name, skin color, or accent, for example), their routine categorization as White may feel like an erasure of their identity. Further, aspects students may feel are important to their identities—their citizenship in a nation, a language spoken, a story they have been told or retell, a connection to land—are not always visible in the ways settler society imagines Indigeneity to be expressed.

Melvina had noted that some Native students with lighter skin in the program often experience the quandary of not being “seen” as Native, despite active participation in their communities, nations, and cultures. Some students, grounded in a sense of who they are, are amused by the misnomer when people mistakenly view them as White, especially if they are more “traditional” than some of their friends (having grown up on a reservation, or speak their Native language for example). How could Indigeneity narrowly mean dark skin if the languages they learned or stories they were told were passed down from their own family members and fellow tribal citizens who happened to have light skin? These confident students seem to accurately locate the problem with mainstream society’s narrow and inaccurate understandings of Indigeneity, rather than in their appearance. Melvina’s own daughter who is an enrolled tribal member with a light complexion takes a similar stance. She was actively raised in a ceremonial environment, which Melvina believes gives her a deep base to draw from. She knows her songs and the ceremonies, and is deeply embedded in her family and community. She know who she is, so unlike some of the other students Melvina has worked with, she doesn’t feel the need to outwardly reach for certain markers or symbols to be read as Native.

But Melvina noted that other light-skinned Native students feel troubled by others’ constant framing of them as White. To counteract what they conceivably view as

their erasure, Melvina has seen some of these students occasionally reach for visible ways to mark their Indigeneity, using chokers, big feathered earrings, even Redsk*ns[80] gear—ironically reproducing a parallel form of erasure, despite their attempts to contest it. There is an important element of resistance in those self-representations, as students seek to be visible in a context determined to erase them. Yet, in asserting generic, pan-Indian markers of Indigeneity solely for the sake of visibility, students may also be complicit in ways of erasing their own tribal specificity. This is also not to suggest that these students *only* viewed and represented themselves in relation to dominant culture and narrow framings, but rather, those students' experiences and connections to family, community, nation, heritage, and culture shape, in part, the way they view and represent themselves. For some light-skinned Native students, their perceived erasure is nonthreatening, amusing even; for others, it strongly influences the ways they choose to express themselves as they want to be seen as Native.

This routine miscategorization has also been bothersome to some of the students with darker complexions. When Ms. Carter's class visited the center recently, I shared with her class the large US map we have covered with pins, each placed on a students' tribal nation or traditional homelands. We use this as a way to visibly represent the diversity in the program and Native community locally. I had just shown the class the village in Alaska where my grandma was born and moved aside so Melvina could speak. One of the 5th grade students leaned over and whispered in my ear: "I'm not Mexican. I'm Native." I hadn't met this student before. "Do people often think you're Latina?" I whispered back. She nodded at me. "I am so happy you are proud to be Native," I told

[80] I follow the lead of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and other organizations and individuals who refuse to spell the racist name and instead use "Redsk*ns" or "R word" (NCAI, 2013, p. 2).

her. She smiled. In the few seconds we whispered as Melvina spoke, there was no time to talk to her about binaries of Indigeneity and authenticity, about Indigeneity and peoples' experiences from Mexico, about her own desires to be visible as Native, perhaps even her own possible latent prejudice toward Latinas… So much was at work in this fleeting moment, but I could only offer a whispered affirmation.

This student, it turns out, was routinely viewed by teachers and others as Latina, a miscategorization that her teachers told me frustrated her. She was not the only one routinely miscategorized. Another Native student came to the center distressed one day when her history teacher made a statement that Native people didn't exist anymore. She suffered quietly in that classroom, wondering if he thought she was Latina, wondering if he knew she was Native, and if he would have said that if he had known. She didn't address the issue in class, but processed with Melvina and others at the center after school that day. For these students, erasure through misidentification, based in narrow notions of what it means to look or not look Native, was a fairly common and disquieting experience.

In navigating settler society's narrow image of how Indigeneity appears, students, such as Erin, may reach for visible markers: the buckskin dress or the feather wand for example. On the surface it appears Erin as a young Indigenous woman is caught up in a similar dynamic as the non-Native educators who nostalgically tries to recuperate a timeless sense of Indigeneity. Yet just as the teaching of Yup'ik masks would necessarily be different within a different context, Erin's reach to be visible as a Native person is also different, precisely because of Erin's own particular historical, social, cultural, and political context. Erin's desire to express herself, despite longstanding and (at times

forcible) continuing attempts to erase her, her people, and Native people in general, distinguishes her actions from the teacher who glues feathers on a sign, or the administrator who hires a Native dancer. Erin is reaching for *self*-representation to combat her own erasure. For Erin, Winona LaDuke in a pantsuit or business attire, with nothing to visibly mark her as “Indigenous,” might appear an erasure. Erin may experience the distinctiveness of her Indigeneity as expressed in the Center, but the lack of it being present in school may appear a feeling of loss, of being invisible.

It becomes clear how the context of settler society’s normalization of Whiteness can stifle a Native student’s sense of self and cultural expression. The education of non-Native teachers and students can be tied to this context as some Native students in public schools actively negotiate their identities in a context of erasure and narrow definitions. This invisibility of Whiteness and settler society is a feature of settler colonialism and support for Indigenous students must necessarily recognize this unmarked backdrop against which some Indigenous students may try to express themselves. Care must be taken to encourage Indigenous students to interrogate the ways they represent their heritage and pride; but care must also be taken to make visible the ways settler society normalizes particular (White) bodies, rendering them Indigenous only when adorned with beads. Erin, like all students in that class, must be led to see that there is an unnamed norm against which Indigeneity (or other racial/cultural expressions) must conceivably be distinguished from.

What also distinguishes Erin’s dilemma from that of educators who reach for stereotypical representation is that the burden often befalls Indigenous people to distinguish themselves culturally. Whereas the White teacher can feel cathartically clean

that they included a Native American unit or invited a Native dancer, the Indigenous student may negotiate very real and deeply personal dynamics of identity, cultural expression, and belonging. Settler "imperialist nostalgia" (Rosaldo, 1993) as an "innocent" sentiment enables the benevolent recuperation of what was lost, masking complicity in the racial domination. The narrow, static reproduction of Indigeneity can cause an educator to feel good about her multicultural efforts. Yet the Native student who negotiates their identity and problematically reaches for those very markers, even while demonstrating resistance, might be caught up in a problematic web of authenticity that later elicits questions and criticism from their Native peers, even critical self-reflection. Those Indigenous students who are grounded in their own particular land, language, culture, stories, or families may not feel challenged by the deficits in settler society's discourses about Indigeneity, but for some students, they may internalize those very deficit discourses as their own, and reproduce them, even as a means of resistance. What Erin and other light skinned Native students may be negotiating is not an issue of having the "right" knowledge. Rather, their negotiations point to knowledge of the contextual considerations a teacher may need in order to serve Indigenous students, surfacing the context and terrain of meaning that both teachers and students, Native and non-Native, navigate, which has ties to history and is also lived in the present. At minimum, an educator needs to know enough about these issues in order to recognize that they can be problematic.

When Native Students Wanna Be *indian*[81]

Educational scholarship notes that children are not blank slates. As Paulo Freire (1970) points out, children are not empty vessels to be filled or containers in which to bank or deposit information. Students bring with them important "funds of knowledge" (Moll & Gonzalez, 1994). Culturally responsive approaches to teaching based in "difference approaches" and "resource pedagogies" (Paris, 2012) have been important interventions into deficit frameworks. Given the violent relationship Indigenous nations and peoples have had with schools, which were specifically designed to eradicate and domesticate their cultural difference, the idea that teachers should respect cultural difference and the culture a Native brings to the classroom is important. In response, "culturally responsive teaching" (Gay, 2002) that advocates "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106) make sense. So too do theories of "culturally responsive pedagogy" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) that instruct teachers to have "an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds" and to "respect cultural differences" (p. 23).

What are educators to do, however, if a child demonstrates "cultural difference" in ways that do not necessarily reflect their particular cultural worldviews, but more closely reflect dominant discourses of Indigeneity? How will a teacher know if the

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[81] I use Indian in this context to refer to what King (2012) refers to as the "Dead Indian" and what Vizenor (2013) refers to as *indian* as opposed to "Native." Vizenor writes,

> The word is forever a problem, and should be printed in italics, because the word has no real referent. Indian is used for everything: language, food, culture, you know, everywhere. The word has no discrete meaning. I used the word "Native" to describe specific and distinct and unique cultural practices and stories. (p. 112)

I do this knowing that many in the Native community here, elders especially, still utilize the word Indian as a self-referent and I do not mean disrespect to those self-representations. However, I use the word specifically to conjure up a particular, invented portrayal of Indigenous life that selectively edits and fictionalizes our actual diverse lived realties.

cultural knowledge and insight a child brings is “culturally inherent,” which Leanne Simpson, (2013) defines as “ways that reflect the diversity of thought within our broader cosmologies, those very ancient ways that are inherently counter to the influences of colonial hegemony” (p. 279)? Is it even a teacher’s place to critique forms of Indigenous self-expression, especially when the educator is non-Native? How would a teacher know if a Native student’s culture or cultural representation was counter-hegemonic, or reproduced cultural hegemony? It is precisely because these questions are so hard to answer that I let Ms. Carter know she didn’t blow it. We have to be willing to critique ourselves as teachers, to honestly reflect on our practice, even when it is difficult, and then be responsible for the consequences of our pedagogical and curricular choices. Yet the situation we face with how to educate Indigenous students within public schools and in the context of settler colonialism requires much more of us than determining whether a decision was “good” in one instance, or whether we “blew it” in another. As relentless as settler colonialism is to erase Indigenous experience, our teaching must be equally as relentless: to make it visible, to work within it, to disrupt it. There is no endpoint, no right or wrong—just stamina to keep interrogating our teaching in light of its relationship to settler colonial and dominant discourses that are harmful to our students.

Our conversation and collective support for Erin was premised on the dilemma of how we as teachers might productively create space for students to identify with as well as critically reflect on particular cultural expressions and practices. The work of Django Paris and H. Samy Alim (2014) helps illuminate this question, as they unpack a similar dynamic in the context of hip hop culture. Their piece is a “loving critique” that extends Paris’s former articulation of “culturally sustaining pedagogy” (CSP), itself an extension

of the literature on culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002).[82] In an earlier articulation of CSP, Paris (2012) urges that we move beyond "relevance or responsiveness" and offers instead the notion of *culturally sustaining:*

> The term *culturally sustaining* requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. Culturally sustaining pedagogy, then, has as its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers. That is, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling. (p. 95)

Paris and Alim (2014) document how youth enact cultural and linguistic dexterity, fashioning fluid identities and cultural expressions that embody traditions, while also extending them. CSP calls on teachers to recognize the fluidity of youth culture, and commit "to sustaining them in both the traditional *and* evolving ways that are lived and used by young people," addressing "the well-understood fact that what it means to be African American or Latina/o or Navajo is continuing to shift in the ways culture always

[82] Paris (2012) states, "I focus this article on the term and formulation of *culturally relevant pedagogies* and, less so, on *culturally responsive pedagogies* as these have become, in my view, the most used, short-handed terms and concepts in teacher education, teacher practice, and research on teaching and learning" (p. 96). In this context, however, perhaps because equity work in the district is driven by the knowledge and frameworks individuals bring to the work, Gay's conception of culturally responsive pedagogy appears to be more utilized.

has" (p. 91). They also propose that a culturally sustaining framework should rid itself of the "White gaze" and ask,

> What would our pedagogies look like if this gaze weren't the dominant one? What would liberating ourselves from this gaze and the educational expectations it forwards mean for our abilities to envision new forms of teaching and learning? What if, indeed, the goal of teaching and learning with youth of color was not ultimately to see how closely students could perform White middle class norms but to explore, honor, extend, and, at times, problematize their heritage and community practices? (p. 86)

It is in this last charge, in asking teachers to problematize youth's heritage and community practices, that they illuminate the practical and complex dilemmas a teacher may face as they try to recognize the "rich and innovative linguistic, literate, and cultural practices" (p. 86) youth bring to the classroom, while also employing the insight and skill to problematize them.

Alim (2011) has termed the important "counter-hegemonic forms of youth literacies" that youth bring to the classroom "ill-literacies": the ways a youth's "spoken, rhymed, or written text" exemplifies "linguistic and cultural ingenuity," for example. A teacher's recognition of youths' ill-literacies is an important curricular gesture, creating space for youth culture and community: allowing a youth to communicate in a freestyle rap, spoken word poem, or engage in a rap battle (improvised linguistic duels); yet, these cultural practices and ill-literacies can also problematically revoice "racist, misogynistic, homophobic, and xenophobic discourses" (94). "What happens," they ask, "when ill-literacies get ill? In other words, what happens when, rather than challenging hegemonic

ideas and outcomes, the cultural practices of youth of color actually reproduce them, or even create new ones?" (p. 92).

In answer to this complex question, they offer that a critically sustaining pedagogy both affirms students' cultural and linguistic practices, yet also acknowledges that not all aspects of community and heritage practices should be sustained. They argue teachers need a pedagogical stance and critical reflexivity that enables them to create "generative spaces for asset pedagogies to support the practices of youth and communities of color while maintaining a critical lens vis-à-vis these practices" (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 92). With this critically reflective stance, a teacher might value a youth's spoken word poem in class as a meaningful form of literacy and cultural expression, while simultaneously questioning the way the lyrics reproduce particular systems of oppression, such as homophobia or misogyny (Paris & Alim, 2014).

This acknowledgment of both the "progressive" aspects of youth culture, as well as the need to critique the "oppressive" or "regressive practices" (p. 92) in the reproduction of youth culture is relevant for the ways we were all trying to support Erin, and highlights the tensions in doing so. At the Youth Center, we supported Erin's commitment to culture and community. As educators, we were each conscious of Erin's desire to be seen as Native, yet cautious of her reach for what appeared to be tokenizing forms of expression that reproduced static, historic representations of Indianness. A critical stance that asked Erin to dress professionally (which was indeed a more accurate depiction of Winona LaDuke) indeed complicated the idea that Native people were solely cultural or historic, and perhaps an important intervention into those static representations. Yet Erin's continual desire for markers of Indianness was evidence that

the business suit, though a more accurate portrayal of her contemporary subject, appeared to her a form of erasure. Support for Erin contended with the context of erasure and visibility she navigated, especially as a light skinned Native youth.

So in retrospect, what might we have done differently? As educators, perhaps we needed to critically disrupt the problematic signifiers of Indigenous identity, yet do so through the offer of more promising and generative forms of expression. Erin was unsatisfied with a pedagogy that merely guided her away from participating in the fetishization of her culture. We needed to give her alternative means for self-identification and self-expression. The business suit would have disrupted the stoic Indian, but for Erin, the strategy made her just like everyone else, and didn't account for the Indigenous distinctiveness she seemed to be reaching for. It wasn't "Native American-y" enough. Beyond critiquing the "regressive practices" then, we should have offered signifiers that preserved the distinctiveness she was craving, that didn't fall back into historicism. Perhaps Winona LaDuke's values, knowledge, actions, humor, commitment to land and place, use of Ojibwe language, and political actions all conceivably could have been signifiers of Indigeneity that we amplified. If she needed visible ways to mark those signifiers, she could have held a flag of the White Earth Nation; a replica of the ancient squash that LaDuke has helped revitalize; a sign with the written word Gete-okosomin (the Anishinaabe word she chose to name the squash meaning "really cool old squash"); a campaign sign from when she ran with Nader; or a copy of her book, *The Militarization of Indian Country*, featuring a cover by Bunky Echo-Hawk depicting a Native person in a gasmask, an image that doesn't make the problematic separation of culture from politics as do most other signifiers .

Part of what has to be questioned, part of the work that needs to be done, part of why this is a challenge at all is that white, settler society has become so normalized. As teachers we have to question the ways our world is often set up by that presumption, and we have to find ways to guide our students in questioning that as well. There is a larger context here—of Indigenous erasure, of constrained visibility as Native people are often only "seen" when embodying the static, stereotypical markers of Indianness—that makes the work of cultural identification fall on the shoulders of Indigenous students.

What would a teacher need to know to recognize this dynamic and the ways it fits in a larger historical context? What knowledge would a teacher need—about Indigenous identity, sovereignty, self-determination, colonization, representation—to better serve Erin? Even as Native educators, we struggle with how to help students develop comfortable identities that don't reproduce stereotypical representations. Just recently at the Center, a Native student discussed an international trip she would be taking this summer. As part of the cultural exchange with their host family in the program, each participant was asked to bring gifts to share. Students were instructed that those gifts should reflect the participants' culture so that the family and student can engage in an intercultural dialogue. This student was extremely excited to bring a gift and discuss Native culture. She relayed that she was considering making chokers for the host family. In that moment, I had mixed feelings of pride and concern. I felt proud the student was excited to share about her Native identity and culture. It wasn't long ago that Native people felt shame about their identities, or forced to hide them in order to survive. In this student's family, I knew there were stories of dispossession, shame, and some relatives' denial of their Indigeneity; this student's mother was also the one who felt identifying her

daughter as Native landed her in special education class. For this student, this cultural exchange was important, and bone chokers were a way she could express her Native pride. Yet bone chokers per se didn't appear to be a part of this student's particular tribal affiliation. A necklace made from dentalium or pine nuts might have more accurately represented her peoples' practices. Perhaps it was hard to get dentalium or pine nuts, or perhaps she hadn't thought about it. Like buckskin dresses and ponchos, it wasn't that chokers weren't traditional or meaningful, but in this context, it appeared the student was reaching for a generic marker rather than looking for a more "culturally inherent" (Simpson, 2013) gift.

Chokers, though central to some Native cultural expression, have also been central to dominant warrior discourses, "warrior images" that Gail Valaskakis (1994) argues are not only prevalent in Westerns, but circulate in media representations today as well. Though Valaskakis was referring to mainstream media's fascination with the image of the Mohawk warrior during the Oka crisis, the depiction of the Native warrior in a bone choker is also a part of the "constructed and contradictory images of Indians" that Valaskakis refers to more generally, images "that are removed from the social meaning of lived experience in Native communities — and appropriated by non-Indians in everything from tourist brochures to the New Age 'White Warrior Society.'" (p. 63). The conversations were often difficult, but Melvina and I had had some practice guiding non-Native students and teachers through the tensions between appreciation and appropriation conversations. A non-Native person reaching for a bone choker reasonably fits into the category of appropriation, or at the very least, begs the question why the bone choker? What purpose did it serve aesthetically, culturally, socially, or politically? And yet when

Native students in our program reached for that same choker, a similar tension emerges, though perhaps more nuanced: how might we support these students in expressing cultural pride, while also guiding them in reflecting on expressions that aren't necessarily place-based or deeply rooted? Moreover, who gets to determine what constitutes a place-based or deeply rooted practice or expression?

This tension was compounded because our own Title VII program for many years, including last year, had led students in choker-making workshops. Our program's website and brochures were littered with students adorned in chokers. Parents and families seemed to *like* making chokers. The practice of making chokers itself—fostering community, nurturing relationships between children and adults, instilling patience and a sense of accomplishment—had value. And yet, outside of a meaningful context of story, culture, and place, they seemed to also reinscribe a particularly narrow, warrior-like version of Indigeneity. King (2013) in his book *The Inconvenient Indian* reflects on his own cultural expression as a younger man and shivers at the thought of his own self-expression with regards to what he has termed, a "Dead Indian."

> I never wore a full feather headdress to protests or marches, but I did sport a four-strand bone choker, a beaded belt buckle, a leather headband, and a fringed leather pouch, and when I look at the photographs from those years, the image of myself as a Dead Indian still sends a tremor up my spine. (pp. 65-66)

In teaching students how to assemble chokers that came in little kits, it appears the program sanctioned the sort of Dead Indian that King found so troubling later in life. Intentionally, there were no choker making workshops this year, but the fact that any curriculum for the program is situated in the complex terrain of Indigenous identity, and

that that terrain inevitably includes and competes with historic and hardened images of who Native students may think they should be or look like, is an important one.

Students' relationships to Indianness are complicated at times, but it is also foolish to think that they are completely determined by it. To disrupt the deployment of what appears to be hegemonic forms of Indianness unilaterally and without consideration for the various ways Native people use and deploy conceptions of Indianness is to, in some sense, position students as not knowing who they should be. Native identity intersects with the highly fraught terrain of adolescent identity more broadly, and is also fraught when families themselves deploy these dominant markers of Indianness. Who were we as a program to suggest we knew how students or families should or shouldn't represent themselves as Indigenous peoples, or what a comfortable identity should look like for them? Many Native families came to our program adorned with what may appear to be dominant markers of Indianness—dreamcatcher tattoos, howling wolf t-shirts, big feather earrings. Some of these forms of expression may be part of these families' own tribal and cultural traditions; others perhaps are refashioned to symbolize Native pride; and others quite possibly are unexamined expressions of the "Dead Indian." Support for these students and families can't mean simply presuming that we have more accurate or appropriate forms of cultural expression or self-identification.

We also know from experience that Native people can wield even harmful representations to their own advantage; they can invert them and subvert them, can make those images go to work for them or their communities, and can profit from them. Drawing on postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, Maureen Trudelle Schwarz (2013) offers the Native American Rights Fund's *Coca Cola* colonialism ad, "Fighting Colonialism at

Home," as a form of "mimicry" that "mock[s] the supposed superiority of the colonizer" (p. 8). Plains Cree nation artist Tatakwan inverts and reclaims the word "savage" through creating beaded chokers that are boldly inscribed with the term.[83] Chickasaw metalsmith Kristen Dorsey has created "blood quantum earrings" as a commentary on governmental means of enumerating Indianness. Dorsey's earrings, which feature customizable fractions (1/2, 1/32, 4/4, and so on), are in her words a means to "foster intelligent discussions about issues of race and identity in Native America while creating awareness of how specific historical events are often the triggers of our current perceptions of Native identity."[84] To say that the buckskin dress or choker is entirely problematic is to erase all the diverse and creative ways that Native people have been, as Schwarz's (2013) book title suggests, *Fighting Colonialism with Hegemonic Culture.* The American Indian Movement's (AIM) deployment of hegemonic features of Indianness such as bone chokers and feathers might be considered blatantly stereotypical, or they could be considered a form of what Mireille Rosello offers as a useful stance in relationship to those stereotypes: being a "reluctant witness" toward them; "declining" them by "simultaneously inhabit[ing] them and reus[ing] them in striking and imaginative ways" (as cited in Schwarz, 2013, p. 9). As Schwarz's analysis of the Red Power Movement shows, Native men according to Russell Means "looked ridiculous, all dressed up like Indians." Yet quite possibly, they were also "inhabiting the stereotype of the war-mongering brave— braiding their hair, painting their faces with war paint, adorning themselves with beads and feathers— while reusing these stereotypes in striking and

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[83] Tatakwan's chokers and other art and jewelry can be found at her website (http://www.urbanregalia.com/beadwork/).

[84] Kristen Dorsey's earrings can be found at *Beyond Buckskin*, an online boutique featuring Native art, clothing, and jewelry (http://shop.beyondbuckskin.com/product/blood-quantum-earrings).

imaginative ways" (p. 16). Schwarz claims that Native people have continually taken up the dominant discourse of Indianness in diverse and creative ways to combat colonialism at home. A pedagogy that supports Native students must simultaneously disrupt narrow and static notions of Indianness, while also leaving room for creativity, inversion, and subversion.

Knowing how much freedom to give students is a complex challenge. A student might need to work out for herself what it means to be creative and subversive. Yet it also feels important to consider the ways students may very well reflect back on their own cultural expressions, as many of us do as we reflect on our teenage self-expression, and feel that "tremor up [their] spine." How would Erin reflect on herself in that buckskin dress? How would that student abroad reflect on her gifting of chokers to her host family? I look back at a picture of myself as a 5 year old, dressed as an Indian for the ballet, and wonder what I must have felt. In the image I am standing with my arms folded in a sequined loincloth, a single feather sticking up from my headband, a beaming smile across my face. My non-Native mother says at the time I was proud; I *wanted* to be the Indian in the ballet. She didn't have the cultural resources or critical awareness to know any better at the time, and so letting me "play Indian" in the ballet was the way she could offer me a chance to show my pride and express myself. Her desire to feed my need to be proud of my identity was an act of love and good intentions. And yet I also know viscerally that tremor to which King refers when I recognize the ways I enacted a caricature: when I visually see the ways deep-seated narratives of race and colonialism can play out in my mother's love for me and my own little five-year old body. I may have felt pride, but that hardly feels now like creativity, inversion, or subversion.

Melvina, Ms. Carter, and I in our various ways were all trying to thoughtfully support Erin and the other students in ways that would nurture pride, while being cautious not to reproduce stereotypes. These students could be more than the Indian in the ballet. I noticed, however, the stubbornness of this discursive territory. Erin had said her teacher wanted her to look "Native American-y"; Ms. Carter said it was Erin who was reaching for those markers. We had some meaningful conversations about what it meant to do this work, conversations that I hoped would continue as a result of our relationship. Yet I couldn't help be struck as I was in Erin's school again by Ms. Carter's display. This was work students had already started before our conversations began, some of which Ms. Carter said she would reconsider. Nevertheless, glued to the sign "Legends and Myths" explaining the unit and how it addressed state standards were four little feathers, each one sticking out of the corner of the sign, marking the Indianness of the project, a practice I felt we were so consciously trying to reflect on and disrupt.

In the end, Melvina and I offered some questions to the high school student about her use of chokers: What do chokers mean to you? How are they meaningful to your people? What do you hope to teach through the chokers? We also reminded her of the way our center engages in cultural exchange, creating friendship necklaces to give elders or as a small way to thank those who participate or volunteer in our program. We wanted to create a space for pause and reflection, and provide alternative options. The cultural exchange program's use of gifting was itself a longstanding cultural practice in many Native communities and cultures. Drawing attention to and emphasizing the practice was our way of providing an alternative, while trying not to tell the student explicitly what to

do. We are not sure whether she will make chokers this summer for her host family or not.

On the evening of the final presentations for the wax museum there were other Native leaders as well. A non-Native student portraying a typical rendition of Pocahontas; a Native student in a stereotypical rendition of Crazy Horse; and a Native rendition of Maria Tallchief (Osage), not only the first renowned Native American ballerina, but America's first prima ballerina, who was adorned in a ballet outfit. In the end, Ms. Carter didn't blow it. In fact, it was only because she offered Erin a contemporary role model to research that she began to see some of the more nuanced and complex aspects of Indigenous education. Her willingness to engage with the contemporary provided her a glimpse at a few of the contemporary issues Native students might navigate.

Erin didn't wear the buckskin dress. It was too big (plus Melvina said she wouldn't have let her wear it anyway). Erin never took any of us up on the suggestion to wear jeans or slacks and a button up shirt either. She eventually wore a ribbon dress, a simple A-line dress adorned with ribbonwork. The ribbon dress was on hand at the center and what Melvina could offer in terms of a visible alternative to buckskin. Though unintended, some have traced the origins of ribbonwork to the Great Lakes region (Metcalfe, 2010), close to Winona LaDuke's home on the White Earth reservation, connecting her outfit to LaDuke's homelands. Erin also held the crystal wand for which she had pleaded. In her ribbon dress that evening in the gymnasium, Erin stood tall. She was poised. She was ready. Her eyes stared off into the distance as she stood frozen, but she was not stoic. Rather than emulate a historic hero, she had the opportunity to embody

a contemporary Native leader, and when someone dropped a coin in her bucket, she came to life.

CHAPTER V

LITTLE ANTHROPOLOGISTS

As I arrived at Ms. Bishop's classroom, I stopped to examine the coloring sheets taped to the wall. I was encouraged by the principal to connect with this teacher because she was doing "great work building on Native American culture" in her school. In her email to me, in which she also cc'd the Director of Elementary Instruction, she attached several images. Though I was a bit disheartened that the principal considered these brightly colored Kachina[85] replicas "great work," I was also thankful for the opportunity to learn more about this teacher's work and see if I might have anything to offer her and her students. Standing outside the classroom, I waited for Ms. Bishop and read the name and explanation that accompanied each Kachina:

> Koyemsi, the Mudhead Clown Kachina, are seen in all Kachina dances. When the other Kachinas are not dancing the Koyemsi play games and act as clowns. Since the Koyemsi is considered very sacred, people never refuse him anything. To do so would bring bad luck.
>
> Soyoko is an ogre woman who often travels with Nata-aska, the black ogre, in the evening after the bean dance, Soyoko visits various houses and asks the boys to hunt game for her (mice and rats). She tells the boys if they do not have some for her within four days she will eat them instead of the game! In the same way

[85] I use the spelling "Katsina" to refer to Hopi conceptions of Katsina Friends. As I will share later in this story, "Hopi Katsina Friends are religious objects necessary for the use and the continuation of the Hopi religion by present day adherent…Katsina Friends are used during Katsina religious ceremonies" (The Hopi Tribe, 2015, p. 1).In contrast, I use "Kachina" either when the literature uses this spelling, or to denote the tokenization and commodification of a complex Hopi religious/spiritual/cultural practice (Whiteley, 2003).

> Soyoko requires the girls to prepare Piki, a paper thin bread wafer, for her. She likes Piki made from blue, yellow, or pink cornmeal.
>
> It is believed that Hahai-i Wu-uti is the mother of all Kachinas. She appears in many ceremonies and is the main actor in the water serpent ceremony.

Sacred… water serpent ceremony… she will eat them instead of game! What were students being taught about these Katsina Friends? Did the teacher know Katsina Friends are sacred, that they aren't considered "dolls" but "beings"? Were the Katsina Friends situated in a cultural context that would help students make sense of them, or would they see these as superstitious foolishness? What were students taking away from this activity?

This appeared to be the familiar practice of taking Native culture out of context and emphasizing exotic and beautiful objects over the place-based, cultural practices of which the objects are a part. With a focus on Katsina Friends, however, the stakes were higher as the sacred appeared to be made into a spectacle. As I studied the brightly colored Kachinas, I was reminded of the book I had just bought to help teachers consider how to respectfully incorporate Native content in the curriculum. This book has a list of "No-No's," one of which was directly relevant:

> NO-NO 4!! No kachinas, sandpaintings or pipes! These are also part of religious ceremonials, sacred objects meant to be used by special people in an honored way. Yes, we do note that some kachinas are sold as dolls, but we prefer that you not even attempt to address any sacred subjects. Sandpaintings are not permanent works of art like oil paintings; they are used only for healing and then destroyed.

> Pipes should not even be displayed—there are simply too many rules to follow to respect the customs. (Hirschfelder & Beamer, 2000, pp. xvi)

Though the no-no's were on my mind, starting with them isn't always the most effective approach in working with teachers, I thought to myself. Further, the list of no-no's, though helpful as a rudimentary guideline for teachers earnestly seeking to be respectful, didn't necessarily get at the underlying issues that routinely compelled teachers to frame Native people as objects of study and inquiry. The teacher's lesson, though purportedly aiming to support Native and non-Native students by incorporating Native culture into the curriculum, exemplified instead a "flattening" of Hopi practices (Whiteley, 2003). As Whiteley states:

> For example, the Hopi sign *katsina* (cf. Pearlstone 2001) is an important religious term with multiple layers of significance. But its circulation in tourist and other non-Hopi discourse, and its anglicized transformation to *kachina* minimizes its sphere of meaning. In English *kachinas* primarily refers to the dolls that Hopis make both for internal use and for sale. This is a reference that Hopi *katsina* does not have. *Katsinam* (the plural form of the word) refers to ancestral spirits, who may manifest themselves as rain clouds, as protagonists in sacred narratives, and as personated actors in masked ritual dramas. In the market-driven dialog that refers to the dolls (*tithu* in Hopi) as *kachinas,* younger Hopis especially absorb some of the reduced sense of the term and indeed need to employ that sense in their interactions with buyers of tribal art—interlocutors who are typically only superficially interested in Hopi cultural ideas. As an English term, *kachina,* used by both non-Hopis and Hopis responding to them, has thus been drastically

evacuated of meaning, and this process will expand with the decline of the Hopi speech community and the continuing commodification of Hopi artifacts. (p. 718)

Turning Katsina Friends into a craft project accompanied by descriptions that present their stories as simplistic literal beliefs serves to "minimize the sphere of meaning" of a concept that has "multiple layers of significance" (Whiteley, 2013, p. 718) This reduction can have consequences for both Native and non-Native students. Whiteley comments on how younger Hopis might[86] "absorb some of the reduced sense of the term" (p. 718). Thus, the circulation of Kachinas in the 5th grade classroom not only flattens the concept into a commodified activity for the non-Native students in the room, but flattens a rich, multi-layered concept for Native students as well. There were no Hopi students in the class that I was aware of, but a Hopi student taking part in the activity might identify positively with such a "cultural" activity, while simultaneously internalizing a flattened sense of their own cultural referent through engagement with kachinas devoid of its proper physical, social, cultural, and spiritual context. A young Native student might, without other discourses to operate within, internalize that activity as a source of pride despite the erasure and narrowing it involves. I wasn't sure how this teacher had introduced the activity. As I approached the room, however, I was both curious and concerned—about how the lesson was introduced, what kind of conversation we could have about it, and what the teacher would be able to hear.

[86] I use "might" intentionally to emphasize Hopi agency and resistance within his account. I am not familiar with the extent of Whiteley's involvement in the Hopi community or scope of his work. His framing of flattening remains a useful theoretical tool, and his assertion that young Hopi people might internalize these flattened meanings seems a fair statement (especially as I have seen similar internalizations here). However, I use "might" to signal that some Hopi youth might also resist this internalization as a result of particular discourses they are embedded within (even if it may not be outwardly apparent).

Ms. Bishop greeted me at the door, smiling. It was the principal's idea to connect us, not hers, but Ms. Bishop seemed happy to discuss her curriculum with me. She led me to the other wall lined with Kachinas that the students had invented. As creative replications based on the concept of Katsina Friends, these Kachinas were designed specifically to help students. A photo with two young children overhead explained the activity:

> School kachinas help students with many things. There are kachinas to help students who forget to be respectful. My brother needs a visit from that kachina.

Below the sign were various student-created Kachinas. Artenwa (who helps students with art); Bookery (who helps students read); Geowa (who helps students with geometry); and so on. On the surface, the students' portrayals of dolls that might potentially help them read better or improve their geometry felt endearing, but when read against the cultural, religious, and spiritual context within which those Kastina Friends might make sense, it felt inappropriate. It would hardly seem appropriate to invite children to canonize their own Catholic saints as an appreciative artistic activity—St. Broccolis, an homage to the saint of healthy eating and proponent of green, leafy vegetables; or St. Assistus, a tribute to the patron saint of homework questions, for example.[87] Unfortunately, Native spiritual and religious practices are not often afforded the same respect and regard.

[87] I want to note Hopi/Miwok poet Wendy Rose's poem *Builder Kachina* as a counterexample (Rose, 1980). Rose states, "The identities and roles of the Kachina Holy People are traditionally somewhat flexible; this is one that is not part of the Hopi tradition, but is part of my imagination" (as cited in Warrior, 1992, p. 14). Despite her creative adaptation, I maintain is different than what I witnessed in the students' work.

Ms. Bishop led me into her classroom. “Careful,” she said as we maneuvered around desks that were covered with cardboard and papier-mâché totem poles. The totem poles were propped up on tables around the room, waiting to dry so the students could paint them. These would be gifts for the students’ families and part of the “Native American Christmas” theme she was having that year, she explained. She guided me around the room to view what she referred to as Native dwellings, stored in various nooks and crannies: a teepee, a wigwam, a longhouse. I marveled at one in particular, what appeared to be an expertly built wikiup.

Ms. Bishop confirmed that the expertly built dwelling I was looking at was a wikiup. It was quite remarkable, mounted on a clay base with thin twigs woven around several thicker twig posts. The top was carefully covered with cedar branchlets. This was a stark contrast to what appeared to be a hastily thrown together teepee made of construction paper that it sat next to. The construction paper was crumpled, forcibly twisted around three twigs, and held together with heaps of masking tape. Some care was put into the base of the teepee that was adorned with pictures of little fires. Apparently this expertly built wikiup was put together by one of the few Native students in the class, and I thought about the possible value of this activity for her. I wondered aloud what her tribal affiliation was, curious as to whether or not she was making a replica of her own people’s housing. “I’m not sure,” said the teacher. “Cherokee?”

As Ms. Bishop led me around the room to see the dwellings, my neck craned to peer at the masks the students created which loomed overhead, their vibrant colors and hollow eyes looking down at me as they hung from the ceiling, swaying slightly from the

breeze flowing out of the vent in the ceiling. Another passage from the professional development book I purchased shaped my perception of those masks:

> NO-NO!! No using masks. Do not make them, wear them, or display them. Masking, a feature of many Native religious traditions throughout North America, is used in a large number of contemporary ceremonies. If masks are mishandled, it is believed that disaster can result. They are sacred; many are seen as living and must be fed. Look them up in the library if you don't believe us, but do not ask students to make or wear them. Indian children never wear sacred masks. You can foster respect for these and other sacred objects by making them off-limits in the classroom. Indian masks, whether they are donned by Apache Crown Dancers or part of the healing rituals of the Iroquois False Face Society, are not Halloween costumes! (Hirschfelder & Beamer, 2000, pp. xv-xvi)

As we toured the room, Ms. Bishop discussed the other curriculum that month. The class was reading *Blood on the River,* a book I had never heard of, as well as *Sign of the Beaver*, which is widely recognized as a highly problematic text, though also still widely circulated. *Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare is less about Native people in Maine (though it is located there), and more about Speare's narrow, stereotypical understanding of generic Native people and culture. The book has been critiqued for its perpetuation of Native stereotypes (Lambert & Lambert, 2014; Reese, 2007; Slapin & Seale, 1998, 2003). One commentary on the book points out,

> At no point in the book are the Native characters allowed to speak in other than this grade-B movie pidgin. "That our way. All Indian understand." Attitudes

toward women are those usually drawn by white writers. Matt's weeding is "squaw work." (Slapin & Seale, 2003, p. 159)

I thought about the possibilities if students were to read Joseph Bruchac's (1998) *The Heart of A Chief.* In one section of the book, a junior high school student Chris, who is from the Penacook reservation, confronts his teacher's choice to use *Sign of the Beaver* in his Language Arts class. In the interaction between Chris and his teacher, his teacher Mr. Dougal professes his love for the book while Chris suggests that there is "something wrong"; he knows this because it is about "his people," he states. This book not only details a "Native" experience which was Ms. Bishop's intention with *Sign of the Beaver*, but situates that experience within the lived realities of Native students' lives, a reality that often included misrepresentation and resistance. Non-Native students gain a window into complex, contemporary lives; Native students perhaps a window as well as a mirror that reflects courage and survivance (Vizenor, 1994).[88]

But Ms. Bishop did not use this book, and instead taught *Sign of the Beaver*, a book one of the other teachers said she teaches every year. Slapin and Seale (2003) in their review question what young children will take away from the book, using a scene where the Native boy refuses to free a fox caught in an iron trap, claiming the fox will gnaw its own foot off, as an example. "How could a child think anything except that the speaker of such words really is a savage at heart?" (p. 160) Ms. Bishop's curriculum left me with similar impressions and questions. From this unit, how could the students think anything except that the Native people they were studying were superstitious, historic, exotic objects?

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[88] See Bradford's book (2007) *Unsettling Fictions* for postcolonial engagements with *Sign of the Beaver* and *The Heart of a Chief.*

I asked her politely about the use of the word squaw in the book and the way the Native characters don't speak in more than single syllables. She replied that it was her favorite book and she loved the characters. The critique underlying my question didn't appear to have registered. To her, the words squaw probably did not have the negative connotations I associate with it, nor did she view the speaking style as problematic. A few students came into the classroom and needed her. She was just beginning to tell me that the students were also doing research reports on various Native American tribes and would be presenting the following week. I asked if I could come back and watch the students present their reports and she said yes. I was disturbed by what I had seen, but hopeful that the students' research in these reports would provide a bit of context, as well as accurate information to offset the tokenizing activities I had just witnessed.

"Our tribe is the Kickapoo"… giggle, giggle, smirk

I returned the following week to observe the reports and sat in the back as the students who researched the Crow nation presented:

> Our tribe is the Crow. They live on a reservation where they can make their own rules.

This group is talking about Native people in the present tense, I thought to myself, rather impressed. Most reports and curricula on Native Americans that I had witnessed in the district so far were situated in the past, but this small group of 5th grade students' assertion that the Crow *live* (currently) on a reservation, and that they *make their own rules* (a nod toward tribal sovereignty) had me hopeful—a sense of hope I desperately needed as I glanced around the room at the dangling Native masks, Kachina replicas, papier-mâché totem poles, and various dwellings. Students were divided into small

groups to present on the Native nations that they had studied (though only the Hopi group used the word nation). The Crow nation was the first of the various tribal nations to present, and I would later hear reports from nations such as the Blackfoot, Hopi, Cherokee, Nez Perce, Apache, Dakota, Iroquois, Cheyenne, and Kickapoo (which students responded to with giggles and smirks).

The group went on to talk about Crow children, who "go to school just like us," and to discuss Barney Old Coyote, a famous Crow veteran in WWII. They didn't highlight Barney Old Coyote's prominence as a code talker and the service and role of the code talkers in WWII (which I think the kids would have found fascinating,)[89] but their report focused a bit on contemporary Native people and alluded to sovereignty (though they didn't use the word). Unfortunately, the report on the Crow nation was the only report that primarily emphasized Native presence. Others occasionally used present tense, but the presentations seemed to predominately use historic framings.

> *Cherokee:* They used to live in grass houses with hay beds… They wore this [putting a paper band around his head] because they didn't have bandanas back then…They used bows and arrows for fishing, hunting, and protection… They played lacrosse.
>
> *Apache:* They used to live in wikiups…They wore breechcloths.
>
> *Iroquois:* They used to play lacrosse. They used clubs. They lived in longhouses.
>
> *Kickapoo*: The men were hunters, the women raised the children…They used bows and arrows for fishing, hunting, and protection.

[89] The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) Education Office provides in-depth lessons and materials that investigate "American Indian Code Talkers, the servicemen who used their traditional tribal languages to transmit secret messages for the United States military during World War I and World War II." The lessons, which are geared toward grades 6-12 but can be adapted to engage younger students, can be found at the NMAI website (http://nmai.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/lessons.html).

I smiled wryly to myself, thinking about my Cherokee or Apache friends. This is what students were learning about them and their people. This was the knowledge being produced out of this activity. This was what was going into these students' "schemas" and would later become the "prior knowledge" about Native Americans that they would draw from. The accounts were not only framed historically, but also shallow accounts of that history. "They lived in adobes." "They used bow and arrows." It's not that people *didn't* live in adobes, or *didn't* use bow and arrows, but the flattened and reductive nature of the reports left little room for commentary on adobe earthen houses as a brilliant adaptation to the landscape, or bows and arrows as a formidable and sophisticated hunting technology. Yuchi/Muscogee Creek scholar Daniel Wildcat has termed this recognition of Indigenous knowledge and ingenuity as *indigenuity,* an acknowledgment of "Earth-based local indigenous deep spatial knowledge" (2009, p. 48). But these statements weren't portraying Indigenous peoples as having deep spatial knowledge; rather, references to bows and arrows and adobe huts were used to primitivize indigenous people.

The fact that Native people *still* utilize this spatial knowledge—in their homelands, communities, and cities—was overlooked through the historic framing of the unit; but so too was the creativity, sophistication, dignity, and purpose of their historic technologies and practices. The students' statements appeared premised on what Grande (2004) has coined "the deep structures of the colonialist consciousness," one of the beliefs being the "*Belief in progress as change and change as progress*" which supposes that "both progress and changes are measured in terms of material gain (e.g., more education, more income more production, more status) to be acquired through economic

and technological growth, and to which there is no preconceived limit" (p. 69). These students consistently positioned Native people as less progressive than people today. The shallow nature of the students' accounts might be forgiven as the oversimplified reporting typical of 5th graders, or nerves even; yet as complex Native people and societies have been routinely deemed as simple or primitive (a designation that has often served as justification for their physical, cultural, and spiritual dispossession), it was hard to listen to the reproduction of this over-simplification of Indigenous life.

Listening to the reports, I thought about the young Native girl in the class. Multicultural education is often endorsed as a way for students to "see themselves" in the curriculum. Framed as a Native American unit, Ms. Bishop saw this curriculum as a chance for this young Native girl to identity with the content and see herself. The curriculum, however, was constrained through its erasure of contemporary Indigenous lives, and the exotification and simplification of Indigenous histories. In contrast to the teacher's hopes, I actually feared that the student would see herself in this curriculum. I also feared that she would identify with some of these curricular distortions and caricatures. When this young girl and her peers in the Apache group were heading to the front of the class to present, the teacher leaned over to me and whispered, "That's my little Pocahontas." My stomach sank as the young girl smiled and looked at me. "That's me," she said proudly in response to her teacher. She then picked up the wikiup and carried it to the front of the class. The young girl and her group began presenting at the front of the class, and I tried to pay attention, but the teacher's framing of that young girl gnawed at my insides. There was so much work to be done to better support Native students in schools and provide more meaningful and accurate curriculum. The issues to

be addressed were systemic, cultural, and institutional, not solely individual; yet that teacher's comment pulled me back into the micro-level classroom dynamics and the power a single teacher could hold in that space. Her comment was based on her own lack of knowledge and stereotypical conceptions of Indigeneity, yet it was also symptomatic of the dominant, molded, and temporally fixed discourses that circulate around teachers' understanding of Indigeneity more broadly—discourses shaped by "the imaginary Indian" that continually "play out and overwrite knowledge of Indigeneity even as white teachers begin to learn about Indigenous peoples from Indigenous peoples" (Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2013, p. 270). Pocahontas was a real person, of course; her actual name according to the Powhatan Nation was Matoaka (Chief Roy Crazy Horse, n.d., para. 3). Yet the particular geographical, social, cultural, and political contexts (which included violence) have been overwritten and rewritten, and instead of understanding Pocahontas with respect to these contexts, she has been uploaded into a generic racial and colonial social imaginary that posits her as one side of a coin representing all Native women in relation to men: Pocahontas on one side as Princess and colonization's helping hand, and her darker, savage twin the Squaw on the other (Green, 1975). This collapsing of all Native women into this dichotomy in relation to men has left "The Indian woman… between a rock and a hard place…her image… freighted with such ambivalence that she has little room to move" (1975, p. 713). The teacher's comment, ascribing a Powhatan princess to a Native student whose tribal affiliation she did not even know, was also an imposition of the imaginary, fictionalized Indian. As Higgins and colleagues state,

> The Indigenous peoples these white teachers "know" are stereotypical images moulded by dominant discourses and perpetuated within the public imaginary,

> rather than their actual students and their families who have distinct and varying cultures depending on, but not limited to, the individual, community, and nation. When the imaginary and the actual images (i.e. Indigenous peoples who interact with teachers) are simultaneously read by white teachers, the imaginary overwrites and overrides the actual, resulting in Indigenous students and their families being read as stereotypically-informed spatially and temporally collapsed pan-Indians. (2013, p. 270)

That the student was proud to be Native was promising; yet watching how that young girl apparently internalized that distortion through her sweet smile and "that's me," I felt that student would have perhaps been better served in that classroom if the teacher didn't know she was Native.

The Feeling of Absurdity and Distance

I listened to the rest of the presentations. Students giggled nervously, shifting and squirming around, talking in the past tense about their tribes, discussing bows and arrows, clubs and spears, teepees and wigwams. They told legends. They demonstrated games Native people used to play. One group tossed pinecones into a garbage can; another twirled tape balls in circles that they had strung onto sticks. The games made little sense to the audience, and little sense to the students, it appeared, even as they presented them. Missing from the reports was the importance or complexity of these traditions, as they again recreated what could only be the quirky and puzzling practices of historic, simplistic, and backwards peoples. I read the erasures as missed opportunities and pedagogical roads not taken. The mentioning of how the Iroquois "used to" play lacrosse, for example, was a profound missed connection between Indigenous people and the

contemporary practice of lacrosse, a connection that for me immediately jumps to the Thompson Trio, two Onondaga brothers and their cousin, who have dominated the sport recently. Situating this practice as solely historic erases this trio's current accomplishments, what their success has meant for the Onondaga nation and Indian country, as well as the cultural significance of the sport to Native people today. Students would have enjoyed the ESPN 2 clip on these young men in *The Spirit of the Game* (2014), linking the Thompson Trio and their success to longstanding stories and cultural practices in their community. A teacher couldn't possibly know about or make all of the contemporary connections that there are to make. I can't make them, even as I immerse myself in contemporary Native news sources; yet it was clear that by framing the unit as solely historic, making any of those important contemporary connections was almost pedagogically impossible.

There were some promising moments in the reports. The occasional nod to important historical leaders, for example, felt important. Students briefly recognized Chief Joseph or the plight of Geronimo, which was the most accurate and meaningful reporting in the presentations. Yet the homage to the historic leaders felt overshadowed by the omission of contemporary Native leaders. A teacher wouldn't even need a comprehensive understanding of Nez Perce or Apache people or nations to make these connections, but rather an orientation that invited them to seek out those connections. No teacher could possibly know all of the contemporary heroes or leaders in Indian country, but with a contemporary orientation, a quick Internet search might surface Renita Brien, a Nez Perce tribal member who is a member of the American Indian Alliance, as a recent recipient of the American Indian Heroes award in Santa Clara Valley (On Q, 2014); Nez

Perce Tribal Chairman Silas Whitman who led a group of tribal members in blockading Highway 12 and their sacred lands in order to stop a mega-load headed for Alberta tar sands (Taylor, 2013); Apache leader Jeff Houser who voiced strong objections to the use of "Geronimo" as a military code name (Toensing, 2011); or San Carlos Apache Chairman Terry Rambler's recent advocacy to protect Oak Flat, a sacred Apache site, against encroachment from the mining company Resolution Copper (Allen, 2015). "What was once a struggle to protect our most sacred site is now a battle," stated San Carlos Apache Tribal Chairman Terry Rambler. Imagine if students had learned about current Native resistance to the exploitative practice of tar sands and oil pipelines, or the usurpation of Oak Flat. Imagine if they learned of the ways youth, elders, and the broader community have blocked highways, or have currently been occupying their sacred territory as a means of resistance. Imagine if they learned of the ways artists have used their skills to raise awareness of the issue, such as Joey Montoya's poster urging people to "Protect the Sacred Oak Flat" (Montoya, 2015) or *An American Battle Cry*, a film written and directed by Ezekiel Kelly to document the issue. Rather than replicating crafts or investigating historic heroes, students could survey contemporary leaders and take action within the important battles they are fighting today for their lands, communities, and nations.

But these opportunities to engage contemporary leaders were missed. There was some attention to the present, including the Hopi group who, like the Crow, alluded toward tribal sovereignty and governance. Like the Crow group's brief mention that they can "make their own rules," the Hopi group stated, "the Hopi are citizens of the Hopi nation and the US." This attention to nationhood and sovereignty was important, though

the students did not elaborate. Any details about the tribal government, past or present, were ignored, as the group followed the brief political acknowledgement with a few historic statements about adobes, bows and arrows, and breechcloths. Students did speak in the present tense on occasion, the Nez Perce group stating, “They eat fruit, berries, and rice,” and the Hopi group noting, “They dress up in costumes and do a dance for rain.” This latter statement elicited no comment from the teacher. I suppose given the curriculum I had witnessed so far, it should not have surprised me. She made few comments during the student’s reports overall, sitting in the back of the class as she watched, smiling reassuringly to the students. It’s not that she never commented. When the Cheyenne group presented their tipi, Ms. Bishop asked, “Did you put designs around the base of the teepee? That’s nice.”

It was hard to be critical of these 10 and 11 year olds who were doing their best to fulfill their teacher’s expectations. Similarly, as shocking as some of the curricula sounds, it is also not all that shocking given settler society’s widespread exotification and fascination with Native culture, making it hard to even be critical of this teacher as an individual who was probably educated within this context. I could only assume that she was doing her best to include Native content into the curriculum. It was also unsurprising that the principal considered this “great work.” This teacher’s curriculum and the principal’s endorsement of it were shaped by both misinformation and nostalgia that is pervasive in schools and settler society generally. This kind of a “Native American Unit” is commonplace in public schools and as such, is an indication that the problem is less individual knowledge deficits, and would be more properly thought of as deficits in broader narratives circulated about Indigenous peoples in the wider society. These

narratives shaped the school's curriculum, which in turn reinforced the pervasiveness of the narratives. All of this happened with few, if any, interactions actual with Native people, communities, or nations. It was hard to imagine an entry point into this self-perpetuating and self-congratulating system of misrepresentation.

I thought about the unit as a whole: the crafts, the fictitious books, and the research reports, and what I might say to this teacher. She didn't ask for my help, nor did she assume she needed it; rather, she was being held up in the school as an exemplar of Native inclusion. The Director of Elementary Education seemed to have little problem with the unit either. To me, however, the course of study appeared problematic to the point of caricature. It seemed ludicrous that reading a few stereotypical books, learning about the historic Indian, and replicating a few of their crafts could appear to educators as a relevant and meaningful effort to understand Native peoples. This was not a feeling of condemnation as much as a feeling of absurdity and distance. It is strange to have earnest and intelligent people look right past the Indigenous people around them and see only historical and stereotypical images.

This feeling of absurdity and distance is a fairly common experience for Indigenous educators in schools (Kaomea, 2005).[90] In the local school district, the Title

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[90] A parallel example can be drawn from the work of Kanaka Maoli scholar Julie Kaomea (2005). Kaomea highlights the complexity of non-Hawaiian teachers fulfilling a constitutional requirement to teach Hawaiian studies. In one curricular example she offers, students presented in small groups on their self-selected foci of "early Hawaiian life." Kaomea cringed as she witnessed descriptions of *kapu* that reduced the complex ancient Hawaiian system of law to simplistic and senseless violence ("If you got caught breaking a kapu they would *kill* you"); accounts of a Hawaiian war god Kū that described him "as a vicious, bloodthirsty god with an insatiable appetite for sacrificial victims"; and crass descriptions of "the lowly *kauwa*¯(societal outcasts) who were used as sacrificial victims when kapu breakers could not be found" (p. 26). She notes after the lesson:

> As the recess bell sounds and the students give themselves a hearty round of applause, I struggled to make sense of what had just transpired before me. The experience can best be described as uncanny—oddly familiar and strangely estranged. Many aspects of the lesson—the nervous giggles, the students speaking in unison, and the sing-song, almost poetic register—were quite ordinary. At the same time, however, something about the lesson was "'odd'—'queer'—

VII Coordinator Melvina in her first year has already encountered numerous units like this and requests from teachers for resources to accompany them. On occasion, teachers call for advice about how to reach a particular student, or with the sincere intent of improving what they have previously taught, utilizing Melvina as a curricular resource to more accurately and respectfully portray Indigenous life in their unit; but more often than not, the phone call is to see if there is a choker on hand for a student who will be dressing up as Siting Bull, or to see if there are coloring sheets of teepees or Northwest coast style art to go with a unit they are implementing. As Melvina contends with how to best serve the very real lives of Native students in the district in the precious few hours she has with them in a week (if any at all), she must often artfully navigate requests from teachers to support the fictitious Indians in these teachers' curriculum.

The Scope of Miseducation

This type of Native American unit isn't a phenomenon unique to this particular school or even this district. Rather, the sheer scope of this kind of education almost elicits a sense of vertigo. The Native American unit in the district has become a staple as well, the normative template for including Native content rather than the exception. The

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> 'wrong'— 'strange'—'fishy"' (Zizek 1991:53). In Slavoj Zizek's (1991) terms, something about the lesson had definitely gone awry. How is it, I asked myself, that a curriculum designed to foster an appreciation for the Native people of Hawaiʻi could lead to such horrific depictions of Hawaiian sadism and violence? (pp. 26-27)

Like Kaomea, my experience of these Native American units left me with a similar feeling: "uncanny—oddly familiar and strangely estranged." Kaomea linked the strange, fishy, odd, and wrong aspects of the lesson "to long-standing colonial discourses about Hawaiians, which continue to find voice in classroom textbooks and Hawaiian studies lessons" (p. 34). The outdated texts the teachers used and the students' accounts resembled

> … exaggerated depictions of colonial missionaries and sailors… [which] echo and cite a series of very old but enduring colonial discourses that justify the demise of our Hawaiian civilization, our culture, our religion, and our government. These discourses legitimize past colonial oppressions of the Hawaiian people, create a fear or distrust of current movements toward Hawaiian self-determination, and continue to influence the way children and teachers think and talk about Hawaiians today. (pp. 28-29)

teacher in the classroom next door, Mr. Smith, organizes a similar unit each year. He has been teaching for 13 years, but this is his sixth year implementing the Native American unit at this particular school, a unit he was taught by the teacher that mentored him. Like Ms. Bishop's class, the reports detail what people in the student's tribe wore and ate, the weapons they used, and their customs. A few excerpts illustrate the nature of his students' reports and their resemblance to those in Ms. Bishop's classroom:

> *Ojibwe*: Ojibway [sic] wore leather headbands with feathers standing up in the back. In war they shaved their heads in a mohawk form. Ojibway painted their faces and arms for occasions.
>
> *Apache*: The Apache hunted buffalo, deer, antelope, and small game. The Apache would smother themselves in animal fat to take there [sic] sent [sic] away… This might seem a little sad but here are some of the foods that they ate. They ate rabbit, deer, and other animals in the area.
>
> *Iroquois*: Their weapons were war clubs and spiked tomahawks and their tools were bows and arrows, spears and hooks.
>
> *Navajo*: The Navajo people sang songs to scare away evil spirits. The Navajo also believed that building hogans facing east would welcome the morning sun.

Rather than presenting to their peers, however, the 5th grade students in Mr. Smith's class present their Native villages and reports to the rest of the K – 4th grade students in the school. The students develop a Power Point presentation based on their research report and invite the younger students in their school to visit their Native dwelling or village as they discuss their tribe alongside a laptop presentation containing images and interesting facts. The school's population is roughly over 400 students, which

means that this year alone, the 5th grade class educated around 300 younger students in the school about Native Americans using these village dioramas and information from their reports. Each year, for the past six years, approximately 300 students listen as the 5th graders they look up to recreated what life would have looked like for Native Americans back in the day. Each year, for the past six years, 300 students admire student replicas of teepees, wigwams, or wikiups, and most likely anticipated their chance to replicate them in the future. Each year, for the past six years, 300 students listen to accounts of a historic people, receiving an implicit message that Native people are no longer here.

The scope of this type of miseducation becomes overwhelming when I think about this unit being reproduced in various ways in thousands of classrooms around the country. In sites such as "Teachers Pay Teachers," a search for "Native American unit" results in over 2,839 possible lessons or units. Though there must surely be some accurate and respectful content in some of these units, the results inevitably turn up hundreds of pre-packaged units advertised as "little" or "no teacher preparation" required. The most frequently downloaded "Native American Unit" (see Appendix A for examples), a unit purchased and rated by 401 teachers so far who all gave it 4 out of 4 stars, includes activities such as choosing an Indian name ("My name is Fearless Bulldog. I chose this name because I am not afraid of anything," states the example within the unit, accompanying a construction paper depiction of a dark skinned Indian, bare chested, body painted, wearing a feather headdress); or a teacher suggestion accompanying the totem pole activity that states, "beat a drum as students present their writing." "What an awesome resource! We started today by creating our Native American names," comments Catherine L. "The totem poles were a huge hit!!!" notes Blair. R. Though the unit only

reached 400 teachers, it is highly symptomatic of the pervasive, taken-for-granted framing of Native people as historic objects of study, and the curricular endorsement of replicating Native arts and crafts. Even more daunting is the knowledge that administrators in schools often sanction these types of units as good, multicultural curriculum.

To be fair, not all teachers have their students choose Indian names or beat a drum. Not all teachers make masks and Kachinas like Ms. Bishop, or sandpaintings like Mr. Smith did this year either. Yet even after the seemingly inappropriate activities are peeled away, the more “factual” or “research” oriented units still partake in a larger curricular project of erasure and objectification.

The Ethnographic Gaze: Salvage Ethnographies and Imperialist Nostalgia

Given the broad acceptance of units such as Ms. Bishop’s, Mr. Smith’s, or the countless others I have seen in other schools or found online that nearly mirror the unit at this particular school, I realized my concerns with the unit go beyond merely presenting Indigenous people as historical figures. As an outsider to this space, a researcher asked to observe and when possible improve lessons, but with no institutional capacity to make change within the district, I have often wondered how to offer help in my limited capacity that could unsettle this deeply entrenched framing of Indigenous peoples as historic. The ways I have been asked to offer support for teachers mirrors the Title VII Coordinator’s role in the district, both of us positioned outside of the classroom and with little authority or capacity to change the daily happenings inside.

As a starting point to combat Indigenous erasure in curricula, we had begun to use short aphorisms in our work with teachers to help them rethink their curriculum about

Indigenous peoples: “Start with the present rather than the past” and “Start with the local rather than the Plains,” we guided teachers. The focus on only the historic aspects of Native life, for example, is pervasive in mainstream education. It is also sanctioned by state standards that heavily emphasize the study of Native people pre-1900 (Shear et al., 2015). Since contemporary Native America is virtually absent in curricula in the district, asking a teacher to consider Native America today—the diversity of peoples and nations, the challenges Native people face, the visions Native people have for the future—has been a limited, although somewhat useful, intervention.[91] These orientations, to the present and the local, were meant to provide new curricular frames and starting points so that even if a unit isn’t overhauled, hopefully the inclusion of Native people today and in this region might offset the idea that Native peoples are extinct and used to live in the Plains somewhere. Given the immense practical demands on teachers’ time, we sought to give teachers ways to orient themselves and adapt curriculum in practical, respectful, and responsible ways. Yet reflecting on the curriculum I have seen at the school, or the curriculum I know exists and circulates more widely, I realized that a focus on the present and the local alone would do little to disrupt the more pervasive and problematic orientation students were being asked to take up in these units.

The routine focus on the historic Indian (evident in both policy and practice) or the emphasis on exotic Native culture appeared symptomatic of a much deeper problem. In the context of visiting this particular class, I began to realize that these aphorisms and this effort to educate teachers were not really adequate to disrupt the power dynamics being reproduced in the lesson. The act of representing Indigenous life—regardless of

[91] See the case study “The Wax Museum” for an example of how the aphorism “start with the present” helped a teacher provide a contemporary Native role model for her student, as well as complicated that work.

how accurate or respectful the content—reproduced the "positional authority" (Said, 1978) of these students to be the *knowers* of Native life. It was not just that students were narrowly studying Native people in the past (which would suggest a recommendation that they also study Native people *today*); or that they were simply commodifying, exoticizing, and misrepresenting Native life (which would suggest an intervention to more *accurately* represent Native people, culture, and practices); but that the students were being asked to represent Indigenous life at all. It was not the portrayal of Indigenous life that had to be transformed, but the very dynamic of knower/known had to be challenged. There is an inherent superiority and hubris being cultivated in students by training them to represent Native life at all. Starting with the "here and now" as an aphorism to orient teachers would do little, then, to disrupt the way the curriculum continued to privilege the Western gaze, center white students' subjectivities, and arm students with the desire and skills to know the Other as a legitimate form of multiculturalism.

The Western gaze used to document and know the exotic Other has deep-seated, historical roots in settler colonial and colonial projects, often carried out in anthropological practices premised on the notion of science for the public good. Though the curriculum in these units purportedly focuses on Native peoples, it is clear that it is the Western self that is central and dominant (Said, 1978), and that these students were being trained as little anthropologists, asked by their teacher to detail the strange and curious practices of the exotic Others they were studying. Listening to the students' reports, it was as if I could see the pith helmets on their heads and the diaries in hand, as they shared all that they discovered. This may not seem obvious at first glance, but there

is a long history of this sort of erasure of Indigenous life stemming from the field of anthropology that uses the ethnographic gaze to narrate Indigenous and Other peoples' lives. When this history is recognized, the ways the curriculum today resonates with those earlier practices comes into focus.

Early anthropologists and ethnographers in the 19th century were in a frenzy to document, detail, record, categorize, classify, and understand Indigenous peoples—to *know* them before they vanished by engaging in what Gruber (1970) has termed "salvage ethnographies." Gruber states, "People began to sense the urgency of collection for the sake of preserving data whose extinction was feared" (p. 1290). Yet not just any Native person was studied; rather, much attention was paid to what Standing Rock Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. (1969) has termed the "real" or "mythical, super-Indian" (pp. 81-82). As Lenape scholar Joanne Barker (2011) notes,

> In the mad rush to preserve and catalogue Native cultural artifacts and human remains in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some archaeologists and anthropologists seemed to care less about how Natives were living than what they remembered or were willing to recount of their ancestors' traditions (Bieder 1986; P. Deloria, 1998). Those Natives considered especially worthy of study were those considered to be less assimilated (the infamous "last of" narratives dominating the popular media and sciences of every kind). (p. 20)

In a way, these students' projects echoed the work of earlier anthropologists such as Henry Louis Morgan who catalogued Haudenosaunee material culture and kinship systems, or Sir Edward Tylor whose ethnographic work in Mexico led him to position cultures on a continuum from primitive and savage to enlightened and civilized. Much of

this early work was premised on a "great chain of being" that was vertically oriented (Winfield, 2007), with primitive societies cast as earlier stages of more advanced forms of being human. The scientific imperative at the time was to "know" these primitive peoples before they vanished, similar to the multicultural imperative now that seems to demand that students "know" Native people as they historically were, a project oriented in the anthropological concept of the "ethnographic present," an idealized (and fictionalized) understanding of "pre-contact" life.

The students' reports and the unit as a whole never explicitly state that Indigenous cultures were lesser forms of humanity that haven't quite reached the apex of human development, but in a sense it was implicit in the orientation of the unit. Teachers used language that framed Indigenous peoples as "nomadic" and "primitive" societies. Perhaps the teachers' orientations more closely resembled Franz Boas' work who, through documenting Kwakiutl cultural systems, intended to challenge the scientific racism embedded in theories of cultural evolution. Cultures, he argued, were relative and different, not inherently inferior or superior (though Boas was not without his own flaws, evident in his mass collections of Indigenous "artifacts," or his participation in world's fairs that literally put Native people on display). Boas differed from the cultural evolutionary views of Morgan and Tylor in theory, but all three engaged in a practice of cultural salvation as a form of science, premised on the inevitability of Indigenous demise. As Clifford and Marcus (1986) note,

> …the main motif that ethnography as a science developed was that of salvaging cultural diversity. The ethnographer would capture in writing the authenticity of

> the changing cultures, so they could be entered into the record for the great comparative project of anthropology. (p. 24)

The students in this class appear to be the inheritors of this ethnographic project. Whereas earlier anthropologists operated under the assumption that Indigenous culture was about to be destroyed, these students' projects appeared to take this fear as fact. It is the information from these anthropologists that informed the curriculum. The project moved from salvation, documenting what would soon be destroyed, to the recuperation and recovery of what had already been lost. Rather than appearing violent, however, the erasure and recuperation appear benevolently premised on what Renato Rosaldo (1993) has termed "imperialist nostalgia," a sentiment that "makes racial domination appear innocent and pure" through "mourning for what one has destroyed" (p. 107).[92] Framed as innocent, multicultural projects, the sentimental longing that drives the students' reports that reproduce the idea of Indians as historic, as objects of study, and as exotic Others (all antithetical to the supposedly humanistic aims of anthropological work and multicultural education) serves as "as a mask of innocence to cover their involvement with processes of domination" (p. 120).

When I asked the teachers about the resources available to students to conduct their research and write their reports, they directed me to the school's library website. A brief examination of the links made apparent that some of the information offered to the students was deeply problematic. Some misinformation took the form of simple erasure,

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[92] Rosaldo (1993) states at length:

> Imperialist nostalgia thus revolves around a paradox: a person kills somebody and then mourns his or her victim. In more attenuated form, someone deliberately alters a form of life and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to his or her intervention. At one more remove, people destroy their environment and then worship nature. In any of its versions, imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of "innocent yearning" both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination. (p. 108)

such as the links to the Oregon Trail where a student would learn that, “In 1800, the American West was still wild country—no cities, no railroads and no cattle ranches yet existed. It was quiet and untouched” (Trinklein, 2012, n.p.) Some erasure was more sophisticated, such as the link to *National Geographic Young Explorer* series. Couched between various issues on animals—grizzly bears, spiders, or pollinators for example—was one human-themed issue. A smiling Native child, her head adorned with feathers, graced the cover of an issue titled “Powwow”[93] Whereas some forms of erasure explicitly omitted Native presence, this one quietly erased Native humanity by relegating Native people to the realm of animals.

It became clear, however, that selective attention was paid by both the students and the teachers to the websites provided. Among the links the students were directed to for their reports was some accurate and relevant information, some information that even challenged the teachers’ choice of curriculum. One link included critical information on Native people and culture; however, it didn’t appear the students or even teachers had read it. Indeed, if the teachers had adequately examined the site, they might have read in response to the question “Can you help me find a good Native American arts and crafts project for my class?” a response that renounced the very curriculum they offered their students:

> Please avoid projects that mimic Native American religious objects like kachinas or spirit masks. These objects are sacred to many Native Americans, and making

[93] I am referencing the Nov – Dec 2009 issue titled Powwow which features sea turtles, wind power, powwows, and snow monkey. The original website I had retrieved this from (http://ngexplorer.cengage.com/ngyoungexplorer/moreissues.html) has since displayed issues from 2012 – 2015. For a visual of what I describe above, see the blog T is for Teaching (http://www.tisforteaching.com/2012/03/national-geographic-young-explorer.html).

inaccurate imitations out of toilet paper tubes and paper mache is offensive to them. ("American Indian FAQs for Kids," n.d.)[94]

Another link led to various tribal nations' websites, a testament to tribal governance and Native presence. Though most tribal nations' websites include both cultural and historic information, they also typically have sections on tribal governance, as well as a range of contemporary topics. It became clear that both the teachers and students selectively drew from the websites, guided by their own frameworks premised on the "the ethnographic present." In the last website students used in their research, a link to Edward Curtis' photo-ethnographic project *The North American Indian* (http://www.curtis-collection.com/curtis/), I could see a direct connection between the content provided and the students' reports. The students' reports replicated almost perfectly the anthropological headings used in Curtis' work—language, location, dress, dwellings, and religion and ceremonies.

Reproducing "Rescue Artists"

Edward Curtis' work, *The North American Indian (1907 – 1930)*, was "a massive nearly 40-year project, financed by JP Morgan and sponsored by President Theodore Roosevelt, [that] consisted of Curtis trekking through the entire American West with wagons and cameras to document, 'The Vanishing Race' of Native American Tribes" ("Curtis Collection," n.d.). Curtis was not only a photographer, but also an ethnologist, a profession whose aim is to delineate and compare differences across various races and cultures (much like a cynologist is tasked with systematically studying various breeds of

[94] The answer to what appropriate activities a teacher might lead her students through lists various suggestions including cornhusk dolls, beadwork, or dreamcatchers (the best choice according to the website, though irksome for some in the program as dreamcatchers have been decoupled from their Anishinaabe roots, hijacked by New Age culture, and hang from nearly everyone's rearview mirrors in this town).

canines, their characteristics, origins, and differences). In the early 1900s, Curtis was explicit that he aimed to document "the old time Indian, his dress, his ceremonies, his life and manners"; he wanted to capture the near extinct race of people whose fate would inevitably suffer the fate of progress. Curtis and other anthropologists, ethnographers, and even wealthy patrons or collectors of the time, were driven by a longing to preserve this timelessness, evident in the feverish rush to collect photographs, stories, songs, and Indian artifacts before they were gone. Curtis's portraits systematically captured this desired timelessness, a project of nostalgia and salvation that resulted in thousands of images of stoic Indians in full regalia, many of which have become staple images of the Indian in the White imaginary.[95]

Curtis' photographs of "old time" Indians are often lauded for their aesthetic qualities. Many people, Natives included, have collected his portraits for those very qualities. He is widely commended for his innovative use of goldtones and platinum prints, not to mention his gumption in setting out to accomplish the impossible task of documenting an entire race: "It's such a big dream I can't see it all" (Cardozo, 2011 n.p.). Yet critical readings of Curtis's work demonstrate the ways photography, though seemingly reflective of reality, is not a neutral medium (Vizenor, 2000). Instead, these critiques aptly demonstrate that the eye behind the camera and its Western gaze can transform the person it is cast upon, producing manufactured images, despite their appearance as a reflection of reality. Curtis routinely altered the subjects of his portraits,

[95] I have a hard time thinking about Curtis without thinking of creative Indigenous responses to his work—"Smiling Indians," a short film by the 1491s dedicated to Curtis, that reverses the gaze and reasserts a more complex (and smiling!) portrait of Native America in to counteract both historicism and stoicism (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ga98brEf1AU); or Matika Wilbur's Project 562, a photo project that captures the diversity and dignity of Native America today (http://project562.com/). (At the time Wilbur started her project, there were only 562, rather than 567, federally recognized tribes in the US.)

removing any traces of Western culture from his pictures—parasols, suspenders, wagons, etc.— so that Native people appeared "untouched" by civilization. To manufacture these constructed and contradictory images (Valaskakis, 2005), Curtis paid Native people for their time as he staged and manipulated their images, using "not only 'phony' costumes, additions, and poses…but indeed, in some cases actual phony Navajo" (Faris, 1996, as cited in Vizenor, 2000, n.p.). "Curtis created a simulation of a native absence and an ethnographic presence," which manifested as "simulations" of Indianness, states Vizenor (2000).

As King (2005) points out,

> Curtis was looking for the literary Indian, the dying Indian, the literary construct. And to make sure that he would find what he wanted to find, he took along boxes of "Indian" paraphernalia—wigs, blankets, painted backdrops, clothing—in case he ran into Indians who did not look as the Indian was supposed to look. (p. 34)

Curtis was at once engaged in a project of documenting the vanishing race, while manipulating and selectively editing his photographs to preserve his own notions of authenticity and culture that compelled his very idea of cultural disappearance and extinction. Curtis's manufactured narratives were both the impetus for and outcome of his project. His photograph, *The Vanishing Race—Navaho* (1904), most directly illustrates this point. Focusing directly on a line of horses, an Indian atop each one, traveling away from the camera, this photo according to Curtis, is mean to portray

> … that the Indians as a race, already shorn in their tribal strength and stripped of their primitive dress, are passing into the darkness of an unknown future. (n.p.)

However, Curtis's other photos, which appear to capture authentic Native culture and life, demonstrate his extreme editorializing, not just of Native life, but of broader social and political happenings at the time. Curtis frames another of his famous photos, *Oglala War Party* (1907), as such:

> Here is depicted a group of Sioux warriors as they appeared in the days of intertribal warfare, carefully making their way down a hillside in the vicinity of the enemy's camp. Many hold in their hands, instead of weapons, mere sticks adorned with eagle-feathers or scalps - the so-called coup-sticks - desiring to win honor by striking a harmless blow therewith as well as to inflict injury with arrow and bullet. (n.p.)

That photo was not only staged in the ways it falsely represented what a "war party" might entail, but it also ignored everything else that was happening during that time, "a time when natives were starving on reservations," and not engaged in "intertribal warfare" as much as oppression and colonization inflicted by the US government (Vizenor, 2000). Vizenor (2000) continues,

> Surely he was not insensitive to the adversities or natives, but his pictures reveal only the simulations of the vanishing race. He paid natives to pose as warriors at a time when their rights were denied, and their treaties were scorned and evaded by the federal government. (n.p.)

Curtis's photographs, rather than neutral reflections of Native life, were carefully constructed and deeply shaped by his own ideologies. As Vizenor writes, "Curtis, of course, would always be the master of the pictures" his work was "ideological," and he was "a photographic rescue artist."

Finding *The North American Indian* as a sanctioned resource for these Native units and reports made these reports make sense. Grounding this curriculum were the same simulations of "native absence" and "ethnographic presence" that Vizenor (2000) traces in Curtis's photographs. Particular aspects of Native life were ignored, overlooked, or erased, while others made visible and points of study. Native people were extracted from the varying political, legal, colonial, economic, or racial contexts they navigated, and their cultural and spiritual "difference" extracted, their lives held up under microscopes and studied for their customs.

The students' selective focus emphasizes the "endurance of categories that emerged in moments of colonial contact, many of which still reign supreme" (Simpson 2007a, p. 69). These inherited categories narrowed what could be known and said about Native people as the students imposed concerns and curiosities that weren't necessarily relative to those whom they studied. As Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2007a) notes in her ethnography of her own nation and conceptions of Mohawk citizenship,

> The people that I work with and belong to do care deeply about ceremony and tradition, but hinged those concerns to nationhood, citizenship, rights, justice, proper ways of being in the world, the best way to be in relation to one another, political recognition, invigorating the Mohawk language – they did not talk about the usual anthropological fare that dominated the prodigious amount of research upon them. They clearly had and have critiques of state power, hegemony, history and even one another that made them appear anomalous against the literature written upon them. (p. 68)

These students, like the anthropologists who studied the Mohawk, were also engaged in a project of writing literature upon those whom they studied, paying little attention to the concerns and issues facing those they documented. Though students drew on Curtis's work (despite numerous and well-known critiques that he narrowed and misrepresented Native life according to his own ideologies), the issue appeared larger than merely utilizing his work to inform a project. (There are, after all, many creative engagements with Curtis and the content of his work.[96]) Rather, the students and teachers utilized Curtis's ethnographic gaze as well as his content, leading them to ignore a great deal of information as they brought their ethnographic lens to the information provided. This particular way of seeing is not inevitable or natural, but itself cultural. The teachers imported Curtis's ethnographic categories rooted in anthropology, and positioned their students as "rescue artists" whose aim was to document cultural difference and know the Native Other.

It was this anthropological gaze that led students to selectively edit material and highlight only particular aspects of Native life. The particulars came into focus when comparing access to the information students had with the ways they constructed their reports. The students in Ms. Bishop's class engaged primarily in a self-directed, constructivist research process. They had access to the Hopi Nation website, for example, but didn't include anything from the "Hopi Tutuveni Newspaper" which was prominent on the nation's website. If they had, they would have read about how water issues are impacting the community, read about the most recent young woman who was crowned "Miss Hopi," learned about new education initiatives, or read about a transit initiative on

[96] See Martin (2013) for decolonizing readings of Curtis's work; Onondaga artist Jeff Thomas (available at The CCCA Canadian Art Database); or the work of Cree artist Jane Ash Poitras.

the reservation (Hopi Tuteveni, 2015). Instead, students took statements directly from Curtis's site, such as "They call themselves *Hópitŭ*, the Peacable People." Further, they followed the link to the Hopi tribe provided on the school website (http://www.bigorrin.org/hopi_kids.htm) where they gathered information such as the Hopi lived in adobe houses, used bows and arrows, wore breech cloth, ate baked beans, cornbread, and hominy, and used Katsina Friends to teach lessons to children. Rather than highlighting the Hopi Nation's new bus system and the various promos used to promote public transit ("Wacky Wednesdays" where fares are $1.00, or offering free rides for Veterans), students gleaned information from one website to highlight the travois (a sled pulled by dogs to help carry heavy loads). In Ms. Bishop's class, two students did briefly comment on historical heroes and their plights (one giving a brief nod to Chief Joseph's famous statement "I will fight no more forever"; another a statement about Geronimo's resistance, "Geronimo came home to a dead mother. The Mexicans had to pay for what they did."). For the most part, however, the emphasis was heavily ethnographic, drawing directly from the headings Curtis used to document the Hopi: language, location, dress, dwellings, and religion and ceremonies. The information students used was carefully filtered to match the categories.

In Mr. Smith's class, the filter students brought to the content comes into sharper focus. These students received not only contemporary content about Native peoples, but also historic content that exceeded the ethnographic categories of language, location, dress, dwellings, etc. Students in Mr. Smith's class watched short videos that portrayed Native life, historic and present.[97] They also read magazines that discussed Native life

[97] When I asked Mr. Smith how he addressed contemporary Native life, he said, "I don't really need to talk about it. It's embedded in each of the videos on the website. There's always a 90 second or so bit at the end

today: historic and contemporary issues of sovereignty, the theft of land, forced migrations, and the suppression of Native rights, for example. Though imperfect, the magazines included information such as Haudenosaunee systems of law and diplomacy, Apache resistance to encroachment on their territory from both Spanish colonizers and American settlers, or the impact the Gold Rush had on communities. Yet *none* of this information made it into these students' reports. Whereas the Apache book included sections on land grabs, for example, there was not a single reference to settler-Indigenous relations or Apache dispossession. Though the book addressed Apache government, there was only one reference to government, which served to deny Apache government explicitly: "They didn't have a government. The Apache had different roles for each gender, and they didn't have social classes."[98] Despite access to a range of information, only the ethnographic accountings of food, tools, houses, and clothing were made visible and present in the reports: "They used spears or hooks to catch fish"; "The men did the

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that says, Native people are still here, and live in cities or on the reservations." I reviewed the videos, which were each approximately one minute long. The last 10 seconds of each video included a short statement about contemporary Native life, such as "Today, about 80,000 Iroquois live in North America. They take pride in their history as the People of the Longhouse"; or "About 35,000 Pueblo still live on reservations in Arizona and New Mexico. They are building a better future, while keeping their traditions strong." Given that Mr. Smith's students' reports had *no references* to contemporary life, it appears that the 10-second sound bites at the end of each video were not enough to counteract the historic framings, both explicit and implicit, in the project.

[98] The Apache group was not the only group to address government. The Nez Perce group stated, "The Nez Perce tribe had their own government laws and tribe traditions. They also avoided misleading anybody man or woman," while the Cheyenne group stated, "Almost the whole Cheyenne had a Government but only about two out of three of the Cheyenne peoples had reservations." These statements appear to address the political and systems of Indigenous law; yet in some instances, the Native people studied were read as lacking their own systems of governance: "They [Zuni] don't have a government"; "The [Navajo] government were the elders." Read alongside Captain Cook's account of the Indigenous people of Australia he encountered, who according to him "had no form of land tenure because they were uncivilised, which meant the land belonged to no-one and was available for possession under the doctrine of *terra nullius*" (Moreton-Robinson, 2004, as cited in Simpson, 2007a, p. 69), it is not an understatement to read these students' statements as part of a longstanding "way of knowing" that is directly linked to Indigenous dispossession and settler occupation and entitlement.

hunting while the women did the farming and gathering"; "The Apache men wore leather war shirts and breechcloths and the women wore buckskin dresses."

On the surface this analysis of the students' reports as accounts of an exotic and timeless Indigenous past differ little from what compelled Melvina and I to orient teachers to the present. Yet situating the students' projects explicitly within the field of cultural anthropology illuminates not only the unstated resistance to that contemporary orientation, but also how even orienting teachers to the present without troubling their framings of self, other, culture, and difference might inadvertently reproduce the anthropological gaze. The students' work was historic in the sense it attended only to the past, but it also preserved an ahistorical orientation, disregarding relevant issues the tribal nations the students were studying actually faced at the time—the same trope Curtis used in framing the *Oglala War Party*. Absent from our quick and dirty aphorism as well was the critical perspective needed to trouble the Orientalizing gaze (Said, 1978) that could be cast even upon Native people today. After all, anthropologists were always studying the real and contemporary people they actually saw, even as they wrote about their own imposed and fictionalized assumptions. The Western gaze that positions the exotic Other as object of study doesn't only look to the past. Undergirded too by notions of authenticity as timeless, the sense of urgency to document dying cultures endures even today.[99]

[99] Jimmy Nelson, a photographer famous for his exhibit "Before They Pass Away," demonstrates the way this gaze is present even today. More than a century after Curtis, Nelson's work *nearly replicates* his style and mission, to document "some of the most fantastic indigenous cultures left on the planet today." Though Nelson claims his work "is intended to be a controversial catalyst for further discussion as to the authenticity of these fragile disappearing cultures," there is little invitation to critically interrogate the work. Instead, the art prints, coffee table book, upcoming film version, and his TED talk all privilege the selective editing of Indigenous cultures for their aesthetic beauty, sense of authenticity, and timelessness, the scope of which illustrate an audience (and market) for that work as well. Nelson (2015) states his

The systematic study of Native people using ethnographic description is a fine-tuned curricular machine in the school and district. It has become unquestioned curricular commonsense, lauded even as multicultural curriculum that exposes students to diverse cultures. Further, any disruptions to this unit—especially the replication of sandpaintings, masks, totem poles, teepees, wigwams or other exciting craft activities—would appear to disappoint the eager students in the earlier grades who have been exposed to and most likely anticipate their chance take part in this beloved unit as 5th graders. While our initial work to help teachers was to transform what is known or said about Native people in curricula, it became clear that the deeper issue was that students were being trained, like earlier anthropologists, *to know and say something of the Other at all*. In these units, Native people are made into objects of curiosity, and the students are being reproduced as anthropological subjects. This is a longstanding and deeply habituated pattern of thinking about Indigenous peoples that needs to be disrupted.

Disruptive Daydreaming

The implication may seem overwhelming, yet despite the fact that the discursive and ideological layers are deeply habituated, a vast array of perspectives and materials

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project is about beauty, and ultimately, shared humanity, though it is clear that it reeks of colonialism. He states,

> I truly believe that there are people on the planet that are beautiful. It's not rocket science. I wanted to put these people on a pedestal in a way they've never been seen before. So, I chose about 35 different groups, tribes, indigenous cultures. They were chosen purely because of their aesthetic, and I'll talk more about that later. I'm not an anthropologist, I have no technical study with the subject, but I do have a very, very, very deep passion, and I believe that I had to choose the most beautiful people on the planet in the most beautiful environment that they lived in, and put the two together and present them to you…(para. 4)
>
> Photography's extraordinarily powerful. It's this language which we now all understand. We truly do all understand it, and we have this global digital fireplace, don't we, but I want to share you with the world, because you are also a tribe. You are the TED tribe, yeah? (para. 20)

That his mode of representation is, in fact, the way Indigenous peoples are *usually* seen (rather than "never been seen") as well as his conflation of the TED viewing community and "tribe" indicates his work is not a "controversial catalyst," but instead reproduces the vanishing Indian discourse and undermines sovereignty. More information on Nelson's project can be found at his website (http://www.beforethey.com/about).

are available to interrogate, challenge, and transform the taken-for-granted anthropological project. Native peoples have long critiqued the field of anthropology. In 1969, Vine Deloria Jr. denounced the field of anthropology as a whole, particularly in relation to Native peoples:

> The fundamental thesis of the anthropologist is that people are objects for observation, people are then considered objects for experimentation, for manipulation, and for eventual extinction. The anthropologist thus furnishes the justification for treating Indian people like so many chessmen available for anyone to play with.
>
> The massive volume of useless knowledge produced by anthropologists attempting to capture real Indians in a network of theories has contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people today. After all, who can conceive of a food-gathering, berry-picking, semi-nomadic, fire-worshiping, high-plains-and-mountain-dwelling, horse-riding, canoe-toting, bead-using, pottery-making, ribbon-coveting, wickiup-sheltered people who began flourishing when Alfred Frump mentioned them in 1803 in his great work on Indians entitled Our Feathered Friends as real?
>
> Not even Indians can relate themselves to this type of creature who, to anthropologists, is the "real" Indian. Indian people begin to feel that they are merely shadows of a mythical super-Indian. Many anthros spare no expense to reinforce this sense of inadequacy in order to further support their influence over Indian people. (pp. 81-82)

Deloria aptly critiques the field's techniques in relation to Indigenous dispossession and colonial justification. Other Native scholars have made similar critiques (Smith, 1999; Medicine, 2001; Trask, 1993; Ramirez, 2007; Simpson, 2007; Warrior, 1999). Though poignant critiques and conversations exist which have had implication for the field of anthropology regarding issues of purpose, voice, representation, and ethics, for example, these conversations have not made their way into this district where the practice of representing the Other is accepted and commonplace. What becomes possible, however, when the Native is no longer an object of the students' gaze? When the curriculum is no longer aimed at "knowing" the Native Other as a historic, mythical super-Indian?

In response to the academy's voracious appetite to document and know Indigenous and Othered life, Tuck and Yang (2014b) call on researchers, not to *include* Native and Othered people as Subjects (a shift from positioning people as Objects to a more humanizing position as Subjects,) but rather, to "take up a stance of refusal":

> The goal of refusal is not for objects to become subjects in the academy, but contrarily, to *object to* the very processes of objectification/subjection, the making of possessors and possessions, the alchemy of becoming-claims. (p. 814)

Refusal, they offer, is generative. By objecting objectification, by "studying to object," new insights and relations emerge. What would have been possible had the teachers refused ethnography as a mode of knowing Indigenous peoples? What knowledge might students have gained? What new experiences might they have had? What new relationships might they have developed and cultivated? What values might have emerged? The following section contains two "disruptive daydreams" (Dion, 2008) that might emerge as alternative pedagogical possibilities if teachers employed a stance

of refusal with regards to the curricular entrapment of the Native in the "ethnographic present."

The information and scholarship that we need in order to employ refusal as a stance is there. What I am suggesting is not new or novel, but I hope by harnessing and infusing existing insights into this particular case, the taken-for-granted Native American unit might be envisioned and refashioned in less colonizing ways. The following two suggestions stem from the call to "anthropologize the West"[100] and make the "familiar strange," as well as the assertion that rather than studying the exotic Other, schools might be promising sites to learn what it means to be in solidarity with, rather than study about, Indigenous peoples. The first refusal offers the unit as a chance to disrupt what Dion (2008) has termed "the perfect stranger," the commonsense positioning teachers often feel they are with respect to Indigenous peoples. That commonsense positioning is extended to students and the curriculum offered as a chance to disrupt that innocent positioning. The second example shifts the focus from the study of Katsina Friends as a "primitive" practice in need of recuperation and replication, to the study of the dominant cultural context that positions Katsina Friends as exotic and desirable, and corresponding political context that threatens Hopi sovereignty through the continual market-demand to buy, sell, even steal, sacred Katsina Friends.

[100] Anthropologists have critiqued their own discipline, with Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1991) calling for the field to "turn the apparatus elaborated in its observations of non-western societies on itself, specifically, on the history from which it sprang" (p. 39). (This was later echoed by anthropologist Paul Rabinow's (1996) call to "anthropologize the West" though as Mwenda Ntarangwi's (2010) notes, much of his field work was still based in Africa). Compelled by such critiques, scholars like Ntarangwi took up such projects, such as his book *Reversed Gaze: An African Ethnography of American Anthropology*, resonant with Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's call for "writing back" (1999).

Disrupting the "Perfect Stranger"

In her research, Lenape/Potawatomi scholar Susan Dion (2008; 2012) reflects on statements that she routinely hears from non-Native teachers that they have little to no relationship with Native people, and little awareness of Native issues. She coins this statement the "perfect stranger," a sentiment that enables non-Native teachers to position Native people and "their" concerns outside of themselves, a buffer that implicitly states, "It doesn't have anything to do with me' (Dion, 2012, np). "I don't know anything about Aboriginal people. I didn't grow up near a reserve. I didn't have any Aboriginal friends. I don't know anything about Aboriginal people," the sentiments indicate (2012, np). To position oneself as having no knowledge about Native people serves to "let them off the hook." Dion states:

> It allows teachers and actually all Canadians to be off the hook when it comes to thinking about Aboriginal issues, thinking about Aboriginal people, or the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. There was a desire to distance themselves from the issues and to say, this has nothing to do with me. (2012, np)

In response to this routine positioning of themselves as "perfect strangers," Dion does not imply that the task at hand is for future educators to simply study the lives of Indigenous peoples. Rather, she asks teachers to investigate their own biography in relationship to Native peoples. She asks them to think deeply about what they already do know about Indigenous peoples, as well as how they came to know that information. This is similar to multicultural imperatives that teachers and students understand themselves as sociocultural beings (Villegas & Lucas, 2002); but in a context where Indigenous people

are often made peripheral, Dion importantly situates the sociocultural awareness of teachers within their specific relationship to Native peoples that they consider to be on the margins (or even beyond).

Dion (2008) asks teachers "to identify and collect 'cultural artifacts,' that is, objects of cultural interest that are reflective of their relationship with Aboriginal people or Aboriginal knowledge" (p. 182). Teachers place these objects in a "file of (un)certainties" where she has them situate their objects alongside contemporary works from Native peoples—artists, scholars, storytellers, among others. This "stereoscopic" positioning of Native and newcomer (Valaskakis, 2005) knowledge calls into question what those teachers "know," and creates dissonance. "The course is not about simply consuming the work of the artists," Dion states.

> Students are called upon to engage with and position themselves in relationship to the work. Engaging the work of Aboriginal artists provides a decolonizing practice – challenging the ahistorical memories of Canada's colonial past, it offers a way to challenge the hegemony of Western regimes of knowledge and representation. (2008, p. 182)

Drawing from Dion's work that challenges the "perfect stranger" positioning, the Native American Unit, rather than studying Native peoples acontextually outside of Indigenous-settler relations, could center what students already "know" about Indigenous peoples within a longstanding history of "knowing." More than merely a critique of Native representation in the media as something "out there," students could intimately investigate the ways their own relationship to Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge has been shaped, not just by media, but by their families, home, school,

community, state, region, or nation. Their existing knowledge could then be situated alongside longstanding anthropological modes of knowing that have framed Native peoples, and these forms of knowing denaturalized. Rather than neutral reflections of Native life, they could be explicitly framed as forms of knowing embedded with particular assumptions, techniques, investments, and consequences.

What if the curriculum made not only the knowledge, but also the way of knowing strange? Instead of encountering Indians, students might more productively encounter longstanding ways of knowing Indians: Imagine a classroom of students viewing an ethnological chart of various "races" of Indigenous peoples, or perhaps detailed images of cranial measurements. Placed alongside categorizations of canines and other animals, these forms of knowing no longer go unnoticed and appear neutral. Perhaps they give students new eyes to see the posters that adorn their classrooms typifying "Indians of the Plains" and "Indians of the Eastern Woodlands," contemporary curricular forms of ethnology. Or what sort of critical reflections might students engage in if they watched the 1986 Australian film *BabaKiueria* (Featherstone, 1986) that satirizes relations between Aboriginal and settler Australians,[101] or the film *Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny* (Sandiford et al., 2006), an Inuit commentary on White culture?[102] Or filled out the *Basic Skills Caucasian Americans Workbook* (Slapin & Esposito, 1994) which satirizes the study of Native Americans by turning the gaze on White culture?

[101] *BabaKiueria* is also available online (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUMpPgMGCe8).

[102] *Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny* is also available online (https://www.nfb.ca/film/qallunaat_why_white_people_are_funny).

Imagine a student asked to consider what she knows about Native art. If her conception were like the teachers I have been working with, she might offer masks or totem poles. Then imagine the conversation that might emerge when Dunne-za First Nation artist Brian Jungen's masks were placed alongside that student's reflection. What would be disrupted, or what new knowledge would emerge when the student reflected on Jungen's artwork that "depicts traditional First Nation symbology using ordinary objects such as plastic lawn chairs, golf bags, and Nike Air Jordans" (Campbell, 2010, n.p.)?

What knowing would emerge if students were to reflect on their own families' biographies of how they came to Oregon (or how they have always been here), then situated those histories alongside land grabs that took place before formal treaties were established in this area. Christine Sleeter (2014) offers an example in her chapter "Inheriting Footholds and Cushions," of what it might look like to trace one's "family's acquisition of Indigenous people's lands" (p. 17). Though asking a 5th grader to trace the year, price, and acreage of land accumulated by their family may be too complex a task for a young child (not to mention that at a school where more than 75% of students are on free or reduced lunch, perhaps acquiring property is not a feasible unit of analysis as many families in poverty rent, rather than own houses), the idea of investigating one's story of migration or emergence in the context of Indigenous claims to place may be feasible. In the case of this school, there are both Native and newcomers (Vaskalakis, 2005), and the newcomers are both White and students of color. As Tuck and Yang (2012) note, equivocating oppression with colonization is a form of "settler move to innocence," as "People of color who enter/are brought into the settler colonial nation-state also enter the triad of relations between settler-native-slave" (p. 17). Thus,

understanding one's relationship to settler colonialism, even as the triad shifts or collapse is important, for as Tuck and Yang state "even the ability to be a minority citizen in the settler nation means an option to become a brown settler. For many people of color, becoming a subordinate settler is an option even when becoming white is not" (p. 18). Offering students a chance to situate their own biography in relationship to land and place, Indigenous peoples, and knowledge of Indigenous peoples is a way to not let students "off the hook," but instead might center them in a more honest and complex network of self in relationship to people, place, justice, and sovereignty.

Studying Katsina Friends Through A Lens of Commodification and Sovereignty

Assuming a teacher's focus is not to guide students inward, but to continue to study Native life, are there possibilities for this sort of study that aren't objectifying and do not commodify or appropriate Native culture? Imagine a teacher still wanted to focus on Katsina Friends; the study of art and culture within in its respective cultural, social, and political contexts can be a fruitful avenue for exploring issues of sovereignty, rights, and responsibility. It is a misnomer to label Katsina Friends "art" or "crafts." Yet it may prove useful to reimagine what a lesson might look like (if a teacher were insistent on studying a particular aspect of Native life such as this) that aims to understand Katsina Friends seriously within a context of commodification and sovereignty.

If the students studying the Hopi nation had followed the link to their website (rather than the link to Curtis' work), they would have learned the "aesthetic" information about the Katsina Friends that perhaps they desired, such as:

> **Hopi Katsina Friends** are religious objects necessary for the use and the continuation of the Hopi religion by present day adherent. The Katsina Friends go

> through a ceremonial process of deification whereby they embody spiritual life. They then become a "Katsina" and serve as a messenger to the spiritual domain for rain and life blessings. Katsina Friends are used during Katsina religious ceremonies. (The Hopi Tribe, 2015, p. 1)

Had students consulted the Hopi nation website, however, that information would have been situated within a context of tribal sovereignty, Hopi customary law and tradition, and Indigenous rights. Pursuing the current events in Hopi country related to Katsina Friends, they would have seen the ways Katsina Friends are currently being auctioned off in Paris without Hopi permission or authorization. They could have read words of resistance from Hopi Chairman Herman G. Honanie:

> We need to bring all our Katsina Friends home to their rightful place on the Hopi lands… Hopi is absolute in its stance that these auctions must cease. We call on all local, state and federal agencies to aid our efforts in recovering our sacred Katsina Friends. They belong on Hopi and must be returned. (The Hopi Tribe, 2015, p. 1)

Students could have written allied letters in support of the Hopi nation, such as the letter written by the Director of the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, Robert G. Breunig (2013), who stated:

> I am writing to request that you cancel this auction, withdraw the katsina friends from sale, and that they be returned by the "owner" to the Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and Jemez people. I have placed quotation marks around the word "owner," because no one can "own" them but the Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and Jemez people. Although katsina friends can be held and cared for by individuals, they belong to

> the communities from which they come or to specific ceremonial societies. Under tribal custom and law they cannot be sold or given away by an individual. (as cited in Gilbert, 2013, n.p.)

Breunig is not a citizen of the Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, or Jemez people, yet in this instance, he illustrates what it means to work with and on behalf of Indigenous peoples: to work toward sovereignty. Students studying the Hopi nation as well as the Katsina Friends through this lens—commodification and as a contemporary issue of tribal sovereignty—could be led to both appreciate the artistic and cultural aspects of Katsina Friends, while also exploring issues of cultural property, ownership, and rights. The object of study would *not* be the Katsina Friends, but rather the historical, social, cultural, and political context that continually threatens Hopi sovereignty and Indigenous sovereignty more broadly. The Hopi nation's current fight could be linked to other contexts where Indigenous lives and livelihood are threatened by social and political contexts geared toward consuming them. This year in Klamath Falls, for example, police seized dozens of cultural items thought to be headed for sale on the black market (Sherwood, 2015). The unit of study would *not* be the cultural items that were culturally significant or ceremonial, but rather the context that created a market for such items to be dug out of the ground while water levels were low. Students could critically interrogate that context, situate themselves within it, and take up projects that disrupted those extractive practices through making them visible or acting in solidarity with Native nations trying to claim back significant items.

These are two possibilities that emerge from this story. The first example, rather than a study of the Other, positions the self in relation to Other as the Object of study.

Students situate themselves as already in a relationship with Indigenous peoples, both real and imagined, and investigate the biography of that relationship, including the ways they may embody and reproduce longstanding ways of knowing. Those ways of knowing are challenged and made strange. In the second example, by situating culture within the realm of its respective political context, students gain a chance to explore notions of sovereignty, rights, and responsibility and a chance to demonstrate solidarity with Native nations currently and continually defending their sovereignty. These examples are not exhaustive, but rather seek to show the sorts of knowledge, values, commitments, and relationships that become possible when educators refuse the "ethnographic entrapment" of Native life in curriculum to an "ethnographic present." Further, these examples confirm, as Tuck and Yang (2012) state, that rather than limiting possibilities, refusals can be generative—in this case by offering pedagogical and curricular possibilities for students to situate themselves more honestly with regards to the "imperatives of Empire" (Simpson, 2007). Rather than the self-congratulating system of multicultural lessons designed to "know" Native Others, refusing ethnographic entrapment might offer students opportunities to see themselves as already in relationship to Native people (and knowledge about Native life). Students might also gain opportunities to better understand tribal sovereignty, and explore the implications of such knowledge including Native and newcomer rights and responsibilities.

CHAPTER VI

NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH

Every year, our Nation pauses to reflect on the profound ways the First Americans have shaped our country's character and culture. The first stewards of our environment, early voices for the values that define our Nation, and models of government to our Founding Fathers -- American Indians and Alaska Natives helped build the very fabric of America. Today, their spirit and many contributions continue to enrich our communities and strengthen our country. During National Native American Heritage Month, we honor their legacy, and we recommit to strengthening our nation-to-nation partnerships.

~ President Barack Obama, 2014

WHEREAS: Native American Awareness week began in 1976 and recognition was expanded Congress in August 1990, designating the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month; and
WHEREAS: Oregon is home—from time immemorial—to the people of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes: Burns Paiute Tribe; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians; Coquille Indian Tribe; Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians; Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community; Klamath Tribes; Confederated Tribes of Siletz; Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation; and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; and

WHEREAS: The American Indians of Oregon have made tremendous contributions to the culture, history and environment of the State of Oregon; and

WHEREAS: As Oregon American Indians have shaped our state, so has the history and culture of our great nation been shaped by American Indians and Indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS: The contributions of American Indians have enhanced the freedom, prosperity and greatness of America today; and

WHEREAS: American Indians' varied customs and traditions are respected and celebrated as part of a rich legacy throughout the United States.

NOW, THEREFORE: I, John A. Kitzhaber, M.D., Governor of the State of Oregon, hereby proclaim **November 2014** to be

National American Indian Heritage Month

in Oregon and encourage all Oregonians to join in this observance.

~Governor John A. Kitzhaber, 2014

A Season Rife With Stereotypes

"Why did they have to make Native Heritage Month in November?" groaned Melvina, the Title VII Coordinator for the Oakfield school district. Melvina had worked in the field of Native education for years. She valued the opportunity for Native people to be recognized and Native issues to be central, but in her experience, the timing of the month had always been problematic. "It seems like spring would be a more appropriate

time. In November we're competing with Columbus Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving…"

National American Indian Heritage Month, also commonly referred to as Native American Heritage Month, wasn't always in November. In fact, it was originally proposed as a day of recognition in June. Seneca scholar and activist Dr. Arthur C. Parker advocated for American Indian Day to be on June 22nd "since then nature has brought the year to perfection and it is the moon of the first fruits" (as cited in Hertzberg, 1971, p. 83). Parker, along with other Native advocates, such as Reverend Red Fox James (Blackfoot) and Reverend Sherman Coolidge (Arapaho), sought to set aside a day each year to recognize the "First Americans." Parker envisioned this day as an opportunity to raise awareness about Native people and issues, and to educate the "Anglo-Agglomerated race" (Porter, 2001). He saw it as a chance for "Indians to be seen and treated as 'American people in America'" (Porter, 2001, p. 106), and part of a broader movement toward respecting Native people as citizens and "Americans." Not all Native people agreed with these efforts. One of the most vocal opponents was Carlos Montezuma (Apache) who questioned the movement, and criticized it as a little more than a parade for Whites and part of a broader agenda for assimilation. Montezuma called the proposal "a farce and worst kind of a fad. It will not help the Indians, but the Indians will be used as tools for interested parties. To the Indian it is a laughing mockery because he does not enjoy freedom, but is a ward and is handicapped by the Indian Bureau" (as cited in Hertzberg, 1971, p. 142).[103] American Indian Day eventually took hold,[104] was later

[103] To Parker's credit, he believed his proposal would intervene into and disrupt the "show Indian" that accompanied Buffalo Bill's Wild West show (Porter, 2001). Parker too expressed hesitation with the way his colleague Red Fox James was eliciting support, riding on horseback from town to town. Parker stated, "I am a little bit dubious about the amount of good that will be accomplished by holding general 'pow-

developed into Native American Awareness week in October,[105] and is now recognized as National American Indian Heritage Month in November. [106] Melvina remained hopeful she could provide educational opportunities during the month, but also shared Montezuma's concerns that the month might result in a token assembly or display case,

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wows,' as you call them…[concerned that they would be] seized upon for their advertising value [and that this] would not lend anything to the dignity which the original intention sought" (as cited in Porter, 2001, pp. 119-120). Montezuma's admonition ran deeper than a critique of "American Indian Day," however, illustrating tensions at the time between the Society of American Indians (SAI) that Parker was involved in, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and "radicals" such as Montezuma who didn't have faith in SAI or the BIA. Montezuma states, "We cannot work side by side with the Indian Bureau and do anything good for the Indians" (p. 147). He ridiculed SAI for their tactics of "meeting and discussing" (Hertzberg, 1971). Montezuma wanted to see SAI advance, but didn't have Faith in its connection to BIA or the "radical" change needed. I highlight these examples specifically to illustrate the complex negotiations happening in the early 1900s among Indigenous people about how best to serve Indigenous peoples, and illuminate tensions that still exist among "pan-Indian" approaches, as well as working with/in agencies such as the BIA.

[104] Parker successfully convinced the Boy Scouts of America to take up this day of recognition as a chance to unite Native and non-Native people, which the Boy Scouts took up for several years in May. (Little did Parker know that this connection would ironically not lead to the increased *visibility* of Indians that he had hoped, nor the *unity* of "whites and Indians," but to eventual *erasure* of Indigenous peoples by this same organization through the scouts' ritual of "playing Indian". See Deloria [1998] for more on this history concept of "Playing Indian.") American Indian Day took hold in several states. Montezuma was concerned that Native people would be made a spectacle for Whites, but the Boy Scouts' practice shifted to one in which they had little to no interaction with Native people. They eventually took up the practice among themselves, donning regalia, creating their own clan and Indian names, and dancing around the fire. The scouts no longer needed to collaborate with "actual" Indians, but could instead "recognize" and "appreciate" Native people outside of relationships with actual Native people or communities, a practice that foreshadowed the eerie yet famous words of Spokane/Couer d'Alene write Sherman Alexie: "In the Great American Indian novel, when it is finally written, all of the white people will be Indians and all of the Indians will be ghosts" (1996, pp. 94-95).

[105] This was enacted by President Gerald Ford in 1976 whose proclamation can be read at *The American Presidency Project* website (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=898&st=native+american+awareness&st1=).

[106] This was enacted by President George H.W. Bush in 1990. His initial week was in December 1989, yet he made connections between November and Thanksgiving that year stating, "The settlers at Plymouth Colony were able to reap that harvest largely because of the help they received from neighboring Indians," a connection Bush most likely thought would foster intercultural relations and mutual respect and understanding. Yet it was this problematic connection between Pilgrims and Indians that Melvina did not want the month to be associated with. His proclamation for National American Indian Heritage Week can be read at *The American Presidency Project* website http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=1797&st=indians&st1=.). It was this connection that led him to not only extend the week to a month, but to move the month to November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." This proclamation can be found at *The American Presidency Project* website (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=1933&st=national+american+indian&st1=). Oregon has both Native American Heritage Month, in November, as well as "American Indian Week" celebrated in May of 2014. Oregon has also celebrated Tribal Nation's Day.

while doing little to improve the actual lives of Native students she was working so hard to serve.

There were valid reasons for Melvina's concern. Fall was a time when stereotypes of Native Americans frequently circulated in the media as well as school curriculum. Columbus Day and Halloween preceded the month, and the month encompassed Thanksgiving and its attendant curriculum (over-simplified accounts of the meeting of Pilgrims and Indians and sanitized accounts of the settling of the US). When tuned into the harmful images and stereotypes that circulate this season the way Melvina is—whether damage done by omissions in the rehearsal of rhymes that praise Columbus' sail across the ocean blue, damage done by the relegation of Native people as colonization's "helping hand" in the unquestioned reproduction of the comforting story of the first Thanksgiving, representational damage to Native children when they are forced to confront non-Natives' shallow and demeaning representations of their cultures through the common practice of donning Indian headdresses or sexualized Pocahottie[107] costumes still sold at Halloween stores, or the damage done when Native people are positioned among the competitive jeers of Redskins fans or the hostile arguments often deployed within the ongoing debate about Native mascots —it's hard to imagine how any respectful recognition of Indigenous people and culture could take place in a climate that appears so hostile.

The mascot debates illustrate how Native students get framed within this hostility, somewhere along the spectrum between vanished and noble or fierce savage. Fall was

[107] As mentioned in my introduction, Spirit Halloween sells a variety of Indian costumes, including Pocahottie, Naughty Navajo, Sexy Dream Catcher, Reservation Royalty, Hot on the Trail, Huron Honey, Wolf Warrior, Native Spirit, Pow Wow Wow, and Tribal Temptation among others. The Pocahottie and other costumes can be found at the Spirit Halloween website (http://www.spirithalloween.com/).

football season, a chance for NFL fans to root for the Kansas City Chiefs or the Washington Redskins, and among the schools in Oregon, fifteen still had Native mascots.[108] Though the Oakfield school district didn't have any Native mascots specifically, schools in the district could still play teams such as the Warriors, Braves, Chieftains, or Indians.[109] Alone these mascots might be viewed as nothing more than stereotypical caricatures, but when mixed with the competitive cries of fans, families, and players, they were often quickly uploaded into hostile and racist jeers ("Scalp the Indians!" fans might yell[110]). These remarks are exacerbated by lingering public controversy surrounding legislation to ban Native mascots in Oregon.[111] Opponents[112] of

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[108] The White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education (WHIAIANE) (2015) estimates that there are

> approximately 2,400 public schools in the United States with Native mascots or nicknames that incorporate American Indian caricatures. WHIAIANE estimates that 64 percent of these are of particular concern because they depict a demeaning combination of two-dimensional or three-dimensional caricatures of Native Americans. These schools are frequently distant from tribal support centers like tribal reservations, Indian lands, or urban native centers. (US Department of Education, 2015, p. 6)

[109] Fortunately the "Savages" were retired in 2005 at the request of students, though it appears "Fear the Savages" apparrel can still be purchased at the Spirit Shop online.

[110] Che Butler's proposal to the State Board of Education included the following examples:

- In Illinois, Native dolls were hung from trees and balconies when a rival team with a Native mascot was in town.
- In Arizona, "Scalp the Indians" was chalked in large letters on the lawn when a rival team with a Native mascot was in town.
- In South Dakota students wear "The Sioux Suck" shirts and chant this saying while playing a rival team with a Native mascot.
- The *New York Post* has headlines such as "Tribe on Warpath" and "Take the Tribe and Scalp 'Em" when the NY Yankees play the Cleveland Indians.
- High schools post "Scalp the Indians" when playing rival teams. (Castillo, 2012, p. 6)

[111] Any comment thread surrounding the issue will immediately surface these tensions. A 2015 article posted on the Statesman Journal's Facebook page (a newspaper in the State Capital) highlights these tensions and the logics deployed.

[112] It should be noted that there are tribal members and nations opposed to these bans as well. I am highlighting in general dominant, non-Native opponents' justifications. However, in Oregon, there is still controversy circulating surrounding the ban with several tribal nations insisting that it infringes on their sovereign right to self-govern. Further, several tribal nations insist they have worked with public schools to conceive of mascots that are respectful. This is similar to the University of Utah and their memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation (though some oppose

such a ban often justify Native mascots as a way to "honor" Native Americans, some who consider Native Americans "extinct" and in need of such honoring. For them, the mascots are a way to honor their "culture."[113] Despite individuals' intentions, this collective institutional practice has, in many ways, reduced Native people to caricatures, contributing to the erasure of the actual lived and diverse experiences of Native people, and inflicting harm on Native students in public schools.[114]

One could claim that being situated in the midst of a season rife with stereotypes might be an ideal time to address misconceptions. Unfortunately, the opportunities to critically engage the narrow and harmful narratives that often frame Indigenous peoples and nations are often missed, and instead the month too often becomes a chance to "honor" Native Americans by replicating these caricatures in the form of arts and crafts activities involving headdresses, masks, dreamcatchers, totem poles, or celebratory assemblies.

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this agreement as many of the Native students at University of Utah are not Ute, but members of other tribal nations. As of 2015, the debate in Oregon is ongoing. Legislation in 2014 was signed by the house, senate, and governor, but had yet to be enacted. This legislation would ban Native mascots generally, but "Allows district school board to enter into approved written agreement with federally recognized Native American tribe in Oregon for use of mascot that represents, is associated with or is significant to tribe." More information on the history and language of this legislation can be found at the Oregon State Legislature website (https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2014R1/Measures/Overview/SB1509).

[113] The district that neighbors Oakfield is still called the "Indians," and the predominately White community has vehemently resisted Oregon's recent ban on Native Mascots, legislation that wouldn't kick in until 2017. A change.org petition started by the community urged people to reconsider the ban. One girl, A.S., class of 1998, relays her sentiments about the potential change:

> I am proud to be feirce [sic], and have respect for my enviroment [sic] and tolerance for all people. In grade school starting out as a Marcola Lady Brave... our mascot instilled a sense of pride and respect for the land and animals, also sparking a curiosity about all different cultures. Learning about a race of extinct americans [sic] native to this country gave me a sense of responsibility, and to keep my mind open. Sincerely A.S. (Jallo, 2011, n.p.)

It would be unfair to characterize only White resistance to the potential change; however, I use this example specifically to illustrate the sentiment of the "extinct" or "vanishing" Native that still circulates to justify such practices. Accompanying the comment by A.S. were other comments of support, by both Native and non-Native advocates. The issue has been a hot topic for the past few years in the state, is still unresolved, and is often hashed out on the field or court each fall.

[114] For more information on the impact of Native mascots and the history of legislation in Oregon, see Castillo (2012).

Is There Even Value to These Months?

Melvina is not alone in her concern about the limitations of "heritage month" approaches. Montezuma questioned the value of American Indian Day as an effective approach to cultural pluralism in the early 1900s, and for over a century, numerous scholars have continued to question or critique the liberatory possibilities of heritage months.[115] Some claim these approaches trivialize communities by failing to acknowledge structural inequities embedded in schools (Menkart, 2008). It was this claim that led Gilbert de la O, a former proponent of Cinco de Mayo celebrations in schools, to stop speaking or performing at events until more structural issues were addressed, when Chican@s/Latin@s would have "parity" with their peers, and be represented equally in spaces such as "board rooms" rather than "cloak rooms."[116] Through trivialization, a school might partake in the "superficial" aspects of multiculturalism, but ignore diverse ways of thinking, being, or doing that challenge assumptions of dominant culture

[115] Though there are points of difference and tension between theorists of multicultural education, most proponents of critical multicultural education do not endorse practices of token inclusion, or even respectful inclusion, without also conceiving of multicultural education in ways that challenges injustice in schools (Banks 2004; Gay, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). See Castagno's (2009) article "Making Sense of Multicultural Education: A Synthesis of the Various Typologies Found in the Literature" for a comprehensive overview of various approaches.

[116] Gilbert de la O's full quote stated:

> A few years ago I quit accepting invitations from schools, state agencies and the private sector to make presentations for Cinco de Mayo, the annual Mexican American celebration.
> Here's why. During the days prior to the celebration, school halls and classrooms are decorated with flags, pictures and other memorabilia. Once Cinco has passed, however, everything goes back into drawers and we're forgotten for the next 51 weeks. Meanwhile a preponderance of Chicano/Latino students is [sic] having negative experiences with our educational system.
> In the halls of our city, county and state governments, you hear Mexican music, see people eat Mexican food, and hear speeches about 'celebrating diversity.' Yet little has been done to increase the hiring and promotions of Chicanos/Latinos. Until we have parity, until you find us in board rooms instead of cloak rooms, then and only then will I speak for Cinco. (as cited in Menkart, 2008, p. 374)

embedded within the school itself (Fish, 1997).[117] Some claim these approaches position particular students and communities as exotic and Other, encouraging a "tourist" approach to education where "Children 'visit' non-White cultures and then 'go home' to the daily classroom, which reflects only the dominant culture." (Derman-Sparks, 1989, p. 5).[118] This othering can contribute to reinforcing stereotypes rather than challenging them (Menkart, 2008).[119] "What is often presented as multicultural education," Dixon and Rousseau (2006) note, "has generally been a superficial 'celebration of difference' through 'foods and festivals' activities rather than an examination of how 'difference' serves to disadvantage some and advantage others" (p. 41). Though discussed twenty years earlier in Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) critique that "the multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change in the current order" (as cited in Dixon & Rousseau, 2006, p. 41), the practice continues today. Heritage

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[117] Stanley Fish (1997) might include heritage months in his conception of "boutique multiculturalism, which honors diversity only in its most superficial aspects" (p. 384). Fish critiques the underlying assumptions that one can "admire" the other, but that admiration and appreciation can hold only so long as the "other" doesn't challenge one's own values. He states,

> Boutique multiculturalism is characterized by its superficial or cosmetic relationship to the objects of its affection. Boutique multiculturalists admire or appreciate or enjoy or sympathize with or (at the very least) 'recognize the legitimacy of' the traditions of cultures other than their own; but boutique multiculturalists will always stop short of approving other cultures at a point where some value at their center generates an act that offends against the canons of civilized decency as they have been either declared or assumed…A boutique multiculturalist may find something of value in rap music and patronize (pun intended) soul-food restaurants, but he will be uneasy about affirmative action and downright hostile to an afrocentrist curriculum. A boutique multiculturalist may enjoy watching Native American religious ceremonies and insist that they be freely allowed to occur, but he will balk if those ceremonies include animal sacrifice or the use of a controlled substance. (pp. 378-379)

[118] Derman-Sparks continues, "The focus on holidays, although it provides drama and delight for both children and adults, gives the impression that that is all 'other' people –usually people of color—do. What it fails to communicate is real understanding" (p. 7).

[119] Menkart (2008) provides a prime example of how "special events in isolation can reinforce stereotypes rather than challenge them. For example, a student who had just attended a Hispanic Heritage assembly in Washington, DC high school was asked what she had learned about Latinos. She answered, 'Well, they are good at dancing'" (p. 374). Menkart's example comes from a book titled *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development* (1998; 2008) that both critiques "add on" curricular conceptions and provides a variety of practical alternatives.

months still also precipitate the question that many communities of color are familiar with: "When is White history month?"

Despite critiques of the value or effectiveness of heritage months, there were Native families in the district who felt that some form of celebration and representation is better than the invisibility they felt when they were not included at all, and so looked forward to the month. In the district, Native American Heritage month has, for the most part, been either overlooked or ignored, or alluded to through a token display case or bulletin board that the Title VII program is responsible for putting together. When efforts are made, they are usually dependent on the whim of a passionate teacher or principal willing to take it on, rather than collaborative and comprehensive approaches by schools or the district. Melvina, for her part, remained happy to answer the phone, which rang more often in November with teachers asking for help. She said she appreciated the phone calls because it gave her a sense of what was being taught in the classrooms. The teachers who called were at least reaching out for help, she said, and that was a starting point. "Some teachers don't like you to know what was going on in their classrooms. They want to do their own thing. They don't want us to challenge what they are doing because they don't want to feel bad about it."[120]

Making the Most of the Month: A Fact a Day

Melvina, through her experience as a Title VII coordinator in several school districts over the years, felt that the lack of background knowledge teachers and

[120] Melvina's reflection on teachers' avoidance, likely due to an unwillingness to be uncomfortable, echoes arguments made by curriculum scholars who view discomfort and unlearning as essential pedagogical starting points. See Kumashiro's (2002) conception of "pedagogies of crisis" or Boler's (1999) conception of "Pedagogies of discomfort" that theorize the critical interrogation of one's own taken-for-granted assumptions as emotional and necessary disruptive work that some teachers, as Melvina noted, seem to resist.

administrators had about Native peoples and nations might be one of the reasons schools were hesitant to take more comprehensive approaches during the month. In her former position as a Title VII coordinator on the Oregon coast, she sought to address this ignorance by coordinating with the principals at each school in the district to read "a fact a day" about contemporary Native people and nations during morning announcements. This was a small activity, inadequate to transform the core of teaching and learning within each school; however, as a part time coordinator responsible for serving Native students, it was her way, despite her limited FTE, to intervene in each school. Reading the facts might make teachers aware of gaps in their knowledge. The facts could also potentially be integrated into the curriculum each day.

Melvina had hoped to implement the same thing here. With 22 schools in the district, this was a much bigger feat. At a local grant meeting, a team of Native educators took that task on, drafting a fact a day for the schools to use during the month. The Director of Elementary Education was on this committee and committed to sending out the list of facts along with a comprehensive list of resources on Oregon's tribes, contemporary Native media outlets, and resources for Native pedagogy and curriculum. Despite all of this information being sent out weeks before the heritage month began, there seemed to be little shift in the curriculum for the month, and hard to know which schools took this task on and how. As I sat in my son's classroom on the first day of Native Heritage Month, I listened intently, waiting for the first fact to be read over the announcement, wondering what the teachers and students would do after it was read. The first fact, taken from a book *Do All Indians Live in Teepees?* (National Museum of the American Indian, 2007), would have stated:

> Many people want to know what the correct word is to refer to Native people... Should I say American Indian, Indian, Native American, Native, or Indigenous? All of those terms are acceptable, however many Native people generally prefer to be called by their tribal affiliation, when possible—Aleut, Navajo, Klamath, or Siletz for example. The term "Indian" originated with Christopher Columbus. He thought that he had reached the East Indies when he landed in America and therefore named the inhabitants Indians. But this term for such a diverse group of people erases the fact that most Native communities have distinct languages, religious beliefs, ceremonies, and social and political systems. Even though people say words like Native American or American Indian to show similarities among them, it's important to remember each Native group in the US has its own unique and diverse culture and government. (p. 2)

The facts we drafted for the month were imperfect, but so too was the reality and pressure we felt to prioritize and consolidate a comprehensive, accurate, and contemporary portrait of Native America into 60 second sound bytes. We still hoped they would spark conversations. In this fact, for example, we hoped teachers might reinforce the diversity of Native America. Perhaps teachers could show a map of the 566 federally recognized tribal nations in the US, or look up the specific tribes in their state or region. But as I sat there grading spelling tests, I heard the usual welcome, then students were asked to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Peace Pledge the students recited each Monday. I didn't hear any of the facts our team had worked so hard on.

As I left the school, I checked in with the principal. I was curious why she hadn't been reading the facts. The principal shared that she hadn't had a chance to read them yet but would shortly. She commented, however, that setting aside these heritage months in some ways "feels like tokenism," and that we should be respecting and learning about diverse peoples and cultures throughout the year. It was impossible for me to read the actual intent behind her words, but it felt a bit like a deflection. There was merit, of course, to her concern surrounding tokenism,[121] and yet her tone and the fact we had sent the facts along with other resources for the month weeks earlier left me with the impression that had I not asked about it, it probably wouldn't have gotten read.

Later that afternoon I received an email from the principal inquiring about a company that had reached out to her about Native educational assemblies they provided. The company was in the area, had a recent cancellation, and was offering a discount for their Native Pride Assembly. The principal wondered if I had heard of the company, and whether or not it would be a good fit for Native Heritage Month. Her email about the assembly struck me as ironic given her previous comment about tokenism; however, like Melvina, I was happy to help in any way that I could. The advertisement for the company stated:

> Our Native Pride Dancer assembly program is a culturally diverse program that is touring for us once again this year. Your students will learn about the beauty and symbolism of Native American music, dance, regalia, and storytelling. The

[121] The *Teaching Tolerance* website by the Southern Poverty Law Center provides a variety of articles that speak to this fear of tokenism. "Native Cultures Should be Taught Year Round," "Heritage Months: Hard to Handle?", "Mining the Jewel of Black History Month," and "Five Things Not to Do During Black History Month" are all thoughtful reflections on how to make the most of these curricular space holders for heritage month, while also integrating content throughout the year. These and other reflections can be found at the *Teaching Tolerance* website (http://www.tolerance.org/).

performance will include insight into the history of Native American life. It will empower, educate and entertain your students about Native American traditions. [personal communication]

I hadn't heard of the company and so perused the website. The company appeared legitimate, created by a Native man who hoped that "[b]y sharing life stories through music, dance and storytelling, we nurture meaningful communication among all people." His goal was "to share cultural traditions through artist-in-residency performances, workshops, lectures, classroom instruction and performances enhancing access to diverse, multicultural artists for people of all ages and backgrounds" (Native Pride Arts, n.d., para. 2).[122] One dancer on the website is quoted saying: "I enjoy helping other people feel good through my dance and inspiring other kids to be open minded and learn about other cultures." The company also offered a variety of programs, including: Native American music and dance; Understanding Indigenous traditions; Storytelling and explanations on Native languages; Contemporary issues; and Native American Arts. Further, the website specifically discussed the diversity of Native American cultures, situating each dancer as a citizen of a different nation. This is a common protocol among Indigenous peoples, but a refreshing contrast to the frequent erasure of Indigenous people in mainstream curricula through the collapsing of distinct tribal nations and peoples into a singular, iconic pan-Indian image. The dancers were also dressed in beautiful and intricate regalia, which I knew the teacher and children would admire. Melvina was always wary about presenting

[122] I will emphasize here again that any critique I lay out in this story about the assembly is *not* directed at the company or individual artists. They have created an organization that thoughtfully and sincerely aims to educate about the strengths and diversity of Indigenous peoples. Further, in the performance, as I will share later, the performer disrupted easy readings of his performance as "pan-Indian" through subversive and critical pedagogies. And yet, I will still attempt to portray respectfully the ways these critical pedagogies might be vulnerable to objectification and consumption if the school (or other assembly host) does not do the critical groundwork necessary to read and engage these performances as they are intended. In other words, the school could not "hear" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 440) the performer's story.

Native people in regalia. She often resisted this call when asked, showing up for presentations in her jeans.

Despite the thoughtful aims of the company, I couldn't help feeling apprehensive. In my experience, some representations and performances reinforce rather than disrupt stereotypes. If our school were predominately Native, or the assembly was geared toward Native students in the Title VII program, I wouldn't have felt apprehensive. It was the context and audience of the performance that prompted my anxieties. I was concerned about what the students would take away from the assembly if this was their "one shot" at learning about Native people this month. I also wondered how the images of these performers, adorned in their beautiful bustles and roaches with painted faces, would intersect with what kids already "knew" about Indians. This is not, of course, to reduce the importance or beauty of regalia, an important spiritual, material, and cultural aspect of some individual's Indigeneity. Rather, I was concerned that the beads, feathers and paint might do little more than reinscribe the seemingly inseparable connection between Indians and beads, feathers, and paint. Regalia is an important form of spiritual and cultural expression, and yet it is only one of many forms. Native people also wear jeans and high tops, even three-piece suits.[123] Indigenous cultures are grounded in relationships to land, stories, languages, values, families, communities, and nations among other relations. The answer wasn't necessarily to *not* include the Native Pride Assembly, but possibly to ensure that it was couched within a diverse and broad range of understandings and representations of Indigenous peoples and cultures and nations. I

[123] The three-piece suit is in reference to an article I read recently by Frank Hopper (Tlingit, Kagwaantaan clan) who discusses assimilation and resistance to it. In the end, he states: "For me the three-piece suit now represents the three qualities that will keep our culture alive no matter how much assimilation damages it. These qualities are: love for our people, respect for our traditions, and courage to fight for what's right" (Hopper, 2015, para. 13).

struggled with how to craft a both/and response, including in my reply both my appreciation for what seemed like thoughtful programming on behalf of the company as well as my various misgivings.

I wrote the principal back, cautioning her that if she went through with the assembly, pre-teaching and then follow up by the teachers would be necessary, connecting this performance to the contemporary lives of the Native people of Oregon today, and situating the performer and performance as one expression of the many ways to be Indigenous. I also offered to help provide information about the Native people and nations in Oregon, as well as other contemporary Native role models to use in follow-up activities. The principal thanked me for my opinion, shared that my comments were helpful, and then shortly after booked the assembly and invited me to attend. Later that day, she shared our list of facts and resources out with staff in her school to educate and foster awareness, and committed to reading some of the facts during the morning announcements as well. A few days earlier, there was little attention to Native Heritage Month, but it appeared the principal was now making a genuine and concerted effort to coordinate some activities and curriculum.

Melvina, it turns out, would *not* have endorsed the Native Pride Assembly. She wondered why the principal hadn't contacted her about it. If the principal had asked her, she would have suggested something entirely different, coordinating our own program kids to visit classrooms or hold their own assembly, for example. Melvina recognized the limits of a month like Native Heritage Month as well as the limits in the type of demonstration she would have proposed, but she also viewed her proposal as both an

educational opportunity for those watching, as well as for the program students to embody and express their heritage and pride.

The Native Pride Assembly: "An Indian is Coming!"

"I'm the Indian Chief," said one 2nd grade student to another in the hallway.

"No I am. I'm going to get you with my spear!" said the other lunging forward.

I watched the boys lunge back and forth at each other, play fighting like "Indian Chiefs." The teacher had come out and greeted me amidst their play fighting. I wondered why she hadn't addressed it. Perhaps she was busy getting students together in line. I wondered what I should say to the boys.

"Most Chiefs don't have spears," I finally said. "They are more like Barak Obama, the President."

The children were standing in the hallway in preparation for the assembly the principal had arranged for Native Heritage Month. The principal had moved forward with contracting the Native Pride Dancer, despite my apprehensions.[124]

"Are you here to watch the Indian guy dance?" one student asked me as we waited.

"Is that what's going to happen today?" I asked.

I stood in line with a group of second grade students, waiting to go watch the "Indian guy" dance. I was thinking of those Native students that didn't dance or attend pow wows and what they would take away. I was thinking of what the non-Native

[124] I later found out the principal had emailed the coordinator and me welcoming us to prepare a PowerPoint of images or pictures to show the students a few minutes beforehand. I am not sure how we missed this email and opportunity. Of course, a "few minutes" of speech or pictures isn't necessarily what I had in mind when I cautioned about pre- and post-teaching, but the principal did hear my suggestion and tried to accommodate part of it. I felt badly I somehow missed the message. In retrospect, however, I also realize this was another example of the burden of the pre-teaching being placed on our program staff and volunteers rather than being integrated into the teachers' responsibilities in their own classrooms, or even the principal herself. Since we did not present anything, there were no lessons to accompany the assembly.

students and teachers would think when they saw the regalia or the dancing. I was thinking of the principal's comment that she wanted to do more than "token" activities.

"Am I Indian?" asked one student as we waited in line, pointing at his light skin.

"I'm not sure," I said. "You can't tell if someone is Native by looking at their skin."

Another student passionately tugged at my shirt. "I'm part Native American" she exclaimed. "And he's part Native American too!" pointing to a boy next to me.

It was nice to see that a few of the Native students in the class felt proud to openly identify this way. Though Native students made up 3% of the school population, it was important for them to have opportunities to feel pride and see themselves represented in the curriculum in some ways. This assembly, like the founder of the company had hoped, appeared to be giving these students a sense of pride. It was also interesting to see that a seven-year old had already internalized the word "part." I wondered if she had gotten this from her family. A response one of my student's was taught by his grandmother rang in my head: "Which 'part' specifically? Your arm? From your elbow to your wrist maybe?"

Already, the students' diverse reactions to the assembly—non-Native students' caricaturizing of Native people alongside Native students' expressions of pride—sat in tension with each other. This assembly meant different things to different students. It reminded me of Stephanie Fryberg's (2004) work on native mascots. Fryberg, a citizen of the Tulalip tribes, found that not only do Native mascots decrease Native students' self-esteem, but they actually *increased* White students' self-esteem. Though I couldn't infer that the non-Native students felt superior in this case, it was apparent that the same content or curriculum could invite different reactions or experiences by students.

As we walked down the hall, I noticed one hallway lined with artistic renditions of the raven in Gerald McDermott's *How Raven Stole the Sun*, a book depicting a traditional Northwest tale of a raven by non-Native author Gerald McDermott, which has received reviews ranging from laudable to outright cultural appropriation.[125] In the main hall to the gym, we passed by a series of cutout Mayflower ships, part of a larger unit on Pilgrims that the second grade classes were implementing. Native Americans were surely included in that unit, though the emphasis on the Mayflower hinted at the dominant perspective from which the unit was framed. Intentionally or unintentionally, this was part of the curricular backdrop for these students during Native Heritage Month and I wondered what else teachers were doing for November. We arrived at the gym and took our spots on the floor. Four hundred students did their best to sit still in rows, their bodies wriggling as they fidgeted in anticipation and chattered excitedly, waiting for the special guest to arrive. As I kneeled down, several students exclaimed, "An Indian is coming! An Indian is coming!" From what I had witnessed so far, it didn't appear that teachers had prepared their students for the assembly, which felt like it was about to be a spectacle.

Performance or Spectacle?

Native performers and artists have long negotiated issues of audience, mediating their cultural expression in ways that might effectively communicate to their own communities as well as be understood by those who may interpret their performance from outside of their cultural frameworks. Indigenous storytellers engage in complex negotiations, often working "at two levels" in their storytelling as they simultaneously try

[125] See Judy Iseke-Barnes' (2009) article "Unsettling Fictions: Disrupting Popular Discourses and Trickster Tales in Books for Children" for an analysis of the ways McDermott's book appropriates Indigenous stories while simultaneously endorsing its own authenticity. This book has been used previously by the local Title VII program, though has recently being taken out of circulation in program activities in light of these critiques.

to reach Native and non-Native listeners (Cruikshank, 1997). Those with limited exposure to Indigenous narratives, however, often miss the nuances and subtleties, despite their yearning for an authentic experience. Despite the "social agency" of the storytellers, "translation" of the stories often relies on the listeners' cultural schema, enabling "some listeners [to] hear levels of humor or pathos opaque to others" (p. 59). Native authors engage in similar negotiations and mediations. Some Native authors explicitly privilege Native cultural frameworks, while others create multi-layered pieces that aim to engage diverse audiences. In either case, Native authors often position the Native reader as the "the insider, privileged and empowered. The *métropole* [in this case, the non-Native audience] is pushed to the periphery, made liminal, at best littoral, in the same way that a non-Native town may exist on the border of a reservation" (Weaver, 2001, p. 41). Just as an audience member depending on his frame of reference may miss particular meanings in a Native performance, a reader's assumptions can also shape interpretations of a book, leading the same piece of Native fiction to be read as stereotypical by a non-Native reader, while simultaneously being deeply meaningful to a Native reader: "…what may be read as derivative Romanticism within a white context may also have stronger and more complex reverberations within relevant Indian cultures" (Murray, as cited in Weaver, 2001, p. 41). It is apparent, then, that Indigenous performers, storytellers, and authors can engage in dynamic and creative negotiations as they represent Indigenous life that can be read simultaneously as stereotypical or deeply meaningful, and serve as both a reproduction or disruption of particular discourses.

As a school that had never previously recognized Native Heritage Month, this school-wide assembly dedicated to Native culture probably appeared to those organizing

and participating a fairly substantial effort. I recognized that the Native students had already expressed some pride in anticipation of the performance, and so I was hopeful they would get something positive out of it. I also recognized that the performer might have the tools to effectively communicate within this context, working at “two levels,” where his performance would be informed both by his own traditions as well as an understanding of how he might be read. I didn’t assume this, however, as I have also witnessed Native people sell caricatures of their own community for economic benefit. I was also wary of the various ways Indigenous culture is often rendered into a spectacle to be consumed. Beyond tokenizing mascots such as the Redskins or Indians or Braves, Native people and culture are frequently commodified into iconic imagery and then used to market products such as Land-O-Lakes butter or Calumet baking powder. This framing of the historic Native as object is so commonsense it is often difficult to even recognize in order to complicate. Its roots are embedded in longstanding historical practices of exploiting Native people, reducing them to iconic images grounded in narrow discourses of authenticity used to market products, including the very land they had occupied.[126] Its roots are also tied to historic practices of literally putting Native people on display at world fairs as spectacles of “primitivism” situated against notions of “civilization” and “progress” (Raibmon, 2005)

I had also seen such exotification and objectification in the curriculum of this school. Encouraged by the principal to visit the classroom of one teacher who was doing

[126] As Raibmon (2005) points out, “From the Chicago’s World’s Fair, through the Puget Sound hop fields, to the first cruise ships up the Inside Passage, images of authentic Indians advertised the availability of land and resources. Developers used picturesque images of Indians to attract tourists, investors, and settlers” (p. 10). This was no contradiction (that the land was already occupied by those same Indigenous peoples) for as she states, “Indian occupancy of the land might have posed a deterrent, yet it did not. Viewed through the lens of authenticity, these Indians were vanishing—more pathetic than powerful—and clearly unable to make proper use of the region’s natural riches” (p. 10).

"great work" integrating Native culture into her curriculum, I arrived to find students making papier-mâché totem poles, masks, teepees, wigwams, and Kachinas. Complex, place-based, and culturally specific processes were reduced to products and artifacts, devoid of any of the social, historical, or cultural context of community, stories, and land that probably gave them their meaning.[127] The teacher was also reading *Sign of the Beaver* with her students, a book which has frequent references to "squaws," uttered by the Native characters who themselves can't manage to utter complete sentences (i.e., "Attean tell me about you…You tell him good story…Attean think squaw girl not good for much," reads one passage). The curriculum, endorsed by the principal as an exemplar, seemed to blatantly endorse misrepresentation of Native people. Native people were positioned as other, as backwards, as primitive. Native people and culture were objectified and then the practice of replicating that culture was taken up as an appropriate form of learning and supposed appreciation.

The principal and teachers are not the only ones implicated in this reductive practice and objectification. Without comprehensive Native Studies education, our own program's efforts could also be read in ways that reduce dynamic cultures and nations to a set of recognizable objects. As an example, there was not a comprehensive effort by the district or even any school a few years ago to develop curriculum for Native Heritage Month. One of the multicultural liaisons, however, invited us to create a display case at one of the local high schools. In the display we included our drum, some of the families' cradleboards, rattles, dreamcatchers, and other cultural objects. This display was simultaneously a place for us to include culturally meaningful objects for our students

[127] I explore this classroom more in depth in another case study titled "Little Anthropologists" which discusses not only reproduction of the exotic other through cultural appropriation, but the ways even seemingly benign book reports that explore these "Others" can serve to reproduce the colonial gaze.

and families but also, inevitably, entailed a narrowing of our cultures to those objects. People contributed objects that were meaningful to them, though our objects included only items that appeared "Native," despite the diversity and complexity of what shaped our identities and cultures as Native people. For some of our youth, a Play Station or iPod would be an appropriate cultural item. It became clear in retrospect that our displays could have been inclusive but pushed the boundaries of "cultural" framings.[128] Though a future display case from our program might look different, our display case at the time seemed to emphasize particular inclusions: showcase Pendleton blankets, but not books or treaties; showcase drums, but not microphones or turntables. These expectations and framings seemed to ground the context of the performance as well: Send us a dancer who can perform for us, but not a tribal chairwoman who might remind us of our tenuous claims to place. Melvina understood this tendency to frame Native people and culture as objects, expressing wariness of such performances, which was why she usually resisted them, choosing to do small-class presentations rather than assemblies, and when invited to do so, always wore jeans.

It was this context of the unquestioned framings of Native people and culture as exotic and Other that shaped my trepidation that the performer would be read as a caricature and the performance would turn into a spectacle. For those few moments as we waited for him to come out, the climate felt ripe with voyeurism, as onlookers eagerly anticipated a chance to witness the "Other" firsthand. Like a living museum, perhaps, or

[128] We could have focused on nationhood or sovereignty, showcasing maps of the district and town as treaty lands, highlighting what was ceded. We could have framed the display thematically, focusing on Native athletes, artists, or leaders. Jim Thorpe's poster, "All-American: Native American," or the American Indian College Fund posters that reclaimed "Think Indian" as a powerful metaphor for the ways Native students grounded in tradition could incorporate Western education and technology to make big impacts in their nation or the broader community could have been useful framings.

a modern day world's fair, I felt that the Native performer was about to be on display, and given the various ways the performance could possibly play out or be read, I was curious how he would respond.

"I Didn't Come Here On a Horse"

The principal introduced Mr. Barry, who entered the gym dressed in traditional regalia, as a Native American fancy dancer. The children oohed and awed, some murmuring that they loved his "costume." Students at this school seemed to be respectful for the most part. He was dressed in regalia, the proper term as opposed to "costume," but you couldn't blame these students for not knowing this. The referent provided a glimpse of the pre-teaching or follow up that might necessarily accompany such a performance, an opportunity to correct common misnomers. The murmurs as he entered felt like general excitement, though I wish I could hear some of the side conversations that were taking place.

When Mr. Barry came out, he introduced himself, his tribal affiliation, and his Indian name and its meaning. I wondered if some of the non-Native kids here would want Indian names like some of them requested at last year's powwow. As I scanned the room, I saw the two Native second graders who I walked in with and they seemed engaged and proud, attentively watching Mr. Barry. Then Mr. Barry shared three things that he said were important for the students to know:

I don't wear this outfit every day.

I don't live in a tipi or in the mountains.

I didn't come here on a horse. I drive a Honda.

I get asked those three questions every time.

Mr. Barry chuckled, clearly engaging the kids on his own terms, sharing not only who he was, but anticipating how he thought he might be perceived, a form of "double consciousness" (Dubois, 1903) that many Indigenous and people of color are often versed in. He dressed in regalia, but not always. He was aware students thought he might live in a tipi, but he lived in a house. He knew they saw Indians on horses, but he drove a Honda. He was a contemporary Native man, but aware that this could seem like a contradiction to students who may have little to no interaction with actual Native people, their only references to Natives from history books or pop culture. He prefaced his performance with these statements because he anticipated that he would be interpreted through a historical lens.

Mr. Barry continued his presentation, sharing a bit about his porcupine roach and golden eagle feathers. He sang a few songs and then explained the warrior dance he would perform. Students marveled at the dance, many of them fidgeting around on the floor as children do, soaking it all in. Mr. Barry then invited groups of students up to dance with him and I watched as the two Native students' hands jutted in the air when he asked for volunteers, followed by their disappointed faces when they didn't get called on. Twenty students or so were chosen by their teachers, and lined up in front of their peers, mirroring Mr. Barry's various dance steps as their peers clapped along and giggled. I wondered why the teacher didn't call on the Native students. Then again, should she have? I remember the pressures of being asked to speak for all Native people, or all people of color when I was a student. But this felt different. These Native students *wanted* to participate. In a later interview I learned that one of the Native boys waving his hand frantically in the air was called on at the previous assembly, and so his teacher

though it might not have been fair for him to be called on again. Would it have been beneficial for these few Native kids to get a chance to participate in this type of Native programming anyway? Was this an opportunity for equity?

A second group of students was called up. Kids raised their hands frantically, desperate to be called on and dance on stage. Side by side, students moved their bodies to the rhythm, many of them off beat, smiling and laughing as they tried to mirror Mr. Barry's steps and motions. In the last few minutes of the assembly, the students chanted that their teachers go up on stage. I remember as a kid loving to see my teacher do things, wanting them to make a fools of themselves. This is what that felt like, a mockery.

I watched Mr. Barry lead the teachers through traditional dance moves, but he also threw in "the sprinkler" and "the Cabbage Patch." He could have been mocking the teachers; he could have been just having fun. There was laughter and joy in the room, but it was also hard to know what purpose this assembly was serving. Heritage celebrations don't always communicate what we hope or intend. "Well, they are good at dancing" (Menkart, 2008, p. 374), said one student after attending a Hispanic Heritage assembly in Washington, DC, and asking what she had learned about Latinos. I wondered what the students would take away from this performance.

Positioned Between Erasure and Caricature

> Historically, it has perhaps been better to be represented in some way, however problematic and contradictory, than to remain invisible, a body that did not register in any important way in the national imagination. (Raheja, 2010, p. xiii)

I left the assembly unsettled. I walked back with the two Native second graders I came with and was pleased that they seemed to have enjoyed the performance, evident in

the way they chattered about the dancer. I remained concerned, however, with what the rest of the school took away. I wasn't sure the context had been set up to appropriately and respectfully witness this performance, and was fearful the interpretations were devoid of the rich context that gave the performance its meaning. It's not that kids couldn't have fun, or they needed to be overly reverent. I supposed I just wondered what type of cultural work this cultural performance actually did. By not addressing the discursive understandings students brought with them regarding Indians, it was hard to see how the assembly did anything other than reify the dominant narrative.

The Native Pride Assembly was framed as a way to support Native students as well as foster an understanding of Native people, but it seemed evident that the context was not set up in a way to resist stereotypical readings and consumption of such a performance. Waiting with the second grade class before the assembly, hearing their comments before he had come out, I knew that these students had already learned a great deal about Indians, about chiefs and spears and teepees. I am not sure that Westerns still have the same currency they used to, but Native people still appear to be positioned somewhere between erasure and caricature. Representation of contemporary Native people and life in the curriculum is infrequent to say the least, most addressing pre-1900 life (Shear et al., 2015). The same can be said for mainstream media[129] (which is why I get my Native news elsewhere).

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[129] Duncan McCue (2014), an Anishinaabe reporter for CBC stated, "An elder once told me the only way an Indian would make it on the news is if he or she were one of the 4Ds: drumming, dancing, drunk or dead." McCue added a W and suggested a formula that can predict when Native people make the news: Be a **W**arrior, Beat your **D**rum, Start **D**ancing, Get **D**runk, or Be **D**ead. As McCue shares, "Research shows news reports from Aboriginal communities tend to follow extremely narrow guidelines based on pre-existing stereotypes of Indians." McCue admits that his formula is over-simplified, and that the stereotypes shift depending on the "concerns of the age." He points to the Indian as "troublemaker," the "Good Indian," "native-as-environmentalist," or Aboriginal people as "incompetent or corrupt financial managers" as other

The assembly provided a curricular moment of visibility for a contemporary Native man, perhaps a way to remind majority culture that Native people have not vanished, that we are still here. Perhaps for the two Native students among the others I didn't see, the curriculum was a mirror in which they could see themselves and express pride, which possibly explains why they seemed so eager to identify themselves to me as Native. Yet along with that visibility came the blatant misrepresentations by their peers. Their eager and proud words were situated against a backdrop of war whoops and spear talk. Beyond caring about the little boys playing Indian in the hallway, I realized how concerned I was for those two Native students who appeared surrounded by hostile fictions.

It was hard to see how this environment could be supportive of Native students or help nurture pride in their identities when what circulated around them were either caricatures of Indians or complete silence. This same spectrum—between hyper-visibility through Hollywood's Indian to invisibility through silences and exclusions in the curriculum—left little room for nuanced, contemporary understandings and expressions of Indigenous identities and life. As a Native woman, I recognized that these caricatures inevitably came with the "turf" when Native people were included in curriculum. I also recognized the importance of inclusions for a people so erased from the "national imagination." I wondered if majority culture teachers recognized these constraints and tensions, and the sense of compromise and contradiction Indigenous people often felt regarding representation, evident in Raheja's (2010) comment that imperfect representations were perhaps preferred than outright abjection because they might

historical and present stereotypes. Yet his formula is a helpful frame to guide teachers through the ways media portrayals both stem from and further perpetuate stereotypes.

promote visibility "in a nation that had already written Native America's obituary" (p. xiv). In a context of outright invisibility and erasure, did even narrow inclusions of our lives necessitate some form of gratitude?

The societal curriculum about Indians reached way back into students' homes and their TVs and their movies and their kitchens and their toys; it didn't begin in school. I cringed at the way the assembly might have reinforced those images and stereotypes, the Indian these kids already knew, which would most likely be compounded later by damage-based narratives in history class, and then only challenged by those lucky enough to have Native friends or take an ethnic studies class in college. Why did Native students have to wait until college to hopefully witness more respectful representations of their communities in the curriculum? (That was only if they didn't find college as oppressive or irrelevant as their K-12 experience.) And why did non-Native students have to wait until college to hopefully gain more accurate, diverse, and contemporary understandings of Indigenous peoples?[130]

This tension between erasure and caricature is a persistent feature of efforts to include content about Indigenous people and cultures in K-12 curriculum. This is not a necessary or inevitable tension. There is a great deal more about which students could be educated. Schools could focus on Native sovereignty and tribal governance, focus on any number of contemporary issues that Native communities and nations face today, or critically explore and engage the stereotypes Native people constantly contend with. These possibilities, however, remain invisible to most of the professionals in K-12

[130] There are currently many educators pushing for students to *not* have to wait until college, arguing that ethnic studies classes should be mandatory in high school. The Ethnic Studies Now Coalition is currently advocating a California statewide campaign to make ethnic studies mandatory in high schools. They also offer a toolkit for educators and communities interested in taking up a similar campaign in their own district or state (http://www.ethnicstudiesnow.com/toolkit).

educational systems. This ignorance creates an impossible situation when things like Native American Heritage month force some degree of attention to Indigenous lives and culture. Even knowledgeable advocates working within the schools system are constrained by the limits of what teachers and administrators find legible, and so schools revert to hosting events like dance performances without any accompanying critique, historicizing, or humanizing of contemporary Indigenous life. It is inclusion of a sort, but inclusion in a narrow discursive cage.

It became clear that the Indian evident in some of those second graders' imaginations, the Indian in the tokenizing curriculum I had witnessed in the school, and even the Indian that the students and staff watched perform, each exemplified King's (2012) "Dead Indian," "the stereotypes and clichés that North America has conjured up" (p. 53). King contends that "America no longer *sees* Indians," at least not the Live or Legal ones. Instead, "What it sees are war bonnets, beaded shirts, fringed deerskin dresses, loincloths, headbands, feathered lances, tomahawks, moccasins, face paint, and bone chokers" (p. 54). Those who don't take up the "cultural debris" aren't seen as Indian at all it seems. The Native Pride Assembly appeared a narrow sort of inclusion, and a curricular engagement premised on Dead Indians, the Indian America *wants* to see, the Indian educators seem to *want* to include.

As an example, several teachers and administrators in the district shared that watching the Native Pride Assembly either brought them to tears or gave them goose bumps.[131] This is not to say that they can't have or didn't actually have visceral reactions to the aesthetic qualities of the performance such as his regalia, or his singing, drumming,

[131] These comments have also been echoed in numerous ways about other program activities, for example, in teacher's reflections on the drum group's performance or attending the annual pow wow.

or dancing, or even that it is inappropriate to have such reactions. What must be questioned, however, are the unacknowledged ways those reactions might be mediated by discourses such as the "exotic other," and more specifically, the romantic discourses that seek to consume and define Native culture. As both principals shared, they felt "honored" to witness the Native Pride Assembly and it gave them "goosebumps." One principal relayed that she almost started crying when Mr. Barry made it a point to apologize for speaking in front of any elders in the room. He stated that in his culture, to do such a thing wasn't acceptable without permission, but he was invited to come and perform, and so he hoped that people would understand and would forgive him. This touching tribute almost brought her to tears.

Mr. Barry is clearly a Live Indian, making part or all of his living doing something that he enjoys and is good at, something that connects him to his heritage and culture, and for which, as he shares in the assembly, he feels immense pride. However, Mr. Barry's enactment as a Live Indian doesn't contradict him being read as a Dead Indian by the audience. Rather, King's category of the Dead Indian helps theorize how Mr. Barry can perform in a way that is personally meaningful, while also (without being situated in a critical context and broader engagement with Native peoples) being perceived as an exotic other, a caricature, a Dead Indian who happens to be alive. It helps us theorize why the principals were almost brought to tears by Mr. Barry's performance, but that in their everyday interactions with me—a Live Indian who doesn't perform my Indianness in that particular way—I didn't seem to elicit such emotional reactions with them (though I could probably elicit such emotions if I wanted). More globally, King's categories help us theorize why the principal, when thinking of how to foster awareness

of Native people and cultures, chose to bring in Mr. Barry and the Native Pride Assembly, rather than engage other curricular possibilities.

There were others spaces in the district where different stories and engagements with Indigenous people were probably taking place. In my work I am constantly preoccupied with the limits of highlighting this particularly narrow context at the expense of amplifying the voices of those engaging in more nuanced work. I had friends teaching courageous conversations classes in elementary and middle schools in the district next door, talking about race and stereotypes and identity. I am sure that somewhere there was a teacher trying to create space in her curriculum to learn about local Native nations, or engage explicitly in anti-racist work with regards to Native people. Yet, reflecting on the sheer absence of Native people in the curriculum, and the sheer pervasiveness of the caricatures deployed when Indigenous people were represented, I felt that what I was witnessing was fairly reflective of what the average student with the average teacher in this district received. I felt disheartened knowing that these activities—the masks, totem poles, Kachinas, and the occasional "Indian guy"—were endorsed by principals and high level administrators as good teaching, and that the pendulum that swung between erasure and caricature had changed so little since my childhood. I left the assembly disappointed, not necessarily because I had expected something different, but probably because it resembled too closely what I had imagined and feared. As I was leaving the assembly with the second graders, the principal was speaking with another parent and stopped me in the hall.

"Wasn't that wonderful?!?!" she exclaimed. "What did you think?!"

The Need for Critical Awareness

(Or My Hope That She Might Un-ask That Question)

I can't help but wish that the principal hadn't asked that question. Her question led me to believe that we had very different experiences of the assembly, and that the anxieties and conflicted feelings I experienced during the performance didn't register with her, even if she didn't agree with them. I struggled with how to respond on the spot as she stood there proudly next to that parent. Her question asked me to validate her efforts for the month without leaving much space for any critical examination of those efforts. Her question positioned me in such a way that if I expressed support, it might be read as validation or an endorsement, but that if I was critical, I risked the possibility that her discomfort might lead to no curricular focus on Native Heritage Month the following year.

I did plan on discussing the assembly with the principal, but in that moment, I grappled with what to say. She was so happy. Her cheeks were flush and she seemed to be full of adrenaline because she had just been dancing. With the other parent standing there, it also didn't feel like the time to be honest, which I feared might come off as pointedly critical and unsupportive. And so I smiled as I stood there. My mind raced and I shifted my eyes trying not to look at the beaded choker on her neck with a big wolf on it. Luckily, a stream of students and teachers poured out of the gymnasium and in between us, and I was off the hook to affirm her efforts.

Though I read her efforts to include Native curriculum for the month as a sign of support, I felt she still needed to develop a more critical eye regarding the ways Native people were represented in curriculum, and consider the ways those representations

affected both Native and non-Native students. I wasn't sure that she had situated such a performance within the discursive terrain of authenticity, mysticism, and romance that circulated around Native culture. Her endorsement of the mask-making and cardboard totem poles as good curriculum, the fond recollections she expressed to me of the times she made a spirit rain mask as a second grader,[132] her comments about the goose bumps and tears in her eyes that she felt after the recent performance all indicated to me that her own conception of Indigenous people was wrapped up in a discourse of "the romantic, mythical Other" (Dion, 2008), a discourse I felt constrained any meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples and content, and needed to be made visible, disrupted, and critically interrogated.

This discourse of the romantic, mystical Other is often hyper-visible to many Native people who seem all too aware of the ways non-Native people often project exoticism onto them. An elder at one of the local Longhouses expressed to me the way a non-Native educator I work with in the district always seems to position him in a particular way, treating him with a disproportionate amount of reverence and deference. He is an elder, yes, but not a king, and certainly not a caricature. Her projections onto him conferred upon him a type of exotic identity that he didn't ask for or want. It is this terrain that Native people are often forced to walk along, even as we contest it, yet this terrain feels as if it is invisible to the principal.

[132] I have yet to write this story, but plan on using it to discuss what Dolores Calderon (2009) terms "colonial blind." The principal, reflecting on her equity statement, discussed how she came to understand the importance of affirming the color brown by recalling a pivotal moment in her own schooling experience. Her memories of making "spirit rain masks" were central to her development as a race-conscious educator, yet nowhere in that memory was a troubling of that particular activity. She was explicitly trying to affirm race and resist "color blind" mentalities, but was blind to the coloniality of her activities, emphasized in her continued endorsement of such tokenization.

A principal sensitized to such terrain not only would have situated the assembly among other comprehensive curricular activities for the month, but also recognized that critical engagement with this discourse would be *necessary* as it often comes with the turf of inclusions of Indigenous peoples and life in the curriculum; that is, Native people are "*always already* 'Indian'" (Barker & Teiawa, 2005):

> He/She stands before you. He/She walks with you. He/She interferes with the ways of your steps, making you always backtrack, sideways, through the dramas of the Frontier and the stills of Curtis.
>
> CHIEF BRAVE MEDICINE MAN WARRIOR PRINCESS SQUA FRY BREAD MAKER PAPOOSE CARRIER insists on enclosing you within His/Her reserves of "Indian" identity and "Indian'" territory engendered and racialized as the "primitive-native." (p. 111)

She would have recognized that in order to affirm the diversity, complexity, and contributions of Native peoples, the exotic shadows cast on Native people would need to be challenged. Though I am sure she saw the assembly as a means to support Live Indians, as well as raise awareness about Native culture, the trope of the Dead Indian seemed to be getting in the way of more nuanced curricular support, and it didn't appear that she was aware of it. This came into sharper focus as Melvina showed me a video that was circulating around the district of the teachers and administrators dancing at the assembly.

What seems to be lacking is not the will to represent Indigenous peoples (evident in her willingness to include the assembly, or her support for projects like Kachinas or totem poles or masks), but the willingness to hear what I offered her, and the

unwillingness to be critical of any of those efforts. By unwillingness, I do not necessarily mean an individual's stubbornness, though the fact that some individuals are more or less attuned to these dynamics leads me to believe that some individuals might willfully be ignorant; rather, I am referring to the stubbornness of the particularly hegemonic narrative of the Dead Indian that circulates unquestioned, and the unwillingness to recognize and be critical of that particular form of Indianness. This unwillingness perhaps might be more appropriately termed inability (as in an educator may not necessarily be *unwilling* to see outside of that Indian narrative, but *unable* given her particular resources), and yet, there seems to be a collective unwillingness to critically engage those narratives, to disrupt the ignorance those representations maintain. As King states, "…all North America can see is the Dead Indian. All North America dreams about is the Dead Indian. There's a good reason, of course. The Dead Indian is what North America wants to be" (2013, p. 73).

This navigation of ignorance and misrepresentation of Indigenous life *is* one of the most central features of contemporary Indigenous life in a post-apocalyptic[133] world colonized by European settlers. It is an appreciation of this feature of contemporary Indigenous life by educators, perhaps more than any particular piece of information, that is needed in mainstream schools. Understanding this would reframe the struggles of many Indigenous students and families—transforming them from personal deficits to an understanding that Indigenous students are often the ones strained to work around the deficits of others (including their teachers who are there to support them). Of course such understanding requires acknowledgement of such deficits on the part of majority culture

[133] See Cutcha Risling Baldy's (Hoopa Valley Tribe, Karuk, Yurok) article (2013) "On telling Native people to 'get over it," or why I teach about the Walking Dead in my Native Studies classes…" for a connection between Native people and post-apocalyptic times.

teachers, administrators, and institutions, something that both persons and institutions have historically been resistant to doing. These deficits, however, are real, as are the consequences of denying them, which result in the deficits being projected onto Indigenous children and their families.

This awareness of the ways Indigenous peoples are often concealed in mainstream narratives, or when included are represented in the forms of caricatures, is a central component of teacher practical knowledge needed to better serve Native students and represent Native peoples in the curriculum. This awareness would not only facilitate more appropriate and respectful curriculum for Native Heritage Month, but also enable teachers to begin detecting bias in the curriculum often taught about Native peoples—the historic accounts of Pilgrims and Indians, the Indians the explorers encountered, the reach for cultural activities such as masks and totem poles, as well as the almost deafening silence surrounding contemporary Native peoples in the curriculum.

What should be circulated, rather than caricaturizing narratives, is an awareness of the ways those narratives operate to silence the real, diverse, and contemporary lives of Native peoples. What should be normalized, rather than the unquestioned reach for and reproduction of the Dead Indian, is a self-consciousness on the part of majority culture and settler teachers as to how problematic that circulation of the Dead Indian actually is. This awareness and self-consciousness shouldn't paralyze efforts to include Indigenous people and life in the curriculum, but serve as a critical reading alongside any such efforts at inclusion on the part of teachers. Further, in order to begin circulating and normalizing different discourses about Indigenous peoples in schools, there needs to be explicit

attention to a critical education for students as well, as they are the peers who often constrain Native students in schools with their uncritical imaginations.

Critical awareness in planning the assembly might have situated this Native Pride event within a context of much needed pre- and post-teaching, recognizing that *any* inclusion of Indigenous people in the curriculum would necessarily entail at least some of the students or educators interpreting the performance through a Dead Indian reading. Critical awareness might have recognized that Native people have long been positioned as objects and spectacles used to delight non-Native audiences, and though this performance wasn't the same as the historic world's fairs that positioned Native people as timeless and exotic, the inclusion of a Native performer in regalia was still a form of curricular staging and selective editing. Critical awareness might have understood that narrowing the inclusion of Native people in the curriculum for Native Heritage Month to a single performer dressed in regalia was a form of staging or selective editing. Critical awareness might also have recognized that schools as institutions wield particular forms of power through such constrained inclusions, and that this editorial process would have real effects for what students would consider valid knowledge about Indigenous peoples.

The principal's question to me is reflective of the need for *everyone* in schools—administrators, educators, Native and non-Native students—to be educated about a critique of settler society along with inclusive representations of Indigenous life. Teachers equipped with a critical awareness to interrogate the ways Indigenous peoples are represented in the curriculum could move beyond a "poetic" reading of the performance (his performance gave me goosebumps, his performance was so powerful)

to a “political” read, one which situates the performance within the broader sociopolitical, cultural, and historical context in which that performance takes place (Lidchi, 1997).

Lidchi’s analysis is particularly important as events framed to honor and respect Native people often occur within a broader context that continues to erase their contemporary presence and needs. Lidchi’s example of the *The Spirit Sings* exhibit in Canada is a prime example. The exhibit was designed “to highlight the ‘richness, diversity, and complexity’ of Canada’s native cultures at the moment of contact…the ‘distinctive view’ of these cultures, and… the ‘adaptability and resilience’ of these cultures in the face of European domination” (p. 202). A poetic reading of the event may have highlighted these aims, but situated in the broader political context (Shell Oil’s endorsement of the museum, for example), the exhibit might be also read within the context of power, knowledge, and unresolved land claims that Chief Bernard Ominayak notes as ironic: “The irony of using a display of North American Indian artifacts to attract people to the Winter Olympics being organized by interests who are still actively seeking to destroy Indian people seems painfully obvious” (p. 203). A “politics” of representation and performance lends itself to better understanding why Gilbert de la O refused to perform for Cinco de Mayo until Chicanos/Latinos have parity “in board rooms instead of cloak rooms,” or why Montezuma was concerned about Indians being paraded around on display for Whites, while remaining wards to the BIA.

The performer, however, was not Gilbert de la O or Montezuma. He most certainly seemed to be participating on his own terms.[134] He was part of a larger

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[134] I struggle with ways to explore the limits of such a performance, recognizing the terms were produced within the context of discourse, without reducing the awareness, purposes, and intentions of the performer. It would not be appropriate to frame him in the same way that Lidchi views museum collections—objects, or subjects made into objects, “not extracted willingly from originating cultures… always excisions,

collective of performers, passionate and prideful in their practice, hopeful that they can "educate, inspire, motivate and empower diverse communities to bridge cultural gaps through Indigenous traditions" (Native Pride Arts, n.d.) Perhaps the dancer, along with his colleagues, was aware of the broader pattern of Indigenous people being called on to perform for non-Native audiences, and despite this problematic history, see promise in the practice. Perhaps he views performance as a powerful way of maintaining visibility for himself and his people, an important assertion in the face of historic and present erasures. Perhaps he also assumed his assembly would be part of a more comprehensive educational effort on the part of the district, rather than *the* effort for the month. It is possible he hadn't considered the politics of his performance and how he might be read (though given his critical assertions throughout the performance, it seems likely that he is highly aware of the complex context in which he works). Regardless, the performer wasn't the problem.

The problem was the broader context and narrative that positioned him between the poles of erasure and caricature, what Stuart Hall (1995) discusses as an ambivalent positioning inherent in some of society's "base-images of the 'grammar of race'" (p. 22). The slave-figure who is dependable and loving, but also "unreliable, unpredictable, and undependable—capable of 'turning nasty'"; the "native," who on the one hand embodies "primitive nobility," but on the other, is cheating and cunning, savage and barbaric; or the "clown" whose graceful and humorous performance coupled with his stupidity leaves us

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removed, often painfully from the body of other, less powerful, cultures" (p. 198). Further, scholars like Cruikshank show the dangers in analyzing his performance as solely a representation. Drawing on Frank Myers who "suggests that public performances of indigenous culture should be understood as tangible forms of social action rather than as texts or representations standing outside the real activity of participants," Cruikshank highlights that "such analyses…erase the ways indigenous peoples confer meaning on circumstances that confront them, having the effect of a double erasure of agency—first by the colonial forces, then by postcolonial analyses" (p. 56). Yet I am also looking for a way to talk about the ways the audience might mediate and constrain his agency.

wondering if we are laughing with him or at him. The connection between these images is what Hall terms

> their deep *ambivalence*—the double vision of the white eye through which they are seen. The primitive nobility of the aging tribesman or chief, and the native's rhythmic grace, always contain both a nostalgia for an innocence lost forever to the civilised, and the threat of civilisation being over-run or undermined by the recurrence of savagery, which is always lurking just below the surface; or by an untutored sexuality, threatening to "break out." Both are aspects—the good and the bad sides—of *primitivism*. In these images, "primitivism" is defined by the fixed proximity of such people to Nature. (p. 22)

A critical reading of inclusion would necessarily entail a recognition of this ambivalence, a recognition of the ways Native people are not only positioned between the poles of erasure and caricature, but also other "binaries of authenticity" (Raibmon, 2005) that often unconsciously frame Indigenous peoples, and subsequently, shape curricular inclusions and framings of Native peoples. Raibmon outlines various "either-or" binaries that have been part of the collective framing of Indian authenticity between poles of civilized/savage, modern/traditional, political/cultural, dominant/subordinant, or urban/rural for example. These binaries manifest as some of the "base-images" Hall outlines (noble/ignoble savage, or the princess/squaw that Rayna Green critiques), images he claims that go to work unconsciously, and "disappear from view into the taken-for-granted 'naturalised' world of common sense" (p. 19). Rather than "overt" racism, they manifest as "inferential racism" as they are often based on "unquestioned assumptions" (p. 20).

Given this, an adequeate teacher knowledge base to support Native students necessarily needs to be able to surface these unquestioned assumptions and to disrupt the unconscious ambivalent framings of Native people, often by non-Native educators or students (though possibly by Native students as well if their understanding of these issues comes from settler educaiton alone). Further, a recognition by educators that Native people often navigate this ambivalence artfully despite others' unconscious framings of them positions Native people as skillful navigators, rather than what appears the almost-default positioning of Native people as embodying the deficits. The deficits that must be acknowledge are in the unexamined narratives that frame Native people so narrowly and problematically.

A reading of the Native Pride Assembly, then, through a political lens of performance, through the Dead Indian, and through the problematic binaries and "base-images" of Native peoples, might situate an evaluation of this performance beyond the question of "Wasn't that wonderful?" A critical reading and evaluation would situate the performance within broader questions about when Native people, such as this dancer, are invited into the educational processes of the school. In what ways are they invited to do so? How does this performance sit with respect to the core processes of curriculum and pedagogy in the school? What does it help students learn about Native people and nations? What does it help them unlearn? What does this performance reproduce about notions of authenticity (or self/other or familiar/strange)? What does it unsettle or disrupt?

A critical awareness might not have questioned whether or not the assembly was "wonderful," but instead theorized and been accountable for the conclusions students

would draw from such a performance. It would have already situated this performance and questions about it within a context of pervasive miseducation regarding Native peoples. It would recognize the curriculum's potential was limited, but would always keep in sight the question of what the curriculum was doing for Native peoples and nations. How does this performance work toward creating more promising Native futures? How does this performance help non-Native students understand themselves in relation to Native people and nations?

In his reading of the "Spirit Sings" museum exhibit sponsored by Shell Oil, Peter Kulchyski (1997) states, "The question is whether this exhibit – which follows what seems too [sic] commonly be done in museum practice – celebrated dead culture at the expense of living Aboriginal culture, and thereby contributed to the process of cultural destruction" (p. 615). The same question applies here: The question is whether curriculum for Native Heritage Month celebrated dead culture at the expense of living Native culture. What might Native Heritage Month look like if it explicitly took up different framings? How might alternative framings remind students of their relationship to Native peoples or nations? How might they remind Native students of their legacy as citizens and descendants of tribal nations? Or how might they remind non-Native students and teachers of their responsibilities as settlers, "arrivants" (Byrd, 2011), or guests?

In the following section, I engage in a process of "disruptive daydreaming" (Dion, 2008). This disruptive daydreaming is "the production of hopeful images. That is, the production of 'images of that which is not yet' that provoke people to consider, and inform them in considering, what would have to be done for things to be otherwise."

(Simon, 1992, as cited in Dion, 2008, p. 11). In this disruptive daydreaming, I imagine a different sort of Native Heritage Month, one that takes seriously King's other two framings of Indigenous peoples—Live Indians and Legal Indians. King asserts that dominant culture is resistant to Live or Legal framings, that these framings are in fact, "inconvenient." Live Indians challenge their own relegation to discourses of backwardness, timelessness, and authenticity, and this is uncomfortable to those who hold on to those comforting stories. Legal Indians assert and uphold claims to land, place, and rights that unsettle dominant narratives of entitlement and rightful ownership. Yet I will imagine anyway what an assembly might look like based on different framings, and what Native Heritage Month might look like outside of the more conventional framing of culture.

It is important to sit inside the tension of recognizing that the principal's efforts were more than this school had ever seen, as well as recognizing that those efforts could be improved upon. There are different ways the curriculum for Native Heritage Month could have played out and there must be space to question narrow inclusions without fear that teachers or principals will abandon efforts all together.

I want to humbly offer two underpinnings that might prompt different curricular approaches. I don't claim these as a panacea for the month or Native education as a whole, but an offering that I hope will prompt teachers and principals to imagine something different for their schools next November. These suggestions should accompany comprehensive efforts by educators to work with a collective of parents, educators, and community members to outline activities for the month, and make a plan for how to integrate them throughout the year. Educators should also explicitly "consider

what students will learn from heritage celebrations" (Menkart, 2008, p. 375) and tailor those outcomes to each particular communities.[135]

Alternative Underpinnings: Process and Sovereignty

The terrain of Indigenous identity, culture, community, and nationhood is complex. As such, corresponding efforts to serve Indigenous students and teach about Indigenous people, culture and communities, and nations must not be perfect—they can never be—but those efforts must be equally complex. To reclaim the space of heritage months as a site of resistance to dominant framings, a site of empowerment for Native youth, and as an educational opportunity for non-Native students is to claim a site that is already marginalized. One month might inevitably be a "tokenizing" or "add-on" curricular gesture for an educational system that scholars such as Dolores Calderon (2009) have blatantly (and accurately) critiqued as the "functionary arm of colonialism" (p. 53).

I hear the concern that Native Heritage Month, along with other heritage months, is positioned as peripheral to the core curriculum, and that its marginalization outside of the regular business of schooling is inevitably constrained as an "add-on" approach to multicultural education and might feel like a concession. Yet to ignore this month because of its limits, to avoid creating opportunities for Native students or avoid engaging the general student body in efforts to better understand Indigenous peoples and

[135] Deborah Menkart's (2008) article "Heritage Months and Celebrations: Some Considerations" in *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development* has a variety of practical suggestions, including:

1. Consider what students will learn from heritage celebrations.
2. Examine the school's yearlong curriculum.
3. Recognize that Latinos and Asian Americans have deep roots in the United States.
4. Include all the Americas.
5. Present Native American culture not only in the past, but also in the present.
6. Introduce leaders in the context of the organizations they worked with.
7. Recognize the diversity that exists within the United States and Canada. (pp. 375-375)

nations and issues, especially on the part of majority culture educators, is a deflection and another form of erasure. Because of the "symbolic annihilation" (Gerbner, 1972) of Native peoples in mainstream media and school curriculum, I hold on to the curricular space that Native Heritage Month holds, hoping to wield it in such a way that it benefits Indigenous students while also educating the rest of the student body—not as a replacement of, but alongside other efforts to disrupt the colonialism that schools often reproduce.[136] My advocacy for Native Heritage Month as a site of promise is part of a larger collective of educators urging schools to tell new stories to students. Refashioned,

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[136] Heritage and history months have a longstanding history of being marginalized, and there are contesting views as to whether educators should wield them as tools or abandon them. I maintain that they create a compromised but useful pedagogical and curricular space in the current context that rarely includes contemporary Indigenous issues, but also recognize that they have been ignored or tokenized, and in my context specifically, Native Heritage Month in the K-12 level has yet to do real good for the communities it purportedly "celebrates." As a parallel example, Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black history," worked tirelessly to create Negro History Week. His proposal was conceived, not as a way to supplant yearlong curriculum that incorporates Black History, but as a specific intervention into what he saw as a blatant omission of such. Woodson (1933) states:

> In history, of course, the Negro had no place in this curriculum. He was pictured as a human being of the lower order, unable to subject passion to reason, and therefore useful only when made the hewer of wood and the drawer of water for others. No thought was given to the history of Africa except so far as it had been a field of exploitation for the Caucasian. You might study the history as it was offered in our system from the elementary school throughout the university, and you would never hear Africa mentioned except in the negative. You would never thereby learn that Africans first domesticated the sheep, goat, and cow, developed the idea of trial by jury, produced the first stringed instruments, and gave the world its greatest boon in the discovery of iron. You would never know that prior to the Mohammedan invasion about 1000 A.D. these natives in the heart of Africa had developed powerful kingdoms which were later organized as the Songhay Empire on the order of that of the Romans and boasting of similar grandeur. (p. 34)

For Woodson, Black history was essential to both the story of Black Americans and all Americans. He thought an emphasis on Black history, "from their roots in African civilizations, to their resistance and fight against slavery, to their numerous contributions to American society—needed to be researched, published, distributed, and learned by Blacks and Whites alike...[and] the only way to carry out the important process of racial uplift" (Bair, 2012, p. 61). Yet Woodson soon became aware that his efforts to utilize Negro Awareness Week as a platform for engaging in yearlong Black History were often misunderstood. In 1938, he commented in an article for the *Negro History Bulletin:*

> Some teachers and their students have misunderstood the celebration of Negro History Week. They work up enthusiasm during these few days, stage a popular play, present an orator of the day, or render exercises of a literary order; but they forget the Negro thereafter throughout the year. To proceed in such fashion may do as much harm as good. It is a reflection of the record of the race to leave the impression that its history can be disposed of in a few days. (Bair, 2012, p. 61)

I move forward with my claim that schools should utilize heritage months more effectively, well aware that educators usually "work up enthusiasm" and then "might forget the Negro [Native] thereafter."

the month of November could be a launching point for schools' efforts to tell better stories all year long.

My first suggestion emphasizes the month in lieu of *processes* rather than *products* (Pepper et al, 2014). In this reach for process, Native Heritage Month might be a chance to provide a valuable space for community, culture, and decolonizing praxis specifically for Native students. This suggestion privileges King's conception of Live Indians, offering that the month be used in a way to support the Native students within the school and district as Native students. In the second proposal, I abandon the idea of performance, suggesting that cultural underpinnings to this month might quite possibly be bankrupt. I suggest that maybe culture is no longer a useful construct or underpinning for this month anymore, and that Native Heritage Month might be more useful and effective if it were to focus explicitly on sovereignty and nationhood. This suggestion privileges King's framing of Legal Indians, and in this proposal I imagine the month as a chance to take seriously the notion of sovereignty and the responsibility that recognizing Indigenous rights to sovereignty and self-determination entail on the part of Native and non-Native people.

Live Indians: A focus on processes rather than products. Performances, if linked to processes, are not inherently bad framings. The deficits I hope I pointed out earlier did not lie in the performer, or even the desire to include performances if they were part of a broader effort. The deficits were in the ways non-Native students and educators engaged the performance using those narratives. An emphasis on processes over products might enable performances to provide more valuable opportunities for

Native youth, the suggestion Melvina has had for the month all along, but was never asked.

As an example, on the Warm Springs Radio Facebook page recently, I saw a similar assembly. Hundreds of Native students were sitting on the floor and bleachers as they watched other Native students and community members partake in various fancy, traditional, and inter-tribal round dances. A drum circle played on the side, while a group of Native vets and military stood behind watching. The assembly was titled "Rock Your Mocs," an idea started in 2011 by then 19-year old Laguna Pueblo student Jessica "Jaylyn" Atsye from New Mexico, who came home from a ceremony wearing her moccasins and commented, "These mocs are so comfortable, I wish I could wear them every day."[137] She decided to start a day during Native Heritage Month where Native students could do just that. She saw moccasins as a part of Native cultures that most Native people shared, despite the fact the materials or designs differed. Wearing them together would be a way to exert cultural pride and foster a sense of community. "Rocking one's mocs" was a form of performance, but wearing the moccasins was not just about the moccasins as a product, but part of a process of individual and community empowerment. The performances within the predominately Native context of Warm Springs as well as the Rock Your Mocs pride movement felt something other than what I was experiencing at the Native Pride Assembly in the district. Context seemed to profoundly shape whether performances would be interpreted or felt as processes of empowerment or as products.

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[137] See the Colorlines article by Bogado (2013) for Jessica Jaylyn Atsye's explanation of how the "Rock Your Mocs" day started.

In the predominately non-Native context in the district, perhaps a performance could also be envisioned as a way to both support Native students as well as educate non-Native students. If this is the case, the goal of working towards performances that empower Native youth, might benefit from engagement with examples such as the Wapato Indian Club, a club that Yakama scholar Michelle Jacob examines as a site of cultural revitalization practices and decolonization. Jacob opens her book *Yakama Rising* with a beautiful portrayal of Native youth from the Wapato Indian club on the Yakama reservation, dancing to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Washington State. Jacob's account of the performance portrays not only the beauty and grace of the welcome dance the students embody, but the cultural values and responsibilities the youth were embodying in their Yakama decolonizing praxis. As Jacob states, the children are "expected to embody these values, as they learn and carry on the teachings of their elders. As such, the children's bodies become a site for critical pedagogy" (p. 45). Jacob outlines how the Wapato Indian Club contributes to Indigenous social theories of change as they call on us "to remember the potential and contribution of recognizing young people's leadership and the importance of the body as a liberatory tool for critical awareness, leadership development, and decolonizing praxis" (pp. 45-46). Depicted through a beautifully illustrated swan at the end of the chapter (symbolic of the swan dance, a traditional dance the youth learned to honor the bird), were core values Jacob saw emerge from the Wapato Indian Club: respect, healing, inclusivity, self-awareness, unity, listening, and responsibility.

In Jacob's account, the students were performing for a broader audience, but the explicit aim was to provide opportunities for the youth to embody those core values. It

was the latter aspect that made such a performance decolonizing. Like the Native Pride dancer, however, just because the students embodied critical pedagogy did not necessarily mean they wouldn't be interpreted in narrow ways. The students were also "embodying contradictions." Some of those contradictions to those who view "tradition" narrowly were evident in the way the Club acknowledged the fluidity of identity, teaching both Plateau style dances alongside pan-Indian pow wow ones, or including dances that sign "the Lord's Prayer," eliding the question of authenticity by grounding the performance in Yakama values of unity, generosity, and inclusivity. Other contradictions were evident in the ways the performance may have been read by the non-Native audience. Regarding the opening Welcome Dance, Jacob offered:

> Perhaps it is a fitting irony that Indian children danced to commemorate Washington's one-hundredth anniversary. Perhaps the dance reminded state officials of their obligation to our people. After all, the officials worked for a bureaucracy that existed as a result of the genocide and destruction of Indian peoples. Perhaps the display of dancing children and the presence of so many Indian bodies reminded officials that they were on Yakama homeland. Or, perhaps the audience simply saw, in amazement, that even after over one hundred years of the violence of colonization, settlement, war, and reservation policies, Yakama children could take center stage at an official event and steal the show. (p. 5)

I am not sure that the Native Pride assembly reminded students or teachers of their "obligation" to Indigenous people, or that they were on Indigenous land. It seems more likely that the performance was experienced as entertaining, one in which Mr.

Barry "stole the show." What seems to distinguish the Warm Springs and Wapato Indian Club example from the Native Pride Assembly, however, was that in the former, the schools were reaching for a decolonizing *process* (the empowerment through the Rock Your Mocs campaign, or the Wapato Indian Club's ongoing efforts at cultural revitalization that only happened to lead them to their performance at the state's anniversary event). The school, however, in its reach for curriculum for Native Heritage Month, appeared to reach only for the *product* (the Native Pride Assembly), rather than these processes of empowerment.

Dominant culture's grasp for the products of Indigeneity is far too common. But a quick dismissal of those products as inherently bad and in need of avoidance elides the ways what may appear as products for majority culture consumers simultaneously operate as processes within particular contexts. This distinction between contextual cultural processes appropriated into products/commodities is portrayed eloquently Peter Kulchyski's (1997) work on cultural appropriation and subversion. Kulchyski illustrates how "the same slippers widely sold throughout North America as commodities that are emblematic of Native American-ness are made by hand, distributed in a gift economy, and worn as basic footwear in many northern Aboriginal communities" (p. 612). To dismiss the slippers/products themselves as the problem would be to also dismiss the way those same products fit appropriately within a context of production and popular culture; rather, it is the cultural practice of emphasizing the "product" (and the associated Nativeness) that appears problematic.[138] A Native Heritage Month that emphasized *processes* and the context of production rather than the *product* (the performance, the

[138] I suppose an over-emphasis on "production" can also lend itself to dilemmas, evident in the ways German Hobbyists can become "experts" on Native culture to the extent that they critique Native peoples' own cultural practices as "inauthentic."

totem pole, the mask) might better serve Native students, though it doesn't necessarily interrupt the ways non-Native students and educators might frame or even appropriate those efforts.

Melvina echoed a desire for a similar process for the program's Native kids, one that would empower them as Native people, leaving the education of non-Native students and educators as a secondary concern. The Title VII program currently has a drum group and if the students desired, they could present at their respective schools, for example, as both an empowering experience for them, as well as an educative experience for their peers. Students have performed at multicultural assemblies at their school, as well as district events. Like the Wapato Indian Club, the month could be a chance to highlight important processes the group is already engaging in, though schools would still need to partake in corresponding efforts to critically educate their students about contemporary Indigenous life, as their performance could be interpreted as and reinforce narrow framings of Indigenous peoples. However, the shift from hiring an outside Native performer to engaging the district's own students in the ongoing process of embodying important community values might be a more promising direction.

Legal Indians: A focus on sovereignty. I believe processes are important to Native students, but in the predominately non-Native context of public schools here, perhaps those processes are meant for closed spaces like the Native Youth Center. Perhaps those processes are meant for Native students to engage in among their peers and mentors and communities, and not in their predominately non-Native schools. Another possible framing for Native Heritage Month could be one of the foundational "bedrock

upon which any and every discussion of Indian reality today must be built"—sovereignty (Lomawaima, 2000, p. 3).

There is enough anecdotal evidence by now—in my own schooling experience, from the Native youth and educators I work with, from pop culture's continuing fascination with Dead Indians—that a cultural undergirding of curriculum in predominately non-Native contexts has done little except reproduce engagement with Dead Indians, and foreclosed possibilities to interact with Live and Legal ones. Teachers and principals may have felt touched by the assembly and experienced the aesthetics of Native cultural expression, but I'm not sure it fostered any substantive engagement with issues of Native student success in the schools or district. The performance may have fostered a sense of wonder about Native culture, but I'm not sure it led to considering how Native students at that school might have disproportionate access to the school curriculum as a result of their culture or backgrounds. This performance most likely did little to draw attention to what students are taught about Native peoples the rest of the year; it may have even served to appease the principal and teachers and left them feeling they had addressed Native curriculum, since this multicultural assembly was seemingly inclusive through its focus on Native heritage.

Students may have watched in awe at the Native dancer, but as their only engagement with Native people that year so far (aside from the unit on the Mayflower and the Kachinas, totem poles, and masks), I'm not sure it broadened their understanding of Native peoples, or fostered a respect for their Native peers or people today. Native students may have gained a sense of pride in their cultures, but what attention did it draw to their reflections about being citizens or descendants of tribal nations? It may seem too

much to ask that the curriculum for Native Heritage Month be responsible for instilling a sense of understanding of or responsibility toward Native people and nations, but what if that were its goal, however far-reaching or elusive?

I am not the first to make a claim that alternative underpinnings are needed. This insight is not my own, but a collective one, pervasive in the literature I read and the communities I am a part of. I only use stories such as this one as a means of amplifying this collective insight. Numerous scholars have theorized the limits of narrow notions of "culture" (Erickson, 2010; Grande, 2004; Gutierrez, 2005; Hermes, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Kulchyski, 1997; Paris & Alim, 2014). Other scholars have critiqued the ways that multiculturalist discourses function to erase Indigenous distinctiveness and undermine sovereignty. Indigenous peoples have long been insisting that they are not "people of color," but rather citizens and members of sovereign tribal nations (Lomawaima, 1991; Calderon, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012; St. Denis, 2011). (It should be noted here that not all Indigenous people are citizens/members of tribal nations, and that not all tribal nations are recognized as such; however, it is colonialism, not racism alone, that provides the contours and boundaries that delineate inclusions or exclusions of tribal membership, or account for which tribe is federally recognized or not).

These scholars critique multiculturalist framings that erase land-based and political distinctions, foregrounding dispossession via colonialism rather than oppression via racism as a primary site of struggle. St. Denis (2011), for example, states,

> …multiculturalism erases the specific and unique location of Aboriginal peoples as Indigenous to this land by equating them with multicultural and immigrant groups…Aboriginals peoples reject multiculturalism as an instrument of

> colonialism. Multiculturalism is dependent on colonial structures because it assumes the legitimacy of the current colonial Canadian government. As multiculturalism ignores ongoing colonialization, the result is a trivializing and erasing of Aboriginal sovereignty. (p. 311)

Given not only the erasures evident through caricatures, but also those that occur when Indigenous peoples are positioned within multiculturalist frameworks, a response to these erasures would be to make apparent these erasures through a reassertion of the political distinctiveness of Indigenous peoples as the original peoples of this land, and who hold not only moral, but legal and political claims to territory in the US.

This political distinctiveness and recognition of sovereignty has been noted in many Presidential and Gubernatorial proclamations for National American Indian Heritage Month, and yet, it has been seemingly "unlearned" or ignored through schools (Calderon, 2011), many of whom take cultural approaches to Native curriculum. Early attempts by Parker and others to create a time of recognition through the assertion of American Indian Day were, in part, an effort to recognize American Indians and their substantial contributions to the US. Presidential proclamations that followed acknowledged explicitly the political status of tribal nations, and considered this day/week/month a chance to recognize not only the substantial contributions American Indians have made, *but also their unique status as sovereign nations*, and the US government's responsibility to engage them as such. As President Reagan stated in 1983 for American Indian Day:

> Our new Nation continued to enter into treaties with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis. Throughout our history, despite periods of

> conflict and shifting national policies in Indian affairs, *the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian tribes has endured*. The Constitution, treaties, laws, and court decisions have consistently *recognized a unique political relationship between Indian tribes and the United States.* [emphasis added]

As Obama stated in his 2014 declaration for National American Indian Heritage Month:

> During National Native American Heritage Month, we honor their legacy, and we *recommit to strengthening our nation-to-nation partnerships*. [emphasis added]

As Governor Kitzhaber stated in his 2014 declaration for National American Indian Heritage Month:

> Oregon is home—from time immemorial—to the people of *Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes*: Burns Paiute Tribe; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians; Coquille Indian Tribe; Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians; Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community; Klamath Tribes; Confederated Tribes of Siletz; Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation; and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. [emphasis added]

In each of these proclamations there is attention to and recognition of the *sovereignty* of Indigenous nations. It seems, however, that the formalities of these nation-to-nation relationships and the corresponding responsibilities they entail have been, as Dolores Calderon (2011) states, "unlearned," and that subsequently, this ignorance has been reproduced through schooling. Schools, in their choices to include only "cultural" practices of Indigenous peoples, or to include Indigenous peoples in only historic ways,

do so at the expense of other important foundations and inclusions, such as inherent and political sovereignty, or responsibilities to people and place. When read against this light, it becomes plausible that the "unknowing"—the ignorance surrounding Live Indians and Legal Indians, and the corresponding fascination with Dead Indians—is not just a "gap" in knowledge, but a particular knowledge construction, a construction based in and reproductive of particular gaps.

This manufactured ignorance produces and maintains, as Calderon (2011) suggests, "configurations of interests." In her analysis of social studies, the "'configuration of interests' is the framing of Whites as the new natives" (p. 112). In the case of the Native Pride Assembly, the "configuration of interests" is that educators can "feel good" about their multicultural efforts to include Native people in the curriculum, evidenced by their goosebumps or the tears in their eyes. Those educators gain affective returns on their diversity or multicultural investments. Further, their narrow and selective focus on culture enables them to avoid the less "satisfying" dimensions of Indigenous life, such as issues of rights or responsibility. It doesn't feel as good to know land is being usurped, rights being taken away, or realize one's complicity in the historic and present-day assaults on Native peoples, lands, and nations. It doesn't feel good to know one has benefitted from or is complicit in dispossession.

Lyons (2000) outlines the consequences of "hegemonic versions of the American Indian story" still told in schools and popular culture that imply Indian nations are "communities" rather than sovereign nations:

> From "sovereign" to "ward," from "nation" to "tribe," and from "treaty" to "agreement," the erosion of Indian national sovereignty can be credited in part to

> a rhetorically imperialist use of writing by white powers, and from that point on, much of the discourse on tribal sovereignty has nit-picked, albeit powerfully, around terms and definitions. (p. 453)

Schooling has explicitly been a site of reproduction of this ignorance, and performances such as the Native Pride Assembly without any other explicit education or contextualizing of the assembly, reproduce through their "cultural" underpinnings not only tokenistic and shallow understandings of "culture" generally, but the notion that Native people are "cultural" members of diverse "communities." Though unacknowledged, by keeping quiet about the other dimensions of Indigenous identity, life, and nationhood, the multicultural Native assembly becomes a microcosm of the broader pattern scholars like Calderon and Lyons note of negating and eroding sovereignty (precluding responsibility to Native people and nations).

Tsianina Lomawaima (Mvskoke/Creek Nation) in a visit to our graduate curriculum studies class at the university one year, stated that in her introduction to Native Studies class, her primary goal for the term was to get her freshmen students to understand one thing: tribal sovereignty. For Carter G. Woodson in his advocacy for Negro History Week, *history* was a site for critical engagement, but for Indigenous peoples, often rendered historic, a grounding in *sovereignty* might be a more suitable base from which students and staff could then critically respect and recognize Native American nations, people, and their contributions in respectful rather than tokenistic ways. What if this month were—following in the footsteps of courageous Indigenous educators and allies who created curriculum such as the Since Time Immemorial Tribal

Sovereignty Curriculum in Washington—a chance to focus on sovereignty; a chance to understand Indigenous nations' unique government-to-government status with the US?

Sovereignty predates Indigenous encounters with settler society. It is, as many Native people have continually asserted, *inherent*. As the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs' "Declaration of Sovereignty" (1992) states,

> Our people have exercised inherent sovereignty, as nations, on the Columbia Plateau for thousands of years, since time immemorial. Our Sovereignty is permeated by the spiritual and the sacred, which are, and always have been, inseparable parts of our lives, for the Creator leads us in all aspects of our existence. (para. 1)

As Lyons (2000) states, "Sovereignty as I generally use and understand the term, denotes the right of a people to conduct its own affairs, in its own place, in its own way" (p. 450). Lyons contends sovereignty is more robust than how it is conventionally understood, "more than arguments for tax-exempt status or the right to build and operate casinos… nothing less than our attempt to survive and flourish as a people" (p. 449). Grande (2004) also reminds us that sovereignty is not only political, but also an intellectual, pedagogical, and spiritual project, as well as a "restorative process" (p. 57). Native peoples have long been discussing the principle of sovereignty, and for many Native peoples, an understanding of sovereignty must necessarily entail more than the political, as those tribes who are not federally recognized or those Native individuals who aren't citizens still "attempt to survive and flourish as a people." In fact it is in these immensely personal, spiritual, and collective struggles that political sovereignty can be seen to be necessarily strategic, but also partial. Yet despite the more-than-political

conversations around sovereignty Native peoples have been having, to begin grounding Native Heritage Month in the principle of sovereignty doesn't necessarily require an educator understand these nuances before improving and intervening into curricula.

All teachers, pre-service and in-service, should have some education around Indigenous sovereignty and be reading and in conversation with those who have thought deeply and critically about these issues. However, currently there are many teachers in schools who have little to no understanding of the concept: who couldn't even identify the political nature of Indigeneity and Indigenous nations, let alone what sovereignty might mean as a spiritual or rhetorical project (Grande, 2004; Lyons, 2000). Though I believe this knowledge and Native Studies more generally should be required pre-service curriculum, to require such an understanding of sovereignty before any imagining of alternative framings for Native Heritage Month would position that potential grounding as always on the horizon, a positioning that would use ignorance as justification for its exclusion. (This is the same reasoning that is consistently used to avoid the inclusion of contemporary Indigenous issues in the curriculum. "I would do differently if I knew…." is a common rebuttal for why teachers rely on the same historic, tokenizing curriculum year after year).

If sovereignty were thought of instead, at least minimally, as an orientation—a shift from looking at Indigeneity as a cultural matter to at the very least, a political one—even a relatively uniformed shift would begin to invite different curricular questions, decisions, and possibilities. A shift that positions Native people as citizens of nations (rather than "diverse" members of communities) would then invite explorations of

Indigenous nationhood, citizenship, and rights (rather than celebrations of "food, festivals, and fun").

The overarching, essential questions for the Since Time Immemorial (STI) curriculum developed and now required in Washington State provide a glimpse at the orientation I am referring to.

STI Essential Questions:

1. How does physical geography affect Northwest tribes' culture, economy, and where they choose to settle and trade?
2. What is the legal status of the tribes who negotiated or who did not enter into United States treaties?
3. What were the political, economic, and cultural forces that led to the treaties?
4. What are the ways in which tribes responded to the threats and outside pressure to extinguish their cultures and independence?
5. What have local tribes done to meet the challenges of reservation life? What have these tribes, as sovereign nations, done to meet the economic and cultural needs of their tribal communities? (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.)

These questions orient the curriculum toward understanding both the place and politics of Indigenous life, and ground that understanding in the relationships between Indigenous nations and the US. Some elementary educators don't believe elementary students are capable of understanding these issues (though Indigenous families whose livelihoods have been threatened by encroachment on their land and life, or whose rights have been threatened or taken away, might beg to differ that their own children are

incapable of understanding such issues). Yet even the five essential questions for elementary schools have this orientation.

By the time Washington State students leave elementary school, they will:

1. understand that over 500 independent tribal nations exist within the United States today, and that they interact with the United States, as well as each other, on a government-to-government basis;
2. understand tribal sovereignty is “a way that tribes govern themselves in order to keep and support their ways of life”;
3. understand that tribal sovereignty predates treaty times;
4. understand how the treaties that tribal nations entered into with the United States government limited their sovereignty; and
5. identify the names and locations of tribes in their area. (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: The Indian Education Office, n.d.)

A shift in orientation from culture to nationhood and sovereignty would foster different curricular avenues for understanding the history, present, and future of Indigenous nations. Premising this engagement on the recognition that the school sits on Indigenous land might provide opportunities for exploring connections between the school and tribal nations in the area. Students could explore the land claims or treaties negotiated to settle the school grounds and surrounding area. Students could explore how tribal nations are still defending their treaty rights and pursuing sovereignty and self-determination today and the challenges in doing so. They could also consider what is at stake for Native communities without treaties. This recognition could help students and the school work to build more honest and respectful engagement with both place and the

peoples who have always been there. The month could be used to enhance "civics education" by positioning students in the US as citizens responsible for respectful engaging with citizens from the 566 federally recognized nations within the US. By positioning tribal nations in the US within a transnational context, citizenship education (which often looks outward, preparing "citizens of the world") could also focus on strengthening students' understandings of Indigenous nationhood, grounding conceptions of citizenship within a transnational context of diplomacy with the "domestic dependent nations" in the US. Activities could also take on issues of representation, linking stereotypes and racist representations to Native peoples' self-determination, linking representation to symbolic assaults on Native peoples' abilities to "flourish as a people." Students could learn about the natural surroundings in their school, and learn about how place was and continues to be important to Native sovereignty and lifeways.

Sovereignty doesn't preclude culture, but subsumes it as an important element of Indigenous peoples' and nations' ability to thrive. An understanding of the role of salmon to local tribal nations might help students see how current water and land policies in the city might inhibit Native lifeways. Rather than replicating NW Coast style art in the shape of a salmon as an appreciative activity, for example, a school could work with a local tribal government to coordinate a service project that addresses the issue of salmon and water/land use, benefitting both Native peoples, as well as fostering opportunities to diplomatically engage with a tribal council. Imagine if a public school took this month as a chance to "honor" Native nations, not by replicating cultural items or inviting dancers, but by investing in tribal nations, by instilling a sense of responsibility toward tribal nations and their citizens, by educating youth in a comprehensive understanding of

sovereignty. The youth educated in public schools may be the next generation of lawyers, natural resource managers, educators, social workers, or any another profession that might be crucial in upholding sovereignty (whether it's through an understanding of Indian law, upholding important fishing, hunting, and gathering rights, educating Native youth, or recognizing the impact generations of child removal have had on a nations' sovereignty). They will also be the next generation of voters or policy makers.

Efforts for the month could position sovereignty not as something "out there" and relevant to only Native peoples and nations, but develop in students a sense of relationship with and responsibility to Native nations. This could mean reflecting on one's own positioning, town, or state with regards to these questions. An inquiry-oriented approach could invite questions such as: What has the relationship been between this municipal government and the tribal nations in the area? What has the town's role been in the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples or nations? What is the current relationship like between the city/state and tribal nations? What issues need to be attended to in order for Indigenous nations to retain their sovereignty? What is needed for healthy relationships between tribal nations and the district, state, or federal government? What can I do to be a good ally in Indigenous efforts to assert self-determination and maintain sovereignty? What can I do to be a good citizen or descendant?

Lyons (2000) asks, "What do American Indians want from writing?" In one answer, he offers *rhetorical sovereignty*, "the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires" (p. 449). A heritage month based on Lyon's principal of rhetorical sovereignty might also ask Native students, families, tribal nations, or urban Native communities what they want from the month. What types

of knowledge would they want students and teachers to have about them or their nations? What types of relationships would they like to have with the students, the school, or the community? What types of activities would they like the school to do with them or for them? A grounding in sovereignty might view a school as already in relationship with Native peoples and nations, and from there, ask what accountability to those relationships looks like.

If Native Heritage Month were taken seriously as a chance to intervene explicitly into the narrow taken-for-granted framings grounded in Dead Indians, and emphasized instead Live Indians and Legal Indians, November might be an opportunity to begin the conversation about tribal sovereignty and continue it throughout the rest of the year. With a different grounding students might then have the chance to take seriously issues Native peoples face, and better understand the knowledge, strengths, and insights they hold.

On the one hand, I hope my story complicates the routine temptation and practice of inviting a Native dancer rather than a tribal council member. On the other, by engaging in “disruptive daydreaming,” I am trying to offer more than just a no, but a glimpse at what is possible when different underpinnings are imagined. A new grounding for this month, one that moves away from Native people trapped in history and antiquated notions of authenticity and culture to substantial engagement with the actual lives and political realities of Indigenous peoples, might be, at the very least, an opportunity for Native Heritage Month to be more than it has been, and I’m not willing to give it up. I am looking forward to next November.

CHAPTER VII

FROM EXPLICIT TO ENCODED ERASURE

The US government has always wanted Indigenous peoples to disappear. Native people were historically treated as outsiders and a threat to the US as a nation (Wilkins, 2002) and policies of extermination and removal were designed explicitly to eliminate Native people or force them from their coveted land bases. When physical genocide and forced removal became impractical or unacceptable, new policies of cultural and spiritual genocide were implemented, seemingly more benevolent on the surface, yet still aimed to dispossess Native peoples not just from their land, but their sense of self and peoplehood.

We are currently in an era of "self-determination." Decades after the passage of the Indian Education Act (1972) and the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975), educational policy and practice have transformed. Aims that were once overtly assimilative now support tribal nations to reclaim education to serve the uniqueness of their tribal communities (Brayboy et al, 2012) and explicitly aim to serve Native students in public schools. For example, legislative language in the Title VII Indian Education statement of policy states:

> It is the policy of the United States to fulfill the Federal Government's unique and continuing trust relationship with and responsibility to the Indian people for the education of Indian children. The Federal Government will continue to work with local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other entities toward the goal of ensuring that programs that serve Indian children are of the highest quality and provide for not only the basic

elementary and secondary educational needs, but also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children. (20 U.S.C. § 7101)[139]

Despite increased commitments toward educational sovereignty and self-determination, and explicit directives to support Native students, the erasure of Indigenous students, families, and communities in public schools happens constantly and in myriad ways, some of which appear incidental. A school secretary who presumes a student isn't Native because of her phenotypical appearance, a counselor who is unaware there is a Title VII program to serve Native students in the district, a principal unfamiliar with tribal nations in the region, or a narrative about the founding of the school's home town that presumes settlement as the origin story all are contemporary forms of erasure of Indigenous life that students and families may encounter.

Yet these experiences are not incidental; they are symptomatic of the pervasive erasures of Indigenous life that characterizes settler society. Rather than being isolated events, each instance repeats this historical pattern of displacement in a way that Native peoples have almost come to expect. One iteration of erasure in the district occurred when district administrators overlooked an important event in the Native community. This erasure was not just an individual oversight, but was a consequence of the institutional and discursive marginalization of Indigenous lives in the district. Erasures have also been institutionally embedded in the very systems designed to count (read: make visible) Native students. Without knowledge of the way this marginalization occurs, it is practically impossible for educators to fulfill the Title VII mandate that

[139] Importantly, the language of the law *also* states that students' "unique cultural and academic needs" should be supported "so that such students can meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards as all other students are expected to meet." This statement overlooks the ways standards may be inherently Eurocentric, or assimilationist in themselves, of the ways achievement via standards should be the sole marker of "success" for Native students.

"programs that serve Indian children are of the highest quality and provide for not only the basic elementary and secondary educational needs, but also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children." If schools are unaware of events that are central to the Native community—indeed, if schools can't even seem to identify who "these children" are (a task which appears relatively simple on the surface, yet much more complicated in practice)—how can schools meet Native students' needs? Despite our supposed progress beyond the eras of physical and cultural genocide, it is clear that schools are still engaged in more veiled forms of erasure, and that some of these erasures are encoded into educational practices within schools.

Pow wow or Prom

The annual pow wow was a chance to honor some of the Native seniors in the school district. For months now, parents, volunteers, and the Title VII Coordinator had been working to collect prizes for the raffle, organize vendors and food booths, and contact a host drum, emcee, and other drums for the event. The group worked tirelessly but eagerly, anticipating the chance for the community to come together and celebrate this year's graduating seniors. The pow wow had become a tradition[140] in the community for the past five years. Yet despite its presence in the district as one of the most prominent, visible activities of the Oakfield Native community, the pow wow was overlooked. School administrators who were faced with a venue cancellation for prom and needed to reschedule the event chose to do so on the same evening as the annual pow wow. The pow wow—one of the central events offered through the Title VII program—

[140] See Chippewa scholar Gail Valaskakis' chapter "Dance Me Inside: Pow Wow and Being Indian" in *Indian Country: Essays on Contemporary Native Culture* (2005) for more discussion on the complex, cultural significance of pow wows as "tradition" in Indian Country, as well as commentary later in the story.

didn't appear to register as a consideration or concern as administrators sought a date to reschedule prom.

School and district administrators scheduling major events concurrently with pow wow was not a new phenomenon. Though the pow wow was the most visible Native event in the program and district, more prominent school and district-wide events often overshadowed it. The annual Mr. and Miss Cardinal pageant at the district's largest high school, for example, had frequently competed with the pow wow in the past, reducing not only the number of attendees, but also the number of volunteers available to help at the event, assistance that the small group of parents and students putting the pow wow on had come to rely on. Athletic tournaments had also been scheduled not only at the same time, but one year even at the same venue. For some parents in the program, this type of oversight was typical of their experiences, which reflected a broader pattern of Indigenous erasure by settler society.

Families in the program have relayed similar experiences with erasure, though expressed in distinct ways. One parent noted the ways most educators don't recognize her light-skinned family as "Native"; another observed the general exclusion of Native people from curriculum (and inclusion only during Oregon Trail units where Native people were portrayed as threatening); and one family who recently transferred into the district and inquired at her child's school about their Title VII program was told that there was no Native program in the district. Students have expressed feelings of erasure when educators presume all Native cultures are the same (an assumption that erases a family's tribal specificity), or when an educator minimizes an issue that is deeply important to

them, such as the hurt experienced from cultural appropriation,[141] or the desire (and religious right) to wear regalia or an eagle feather to graduation.[142] These instances were parallel to the minimization and invisibility of the pow wow that year that administrators overlooked.

A Persistent Pattern of Erasure

Though the experiences might vary across contexts, the experiences the families expressed reflect the broader pattern of the institutional erasure of Native people from mainstream, contemporary life. These erasures are not only common, but also continual with a longstanding historical pattern of Indigenous erasure. Patrick Wolfe (1994; 1999; 2006) connects Indigenous erasure to a deeply entrenched "logic of elimination" that has been foundational to the territorial development, expansion, and continuity of the United States as a nation.[143] Wolfe (2006), drawing on the work of Deborah Bird Rose, states,

> As Deborah Bird Rose has pointed out, to get in the way of settler colonization, all the native has to do is stay at home. Whatever settlers may say— and they generally have a lot to say—the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element. (p. 388)[144]

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[141] I discuss the minimization of this issue in the story "Spirit and Pride."

[142] One parent relayed her experiences in another district where she and the parent group fought for students' rights to wear regalia to 8th grade graduation. In another case study, I explore the parent group's advocacy for the Native graduating seniors to wear Pendleton stoles to their high school graduations, a practice administrator was reluctant to support, but ultimately (after pressure from higher level administrators, including the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction at the state level) agreed to.

[143] Wolfe addresses the particulars of Australian settler colonialism (1994) but also expands his scholarship to include the United States (2006).

[144] Wolfe (1994) is explicit that this territorializing is highly gendered as both "the dormant landscape being unequivocally coded as female" (p. 96). He asserts that rather than positioned as competing issues, the

Indigenous people have been in the way since contact and subject to a diverse and violent array of policies and practices aimed at "physical and ideological dispossession" (Calderon, 2014). Whether first removed through extermination or forced dispossession, or ideologically dispossessed through discourses of a "dying race," these practices have been extensions of this logic of elimination (Wolfe, 1994)[145] geared toward getting rid of the Indian and the Indian problem.

Schools reproduce this logic in various ways as they both "account and discount Indigenous existence" (Calderon, 2014, p. 319). Indigenous students, programs, or events might be ignored, a more explicit disavowal of Indigenous presence, or more subtly, Native students folded into racialized discourses as "students of color." One mother expressed invisibility, as educators rarely considered her family Native due to their light appearance; yet she also remarked that at times her identity made her feel hyper-visible, relaying the time she checked the American Indian demographic box on her enrollment form which triggered her daughter's placement in Special Education.[146] In another instance of constrained visibility, the district offered financial support one year for the pow wow, but the support was paradoxical: the funds were earmarked for "diversity" programming. If given the choice, the families and Title VII coordinator would have used the money for academic supports such as tutoring; the funds, however, could support

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exploitation of Indigenous women and land might be connected through what he terms "gendered territorializing."

[145] Wolfe (1994) states, "Though couched in philanthropic rhetoric ('smoothing the dying pillow', etc.) which contrasted strongly with the homicidal sentiments expressed in the first phase, the premise of the dying race was no less consistent with the logic of elimination" (p. 100).

[146] This was in a different school district, and it was twelve years ago, but the family is still upset about it. Further, although a child might not be so blatantly placed in SPED programming as a result of demographic information, there is still consistent disproportionate overrepresentation of American Indian/Alaska Native children in Special Education. According to a National Education Association (NEA) policy brief, "American Indiana/Alaska Native children receive special education labels and services at twice the rate of the general student population" (2008, p. 2).

Native students "culturally" but not "academically." Viewing support for Native students through a "cultural" lens not only negates the ways academics may be crucial to self-determination, but also reproduces a split between academics and culture that is not only artificial, but can be highly problematic for Native students (Hermes, 2000).[147] Even the Title VII program occupies a perilous position in which Indigenous presence is at once accounted for and discounted. As a program designed to serve Native students, Indigenous presence is accounted for in the district; yet as an extracurricular, supplemental support project, it perhaps discounts Indigenous presence in the central processes of schooling—support for Indigenous students is what happens "over there."

This logic goes to work in more elusive ways as well. The family's experience with the Oregon Trail unit, where curriculum portrays Native people as threatening, represents a broader pattern of social studies units and textbooks that are based on a "dialectical presence and absence of Indianness" (Calderon, 2014, p. 314). Portraying Native people as peripheral, threatening, and inferior reproduces the "origin story" of Oregon that retrenches settler identities and gives rise to "an almost predestined sense of citizenship and democratic participation" (Calderon. 2014, pp. 314- 315). Indianness is continually disavowed, premised on theories of "empty land" or through constructions of the United States as an "immigrant nation." Yet, these same textbooks must account for Indigenous presence, so theories reproduced in the texts frame Indigenous peoples as inferior and reaffirm and "settler superiority" (p. 329).

Taken together, these examples illuminate the ways schools continue to be structured to reproduce erasures and silences regarding Indigenous life (Calderon, 2009).

[147] As Hermes (2000) notes, "The distinct boundary between learning culture or academics tends to narrowly define both identities (a traditional-cultural identity versus an intellectual identity) and makes the choice for an identity of an "Indian intellectual" seem like a contradiction" (p. 391).

Further, the logic of elimination and corresponding erasures which have come to frame contemporary life appear natural, normal, and invisible (Veracini, 2011). Living within a context of erasure has become a visible and significant experience of Indigenous peoples' lives today. This experience of erasure is historic and contemporary, pervasive yet often unnoticed, quiet and violent, and has structured the experiences of many Indigenous peoples in schools. To many of the parents, then, the district's overlooking of such an important Native community event was just another iteration of what had become a fairly common experience with erasure, and an experience that reverberated more broadly within Indigenous-settler relations. Although some parents had come to expect such oversight, the fact that the annual pow wow in the Native community wasn't visible on the district's master calendar was still upsetting to many in the community.

Contesting Erasure

The district's oversight regarding the pow wow was also particularly troubling for Ms. Donovan, a non-Native high school literature teacher who initially recognized the conflict and raised her concerns to district administrators. Ms. Donovan for the past few years had been making important connections to Native literature and life in her curriculum, and explicitly tried to connect her students to the annual event. As the department head, she had restructured the 11th grade literature courses to include this emphasis on Native literature because of her own experiences with Native literature and Native people, including a Native friend she had met in college, and more recently, her professional relationship with the previous Title VII Coordinator. Through these relationships, she learned about the history of pow wows, pow wow protocols and etiquette, and eventually became a participant in and advocate for the program in the

district. She saw the annual pow wow as a prime opportunity for her students to learn about Native culture and traditions, and to connect Native students to the program, and so made a point to connect her class each year to the pow wow, offering extra credit for students to volunteer. Ms. Donovan's efforts were recognized by Native students, one student noting she was the only teacher to ever ask her about her involvement in the Native youth group, which she had been a part of for two years. This student laughed when she said that Ms. Donovan "loves Natives" a little too much: "but it comes from a genuine place inside of her heart, even though it may come off a little bit like, okay….back off [Ms. Donovan] …but it comes from a good place. I think that she really means it." This student said she preferred Ms. Donovan's overeager interest to the disinterest she felt from other teachers. None of them, she said, "asked me what have you learned? Or how has it affected the classes that you've taken? How has the affected the way you are directing your future to go? There's a lot of just like, great, you're doing what you're supposed to be doing…"

Ms. Donovan, as an advocate for Native students and the program, was outraged at the district's oversight this year and the double booking. She and the previous coordinator, after navigating multiple scheduling conflicts, had worked diligently to reschedule the pow wow away from the high school pageant, solidifying the third weekend in April and establishing it on a circuit with other pow wows in the state and along the coast. She was incredulous that their efforts hadn't been included on the district's master calendar, and now the district scheduled what appeared to be a more "important" event—prom—at the same exact time. It was as if a whole community's yearly efforts didn't exist.

Ms. Donovan had also witnessed the marginalization of the people who run the pow wow. Frustrated by this oversight, she emailed district administrators and community members, highlighting the logistical challenges the previous coordinator had to maneuver around, and the drastic effects this reschedule would have for both volunteers and participants at the event.

> We have a problem. The powwow is scheduled for the day of the SHS prom. I am so frustrated by this. I have assisted Marcus every year with the powwow. Most years the date conflicted with the Mr./Ms. Cardinal pageant-fundraiser. Marcus was finally able to schedule it on a different weekend, and it made a huge difference in attendance and how many kids were able to help set up and take down. However, I just saw that this year the powwow is on prom day. I will have a terrible time trying to find students to help organize. The best volunteers come from my AP class, and I know they will definitely not be available that day at all. This will also greatly cut back on the number of kids who attend the powwow. I know the prom is at night, but the kids spend all day getting ready.
>
> Might I suggest that next year the organizers communicate with Ms. S. so we can finally find a time that will allow as many students as possible to attend and help with this important community event? I think that with the changing of personnel, people just don't know what Marcus had to work around.
>
> I will of course be there all day to help, and this is my CC to James to let him know that. I will do my best to recruit some student volunteers. I am just so sad the calendar has this conflict. As I understand it, the powwow has been on the

district calendar far longer than prom. Perhaps with some communication with our administration, we can avoid this conflict in the future. The district is renewing its efforts to promote diversity and cultural awareness, but then we fail to give priority to one of the most significant cultural events provided in Oakfield Schools: the annual Honor Powwow.

As a program parent, parent committee member, and researcher within the district, I echoed Ms. Donovan's concerns in an email, and shared that the conflict seemed to stem from the general invisibility of the Native community and our events to the district, despite the fact that the event has been an important site for community and culture for the families who attend each year. For several years, the pow wow has failed to be on the district's calendar, indicating that the event was not considered a "district" event, but a "Native" one, a categorization that both marginalized the pow wow and also marked the Title VII program more generally.

One of the district's top administrators initially responded with immediate concern and dismay at the district's oversight, as well as with a strategy to get more volunteers for that year. He was apologetic and helpful, but in his initial response, he also wondered if the pow wow could possibly be rescheduled to the following month so that April wouldn't have as many conflicting events, such as prom. This administrator didn't understand the intricate web the scheduling of the pow wow takes place within, and that rescheduling the event affects not only our community, but others as well, as it is part of a broader pow wow circuit. The coordinator and volunteers responded, addressing these concerns in an email to administrators in the district:

Since its inception in Oakfield, our pow wow has been held the third weekend in April. Other Oregon tribes, Title VII programs, longhouses and programs have their dates already established—our date was determined relative to the state wide pow wow 'circuit.' Vendors, dancers and families schedule their attendance well in advance; changing the pow wow date for the future would impact much more than our school community.

Another in the community echoed:

The Honor Pow Wow has always been the 3rd weekend in April. The date was chosen after careful planning with other area Pow Wow coordinators. This date is so that other people in the Pacific Northwest do not have to choose between events. Our event and other events have long been established and people who make the Pow Wow circuit (Dancers, Vendors, Drum circles etc.) would have to choose which event to attend if the date were moved. Attendance would be dramatically decreased if we were to force people to make this choice. Changing the date of the Pow Wow would be a poor solution to an easy problem and I hope that I would not be put in a position to need to make this choice. Dedicating one week end a year to this cultural event should not be an issue to a district that wishes to promote cultural awareness and equality.

Not only was the visibility and importance of the pow wow as a community event invisible to district administrators, but they also couldn't see the network of other communities that would be affected. The pow wow was not only advertised within our community, but shared across multiple other venues in the pow wow community. This was not only so that families and dancers could plan in advance, but so that vendors, who

made a portion of their living off of selling their art or crafting supplies, could effectively schedule and sell their goods. The loss in attendees would potentially affect the amount of money vendors would make at this year's pow wow. Moreover, pow wow was a prime opportunity to recruit new students into the program. Less attendees could mean less potential students to recruit into the program as well, and possibly affect the Title VII program's future budget. The administrator eventually heard everyone's concerns and met with district leadership. They vowed to create a permanent space on the district calendar, holding the third weekend in April "sacred" for the pow wow to ensure that no other major district events would conflict with it. Despite the district's promise to reserve the third weekend in April on the district calendar for pow wow specifically, the pageant was scheduled—yet again—for pow wow weekend. In the other comprehensive high school in the district, an athletic tournament was scheduled that also conflicted with the pow wow, making it difficult for student athletes and fans to participate or volunteer.

The administrator that had committed the district to reserving that date on the district calendar had taken work elsewhere. Perhaps if he had stayed there would not have been a scheduling conflict. The fact that the community's concerns and visibility rested with one individual also exemplified a form of erasure. In a community forum unrelated to this event, several parents mentioned the ways staff turnovers have affected their families. One parent expressed frustration that she would finally connect with someone in the school who she felt understood their family. They would leave, and with them, the relationships, understanding, and institutional history they had built. She commented that this "revolving door" meant that she had to "start all over." That the administrator left the

district, and that along with him went the knowledge, relationships, and commitments made reflected these families' concerns.

The issues with turnovers—that prompted parents to form new relationships at their school, and the need to, once again, work with another administrator to ensure the visibility of the pow wow—indicated that the visibility, presence, and support of Native students and the program rested with individual people and personalities rather than being embedded into institutional processes. By structuring a process for relationship building, responsibility, and support for parents and the program into the district, the visibility and prioritization of Native students and staff could be sustained, irrespective of individual personalities or staff turnovers.

Despite the scheduling conflict, the first grand entry that afternoon was a success. The opening song honored the veterans; as they entered the floor with flags and eagle staffs, the dancers following behind. Students, families, and community members then watched as the floor opened for inter-tribal dances and people round-danced together, shaking hands and greeting one another. Not all Native students in the district came to the pow wow, some because pow wow wasn't that important for them, some due to the scheduling conflict. For a few students, the clash positioned them as Native seniors in between the opportunity to be recognized as Native graduates in front of their family and the Native community, or to participate in their final farewell dance with their senior peers that same evening. For these students, being Native and being like everyone else were in direct competition. That the district structured conflicting events that positioned Native students to choose between culture and social was problematic; moreover, it was structured in such a way that peers were positioned to choose between going to prom or

honoring their friends' cultural and political identities and educational achievements. But there was a group of Native seniors there, because this was explicitly an Honor pow wow, and that group of Native seniors would stand in front of their community to be honored and recognized for their important achievement: graduating from high school.

While educators who were responsible for the conflict weren't explicitly intending to erase, demean, or disrespect Indigenous students and their pow wow, this oversight is continuous with a whole history of erasure, and it is interpreted as such by parents and families. Erasure was not just a simple phenomenon of forgetting; it also manifested as a habit of overlooking the nuances of Indigenous identity politics and practices, as the next example illustrates.

"We're Native *and* Black"

On the entryway door to the gymnasium where the pow wow took place, a large, multi-colored, hand-written sign congratulated the Native graduates for that year. Several upcoming graduates gathered eagerly around the sign with their families, pointing out their brightly colored names. For some, high school was a challenge and accomplishment they were both surprised and grateful they could check off of their list. For others, like Beth, (who was phenotypically Black but self-identified as both black and Native), high school was an inevitable stepping-stone to her next undertaking. Beth had recently been accepted to multiple universities, including several Ivy League schools. She also earned a prestigious scholarship enabling her to pick the school of her choice. She entertained ideas of attending the local university, a historically Black college/university (HBCU), and several other prestigious schools. Beth and her father, who gathered with the others around the sign, were quietly disheartened when they realized that Beth's name was not

on the sign. I was deeply embarrassed, apologizing for the oversight to her and her father, as I fumbled, hunting around for a Sharpie to add her to the list. Her father was calm, but visibly disconcerted. Would we be acknowledging her at the pow wow, he wondered? Her family had come specifically to see her honored. We would of course honor her that evening, but a knot grew in my stomach, as I felt responsible for their exclusion, and wondered if any other students didn't make the sign.

In the hallway later I talked to the father some more. I had met him last year at a college night put on by our local university and remember discussing her options, the possibility of attending an HBCU alongside other prestigious schools. The HBCU would give his daughter a chance to express her Black self, in solidarity with other Black students and community, something that was difficult to do in the predominately White schools in this predominately White state. It seemed at the time, even before gaining the prestigious award, that she had her pick of opportunities. Because I had spoken with the family before at the college night, I felt comfortable asking how they filled out their racial/ethnic information with the school district, hoping it would give me insight into why she wasn't included on the poster. I wanted to know if they identified as Black, Native, or both. "We're Native *and* Black," the father shared so blatantly it seemed absurd that I asked. Perhaps my inquiry was itself a form of erasure. As a multiracial person myself, I knew from experience what it meant to feel fully invested in each "part" of yourself. I also knew that how an individual identified socially wasn't always what they marked down on documents, and also that what was marked down mattered. Marking down what seemed to be an obvious reflection of one's identity—Native and Black—didn't necessarily get uploaded into the system the same way. As an advisor at

the University, I had witnessed students become privy to or miss out on important opportunities or services because of the boxes they check. I had seen graduation and dropout rates under- or over-counted. I thanked the father for his time, let him know how sorry I was, and how proud of his daughter I was, and then left to find the list of Native graduates.

The congratulations sign was made by a parent volunteer who had taken a printout of Native graduates the program coordinator had given her and copied the names onto a poster board. The printout was a list of graduates from the district who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native. After tracking down the list and perusing the names, we noticed another student was missing. Viviana, a Native senior who also identified as Latina, was missing as well. Though we didn't know all of the students on the list and knew they wouldn't all come (though this was ultimately one of the program's goals: to know and serve every Native student in the district), Viviana was extremely involved in our program and we were deeply surprised at missing her name. She had been one of the founding members of the Native Youth group and participated for two years before graduation. She had attended weekly meetings, helped raise money for the program, volunteered at pow wow, and was supposed to be honored that evening as well. We knew she was graduating, but how did she not make the sign?

It became apparent after some discussion that the two students missing from the list were multi-racial: Beth, who identified as Black and Native, and Viviana, who was Latina and Native. The list we had been working from was a list of graduates who identified exclusively as American Indian/Alaska Native. For that evening, we were able to identify several students who didn't make the list and acknowledge them at the event,

but we met shortly after pow wow to discuss the district's database and how we could more accurately find, track, and ultimately support, our students. But this small incident pointed to much more insidious problems with the district's database. The seemingly simple task—obtaining a list of Native high school graduates—was apparently not so simple. Native students identified in a range of ways, but the district's data system didn't seem to accommodate the array of students' self-identifications, instead neatly demarcating and sorting students into clear racial/ethnic categories that functioned as a sophisticated and statistical form of erasure. Our oversight that evening was of course unintentional. The students' names failing to appear on the list also appears incidental, but it reflects the broader pattern of Indigenous erasure that Native students and families navigate constantly. To understand how the omission of these young women's names came to pass, it is important to look at how it is illustrative of deeper structural issues relating to racial and ethnic data collection and reporting. Quietly buried within a system designed to support, even make visible, Native students in the district, were nuanced, encoded, and demographic forms of erasure that rendered Native students invisible.

The (Not So) Vanishing Race

> Demography – for Native Americans – has always pointed towards a struggle against disappearance, or, more precisely, against being forced to vanish! (Forbes, 1990, p. 2).

> You and I know, and of course everybody does who thinks of it, the Indians of North America are vanishing…There won't be anything left of them in a few generations and it's a tragedy—a national tragedy…(Curtis, as cited in "The Vanishing Indian")

The Oregon Statewide Report Card for 2013-2014 shows a consistent decline in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) student enrollment for the past six years. From a total of 11,349 Native students in public schools statewide in 2008-09, the number of Native students has gradually decreased to 9,161 in 2013-14, a fall of 2,188 students (Oregon Department of Education, 2014, p. 4).[148] Though other racial groups also experienced population reductions, the Native student population experienced the sharpest decline, decreasing 19.3% in that six-year time span.[149] The latest Statewide Report Card is yet to come out, but the Fall Membership Report for the 2014-2015 school year shows another decrease in AI/AN students enrolled in public schools in Oregon, dropping to 8,650 students, a 5.6% decrease from the previous year. This means that over the past 7 years the AI/AN student population in Oregon public schools has decreased 23.8%. A similar decline had been occurring at the district level as well. Between the years 2009 and 2014, the AI/AN population dropped from 260 students (2.4% of the district) to 159 students (1% of the district), a decrease of 38.9% over the span of 6 years (Fall Membership Reports, 2009 – 2014). [150]

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[148] Other groups have declined as well. In that five-year timespan, White students had decreased by 22,037 students, and Black students by 2,813. Asian/Pacific Islanders were now disaggregated, with both respective groups experiencing slight-increases. However Hispanic/Latino and Multi-racial groups of students were now experiencing great increases with Hispanic/Latinos increasing 27,414, and Multi-racial students by 13,380.

[149] Though on the surface it appeared that Native students were decreasing by so little compared with the sharp decline in White students for example, a look at the percent of change with respect to their population shows Native students decreasing by 19.3% compared to their White peers (5.7%). Black students also reported sharp decrease in the percentage of students, calculated at 17%. For a discussion of the implications of how the federal reporting requirements obscure the classification of Black-White multiracial students specifically, see Dena James' (2012) dissertation "Exploring the Classification of Black-White Biracial Student In Schools."

[150] I only had access on the Oregon Department of Education's website to Fall Membership Reports between 2009 and 2014 which were all downloaded from the ODE website (http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3225).

It would appear, given the demographic decline of Native student enrollment at the state and district level that Native students are, indeed, vanishing the way Edward Curtis and others had presumed. “The Vanishing Race,” one of Curtis’s signature photographs and the metaphor that undergirded his nearly 30-year photographic endeavor to document what he considered a dying race, appears, upon looking at the numbers, an inevitable reality. Yet upon closer analysis of demographic information nationwide, statewide, and in the district, it becomes clear that Native students are *not* vanishing. The downward trend in Native student enrollment in Oregon has occurred in concert with an overall upward trend nationwide of people self-identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native: an increase of 26.7% between the 2000 and 2010 US Census (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012, p. 4).[151] In Oregon as well, the number of people who self-identified as American Indian/Alaska Native actually increased by 27.5% during this same time period (US Census Bureau,). In fact, before 2008, the number of Native students in Oregon public schools was *increasing*, from 8,924 in 2000 to 10,237 in 2007; a 14.7% increase over the span of 8 years (US Department of Education, n.d.). Rather than *actually* vanishing, then, it appears that something happened during that time to mask what was a considerable upward demographic trend.

New federal reporting requirements. In 2007, the federal government outlined new guidelines for federal reporting on race and ethnicity categories, although the data collection and reporting requirements weren’t set to be implemented until 2010. In 2012 when we formed the Native Youth Group as part of the Title VII program, we noticed consequences of the new mandate, though at first didn’t trace it to the requirements. A

[151] These numbers reflect the increase of those identifying as AI/AN alone-or-in-combination. The increase in those who identified as AI/AN alone was (18.4%), and AI/AN in combination (39.2%).

multicultural liaison and I were working together to recruit students at her school into the Title VII program and a new youth group I had formed. From the district, we were given a list of roughly 1,400 students, nearly two hundred of whom supposedly attended that high school. This number felt disproportionately high, but as our only data source for student recruitment, we decided to reach out to each and every student on the list. The liaison painstakingly ensured that my invitation reached each and every student at her high school. However, slowly, students came into her office wondering why they had received the invitation, as they didn't identify as Native. Further, she realized that were students who she *knew* were Native, but weren't on that list generated from the database.

Previous to 2007, existing federal reporting standards used by the US Department of Education asked that students and families choose one of five racial and ethnic categories:

1) American Indian or Alaska Native
2) Asian or Pacific Islander
3) Black or African American
4) Hispanic or Latino, or
5) White

Some forms of data collection had already begun separating the racial and ethnic categories, as Hispanic/Latino is considered an ethnicity, not a race category (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2008, p. ix). In these forms, the question took a two-part format where race was followed by ethnicity:

Race (choose one):

1) American Indian or Alaska Native

2) Asian or Pacific Islander

3) Black, or

4) White,

Ethnicity (choose one):

1) Hispanic origin, or

2) not Hispanic origin.

Families "who are of mixed racial and/or ethnic origins," were advised "the category that most closely reflects the respondent's recognition in his community should be used for purposes of reporting on persons" (NFES, 2008, p. ix). Data was then reported accordingly in the following five categories:

1) American Indian/Alaska Native

2) Asian/Pacific Islander

3) Black, not of Hispanic origin

4) Hispanic, and

5) White, not of Hispanic origin.

In 2010, however, the US Department of Education required that school districts and states follow the new standards for collecting and reporting individuals' race and ethnicity that were developed in 2007. These standards were designed to provide more flexibility and accuracy for student's racial/ethnic reporting. Individuals were still prompted to select from each category of the two-part question format that disaggregated ethnicity from race, and were now able to report more than one race according to their preference:

Ethnicity (choose one):

1) Hispanic/Latino, or

2) Not Hispanic/Latino

Race (Choose one or more, regardless of Ethnicity):

1) American Indian or Alaska Native

2) Asian

3) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

4) Black or African American, and/or

5) White

A supportive document, *Managing an Identity Crisis: Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories* (2008), was circulated, designed to aid educators in implementing the new reporting requirements. The document explained that in the new categories the ethnicity Hispanic/Latino was teased apart from race, a design aimed to "better reflect the current racial and ethnic makeup of communities" (NFES, 2008, p. 3).[152] The new categories were also supposed to "finally allow…multiracial individuals full recognition of their heritage" (p. 25) and "minimize the reporting burdens for educational institutions and other recipients" (p. 59270). These changes were designed to increase the accuracy of demographic collection and reporting and also better reflect families' diverse identities.

> The evolving racial and ethnic composition of the school population also provides a strong incentive for reporting data that *more accurately* reflect the student body. Parents want the opportunity to *more fully* describe their children's heritage.

[152] Other changes included disaggregating the category of Asian/Pacific Islander to distinctly mark Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander experiences (an important step that, although still embodied a larger grouping under the category "Asian," demarcated in part distinctions between the racial communities and potentially experiences and achievements or challenges in school).

> Districts and states need data to track and assess racial and ethnic disparities and to measure the effectiveness of school programs in reducing performance differences between groups of students. An effective accountability system relies on *precise* data, and the new categories can benefit operational decisions as well by *more specifically* acknowledging racial and ethnic heritage. For example, districts may use the *more precise* descriptions of their students' backgrounds to better provide instruction and services. (NFES, p. 3, emphasis added)

"Observer identification." The mandate also required districts to mandatorily report on students' race and ethnicity even if families decline to provide information. Historically, families have been allowed to "decline" reporting in response to racial/ethnic classification questions on school and district enrollment forms. In 2009-2010, 174 students in the school district declined to report, 10 of whom attended that particular high school. By 2010, however, the transition years for the mandate were over, and the district was now required to implement the mandatory reporting requirements established in 2008. If a student or family chose not to self-identify, preferably an administrator (but a secretary or teacher if necessary) would now ascribe a racial/ethnic identity through a process of "observer identification" (New Federal Race and Ethnicity Reporting Assistance Manual, 2010, p. 8), more blatantly termed "eyeballing" by some scholars (James, 2012).

Indigenous peoples have a long history with this sort of "observer identification" and "eyeballing." Blood quantum, for example, wasn't something that was *actually* measured. Initially, it was observed by outside agents who determined, based on phenotype or hair for example, that someone was "full blood" or either "mixed blood" or

"half blood." These observer identifications also had consequences. As white blood was seen to be a bit more "civil," "mixed blood" identification came with "a kind of political status, which labeled one as being physiologically and mentally more 'civilized' depending on the mixture of white and Indian" (Martínez, 2009, p. 71). Blood quantum has since been traced through complex fractions, but its roots remain in just this sort of "observer identification" which was now a mandate.

The support manual was careful to assert that families were the most "appropriate source of race/ethnicity information" and encouraged districts to use various means to encourage self-identification (NFES, 2008, p. 6). Observer identification should be a "last resort" (p. 31). However, the manual continues,

> If self-identification is not practicable or feasible or the respondent has been provided adequate opportunity to self-identify, but still leaves the item blank or refuses to self-identify, observer identification should be used. Observer identification should also be used if staff persons decline to identify race and ethnicity for themselves. (NFES, 2008, p. 6)

The manual also recognized the difficulties in observer identification, noting that the process was somewhat "arbitrary":

> Assigning a race and ethnicity to an individual is a somewhat arbitrary exercise because these are not scientific or anthropological categories. While assigning race and ethnicity to another person is a difficult task, given the emotionally charged feelings and deep beliefs that many people have concerning the issue, your job as an observer for federal reporting purposes is simply to assign race and ethnicity categories to the best of your ability. It is important that you are

consistent in your observation, and make your judgments objectively. (NFES, 2008, p. 31)

Nevertheless, the manual offered suggestions such as checking a student's prior records, the classification of a student's siblings, or a country of origin or home language. The manual also provided a detailed list of countries of origin and their correspondence with racial/ethnic categories, as the manual states, "In general, the new federal requirements conflate race and geographic/national origin" (NFES, 2008, p. 32). For Native students, a list of over 200 "American Indian tribes," though "not exhaustive," was provided to "help" with observation (p. 33).

The district and schools did what they could to compel families to self-report. They educated staff around the issue, and sent letters home to families explaining the change, but teachers and administrators were still faced with what to do when families chose not to report. Districts responded to this dilemma in a variety of ways (James, 2012). All across the state, schools and administrators, if conscious to the dilemmas of observer identification, were placed in difficult positions to adhere to the mandate, ignore it, or find a way around it. Any administrator sensitized to the complexities of race understood that racial identity didn't directly correspond to an easily identifiable pattern of phenotypical traits. Because administrators in this district realized that it was not only difficult, but also inappropriate, to assign racial and ethnic categories for their students, they chose to subvert the new mandate by marking "non-Hispanic" and checking every racial category. This choice enabled the district to fulfill the mandate by reporting the required information, while also preventing administrators from having to "eyeball" an identity—an impossible task given the phenotypical variation within racial groups, along

with varying personal, social, and cultural reasons for wanting to identify in a particular way. It became clear that the district's response to the mandate complicated identifying Native students and that there were consequences to this decision.

One of the consequences was statistical. Because administrators checked every racial box, the number of multi-racial students in the district rose drastically, increasing by 218% between 2009 and 2010.[153] In that particular high school, the number of multi-racial students increased by 306%.[154] This also corresponded with a 20% drop in Native student enrollment at that high school between those two years. Because the list we had to work with included *anyone* who had marked American Indian/Alaska Native, our list included those who self-identified as Native (whether alone or in combination with another race), as well as those ascribed a multi-racial identity by the district.[155] It was unclear, however, how many students declined to report and were then ascribed an identity by an administrator.

One of the district's data support specialists shared that when forms were mailed out to each student in the district to self-identity (corresponding with the strong encouragement by the US Department of Education to "re-inventory their racial and ethnic data") many of them came back with responses such as "none of your business." Despite district outreach, some families were unclear or uncomfortable with the information requests. Regardless of the actual number who were ascribed a multi-racial identity, and regardless of whether it was the district or families choosing this particular

[153] The actual number of multi-racial students increased from 313 to 996.

[154] The actual number of multi-racial students increased from 33 to 134.

[155] I have been unable to access the list of students, and so am not clear how many in the district were assigned each racial category by school or district staff.

multi-racial identity, it became clear that the new category of "multi-racial" itself was a source of erasure.

The new race and ethnicity classifications, which were explicitly designed to provide data that was *"more precise*" and would "*more accurately reflect* the student body" (NFES, 2008, p.3), were actually *less precise* and *less accurate*; in fact, the new methods of reporting were actually *obscuring and concealing Native presence* in the district.

Assimilation by Algorithm

The transition between the self-reports from individuals as well as observer identifications, and the creation of departmental reports that document those identifications is precisely where the erasure occurs for Native students. Although the new reporting requirements were designed to provide more flexibility and accuracy in identification, encoded in the algorithms were neatly prescribed demarcations that obscured Native students within the data. Although individuals were now able to report more than one racial category, the ways schools reported their identification to federal agencies collapsed those diverse identities into seven possible reporting categories.

As a result of the new minimum federal reporting category changes, new algorithms emerged. In this new formula, "Each student is associated with *exactly one*" of the seven aggregate reporting categories:

1) Hispanic/Latino of any race
2) American Indian or Alaska Native
3) Asian
4) Black or African American

5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

6) White, or

7) Two or more races (NFES, 2008, p. ix, emphasis added)

For a student such as Beth, who was Black and Native, or a student such as Viviana, who was Latina and Native, they were no longer identified as American Indian/Alaska Native in the district's newly adopted database, Synergy. Instead their Indigeneity was erased. Beth's demographic data listed her as "Two or more races," and Viviana was reported as "Hispanic/Latino of any race." This form of erasure was antithetical to claims that the new reporting requirements would help districts and schools enforce "civil rights," "**allocate their human and financial resources** more accurately and equitably," or "afford individuals of multiracial background an opportunity to select categories that **better represent themselves"** (NFES, 2008, p. 3, emphasis in original). It effectively erased these students as Native individuals in the eyes of the district, the state, and the federal government.

The district's new database Synergy utilized strict algorithmic codes that precluded particular forms of racial/ethnic self-identification. For example, when an administrator checked every racial box, (save for the ethnic flag Hispanic/Latino), students were designated as "two or more races" according to the new guidelines, which was encoded into Synergy as "multi-racial." Synergy also encoded students as "multi-racial" when a Native student marked "White" and "American Indian/Alaska Native," for example, or in the case of one of our Native graduates, "Black" and "American Indian/Alaska Native." Reflecting back on our disservice to Beth, who is both Black *and* Native, it became evident that she was categorically erased from the generated list of

Native graduates through her classification as multi-racial. The district's database could not account for two racial categories the way the family could, and so collapsed her into a singular category that erased her Indigeneity. The same was true for other students not included in that list of high school graduates who were both White and Native. However, the other Native senior, Viviana, illustrates how the ethnic flag "Hispanic/Latino" actually trumps the category American Indian/Alaska Native, but in a different way.

Because Hispanic/Latino is considered an ethnicity and not a race, a student like Viviana, who identified as both Latina *and* Native, was included in the category "Hispanic/Latino of any race." The new guideline asked individuals to identify as "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino," followed by a racial designation. However, regardless of the racial categories chosen, the database encoded ethnic categories to overwrite racial categorizations. Any time a student marked Hispanic/Latino, the database erased anything a family might mark after it, collapsing varying forms of self-identification (Hispanic/White, Hispanic/Asian, or in the case of Viviana, Hispanic/American Indian) into a singular designator: Hispanic/Latino. Within the new racial reporting guidelines, ethnicity within the new system trumped race. There was, it seemed, no room to statistically be both, and algorithms ensured that these multi-racial Native students were assimilated into other racial/ethnic categories.

A brief excerpt from the State of Indiana's Reporting Administrator Guide (2011) to using Synergy SIS shows how an algorithm like this can operate as statistical erasure in a district's data system:

> The race and ethnicity value is extracted from the Code column of the Ethnicity Lookup Table. If a student has multiple race codes selected, an ethnicity value of 6 – Multi Racial (not Hispanic) is extracted.
>
> If the Hispanic/Latino field equals Hispanic, an ethnicity value of 4 is extracted, even if other Race codes are selected for that student.
>
> (*Synergy SIS*: State of Indiana Reporting Administrator and User Guide, 2011, p. 27)

The Scope of Erasure

> If you are not counted by the census, then, in the eyes of government agencies, you don't count. In fact, you don't exist at all. (Anner, 2001, p. 48)[156]

The day of the pow wow, we were working with a list of Native graduates that included only those who had indicated American Indian/Alaska Native as their sole race on their enrollment paperwork. Whether this type of list was generated intentionally or unintentionally was unclear. What was clear, however, was that the district's new database was not designed to accommodate for complex forms of identification. The list used to recruit students into the youth group was inaccurate, but the list of those who indicated American Indian/Alaska Native only embedded erasures, excluding those who marked their Indigeneity in diverse ways. Native students were there somewhere, embedded in the new racial and ethnic categories that collapsed Native students into the Hispanic/Latino or multi-racial categories.

[156] Anner (2001) continues, "'Statistical genocide, says Dr. Susan Lobo, who works with the Intertribal Friendship House in Oakland, California, 'relates to the ways in which figures and statistics are used to determine programs and set policies.' The most important source of these figures and statistics is the once-a-decade national census. Census figures are used to determine, among other things, who gets what in terms of federal funding and congressional representation" (p. 48).

This form of erasure reflects debates around the ways discourses of multiculturalism erase Indigeneity. St. Denis (2011) for example, states that "multiculturalism erases the specific and unique location of Aboriginal peoples as Indigenous to this land by equating them with multicultural and immigrant groups" (p. 311). St. Denis is more concerned with the ways multiculturalism ignores the specifics of coloniality as they relate to Indigenous peoples, a parallel argument to those made by other scholars that posit Indigenous aims of self-determination and sovereignty are ignored and obscured through multiculturalist discourses premised on Civil Rights (Calderon, 2009). A brief return to the US Census helps amplify the scope of this sort of identification at a national level, alluding to the potential scope of erasure in the district. Yet the demographic processes of collecting and reporting information in the district mirrored these theories, offering literal, statistical instances where Indigenous students who indicated more than one racial category were equated with "multiracial" identities. A look at the US Census provides a glimpse at the scope of such erasure.

Between the 2000 and 2010 US Census, the number of people who self-identified as American Indian/Alaska Native rose from 4.1 to 5.2 million people, an increase of 27%. This percentage increase, however, reflects the number of AI/AN people identifying as AI/AN "alone" or "in combination."[157] The "alone" category reflects those

[157] The 2010 US Census explains the "alone" category as follows:

> … people who responded to the question on race by indicating only one race are referred to as the race alone population, or the group who reported only one race. For example, respondents who marked only the "American Indian or Alaska Native" category on the census questionnaire would be included in the American Indian and Alaska Native alone population. Respondents who reported more than one tribe, such as Navajo and Pima, would also be included in the American Indian and Alaska Native alone population. The American Indian and Alaska Native alone population can be viewed as the minimum number of people.

The "in combination" category is described as follows:

> …individuals who chose more than one of the six race categories are referred to as the race in combination population, or as the group who reported more than one race. For example,

who only indicated AI/AN and no other racial category. The "in combination" category reflects those who indicated they were AI/AN *in combination* with any of the other racial categories. Taken together, these two populations are combined and reported in what the Census reports the combination of these two groups in a statistic termed "alone-or-in-combination," also referred to as the "multiple-race American Indian and Alaska Native population." (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012, p. 3).

Those two populations combined contribute to the 5.2 million individuals who identified in 2010 as American Indian/Alaska Native. Strikingly, *nearly half* of those 5.2 million indicated that they were AI/AN in-combination with some other race. Effectively, *half* of the Native population in the US identifies as multi-racial. 2.3 million people in the United States reported that they were American Indian and Alaska Native in combination with one or more other races (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012, p. 3).

The Census is able to account for this multiracial demographic through disaggregating the statistics. Though reports are often made generally on the "alone" or "in combination" or "alone-or-in-combination" populations providing a snapshot of Native America, inquiries can be made into how people identified specifically: AI/AN and White, AI/AN and Black, etc. Whereas the US Census might make Beth visible as someone who is American Indian-in-combination with another race in its breakdown of "two or more races" statistics, the school system renders Beth invisible through the category of "multi-racial." Beth's identification as Black *and* Native is, in fact, the second largest combination of "two or more race" reporting of AI/AN people in the

respondents who reported they were American Indian and Alaska Native and White or reported they were American Indian and Alaska Native and White and Black would be included in the American Indian and Alaska Native in combination population. This population is also referred to as the multiple-race American Indian and Alaska Native population. (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012, p. 3)

system. Given the broader pattern of multiracial identification nationwide, and given that the school district's database erases those who identify as AI/AN in combination with another race, it becomes highly disconcerting to consider the number of students who may have been erased by categories that were designed to better support them.

A Return to Oregon's "Vanishing Indians"

Returning to what appears the demographic decline of Native students Oregon schools, it becomes evident that rather than *actually* vanishing or disappearing, the methods used to organize and track Native students have been gradually *absorbing* them into other categories, a more nuanced and insidious form of structural erasure. Whereas the AI/AN population in the public schools in Oregon had decreased by nearly 24%, both the Hispanic and multi-racial categories of students experienced sharp increases over that six-year period (28.2% and 82.9% respectively) (Oregon Department of Education, 2014). In the school district, those numbers paralleled the sharp incline, with a 22.8% increase for Hispanic students, and a 179.2% increase for those who identify (or were identified as) multi-racial (Fall Membership Reports 2009 – 2014). Although it is hard to tell how many students have been absorbed into or erased by those categories, *some* Native students have been re-classified as Hispanic or multi-racial. If the latest US Census indicating that nearly half of the Native population in 2010 identified as AI/AN in combination with another race is an indication of the upward trend of Native people identifying as multiracial, this might mean that a district relying on a system that automatically classifies AI/AN individuals who check another racial category as "multiracial" rather than "Native and…" is potentially making *half of its Native student*

population categorically invisible. How a district or school can serve its Native students when it cannot identify them is a complicated, if not impossible, task.

The Knowledge Needed to Honor Beth and Viviana

Several Native seniors didn't attend the pow wow that year, but fortunately we were able to honor Beth and Viviana along with a few others. This happened because we had formed relationships with them that didn't depend on soliciting demographic information from district-generated lists. In order to identify, monitor, and support other Native students, however, the district and Title VII program are both highly dependent on the district's database. Two years after that incident, there are still issues in generating accurate lists for the purposes of honoring Native high school graduates.

The current Title VII Coordinator, Melvina, has worked countless hours with a district technology specialist to try and get an accurate count of Native students in the district. They worked strategically to generate a list of Native graduates to honor each year, but also to clean up the database so it could generate other important information: achievement or discipline rates, track the number of students receiving free/reduced lunch or English Language Development (ELD) services, or identify those taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes to ensure they get college credit. Melvina and this specialist realized the school and district have generated multiple lists of its Native student population, each one differing from the last. Generating lists from the database indicating those involved in the Title VII program (marked "Indian Education flag" in Synergy) would perhaps be a reasonable intervention as the flag could be applied to those who are erased through Hispanic/Latin@ or multiracial classifications in general database; yet the Title VII lists generate only a portion of Native students in the district due to program

marginalization, confusion about eligibility, or disinterest in the program. The erasures embedded in the database and lists generated from it leave the district with an inaccurate idea of who its Native students actually are.

The effects of this erasure are critical. It might mean undercounting disproportionate discipline rates that negatively impact Native students, or painting an inaccurate picture of the dropout/push-out rates of its Native students, both issues of equity that the mis/categorizations of these students preclude. It might also mean, in the case of Beth and Viviana, nearly missing the opportunity to honor Native success and survivance (Vizenor, 1994). Melvina only found these disparities, however, because she was working with a data specialist who was willing (and authorized by an administrator), to spend an inordinate amount of time uncovering these issues. It should be noted that this data specialist retired this year. Hopefully the knowledge, processes, and relationship formed between Melvina and the district office will remain. Melvina's ability to effectively serve as a Title VII coordinator is often dependent upon the support of such individuals or others in the central administration office. Aside from highlighting the necessary attention to detail when utilizing demographic information, this story alludes to the relational work needed to identify and support Native students, and the ways districts need to structure sustainable support to programs and service providers, as well as ways for hard-earned knowledge to remain in the district, and not leave with the dedicated individuals who happened to transition out. The visibility of the Title VII program, the knowledge needed to support students, and the intricate knowledge needed to navigate a complex demographic system should not rest with individuals, but be structurally embedded into the district.

Reflecting on these stories, it is important to consider the types of knowledge a teacher, administrator, or data specialist might need to effectively identify and support Native students in schools or a district. These suggestions (discussed in the analysis chapter) include awareness of the ways Indigenous communities have histories of negotiating contexts of erasure; awareness of the complexity and diversity of Indigenous self-identification; specific understanding of Title VII program eligibility requirements; knowledge of the ways demographic profiles of cities and districts are made; and a recommendation that this awareness be distributed, not just among teachers, but among anyone who works with Indigenous students, either personally or behind the scenes (office assistants, district administrators, statisticians, etc.).

Though districts may need to rely on "best practices" trainings to educate the substantial number of existing teachers and administrators, my suggestion is that substantial time, energy, and attention be given to raising awareness of these ideological and discursive dynamics in teacher and administrative preparation programs. This corresponds with a suggestion that districts hire Native Title VII Coordinators and educators, and that teacher education programs hire Native faculty who are already versed in the politics of representation where Native students are concerned. This knowledge already exists, and efforts should be made to create pathways for those with this knowledge to be in positions to support and empower Native students in schools.

CHAPTER VIII

CULTURAL EXPRESSION AS SOVEREIGNTY

Ts' its' tsi' nako, Thought-Woman,

is sitting in her room

and what ever she thinks about

appears.

She thought of her sisters,

Nau' ts' ity' i and I' tcs' i,

and together they created the Universe

this world

and the four worlds below.

Thought-Woman, the spider,

named things and

as she named them

they appeared.

She is sitting in her room

thinking of a story now

I'm telling you the story

she is thinking. ~Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony

In the course of that long migration they had come of age as a people. They had conceived a good idea of themselves; they had dared to imagine

and determine who they were. ~N. Scott Momaday, Way to Rainy Mountain

A year ago I was the instructor for a two-week summer bridge academy for Native high school students. My course, titled "College Success," included a variety of practical skill-building activities (using action-verbs for resumes and college essays, for example), along with envisioning activities: What's your story? What are your strengths? What do you offer the university? What do you hope to gain from it? What does success mean to you? My goal was to help the students realize that they had something important to offer universities. I also wanted them to see themselves as not only college-bound, but also as future college graduates. At the end of the short course, I had students dress up in caps and gowns with Pendleton stoles and we took pictures. These 9th – 12th graders saw themselves as future Native graduates. I gifted those pictures to each student and posted a group collage on the program's Facebook page. As the quotes from Silko and Momaday above and this exercise attest, sometimes, in order to reach our goals, we have to dare to imagine, envision and determine what that goal might look like.

The Importance of Visibility

Months ago at one of our Title VII parent committee meetings, our committee decided to honor the Native seniors in the Title VII program with Pendleton stoles at the annual pow wow. We chose the stoles as a way to partake in the longstanding tradition in many Native communities of blanketing people with Pendletons for important achievements. Blankets are significant to many Native communities, despite their diverse uses and meanings. Healing blankets, for example, have been and continue to be used as a way to cure the sick. Those in need wrap healing blankets around them for warmth and

protection; those fortunate enough to survive the sickness may burn the blankets that have fulfilled their purpose. Blanketing as a form of gifting, recognition, and honoring is symbolic, but many also consider this practice a literal wrapping of prayers and blessings around the individual honored. Traditions in Native communities vary, but the practice of blanketing continues to be prevalent in many Native communities, and the gifting of Pendleton blankets specifically has been an important aspect of marking these special occasions or achievements. Pendleton Woolen Mills in Oregon has been making Native-inspired wool blankets for over one hundred years (though the Hudson Bay Company has been manufacturing point blankets since the 1780s, and Native communities had been weaving and using blankets or animals skins centuries earlier). Though the history between Native communities and the Pendleton company is somewhat complicated (as "Pendleton blankets represent a complicated alchemy of white industrialists' ideas of Indianness, combined with actual Native American market preferences"; Metcalfe, 2011, n.p.), Pendletons are still almost always found at ceremonial and significant events. Unfortunately, our program couldn't afford a Pendleton for each student (the average price of a Pendleton hovers around $200, making them an unfeasible gift for our graduating seniors), and so our parent committee used Pendleton stoles to preserve our central desire to continue the practice of gifting in way that visibly recognized and honored the Native graduates.[158]

[158] Our parent committee chose the Pendleton stoles for a few reasons. For one, we were gifted the stoles and they were beautiful. Pendleton blankets and fabric have long-been associated with Native Pride. Yet, as Cherokee scholar and blogger Adrienne Keene notes, the relationship between Natives and Pendletons can be complicated:

> I've always associated the patterns with Native pride–a way for Natives to showcase their heritage in their home decor, coats, purses, etc. There's something just distinctly *Native* about Pendleton to me. (Keene, 2011, n.p.)

Referring, however, to a $700 coat offered by a company in Portland, she says "It almost feels like rubbing salt in the wound, when poverty is rampant in many Native communities, to say 'oh we designed this

For several years now our parent committee has recognized seniors at the pow wow and honored each of them with a small gift such as a program t-shirt or sweatshirt. The committee had yet, until this year, gifted the students something they could carry with them beyond the pow wow arena to any of the high schools in the district where they would again be formally recognized. This year our committee wanted to recognize the students in a more visible ways, and so planned on gifting them stoles adorned with Native designs that we hoped they would later wear at their respective graduation ceremonies. Stoles, and other forms of recognition, often have a life outside of the context in which they were originally gifted, often surfacing again in various community activities such as dances or pow wows. As a community practice, stoles and the honor they entail are often meant to be lived out again. This, too, inspired our intent as a parent committee. For one of the smallest and least visible student groups in the district, and one with the lowest graduation rates, we hoped the stoles would serve to both honor and recognize our Native graduates for their important achievements within our community, as well as make them visible to those following in their footsteps at their respective schools. We wanted them to be seen as proud Native graduates.

> "We better make sure that the principals are okay with this," said Melvina, the Title VII Coordinator at the parent committee meeting. "I know my daughter's principal will be okay with it at the alternative school, but we need to make sure the others will be on board."

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collection based on your culture, but you can't even afford it!'" Hipster culture compounds the complex relationships as the desire for Pendleton borders on appropriation ("To me, it just feels like one more thing non-Natives can take from us–like our land, our moccasins, our headdresses, our beading, our religions, our names, our *cultures* weren't enough? you gotta go and take Pendleton designs too?"). Keene ultimately decided that she wanted to keep associating Pendletons with Native important events or accomplishments, and pride. It was this association—between Pendletons and Native pride—about which our parent committee felt strongly, though the formation of a Native-owned wool blanket company will be an avenue to consider in the future.

"Well if they want a fight I'll give them a fight," said one mother. "You don't know how hard we had to fight at the district on the coast for our students to be able to wear eagle feathers at their graduation. I'll do it again if I have to."

In our experience so far, the principals in the district all seemed like supportive people. Some, like Mr. Thompson, had even reached out to our program. He saw the importance of the Title VII program and Native Youth Center founded that year and wanted to make sure he was doing all he could at his school to support the program and Native students.

Though the issue had been raised at the meeting, none of us followed up on it. Perhaps we were busy and forgot. Perhaps because we thought they were "good people" we assumed that they would be supportive of our gifting ceremony as well as let the students wear the stoles to their respective graduations. As the pow wow approached, Melvina reached out to me. She had heard that the principals had all agreed this year to a "no adornment" policy at graduation. She was swamped with program logistics, prepping for the pow wow, along with the other three grants she was contracted with to increase her FTE to full time. She wanted to let our parent committee know and didn't feel she had the capacity this year to address it. The pow wow which always took place at the district's central high school was also shifting venues this year to Aspen High School where Mr. Thompson served as the principal. Along with the pressures on her time, she was also a bit concerned about the tensions the might surface if we contested the no-adornment policy.

Melvina had been developing an important relationship with Mr. Thompson, a new relationship she felt was critical to supporting Native students at Aspen as well as

better connecting them with the program. The school was five miles outside of the center of town, which might not seem like a long distance, but had been a substantial barrier in coordinating students' participation from that school with the youth center. Aspen at times felt like it was in a different town, almost a different district. Further, it was in a much higher socioeconomic area and the least racially diverse area in the district. Though shifting racial demographics in Oakfield's central areas seemed to be generating a considerably more tolerant[159] climate than the previous decade (which seemed to stem from the city's lower taxes and rental prices compared to the neighboring city, along with general demographic shifts overall), the area surrounding Aspen had remained predominately middle class and White. Students and families had expressed there was less overt tolerance for diversity. Though the town's more recent efforts to embrace and celebrate diversity were just scratching the surface—Cesar Chávez celebrations that highlight a school's mariachi program, or even the annual pow wow that was to come—Aspen didn't seem to offer as many multicultural events. The previous assistant principal, who had moved away two years ago, was extremely supportive when I visited the school to start a Native Youth Group in the district and recruit students from his school, which eventually turned into some Native students initiating their own Native American Student Union (NASU) at the high school. This administrator saw it as an important project for the school, recognizing that Native students faced unique challenges in predominately White environments. He had already noticed the ways the school community felt out of touch with particular communities, and began to do deliberate outreach to Latino families

[159] I acknowledge the limits of the word "tolerance" and agree with critiques that communities of color and other minoritized communities deserve more than to be merely "tolerated" (see Paris, 2012 as an example of this critique). Yet I retain this word precisely because my read of the climate as it stands is one in which difference is "tolerated," or at times "celebrated" but does little yet to question the centrality of who is normalized as the center, and who is different (and thus tolerated or celebrated).

surrounding the school to see how Aspen could be more welcoming and better serve them.

This previous principal (who had since left the district) made it clear that the climate was not very tolerant. With this new principal's support, our parent committee was excited the pow wow would be at Aspen to support and recognize the Native students there. Yet some of us also wondered if the climate was ready for such an event. Melvina's relationship with Mr. Thompson was key to the pow wow's venue change to Aspen, and she was concerned that contesting the no adornment policy this year would jeopardize that relationship.

As an employee in the district who had already felt marginalized due to the program's positioning, she was rightfully nervous that actively opposing the policy might further marginalize her. Our parent committee understood her concerns and her tenuous position within the district. We had seen not only how much effort she put into her job—spending above and beyond the allotted FTE for that position—but that success in her work was often dependent on preserving relationships with secretaries, teachers, and principals who served as a bridge between her program and the schools. Our parent committee decided to take up the task, and I offered to reach out to Mr. Thompson. I emailed Mr. Thompson who responded back with his phone number. We played phone tag but eventually caught each other as I was in the car on the way to pick my son up from school.

"It's Just for an Hour"

It would be fair to characterize our conversation as a respectful twenty-minute debate. There was no yelling or screaming, but for the duration of our call, the principal

and I adamantly argued from and for our respective standpoints. I took seriously Melvina's concern to consider her ongoing relationship with this principal and tried to be as polite as possible. I'm not one to raise my voice anyway, but as I spoke with him, her concern rested on my shoulder, and my arguments, tone, and temperament were filtered through it. I have been in personal and professional positions where others' actions had created more work for me, times when, despite their good intentions, a person's advocacy or actions put unnecessary strains on relationships I was very careful to build. I knew the nuanced relationship skills Melvina had, and so although I felt strongly about students' rights to wear Pendleton stoles, I tried to exude a gentle and restrained strength.

I began by thanking Mr. Thompson for calling me back and for all of his support for our program. We were excited to have the pow wow at his school, and grateful for the help in doing so. The change in venue came from the request of an elder in our community who had wanted to support her great granddaughter's effort to organize the pow wow at her school this year. I let him know this was the same elder who I hoped would be able to witness her great granddaughter proudly donning one of the Pendleton stoles our parent committee was gifting graduates that year, a symbolic practice of witnessing, blanketing, and gifting that we were taking part in, but also a visible marker for those students to be able to recognize those Native graduates visibly as Native.

He responded that he loved the idea and that absolutely the parent committee could wear the stoles. He saw that as an important cultural practice and wanted them to be able to express their cultural pride. The graduates could be gifted them during the pow wow and could wear them the day of graduation, but unfortunately, for that one hour

while they were on stage during the ceremony, they would have to keep the stoles hidden under their gowns.

"It's just for an hour," he told me.

"That takes away from the process of being visible," I responded. "How can you say you support them being proud of their culture, but then ask them to hide it for the one hour they were on stage?"

"Your phone call is actually very timely," he said. "This issue just came up recently. It seems that over the years graduation had become too jumbled; there have been too many types of stoles and cords and leis and adornment. We recently had a series of focus groups to address this issue. We met with the site committee and department heads, among others, and decided to implement a no adornment policy as a result. These meetings just took place, we just went through this long process and came to consensus, and we can't change it now. I'm happy to work with you on this next year though," he said.

"Except that next year is too late," I replied urgently. "Thank you for your support next year, but I am concerned about this year. What am I going to tell this elder this year…that she can't watch her Native great granddaughter walk down the aisle as a Native graduate? I have a 96 year-old elder who is going to watch her great granddaughter graduate. I want her great granddaughter to walk proudly as a Native graduate and for this elder to witness that moment; especially after all she went through in life to be able to get to this moment."

"I hear you," he said. "And I'm saying that she absolutely can wear that stole on the day of graduation. She can wear it proudly too. They can take pictures

together, she can wear it around the school, she can feel proud; but just for that one hour during the actual ceremony on stage, she has to keep it hidden."

I didn't even know how to respond. Be proud but keep it hidden? Didn't he hear his own contradictions? I asked him who the people were who were involved in the site committee. As less than 2% of the population in the school district, Native people didn't always benefit from democratic processes or processes of consensus if the stakeholders in those conversations didn't understand the unique rights of Native students.

He said it was made up of teachers and other staff and administrators.

"You are very passionate about your cause Leilani, and I respect that. And I also have a lot of students and families equally as passionate about their causes. What am I going to tell the parent of a student in the Lego Robotics Club if I let Native students wear stoles but won't let him wear a stole?" he asked.

"You cannot equate the Lego Robotics club with Native citizens and descendants of tribal nations," I contested. "You are conflating a club with communities and nations who have rights that predate the founding of the US as a nation, this school district, and your school. A student's right to express cultural or religious expression is an important aspect of sovereignty, not equality."

He rebutted, "Of course I am not suggesting that Lego Robotics and Native students are not the same thing. But the same principle applies. We need to treat these students equally."

"Mr. Thompson, you are trying to apply a principle of equality where a principle of equity should apply. More than that, this is an issue of rights. The Lego

> Robotics club does not have the *right* to cultural and religious expression, but Indigenous students do."

I let him know that I thought that the Robotics club *should* be able to wear their stoles or cords, a marker of pride in their interest and club, but the fact that those students are in a club, and not citizens or descendants of sovereign nations, is what distinguished the two and why I was advocating specifically on behalf of Native students.

> "I hope you don't have any students from Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes attending your school," I warned, "because I'm not sure how the tribes would react to the way you are limiting their tribal members' cultural and religious expression."

These tribes had claims to this place before your school was even built I thought to myself. I said something to suggest this earlier but felt it would be too emphatic to say again.

> "Native students still have a chance to be honored at graduation," he stated, "and still have a right to express themselves culturally, but we are limiting that adornment during that one hour on stage to academic honors alone. We will recognize National Honors Society and a few other academic honors through various stoles and cords. This was the policy that we identified through our process as a fair solution for everyone."

I couldn't understand how *he* couldn't understand that hiding their stoles underneath their gowns wasn't just an issue of "expressing themselves culturally." Or rather, it was a form of cultural expression, but that right to cultural expression was both inherent, as well as a political right. My argument was inadequate, I realized. In the

moment I fumbled for words and couldn't seem to make myself clear. I was trying to argue for Native students' political rights to cultural expression, but he kept reading my arguments as cultural. I decided to try a different approach.

"It is not a fair solution if Native students don't have equal or equitable access to those honors," I responded. "Given the state's and school's low academic achievement and graduation rates [which I had just looked up the week prior for a presentation and found out was an abysmal 33% but didn't want to bring up because I wasn't sure if the numbers were skewed somehow and didn't want to derail the conversation], Native students clearly don't have equitable access to those academic honors. I know you probably thought that would be a fair and neutral solution, but instead, it would actually reflect the opportunity gap that still exists for Native students."

"Are you saying my school and the process we are using for the academic honors stoles is perpetuating the achievement gap?" he asked incredulously.

"No," I replied. "But I am saying it will mirror it. I know you do a lot to support Native students, and I appreciate that, but given the data, I don't believe we can honestly say that they have the same opportunities to earn those cords as their peers."

"I don't know what to tell you," he said. "We went through the process with the site committee and department heads and this is what we came up with. I'm happy to work with you on this next year."

Next year was too late, I thought to myself. "I respect you and your offer of support," I said, "but I also think you're wrong. I know your goal is to create an

environment where Native students would be well represented among those with academic honors. More than that, I believe highlighting academic honors for Native students and all students is a *good* thing. I just want to point out again that the policy your committee decided on isn't as fair as you think. But that's all a digression. My point is not to contest the academic honors, but to allow Native students to wear their Pendleton stoles with or without their academic honors. To graduate *as a Native* and be visible as such is an important honor for many of our families and their Native communities. And this right, to religious and cultural expression, is one that is protected. Native students in different districts have been fighting for their rights to wear eagle feathers[160] at graduation, and they have been winning.[161] I wish you would change your mind. If not, I think you are going to

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[160] Our program chose Pendletons as opposed to eagle feather for a few reasons. The stoles were gifted to us, making it cost effective for our insufficient program budget. Our program could order eagle feathers from the National Eagle Repository for no cost as well; however, the right to wear eagle feathers was protected for some Native students under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, but only specifically for students who were *citizens* of their tribal nations, pueblos, rancherías, villages, etc. As the US Fish and Wildlife application for Ordering Eagle Parts and Feathers from the National Eagle Repository states in response to the question "May a school request eagle feathers from graduation?":

> Yes, schools may request eagle feathers to present at graduation to Native American students who are enrolled members of federally recognized tribes.
> 1. A representative from the school who is an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe should apply at the beginning of the school year for the 20 miscellaneous feather category which has the shortest turnaround time. (US Fish and Wildlife Service, n.d., p. 2)

Our program served both citizens as well as descendants of tribal members. It didn't feel appropriate to honor those who were tribal members in one way and descendants in another, a process that felt as if it would amplify inter-tribal tensions and students' sense of belonging rather than foster pride in their achievements and Native heritage. Further, from a practical standpoint, there were substantial fines for possessing eagle feathers without a permit, permits which only some of our Native students would have access to: "The 1972 amendments increased civil penalties for violating provisions of the Act to a maximum fine of $5,000 or one year imprisonment with $10,000 or not more than two years in prison for a second conviction. Felony convictions carry a maximum fine of $250,000 or two years of imprisonment. The fine doubles for an organization. Rewards are provided for information leading to arrest and conviction for violation of the Act" (US Fish and Wildlife Service, n.d., para. 1).

[161] Here is a story about a recent victory in California: http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/15/superintendent-says-yes-beaded-caps-says-other-districts-should-allow-feathers-160376

reflect back on this moment later and realize that you were on the wrong side of history."

We were both silent for a while, then he said finally,

"Leilani, I hear you. I hear you. I just think we need to agree to disagree."

I was so disheartened. It all happened so fast. I felt like maybe if one of my friends or colleagues were in this conversation with him they could have convinced him, used a different logic to help him understand the concern, change his mind. I felt inadequate. I sat there in the parking lot of my son's school feeling defeated.

"Well, I appreciate you calling me back and listening. I don't know how to end this. I respect you, but I disagree with your decision and don't think that it is supportive of Native students."

"Listen," he said after a long pause, "if you want to go above me or around me, by all means do so. Talk to the director of secondary education or the assistant superintendent. If they tell me this is something I have to do, then I will do it. We just went through this process at our school with the committees and I don't feel like I can change it. But if I am told that I have to follow a particular protocol, then I'm happy to do it."

He appeared to be giving me a way to work around him. I was trying to read through his words to his motive and intentions. Was it a challenge? Was it an offer? I was sad he didn't have the courage to make this decision on his own, but then again, I knew what it felt like to be between a rock and a hard place. As a principal in this situation, I feel I would have responded differently, but who knows. Given this issue quite possibly, but what if it were an issue that sat within one of my own cultural blind spots…would I

be able to hear that parent or make that decision the way I had pleaded with him to? I had to work with him where he was, and he was offering me an option. I chose to take him at face value: that he was sincere, wanted to support Native students, but didn't feel he could overturn a community process that he had just convened and endorsed. I chose to read his offer as a strategic way to both support our program as well as save face in his community. I know that leadership is often compromising and messy, and I also wanted to keep a good relationship between him and our program, for both Melvina's and the students' sake. But I probably would have gone over his head anyway. I was serious about that elder, that I did not want to go back to her and tell her that her great granddaughter couldn't walk with the Pendleton stole our parent committee was going to gift her. I couldn't. But I took his offer as an opportunity.

> "Just so we're clear," I told him thinking about Melvina. "I want you to know that I've appreciated the ways you've been supporting our program, our Native Youth Center, and Native students. I see you as a strong supporter and partner in general, even though we disagree now, and our relationship is important to me. So I'm hoping that even as I go above or around you, that we can continue to work together to support Native students and you don't take it as a sign of disrespect."
>
> "Absolutely not," he told me. "By all means. I just want you to know my hands are tied. I really want to support you, but we had already gone through that process. If it doesn't work, please know that I am committed to working together next year to make this happen."

We said goodbye and I hung up. He suggested that I go around him. I wonder if he thought it would work.

Talking Strategy

The conversation shook me up. We left on good terms, but my heart was racing and my adrenaline was pumping. I had been talking to him using my headset from my car and sat outside for the last ten minutes of the conversation in the parking lot of my son's school, the arguments that I had used spinning around in my head. At one point I was arguing that it was a sovereign right for students; in another moment that it was a principle of equity; and yet in another that it was an important marker of visibility for the next generation of Native graduates. It was important that these Native graduates saw themselves in the future. That was what the whole activity at the summer academy was about: for highly capable youth and communities—who had been pathologized, viewed through deficit lenses or underserved by schools, or rendered historic by societal narratives—*to see themselves in the future.* Going to college wasn't the only way to have a future or to be successful in this world, but it needed to remain a viable, visible future option for these youth. They were daring to imagine who they were!

I wasn't sure if the logics I used conflicted or competed with each other. I thought the right to see oneself in the future was related to sovereignty, but I wasn't sure that the principal understood that connection. What seemed most important was to stress the right to wear stoles as a right to religious expression. That felt the most strategic. It almost felt as if it would have been easier if we had chosen eagle feathers. Either way, what I said didn't work. I couldn't help feeling inadequate as I got out of the car, trembling a bit with nervous energy as I went in to get my kids.

On the ride home I usually talk with my kids about their day and our plans for the rest of the afternoon. Our car ride home is always full of stories about our day. But that

day, I was so distracted. My poor kids sat in the back while I talked in my headset. They heard half-conversations of what I said or wished I had said, and what the next steps might be. We got home, and as I made dinner, the conversations continued. Should I go directly above him? My friend, a former administrator in the district, thought it best to work with a few principals and administrators in the district that she knew would be on board. “Can you write something up tonight?” she asked. “They have a principals’ meeting next week. I know they’ll be on board, but if you write something up, a list of facts or a story or a letter, they can have the background and language to make the case for you.” I thought her strategy was good. The Director of Secondary Education and the Assistant Superintendent had no idea who I was. I wasn’t sure a random letter from me or even from our Title VII parent committee would do the trick. It was a short turn around, but a good option.

I first called a few of the Native students. We were planning on gifting them the stoles, but were they on board with this fight? This form of cultural expression and visibility was important to us, but was it important to the youth? One of the youth answered, responding that it was very important to her, and that she would get statements from some of the students at the next NASU meeting that explained their reasons. I then called the elder whom I referenced earlier. I knew she believed in this issue, but wanted to make sure she was okay with me using a story she had shared at our Native Youth Group to make a point. I didn’t want to put her in the center of this battle if she didn’t want to be.

> “Of course I think it’s important,” she said. “She’s not just a graduate out there. She is representing our Native community.”

I thanked her for giving me an important frame for the conversation. This wasn't about individual students but how each student was indebted to and an embodied reflection of those who came before them—their families, communities, peoples, and nations.

> "You can quote me on that!" she said." I'm off to Bingo, but let me know if you need anything else."

I chuckled at her fierceness and humor. After calling the other parent committee members, I drafted a story and some FAQs about the issue (mostly in response to Mr. Thompson's arguments, or the rebuttals I thought leadership might pose), and forwarded them along to the committee for any revisions and approval. I forwarded the approved draft [see Appendix B] late that night to my friend who helped edit. She also had a change of plans.

> "We should still forward it to those principals and administrators," she suggested, "but what if I reach out to the Director of Secondary Education for you. I know him and I think if phrased the right way, he might be on board."

I didn't know him personally and so told her that we should move forward in whatever way she though appropriate. She sent an email to him, asking for his advice on the situations he was faced with. She said she trusted him and hoped he could help her navigate this, and then shared the dilemma. He responded shortly after that he would look into it and get back to her soon. The next day, I received a call from her and the Indian Education Advisor to Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction.

> "Leilani, why didn't you call me?" she asked. "I want to know when these things are going on and I want to support you."

I thanked her. From my work with her already, I knew how strong of an advocate and supporter she was for Indian Education. Melvina and I had worked with her on the American Indian/Alaska Native State Planning Committee, and so we had a relationship with her. But her support extended beyond that relationship. This was her heart work, and she was good at it. It never occurred to me, though, to go that far above Mr. Thompson—to the state level. I wanted to give him the chance to make what I felt was the right decision on his own. He didn't, and so I thought we'd address it at the district level first, but my friend, who was meeting with her for other reasons, raised the issue we were working through, and they immediately called me.

> "I'm so glad you brought this up," the advisor said. "Each year we send out a letter anticipating these types of conversations. We usually work with our civil rights staff who help us draft something up. This just reminds me that we need to get that letter out ASAP. "

I wondered to whom that letter was sent the year before, and if it was sent last year, how could Mr. Thompson have even led his committee through a process that would deny that right in the first place? She let me know that a letter from her office would be coming soon. I thanked her for her support. Her position was so important for our students and the state.

Because of their conversation, my friend wrote back to the Director of Secondary Education, thanking him for his support, and let him know that it would soon be addressed anyway. A letter from the Oregon Department of Education would be coming soon, she said, outlining the ways that limiting cultural expression is an infringement on Native students' rights.

I was at my son's baseball practice when she called me. Excitedly, she shared that the Director had just written her back. In his email, he shared that he had called Mr. Thompson and had discussed the issue with him, sharing the district's expectations for cultural expression at graduation. He told her that he communicated there was a distinct difference between the expression of particular programs and cultures, and would take this opportunity to work with staff and administrators around issues of diversity and cultural competence. We were both elated. I felt thrilled that I would be able to call that elder and tell her the good news, that she could witness her great granddaughter stand proudly among her peers as a Native graduate.

I couldn't help but also feel a twinge of despair. I thought about the time and energy this took, the strategizing involved, the knowledge of who to talk to, the relationships and networking required, and having connections to the right people in the right places. It worked out, but I couldn't help but wonder if it would have worked out if I had contacted the Director of Secondary Education myself, or if Melvina had taken this on as project? Part of this work was relationship-building, networking out to communities, and reaching out to the right people. It all happened quickly, but it felt like it took a lot of connections for it to work out, and I wondered about all of the times when coordinators or community members didn't possess what seemed to be the crucial social and political capital to make things happen. Still, I was happy. It was a small victory, but, we felt, an important one.

If your imagination isn't working—and, of course, in oppressed people that's the first thing that goes—you can't imagine something anything better. Once you can

imagine something different, something better, then you're on your way. –*Lee Maracle (Salish and Cree Stó:lō Nation, 2014, p. 10)*

Every time we carry an eagle feather, that's sovereignty. Every time we pick berries, that's sovereignty. Every time we dig roots, that's sovereignty. –*Billy Frank Jr. (as cited in Remle, 2014, n.p.)*

CHAPTER IX

EDUCATION ON THE BORDER

Encoded Language

I was just leaving Trader Joe's with a few things, walking through the parking lot bag in hand, when I ran into Sharon. "Fancy meeting you here!" she said. "It's like we're on the same path." Perhaps she said journey. If this were an isolated incident, I probably wouldn't think twice about it, but because in our previous interactions she has made statements that we are on a sacred journey together, or that she honors my knowledge—encoded language that I'm not sure she would say if I weren't Native—I remember feeling like I occasionally do with her: like I'm this tiny person inside, peeking out of the eyeholes of the mystical mask she puts on me. I had been feeling lately that she sees a little more of me each time we talk, but then she slips into encoded language that reminds me there is still work to do. "And thank you so much for coming!" she exclaimed. "It was a great conversation today!"

Melvina, the Title VII coordinator, and I had just spent an hour and half earlier that day in Sharon and her partner teacher Kelly's class, "Native American Art and Culture," and it did feel like a great conversation. Their course was part of a yearly opportunity for teachers at the arts-based charter school to develop a month-long course based on their interests. Sharon had hoped to design a class focusing on local Native art and culture, and her partner teacher had hoped to organize the term around a service-project. The teachers teamed up and reached out to a local ranger station to see if there were any service projects the class could engage in. The forest rangers responded that a mural at their bunkhouse might be an ideal opportunity for a student project.

Melvina and I didn't know much about the class before presenting, aside from the mural idea and the request to come present on Native art and culture, but we agreed because Melvina was hoping to be more involved in the schools. Melvina was hoping to learn more about the Native-related content teachers were using in their classrooms and how they were supporting Native students in those classrooms. She wanted to develop some presentations to use with classes throughout the district to raise awareness about Native peoples and issues. In her role as Title VII coordinator, Melvina was explicitly responsible for serving Native students, yet Native students spend the majority of their day with their teachers and only a few hours at most at the Native Youth Center after school. She felt class presentations were promising opportunities to educate students on Native-related issues, and indirectly educate teachers on cultural sensitivity. Sharon had been one of the few teachers so far who had eagerly and repeatedly invited us to participate, and so we were grateful for the opportunity, as well as her enthusiasm.

Working with Sharon was important. She and I had been conversing for the past year over a cultural conflict that happened in one of her classrooms,[162] and I was appreciative to be working with a teacher who was trying so hard to be respectful and responsible. Our work, however, illuminated the stubbornness of deep-seated discourses and ways of thinking. For some time, it felt that we had been engaging in an ongoing pattern: requests from her part, and refusals (Simpson, 2007) from mine. She wanted "Native music"; I gave her A Tribe Called Red, a First Nations electronic group that blends hip-hop, reggae, and other musical genres.[163] She wanted "Native art"; I gave her

[162] See the counterstory "Spirit and Pride" for an account of this incident.

[163] One of their albums can be listened to and downloaded here for free at their website (http://atribecalledred.com/).

Dwayne Wilcox[164] and Fritz Scholder.[165] The frames Sharon brought with her appeared to continually orient her to learn *about* Native people, and I kept seeking out ways that she could learn *from* Native people. She asked for cultural objects (flute music or NW coast style designs) and I gave her pedagogical subjects (contemporary musicians and artists who spoke against their objectification).

Earlier that year, Sharon asked us to present to her art class on "Native American culture." We felt it fitting to use that presentation to disrupting the "single story" (Adichie, 2009) that often narrowly frames Native people and culture, to surface the culture that narrows Native culture. With little information on the overall design of the course, we thought a similar framing for this presentation might be appropriate: to surface and disrupt the often unconscious, narrow framings of Native art. We presented in her class for an hour and a half that morning, and then the teachers organized a trip to the Longhouse on campus to see a Native art show that was on display and speak with a local Native artist. Students seemed engaged during our presentation earlier that day, and most were participating—asking thoughtful questions, and even openly questioning or challenging each other respectfully. We hadn't gotten through even half of the activities we had prepared for her class, and so Sharon and her teacher invited us to come back the next day to finish.

Sharon and I chatted for a few more minutes in the parking lot. Sharon told me they we were working on the mural project, but waiting for the tribal liaison to get back

[164] Dwayne Wilcox is an Oglala Lakota artist who uses ledger paper, a traditional medium, "to convey, in the most contemporary way, a living culture through humor, dance, or vices of the modern times." For more information, see his website (http://www.doghatstudio.com/).

[165] Fritz Scholder is an enrolled member of the Luiseño tribe, though "he often said he was not Indian…His revolutionary paintings broke away from stereotypical roles and forever changed the concept of 'Indian artist'." For more information, see his website (http://fritzscholder.com/index.php).

to them about the designs. The tribal liaison worked with four tribal representatives who would need to approve the mural design before students painted, a much lengthier process than either of the teachers had anticipated, and what Sharon described as a lot of back and forth that was slowing the project down. I hadn't yet seen any of the proposed designs, and asked Sharon if she could forward those to me. I also made a note to reach out to the tribal liaison.

Sharon thanked me again for coming, and for Melvina and I helping her and the class reflect on the course content in ways she hadn't considered. Her comments tempered the fact that although Sharon wasn't quite seeing all of me, she was kind and enthusiastic and willing to learn. I looked forward to the next day, and the chance to share some of the outstanding Native artists Melvina and I had been researching for the presentation. Yet I left our parking lot interaction still struck by Sharon's encoded language, especially after the lengthy discussion and activities we had done earlier that day to disrupt the unconscious coding of Native life.

Earlier That Day: Disrupting the "Single Story"

The diverse range of Indigenous life and culture is routinely narrowed by dominant assumptions about authenticity (Raibmon, 2005). Dominant discourses of Indigeneity and authenticity (that are rarely considered narrow, but instead considered commonsense), also constrains the understandings and possibilities of a category such as "Native art." We felt surfacing that commonsense was an important starting point, and so we led the students (and teachers) through activities designed to make that "familiar" framing feel "strange." We wanted to make visible the particular historic and exotic underpinnings that often frame Indigenous life, underpinnings that are perhaps

understandable as well as expected if the information teachers and students have about Native people comes from the Internet or mass media rather than ongoing interactions and relationships with actual Native peoples. To do this, we expanded on an activity we did in our previous presentation in Sharon's classroom, and tried to surface what Paige Raibmon (2005) in her book *Authentic Indians* terms "binaries of authenticity."

In her book, Raibmon describes some of the underpinnings of a collective consciousness that often frames discussions of Native people and Indianness. She states, "Anthropologists, government officials, missionaries, reformers, boosters, settlers, and tourists were diverse, their aims and goals often contradictory," yet she points out, they "shared an understanding of authenticity…[and] were collaborators in a binary framework that defined Indian authenticity in relation to its antithesis: inauthenticity" (p. 7). She continues,

> First among them was the distinction between Indian and White. Indians, by extension, were traditional, uncivilized, cultural, impoverished, feminine, static, part of nature and of the past. Whites, on the other hand, were modern, civilized, political, prosperous, masculine, dynamic, part of society and of the future. (p. 7)

Melvina and I aimed to disrupt this particularly hegemonic understanding of Native people that would subsequently frame any understanding of Native art, an understanding firmly situated as historic, timeless, and exotic—symbolic of King's (2012) "Dead Indian." The Dead Indian, King notes, are "the stereotypes and clichés that North America has conjured up out of experience and out of its collective imaginings and fears." As in previous presentations, we thought it would be useful to elicit this "Dead Indian" in a way that left people reflective and not defensive, and so we asked students to

share the image they associated with Native Americans.[166] And just as in our previous presentations, when we offered a few images on the next slide—black and white images of Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, and Lucille, a Dakota woman, all the images from Edward Curtis' infamous photo collection[167]—most students raised their hands in agreement that this was what they had imagined. It shouldn't have surprised me, I suppose, but the enduring power of this hegemonic image in the collective imagination of the students and teachers still caught me off guard, especially as we were standing there right in front of them.

"I was thinking of something more contemporary," interjected one student.

Anticipating that some students might picture someone more contemporary, though perhaps still in "cultural" attire, we had prepared another slide that included a picture of a grass dancer and women's traditional dancer at a pow wow.[168]

"Exactly," he said upon seeing the image.

One student said he was picturing someone native to South America. When asked to describe what he saw, he said it was similar to the pow wow pictures, but the dress was more specific to South America, with brightly colored feathered headdresses.

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[166] The idea for this activity came from the book *Actionable Postcolonial Theory in Education* by Vanessa Andreotti (2011) in which she explores the hegemony of corn. We did started with this activity, asking students to picture a piece of corn in their head: its size, shape, and color. Most pictured the iconic yellow corncob, though some thought of "Indian corn" and blue and red corn. This led to a discussion of how our ideas and imaginations are shaped by our experiences, themselves shaped by factors such as our place and location (what corn is available here), our homes (what types of corn we eat), nearby stores (what types of corn are available), and even broader influences such as industrialization and globalization (the production and availability of particular types of corn locally are themselves shaped by the demand internally and globally for a particular type of corn). This led to the later activity in which we surfaced what people thought of when they imagined a "Native American."

[167] Photos of his collection can be found at the Northwestern University Digital Library Collection (http://curtis.library.northwestern.edu/).

[168] Our use of these images in no way implies that what they do is stereotypical; rather, it was a chance to share how particular ways of being Indigenous tend to have weight in the dominant imaginations, which we argue limits possibilities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

"You didn't say contemporary Native American," said one student, though he seemed to state this more thoughtfully than defensively. "I guess I just assumed that," he commented.

"I thought of you," said Celeste, one of the members of our Native youth group.

The class laughed. There were spaces where different stories were lived and understood; school just didn't appear to be one of them. We were trying to create that space at our Native Youth Center, and Celeste, either being facetious or honest, made a good point. For some, Native American meant us—Melvina and I. When Zeik, a Native second grader in the program, was asked, he answered, "just sort of normal I guess." Celeste and Zeik's remarks were indicative of Lyon's (2000) reminder about "dominant" discourses: "I want to point out that the dominant stance achieved by the Americans must continue to be seen as merely that—dominant, not omnipotent—which is far from saying all things are said and done" (p. 453). All things were of course not said and done, but we could see there was much more work to do. Melvina laughed at Celeste's comments, too, but told the class, "No matter how many times I have stood in front of students asking them what a Native American looks like or dresses like, they never think of me."

To demonstrate how pervasive this "commonsense" was, we conducted several Google image searches on the projector (see Appendix C). A search for "African American" and "Asian American" each resulted in a diverse representation of contemporary people with separate tabs along the top banner that said "African American history" or "Asian American history." In contrast, a search for "Native American" produced mostly historic images of Native people in headdresses or with painted faces, aside from one contemporary Black-Native family. The separate tab above the images, in

contrast to the others, read "Native Americans Today." It seemed that an implicit framing of Native people as historic and cultural was embedded in Google's search algorithm. It was no wonder the teacher had asked us to give a "cultural presentation," or that the class had the same hegemonic and historic image in their mind of what an American Indian looked like. We challenged the students to think about how they learned about Native people.

It was also important to note, however, that the Native people in our images were not themselves stereotypes, but actual people with purposes and contexts that are often ignored. The two dancers, for example, were engaged in cultural practices on their own terms and should be read as such. We only questioned why some Indigenous forms of expression have more currency in images and imaginations than others. Perhaps it is because other representations were not as comforting or as "safe" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006) as these images because they had the potential to challenge and unsettle deeply-entrenched and hegemonic assumptions of Indigeneity and authenticity. One of the images on the search was a frequently circulated image of Chief Joseph, the revered leader of the Wallowa band of Nez Perce (also known as Nimi'ipuu). In this image, Chief Joseph is sitting alone in buckskin and a full headdress. This type of image is often particularly moving for people, an engrained part of the collective consciousness that seems to only "see" Dead Indians (King, 2012). The image was taken by Edward Curtis during Chief Joseph's visit to Washington in 1903, and although the image has particular currency because of its Dead Indian qualities, Chief Joseph was not a stereotype, nor was he a Dead Indian; he was a "Live Indian" in that photo, and on a trip to actively fulfill his own people's purposes: *to get back Nimi'ipuu land* (Stein, 2013).

“I like the white people,” Chief Joseph said in a speech to the Washington State Historical Society after watching a football game with this nephew Red Thunder, “but they have driven me out of my home.” Joseph’s speech was an artful balance of praise for his new white friends while also condemning the government that had “broken its promises” and “are big liars.” “I am going to keep on asking the government to go back to my old home,” Chief Joseph said. “Colville is not my home” (as cited in Stein, 2013, n.p.). Shortly after this courageous speech of resistance, Curtis took photos of Chief Joseph, some showing him sitting alone, and at least one with his nephew and Professor Edmond Meany. The image that is most often circulated, however, is the lone photo of Chief Joseph; usually absent from the viewing of that photo is the political context Chief Joseph was operating within, and his resistance to dispossession. People see the cultural markers of a chief, but that chief was wielding his political power for his people.

That Chief Joseph or the dancers wore regalia is not the problem; we wanted to trouble the routine framing of Native people, both historic and contemporary, that can *only* see them in regalia. We wanted to make the erasures embedded in that sight explicit. Even when viewed in the present, this too can be considered a historic underpinning: a substitution of a blatant black and white historicity through one embedded in a discourse of authenticity that locks Natives out of modernity by relegating them to their “traditions.” Our aim was to use the class session as a chance to surface the code that erased Melvina, as well as these other Native people with purposes, from view.

Art *of* Natives…or Produced *by* Natives?

Since Melvina and I weren’t Native artists, we felt using Native art from artists who were already disrupting the single story about them would be an appropriate

entryway. Not only did we want to make visible facets of Native identity that were erased from view, but also the realm of people and practices that were erased when conceptions of Native art were framed narrowly. Narrow notions of Native art erased entire communities of people and their diverse practices as artists, usually leaving visible only those who participated in the "single story" of Native art: a story that might include Northwest coast form lines, basketry, or totem poles, for example, and ignore other contemporary forms. To disrupt that single story, we framed our presentation around a question posed by a Navajo artist in the area.

Renowned in the community for his graphic design and photography skills, the Navajo artist was recently featured in the local paper. In the article, he posed the question: "What is Native art? Is it the art *of* Natives? Or is it art produced *by* Natives?"[169] Our experiences with Sharon indicated that, despite being extremely well intended and enthusiastic, she held what seemed to be a single story about Native American art and culture—a single story that risked foreclosing possibilities for both Native artists and those bearing witness to that art. It's not that carving or basketry is "stereotypical" either. The Native Youth Center, for example, hosts art classes taught by master carvers and basket makers. There is value to these cultural practices, the teachings within them, their aesthetics, as well as the intergenerational sharing of knowledge and community-building functions. But in this context specifically, we aimed to blur the myopic vision that could only see those particular forms as "Native," and bring into sight the range of art that that particular story and vision ignored.

[169] Native artists have long been wrestling with this idea. As Native artist Robert Hart stated at the "Indian Art in a Changing Society" conference in 1962, "It is almost impossible to define [Native American Art]; there are two things involved: is it traditional Indian arts and crafts, or is it arts and crafts designed and produced by an Indian?" (as cited in Crouteau, 2008, p. 236).

To be clear, Sharon was not alone in this narrow framing. A more pervasive narrative of authenticity exists that continues to strain Native artists to produce *as* Natives (read historic, traditional) in order to be marketable, often eliding engagement with contemporary or "modern" forms of art made by Native people by relegating them as less "authentic." "By this logic," Raibmon (2005) notes, "modern Indians were not Indians at all, they were assimilated" (p. 9). Subsequently, for some (museum curators, consumers of Native art, educators incorporating Native art into the curriculum), modern Native art might not be seen as "Native" art at all.

We hoped to make this familiar framing strange. We also hoped to mend the split that teachers often seem to make, one that separates a concept like "culture" from "politics." Even in the realm of art, what Sharon considered a "cultural" practice, many Native artists are faced with negotiating highly political narratives of authenticity, especially if they sell their art to non-Natives. Their art as a cultural practice often takes place in a highly politicized context, even if those politics aren't visible to those in the dominant culture who purchase that art. In her examination of Alutiiq mask making as a form of cultural remembrance in Alaska, for example, Nadia Jackinsky-Horrell (2007) discusses the way the non-Native market constrains some of the artistic choices of Alaska Native artists. In her interviews with Alaska Native artists, she highlighted the ways they negotiated these constraints:

> Not only does the non-Native art market establish the marketing of Native art, it influences the style and materials that Native artists use. Without the market, some artists expressed that they would not make art in the same form. Although there are examples of historical masks without eyeholes for example, Sven

> mentioned that, "people don't want to buy masks that don't have eyes." As a result, he discussed possibly reworking one of his masks without eyes so that it might sell. Coral discussed how some mask forms she "made because they sold, not because (she) felt anything for them." She added, "people think that primitive sells. If you stick a feather in it, it sells." Doug echoed her comments describing that feathers make his masks sell better, "but it makes the price (in constructing the masks) go up." Mask makers from other areas of Alaska such as Inupiaq sculptor Susie Bevins-Erickson, face similar tensions relating to the materials that they use, "When I began to incorporate plastic and metal in my sculpture, the gallery sales dropped because the collectors like the traditional materials" (Baechtel and Smith 2005: unpaginated). These market driven choices demonstrate that the artists' sellable work responds to the non-Native buyer. (pp. 78-79)

These tensions and constraints of course do not entirely determine artists' production. Artists adapt their mediums for the opportunity to engage in art as a professional endeavor and make a living. The acknowledgement "If you stick a feather in it, it sells" not only indicates the context within which Native artists work, but highlights the fact that Native artists have knowledge of that context. Furthermore, Native artists continue to exert their own purposes and meanings into their art, despite whether or not these meanings are apparent to those who purchase them. Former executive director of the Inuit Art Foundation, Mary Mitchell, highlights this constrained autonomy, stating that while "Many people are buying not the 'art' but an outdated and static image of Inuit

life," Inuit artists still "exert ownership over their art."[170] This cultural practice of living within and against a politicized context is just part of the terrain of artistry that most people, including the teachers we were working with, were probably not aware of.

We wanted to make these constraints and negotiations visible, and so refused to let masks, form lines, and totem poles be *the* definitive story of Native art and artists. We wanted to situate that story as merely "dominant," not "omnipotent," and wanted students to recognize the insight and artful negotiations Native people were engaging in. If time would have allowed, we could have shown how these artists making masks and NW Coast Art and totem poles artists invoked meanings and disrupted easy readings, but with only enough time for a short presentation rather than an entire unit, we chose to focus on Native artists who have been constricted by that single story, highlighting the ways their work responded to constricted narratives about who they were or what type of art they should be producing. We utilized artists to infuse unsettling and disruptive moments for critical self-reflection throughout our presentation.

> "Now *that's* what I'm talking about." said one of the high school students in the front row when he saw the slide.

Alongside the words "Native American Art" was a painting by Bunky Echo Hawk, a Yakama/Pawnee artist from the Yakama Reservation in Washington, titled "Shrek and War Donkey" (Echo-Hawk, 2010). It was a bold image of Shrek and Donkey from the movie *Shrek*, but transformed so that the two characters were dressed in full

[170] For another example of the complex terrain Indigenous artists navigate, see the essay "Inuit Art is Inuit Art," parts 1 and 2, in *Inuit Art Quarterly* (1997) about how museums and the market can both constrain and shape the production of Inuit art, but Inuit artists still have agency and are not fully determined by these constraints evident in the ways they persistently try to "make it their own" (http://inuitartfoundation.org/wp-content/themes/u-design/images/Archives/1997_01.pdf [part1]; and http://inuitartfoundation.org/wp-content/themes/u-design/images/Archives/1997_02.pdf [part 2]).

regalia. As the work of a Native artist this was undoubtedly Native art, but we wondered if the students would read it as such.

I remember feeling relief at this student's comment in response to Echo-Hawk's piece. We highlighted artists like Echo-Hawk because he explicitly took up issues affecting Indian country, merging contemporary and traditional content, illustrative of what Cherokee scholar Joshua Nelson (2014) has termed "progressive traditions." Echo-Hawk, for example, has a notable gas mask series addressing the dumping of toxic waste on Indigenous lands. His bold use of color and his juxtaposition of traditional regalia with toxic gas masks, in his words exemplify "the dualities of contemporary Native American life, the perseverance of culture and religion through hardships, and the stark reality that we have survived" (Echo-Hawk, 2014, n.p.). The choice to foreground this type of art was not to diminish what some might view as more "traditional" forms of art passed through the generations, but in this context, it felt appropriate to reach for other examples and to disrupt the students' static ideas of "tradition." Such a privileging of a narrow notion of traditional could unconsciously reproduce a historic view of Native people. In limiting what might be included within the realm of "Native American Art," the diverse range of contemporary life, experiences, and art forms produced by Indigenous people today are ignored. That ignorance serves as an erasure, and embedded quietly within that erasure is a reproduction that continually defines what constitutes Native art in narrow ways and ignores what doesn't quite fit within that limited definition. We used artists who spoke against that erasure and timelessness.

We chose artists like Gail Tremblay (Onondaga/Mi'kmaq) to question notions of authentic and traditional. In limiting the art of basketry to only particular forms such as

sweet grass or bear grass or cedar, for example, one might miss the beauty and subtle critique embodied in Tremblay's basket "Strawberry and Chocolate" (Tremblay, 2000). In this piece she combines "the traditional" (the strawberry stitch, a technique learned from her family's longstanding tradition of weaving baskets and gathering strawberries), and "the contemporary" (strips of film, a more contemporary medium that has long misrepresented Indigenous peoples), to form a piece that is both "traditional" and "modern." Moreover, the basket is situated, through the title "Strawberry and Chocolate," in a cross-cultural, contemporary, and contentious context, sharing the same name as a Cuban film in the 1970's that explores homophobia and gay rights.[171] Her basket does not neatly separate tradition from contemporary, or the cultural from the political. It was this type of complexity and "progressive traditions" (Nelson, 2014) we were hoping would generate a broader narrative about Native art. Using artists like Echo-Hawk or Tremblay, who create art outside of mainstream notions of "Native American Art," was a strategy to prompt students into reflecting on their own assumptions; but beyond that, beyond being considered reactionary forms, we believed artists like Echo-Hawk and Tremblay were making important critiques as well as contributions to the field of Native Studies and art. We could learn not just about but *from* these artists.

The student's initial enthusiasm at "Shrek and War Donkey" had me hopeful that we might engage some of the nuanced and complex issues these Native artists were addressing, anticipating the critical reflections and conversations that might ensue; but then again, the student might have just thought it was cool or funny. Of course the Indian

[171] I am responsible for any misinterpretations of Tremblay's work. I do not have a background in art or art criticism, but have stitched together interpretations from the National Museum of American Indian (NMAI), the Craft Council, and an interview excerpt from Ms. Tremblay in the *Washington Post*. Any mistakes are my own.

Shrek was cool and funny, but it was also explicitly political, an important and timely intervention into current issues affecting Indian Country. In reference to the series, Echo-Hawk stated:

> Mass media has long been a weapon of mass destruction for Native American people. It was used early on in American history to garner widespread public support for, and to justify the violent occupation of this land and policies encouraging the extermination of Native American people and culture. Currently, it is used to romanticize the culture, promote negative stereotypes, and maintain the fallacy that Native Americans are a people of the past… In this series, I use mass media as a vehicle; the images are all recognizable as American cultural icons and convey a message that is both palatable and subtly challenging… In this way, I am using the mass media against itself. (Echo-Hawk, 2005)

The purpose of our presentation was designed to provoke students in reflecting on what they considered "Native art" and who they considered a "Native artist." Though there appears to be an unspoken, taken-for-granted understanding of Native art, Native artists have long been wrestling with this idea, and we decided to make that dilemma explicit for the students. This was an intervention intended for both the Native and non-Native students in the room as we have seen that these constrained discourses often show no mercy. For the non-Native students, they might learn to frame the Native Other in particularly narrow ways, a dynamic that hurts themselves as they miss out on a range of experiences and knowledge, but more troubling because as fellow classmates they might narrowly frame their Native peers. For Native students, we hoped they would have opportunities to put their knowledge and experience to use as artists and to, like Echo

Hawk had done, “use mass media against itself.” We didn’t want to limit Native students’ sense of art to forms that only spoke against colonization, yet we wanted to equip students with (or remind them of) the resources embedded in their families, histories, lands, languages, and stories to do such a thing if they desired.

To make these assumptions and commonsense visible, we showed fictionalized portrayals of individual artists, and in each portrayal, adjusted their physical features (adjusting their phenotypical appearance to be lighter or darker) and their Indigenous identity (enrolled member, descendant, non-Indigenous). We also adjusted their hobbies, ranging from “making Native American hand drums,” to “making watercolor paintings,” one image highlighting an impressionistic painting of a German shepherd in watercolor. “Is this Native American art?” we asked after we showed each image. The classroom discussion and dynamics were exciting and tense. Some students were adamant that non-Natives making hand drums was more “Native” than an enrolled citizen of a tribal nation making watercolor paintings of German shepherds. Others weren’t so sure. In response to the image of Billy, an enrolled tribal citizen who painted dogs for a living, one student commented.

“It’s not really Native art.”

“Definitely not,” blatantly said another.

“I guess that dog looks sort of….” expressed one student, his words trailing off. I thought he might be trying to find words to express how something might look “Native.”

“What makes Native American art then?” another student chimed in.

Our goal wasn't really to come to terms with what Native art *was* necessarily, but to unsettle dominant assumptions that precluded a diverse range of possibilities, evident in the ways Billy's art wasn't viewed as "Native."

> "It's just hard to think about," said one student. "In Greece, they had all of these beautiful statues, but then they were destroyed. The Romans wanted to recreate some of those statues, so they did, but they were still considered Greek art."
>
> "Well, and I don't know how to say this," said another student. "We studied art from Europe, and it was their being European that made the art European."

Our conversation amplified tensions that Raibmon (2005) explores in the discourse of authenticity and the binaries that underlie such a narrative, highlighting how such binaries create a "powerful Catch-22 for Aboriginal people." She states,

> The notion of a singular Aboriginal culture—a culture that could be preserved in the static representations of ethnographic texts, museum cases, or stylized performances—held Aboriginal people to impossible standards of ahistorical cultural purity. Aboriginal people inevitably deviated from their prescribed cultural set, because no culture conforms to an unchanging set of itemized traits, a fact that goes uncontested when the culture in question is the dominant one. But binary conceptions excluded those who adapted to non-Aboriginal culture from the narrow definition of traditional Indians. (p. 9)

We wanted to disrupt students' perceptions that it was adherence to the "traditional" art form that was most important, a belief that often justified patterns of non-Native people becoming more "expert" Native artists than their presumably "assimilated" Native counterparts. Even as Native people were held to "impossible

standards," and even as they simultaneously deployed and resisted these standards, we highlighted the ways non-Native people appeared to benefit from this notion of authenticity.

We Can't Tell You What To Do

None of the students had ever heard of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (1990/2010) which makes it illegal "to offer or display for sale, or sell any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian Tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization." Fines for falsely marketing art as "Indian produced" or an "Indian product" are punishable with a fine up to $250,000 or a 5 year prison term, or both.[172]All of a sudden, who counts as "Indian" was really important as well.[173]

> "Does this change what counts as Native American art?" we asked. "Does it matter, then, if someone learns from a tribal member how to make drums? Does he have a right to sell them as such?"

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[172] The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 can be viewed at the US Department of Interior website (http://www.iacb.doi.gov/iaca90.html).

[173] For the purposes of the Act, the federal government states:

(1) the term `Indian' means any individual who is a member of an Indian tribe, or for the purposes of this section is certified as an Indian artisan by an Indian tribe;
(2) `the terms `Indian product' and `product of a particular Indian tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization' has the meaning given such term in regulations which may be promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior;
(3) `the term `Indian tribe' means--
(A) any Indian tribe, band, nation, Alaska Native village, or other organized group or community which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians; or
(B) any Indian group that has been formally recognized as an Indian tribe by a State legislature or by a State commission or similar organization legislatively vested with State tribal recognition authority (18 U.S. Code § 1159). Retrieved from http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title18/pdf/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap53-sec1159.pdf

“Well it depends on if he’s saying he is Native American, or if the drum is Native American,” said one.

I asked if students knew the local non-Native gentleman in town who made drums and sold them downtown at a local market. I’ve approached this gentleman at the market before, asking him how people felt about him engaging in this work. He shared that he learned from Native artists and is respected for his adherence to form, but, he also shared that both Native and non-Native people have chastised him, telling him how inappropriate his art is. On his website, he claims he is “self-taught,” though a newspaper article about him states that “He traveled to British Columbia and went to museums and would sketch traditional Native designs, which have inspired his drum and T-shirt designs ever since.” One student wondered about his work and what it meant with regards to the Indian Arts and Craft Act.

“How do people get around this law?” one student asked, wondering why he or other non-Native artists were never charged.

We shared a few justifications non-Native artists use to be able to sell their work—Native American “Style,” Native American “Themed,” Native American “Inspired”—and then transitioned into a discussion of cultural appropriation, trying to illuminate the complexity between appreciation and appropriation. We looked at a framework, the 3 S’s, developed by Professor Susan Scafidi, author of *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law*: Source, Significance (aka Sacredness), and Similarity (as cited in Baker, 2012). This was a rubric to guide those who wanted to be thoughtful to not appropriate, but weren’t exactly sure how to go about it. The students scoffed that people would even wear headdresses nowadays, and

incredulous that Coachella would consciously ban “war bonnets” yet still rent out tipis at their music festival. [174] We felt the ethical borders of the 3 S’s could be an appropriate outline for these artists since Native designs and styles, much like jewelry or headdresses, could also be appropriated.

We were careful to state that there wasn’t consensus on these issues, that Native America was diverse and thus full of diverse perspectives. We didn’t want to lapse into a relativism that justified appropriation, yet we also didn’t feel we could dictate universally what was appropriate or off-limits to students. One student, however, seemed particularly distressed.

“Just tell me what to do!” she blurted out.

The problem was, we couldn’t tell her what to do. The border we were working was ethical. Our task was to raise awareness of these issues, to provoke thought and critical reflection, hoping that knowledge would translate into respectful actions. Our purpose was to questions assumptions underlying Indigeneity and Native art, with the hopes of discussing the issue of representing others. I found out, however, that the students and teachers actually *were* being told what they could and could not do in the context of making their mural. Rather than presenting new information with the *hope* that teachers and students would engage in respectful representational practices, the students and teachers were learning about respect through *actual* limits that structured what that representation could and could not entail. Our educational practice as educators was based on an ethical border; the tribal liaison and tribal representatives’ practice was based on the sovereign and political borders of Native nations.

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[174] The teepees cost $2,350 for a two person teepee for the weekend and $3,400 if you want the VIP pass. More information can be found at Coachella’s website (https://www.coachella.com/festival-passes/).

Native Nations *Can* Tell You What To Do: The Border as Pedagogical

The teachers did not ask to work with the tribal liaison and representatives from Native nations in this area. It's not that they objected either; they just weren't given a choice. It was a process that the Forest Service had mandated. Upon calling the Forest Service to inquire about their project, they were connected to the tribal liaison once they explained that the class and mural design involved Native American Art and Culture.

Before the term had started, Sharon had looked up different symbols from the local tribes and offered them to the students as potential designs. The students worked with the Sharon's suggestions and conducted their own research, developing a few sample designs for the murals. The teachers then sent the designs that the class had worked on to the tribal liaison, who in turn forwarded them to representatives of several local Native nations, which prompted a "flurry of emails" and involved the class needing to make continual adjustments to the designs.

It was only later that we learned of the images that the class had initially proposed for their mural in the bunkhouse. The first depicted two shirtless boys sitting in a canoe on a river lined with cattails, dressed only in loincloths, peering out into the water at the salmon below. Another depicted an eagle, mid-air, its talons spread trying to catch a salmon, the whole scene set against a skyline of majestic white mountains. From the adjacent mountains the head of a Native person branches out, bodiless, adorned with long hair and a few feathers. In a third proposed image, a soaring eagle, set against a scenic mountain backdrop, flew alongside the head of a long-haired Native, both hovering above a salmon resembling NW coast style designs. The Native head, eagle, and salmon all

seem to be of the earth. In the last image, also seemingly inspired by NW style form lines, a stylized salmon sits just below the surface, a predatory eagle soaring above with outspread talons eager to pluck it from the water below.

Each image was rife with Native signifiers, what Vizenor (2008) has termed “simulations,” or constructed images of Indians that did not reflect “real” Native presence, but rather, were constructed absences. Of course salmon, long hair, and canoes are *real*, and have significance to Native peoples; however, these were constructed absences, simulations of Indianness, dominant discourses etched in pencils and markers.

It was also only later that we learned that many of the designs they had originally proposed had been removed, the feedback ultimately resulting in censoring most of the original depictions that appeared to one of the representatives as “stereotypical.” In the end, the mural was stripped of any actual reference to Native people at all. The mural, through the process, became what one teacher disappointingly referred to as “a bland nature scene.”

> “The hard part of the process,” said Kelly, “was that we wanted it to honor Native American people, but we didn’t want it to just be a ‘bland nature scene.’”

I’m not sure what we would have done or said had we known of the designs. We probably would have, in some way or another, invited students and teachers to critically reflect on their representations. Whatever authority we had in the classroom space was as teachers, and our challenges were directed toward the teachers and students’ hearts and minds. Yet the tribes had a different kind of authority. Unlike Melvina and I who did not feel we were in a position to tell that student who yearned for direction explicitly what to do, as sovereign nations, they could set different sorts of limits. In this case, because the

Forest Service had institutionalized trust responsibility[175] into the department through liaisons, the tribal nations were given the authority to determine how they wanted to be represented on what has always been their land.

Melvina and I tried to be thoughtful in guiding the students and teachers through processes of surfacing and critically reflecting on their own assumptions. We were, along with the other Native guest speakers, Native community members, sharing our knowledge or experience with the class. We all hoped to raise awareness about issues that were important to us or that affected us today. For our part, Melvina and I were aiming to reframe the terms of the debate around "Native art," a rhetorical move to position Native peoples as subjects in relation to their own art, defined in their own aesthetic terms, rather than narrow and imposed terms endemic in the "single story" that seemed to stifle Native creativity. This was our sincere way of engaging what Lyons (2000) terms "rhetorical sovereignty," "allow[ing] Indians to have some say about the nature of their textual representations" (p. 458). Our presentation was a way to shed light on what Native people had to say about Native art.

In their own way, Sharon and her partner teacher Kelly engaged in this process as well. They decentered themselves as experts and invited various Native people to come present on issues important to them. The teachers were disrupting the cultural

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[175] Chief Justice John Marshall first established the federal trust obligation in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) where Marshall established tribal nations as "domestic dependent nations" (though recognized their inherent sovereignty) and set the precedent for the "doctrine of federal trust responsibility." As the NCAI report *Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction* states:

> The federal trust responsibility, one of the most important doctrines in federal Indian law, derives from the treaties between tribes and the US government and from traditional European legal theory. It is the obligation of the federal government —all branches and agencies—to protect tribal self-governance, tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and to carry out the directions of federal statutes and court cases. The Supreme Court has defined this trust responsibility as a "moral obligation of the highest responsibility and trust"(*Seminole Nation v. United States*, 1942). (NCAI, 2015, p. 21).

homogeneity that often accompanies “Native American” units by invited diverse Native speakers to present on language revitalization, art, culture, and issues of Native representation, a pedagogical move that reinforced the diversity of Native America, and positioned Native speakers as subjects.

It appears, however, that the most transformative learning experiences in the class took place as a result of engagement with the tribal liaison and four tribal representatives. Because the Forest Service had institutionalized a tribal liaison,[176] the curriculum was structured to take place at the *actual* border between a public school and four sovereign tribal nations. That border set limits on what the teachers could and couldn’t do, and guided the teachers through a process of what respectful and disrespectful representation entailed. The education on that border was a much more valuable and lived experience of sovereignty, recognition, and respect than our hypothetical scenarios that invited students to act in ethical ways. On the political border that required and compelled, rather than hoped for or implored recognition and respect, students and teachers faced negotiations within a context of limits. Being told what they couldn’t do ultimately may have reduced the mural to a “bland nature scene,” but broadened their understanding of respect and sovereignty. Though not generative of the designs they may have wanted (or their desire to honor Native people), it was generative of important experiences to help them better understand tribal sovereignty and the rights and authority that encompasses (honoring

[176] As the US Forest Service’s website states:

> The Forest Service maintains a government-to-government relationship with Tribes. It consults with them on actions that have Tribal implications and delivers to them scientific knowledge and technology that helps them manage these lands, landscapes, and associated resources sustainably. (n.p.)

Further, the Forest Service developed what it terms a “Tribal Engagement Roadmap” after “an official period of Tribal government-to-government consultation open to federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations and other Tribal leaders.” The Tribal Engagement Roadmap can downloaded from the US Forest Service website (http://www.fs.fed.us/research/tribal-engagement/roadmap.php).

people through honoring the treaties). Importantly, these relationships were honored whether or not they were "known"; it was structured to be so.

Building these partnerships and institutionalizing trust responsibility was one of the Forest Service's explicit objectives.[177] The limits set by working with a tribal liaison, rather than being merely restrictive, helped foster relationships between the school and the tribal nation. Further, by embedding this trust responsibility into the core processes of the organization, respectful engagement with the tribal nations was not dependent on the individual choice, consciousness, or commitment of any given teacher. The Forest Service, by design, made a structural commitment to respect.

After the month-long class had ended, Sharon and I talked about that process of encountering limits, of framing and designing the mural, and working with the tribal liaisons only to find what they had proposed wasn't acceptable. She said when they originally proposed the Native American art and culture course and found out about the tribal liaisons,

> …of course I *wanted* to get the approval of the tribal leaders, but I don't think I thought through the mural design. I recognized later that it had potential to offend…

[177] The six objectives are:

1. Build new and enhance existing partnerships with Tribes, Indigenous and Native Groups, Tribal colleges, Tribal communities and Intertribal Organizations.
2. Institutionalize Trust responsibilities and Tribal engagement within Forest Service R&D.
3. Increase and advance Tribal and indigenous values, knowledge, and perspectives within Forest Service R&D, including both operational and research activities
4. Network and coordinate within R&D and across deputy areas to increase agency and R&D program efficacy
5. Through a collaborative and participatory approach with tribes and tribal organizations, advance research on topics of joint interest, such as: climate change, fire science, TEK, water protection, fish and wildlife, forest products, non-timber forest products, restoration, social vulnerability, sustainability.
6. Develop and deploy research and technologies to support tribal decision-making on natural resources issues. (US Forest Service, n.d.)

Sharon's use of the word "recognized" feels important to address. Some definitions of the verb are rooted in a cognitive process; one identifies or recalls prior information, perhaps prompted by a social cue. Recognition, however, is more than a cognitive process. Though it can involve the recall of information, recognition is also a social (and in this case, political) process. Sharon didn't just recognize it was offensive because of some "aha moment"; rather, she had an "aha moment" precisely *because of* the social and political principle of recognition. The environment and process that was shaped by the Forest Service's recognition of tribal sovereignty created a context for this learning.

Sharon stated that regardless of their intentions, they listened. Actually, given the position of the tribes and tribal liaisons with respect to the project, they didn't have a choice. But Sharon said she was thankful for the tribal liaisons and the process she went through, despite how uncomfortable it was.

> I think it is better though. I learned a lot doing the murals because a lot of things we wanted to create didn't get included. It was good for me to recognize that my idea of what I wanted didn't even matter.

Sharon offered that she was at a point in her life when she was ready to hear certain things. It was Sharon's idea to frame the class as Native American Art and Culture and to pick a "Native-themed" design for the mural, but after taking part in our two-day presentation, she was a little embarrassed at how she had framed it.

> Now I don't think I would, you know… trying to do a Native American art project and we're not Native American. It just made me think about it…

Sharon attributed her new awareness to both our class as well as the negotiations with the tribal liaison and representatives, and perhaps our work made some difference. Yet given the ways our relationship and interactions have ebbed and flowed between respectful visibility and what I have felt to be my invisibility through her imposing caricatures on my lived experience, I felt that her new understandings came less from our work to raise awareness, and more from the disruptions she experienced. She experienced structural limits that didn't ask her to be aware of or critically reflect on her actions, but set *actual* limits on her actions, boundaries based on and delineating what respect entailed. These borders and imposed limits generated new experiences for her, which included new awareness. Importantly, shifting the context to compel, rather than plead respect, fostered this sort of awareness, rather than aiming the project as we had at educators' and students' hearts and minds.

I wondered what a school district that was premised on that same structurally embedded respect to sovereignty might look like. What might it look like if a school or school district took seriously the notion of "trust responsibility" for its Native students and to institutionalize that responsibility? What types of processes might it go through? What type of trainings might it require of its teachers and administrators? What might those processes teach its students about sovereignty? What proved educational for the students and teachers was not necessarily an awareness of the sovereignty and the potential borders and limits it might set, but an *encounter* with that border, and an *experience* of those limits. How might those encounters and experiences be integrated into public schools and classrooms as important for understanding tribal sovereignty?

Toward a New (but Not New) Tribal Code: Education as "Trust Responsibility"

In 1994, Choctaw scholar Mike Charleston wrote an article titled "Toward True Native Education: A Treaty of 1992," a Final Report of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. In it, Charleston distinguished between "*quasi*" Native education ("an education that sincerely attempts to make American education more culturally relevant and supportive of Native students and Native communities," but is nevertheless a "band-aid"[178]), and "*true"* Native education (an education that "emphasizes both high quality academics *and* the Native cultures of Native students"). Charleston, situating his work as a "treaty," explicitly addresses tribal education and the government and district's "trust responsibility" to Native nations. He also, however, calls on "mainstream education" in public schools to be responsible for "true" Native education. "Significant changes are required to accomplish this transformation of public school Native education," he states. One way is through the implementation of local "Tribal Education Codes":

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[178] He describes quasi Native education more at length, and it eerily sounds like Title VII programs who despite their best efforts, can be framed as "band-aids" if they are the only source for Indigenous education in a district:

> The quasi Native education projects generally teach about Native cultural topics with a heavy emphasis on the material culture of beadwork and featherwork and the tangible aspects of Native culture such as the diversity of historic Native housing. They also teach legends, history, and Native words–all well intended efforts to improve the self-esteem of Native students in the schools and make them feel more "at home" in school. These projects provide tutoring and remedial academic services, counseling, and home-school contacts that help Native students and their families cope with the mainstream education process. These projects are temporary by design. In most cases, they are not part of the "regular" education program provided to the Native students (the pseudo Native education) that continues to be the main thrust of the education provided to Native students. When the project period ends, the quasi Native education also ends. (n.p.)

The existence of the special "culturally relevant" services provided by the quasi Native education projects is far better than no relevance at all. But, these projects are just "band-aids" that are dispensed by federal agencies that are far more concerned with allocations of the shrinking federal budget to the big problems of the mainstream American education system. Quasi Native education projects are not the solution; they are woefully insufficient to meet the needs of Native students.

> Tribal involvement in public education must be asserted through local standards and criteria that create an appropriate context for the public education of tribal citizens within all types of schools.
>
> Tribal education codes are necessary to establish the legal framework to incorporate all the essential elements and resources into a systemic regional approach to Native education that compels all schools to be responsive to the academic and the cultural needs of Native students. The codes must be developed locally, make sense in the region and maintain and respect local diversity in Native cultures and languages.
>
> Formal and informal evaluations and accreditation reviews by the tribe and other agencies must focus on specific Native education needs and the relationship of all resources, policies and practices to meeting Native students' needs and enabling achievement. Strong and comprehensive tribal Native education codes are the primary vehicles for initiating change and causing reform in the public schools. Their development and enforcement is essential. (Charleston, 1994, n.p.)

Charleston's conception of "tribal education codes" is similar to the "tribal engagement roadmap" offered by the US Forest Service. As a result of their roadmap, the US Forest Service aims to "Institutionalize Trust responsibilities and Tribal engagement within Forest Service R&D." The tribal liaison who connected Sharon and Kelly to the four local tribal nations was hired a result of this institutional commitment to recognizing and respecting sovereignty. Lyons (2000), commenting on Charleston's notion of "true" Native education notes, "What true Native education calls for in the final analysis is nothing less than the formal institutionalization of rhetorical sovereignty" (p. 464). Lyons

commends Charleston's work that he believes is "insistent upon dialogue, land, and the continuation of the people." Further, this educational "treaty" is a step toward the type of respectful engagement needed between Native and non-Native people, what Charleston's posits as "the New Ghost dance."[179]

Charleston also challenges public schools to take up this respect for treaties and trust responsibility, a challenge that is feasible, but only not achieved due to lack of effort, not possibility. He states,

> Understanding the special case of Native people in this country is a difficult task only because non-Native societies have never really tried. Non-Native societies must understand that the reservations, the tribes, the treaty obligations, and the federal trust responsibilities are as perpetual as the land itself, the vast areas of lands that were ceded to the United States by our tribes in exchange for our right to continue to exist as sovereign tribes on tribal lands with the support and protection of the United States. The treaties are the supreme law of the land. The trust responsibilities of the United States includes Native education.

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[179] Charleston outlines a bit of the education that is needed to serve Native students and engage each other—as Native and non-Native people—on proper terms. "For many non-Natives working in schools," he states, "a major change in their behaviors, attitudes and values is required." He goes on to outline what the knowledge that should be taught in schools:

> American education must teach all present and future generations of American citizens the following important topics about Native people:
> * Basic understanding, respect and appreciation for American Indian and Alaska Native cultures
> * Why tribal societies of American Indians and Alaska Natives exist now and in the future
> * Why tribes are different from other American societies
> * How to act accordingly in matters relating to Native societies
>
> Public schools need to teach the reasons for the hundreds of treaties and agreements between the various tribes and the United States, the thousands of acts of Congress, and the countless court cases that constitute the present complex body of federal Indian law. All of our people need to learn that the tribes and Native nations of this land have Constitutionally-based government-to-government relationships with the federal government and that no other group of people in the United States has this special relationship. Non-Native people must learn to respect the fact that, as members of tribes, American Indians and Alaska Natives are different from all other citizens of the United States; they have dual citizenship: tribal and United States citizenship. (n.p.)

What might the institutionalization of "trust responsibility" look like in public schools? I don't have a definitive answer, but I believe this story illustrates some of the promising efforts toward that end. It was not the decision of the individual teachers in this story to consult with the tribes on their mural. Nowhere in their "learning targets" for the course was anything about sovereignty. Instead, the teachers hoped the students at the end of the course could: identify 5 tribes of Oregon, greet others in Chinuk Wawa, "create drawings/sketches that reflect synthesis of local Native American values and artistic expression" and "collaborate with peers to produce a Native American-inspired mural."

The teachers did make an explicit effort to include historically accurate and contemporary content from Native perspectives, and undoubtedly students learned something important from this curriculum. Students read excerpts from *First Oregonians*, a book that addresses historic and contemporary accounts of Oregon's nine tribal nations based in tribal voices and perspectives with over half of the chapters written by tribal members. They read excerpts from *The People Are Dancing Again* about the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, visited their tribal website, and watched *Skookum Tillicum: The Strong People of Siletz*, a short YouTube documentary on the nation from a tribal perspective. They learned about the importance and revitalization of Chinuk Wawa, a language that has long connected diverse Native peoples together, by examining dictionaries, listening to language recordings, and inviting a Siletz tribal member to come in and teach the class some words in the language. They also watched a video and read a eulogy that commemorated a contemporary Klamath Hero, Alfred "Al" Leo Smith, an instrumental advocate for Native religious freedom who recently passed

away. Their curriculum was the most earnest and comprehensive effort I had seen so far to include a diverse range of contemporary people and issues.

By framing Native people as contemporary and by seeking out sources that privileged tribal voices and perspectives, the educators worked against the common tendency to frame Native people in the past. Importantly, however, despite the diverse and vast array of engaging resources the teachers provided, the most powerful and experiential learning took place on that border, which provided a venue for understanding the notion of tribal sovereignty and what respect and responsibility in a context of acknowledging sovereignty looks like. This venue was only possible because of the Forest Service's establishment of a tribal liaison that upheld the tribe's expressed sovereignty. Rather than being solely a knowledge-based project, this learning was experiential, generative only because of the tribal representatives' refusal of the ways the class wanted to represent them.

In their essay "R Words: Refusing Research," Tuck and Yang (2014) theorize refusal "not just as a 'no,' but as a type of investigation into what you need to know and what I refuse to write in' (Simpson, 2007, p. 72)" (p. 223). In this case, the tribal representatives' boundaries on how they would or would not be represented delineated the context that they refused to be represented in. On the one hand, it could appear that a "Native American-inspired mural" in a course designed to foster respect and appreciation for Native people that included no Native people but rather, a "bland nature scene," didn't achieve the desired aims of respect or appreciation. Perhaps it might even be considered another erasure of Indigenous life. Yet, just as Tuck and Yang theorize refusals as generative, being denied the chance to represent Native life in the mural was

also generative. Though the students didn't generate depictions of Native people, new structured relations and understandings emerged as a result of the tribal representatives' refusals. This small example points toward the possibilities of what other pedagogical opportunities exists at this border, opportunities for relationships and understandings that might be generated from institutionalizing notions of trust responsibility and limits. These limits, rather than a "no," might offer not only deepened respect for and understanding of tribal sovereignty by non-Native people, but also collaborative endeavors between Native nations and public schools that perhaps are part of what Charleston meant when he described the "new Ghost Dance" for education.

CHAPTER X

MY PEOPLE DON'T USE MEDICINE WHEELS

The News

A sigh of relief, collective joy, and tears filled the room. Parents, grandparents, Title VII staff, volunteers, and students gathered together to hear the good news—the grant for the new community center was finally approved. Many felt this to be a historic moment for the program as its visibility waxed and waned—with its varied locations in the districts, including in and out of closets, boiler rooms, the local high school, and most recently the cramped yet welcoming space of the Spencer House.

It was ironic that this important moment was taking place in the Spencer House. The Spencer House has been central to the formation of the Native Youth Group, a youth leadership component of the district's Title VII program, offering the group a place to meet when no other venues were available. The youth group moved to the house when the group had troubles taking root in the local high school. The first gathering of youth at the high school took place outside a locked classroom door. The second meeting took place in another hallway because, again, a communication failure left students locked out of the designated room. Noticeably placeless, the Director of the Spencer House welcomed the youth group into this alternative space, despite bursting at the seams with supplies and resources for a vast array of programs serving students and families in the district. The Migrant Education Program, English Language Development program, McKinney-Vento Program, as well as other services such as the Clothing X-Change, Terrific Toddler Play group, parenting classes, and a homeless teen group were all housed in the two story building, every inch of which was occupied with food, clothes,

art supplies, or fliers for upcoming events. The Director of the house didn't hesitate for a second to offer what space was available to the newly formed Native Youth Group. In one of those ironies that are all too common in Indigenous experience, this new home for the Native student group that could not find a home in their own school was named after Thomas Spencer, one of the town's earliest settlers. Spencer (along with numerous other family members), acquired land through the Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850, an act designed specifically to displace Indigenous people and their claims to territory by encouraging Westward expansion, settlement, and land acquisition. Named after an early settler who actively dispossessed Native people through his family's acquisition of 126 acres in the area, the Spencer House was now being utilized as a place to nurture and support Native students and community.

This irony was not lost on students and families. It poignantly echoed the irony of the district forming a Native youth group for the purpose of creating a welcoming space for Indigenous students and then repeatedly locking them out of their meeting spaces. Students and their sponsors recognized the familiar pattern of displacement that is a constant feature of Indigenous life in schools and in general. We did try to laugh that day at the irony of the experience, so perhaps the experience of exclusion actually brought us together as a community.

Making the Case

Months earlier, a representative of the funding agency came out for a site visit to determine whether to award the program a grant for a Native youth center. Youth, families, volunteers, and service providers testified about the importance of a community center and the need for a permanent space for the program. The day of the testimony, the

youth group was both excited and nervous to meet with the reviewer. Many of them were wearing their youth group shirts, a vibrant and creative design thoughtfully developed by one of the students to incorporate animals, landscapes, and cultural symbols from each of the members' respective nations. The group wanted a design that would unite them as a group, yet reflect the diversity of the group. They were all Native, but no two students in the youth group shared the same tribal affiliation. The process of developing the shirt design was important as each student was called on to contribute a symbol—a basket design pattern, a mountain range from their homelands, a plant particular to their tribal region, or an animal from a story they have heard their family tell. The eventual design included these distinct tribal differences, while designing the symbol and eventually wearing the t-shirts united the youth and counselors together in a shared group and project. That day, most of the youth and families wore those shirts with pride, united in their mission to advocate for a home for the Title VII Program.

The reviewer, who identified herself as Native American, outlined the process of reviewing a grant: what her role was, who would review the application, what the process was for accepting or rejecting a proposal. We were fortunate, she told us, to make it this far; a site visit was very promising. She was careful, however, to temper the excitement and hope in the room with the reality that not all grants get funded. We sat in that anxious space between promise and pessimism, between hope and the hard reality that we might not get the grant, as she invited us to tell our stories.

"It's hard to know where the drum or craft nights are going to be," said one young parent, sharing a story of how he showed up at the district office basement late at night for craft night, only to find it was at another location. Other parents and families chimed

in that they often didn't know where events would be, and were confused by the frequent changes in location. Though it could be suggested that the program be more strategic and organized by setting a calendar of regularly scheduled programs, this suggestion doesn't account for the way program staff had to continually flex their meeting times and locations around events such as school board and district meetings, after school programming, and other evening events at the district office and schools, not to mention the absence of budgetary allocation for the creation or mailing of a calendar, newsletter, or other announcements. The group, instead, strategically used Facebook, texting, and phone trees to keep everyone up-to-date on event locations and programming changes. Stepping back to view the complex logistical dynamics the program staff had to weave through and around, it is quite remarkable any programming gained enough traction to form a collective that could testify on its own behalf.

The program coordinator echoed the logistical challenges she and earlier coordinators faced. Those coordinating the drum and dance group also attested to the difficulty of constantly moving the drums and having no place to secure regalia. Moreover, drum sessions often took place in the basement of the district office as staff and school board meetings took place. Though there were a few people upstairs who shared how much they loved hearing the drums, it was also noted how loud they were. Even at the Spencer House, where students and families felt welcomed, it sometimes felt inappropriate to beat drums and sing loudly while others in the building were meeting with clients or engaged in paperwork.

Parents and staff shared the immense logistical challenges of not having a home, but most powerful during the testimony were the youths' voices. "I want to learn more

about my culture," shared one youth. "I've had a chance to do that here, and I want to know more." Others echoed this narrative in various ways. As one young girl attested, "My father is Native and currently in prison. I have never met him. Having a place to learn about my culture helps me feel connected to him." Another youth conveyed that her father passed on, and this was a way to connect with him, too. Reiterated were sentiments that these youth didn't have a space to feel affirmed and connected to their cultures. The Title VII program sought to offer this supportive space, but it was difficult due to the lack of a reliable venue to convene.

Toward the end of the evening, a young man who was silent throughout the testimony spoke up, sharing how his father had passed on too, and sometimes he didn't feel like he had anywhere safe to go. Beyond the comfort a cultural space could offer, he shared how he could find physical comfort and safety in a center. "It would be somewhere where I could feel safe," he said. The youth were diverse and connected to the program for their own particular reasons, but clear themes were expressed that night: culture, community, and safety.

Though some of the stories circulating in the room that day were painful and laced with tears, those sharing the stories were not victims. Their pain was driving them to action and their tears were hopeful. They had started to feel a sense of community in the district and wanted to convey how earnestly they wanted that to continue. Fortunately, their testimony resonated with the reviewer. After months of waiting and continuing programs under difficult conditions the Title VII coordinator shared the news that the dream of the center was to become a reality.

Making a Home

After the announcement, efforts shifted from the advocacy work of making a case for the center to the details of what that center would look like. The parent committee (a small, but determined and committed collective of mothers) and the youth group (a high school leadership group formed a year and half earlier) sat down with the facilities manager and architect to discuss the design of the new center. Folks chattered away in the Spencer House, many not seeming to mind being seated in preschool chairs, a taken-for-granted seating arrangement when there weren't enough regular-sized chairs to accommodate everyone in the space. We discussed whether the kitchen island would be used for homework, potlucks, or cooking demonstrations; we wondered if families need a place to shower and do laundry; we wanted ample space for storage, but movable furniture so that there would be room for drumming and dancing.

The details and discussions of what the space should look like began to surface negotiations of identity and community. Discussion of the types of activities the center would offer was simultaneously a discussion of who we were and who/what we wanted to be as a community. Would we want computer stations for homework or genealogy research… a fully equipped kitchen for potluck and traditional foods demonstrations… a reading corner and a library? These collective daydreams were of course tempered by limited budgetary realities. Yet as we discussed logistical details of the space—the type of flooring that is conducive to dancing, finding wall panels that would absorb the shock of the drums, or the need for storage for those drums and regalia—we were also negotiating much deeper questions. Who are we as a Native community? Who do we want our youth to be and become? Each of us had probably already reflected on these

questions, whether as a parent, as part of a family, or as part of a tribal community. Program coordinators and volunteers, too, have probably considered the connections between their curriculum and the youth's self-concept. Our parent group had met regularly as well, but always concerning issues at hand: volunteer sign-ups, soliciting donations, carpooling. It was the construction of a new building that in some sense forced these questions as a collective, and through the collaborative process and vision of a community center, we had a chance to gather as a group and deliberate in ways we hadn't before: to dream big about our future. These questions also echoed the youth group's earlier deliberations about the t-shirt design, mirroring the complexities in desiring and asserting an Indigenous collective identity without erasing tribal distinctiveness. We were also aiming to imagine a center that would foster both unity and difference.

On that first day of discussions, the architect shared different flooring materials and patterns, including one material that could accommodate embedded designs. The group thought this was a great opportunity to incorporate a Native design as a central element of the flooring and center. Immediately, one of the youth proposed that the flooring have a medicine wheel design. Enthusiastic agreement of the idea was echoed by the youth, which was quickly taken up by the non-Native Title VII Coordinator. The youth and Coordinator all agreed this would be an artistic element to the flooring, as well as mark it visibly as a Native space. The architect did not know what a medicine wheel was, so some of the youth explained its circular shape, the colors, and the four directions. The Coordinator echoed her excitement for the youth's ideas.

"Whose medicine wheel?" asked one of the Native mothers. The youth, not hearing her, continued explaining medicine wheels to the architect. The mother began

discussing with another mother to her right the differences among medicine wheels. "Some have White in the East," she said. "Some have yellow." "This is more of a Plains symbol. My people don't use medicine wheels at all," the other mother shared. How do we be respectful to those who do and don't use medicine wheels, they wondered? Is this symbol appropriate? Is it tribally specific or pan-Indian? Does that matter?

The Title VII Coordinator who had initially been enthusiastic about the idea of embedding a medicine wheel on the floor became quiet. She had recognized the medicine wheel as a "Native" symbol, but was unaware there might be variations of patterns and meanings among distinct tribal groups, or that not all Native nations identified culturally with the symbol. The symbol had in some ways become a universal icon for Native or "pan-Indian" culture, but its roots were also deeply embedded in particular tribal traditions, and it turned out that not all in the room shared those traditions. The Coordinator stepped back in as facilitator, and deferred to the emerging consensus, led by the mothers, that the group move away from medicine wheels and keep brainstorming. The group, however, still strained to find a way to be welcoming to everyone considering that there were 56 tribal affiliations represented in this program alone, only a fraction of the tribal affiliations in the broader local community.

Thoughtfully negotiating desire for both unity and difference, but also trying to avoid the reduction of Indigenous representation to an icon that didn't represent the community,[180] the group shifted the conversation and began discussing various animals.

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[180] I want to note again that medicine wheels are not inherently generic icons; however, they have often been removed from their roots in specific cultural contexts and used as a universal symbol for Indigeneity. There is nothing wrong with medicine wheels as appropriate tribally specific or even "pan-Indian" symbols for Native communities or organizations. Many organizations that I respect have adopted the medicine wheel as their symbol/logo, and in no way am I suggesting that their representations of themselves as an organization or the people and communities involved is generic. However, in *this* Native community, the parents were reaching for something else, something that was more grounded in the experiences of the

The group soon realized, however, that the physical world was also imbued with competing cultural meanings. “Owls signify wisdom,” said one. “But in my culture they signify death.” The parents discussed how they might create a space that is welcoming but not offensive. “It feels like we’re thinking about this defensively,” another shared. It was clear that the Native mothers in the group recognized that all Native people were not the same. There were tribal differences among people, and these differences were to be respected. So what was it that united everyone as a community? How might the group create an inter-tribal space that is not too “pan-Indian”? How could we come together as one, yet be respectful of each other’s differences?

After more discussion, one of the parents suggested, “What about the two rivers?” The school district is situated in a valley nested between several rivers. This idea moved the group into a conversation about the importance of place, and the anchor for the center soon became the land.

It is hard to discuss similarities across Native peoples without being reductive. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have earnestly attempted to do so, as they try to theorize and delineate values or traits that comprise an “Indigenous worldview” (in both constructive as well as overly-formulaic ways). Place and land has been offered by many Indigenous scholars as one of these core values, and indeed, place and land (our shared locale, and the physical and cultural landscape such as the adjoining two rivers that we

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youth and families in *this* program. For them, the symbol was not appropriate, and I think highlighting this might also surface the way non-Native people are eager to represent Native peoples in ways that are familiar to them, usually stemming from media and pop culture. As Friedel (2014) draws on Mary Hermes to point out, teaching cultural activities devoid of a deep cultural context “‘can intersect with mainstream stereotypes and students’ notions of equating a Native identity with these traditions’ (p. 10)” (Friedel, 2014, p. 200).

shared), emerged as two of the core values grounding and guiding the diverse, inter-tribal community and the envisioning of the center.

As parents and youth grappled with what to name the Center, another key value emerged. At first we engaged the youth in a process of generating themes, hoping that they would lead to an appropriate name. Among the themes were community, safety, and home, but this never led to a name that really resonated with the group. Throughout this process, most agreed that they didn't want to force the issue. There was some pressure from the Title VII Coordinator at the time to get a name quickly so that next logistical steps could be taken (e.g., making a sign, getting the word out). The Coordinator was not pushy, but she worked within a system of timelines, deadlines, and a shorter view of efficiency. However, several parents felt the right name would come with the right process and with patience—and it did.

Though the Center hadn't yet been named, the Title VII Coordinator and parent committee decided to host an opening event to ensure families and the community knew about the Center before the school year ended. After a potluck, a giveaway, and an afternoon of various cultural activities, the event winded down. A tribal historian from one of the local tribes had been invited, not only to establish strong connections between the Center and local tribal nations, but also because he graciously assisted in helping secure two cedar poles for the front entrance. It was after this long month of planning for the grand opening and at the tail end of the day, when only the staff and parent volunteers remained to clean up, that the Center was named. As the tribal historian was on his way to his car, a few of the parents were sharing the dilemma in finding an appropriate name. One of them asked him if he had any suggestions. Without pause he stated Chapen.

Chapen, he explained, was the name of the original band of Kalapuya in this area, and the band named in the treaty. He has been working with his tribal nation to incorporate original place names and the original inhabitants of the land into names when possible. This name, he said, would be the appropriate one for this particular area. Everyone agreed that the name seemed to fit. It felt right. After a few emails back and forth discussing spelling with a linguist, and reading copies of the treaty, the parent group took the name to a group of youth, families, and volunteers to process and get feedback, wanting to still embody a collective process. The group agreed on the new name.

The naming of the center uncovered another value of the community—recognition, the understanding that others were here before us. The place we all shared as a community was not “empty” or “vacant” land as early attempts to settle it would suggest. Naming the Center in a way that recognized those before us kept this history present. This was not, however, a static acknowledgment of the past. Often times in Indigenous gatherings, we will recognize and acknowledge the Native people of the land where our meeting is taking place. As I have heard many times at our own Longhouse, or in other spaces, people recognize the original people of that particular territory as a formal protocol of recognition and respect. By acknowledging the Kalapuyan people whose traditional territory the Center is built upon—the area that originally ranged from the Cascades to the Coast Range, and from the Columbia River to the Umpqua—we engage in that protocol of recognition and respect toward people and place. Leann Simpson, a scholar of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg ancestry and a member of Alderville First Nation, writes

> When I asked my Elder about how to behave in another nation's territory, he reminded me that it is individuals who carry political responsibilities within them. Indigenous diplomacy is not so much about dialogue, but about action and embodiment. Treaties are not just between Indigenous nations and the Canadian state; they are carried and acted out through the actions of individual people. (2013, n.p.)

Though a personal protocol of recognition is something many Indigenous people in the community engage in individually, the tribal historian helped us embed this protocol and Indigenous diplomacy into the Center, a collective and material form of embodying and enacting this sort of diplomacy. Through naming the Center specifically to acknowledge those that were here before settler occupation, a tribute not only to the past, but also to those that continue to reside and thrive in the area today, we turned toward the past to engage in a more honest and respectful present and future together. Yet, as Tsalagi scholar Jeff Corntassel (2014) cautions, it is important to note that beyond mere "acknowledgement," these protocols and acknowledgments should work toward repatriation and ensuring the futures of Indigenous land and life:

> What does it mean to acknowledge the Indigenous territory you're on? Are you coming to community, place-based relationships as a settler or as an Indigenous person? Additionally, how are you entering Indigenous homelands – as an invited guest, uninvited, trespasser, visitor, resident, immigrant, refugee etc.? How you situate yourself and your level of awareness about colonial occupations of Indigenous homelands brings new responsibilities to the forefront. Awareness of colonial realities requires us to go beyond a simple acknowledgement of the

> Indigenous nations and peoples of the territories you are visiting. It is a call for justice and the return of stolen lands/waterways to the Indigenous peoples who maintain special relationships to these places. Ultimately, what we are arguing for is a responsibility-based ethic of truth-telling to identify and act upon new pathways to Indigenous resurgence. (as cited in Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Corntassel, 2014, p. 4)

The name was an important part of this acknowledgment, but only the starting point to foster continual connections between the Center and the Native nations in this area.

At the naming presentation later that fall, the tribal historian discussed the name the group chose, connecting it to the band that took part in the treaty that ceded the very land the Center was on. He discussed the importance of rewriting the land with Indigenous and place-based names, situating our project along with other efforts in the area—the talking stones along the river that inscribed Kalapuya words on the landscape, or the naming of a recently renovated bridge. Beyond helping with the name, the tribal historian had offered to create informational panels for the center, detailing more information on the Kalapuya peoples and local history and presence. He conveyed to the community the importance of recognizing those that walked on this land before us, and of getting to know the land itself. He then gifted the Center a series of poster-sized information panels that he took great care to create which included the history of the local land and people as a material presence in the new Center. Several panels featured notable Native people from the area, while others detailed particular geographical, linguistic, historical, tribal, or political aspects of the place we shared. He told the group what an

educational experience it was for him to create the panels, as he found himself in various libraries and museums throughout the state.

As he held up each panel and explained its meaning, it became clear in his presentation that two more values were grounding the Center. The first was the recognition of hardship and the loss of both life and land. The panels outlined the harsh realities those who lived before us endured, and the way our presence is currently shaped by those realities. One panel detailed the life of Eliza Young (Indian Lize), a local Kalapuya woman from the area who was eventually removed to the reservation. The panel described the fact her parents died from introduced diseases (asserting also that those diseases "caused the death of some 97% of tribes in the Willamette Valley"), as well as the mistreatment and abuse she faced by her husband and the loss of her two children at an early age. Another panel featured the treaty in full that "ceded" this land in this region (though the lands were already being eagerly [and "legally"] grabbed by settlers. By the time the treaty was signed, more than 2.5 million acres of land in Oregon had already been claimed).[181] On another panel, a map delineated the various treaties throughout Oregon and visually displayed the land mass acquired by each one. A visual overlay of the treaty signing locations and ceded lands on top of the usual and accustomed areas of Indigenous peoples in the area made visibly stark the immense land loss faced by the Indigenous people in this region. Further, the section noting the historic reservation established through an executive order, as well as the actual reservation eventually allotted to the tribal nation, made apparent the small fraction the tribe secured

[181] The area in the Willamette Valley is technically "ceded" land as a result of the "The Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855." Yet millions of acres of land (and thousands in the valley) were ceded before any official treaty was negotiated. This was due to the Oregon Donation Land Claims Act of 1850 outlined earlier. According to the Oregon Historical Society, "By the time the act expired on December 1, 1855, settlers in Oregon had filed for 7,437 patents that covered more than 2,500,000 acres of land." (Bevan, 2014, para. 1).

from the much-larger originally promised amount. The excerpts were honest acknowledgments of the pain and loss from colonization, and important reminders of the aim of colonization: to acquire land.

The panels did not shy away from representing the troubling history or present of this area, yet also did not solely focus on pain and loss. They included an honest accounting of local history, and the loss of life and land was part of that, but that wasn't the central focus. To do so, Tuck (2009) asserts, is dangerous: "it is a pathologizing approach in which the oppression singularly defines a community" (p. 413). Instead, pain and loss were acknowledged, but so too were "the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and communities" (Tuck, 2009, p. 417). The panels detailed perseverance despite challenges faced, resonant with what Vizenor (1994) has termed survivance. Survivance can account for pain, but Indigenous peoples are not victims to that pain. Survivance entails more than resisting in the most basic sense, "more than the potentially dangerous, precipitous act of (metaphorically) hanging on by the skin of your teeth, i.e., surviving" (Watanabe, 2015, p. 157). "Survivance," Vizenor (1999) states,

> means a native sense of presence, the motion of sovereignty and the will to resist dominance. Survivance is not just survival but also resistance, not heroic or tragic, but the tease of tradition, and my new sense of survivance outwits dominance and victimry. (p. 93)

"A life of perseverance characterizes the hard life Eliza endured," one panel read, describing both the challenges Eliza Young faced, as well as her survivance as she continued to harvest traditional berries and weaving materials to make a living for herself, even after she became blind later in life. Eliza Young ended up living to 100

years old, skillfully weaving purses until the end of her life. A panel on Chief Halo (Halito) of the Yoncallas highlighted his stance toward encroachment and dispossession, stating "He insisted on staying in his homeland when removal to the Grand Ronde Agency was enforced in 1856." Chief Halo was a leader among his people, and his assertion that "I will not go to a strange land" represents one model for Indigenous survivance. Yet there is no one way to enact survivance, to maintain a sense of active presence. While Halo did "not go" to Grand Ronde, the panels also highlight the continuity of those who did. A panel featuring those who were removed to the Grand Ronde reservation illustrates the strength and promise of their nation currently. The excerpt on the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde acknowledged the land lost and forcible attempts at assimilation, relocation, and termination, but also featured the tribal nation's current work on cultural restoration, including the "revitalization of the tribe's canoe, language, and craft cultures" which have "made significant progress in recent years," as well as the new tribal museum and cultural center that recently opened.

Collectively, these panels did not avoid engagement with the brutal truths of the history the people and land here have seen. Instead, they acknowledged them, while also exemplifying the strength and dignity of those in this area: what they overcame, what they achieved, what they stood for, and the futures they have and continue to work for. As a spatial project, the panels provide a visual reminder to those who enter the Center that they are on Indigenous land and treaty land, an acknowledgement that also comes with responsibilities.

Our hope was that the youth in the program would take up the responsibility to educate those who came in the Center about the panels so that they wouldn't become

solely static decorations, but serve an interactive and educational function. On the other side of the room, a map detailing American Indian and Alaska Native areas and statistics within the US has served this interactive function.[182] Each person who enters the Center is led to the map, which is covered with pushpins marking an individual's tribal nation or homelands, a testament to the diversity of the Native community in the area. This map has served not only as a spatial installation of tribal specificity and diversity (an intervention into a narrow, monolithic conception of Indianness), but also to connect people within the Center. At the opening event the prior spring, a woman about to place her pin on the Standing Rock Reservation noticed another pin already there. We introduced her to the elder who had placed the pin, and the two conversed about the peoples and places they had in common. These panels would hopefully complement other efforts to use the space pedagogically in disruptive, interactive, and connective ways.

At the end of his presentation, the tribal historian took out strips of Velcro and asked youth and families to help attach the panels to the wall. Little hands held the panels as older youth unpeeled Velcro, and adults worked together to ensure they were level on the walls. The labor, just as the advocacy, dreaming, and planning that went into the Center, was collective. Grounded in land, in a recognition of people and place, and accounting for both the stark realities of colonization as well the accompanying survivance (Vizenor, 1994), the Center become a site where past, present, and future were meaningfully enmeshed and entwined.

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[182] We used the 2010 "American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States" Census map which can be viewed from the US Census Bureau website (http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/special/AIANWall2010/AIAN_US_2010.pdf).

The Importance of Claiming Space

We were elated the day we received the announcement. At the naming presentation, we breathed life, love, and meaning into the space as a community. Meaningful events and moments have taken place within it since, as it has become another part of what Ramirez (2007) has termed our "Native hub": a site for "culture, community, and belonging." Of course, before the Center was created, we had already been engaged in the practice of "hub-making," as it was the youth group and parent group that fostered momentum for the community and advocacy for such a Center to begin with. Beyond the physical space, even the virtual space of our program's Facebook page and the Native listservs we used to access and distribute information served to connect us as a community. A hub, Ramirez states,

> is a geographical concept. Hubs can represent actual places. Gathering sites or hubs include cultural events, such as powwows and sweat lodge ceremonies, as well as social and political activities, such as meetings and family gatherings. In fact, urban hubs are often portable. Because Native Americans in the San Jose area live away from a land base, hubs often revolve around temporary gathering sites, including high school gymnasiums and conference rooms. (p. 3)

We were already connected—to each other, our heritage, and our homelands—in many ways, even before the Center became a reality. We had already been a part of the fluid and relational network of spaces Native people have long carved out in urban areas (Lobo, 2003): the lake where families celebrate birthdays, the homes people cook at, bead, or play hand game,[183] or the field where students gather to play shinny. Yet

[183] This game is also often referred to as "stick game" depending on the person, culture, or part of the country.

establishing a more permanent presence in the city and district has also been important. The two Longhouses at the university and community college are crucial sites for Native community and continuance in this town. We were an active community before we had the Center, our group migrating as needed to available spaces; yet the creation of the Center explicitly helped us claim physical space in the district.

Our efforts might be considered a small urban act of repatriation, a minor part of a broader effort to "decolonize" Indigenous education, an effort which, rather than simply a "metaphor" and "metonym for social justice," worked specifically toward "the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 21). Asserting and claiming sovereignty, rights, and lands in one's homelands is necessary, yet for many Native people in the program, the city is also home, and so claims to land and space in urban areas and cities are also important (Coulthard, 2014). As Glen Coulthard, member of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation states, drawing on Mi'kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence, "Native individuals, families, and communities are able to creatively retain and reproduce Indigenous traditions in urban settings," but it is also important "for urban Native people to have 'some form of mutually agreed upon, structured access to land-based communities.' Access to land is essential" (p. 176). Claiming the Center as land in the district has been an important act, not simply as an end in itself, but as the initiation of what will hopefully be the continuation of critical place-based, decolonizing community practices (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

A Promising Practice, But Not a Panacea

The creation of the Center, however, has not been a panacea for Indigenous education; nor has it "solved" all of the issues that Indigenous students face in the district

or community, many of which exceed the capacity of a Center run by one (less than full time) Title VII Coordinator and a handful of volunteers. This problematic assumption that the Center might be the “educational remedy” for the “problem” of Indigenous education not only positions Native students and community as a problem to be “fixed,” but it unrealistically positions the Center and Title VII program as the cure that will fix them. The Center has begun to effectively support students after school, yet it must not supplant the responsibility schools and teachers have for supporting Native students each and every day while they are in school. Furthermore, this solution-seeking discourse ignores the macrosocial dynamics that affect education. As Sumida and Meyer (2008) note,

> The rhetoric of “solving” social problems by restructuring schools and promoting educational reform blinds the public from the macro levels of economic, social, and political structures that create the basic oppression, malfunction, and inequality within a society. (p. 344)

The Center has increased access to academic support, provided necessary school supplies and snacks to youth and families, engaged Native youth constructively with their peers and adult mentors, and hosted various community activities, all of which have fostered a sense of self-efficacy, community, and belonging among those involved. These efforts are promising. The futures, prospects, and possibilities the Center has help foster are difficult to trace. A Native student’s claim that her career goal is to be an artist who uses her skills to further awareness about Native issues could reasonably be tied to her involvement in the Native Youth Group and the Center. Through involvement in the youth group, she connected to a Native summer bridge program designed to support

Native students academically and culturally. Would this student have imagined her future in such a way without the Native Youth Group, the Center, or this summer program? Perhaps. She, like other students in the program, is strong, brilliant, and determined. She was not fixed or even molded by the Center. Yet as a hub, the Center helped enlarge the possible worlds she might imagine herself in.

Her "success," however, according to the district (and subsequently to the Title VII program), will not be measured according to whether she wields her education in ways to further Native sovereignty, but whether she can read and write, and whether or not she graduates. These measures are important, essential even, yet imposing these outcomes on the Center and the program as the sole means for "success" constrains curricular possibilities as the Center must filter its programming through the conventional language of achievement and graduation. This process of translation, of articulating what may appear immeasurable (sense of pride, commitment to one's nation, desire to learn one's language) into legible and measurable terms is important work. The Center, as an extension of the Title VII program, cannot necessarily justify its existence by helping Native youth "feel good" about themselves or their educational experiences. What is "counted" by the district is what "counts." Though a sense of community for Native youth appears to be an important aspect of educational success, the Center is positioned with the burden of "proving" itself through measurable outcomes such as increasing academic achievement, boosting graduation rates and academic preparedness, and reducing dropout rates and absenteeism.

Meeting these outcomes becomes further challenging as the marginalization that trails the Title VII program also burdens the Center despite its overt presence as a Native

program and space in the district. The Center is centrally located—housed adjacent to an elementary school, a block from a local high school, and within walking distance from several other schools in the district—yet it still remains marginal to the daily life and happenings at each of the twenty-two schools within the district. And despite a grand opening and successful year of programming, the process of the Center's creation and growing presence has still gone unnoticed, invisible to many in the community. Thus, positioning the Center and Title VII Program as the educational "remedy" for the "problem" of Indigenous education disproportionately burdens a program that only serves students after school and occasionally on weekends (with a less than full time Coordinator).

The parent committee, Title VII Coordinator, and volunteers are hopeful about the promise of the Center. To offset the Center and program's marginalization, the Center recently formed a council consisting of parents, educators, administrators, and representatives of the city and state to collectively support the Center in its continual growth and desire to provide holistic support for Native youth and families in the district. Despite the challenges the Center still faces, hopefully unpacking the story of its creation, including the processes and forms of collaboration, might be instructive for educators committed to Native students, community, and educational self-determination and sovereignty. This story will hopefully illuminate some of the lessons learned throughout this process.

Lessons Learned: Listening and Inclusive Deliberation

The process of inclusive deliberation during the meeting with the coordinator, architect, and students and families, for example, permitted a respectful outcome for the

center, as opposed to the usual pattern of Indigenous erasure. The coordinator and architect listened as youth and families gave input into a complex desire to symbolically articulate unity and difference. Their patience, allowing the community involved the time needed to discuss and even disagree on what the space should look like, was an important act of support. They also encouraged and supported peoples' ideas and input, including the proposal from the youth. Yet the story also highlights the complexity of this deliberative process, and how even within this commitment to inclusive deliberation, the history of colonialism, ongoing patterns of erasure, and the monolithic conception of Indigenous identity that emerges from settler society discourses, threatened to involve the youth and the coordinator in a process of erasure of Indigenous identity.

In another community or cultural context, perhaps, the youth's suggestion that a medicine wheel be embedded in the floor might have been appropriate. It was not inappropriate to suggest this idea. Being visible as Native people in the community and within the space was important to everyone. Medicine wheels are also not inherently generic or pan-Indian markers of Indianness; instead they are tribally specific, place-based cultural practices rooted in longstanding expressions. For some, especially those outside their homelands, the use of medicine wheels can retain their rooted meanings while also being portable, a form of "taking your roots with you" (Lyons, 2010, p. 99). For others, especially those in diverse urban Indigenous communities, medicine wheels might be a symbolize that reflects a unified Native presence. Though outwardly they might appear to mirror dominant representational practices, Indigenous communities can and do reclaim or subvert those representations for their own use and benefit (Schwarz,

2013). These symbols are not intended to collapse tribal differences, but instead represent pan-Indigenous solidarity.

In this context specifically, however, the two mothers' deliberation and conversation about the symbol, particularly highlighted in one mother's comment—"This is more of a Plains symbol. My people don't use medicine wheels at all"—complicated the proposal of the medicine wheel, what appeared to them as an erasure of their own tribal specificity. The recognition and representation of Indigenous identity is fraught with layers of discursive conflict that are not easily sorted, even by and among Indigenous people themselves. It was by providing time for thoughtful deliberation of these complexities that the insights of these two mothers emerged and helped guide the group.

Lessons Learned: The Importance of Tribally Specific Knowledge

Providing the time necessary to deliberate, however, is only one important consideration. It is also important to note that the insight regarding the medicine wheels emerged *because* of the mothers' place-based and tribally specific knowledge. Native icons and imagery have been important in raising visibility and awareness of Native peoples and communities, particularly in urban areas, which are often "unexpected places" (Deloria, 2004) for Native people in the dominant cultural imagination. Yet as important and productive as these images have been and continue to be, important too is the tribally specific knowledge of a person, community, or nation. Not all Native people can articulate the distinctions of their own tribal culture and lifeways from more pan-Indian iconic imagery (often for reasons outside of their control—legacies of removal,

dispossession, assimilation, or shame that have disconnected them from these specific histories and practices).

The absence of this specific knowledge must not be read as personal deficit, especially as those disconnected from or denied these histories continue to assert Indigenous presence with creativity and connectedness. Yet the recognition and nurturing of particular place-based, cultural, and linguistic knowledge remains a firm grounding against erasure. Educators must first understand the value of specific historical, place-based, collective, cultural insight. What would this story be like if the mothers hadn't had that knowledge, or the tribal historian hadn't been involved? Educators need to recognize the importance of such specific knowledge, and if they do not have it themselves, the importance of finding a way to bring it into the process.

The importance of recognizing and retaining this specific knowledge serves as an important guidepost for Indigenous education and has grounded much of the work in the center. In our program, several elders in the community offered this orientation as both a starting point and outcome for students when we started the youth group. As I made my way to the high schools to meet with Native students and ask what they would want from a Native youth group, many expressed a general interest in learning about "Native culture." I was overwhelmed with the diversity of tribal affiliations in the program, compounded by the fact that far from my homelands and grandma's village community in Alaska, I considered myself a learner, not teacher, of what it meant to be Alutiiq or Sugpiaq ("a real person"). I felt paralyzed at the responsibility of teaching each of these youth what it meant to be a real person, and good citizen or good descendant[184] of his or

[184] The inclusion of "good descendant" came from a colleague Julie Bacon and her proposed doctoral research.

her own people. One might think it was presumptuous to position myself with the responsibility of teaching the youth what it means to be human; however, this questions often underpin educational goals (even if implicit). Vine Deloria Jr. makes a similar claim when he states, “The real interest of the old Indians was not to find the abstract structure of physical reality but rather to find the proper road along which, for the duration of a person’s life, individuals were supposed to walk” (Deloria et al., 1999, p. 46). Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) further states,

> Colonized peoples have been compelled to define what it means to be human because there is a deep understanding of what it has meant to be considered not fully human, to be *savage*. (p. 27)

I had seen the less-than-human portrayal of Native people in schools and felt the need to intervene, helping students disidentify with those representations and offer promising alternatives. Some youth were not seeking this knowledge, as they already had meaningful and alternative bases to draw from, but many explicitly asked for guidance. “I want to learn more about my Native culture,” was a common sentiment. I felt comfortable with leading the youth through critical activities designed to disrupt overtly narrow and stereotypical representations and identities, but uncertain how to offer them more constructive and meaningful forms of identification. During initial planning for the youth group, however, two elders relayed their experiences as educators and volunteers in a Title VII program years ago, and the similar challenges they faced.

They shared how imperative it was to foster a sense of community among the youth, but also to steer each of the youth to his or her own particular heritage and people; to build that collective, but also help youth learn and understand what it means to be part

of their tribal community or nation as well. This meant coupling not only the community building, but also the critical skills with each of the youth's own rootedness and relations. To do this, the elders used beading as a shared activity and useful skill, but encouraged each youth to bring a design that reflected their own tribal heritage. In their program, as in ours, some in the community were from reservations and others had never set foot on their reservation or homelands. Some were explicitly taught stories and cultural traditions and practices by their families, but others were not. And so for some, this meant asking an aunty or other relative about a design; for others it meant looking on the Internet at their tribal nation's website.

The importance was not how the youth gained their information, for each had their various reasons for knowing or not knowing, for feeling connected or disconnected; the importance was in the asking, in the act of connecting, and in the act of seeking specificity. The elders seemed to understand the tensions in relating youth to both their homelands and diaspora (Ramirez, 2007). Their advice became a model for how to dance between unity and difference, recognizing the interplay between fostering a sense of community while also nurturing the distinct peoples and knowledges that were a part of it.

The elders' advice mirrored Ramirez's acknowledgement that hubs can be portable, even virtual. And they, like Ramirez, didn't that Native people in cities were assimilated or less-Indian, an assumption that often underpin urban/rez binaries. As Ramirez (2007) states,

> Urban Indians ultimately maintain a rooted connection to their tribal lands and communities even if we no longer lived there, which is very different from the

> classic notion of culture and community that roots and stabilizes Indians within the confines of their reservations. In this way, Native senses of rootedness can be transported. (pp. 11-12)

Our place-making as a youth group community was a practical engagement with this portable rootedness. Like the elders, we utilized the shared practice of beading but directed students to their particular tribal heritage. It later became the model for how we developed the t-shirt design as the process both fostered community while also connecting each of us to our families and heritage. In the symbolic play between tribal home and diaspora, for example, we transported and transposed our sense of home and place, carrying our rootedness with us. For the Karuk student, it was the intricate weave of the basket pattern from her region that was incorporated into the shared design. For the Creek student, it was the symbol of corn that she offered, rooting her to her peoples' longstanding practice of harvesting corn. For the Klamath student, the salmon was the place-based icon representing a specific cutural and physical lifeway of his community. Many of these symbols were common to more than one tribal culture, but the purpose was to assert distinctiveness, even as those distinctions might have been shared among the collective.

Lessons Learned: The Importance of Recognizing People and Place

Though on the surface it doesn't appear place-based or cuturally-specific, even the design on the floor enabled this dynamic interplay between diaspora and homelands; between shared place as a group and the places of our various peoples. The design on the floor that foregrounded the two rivers in the area, for example, was rooted in a recognition of place. Though not all peoples in our program come from places where

rivers as a particular geographic and place-based feature are prominent, the practice of orienting oneself and one's community to place is a longstanding practice that most Indigenous peoples share; indeed, it is how many people *define* Indigeneity. Kanaka Maoli scholar Haunani Kay Trask (1999) states, "As Indigenous peoples, our nationalism is born…of a genealogical connection to our place" (p. 59).[185] Thus, our acknowledgment of Indigenous presence in the area since time immemorial, even as many of us are Native, but not necessarily native to this place, is part of a protocol of recognition, an acknowledgment that the place we are in, if not our original homelands, is someone else's homelands. "To respect and acknowledge the existence of a host/indigenous culture is," according to Sumida and Meyer (2008)

> …critical because it sets into motion a mutually defined relationship of caring that should have been maintained and never erased. The hope for the future is that this idea will become reinstated and supported as foundational to educational curriculum for the continuing health of the world.
>
> For some, the notion of being a "guest" is awkward. However, if understood in its proper context, as guests, perhaps a more equitable and sustainable rapport with

[185] Place-based scholars such as David Gruenewald (2003) argue that cultural diversity stems *from* geographic diversity; that unique cultural practices are themselves rooted in and stem from the diverse landscape and geogrpahies of places. This is an important contribution that foregrounds the interrelatedness of "eco-justice" and "social-justice" education. Kanaka Maoli scholar Haunani Kay Trask provides a parallel argument, but deploys the importance of its inverse, that human diversity can ensure biodiversity:

> This lesson of our cultures has never been more crucial to global survivial. To put the case in Western terms: biodiversity is guaranteed through human diversity. No one knows how better to care for Hawai'i, our island home, than those of us who have lived here for thousands of years. On the other side fo the world from us, no people understand the desert better than those who inhabit her. And so on and so on, thorughout the magnificently varied places of the earth. Forest people know the forest; mountain people know the mountains; plains people know the plains. This is an elemental wisdom that has nearly disappeared because of industrialization, greed, and hatred of that which is wild and sensuous.
>
> If this is our heritage, then the counter to the New World Order is not more uniformity, more conformity but more autonomy, more localized control of resources and the cultures they can maintain. *Human diversity ensures biodiversity.* (Trask, 1999, p. 59)

the host/indigenous culture and their environment would necessitate a dramatically different kind of relational orientation that would mutually benefit all of society. (p. 363)[186]

Emblematic in the name of the Center, embedded in the floor, and adhered to the walls were physical acts of rememberance, recognition, and respect of the "indigenous/host culture." It almost appears strange that an Indigenous community was making such earnest efforts to recognize they were on someone else's homelands, given the pervasive context of settler society that rarely questions their entitlements to land and place, moving freely above and around what has long and most likely been other peoples' homelands.

As an orienting practice, an educator might learn to situate his or her pedagogy with respect to this conception of being a guest on someone's homelands. Formal protocols for this framework already exist internationally—there are passports and visas to obtain, and guidebooks one can buy to learn about a place, people, and customs. Native people often already enact these formal protocols as well as recognize the transnational contexts they move within and across as they traverse lands and communities. At the American Education Research Association (AERA) conferences, for example, Indigenous educators and allies often acknowledge the Native peoples of a

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[186] It is important to recognize critiques of the term "host" culture or nation. Though the term is used in decolonizing scholarship (e.g., Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel [2014] use "host nation"), others are suspicious of or oppose the use of "host" culture:

> In her poem "Host Culture (Guava Juice on a Tray)," Kanaka Maoli poet Mahealanii Kamau'u stridently opposes the haole-imposed and repressive concept of what "host culture" is supposed to mean, referring to it as "euphemistic bull shit," stating "They act like / they was invited / like all these years/ we been partying / Or something…/ whoever thought up/ That crap/ Deserves to get whacked" (as cited in Ho'omanawanui , 2008, p. 144)

Ho'omanawanui continues, "While it is nice that a growing number of non-Kanaka Maoli are "interested" in the "host culture," I am a skeptical Kanaka Maoli writer, poet, and scholar who has witnessed far too many examples of what this means: the taking over of our kuleana by non-Natives" (pp. 144-145).

particular place before public speaking. This protocol inevitably shapes and informs the events and experiences that take place after. In 2012, Tuck called on AERA attendees to "acknowledge the land and peoples of the host cities." Further, she invited educators to situate themselves as attendees and as an association association as guests on Indigenous lands:

> How might the impact of the Association as guest on Indigenous land be wielded responsibly? Association members might consider how their work invests in the permanence of a nation-state that denies the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. Structures of settler colonialism might be investigated more robustly in education research. Members might attend to the invisibility of urban Indigenous peoples, particularly in the cities that host our conference. Members might learn more about Indigenous and decolonizing critiques of education research and Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies and theories, all while resisting the draw to appropriate and settle Indigenous knowledge. (Tuck, 2012, np)

Tuck was calling on educators not only to recognize the traditional homelands where the conference took place, but also the corresponding sense of responsibility that recognition entailed. Drawing on this notion of being a guest, as a performative practice, an educator could situate her classroom with regards to the host community or nation, to both its history and presence. Beginning class each day with an acknowledgment could be one way of embodying this performative practice. Or like the Center, the school might publicly recognize the host people and land where the school is located. At the University of Oregon, rewriting the landscape in ways that respect and recognize Native presence and the corresponding responsibilities those on campus have to Native peoples and

nations was part of the animus driving the flagpole project initiated by Klamath elder and steward of the Longhouse Gordon Bettles and business students in 2012. As Bettles stated during his advocacy for the project,

> By recognizing and placing the flags of the nine Tribes in this central location of campus the UO will show to all that this institution recognizes those ancestors as Oregon's First Inhabitants. This act would show physical representation that …Oregon's educational system is committed to working with the Oregon Tribes in furthering education, cultural sharing, and an unwavering partnership. This act would show great consistency in furthering The State of Oregon through …responsibility in fulfilling Treaty obligations regarding Tribal education. (personal communication)

Though an installation of nine flagpoles might be unfeasible for a school, how might an educator in her classroom or school take this act of recognition and respect seriously? Drawing on examples from both the Center and the flagpole project, an educator might disply tribal flags in the classroom, display maps of Indigeous territory, or display treaties if applicable to remind students that their education takes place on treaty lands. An educator could rename hallways or classrooms in the school with Indigenous place names, along with corresponding education about those names. In fact the world around us is rife with Indigenous names that people utter with little disrgard for the land and languages those names emerged from. These words could be given life by educators if they connected with elders, language experts, or community leaders, much the way Leanne Simpson (2011) reanimated through story the aglicized name of the city she's from, Otonabee, to mean the place where beating hearts gather.

An educator might also explicitly discuss what it means to be a guest, or rather, a "good" guest in another's homelands. As Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred noted, "*As a visitor, you can't demand to be respected on your own terms*" (as cited in Ritskes, 2013, np). Educators can, as settlers, or even as Native people in another's homeland as we did in the Center, reflect on what it means to be a good "guest" or "visitor." Perhaps at first it means learning where you are and whose land you are on. That might develop into understanding the issues those tribal nations or communities face near you, with that awareness translating into action. As Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox (2012) writes regarding the Idle No More movement,[187] responsible "co-existence" means "co-resistance":

> Co-existence through co-resistance is the responsibility of settlers, and we achieve it in part by making change in our own systems and among other settlers, taking our cue from Indigenous action and direction. For settler allies, having a place to land relationally creates a stronger rationale for unsettling established systems: knowing and being with Indigenous peoples, even if it is just to be welcomed to stand alongside at marches and rallies, or to join the drum dance circle, creates a tangible bond. Relationship creates accountability and responsibility for sustained supportive action. This does not mean requiring Indigenous energies for creating relationship with settlers; it means settlers taking initiative to live on a personal level what they claim on a political one. (np)

[187] Idle No More, an Indigenous-led movement that began in Canada and has spread worldwide, focuses on protecting Indigenous sovereignty, lands and waters, and fostering Indigenous resurgence. Though rooted in centuries of Indigenous resistance, the Idle No More movement specifically was initiated by four women—Nina Wilson, Sylvia McAdam, Jessica Gordon, and Sheelah McLean—who were concerned about legislation in Canada (bill C-45) that would effectively erode First Nations' treaty rights, lands, and waters and held a teach-in in Saskatoon. The movement gained considerable visibility with the public hunger strike from Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat First Nation and elder Raymond Robinson from the Cross Lake First Nation in Manitoba. The movement continued with teach-ins, panel sessions, public protests, marches, and round dance flash mobs, among other forms of creative resistance. More information can be found at the Idle No More website (http://www.idlenomore.ca/).

Enacting and performing protocols of recognition and respect as both embodied and representative knowledge, too, will shape the teaching and learning that takes place in a classroom or school.

Lessons Learned: Acknowledging Ignorance and Sharing Epistemic Authority

The process of deliberation enacted in the development of the Center also surfaced issues related to what Eliot Eisner (2005) refers to as primary and secondary ignorance. In some sense, the non-Native Coordinator understood that she was not the expert in the room, reflecting what Eisner terms "primary ignorance": "when you do not know something, but you *know* that you do not know it" (p. 139). With this awareness, the Coordinator let the youth and families lead the conversation, and served initially as facilitator. The conversation also surfaced a moment of secondary ignorance: "when you do not know something but do *not know* you do not know it" (p. 139). The Coordinator was initially enthusiastic about the medicine wheel, feeling as if she was supporting the youth through her support of the symbol, but was unaware of the other perspectives. Yet she heard the perspectives offered by the mothers and recognized their concerns. She sat within that complexity and tension and skillfully moved from *not knowing* she didn't know, to knowing and recognizing that there were issues of which she was previously unaware. She demonstrated this through silence (taking the opportunity to listen rather than speak) and deference and respect for the perspectives offered.

Educators must recognize that there will be inevitably be gaps in their knowledge. To address some of these gaps, educators might recognize that knowledge and insights already exists in the communities in which they teach. Educators should also have a tolerance for contradictions, and a patience to sit within them. This task might invariably

be complex in a context where opinions within a Native community differ (as they do within any community); nevertheless, educators must have opportunities to consider their own inevitable ignorance. A prerequisite for being an effective educator should not necessarily be knowing all there is to know about a culture or people, but rather, a recognition that some things may be unknown; a tolerance for ambiguity, contradictions, or disagreement; an unwavering commitment to Native wellbeing and community; and a respect for the knowledge in the community. This also implies that teacher education must equip educators with experiences to reflect on their own ignorance, both primary and secondary.

A story shared by Mi'kmaq scholar Marie Battiste (2000) is helpful here. Battiste relays a story from Chickasaw educator Eber Hampton, and states,

> He told of an elder who asked him to carry a box. Thinking well of his own youthful stature, he felt proud to be chosen and agreed willingly. The elder then thrust forward what appeared to be an empty box, which puzzled him:
>
> > His question came from behind the box, "How many sides do you see?"
> >
> > "One," I said.
> >
> > He pulled the box towards his chest and turned it so one corner faced me. "Now how many do you see?"
> >
> > "Now I see three sides."
> >
> > He stepped back and extended the box, one corner towards him and one towards me. "You and I together can see six sides of this box," he told me. (Hampton 1995, 42). (p. xvii)

Educators must recognize that knowledge exists in the communities in which they work. Further, this knowledge provides crucial insight into matters that affect them. As the previous story shows, the process of sharing epistemic authority, rather than a subtractive process, is generative. We need educators who are willing to trust the Native families they work with so together they can see more of "the box."

Teacher education programs and districts should make every effort to hire Native faculty, educators, and Title VII program coordinators. As members of Native nations and communities, as those perhaps already knowledgeable about the discursive dynamics that enable and constrain Indigenous education, these efforts are essential. Teacher education programs and districts must also make efforts to educate professors who prepare teachers along with those providing training to educators in schools about the importance of identifying sources of specific knowledge when we educators lack it; of the need to recognize one's primary and secondary ignorance; and of the importance of becoming learners through this process of shared epistemic authority.

CHAPTER XI

ANALYSIS

The counterstories I offered in the preceding chapters reflect my experiences of urban Indigenous education in this district as I aimed to understand, responsibly engage, and represent personal and interpersonal experiences situated within complex discursive contexts. Rather than outline a prescriptive pedagogy for urban Indigenous education, I used stories as a way to examine Indigenous education as a practice of being in schools; a practice of survivance amidst discourses designed to ignore, erase, consume, or demean our presence as Indigenous peoples. Given that aim, it did not seem possible to provide a list of these practices, but rather, to present this information via the stories I lived and told. I did, at times, interweave analysis and suggestions throughout the stories that I wrote as I kept living the stories anew, each observation, experience, poem, artwork, and theory inviting me to revisit the story with new perspectives, an iterative process of reading, writing, and imagining that led to rereading and rewriting.

The stories as a whole constitute my findings, as opposed to any single culminating insight that can be summarized in a sentence. Describing how I, and others, moved through clearly constraining contexts is a product and process that I hope will be instructive and useful for educators. Stories avoid imposing prescriptions for what to do, and hopefully offer space to imagine what "dancing with the dilemmas" (Tejeda, 2008) in one's own community might entail. [188] That being said, in this chapter I will attempt to summarize some more general insights that might be constructively gleaned from this work. In a context of schooling that reproduces "business as usual" (Castagno &

[188] By "dilemma" I want to stress again that I do not mean that Native students are the dilemma (echoing the longstanding frame of the "Indian problem"); rather, the dilemma is how to move responsibly in a context of pervasive erasure, marginalization, racism, and colonization.

Brayboy, 2008) practices, I want to avoid misinterpretation, drawing attention to some practices that were clearly more constructive than others (and some that should be abandoned all together).

I organize the following analysis section loosely into themes. In the first two themes, I aim to highlight various forms of teacher knowledge, which I will offer as *concrete* teacher knowledge, such as information and practical suggestions, and broader *conceptual* knowledge, which includes theories and concepts. In the last section, I suggest that this work cannot be accomplished merely by accumulating more concrete and conceptual knowledge, but must entail a relational practice of "being" in schools that requires attention to power and ethics. I then offer a framework for such a relational practice based in care, courage, and connection.

Concrete Teacher Knowledge

These stories point to a variety of concrete and practical forms of knowledge that teachers should have, essential information that could have greatly improved the practices of Indigenous education in this district. There is some basic information all educators simply need to know.

Educators need to be aware that they are likely to have Native students in their class and school, and that they need skills and strategies to identify those students. Demographic information can provide such information, yet teachers should also recognize that formal bureaucratic categories can embed erasures. The story "From Explicit to Encoded Erasure" clearly demonstrated the ways those categories erased Native presence and impeded the district's ability to identify Native students in the district, a prerequisite for serving Native students. It is impossible to tell whether a

student is Native by appearance, a realization Ms. Carter came to upon seeing how deeply involved Erin was in her own culture, even as she didn't "look" Native. Both demographic systems and observations inevitably include erasure. The district's data system couldn't accommodate the range of Indigenous identities that were multiracial or included Hispanic/Latino as an ethnicity (ironic, as the new race and ethnicity categories were designed to finally allow "multiracial individuals full recognition of their heritage" (NFES, 2008, p. 25). Further, Indigeneity, as both a racial and political identity, is not a visibly identifiable characteristic. Any attempts to define physical characteristics of Indigeneity would inevitably include erasure.

Creating systems, processes, and contexts so that students and families feel comfortable bringing their diverse and multiple identities into the classroom and school has been an important intervention to the limits of the demographic systems of identification alone. In the story "From Explicit and Encoded Erasure" that discussed the demographic erasure of Beth and Viviana because of their multiracial identifications, it is important to note that Beth became involved in the Title VII program because she attended a college night hosted in the district for Native students, a program she became aware of because her school counselor gave her an invitation. Viviana became involved because she saw a flier we had posted for the Native youth group in the hallway of her high school. Ms. Donovan, also recognizing the limits of the demographic data, coordinated her Native literature class to attend and volunteer at the pow wow, an activity that she hoped would raise awareness of contemporary Native culture, while also encouraging her Native students to self-identify and potentially connect to the program.

In each instance, a concerted effort was made to provide a context for Native youth to connect to, and to elicit participation, irrespective of demographic information.

Identifying whether there is a Title VII program in the district is also imperative. The Title VII statement of policy declares "It is the policy of the United States to fulfill the Federal Government's unique and continuing trust relationship with and responsibility to the Indian people for the education of Indian children" (20 U.S.C. § 7101). Given this, and the acute need for supports for Indigenous students, it is inexcusable that any district employees would be unaware of such a program, the services and events the program offers, or the eligibility requirements. Title VII coordinators are often valuable community and educational resources who can help educators support Native students and gauge the appropriateness of Native-related content. Sharon was unaware of Celeste's involvement in the Native youth group, and even that there was a Title VII program. The same was true of Ms. Bishop and Mr. Smith, who have each taught 5th grade Native American units for years in the district, and Ms. Billings, who only became aware of the program through our interview, despite having several Native students in her class.

Similarly, educators need to investigate what programs and supports exist in the broader community. It becomes strange to think that an educator would teach an elaborate curricular unit on Longhouses and guide students in replicating Longhouses without realizing that two Longhouses exist in the community, and that, rather than being historic cultural artifacts, actively support a vibrant Native community that holds potlucks, community events, seminars, guest speakers, memorials, and Waashat services, among other activities. There is also a Title VII program in an adjacent district (relevant

because many families move between districts), a Native listserv and calendar that details important community events, and the program's Facebook page that offer important connections for the Native community. An educator aware of those networks can help new families in the district plug in, and help families connect to academic, cultural, and social opportunities.

Educators should also know that there may be a variety of programs specifically designed to support Native youth in the area. Native high school students, for example, learned more in the two weeks attending the summer bridge academy at the local university than in two years of one day a week after school programming. The summer academy connected Native youth from this city and the region to each other, connections most of them maintained long after the summer academy was over. The academy also emphasized Native scholarship as a cultural value. For three years, I taught at this academy, and the academic focus enabled the youth to delve deeper into Native studies literature and philosophies than our after school group, as we could require students to read and write, an observation that leads me to believe support for Native students must be both cultural and academic (a split that problematically divides the two to the detriment of Native students; Hermes, 2005). Only one counselor I met was aware of this opportunity, despite expressions of an earnest desire to support Indigenous students' efforts to be involved in their cultures. Teachers simply having this information could make a significant impact on Native students' education.

These recommendations do not mean that educators must solely rely on Title VII coordinators or other Native educators for their programming. The principal who coordinated Native Heritage Month invited the program to present a slide show to

complement the assembly. Somehow we had missed the email request, and as a result no corresponding educational efforts accompanied the Native Pride Assembly. The displays for Native Heritage month at the high school depended each year on the program, and when program volunteers did not construct one, there were no displays. With 22 schools, the Title VII coordinator and program volunteers cannot be the sole source of support for schools. There is a balance to be struck. To over-rely on Title VII coordinators as a way to avoid one's responsibility to self-educate is problematic, but to overlook opportunities to establish meaningful relationships with those coordinators as knowledgeable, skillful, and resourceful district colleagues is even more problematic. Educators need to take responsibility for being knowledgeable about Indigenous students' unique needs and the programs that support them. Title VII program coordinators can be a source of such knowledge, but they are not a substitute for it.

It also became clear that there is general information that would have improved curriculum that included Native life. Attention to tribal specificity, for example, rather than teaching generically about "Pilgrims and Indians" is important. Although Ms. Billings shared that her teacher education program prepared her to teach multiple perspectives of history, her lack of knowledge that the Wampanoag were one of the specific groups of Indigenous peoples whom the Pilgrims met, rather than generic "Indians" used in her texts and classroom conversations, impeded her ability to put that multiple perspectives theory to practice.

Teachers need basic information about history that is accurate. Without such information, Ms. Billings reproduced a simplified myth about Pilgrims and Indians. I opened this chapter with Parker's (1916) quote that "No race of men has been more

unjustly misrepresented by popular historians than the American Indian" (p. 261). In the 1930s, Luther Standing Bear (Oglala Sioux) wrote, "No longer should the Indian be dehumanized in order to make material for lurid and cheap fiction to embellish street-stands…Rather, a fair and correct history of the native American should be incorporated in the curriculum of the public school" (as cited in Lyons, 2000, p. 465). Native people have long been saying history should be more accurate and honest. The material needed to engage these histories is there, much of it written by Native people trying to reright and rewrite (Smith, 2012) historical wrongs. Without such histories, Native students learn that Native peoples were colonization's "helping hand," overlooking alternative historical accounts, and demeaning resistance embedded in Native counterstories. Native students are further positioned to potentially internalize those dominant, Eurocentric narratives. As historian James Loewen states, "the antidote to feel-good history is not feel-bad history, but honest and inclusive history" (1998, p. 80).[189]

In this story, I offered the examination of Plymouth 400 efforts as a way to transform outdated curricular framings by situating them within current tensions. The Title VII program is also providing educators with copies of *1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving*, and *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years* so they have resources to do so. The information needed to do this is already there. Educators need to orient themselves to seek it out.

[189] I am working on one story that draws from the work of Wayne Au (2011) to suggest histories should be more than "inclusive" of Native perspectives, but must also take a particular "standpoint" with respect to various perspectives. It would be hard to merely let all accounts of settler and Indigenous histories sit alongside each other, especially when such accounts often testify to unforgivable violence. In the story, "Pilgrims and Indians," I tried to highlight some of the costs of curriculum that omits Native perspectives. A story I am currently writing, however, details why teachers must go beyond inclusion to developing what Au terms, the "standpoint of the oppressed."

Native curriculum is also not the reproduction of stereotypes. Native people are not generic bodies made Indian when the familiar set of cultural markers are added. Content is not made Native when you glue feathers to a student display in the hallway. It is not the making of Kachinas, teepees, totem poles, and other "crafts." This has been said for years, and for some reason, educators seem to ignore these assertions.

Finally, these cases unfortunately illustrate that teachers did not appear to have the information and skills they needed to detect bias, racism, or anti-Indianism (Cook-Lynn, 2001) in the curriculum. Racism is institutional and structural (Leonardo, 2004), and while it should not be reduced to interpersonal exchanges between individuals, it is also locatable in those interactions. It was clear that the curriculum reinforced particularly harmful "ways of knowing" that weren't explicitly racist, but reflective of more "deep-structures" (Grande, 2004) of colonialism which I examine in the next section. Nevertheless, there were multiple instances where teachers failed to detect or interrupt bias or racism.

That an educator calls a student Pocahontas is inexcusable. That educators are still allowed to use *Sign of the Beaver* despite its routine use of the word squaw and despite widespread critiques (Lambert & Lambert, 2014; Reese, 2007; Slapin & Seale, 1998, 2003) is also unacceptable. Subjecting students to degrading language such as squaw and the "Tonto talk" in *Sign of the Beaver* positions Native students at risk of internalizing those demeaning representations. If Native students are conscious of the overt and latent prejudice in either curricular material or their peers' comments, they are faced with myriad decisions including quietly withstanding or choosing to address the bias, a choice

Zeik made that was fortunately met with no resistance, but a choice other families have made, met with resistance and feelings of marginalization and retaliation as a result.[190]

Some of this racism appears to reflect what Robertson (2015) has termed "legitimized racism." Educators must know that squaw, chief, and Pocahontas are degrading, not loving, referents. To call a student Pocahontas is inexcusable. It puts that student at risk for internalizing a degrading self-referent as a source of pride. Sharon's inability to address Celeste's concerns also stemmed from practices of "legitimized racism," evident in her own comments. When she told me that it was the intentions underlying the practice that mattered, she admitted her own latent desires to dress up, reproducing legitimized racist fantasies. "When I hear Native Americans like chief Seattle," she stated, "there's a part of me, you know, I wish I could put war paint and breast plates [indicating to her chest] and honor him." Sharon is deeply embarrassed by her comments now, and appears to understand more fully the ways her desires were based in the racial and colonial discourses of cultural appropriation.

When I approached the classroom on the day of the Native Heritage Month assembly and the two boys were "playing Indian" ("I'm the Indian Chief!" said one. "I'll shoot you with my spear!" said another) the teacher had been in the hallway and seen them playing as well. She was busy getting students organized for the assembly, and so I intervened by letting them know that "Chiefs" are much more like "Barack Obama" or other presidents, than spear-wielding warriors. I don't offer this quip as an exemplar response; rather, my offhand attempt to interrupt the boys' commentary felt necessary. To let those statements go would not only condone those viewpoints, but would have

[190] See Oyate's "Living Stories" for examples that occurred in this area, including Jane's son, Raven's story, and Qala's story (http://oyate.org/index.php/resources/45-resources/living-stories).

irresponsibly enabled a hostile climate for the two Native students who watched them play Indian.

More subtly, educators subjected students to curriculum that tokenized Native culture through the guise of appreciating diverse cultures, demonstrating the pervasive inability (or unwillingness) to critically examine curricular choices. I only wrote two stories about this, but it was everywhere I turned. For example, I took my son to the bathroom at an elementary school in the district I had yet to visit. It was after school hours during his soccer practice. As I waited for him in the hallway, I was struck by a giant floor to ceiling display titled "What's Your Spirit Animal?" designed with what appeared to be Native "totems." A description of the Native totems read that raven is known for "introspection, courage, self-knowledge, magic," or that a buffalo represents "Sacredness, life, great strength, abundance, gratitude" I traced the spirit animal key to the website *Legends of the Americas* (http://www.legendsofamerica.com/na-totems.html), and in the "Native American Totems and Their Meanings" section, individuals were guided to ask themselves questions to find out what their own totem was. Such a blatant homogenization and reduction of spiritual beliefs and practices (which not all Native people ascribe to) was disheartening in and of itself; that is was so prominently displayed was indicative of the ways those racist practices continue to be "legitimized" as multicultural work.

Oftentimes in teacher preparation programs, educators are taught to "activate prior knowledge," to elicit what students already know as a resource to draw from. Recognizing the context of widespread misinformation about Indigenous life and culture, Melvina and I aimed to inverse this recommendation, activating prior "ignorance" so that

the "knowledge" students and teachers brought could be unsettled and disrupted. We made the commonsense framings of Indigenous life as historic and exotic visible to students and teachers, and thus, subject to critique. We also provided a range of contemporary Native people and practices that differed from those images to decenter the dominant narrative and make explicit the range of peoples and practices it occluded.

Such activities, while potentially contributing to a more respectful climate, also provided Native youth opportunities to share their knowledge. Native youth in the story "Education on the Border" eagerly identified with the theme "single story," sharing their own experiences of what it meant to be trapped in someone else's story of what it meant to be Native or be a boy, for example. Denaturalizing dominant discourses and making them subject to critique can also help Native students develop critical literacy skills, and perspectives and vocabulary to "name" their experiences can serve an important liberatory function. Celeste was empowered when she had new terms (e.g., cultural appropriation) to put to the familiar practice of dressing up as Indian that she felt was so offensive.

Another way of disrupting dominant discourses of Indianness is to recognize the diversity of Native America, the distinct languages, value systems, worldviews, and cultural practices that comprise the 567 federally recognized nations among other state-recognized tribes and unrecognized Native peoples. Drawing curricular attention to this diversity can be an important intervention into dominant discourses. Ms. Bishop and Mr. Smith attempted to do this through the study of distinct tribes, although their efforts were thwarted through sole attention to history, as well as undermined by the replication of "Native" crafts with little attention to the place-based and cultural particularities of those

cultural items. Sharon and her partner teacher Kelly purposefully brought in a diverse range of guest speakers, but this attention to diversity did little to disrupt the ways generic "simulations" (Vizenor, 2008) of Indianness informed their mural proposals. The principal who organized Native Heritage Month, if she had a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of Native America, would have been cautious and critical of her own reproduction of statements that Native people are "circular thinkers" and may like to "gather in circles" rather than stand in lines.

In "Native Heritage Month," the "fact a day" announcements to be read were a small intervention, designed to draw attention to the diversity of Native America as well as provide factual information to students and staff. The story "My People Don't Use Medicine Wheels" showed practical ways to respect and represent diversity. Inviting students and families to place a push pin on the map of Native nations within the US that represented their particular tribal affiliation provided a visual and performative way to address this diversity. Our efforts to engage students in a collaborative t-shirt design that invited them to contribute a specific referent from their own Native nation into the collective design also provides a model that thoughtfully tried to address distinctiveness while still fostering a collective identity as a group.

Educators should also know that Indigenous peoples are not artifacts of the past, but contemporary peoples of the present. This brings us to another level of knowledge that is important.

Conceptual knowledge

There are several broad concepts that can constructively inform teacher practice. For example, the idea that Indigenous people are not artifacts of the past but

contemporary peoples is a conceptual understanding that can lead to more constructive efforts to support Native students and teach Native content. That many educators do not know much about contemporary Native America is a feature of settler colonialism (Calderon, 2014), perhaps maintained through willful ignorance. However, some teachers, such as Ms. Carter in "The Wax Museum," recognized her own blind spots and reached out for help. She tried to take responsibility for the ways her curriculum unwittingly reproduced a historic understanding of Native people. Ms. Carter provided space for Native people to be "real time beings" (Pepper, 1990, np). This contemporary focus afforded Ms. Carter's student, Erin, the chance to bring more of who she was into the classroom. This was not without its complexities, however.

This Indigenous present is personally and politically complicated. It doesn't lend itself to a simple, easy pan-Indigenous prescription. Not all Native people are alike. The assumption that they are leads to stereotypes, but the alternative is not a single correct view of what Indigenous life is like. There is no single answer to that question. Instead, teachers need to develop an understanding of the local Indigenous peoples in their area, an orientation that would lend itself to an appreciation of the diversity of even those local experiences that are marked by geographic locations (urban, rural, etc.) or political experiences (being terminated or confederated, etc.), among other dynamics.

I don't presume that this section will delineate *the* conceptual knowledge base educators need in order to more responsibly serve Native students and teach Native curriculum. Nevertheless, I have identified several conceptual themes that merit conversation. As my discussion will show, conceptual knowledge will lead to more practical knowledge, an iterative process of learning as knowledge is disrupted,

deepened, or expanded, a process that generates new possibilities for teacher practices and commitments. For example, conceptually, teachers might benefit from exploring the ways discourses of authenticity or culture serve to frame Indigenous peoples in the past or as objects of study. This conceptual knowledge base will provide the grounds for new concrete knowledge and teacher practices.

Conceptual knowledge takes time for teachers to develop, as it will likely involve an excavation of deeply rooted assumptions some teachers have about Native students and issues. Below I will offer a discussion of several of these concepts, and where relevant, I offer practical examples of the conceptual knowledge this might generate.

Knowledge of marginalization and erasure. Perhaps the most important concept teachers need is a recognition of the marginalization and erasure of Indigenous life. No time soon will the marginalization of Indigenous students in schools be ended, so teachers need to know that the erasure of Indigenous life is built into the institutions in which they work. As colonialism is constantly “shape shifting” (Corntassel, 2012), educators need to become practiced at recognizing how it surfaces. This is not something that can easily be distilled into a workshop.

Several stories highlighted instances of erasure (the marginalization of the pow wow, demographic categories that erased Indigeneity, the erasure of Indigeneity through caricatures, the omission of contemporary Native life, among others). Each of these reflects a broader pattern of the erasure of Indigenous life. That administrators were unaware of the program’s major community event and routinely failed to place the event on the district calendar, illustrated in the story “From Explicit to Encoded Erasure,” was

not an isolated experience, but instead, an all-too-familiar experience to the people involved.

Most of the erasures were not intentional in any obvious ways, yet they were also not incidental. It is not incidental, for example, that most mainstream educators have little knowledge of Indigenous life (Dion, 2008), cannot name the Native nations in their state, and possess little sense of the Native community in their area. Schools are often structured to produce such ignorance (Calderon, 2011). But teachers can work against this, and being Native is not a prerequisite for doing so.

Indeed, if more educators were connected to the program the way Ms. Donovan was, the teacher who advocated for the pow wow in the district, the district's oversight might not have occurred. Importantly, Ms. Donovan is not a Native educator, but a White educator knowledgeable about and committed to Native students, education, and community. Native youth and programs in public schools are likely dependent on non-Native educators' support; this may include advocating for a program (such as the pow wow, or the right to wear feathers or stoles at graduation), connecting a program with volunteers, or even connecting Native youth to the program through referrals. Educators with knowledge of the program's marginalization have effectively supported the program by creating pathways and processes for principals and teachers to create meaningful partnerships with the program, for example. The Director of Elementary Education worked strategically to raise Melvina's profile, drawing attention to her skills, the program, and services through intentional presentations with principals and elementary teachers. She held her first meeting with principals at the Native Youth Center so they would be familiar with the space.

In this district, the explicit recognition of program marginalization and a lack of comprehensive support for Melvina as a part-time employee with immense responsibilities has led a group of educators, parents, and city officials to coordinate a community council for the Center, in addition to the required parent committee. The district's Education Foundation Director, who has worked closely with the Coordinator, has also been an important ally, helping secure program grants and advocating for full time FTE. The recently appointed superintendent made that funding proposal a reality this year, allocating $20,000 in-kind to be used to support FTE and programming.[191]

These programs do not need non-Native teachers who are fascinated with Native culture (a dynamic that circulates broadly in settler society, but has also trailed the program); rather, they need educators aware of the ways both Title VII programs and Native communities more generally have been marginalized, and who offer their support and skills to assist the program- or community-designed goals. These programs need educators who recognize that active efforts have been made on behalf of the federal government to erase Indigenous presence, to dispossess Native people both physically and ideologically (Calderon, 2014), and that even slight acts of erasure or the negation of Indigenous presence are necessarily a contemporary iteration of this history. Educators must be made aware, not only of the violent history of extermination, dispossession, and assimilation, but also of the ways these erasures continue to structure encounters (and non-encounters; Veracini, 2011) between settler society and Indigenous peoples.

With knowledge of the erasure and marginalization of Native life, an educator might see that any curriculum, pedagogy, or program necessarily works within and

[191] Melvina said this has been offered as a one-time support that is also expected to provide a "return" for the district (e.g., increase program size to increase funding, increase academic achievement scores and graduation rates for Native students).

against that context, and will thus work to make a Native program, community, or student's issues, concerns, and needs visible in order to hold a district and schools accountable.

Beyond individuality to a relational understanding of subjectivity. The education of Indigenous peoples was explicitly framed as a mode of (often violent) assimilation. In light of this history, educators need to move beyond viewing themselves solely as individuals (a privileged position and practice of whiteness), and should instead understand themselves as actors within that stream of history that shapes experiences today. This not only means developing a "sociocultural consciousness" and recognizing the ways society is stratified or that schools often reproduce that stratification (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), but also a relational awareness that recognizes their subjective positions as actors within that history. This relational awareness can enhance the effectiveness of non-Native educators with Native students (Hermes, 2005). If Sharon had investigated the biography of her subject position (White woman) in relationship to her student (Native woman), she may have seen the ways her deployment of "women's issues" as a more worthy topic of study for Celeste erased the concerns of Indigenous women through presuming the White woman as the unspoken subject underlying her use of "women's issues." Further, multicultural literature calls on educators to have "affirming" views of diverse students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Such a stance is an important intervention into deficit framings of students, positioning their cultural knowledge, values, and practices as valid and positioning education as an important site for sustaining the rich cultural and linguistic diversity students bring (Paris, 2012). Yet this affirmation has to happen in concert with reflections on the ways "affirming" views of Native culture can be shaped

by colonial discourses and have led to cultural appropriation. Sharon's knowledge and legitimization of playing Indian was rooted in this longstanding practice that connected their subjectivities.

Culture. "Culture" as it was used by educators often referred to cultural products over processes (Pepper et al, 2014), and anthropological categories that mirrored Edward Curtis's work (dwellings, weapons, dress, food, etc.). In the story "Little Anthropologists," the assumptions that underlie culture reduced the multicultural curriculum to the historic study of Native people and an imitation of various "crafts" (Kachinas, totem poles, masks, dwellings). Culture was removed from place-based and community contexts that gave those practices meaning, and culture was instead offered as the "products" of Native life. Coupled with the tendency to frame Native life historically, it was hard see the Kachinas on the walls, the totem poles on the desks, the dwellings scattered around the classroom, the masks hanging from the ceilings, or sit through the presentations where students described bizarre cultural behaviors without wondering how impressionable young children would take anything away other than considering Native people as "people of the past or creatures of fantasy" (Hirschfelder, Fairbanks, & Wakim, 1982, p. 73).

In the counterstories, I tried to offer glimpses of Native culture as constant and continual, rooted and mobile (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Through our class presentations in the story "Education on Border," Melvina and I shared the work of Native artists who use traditional ways to make sense of current issues. The process of creating the Center in "My People Don't Use Medicine Wheels" also illustrated how cultural protocols of land, respect, and recognition, could ground our diverse

community's place making in a place outside of our homelands. I also read into cultural practices to show there is more at work than outward expressions of "culture": a young boy sharing a song to his classmates is more than an example of the cultural practice of drumming and singing, but also represented his responsibility to share the knowledge he was given; the pow wow represented more than drumming and dancing, but was also a site for youth to learn responsibility and respect for elders.

I also tried to draw attention to the "cultural work" that narrow understandings of culture reproduced. Implementing a Native American unit that commodifies Katsina Friends, totem poles, masks, and Native dwellings as cultural crafts to be imitated not only reflects a biased and stereotypical portrayal of Native life, but reinforces particular dialectics of absence and presence with regard to Native life; a cultural practice of settler colonialism (Calderon, 2014). I cautioned the ways such cultural practices might trivialize Native culture and reproduce "flattened" (Whiteley, 2003) understandings of cultural practices even for young Native students. The cultural work done by these "tourist approaches" to multicultural education ignores the power and politics of difference. Further, I suggested that at an even deeper level, these examples might also be considered an extension of a longstanding project that Yup'ik scholar Shari Huhndorf (2001) terms "going Native."

Going Native in this instance does not mean an anthropologist's attempt to understand a culture more objectively by "going Native," immersing himself in the language, values, and customs of those he studies. Rather, this curriculum "goes Native" as a whole through its continual erasure, rewriting Native peoples as part of US history and engaging in activities that nostalgically recuperate the life that was "lost." As

Huhndorf (2001) states, “European Americans rewrote [their] history in a self-justifying manner by redefining Native Americans as part of their own past.” This rewrite enabled European America to “go native” “by claiming Indianness as part of its own collective identity” (p. 15). This claim not only serves to make innocent colonial violence, but the “cultural work” being done is *not* enhancing students’ understanding of Native “culture,” but rather, “the regeneration of racial whiteness and European-American society” (p. 3). The Native American unit, though framed as an homage to Native American life and culture, participates in the reproduction of Indians as part of the past, and Indianness as a part of “Americanness.” The replication of Kachinas, totem poles, and teepees are not only specific examples of “going native” in the sense that non-Native students attempt to recreate Native life and culture as the “new native” (Huhndorf, 2001), but also reinforce “the racial hierarchies it claims to destabilize” (p. 3). Natives remain historic, marginal, and Other, while white subjectivities and identities are the contemporary, central selves that are nurtured, even enhanced, through this “great” multicultural curriculum.

Further, the discourse of culture as it is wielded in the district reflects what Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) theorized as “the safety zone.” Rather than explicitly seeking to *eradicate* difference, they theorized the complex techniques, policies, and practices of the US government through a lens of strategic containment or domestication. Culture, they claim, has long been assessed for its perceived threat, and evaluations made “to determine where and when Indigenous cultural practices might be considered benign enough to be allowed, even welcomed, within American life” (p. 6). The district appeared to condone forms of “safe” cultural difference, such as crafts and drumming, activities that were showcased. Yet as the story “Cultural Expression as Sovereignty” highlighted,

support was constrained when "dangerous" forms of difference were expressed. The desire to wear stoles to graduation, for example, was an assertion of difference that threatened the policies developed at the high school. It was difficult for the administrator to support this form of difference, especially as the site team had met to provide a blanket policy to narrow graduation regalia to academic honor cords. Fortunately, the educators involved were connected to high-level administrators, including a Native specialist in the state department, who were able to assert expectations on behalf of the department.

The positioning of the Title VII program outside of schools might also be examined through the lens of "safety zone."[192] Culture is contained over there, "innocuous" (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013, p. 90) on the margins because it doesn't disrupt the cultures of schools or "business as usual" approaches to schooling (Catagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 981). This domestication of culture is also written into the law, which positions culture as a means to an end, as a "unique" need so that *"students can meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards as all other students are expected to meet"* (20 U.S.C. § 7102, emphasis added).

Finally, the discourse of culture often surfaces as a source of longing, occasionally even perceived as a deficit, expressed by Native students. "I want to know more about my Native culture" was a common sentiment. In this statement, Native youth seemed to reproduce the idea of culture as solely historic, longstanding, traditional practices, as opposed to a living system of relationships, values, practices, and processes they were already engaged in. Drawing on the work of McCarty and Lee (2014), I suggested that this cultural longing could be a catalyst for Native resurgence. Indeed, the

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[192] This is *not* a call to stop funding and supporting Native after-school and community-based programming. In addition to these programs, which I argue are important counterspaces, schools must address

cultural longing students expressed was also what prompted students to join the youth group, a group that formed vital momentum toward the creation of the Center. Nevertheless, this sense that culture was something that students "didn't have" or that other Native people had "more of" needed to be disrupted. It was what almost stopped Viviana from returning to youth group after the first meeting when she heard me greet myself in Alutiiq.

Land, place, and recognition. In the story "Education on the Border," the educators' work with the tribal representatives and tribal liaison set limits on the representations students could include in the mural. These limits censored content so that the mural students eventually painted appeared to be a "bland nature scene," somewhat of a disappointment to one of the teachers who was hoping to "honor Native Americans." I suggested, however, that these limits were actually generative of new insights and new relations. Further, I suggested that the Forest Service's institutionalization of trust responsibility offered an important theory of change: that rather than raise awareness with the hopes that that knowledge will translate into respect, respect can be educationally structured into the environment in order to generate new learning and knowledge. This was only possible because of the Forest Service's tribal liaison, a positional commitment to "trust responsibility."

In our own efforts to envision and create the Center, land, place, and recognition were central values that guided our work—an intentional effort on behalf of our small community to respect our diversity, to respect the place we live in, and to recognize those that were here before and continue to have a presence today. It was our attempt to be Indigenous peoples living elsewhere, but also "not nowhere" (Tuck, Guess, & Sultan,

2014). To do so, we reached out to tribal members from local Native nations to learn about the land and peoples where we established the Center. This relationship was developed out of respect, but also enhanced opportunities for experiential and relational understandings of sovereignty, Indigenous rights, recognition, and responsibility. We embedded these understandings into the building with the help of the tribal historian and the parent committee, including the design on the floor that privileged the place we live, the name we were given that privileged the people of this place, and the treaties on the wall that demonstrated a commitment to recognizing sovereignty.

Indigenous identity. Native students' identities were constantly being negotiated, oftentimes in relationship to dominant discourses of Indigeneity or erasure. Their identities were not defined by those dominant discourses, however, as they asserted "a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry" (Vizenor, 2008, p. 1). Supporting these negotiations was complex, as they lived in tension between nurturing students' expressions in a context of erasure, as well as concern that students' expressions might be rooted in dominant discourses. In "The Wax Museum," I highlighted the ways Erin's teacher provided Erin a role model to look up to, as well as a way to further bring her own identity into the classroom. It became clear, however, that Erin negotiated her identity differently in the classroom space than in the Center where she was recognized as Native. She showed little ambivalence in the Center, yet in the context of the classroom and the wax museum activity, seemed to desire greater visibility. Perhaps the context of the activity that required Erin to be on display compelled this desire. Melvina suggested also that being light-skinned in a context that recognized Indianness as brown-skinned may have amplified the Erin's desire for visibility.

In another story, "Spirit and Pride," I illustrated how the discourses of Indianness, underwritten by authenticity, can even distort understanding between Indigenous peoples, in this case, our roles as Native educators in our work with a Native student, Celeste. I wasn't aware that Celeste was interpreting the activity in youth group that day through a lens of authenticity. Having not grown up on the reservation, she did not read the comments said by one of the volunteers that sexual violence is still prevalent on the reservation as supportive, but rather interpreted them in two ways: that sexual violence is more important than issues of representation, and that real issues happen on reservations, not where she lives. Though sexual violence is undoubtedly more pressing than issues of representation, those issues are also connected. Further, Native women in urban areas *also* experience high rates of sexual violence. The point here, however, is that Native students' identities intersect with teachers' curriculum and pedagogy in complex ways. To be aware of these dynamics, educators must have a nuanced understanding of Indigenous identity and constantly reflect on their practice in light of such understandings.

Educators should understand that claims to Native identity are made within a long and violent history of physical and cultural genocide and erasure. These claims are often a testament to tribal nations' and Native communities' longstanding efforts at restoration, renewal, and resurgence (Curry-Stevens, Cross-Hemmer, & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2011). These claims are also complicated, however, as Native peoples use diverse justifications for their claims to identity, often employing legal, biological, cultural, and/or self-identification frameworks to assert their Indigeneity (Garroutte, 2003).[193]

[193] One's citizenship in a tribal nation is based in law; an ancestral claim to Indigeneity establishes a connection through blood; a cultural claim may be justified through the ability to speak an Indigenous

The question of Indigeneity is taken up by numerous scholars (Garroutte, 2003; Forte, 2013; Lawrence, 2004; Lyons, 2010; Sturm, 2002), and as Corntassel (2003) states, "The question of 'who is indigenous?' is best answered by indigenous communities themselves" (p. 75). Educators must understand, however, that the stakes of that question are important for Native individuals and tribal nations, as the question itself is underwritten by power (Forte, 2013).[194]

The various and competing means of legitimizing and delegitimizing Indigeneity are complex. This is all to say, the question "Who Is an Indian?" (Forte, 2013) is much more complex and contested than the invitation to check a box on an enrollment form suggests. For some families, their self-identification may invite histories of resistance or resentment; of authenticity; of the social, personal, cultural, or emotional costs of such questions. Educators must have a basic understanding of Indigenous identity: the diverse ways Native people claim their identities; what it means to be a citizen or descendant; and how Indigenous identity is both racial and political. They should be familiar with what it means for a tribal nation to be federally recognized or unrecognized; understand the ways blood quantum can legitimize or delegitimize Indigeneity, and be aware of how

language; or one may simply assert one's Indigeneity as a form of personal self-identification. These rationalizations might also overlap, as a tribal nation's recognition by the federal government may need to be justified through culture (not all tribal nations are "federally recognized," a decision whose authority rests with and is regulated by the Office of Federal Acknowledgement within the US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs).

[194] Important to note are the ways this question is linked to power. Who is asking this question? Why is this question being asked? What is gained or lost in the asking and the answer? In the introduction to his edited volume *Who Is an Indian?,* Maximillian Forte (2013) considers the "cultural politics of a bad question" (p. 3). Linking the question and definitions to power, Forte states "definitions are not only about meaning, but also control, and the power to define the conditions of being of others" (p. 5). Though the question "Who is an Indian?" is arguably more humane than former inquiries into "What is an Indian?" by Thomas Jefferson Morgan in 1892 (Forte, 2013), the asking (and subsequent validating, invalidating, enumerating, tracking, or distributing of resources for example) might be linked to the ways Indigenous identity has long been tied to issues of sovereignty, rights, and land. It is also tied to the ways Indigenous peoples have continually been required to prove their Indigeneity in order to maintain their (inherent) sovereignty, rights and lands.

that discourse circulates among Native peoples; consider the ways other forms of identity claims, such as culture or self-identification, can be used to further or undermine self-determination or sovereignty; recognize that in certain eras, self-identification meant dispossession, disparagement, and even death, and that families may carry that history still; or even just appreciate the complex bureaucracy, time, and money it might take to establish citizenship (e.g., for some families, the cost of original documents needed in order to file for one's tribal membership ID is prohibitive). This knowledge can help orient an educator to the ways schools, curriculum, and pedagogies intersect with these dynamics in complex and unexpected ways.

Positional authority. "To speak of Indigeneity," states Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2007), "is to speak of colonialism and anthropology, as these are means through which Indigenous people have been known and sometimes are still known" (p. 67). The educational contexts I witnessed were structured to "know" Indigenous peoples in particular ways, which I connected to longstanding ways of knowing the Indigenous other. In "Little Anthropologists," I described how the Native American unit the teachers developed framed Native people as historic objects of study. This positioning not only denies Native peoples the chance to be "real time beings" (Pepper, 1990) discussed in the previous section, but reaffirms Eurocentric viewpoints as natural, normal, and central. It reproduces the "positional authority" (Said, 1978) of students to "know" the Native Other. I realized throughout my work that the aphorisms Melvina and I used to start with the contemporary as well as the local were useful interventions into the ways curriculum was framed, but did little to disrupt the ways schools were structured to know Natives as objects.

In several stories, I provided examples of our attempts to move the study of Indigenous peoples from curricular objects to pedagogical subjects, hoping that such a positioning would invite educators to learn *from* rather than learn *about* Native peoples. In other examples, I offered conceptual frameworks for curriculum, such as sovereignty, that steered the lens away from learning *about* Native peoples. Instead of studying Native *people*, studying current issues of sovereignty Indigenous peoples were facing as a concept might be more generative, such as Apache resistance against encroachment on their territory, or the Hopi nation's advocacy to repatriate their sacred Katsina Friends. In another example, I drew on the work of Dion (2008) to suggest that students could study the biography of their relationship to Indigenous peoples, an attempt to disrupt the "perfect stranger" subjectivity many teachers (and presumably the students they teach) presume.

Recognizing and nurturing Native survivance. Native people have, as Tuck (2009) adeptly noted, been framed through lenses of pathology and "damage," so much so that at times we have occasionally come to see our own experiences through these pathologies and "damage-centered" lenses. Educators, attuned to stories and acts of Native survivance, however, locate Native assertions of "presence" within constraining discourses as more than resistance, more than survival, and definitely more than pathology. This perspective not only helps educators avoid blaming students for whatever predicament they may be in, or viewing them as victims of such circumstances, but instead see them through "desire-based" frameworks that acknowledge pain or oppression, but also see the courage and wisdom in those lives (Tuck, 2009).

In the story "The Wax Museum," Erin's reach for buckskin to look more "Native American-y" was *not* simply the ignorant reach of a child for stereotypical representation of Indianness. It was *not* the mere social reproduction of those discourses. Rather, through a lens of survivance, her actions might be viewed as the purposeful refusal on behalf of a young child to be erased by being made to look like everyone else. The markers Erin utilized—the buckskin (though she eventually wore a ribbon dress) and the crystal wand—may have been shaped in part by dominant discourses of Indigeneity, yet her reach to assert a distinct difference was also a nuanced, albeit complicated, form of youth resistance. Celeste's proposal in her social (in)justice art class to address cultural appropriation was also a form of survivance. So too were the ways she processed with her peers, the care and consideration she offered her teacher despite being shut down, and her commitment to that project (despite the fact she ended up doing twice the work). The care the young Native girl took in creating a wikiup for the Native American unit also demonstrated resistance, amplified especially when contrasted to the hastily-constructed teepee that was crumpled together and secured with tape. Though I critiqued the unit for the ways it reinforced the "positional authority" (Said, 1978) to "know" the Native Other, the care this young girl took might still exemplify the efforts she took to know her Native Self. As I aimed to show in the "Native Heritage Month" story, although some curricula can reproduce stereotypes, it can also offer Native students the opportunity to "see themselves." And though I also said in "Reproducing the Gaze" that I hoped the young girl didn't "see herself" in the curricula (because it felt so blatantly disrespectful and demeaning to me), the determination to see oneself and like it (even when, sadly, that means a complicated affirmation to being referred to as Pocahontas) can be viewed as

resistance when seen as an expression of ten year old pride. Zeik, the second grader who raised his hand in response to the ways Native people were represented in a book used by his teacher, and who drew himself as a brown-skinned Pilgrim, was also enacting survivance. Each of these students' acts are forms of counterstorytelling by the students: stories and experiences that lived in contradiction with the assumptions embedded in teachers' practices.

Sovereignty and self-determination. Educators should also have a concrete knowledge base about sovereignty. Identifying as Cherokee or Haida is not just a word choice, and not just a cultural identity; it is a way to privilege one nationality over the other, placing the US identity as a secondary status (Turner, 2006). This entails understanding that while Native students have cultural and racial identities, they may also be citizens of tribal nations, which are political identities. "Native Americans are nations of people within a nation" (Brayboy & Morgan, 1998, p. 348). Like the federal government and the states within it, Native nations are sovereign entities, despite their "domestic dependent" status or location as nations within the geopolitical confines of the US (Grande, 2004).[195] Sovereignty as a principle is too vast and complex to discuss in one paragraph, and as both a definition and political project is not without disagreement (Barker, 2012).[196] Native nations have *inherent* sovereignty, as well as limited *political* sovereignty (Lomawaima, 2008).[197]

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[195] Hawai'i is still arguably an unceded sovereign Hawaiian kingdom, illegally annexed by the US (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013; Silva, 2004).

[196] To note several examples, scholars such as Alfred (1999) have questioned the consequences of adopting sovereignty as a goal for an Indigenous political project, instead advocating the need to decolonize Indigenous self-governance (Barker, 2005), claiming that "to argue on behalf of indigenous nationhood within the dominant Western paradigm is self-defeating" (Alfred, 1999, p. 58). Numerous Indigenous scholars take up this model of decolonization and Indigenous resurgence that Alfred later outlines (Corntassel, 2012; Simpson, 2011; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Scholars like Womack (2008) dismiss this

Native content was rarely examined in this study with reference to or through a lens of sovereignty or Indigenous nationhood. As a result, I often used a process of "disruptive daydreaming" (Dion, 2008) to read these framings into the stories. In several stories, I drew attention to the ways a focus on sovereignty might steer attention toward framing Native nations in political ways, rather than reducing them to cultural "communities" (Lyons, 2000). As illustrated in the case study "Native Heritage Month," I offered sovereignty as a useful orientation to ground the month. There are already precedents for this work, such as Washington's "Since Time Immemorial" Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum, or "Montana's Indian Education for All" curriculum. In "Little Anthropologists," I offered sovereignty as a framework for studying Hopi Katsina Friends. Rather than replicating Kachinas as an activity designed to foster cultural appreciation, and then even modifying and creating new Kachinas, a practice I suggested might be considered blasphemous if it were conducted with Catholic saints, I suggested Katsina Friends could be studied in a context of sovereignty, respect, and rights, with implications for responsibility. The recognition of sovereignty also served as a principle, among others, for how we designed the Center, evident in the posting of treaties on walls, as opposed to solely decorating the space with cultural items.

"etymologic approach" of negating sovereignty that uses point-of-origin as a validating principle and dismissing anything of European origins. He instead embraces a multidimensional understanding of sovereignty as "inherent rather than derivative" and follows Warrior (1995) as "viewing it as an open-ended process rather than a definition" (p. 362). Grande (2004) claims "the task is to detach and *dethink* the notion of sovereignty from its connections to Western understandings of power and relationship and base it on indigenous notions of power" (p. 53). She advocates sovereignty not as a separatist discourse, but as "a profoundly spiritual project" (p. 57) that answers deep questions about who we are as people, drawing on Deloria and Lytle (1984) to suggest "sovereignty will not be possible until 'Indians resolve for themselves a comfortable modern identity'" (p. 57).

[197] As Lomawaima points out, "Most tribes today pragmatically operate within a limited sovereignty as it intersects with and is interdependent with state and federal jurisdictions and powers." However, it's important to recognize that "tribes assert an *inherent sovereignty* that they held prior to the establishment of the United States and, therefore, *that cannot be granted by the US government*" (p. 185, emphasis added).

For Native students, this education is essential in equipping them to understand and uphold their own rights and responsibilities. Native rights have been fought for and upheld by those who understand those rights. Furthermore, nuanced explorations of what self-determination and sovereignty mean have helped Native people move beyond solely "rights based" discourses to theorize other notions of peoplehood (Corntassel, 2003) and governance (Alfred, 2005; Simpson, 2011; Corntassel, 2012). Similarly, Native students need to learn about their rights, treaties, systems of governance, and roles and responsibilities within their community/nation in order to uphold those rights, roles, and responsibilities. Arguably, schools may not be the place for this education, which might require time with elders, community leaders, or those involved in Indigenous forms of governance. Yet as a guiding conceptual framework, schools can create contexts that support such understanding.

Several instances in the stories point to possibilities where "rhetorical sovereignty" (Lyons, 2000) might have been effective guiding principles for practice. Lyons offers rhetorical sovereignty as "the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires in the pursuit of self-determination…" (p. 462). He continues, "rhetorical sovereignty requires above all the presence of an Indian voice, speaking or writing in an ongoing context of colonization and setting at least some of the terms of debate" (p. 462).

Sharon missed an important opportunity to support Celeste's self-determination in the classroom by denying her the chance to determine her own "communicative needs and desires." This omission is important not only as a missed moment to pursue interesting questions, but also to develop the skills and desire to engage in what Lyons

(2000) terms, the “American Indian publics.” We created this sort of “public” in the counterspace of the Center as students harnessed their skills to address Spirit Halloween’s endorsement of racist practices; Sharon’s pedagogical decisions precluded such engagement. As Melvina and I were connected to the university, we found other avenues for Celeste to develop those skills, including the summer bridge program. Just as schools can be sites of reproduction of dominant discourses, the knowledge and desire Celeste demonstrated during youth group activities and the summer program also suggest classrooms—with educators equipped to hear and support students’ “communicative needs”—can be important sites to develop public intellectuals. “Shouldn't the teaching of (American Indian) rhetoric be geared toward these kinds of outcomes?” asks Lyons (2000, p. 466) Ms. Carter offered Erin a chance to study Winona LaDuke, a leader who has clearly used the “publics” and engaged in public literacy (Lyons, 2000). Her practice suggests if Native students have opportunities to learn more from Native leaders, they can wield their education in powerful ways.

Finally, sovereignty, beyond a curricular framework to further respect for Indigenous nations, and beyond a rhetorical framework to support Indigenous students, *is always what is at stake in Indigenous education.* Teachers in urban areas are *still* educating the next generation of Native leaders who can strengthen their nations. Whether they eventually return home, or engage in assisting their nations from afar, all Indigenous education is, in a sense, education for self-determination and “nation-building” (Brayboy et al., 2012).

Power, Ethics, and Knowledge as Relation

If teachers had most of the concrete informational and conceptual knowledge previously discussed, educational efforts to support Native students would undoubtedly be improved. However, this study and my own experiences tell me that information and concepts alone won't enable teachers to equitably and ethically support Indigenous students; they will be necessary, but insufficient, resources.

Such knowledge is inadequate as the ways in which colonial violence and erasure manifest in schools is constantly changing, constantly "shape-shifting" (Corntassel, 2012). No one piece of knowledge or conceptual frame provides sufficient guidance for navigating these dynamics. As Tsianina Lomawaima (1991) states,

> The search for a single teaching method or learning style that best serves or typifies a racially, linguistically, ethnically, or economically defined subgroup of U.S. society is like the search for the Holy Grail. It risks becoming a sacred calling that consumes resources in the search for an illusory panacea for complex social and educational ills. (p. 342)

Because of this, there is no recipe for when one particular piece of knowledge or a particular concept will be relevant. This work takes place in a context of uncertainty, and with high stakes. There are institutional forces at work that counter the interests of these students. Making decisions in this shifting and always uncertain terrain will ultimately be based not on deduction from prior principles, but on judgments made in motion, influenced by affect, values, and imperfect estimations of possible consequences, with ongoing responsibility to them. This will require teachers to be involved in a way that is not just conceptual. This kind of teaching, in other words, is ultimately a form of

relational practice, as much about ethics and politics as epistemology. In what follows, I offer that beyond the suggested forms of knowledge I surveyed, teachers will also need to develop a relational practice of care, courage, and connectedness.

Care. Caring as a foundational relational practice of education has multiple roots. One robust theory of education that characterizes teaching as a relational practice of care is the feminist philosophy of caring, introduced by Nel Noddings (1984). For Noddings, caring is relational and reciprocal. Rather than an "aesthetical" form of caring which she offers as "caring about things and ideas" (p. 21), teachers should strive to engage in an "ethics of care" through a practice of "engrossment," being attentive and receptive to students' lives and needs. Ethical care, Noddings (2002) states, "is always aimed at establishing, restoring or enhancing the kind of relation in which we respond freely because we want to" (pp. 13-14). Angela Valenzuela (1999) also theorized care in her work with immigrant and U.S. born Mexican youth, drawing from both Noddings, as well as from Mexican/Indigenous cultural roots to articulate *educación* as a theory of care, similar to Noddings' (2005) conception of "authentic caring."

> *Educación* is a conceptually broader term than its English language cognate. It refers to the family's role of inculcating in children a sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility and serves as the foundation for all other learning. Though inclusive of formal academic training, *educación* additionally refers to competence in the social world, wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others. (p. 23)

Caring has been asserted as an important relational orientation in the literature for CRS for Indigenous youth (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Demmert & Towner, 2003;

Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). In their examination of Native youth who stay in school and succeed, Deyhle and Swisher (1997) draw on a wealth of research to state that "caring teachers are critical to their success" (p. 167). "We know," they later state, "that caring teachers make a difference in the decisions students make to persist or leave school before graduation" (p. 182).

Educators might learn something from the care demonstrated by students. Celeste demonstrated authentic caring for her teacher as she negotiated the cultural conflict in "Spirit and Pride." "I don't want to get anyone in trouble, because I like this teacher," she said, "…but I don't want to sweep this under the rug either." The mothers who meet monthly for the parent committee and were central to the formation of the Center demonstrated a deep level of caring for the program and futures of Native children as they deliberated the purpose and future of the Center. Melvina demonstrated great care for teachers as she thoughtfully considered how to support them in their work. Through a traditional practice of gifting, she hoped to foster relationships with teachers and offer them support, while gently critiquing and uprooting deep-seated assumptions regarding Native life by offering alternative perspectives. Ms. Donovan also demonstrated care for Native students, evident in her inquiries into their lives and support for the Native program. Ms. Donovan's care, however, was also complicated through what one student expressed jokingly as her love for Natives. The student's perception that Ms. Donovan loved Natives was an expression of aesthetic caring of Native culture. Nevertheless, this student felt supported by Ms. Donovan, and that her care was "genuine" and came from "a good place," something she preferred to other educators' disinterest in her involvement in the Native youth group and her culture.

Caring "is an important affective quality for teachers hoping to practice CRS," Castagno and Brayboy (2008) note; however, "caring is certainly not enough. In other words, we might think of caring as a necessary but not sufficient quality of effective teachers for Indigenous youth" (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 970). "The caring relation is essential as a starting point and a continuous framework of support," Noddings (2005) echoes, "but it is not enough by itself to ensure competent teaching" (p. 1). Valenzuela (1999) also illuminates the politics of caring by situating competing definitions from teachers and youth in relation with each other:

> Teachers expect students to demonstrate caring about schooling with an abstract, or *aesthetic* commitment to ideas or practices that purportedly lead to achievement. Immigrant and U.S.-born youth, on the other hand, are committed to an *authentic* form of caring that emphasizes relations of reciprocity between teachers and students. (p. 61)

Caring as a relational practice can be undermined without critique of underlying power dynamics. That critique would situate teachers within a long stream of "care" that has been backed by powerful interests and carried out through often forceful assimilative schooling practices. Attention to power dynamics would require educators to constantly situate themselves in relation to their practices of care, for example, by striving to develop "authentic caring" as opposed to "false empathy," which Delgado (1996) offers through an instance when "a White [person] believes he or she is identifying with a person of color, but in fact is doing so only in a slight, superficial way" (p. 12). As Duncan (2002) notes, "Also implicit in the idea of false empathy is the premise that empathy has power dimensions and can be a dangerous force if it is not genuine" (p. 89).

Bartolomé (2008) states that “despite teachers’ good intentions, love and caring can be racist, limiting, and oppressive” (p. 3). Sharon initially cared *about* Native culture, an aesthetic form of caring that did little to help her support Celeste. Sharon was unaware of Celeste’s involvement in the Native youth group, and uninformed about an issue personal to Celeste. As Donna Deyhle (2013) notes, reflecting on her work with Navajo students “You can care and respect someone, without having any idea who they are” (p. 5). Yet Sharon also expressed continual care *for* Celeste, evident in her voluntary work with Celeste, Melvina, and me over the course of the year. This form of caring enabled her to stay in relationship to better understand herself and her student. A relational practice of being in schools would sensitize teachers to both the lives of their students, as well as the relations between their subjectivities. Among other things, this practice of authentic caring requires courage.

Courage. Dealing with dynamics of power requires courage. When schools are structured in ways to ignore, erase, or demean Indigenous students’ lives, educators need courage to speak back to those institutions. In “From Explicit to Encoded Erasure,” Ms. Donovan demonstrated this courage when she publicly admonished district administrators for, once again, overlooking such an important community event as the pow wow. Our parent committee demonstrated courage by challenging the administrator’s no adornment policy in the story “Cultural Expression as Sovereignty.”

Courage manifests in other, subtler ways for teachers as well. Equally as significant as speaking up is the courage educators demonstrate through critical self-reflection and vulnerability. That vulnerability can be personal, demonstrated through a willingness to look at oneself critically, and in light of traits, values, or histories one

might not want to see. This sort of courage entails turning toward one's ignorance, for example, a practice some educators avoided. I can only interpret Ms. Bishop's routine avoidance of my emails, phone calls, and visits to school after my time in her classroom as a lack of this sort of courage. I said little to critique her practice, as I was a guest in her classroom and had hoped to develop a working relationship with her, but even my presence, which was in contradistinction to everything she had been teaching about Native peoples, appeared to be threatening. Ms. Carter, on the other hand, turned toward her ignorance by recognizing gaps in her own knowledge and reaching out for help. This was not only evident in her admitted ignorance of any contemporary Native leaders, but also in her thoughtful reflections on the ways her curriculum had positioned Native people in the past, or entailed the study of cultural objects outside of their cultural contexts. Sharon also demonstrated this sort of courage through vulnerability. My interactions with Sharon were frustrating at times as I felt she didn't always "hear" (Brayboy, 2005) what I was saying, evident in the ways words such as beauty, honor, healing vibrations, reverent, and authentic still held sway over how she understood the work we were doing together. Yet this frustration might also be more aptly located in the stubbornness of discourses that sought to constrain our work together. Sharon continually committed to the work of critical self-reflection. This involved her ability to put her own self-concept at risk. Reflecting on her inability to support Celeste in her class, she stated, "You know what's so interesting is that I *thought* that I knew… that's the other thing I would tell you. I thought I was good, you know..." She is now deeply embarrassed by her oversight with regards to Celeste's concerns. In the story "Education on the Border," she also questioned her own framing of the course and whether or not it was appropriate, an

honest reflection that I came to realize took more courage than I thought. “Now I don’t think I would, you know… trying to do a Native American art project and we’re not Native American. It just made me think about it…” she said. Crucial to Sharon’s critical self-reflection, I argued, was the *connection* made between her class and the tribal liaison and tribal representatives.

Connection. The concepts of care and courage are not solely personal. Courage, for example, is not just an individual replacing bad ideas with good ones, leaving the enlightened teacher in tact as the moral authority; it also requires the courageous practice of relinquishing authority. Beyond these two personal commitments, teachers and schools need to foster connections with Indigenous peoples, communities, and nations.

In some sense these connections can be personal as teachers foster relationships with Native students and parents. In “My People Don’t Use Medicine Wheels,” the non-Native coordinator who recognized she was not the expert relinquished some of her epistemic authority in the space as she gave the mothers time to deliberate and share their knowledge. Ms. Carter also worked to foster connections to the programs, evident in her commitment to bringing her class to the Center, the only teacher in her school that has made that effort so far. Sharon and her partner teacher Kelly also worked to create connections between their course and the Native community by inviting Native people to their class and giving them the authority to speak on issues important to them. However, the story “Education on the Border” also demonstrates what a broader commitment to connection entails.

Because the US Forest Service had institutionalized a tribal liaison as a structural commitment to ensuring its “trust responsibility” to Native nations and lands, Sharon and

Kelly's class had to negotiate with the tribal liaison and representatives regarding the representation of Indigenous life in the mural. Although this process was collaborative in the sense that both parties were working together, it ultimately involved relinquishing authority as recognition of sovereignty. This included respecting the right of the Native nations' refusal to allow particular representations of Indigenous life. Though restrictive in the sense that the range of potential mural designs was limited, I argued that this connection to the tribal liaison and representative was actually generative of respect and new learning. I suggested that Sharon's ability to reflect on her actions ("I recognized later that it had potential to offend") came not from internal cognitive processes, but structured connection to Native nations premised on the recognition of tribal sovereignty.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered concrete information as well as conceptual forms of teacher knowledge that might enhance the practice of Indigenous education in this district. I then suggested that rather than the accumulation of these knowledges, education might be considered a relational practice of being in schools, guided by an ethic of care, courage, and connection. I suggested care, courage, and connection not solely as conceptual decisions, but as ethical and political ways of being in relationship. Both concrete and conceptual knowledge can provide tools for such engagement, but there is ultimately no recipe for this sort of practice. Knowing when and where it is appropriate to use that information and conceptual knowledge involves the cultivation of felt appreciation for Indigenous students' experiences, experiences shaped by histories that are often invisible to educators. It involves judgments made in response to students and families' experiences of that history. Information and conceptual knowledge can aid this

practice of being, but as colonialism is constantly "shape shifting" (Corntassel, 2012) to "get what it wants" (Tuck & Yang, 2014; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015) there is only being in the midst of it, constantly committing to undoing it, constantly committed to furthering Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty.

This chapter was difficult for me to write. It was disheartening, upsetting even, to offer these recommendations in 2015, as many of my suggestions were proposed by Indigenous scholars decades earlier, and *some proposed nearly a century ago*. That Native people should be seen as "'real time' beings" in schools and curriculum is hard to say 25 years after Creek educator Floy Pepper did in 1990 (Pepper, 1990). To recommend that more honest and accurate histories be taught in schools is painful to write, as my recommendation nearly replicates the argument Seneca scholar Arthur C. Parker made in 1916 (Parker, 1916). Nearly *one hundred years ago,* Parker wrote:

> No race of men has been more unjustly misrepresented by popular historians than the American Indian. Branded as an ignorant savage, treacherous, cruel, and immoral in his inmost nature, the Indian has received little justice from the ordinary historian whose writings influence the minds of school children…
> The Indians have a right to know that their name as a people is not hidden forever from its place among the nations of the earth. They have a right to ask that the false statements and the prejudice that obstructs historic justice be cast aside. They have a right to ask that their children know the history of their fathers and to know that the sins and savagery of their race were no worse than those of other races called great for bravery and conquest. Yet the Indian youth in government schools are denied a true knowledge of their ancestors, as may be judged from

merely reading the essays of Indian students on the past history of their people. (pp. 261-262)

I situate my recommendations within this longstanding stream of Indigenous scholars who have made similar recommendations as a performative gesture intended to invite educators to question why these insights and recommendations have been ignored for so long. I hope that by situating the practical knowledge, insights, and constraints within the context of stories, educators will visit their own practices with new reflections and insights, and that process will sensitize educators to hear these recommendations more clearly today. Yet, as the sections of my analysis on conceptual knowledge of erasure and connection showed, a strong recommendation that emerges from this research is that educators pay attention to Native voices and perspectives—children, parents, educators, and scholars—as well as to how those voices are silenced or ignored. While I of course do not recommend Indigenous perspectives be privileged uncritically, it is my hope educators bear the burden of a "double consciousness" (Du Bois, 1903) many people of color bear: that they hear Indigenous voices while also recognizing how those voices are seen and heard within the district; that they hear their own voices while also recognizing the ways others might perceive them. I hope this double consciousness steers educators toward paying attention to what has already been said, while also committing to creating spaces for what has yet to be heard.

CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

> These narratives may bear the marks of their production in chaos, but they cannot be ignored, since they too represent discursive strategy.
>
> –Dian Million, 2014, p. 35

> You know nothing of the past five hundred years was inevitable. Every raised fist and brandished weapon was a choice someone made. The decision to become a nation of thieves and liars was a choice. The decision to censure the native truth was a choice. The decision to manipulate the knowledge of American history was a choice. My immediate choice is to celebrate or mourn. With my relations around me I go into mourning—but I go angry, alive, listening, learning, remembering. I do not go quietly. I do not forget. I will not let you forget.
>
> –Wendy Rose, 1992, p. 6

I close this dissertation with a brief summary of the purpose and scope of my work; I outline several limitations of my research and offer several implications for schools and districts, teacher education programs, state policy, and research. I then end with a short story that I hope conveys the feelings of conflicted hope that I have as a result of this work.

Purpose and Scope

In this dissertation, I proposed counterstorytelling as a methodology and mode of representation that could help surface and intervene into the complex dynamics that Native students, families, and educators negotiate as they navigate urban Indigenous education in this district. Based in TribalCrit's (Brayboy, 2005) first and central most

tenet that "colonization is endemic to society" (p. 429), this methodology enabled me to make visible particular racial and colonial dynamics that were quietly buried in "a *nice* field like education" (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Surfacing those dynamics let me denaturalize them and subject them to critique, laying "foundations for alternative ways to imagine and do our work" (Duncan, 2002, p. 90).

These stories were written partially in response to Brayboy and Castagno's (2009) recommendation that

> Educators must pay more attention to the ways colonization, racism, and power matter in educational settings and work towards more effective and longer-term pre-service and in-service training that helps educators understand and strategize about their role as agents for social change and greater educational equity. (p. 49)

To engage this recommendation, I was both a witness and participant throughout this storytelling process; I observed and intervened and wrote with respect to the students and educators I worked with, but also with preservice teachers in mind. I witnessed dynamics, attempted to make visible what might have gone unnoticed in practice, intervened through my work with teachers, tried to teach in ways I thought might be constructive and generative, and critically reflected on the work, including my own. Because Castagno and Brayboy (2008) state that despite a vast body of research that supports CRS, schooling continues to be implemented in a "business as usual" fashion (p. 981), I tried to make those usual and familiar practices appear strange, and at times, uncomfortable (Kaomea, 2003). By reading into the stories of Native Studies scholarship, literature, poems, and my own experiences, I hoped to denaturalize those practices,

sensitizing educators to nuanced dynamics that, as these stories show, Native students, families, and educators are often already aware of.

Yet the stories were also accounts of our individual and collective efforts to refashion "business as usual" by creating counterspaces to support Indigenous students. As Brayboy (2005) states in his fifth tenet to TribalCrit, "The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens" (p. 429). These stories were *counter*stories in the sense they denaturalized presumptions underlying dominant discourses of race and colonization that seemed natural and normal, but they were also more than reactive as I attempted to show agency in a context of immense constraints, and Native people engaging in acts of self-determination, sovereignty, and survivance, using whatever means available to them despite limits imposed.

As I made my way through the district looking *for* stories (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 11), I found myself in classrooms and schools, moving with the Title VII program as we held our events in hallways, libraries, the district office, and eventually our community center. I talked to students and families, coordinators and volunteers, and teachers and administrators. Because of the diverse contexts I found myself in, my stories addressed a range of issues, including teachers' pedagogical and curricular decisions, school policies, educational policy surrounding the program, demographic collection and reporting, and community efforts to create a center.

My hope is that this practice of counterstorytelling will be instructive for those looking for ways to meaningfully engage and intervene into the complexity of educational experiences. I also hope the stories themselves can contribute to the growing

body of critical narrative research and case study research (Shulman, Villegas & Lucas, 2002a; Chang & Rosiek, 2003; Dibble & Rosiek, 2002; Sconiers & Rosiek, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) used to support teacher development within teacher education programs.

Limitations

Aside from limitations anticipated in the methodology section, one limitation of this work might be the ways, through making visible colonial dynamics embedded in dominant discourses, it moved "*within* whiteness by knowing and working from the assumptions of white mainstream preservice teachers" (Richardson & Villenas, 2000, p. 263, emphasis added). In contrast, as Richardson and Villenas state, "In the end, our critique of the diverse multiculturalisms under review brings us back to theorizing dances *against* whiteness - multiculturalisms which begin with the re-investment of power in ourselves and in our own communities" (p. 256).[198] As Alfred and Corntassel (2005) warn, "there is a danger in allowing *colonization* to be the only story of Indigenous lives" (p. 601).

Given this critique, I recognize a heavy representational emphasis within my stories. As Cherokee scholar Jace Weaver (2011) states, "I am long on record that representation work—the examination of images of Indians in literature or in films by non-Native writers or filmmakers—as valuable as it is, is not AI/NAS [American Indian/Native American Studies] *for the simple reason that ultimately it is about white people, not about Natives*" (pp.1-2, emphasis added).

[198] Richardson and Villenas (2000) do not place themselves outside of their own critique, as they reflect on the ways their own work also "dance[d] with whiteness in a paradox of complicity with colonization as the colonized attending the colonizer's institutions" (p. 264).

Weaver praises scholars for moving "beyond simple representation work" to the more important work of being a "theorist and a critic." I take Weaver's words seriously. Especially given the numerous "politics of distraction" at work, which as Corntassel (2012) notes, "diverts our energy and attention away from community resurgence" (p. 91). Dolores Calderon (2014), drawing on Duane Champagne, provides a similar caution: "The resiliency and agency of indigenous peoples, indeed the strategies we employ to maintain our cultures, are often overlooked by *theories that center colonial dominance*" (p. 82, emphasis added). Perhaps this emphasis on representation was important within this particular context and in this moment, if only to see the limits of such an approach. It was through storytelling that I came to these limits, pointing to the ways stories can generate new knowledge, and importantly, new questions. My future research might benefit from a stronger emphasis on what theories of regeneration and resurgence would look like within this context (Alfred, 2005; Corntassel, 2012; Simpson, 2011). There are other ways of theorizing against and disrupting colonial practices that do not rely on centering colonial dominance.[199] As Calderon (2014) continues, however, "anticolonial methodologies have their place as well, particularly when attempting to identify how coloniality, in this case settler colonialism, informs curriculum" (p. 83). Rather than assume my research can do all the work that it is needed, it is important to situate it in complementary ways with other approaches. I see critical *anti-,* and *counter*-approaches

[199] Rather than pointing out to teachers dominant assumptions about "land as property," for example, Megan Bang and her colleagues (2014) have instead reworked the urban environment as Indigenous, as *always* having been Native land, reaffirming Indigenous relational epistemologies and ontologies. This constructive and relational work that doesn't privilege dominant discourses is also an important form of counterstorytelling that, as Brayboy (2005) states, reaffirms the idea that that "concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens" (p. 429). Though my work somewhat engaged this tenet, I hope to engage in more substantial work with the Native students and families I work with to regenerate and reaffirm the wisdom in our worldviews.

as necessary yet insufficient, as complementary efforts must also invest time, energy, and knowledge into productively theorizing and regenerating our own communities.

Implications

There are a variety of implications that emerge from this study. I will frame those implications with respect to schools and districts, teacher education programs, state level educational policy, and research. Within each of these categories, I will offer recommendations to address concrete (informational) knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and support the relational practice I outlined in the previous chapter.

Schools and districts. Districts that implement Title VII programs are, as I have argued, carrying out the federal government's educational "trust responsibilities." As such, district administrators and educators should see the program in light of such responsibility.

Concrete knowledge. There is a great deal of information districts can offer their administrators and teachers to support Indigenous education.

Increase visibility of Title VII programs. As my research has shown, the Title VII program was significantly marginalized in the district, which constrained programmatic efforts to recruit and support Native students. Program visibility and support is crucial as the program is funded using a per pupil allocation model. Districts should provide Title VII Coordinators with stable and sufficient space in the district to work and provide services. They should circulate information about the program to all administrators, teachers, and office staff, orienting each new employee to the program's location, purpose, and services. This information should be circulated at back-to-school nights,

kindergartens, and new student orientations, and be visible and available at each school's office.

Anti-bias awareness. The reproduction of stereotypes and caricatures is *not* Indigenous education. Districts should have administrators (e.g., the Director of Elementary Education) who can provide basic training to administrators and teachers to detect and eliminate stereotypes from curriculum that create hostile climates for students. These administrators should also evaluate the canonical curriculum used (e.g. *Sign of the Beaver, Little House on the Prairie, Indian in the Cupboard*), and offer meaningful alternatives. Districts should also provide classroom sets of culturally relevant books to replace racist curriculum.

Circulate CR curriculum that focuses on local nations and sovereignty. While all curriculum must accompany a conceptual knowledge base and relational practices, some curriculum, especially curriculum developed by Native educators and communities, is much more accurate and appropriate than others. There did not appear to be any guidance for how Indigenous content was implemented throughout the district. Although this provided room for teacher autonomy and creativity, this autonomy also enabled the reproduction of racist curriculum. Districts should acquire and disseminate relevant and contemporary curricular options for teachers, such as *Indians in Oregon Today* (Pepper et al., 2014), a state-sponsored curriculum that could easily be adapted to the elementary levels, or The Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde Community of Oregon's recently developed Tribal History unit for 4th grade (2014).

Knowledge of Native community. Districts should provide an overview for administrators and educators about the local Native communities/nations in the area. In

order to teach about contemporary Native people and issues, or foster meaningful relationships, each educator in the district should recognize the Indigenous peoples and land of the place in which they work. *Every teacher in this school district* should also have a working knowledge base of the nine federally recognized tribal governments in this state.

Conceptual knowledge. Beyond circulating information, some conceptual understandings should guide efforts as well.

Analyze district and school statistics with an equity lens. Although Native students have unique experiences with respect to colonization, they also have racialized experiences that, similar to patterns for other students of color, often manifest in opportunity gaps; disproportionate discipline rates; lower graduation, retention, and achievement rates; and underrepresentation in AP classes (Education Trust, 2013; NIES, 2011). To do address these disparaties, districts must analyze the ways demographics reporting and collection encode erasure, and use systems to make Native students visible in the data.

Promote the hiring of Indigenous educators and service providers. Although I have been careful to note that Indigenous peoples might also reproduce dominant discourses, an important strand of this work is also recognizing that Native people, as a result of their experiential, community, and earned knowledge, often have substantial knowledge and insight into the educational dynamics described in this research. Districts should implement policies and practices to increase the hiring of Native educators and administrators. A variety of models for such work already exist, including recruiting from teacher education programs that focus on preparing Native teachers, to creating

district/university partnerships that aim to "grow their own" graduates, such as the TeachOregon project, "a Chalkboard Project initiative that gives school districts and universities the opportunity to design innovative models to prepare the next generation of diverse and effective Oregon teachers."

Commit to ongoing professional development. The type of knowledge and relational practice needed to support Indigenous students requires ongoing development and commitment. Districts must commit to continued professional development for administrators, teachers, and staff currently serving Native students. This professional development should be required, not optional. It is often teachers who desire this training the least who need this training the most. One of the objectives for Oregon's newly adopted American Indian/Alaska Native State Plan is to "Ensure 100% of educators (administrators, teachers, support staff, school boards) receive AI/AN culturally responsive training at least once per academic year" (2015, p. 3). Districts should fulfill this requirement, while understanding that the breadth of knowledge will require a more substantial commitment to ongoing learning. Critical narrative inquiry and case studies may be an effective way to reflect on and improve teacher practice as they address context, complexity, and constructive efforts to support Native students.

Nurture a cadre of teacher leaders. There are a variety of ways to support teachers' professional development. One model could be to develop teacher learning communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001) where teachers from various schools in the district meet to develop a deep knowledge base with respect to Indigenous education. These teachers could become site leaders at their schools and offer support to their colleagues. Rather than supplant the role of the

Title VII Coordinator, these leaders could collaborate and support the Coordinator's efforts through the role of school-based liaison.

Relational practice. Districts can work to foster relationships between educators and the Title VII program, as well as the Native community and local tribal nations.

Foster relationships between schools and the Title VII program. District administrators (e.g., Directors of Elementary or Secondary Education, Equity Personnel) should facilitate communication between principals and Title VII Coordinators, and principals, in turn, should foster similar relationships between educators in their schools and program Coordinators. Strategies for building relationships could include holding administrator/staff meetings in the program's space, or inviting the Coordinator to visit a meeting early in the year.

Ensure collective responsibility for Title VII Program implementation. Beyond nurturing relationships between the program and schools, districts should be collectively responsible for the Title VII program. This might mean providing administrative, financial, or personnel support. In this district, a council was formed to support the program. Members of the council have helped the Coordinator through grant writing and networking, for example. Other ways to support the program include allocating FTE to the program to provide administrative and personnel support. In other districts, for example, districts provide Coordinator's FTE along with administrative FTE, which frees up grant money to contract tutors, artists, and other cultural practitioners and mentors; provide honorariums for speakers or presenters; or use as funds for travel and lodging costs for youth conferences. This could also mean supplementing salary from the district so that a coordinator can be full time, or providing money for printing and mailings, for

example. It is not enough to be “in relationship” with the program; it must also mean being responsible for providing sufficient support.

Foster relationships with families and the Native parent committee. A district should provide various venues—public and private, informal and formal—for Native students and families to share their experiences with the district. The listening session for students and families at the Center, which was sponsored by a grant, is an example of how to give families a voice to express concerns with district practices and processes. Districts should create a plan for outreach to Native families and processes to solicit families’ input. Attending program events is a way to foster relationships and build community. Administrators might ask to attend parent committee meetings to better understand the program’s vision and needs. Districts might also encourage Native parent involvement specifically in various boards, PTAs, and even the highest levels such as the school board. Districts can create other venues, such as student leadership groups or student advisory boards, that provide students with leadership opportunities, as well as encourage diverse student voices to provide insight into districts’ policies and practices.

Develop formal relationships with nearby Native nations. Premised on a recognition of and respect for nearby Native nations, districts should develop tribal-district partnerships that can assist the district’s support of those nations’ tribal members, and the implementation of more responsible Native content. This could be implemented through a tribal advisory board, the establishment of “tribal education codes” (Charleston, 1994), or by following the US Forest Service’s example, through institutionalizing trust responsibility through a tribal liaison. If properly supported, the Title VII Coordinator could also serve as such a liaison, but this study showed districts

would need to offer more financial and administrative support for such an endeavor. As this study was not conducted on tribal lands, I suggest that developing such a tribal partnership as a respectful and responsible gesture. In public schools on tribal land, this should be a requirement.

Teacher education. Teacher education programs can support Indigenous education in a variety of ways.

Concrete knowledge. Teacher education programs should provide preservice teachers with the concrete knowledge to support Native students, resembling the concrete knowledge recommended to districts, which included: knowledge of Title VII programs, how to detect bias in curriculum, knowledge of contemporary and accurate curriculum, and information on the local Native community and nations.

Knowledge of the history of schooling within a context of genocide. Educators must understand the role schools have played to assimilate (at times forcibly) Indigenous students within the broader context of attempted genocide. Teacher education programs should offer a comprehensive history which includes the ways policy and practice have been designed to assimilate or domesticate (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006) Native students. This knowledge is foundational for understanding the ways schools continue to be structured as systems that erase, marginalize, or assimilate Native students.

Conceptual knowledge. Teacher education programs should provide a range of opportunities for preservice teachers to develop conceptual knowledge.

Provide Indigenous studies courses. Indigenous studies as a discipline has provided substantial conceptual tools to critique colonialism and theorize Native survivance. Beyond a required multicultural or diversity course, teacher education

programs should provide a conceptual base in Native American/Indigenous studies for preservice teachers to understand issues that specifically affect Indigenous students, especially as it has been clearly shown that issues of equality and democracy that underpin multicultural frameworks do not often account for Indigenous students' unique experiences with colonization, or Native nations' aims of self-determination and sovereignty (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Calderon, 2009; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Grande, 2004; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Richardson & Villenas, 2000; St. Denis, 2011). A concrete knowledge base of history is important to make sense of the present, but teacher education programs should also provide education around Indigenous identity, culture, self-determination and sovereignty, survivance, the ways schools are structured to reproduce ignorance (Calderon, 2011), and an orientation to the ways colonialism continually shape-shifts (Corntassel, 2012), among other concepts.

Develop critical self-awareness in relation to Indigenous peoples. Beyond a conceptual knowledge base of Indigenous studies, teacher educators must guide preservice teachers in developing knowledge of themselves in relation to Indigenous students and the ways their subjectivities are connected. Susan Dion (2007; 2008) provides a constructive example of this practice for developing White preservice teachers' knowledge by disrupting their "perfect stranger" positionality. Following calls that educators develop a sociocultural consciousness (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), teacher preparation programs should provide opportunities for preservice teachers to consider the "biography of their relationship" with Indigenous peoples (Dion, 2007). Critical reflections on their own subjectivities with respect to history, knowledge, and ignorance is essential to develop a sense of responsibility and relational practice to counter historic

and current practices of colonization and support Native students. This will require teacher education programs to provide ample time for preservice teachers to consider the blind spots and ignorance in their “knowledge landscapes” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), as this learning requires critical, deep, and uncomfortable reflections, and often includes “unlearning” (Curran, 2004; Kumashiro, 2012).

Teach through critical case studies. This study suggests that teachers *can* become sensitized and attuned to the nuanced discourses and dynamics that affect Indigenous education. Teacher education programs should utilize existing critical narrative research that provides context-rich narratives to examine experiences shaped by macrosocial discourses. Critical case studies and counterstories provide material through which student teachers can begin to appreciate the discursive dynamics Native students, communities, and service providers navigate in the education process.

Promote the hiring of Indigenous professors. To support the development of preservice teachers, teacher education programs must have professors with the capacity to address issues of colonization and survivance in education. Though arguably all professors within the program should have some of this knowledge, as they are called on to support Indigenous students in their classrooms, there are already educators versed in the politics of Indigenous knowledge, issues, and representation where Native students are concerned. Policies and practices should be developed to promote the hiring of Indigenous teacher educators who might already be versed in such knowledge, or are implementing research agendas that engage Indigenous studies content and issues.

Relational practice. Beyond building knowledge, teacher education programs should develop relationships with Native programs and Native nations, providing a model for educators as they transition into their work.

Develop sustainable university/Title VII program partnerships. Beyond developing relationships with Title VII program/Native-serving schools so that students gain practical experience in these settings, teacher education programs should develop authentic relationships that provide sustainable support to these programs. This support could entail a yearlong stream of mentoring (rather than providing one term of support, then leaving programs with volunteer gaps to fill). Support could also entail using preservice teacher knowledge and projects to benefit the community in some way. Teacher education programs should foster relationships which are mutually beneficial.

Develop tribal-teacher education partnerships. Teacher education programs should develop tribal-education partnerships. Created in partnership with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, the University of Oregon provides a model for such collaboration through the Sapsik'ʷałá Teacher Education Project which aims to develop AI/AN teachers who can support tribal communities' education efforts. The program provides financial, academic, and social support for AI/AN preservice teachers who then commit to teaching in schools with Native student. This effort supports district and policy recommendations to hire more AI/AN teachers to work in schools.

Educational policy. There are a variety of way educational policy can support statewide efforts and school districts.

Concrete knowledge. Educational policy can support the development of concrete information regarding local Native nations, and support the circulation of such materials.

Conceptual knowledge.

Recognition of self-determination and sovereignty. Policy as it relates to supporting Indigenous students should not only consider issues of equity, access, and social justice, but must consider Native students' unique issues of self-determination and sovereignty. The documents drafted by the Oregon Department of Education demonstrate the ways such conceptual knowledge can drive support for Native students (see Appendix B).

Policy to support curriculum develop that addresses sovereignty. The Oregon Department of Education, in partnership with Native educators and tribal leaders, developed *"Indians in Oregon Today"* (Pepper et al., 2014), an accurate and responsible curriculum that addresses Oregon's nine federally recognized tribal governments. Policy should continue to support other curricular efforts to supplement this important work, including elementary curriculum and online educational components.

Statewide policy to develop and mandate Native Studies curriculum. In a climate of such pervasive erasure or miseducation, states must develop legislation and policy to support the development of respectful and accurate Native studies curriculum that foregrounds contemporary Native America and issues of tribal sovereignty. Such curriculum should be mandatory, rather than encouraged. Following the footsteps of states like Montana and Washington, states should require curriculum that teaches students about both contemporary issues and issues of tribal sovereignty. Oregon recently passed an American Indian Alaska Native State Plan (2015) that states that the Oregon

Department of Education "will support efforts to develop legislative language which mandates implementation of (K-12) historically accurate, culturally embedded, place-based, contemporary, and developmentally appropriate AI/AN curriculum, assessment tools, and instructional materials" (AI/AN State Plan, 2015, p. 3). This effort should receive widespread support and similar efforts taken up in each state.[200]

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[200] Curriculum from Washington and Montana offer useful principles for curriculum development, focusing attention on contemporary life through a lens of sovereignty and Indigenous nationhood. Montana's seven essential understandings, for example, do not focus solely on Native "culture." Instead, the understandings focus on diversity, nationhood, governance, inherent sovereignty, persistence, historic and contemporary life, and colonization and assimilation, among others. Montana's seven essential understandings include:

1. There is great diversity among the twelve tribal nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.
2. There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by entities, organizations and people. A continuum of Indian identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional. There is no generic American Indian.
3. The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the "discovery" of North America.
4. Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not "given" to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:
    - I. Both parties to treaties were sovereign powers.
    - II. Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land.
    - III. Acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.
5. There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people and still shape who they are today. Many of these policies conflicted with one another. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods:
    - I. Colonization/Colonial Period 1492 – 1800s
    - II. Treaty Period 1789 - 1871
    - III. Assimilation Period - Allotment and Boarding School 1879 - 1934
    - IV. Tribal Reorganization Period 1934 - 1958
    - V. Termination and Relocation Period 1953 - 1971
    - VI. Self-determination Period 1968 – Present
6. History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.
7. Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers, separate and independent from the federal and state governments. However, the extent and breadth of tribal sovereignty is not the same for each tribe (Montana Office of Public Instruction & Juneau, 2012, pp. 1-10).

Relational Practice.

Foster government-to-government relationships. Oregon has institutionalized a government-to-government relationship with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, including a government-to-government education cluster (Oregon Department of Education, 2014). These relationships should continue to be recognized, affording tribal nations opportunities to provide important input into education efforts.

Institutionalize educational tribal liaisons. Policy should address the need for tribal liaisons and develop legislative language to support such efforts. Oregon has a position, the Advisor to Deputy State Superintendent on Indian Education, who serves as an Indian education specialist in the state. This specialist was a crucial support for our advocacy for stoles at graduation.

Research

Concrete knowledge. Research should continue providing descriptive statistics on Native graduation, achievement, discipline, and attendance rates. Surveys should also be designed to better understand what teachers know and don't know about Indigenous students' lives and Indigenous education in order to guide professional development.

Conceptual knowledge.

Research to address colonization in schools. Research should attend specifically to the ways colonization and racism continue to shape Indigenous students' experiences in schools. Research should also seek to make visible the ways institutions are structured to reproduce erasures, making those erasures visible so they can be denaturalized and subject to critique and transformation (Duncan, 2002).

Critical narrative research. Research is needed that looks at how teachers engage the colonial contexts of schools in a constructive fashion and with attention to complexity. This research should support teachers working in schools through the development of teacher-research collaboratives (see Sconiers & Rosiek, 2000), while also providing meaningful content for preservice and in-service professional development.

Relational practice. Research should not solely be geared to learn *about* Native students' lives and communities, but should be actively committed to improving them. This means teacher education research must be "of use" (Fine & Barreras, 2001) and "be relevant and address problems of the community" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 440).

To know what is of use to communities, researchers must utilize methodologies that respect the lives, needs, and goals of Indigenous communities, and adapt research agendas accordingly. By developing a thoughtful and strategic partnership and research agenda, the university could benefit Title VII programs and Indigenous education efforts in these areas in a variety of ways.[201] Teacher education programs should consider the ways their faculty research agendas can directly support school districts in implementing more effective forms of Indigenous education in their own backyard as well as provide direct support for Title VII programs already engaging in that work.

Research is also needed that supports Native teachers' and community efforts at survivance, recognizing the ways that survivance is often improvisational, using the resources at hand to support Native students despite, at times, dire circumstances.

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[201] Evergreen State College provides an excellent example of the ways university research can benefit Native education, including Native students, communities, and teachers responsible for teaching Native content. "The mission of the Enduring Legacies Native Cases Initiative is to develop culturally relevant curriculum and teaching resources in the form of case studies on key issues in Indian Country" (Enduring Legacies: Native Cases Studies, n.d.). Though not specifically a district partnership, the material provides a valuable resource for districts, and can be used for teacher professional development or curriculum in schools.

In keeping with this observation, I conclude this dissertation with a final story.

Conflicted Hope: Native Love

The pow wow had ended a few hours back. Somehow every year, we forget the immense amount of work it takes to put on a community event like this. There was only a handful of us left to pack up the event, put away the chairs, and clean the gym. We had finished cleaning and the youth were in a group talking, some on the ground, some sitting on the rail, one hanging from a tree, when all of them started laughing. The laughter in that moment was medicine, the type of laughter that penetrates your chest and can only come from delirium. Some of the youth had been there since 9 am and it was probably nearing midnight. For a fleeting moment as I looked at them, it was as if the last two years of our work together was right there, vivid, spilling out of their giggles and chiding remarks as they treated each other like siblings. For that moment, I was overwhelmed with joy and goodness, convinced that some of our efforts were leading to what Vine Deloria Jr. had hoped for education: the creation of "good people."[202]

Pride rushed over me. Ojibwe writer Louise Erdrich once wrote, "Every Native American is a survivor, an anomaly, a surprise on earth. We were all slated for extinction before the march of progress. But surprise, we are progress" (as cited in Keene, 2014, p. 1). "Surprise!" I wanted to shout at them. "*You* are what this work is about! *You* are miracles!" But with the restraint only a mother could employ, I held back. I marveled at the ways these teenagers from three different high schools in the district could act like

[202] As Demmert and Towner (2003) state,

> At the National Indian Education Association convention held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 2–6, 2002, Vine Deloria presented the purpose of education from his research on early reports of Indian education as "creating good people." We have added "that are knowledgeable and wise" to present a broader perspective. (p. 1)

family, especially with all the teenage drama that followed them. But they didn't need me in that moment; they had each other.

One of the youth was drawing on the white board we had used for our project that day. At this year's pow wow I had asked some of the youth to help me with a photo project called Native Love, developed by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) designed to "raise awareness and help end violence against Native youth by empowering them to redefine Native Love" (NIWRC website, http://nativelove.niwrc.org/). With our camera, a white board, and dry erase marker, we walked around the pow wow explaining the project and asking people if they would like to participate. Underneath the words #NativeLoveIs… we asked folks to provide their own definitions of love, and then took their picture as they held the white board. Nearly one hundred youth and elders, men and women, responded to the question. To see grown men and teenage boys answer with words like community, acceptance, family, and respect was a blessing, a "bendición" as one young man answered. Tradition. Fry Bread. Family. Heritage. Mom. Beautiful. Culture. Togetherness. Love. Nature. Kindness. Ceremony. Water. Children. Involvement. It was indeed a blessing to be a part of this project, to witness these loving affirmations, and to be able to offer these beautiful words and images back to the community in a photo collage. With our limited budget, Facebook was the only way to share these images, but this "desire-based" project (Tuck, 2009), a chance for our community to develop "positive representations" of ourselves (Keene, 2015), circulated through likes, shares, and positive comments throughout the community

My reflections on the project were complicated, however. Watching the young man doodle on the board as the youth talked to each other reminded me of the meaningful

work we did. It felt important, for example, to walk around with a teenage boy and prompt him to explain the project to others. It felt important to spend time with a young girl as she listened to elders define love in empowering ways: appreciation, togetherness, the river, respect, my sons. There was wisdom in those words and I know it meant something for me and the youth to be a part of it. Yet that evening, I was also humbled.

I had just taken a break from the project to help with honoring the graduates. The parent committee had just gifted the high school students their Pendleton stoles for graduation, an honor I hoped they would carry with them to their graduations, as the parent group fought hard for those rights. The community had just sat down after congratulating them in an honor song and everyone marveled at the tiny tots dancers who took the floor. There was joy in the room. I sat on the outskirts of the dance floor, watching the tiny tots dance. I began talking with one mother who asked about my white board when I noticed her face was deeply bruised. As we both watched her daughter dance, she told me of the violent relationship she was in and was trying to escape. She was fearful, but strong for her daughter. He had recently crossed a line, she told me, and she was determined to leave him. She was staying at a friend's house, but looking for more support. I gave her my cell and told her about shelters and resources in the area. We were both crying.

I held my whiteboard, looking down at the words "Native Love is…" I felt the weakness of the project crumble under the lived and real violence it was supposed to address. The children had finished dancing and her daughter approached us from the dance floor. The mother told her daughter about my project and her daughter said that she wanted to write something. The little girl, perhaps five years old, took the whiteboard

from my hands and underneath the words “Native Love Is…”, in slow and purposeful childlike letters, she wrote, “my mama.”

APPENDIX A

NATIVE AMERICAN UNIT EXAMPLES

Description of a Native American Unit From *Teachers Pay Teachers*

Native American Unit with lesson plans and printables

By Rockin Resources

Native American Unit This Native American Unit is one of my favorite units and I updated it with even more lessons and activities! If you previ...

Subjects: Native Americans, U.S. History
Grades: 3rd, 4th, 5th
Types: Projects, Unit Plans, Printables

$8.00

524 ratings
4.0

Digital Download
PDF (9.99 MB)

ADD TO CART

WISH LIST

"This Native American Unit is one of my favorite units and I updated it with even more lessons and activities! If you previously purchased, download again for free!

The Native American Unit motivates students to want to learn about the Native Americans of North America (Eastern Woodlands, Great Plains, Southwest, Northwest Coast, Southeast). I have included 63 pages of lessons with teacher instructions and printables. All printables fit paper size 8.5 by 11 inches.

1. For each Native American region, I included a 2-page informational text that gives information about the climate, religious beliefs, resources, homes, food, etc. (Total of 10 pages of informational text.)
2. To go along with informational text, I included comprehension questions for each one. (Main Idea, Vocabulary, Graphic Organizers, Cause and Effect, and fill in the blank)
2. Create a Native America name (info sheet and student printable or craftivity)
3. Native American Picture Writing (Center instructions and symbols printable)
4. Project (Instruction printable, examples, Informational text and rubrics)
5. Native American study chart of regions (Student and teacher printable)
6. Map of the Native American regions for coloring and map key (printable)
7. Dream Catcher (information about dream catchers, step-by-step instructions on how to make them, printable for Writing center to write about them.)
8. Totem Pole Craft- (information sheet, animal meanings printable, totem pole parts printables)
9. Raising Your Totem Pole Writing, (instructions, Student and Teacher writing printable, Posters for smart board to teach Exciting beginnings, transition words, and word choice, rubric)
10. Rain Dance instructions
11. Native American Quiz (2-pages)
12. Acrostic Poem."
Retrieved from: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Native-American-Unit-with-lesson-plans-and-printables-355598

Selected Activities and Suggestions

Name ______________________

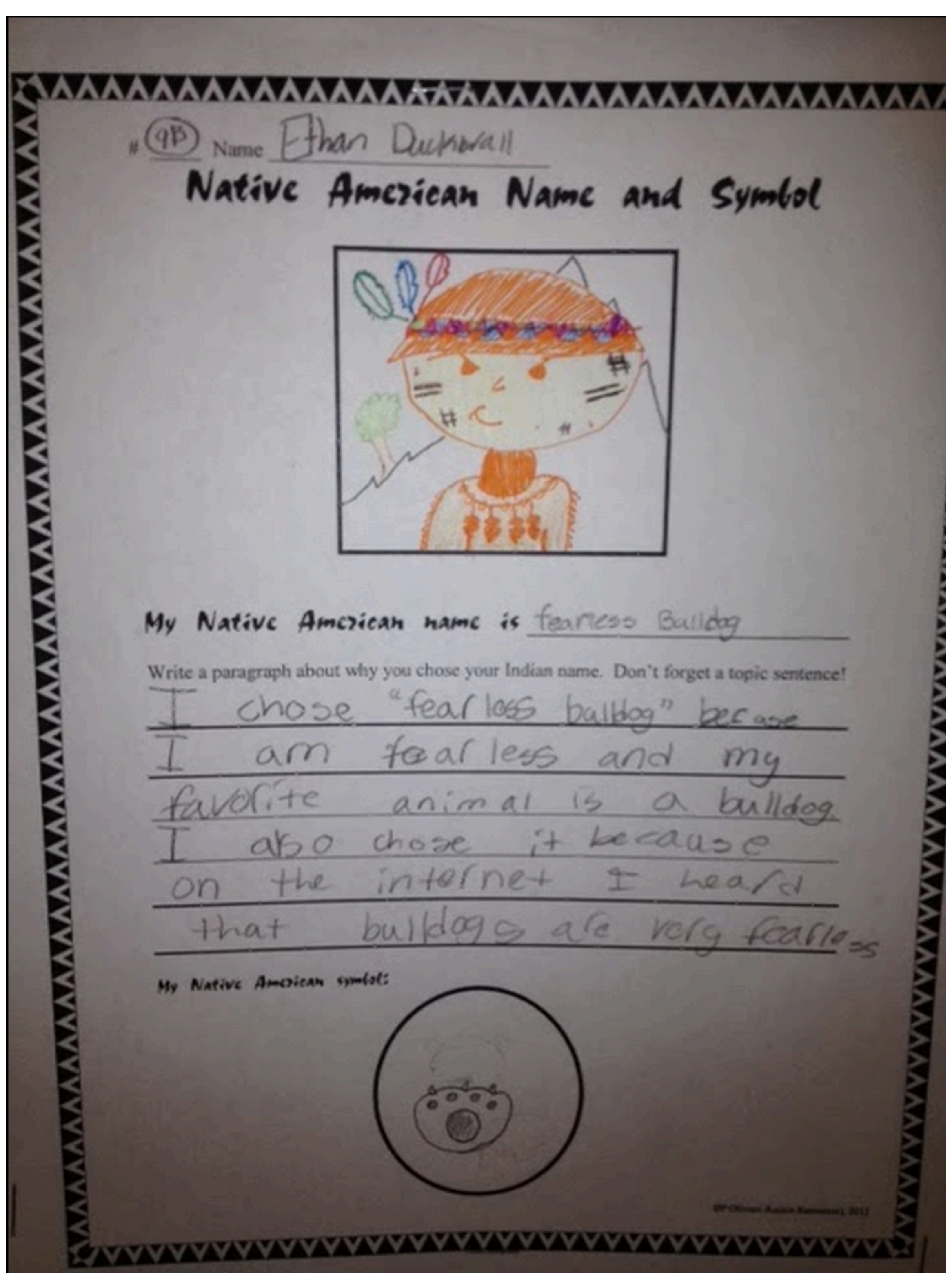
My Native American name is:

____

Write a paragraph about why you chose your Indian name. Don't forget a topic sentence!.

____

My Native American symbol:


(9B) Name Ethan Duckwall

Native American Name and Symbol

My Native American name is fearless Bulldog

Write a paragraph about why you chose your Indian name. Don't forget a topic sentence!

I chose "fear less bulldog" becase I am fear less and my favorite animal is a bulldog. I also chose it because on the internet I heard that bulldogs are very fearless

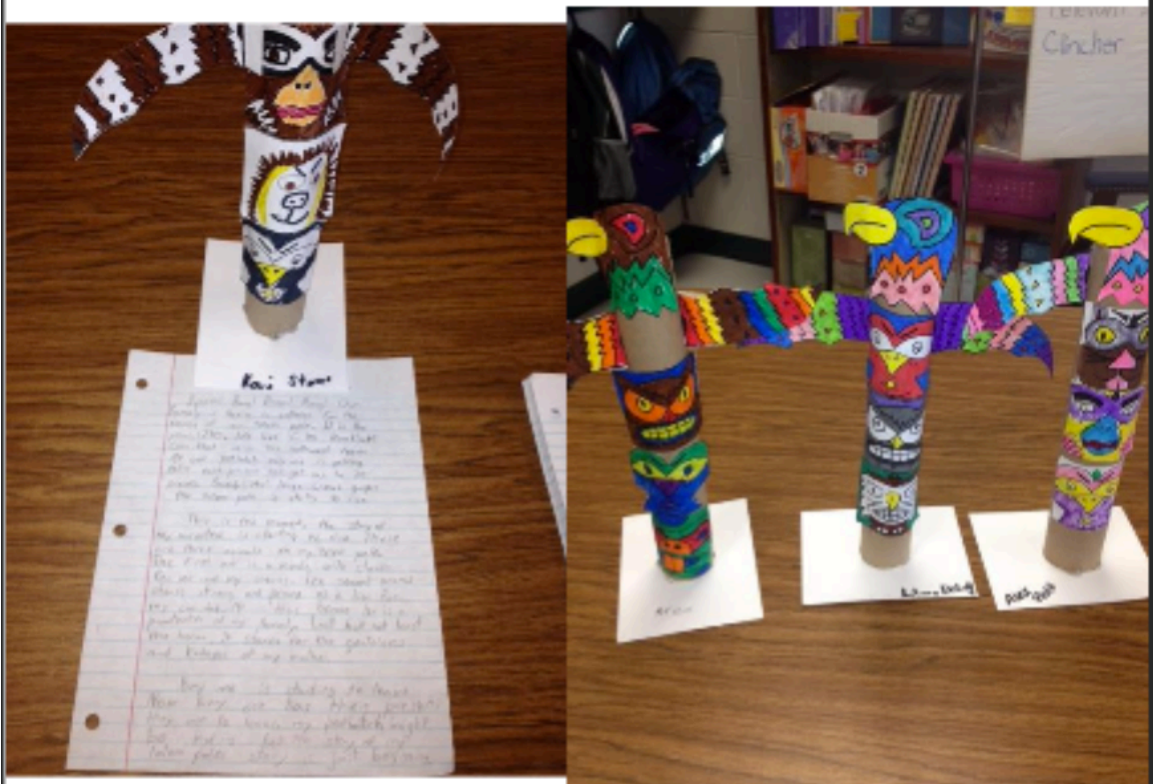
My Native American symbol:

Sample student work retrieved from: http://www.rockinresources.com/2013/10/native-american-unit.html

Native American Project

Due ___________

1. Pick a region from teacher's basket.
   My region is ______________________________
2. Research your region for the following categories:
   a. Type of home
   b. Transportation
   c. Food
   d. Weapons/tools/crafts
   e. Customs/beliefs
   f. A new word that you learned from your research. (The new word cannot be used in the other categories)
3. Choose a way of presenting your project.
   Ex: poster, powerpoint, booklet, mobile.
4. Create your project:
   a. Write the title of your region.
   b. Label each category.
   c. Write 2-3 complete sentences about each one.
   d. Provide a colorful illustration.
5. Present to class!



7. WRITING CONNECTION
See Totem Pole Writing Assignment

***Beat a drum as student present their writing.

©P.Olivieri (Rockin Resources), 2013

Description of a "No Prep" Native American Tribe Research Report From *Teachers Pay Teachers*

Native American Tribe Research Report Project {NO PREP}

By Teaching in Room 6

This recently updated classroom tested project will have your students learning a great deal of information about the peoples who inhabited the A...

Subjects: English Language Arts, Social Studies - History, Native Americans
Grades: 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th
Types: Research, Projects

$5.00

234 ratings
4.0

Digital Download
PDF (1.42 MB)

ADD TO CART

WISH LIST

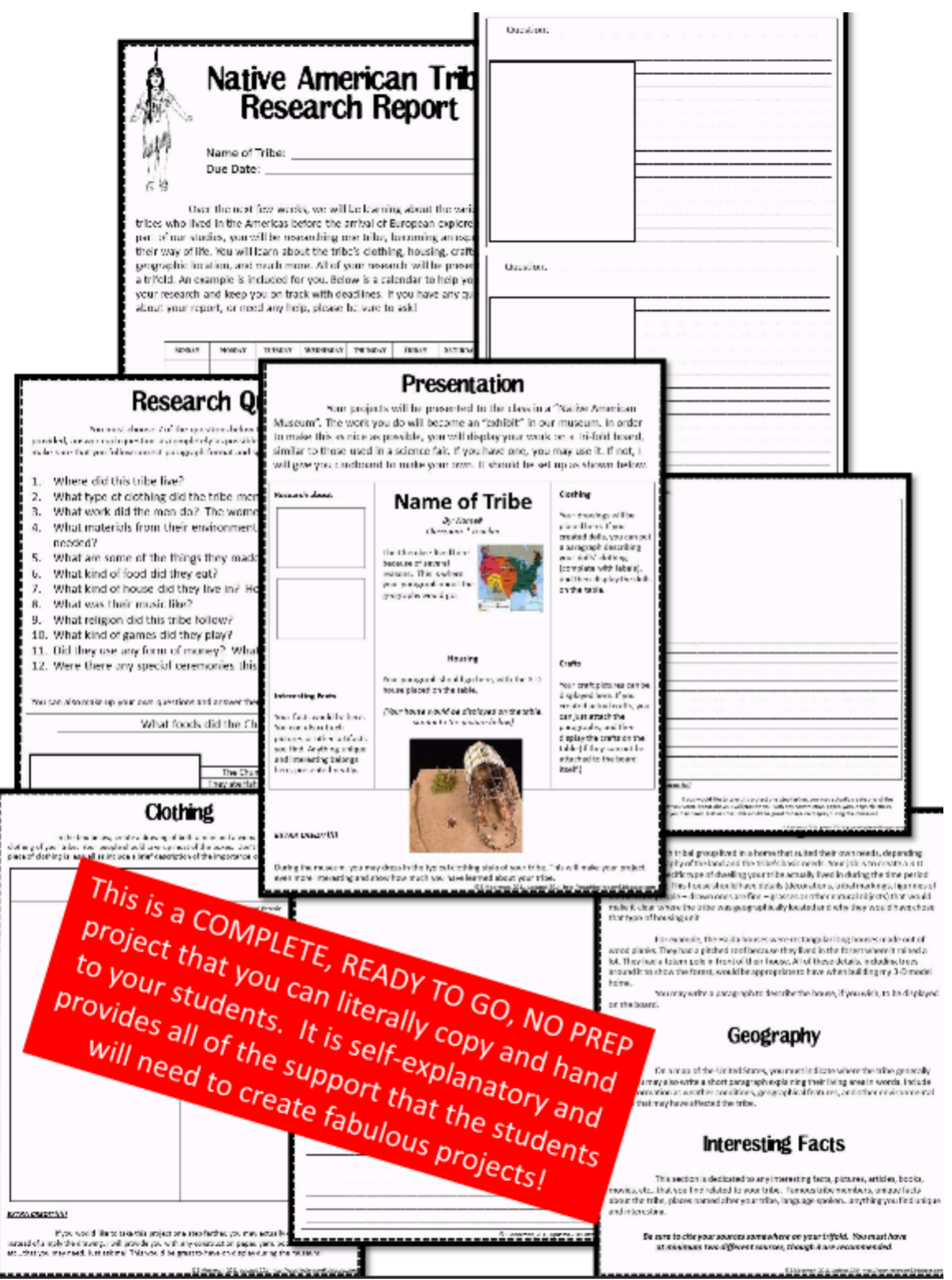
"This recently updated classroom tested project will have your students learning a great deal of information about the peoples who inhabited the Americas before European exploration. This is a fully contained NO PREP project, meaning that you can copy it, hand it to the students, and they can run with it. I have assigned this as an at home project, and an in class project. Both times, I am incredibly impressed by the results.

This project includes:

* Explanation cover letter for students
* Research/display page for clothing, crafts, research questions, and housing of the tribe.
* Check in forms for students to turn in reporting their progress.
* Rubrics for the project as a whole AND for paragraph writing.
* Checklist of requirements for the students
* Sample research questions.
* Sample final project pictures (on cover of this download)
* Presentation display diagram

This project is intended for use by one classroom teacher. Please purchase a license if you plan to use this with your colleagues."

Retrieved from: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Native-American-Tribe-Research-Report-Project-NO-PREP-251014



Native American Trib
Research Report
Name of Tribe:
Due Date:
Research Q
1. Where did this tribe live?
6. What kind of food did they eat?
9. What religion did this tribe follow?
10. What kind of games did they play?
Presentation
Name of Tribe
Clothing
Geography
Interesting Facts
This is a COMPLETE, READY TO GO, NO PREP project that you can literally copy and hand to your students. It is self-explanatory and provides all of the support that the students will need to create fabulous projects!

Description of a Social Studies Unit Available From *Teachers Pay Teachers*

Social Studies Interactive Notebook

By Ashleigh

Are your social studies resources limited? Do you find yourself scrambling around on the weekend finding something engaging and grade level appro...

Subjects: Social Studies - History, Government, Economics

Grades: 3rd, 4th, 5th

Types: Activities, Printables, Interactive Notebooks

$15.00

1228 ratings
4.0

Digital Download
PDF (19.99 MB)

ADD TO CART

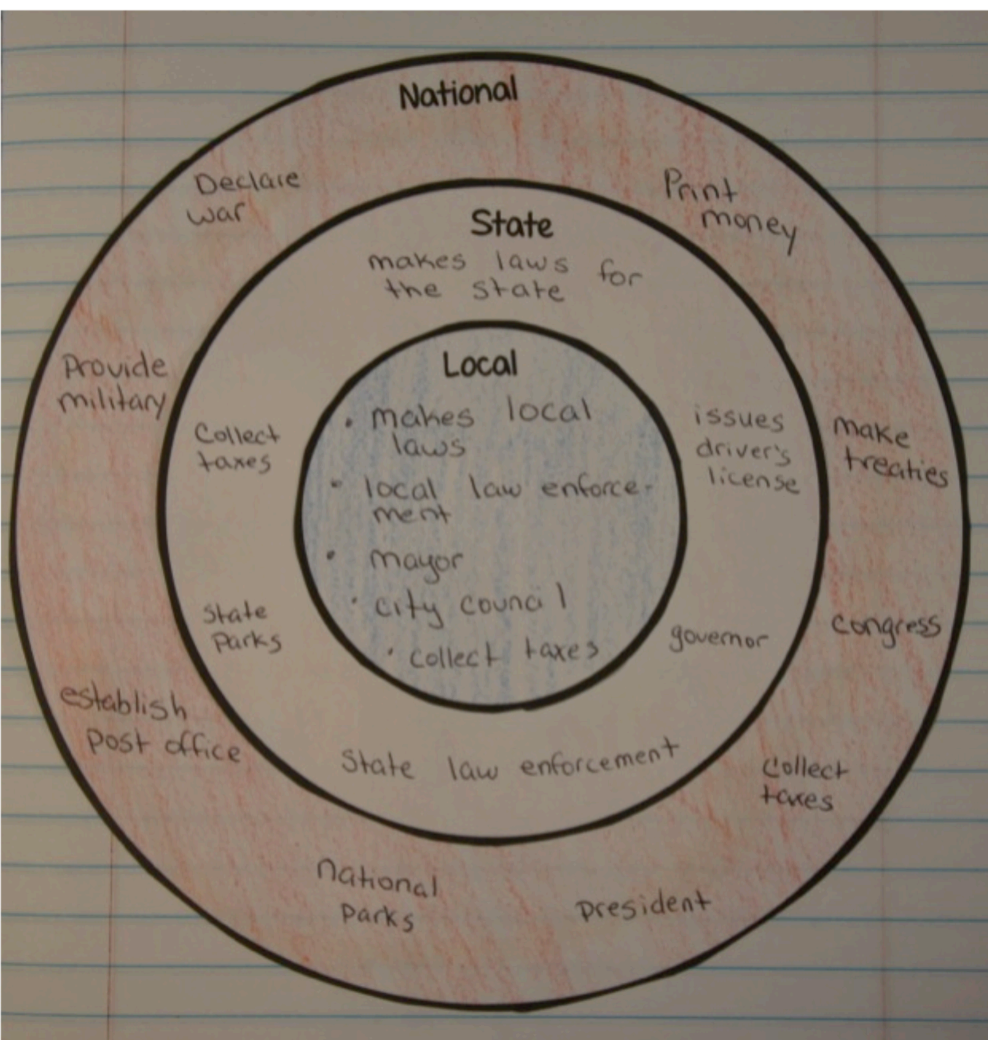
WISH LIST

(Sample topics covered)
Government
-Levels of Government
-Three Branches
-Individual Branches of Government
-Checks and Balances
-Direct Democracy vs. Representative Democracy
-Senate vs. House of Representatives
-Bill of Rights
-How a Bill Becomes a Law
-Rights and Responsibilities
-Important Documents
-U.S. Symbols

U.S. History
-Ancient Greece vs. United States
-European Exploration
-Native Americans
-Individual Native American Tribe
-Plymouth & Jamestown
-13 Colonies
-Westward Expansion
-Lewis and Clark
-Louisiana Purcha
-Gold Rush
-Impacts of West: Telegraph, Locomotive, Cotton Gin, and Steamboat
-Trail of Tears
-Underground Railroad
-The Great Depression
-The New Deal
-Civil Rights Movement
Retrieved from: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Social-Studies-Interactive-Notebook-933658

Selected Activities

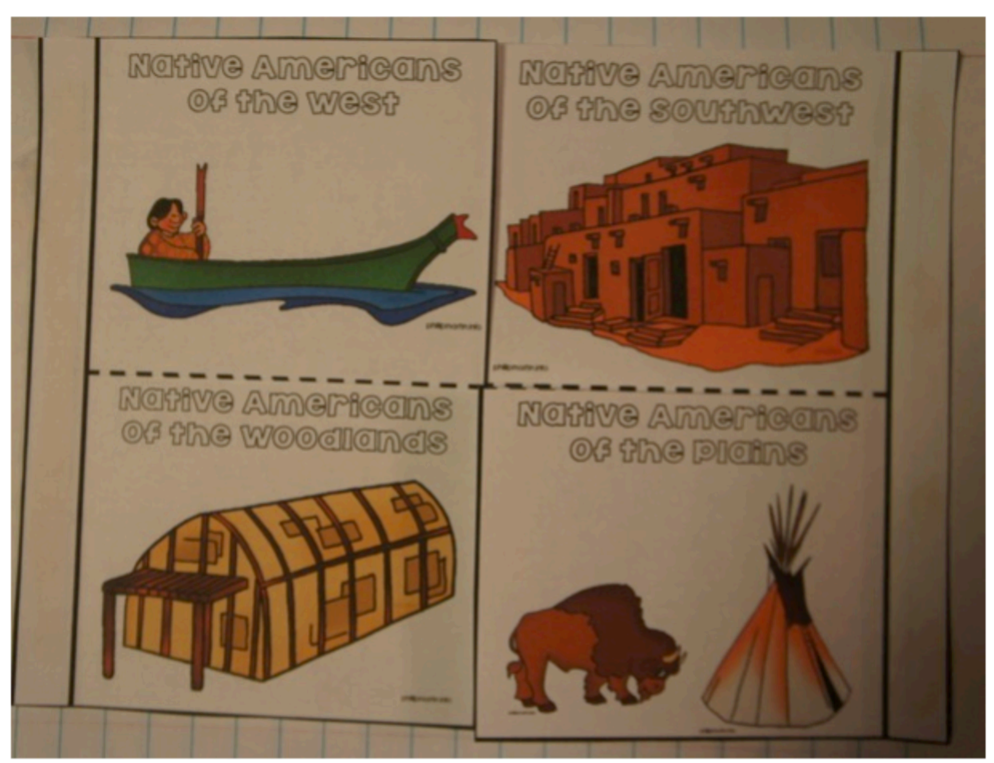
Levels of Government

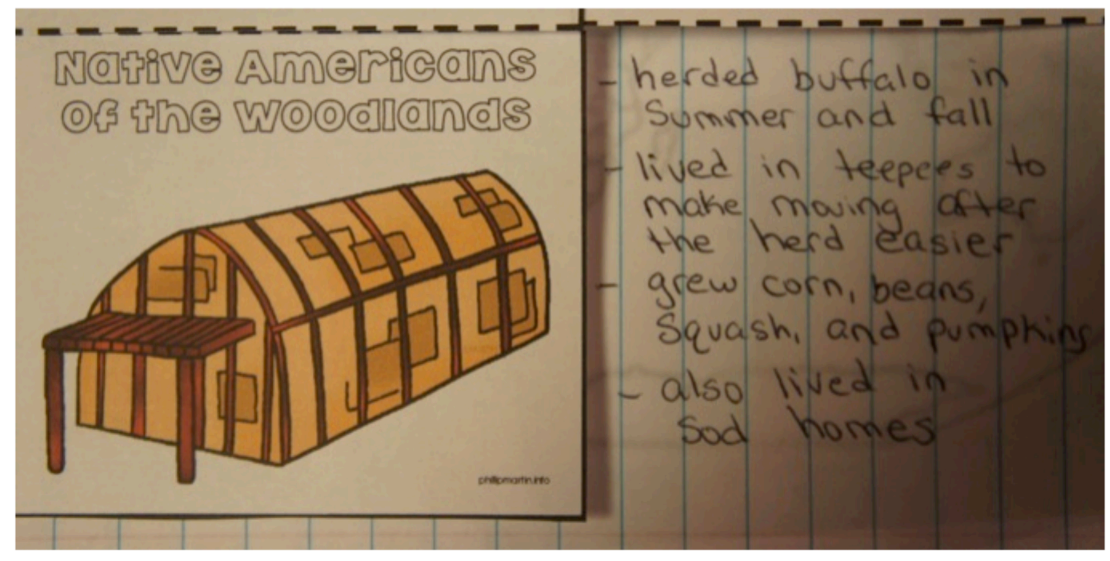


Cut out each circle and glue on top of each other to reinforce the idea of levels of government.

(Tribal governments are notably missing from these concentric circles.)

Native Americans





(That is because Native Americans are seen as contemporary nations but relics of the past.)

Other Frequently Downloaded Native American Curricula

Native American Passages {Aligned to Common Core for Close Reading or Homework}

By 247 Teacher

Updated: 1-21-14 This 56 Page Unit Contains: 7 Passages for Close Reading, Homework, Assessments, Guided Reading and/or Social Studies. 100% Ali...

Subjects: Native Americans, Tools for Common Core, Informational Text
Grades: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, Homeschool
Types: Worksheets, Activities, Test Prep

$7.00

439 ratings 4.0

Digital Download
PDF (3.32 MB)

ADD TO CART

WISH LIST

Native Americans Printables {Perfect for Interactive Notebooks}

By Cutesy Clickables by Collaboration Cuties

This download is perfect for your Native Americans unit! These graphic organizers are great for interactive notebooks. After students have read a...

Subjects: Native Americans, U.S. History, Thanksgiving
Grades: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th
Types: Fun Stuff, Printables, Graphic Organizers

$2.00

328 ratings 4.0

Digital Download
PDF (0.72 MB)

ADD TO CART

WISH LIST

native american kids {a craftivity}

By A Cupcake for the Teacher

Complete your Thanksgiving or Native American unit with this cute craftivity! Your students will create their very own Native American kiddo and...

Subjects: Writing, Holidays/Seasonal, Thanksgiving
Grades: Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd
Types: Fun Stuff, Printables, Bulletin Board Ideas

$3.00

629 ratings 4.0

Digital Download
PDF (9.59 MB)

ADD TO CART

WISH LIST

APPENDIX B

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Title VII Parent Committee Letter and Explanation of Facts

Native Pride: An Issue of Sovereignty

Sapsikʷałá Graduating Class of 2010

"She is not just a graduate out there. She is representing our Native community."

Wilma Crowe, a 96-year old Lakota Sioux elder and citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, was speaking on behalf of her great-granddaughter's upcoming graduation from Thurston High School, and what it would mean to see her up on stage during the ceremony donned in a Pendleton stole the Indian Education parent committee hopes to gift each Native graduate. The context is larger than just a moment on stage.

Wilma recounted to the Springfield/Thurston Native Youth Group the story of her father, who in 1924, the same year the Indian Citizenship Act was passed, stood on a stage in front of government officials in South Dakota and declared that he would be a good "American citizen." He was forced to demonstrate this symbolically by breaking an arrow in front of the officials, and then take an oath while resting his hand on a plow. Wilma witnessed this 90 years ago. She was 6 years old.

The US government has, since contact, attempted to exterminate, dispossess, or contain the Indigenous peoples of this country. Over time, policies of outright elimination became more nuanced, and the project became one of annihilation *through* assimilation. The forced oath Wilma's father took was part of a longstanding movement of the US Government to assimilate Native peoples, and incorporate Native people into the US mainstream as citizens. Schools were instrumental in this process. Boarding schools removed young Native children from their homes, stripped them of their language, culture, heritage, and pride. They were designed to "kill the Indian and save the man." One might be quick to say, "But we don't do that anymore." And to small degree they might be correct. We don't put needles in the tongues of little ones speaking Diné, but we do still force most Native students to enter schools that aren't always congruent with their homes. Yet each year, despite the historic trauma and present challenges Native youth experience in schools, Native youth *continue* to graduate, and somehow, we as Native families continue to have faith that schools will finally recognize our children *as Natives* and serve us so that we can serve our tribal nations, Native communities, and society.

Each year, we proudly witness Native youth who defy immense odds to walk across those stages and be recognized, not just as graduates, but as *Native* graduates. These graduates owe that honor not only to their own hard work (for many of them have achieved their diploma in spite of their

schooling experiences), but also to their families, relatives, ancestors who endured, resisted, and survived so that they could walk. They stand up there connected to all who have come before them, connected to their people and their tribal nations, and have a right to express their identities and be recognized through that connection.

Wilma and her family deserve to bear witness to the successes of their family and to other Native youth in their community in a Native way. To witness, to be recognized, and to express oneself *as a Native* is a sovereign right.

As the Title VII/Indian Education Parent Committee, we respectfully request that our Native graduates be allowed to wear their Pendleton stoles that the committee will gift them. Our gifting of these stoles to our graduates is part of a longstanding cultural practice of gifting through blanketing, witnessing, and public recognition. Our Native youth should be able to be recognized as Native graduates, a visible symbol to those who have come before them, those who have stood beside them, and those who will follow.

EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS

ASSERTION #1*: One might say that this is an issue of sovereignty, not equality. School is not a place to express sovereignty.*

FACT: This is not an issue of equality, but an issue of sovereignty -- our desires and capacity as Native peoples and nations to be who we have always been or whom we hope to be in the future as a people. These are freedoms that we have always had; freedoms that predate the formal treaties that now secure only some of these rights. Our cultural and religious expression is one of these rights. And these rights are documented by state officials and sanctioned organizations:

- Oregon State Board of Education's Philosophy and Goals state:
  "Every Oregonian has inalienable rights and responsibilities for intellectual, political, religious and economic freedom which everyone should learn to appreciate and protect."
- Oregon Indian Education Association (2013) states:
  The celebration and honor of educational advancement through ceremonies should reflect and celebrate the diversity of our children, families and communities and be culturally inclusive and celebratory spaces. We encourage School Administrators to think critically about how their schools and districts choose to formally honor and recognize students and ask themselves: How would a student who is American Indian or Alaskan Native experience this?" **Cultural inclusion at commencement ceremonies should be the rule and not the exception, we should not have to petition each time and get an exception to wear something that is a cultural symbol given in honor of our achievement.** In many Native American cultures, the eagle feather is used as a symbol of achievement and/or rites of passage. Among those rites of passage is graduation, a public ceremony that signifies the students' next step into adulthood. While dropout rates are significantly high in Indian county, graduation is a time that we honor those who bring us honor with their individual successes. (np)

The right to express oneself with eagle feathers, for example, was recently protected by the Grand Forks Public Schools in North Dakota who amended their "no adornment" policy for Native religious and cultural expression. The Native American Rights Fund successfully advocated on their behalf, using legislation from the Department of Justice Policy on Tribal Member Use of Eagle Feathers, part of the Department of Justice's commitment to Indigenous self-determination. We ask the school to make a similar commitment to Native students' sovereignty and self-

determination. Blanketing our students is an Oregon longstanding cultural and religious practice, which we signify through gifting these stoles. Our students' ability to partake in this cultural practice of public witnessing and recognition is a form of cultural and religious expression, inherent sovereign rights, but also ones protected in religious freedoms that the State Board of Education has expressed above.

ASSERTION # 2: *That doesn't seem fair to other groups such as other students of color or cultural groups.*

FACT: Native students are not just students of color; they are citizens and descendants of the Indigenous peoples of this land. To be a tribal citizen of any one of the 9 federally recognized tribes of Oregon, for example, or any of the 566 tribal nations located in the US, is a political identity as a sovereign citizen - not solely a racial/ethnic identity. To deny an Indigenous person their cultural expression in a public school, for example, is an infringement on that sovereignty as a Native citizen. Native students may have things in common with other communities of color, but our experiences in the US have been shaped by colonialism, not just racism. Policies have aimed to remove us from our land, forced us to leave our communities, prohibited us from cultural and religious expressions, and tried to make us disappear. Our ability to express ourselves culturally and **visibly** is an important part of our cultural practice of community recognition.

ASSERTION #3*: We have lots of clubs and organizations and they can't all be recognized.*

FACT: Native students, though they may take part in Native American Student Unions, for example, are not merely members of clubs or organizations and their rights as Indigenous peoples cannot be equated as such. An environment that recognizes the diverse talents and interests of its students on such a momentous occasion feels like a supportive, inclusive, and welcoming climate; and yet to deny the rights of Native students on the basis that other students don't have access to a similar form of recognition is to conflate Native nations with other communities of interest. A school policy that entitles all groups to appropriate self-adornment appears a viable solution; but a policy that infringes on Native student cultural expression so as not to appear "unfair" to the other groups is based on faulty premises. Native students have the right to cultural and religious expression, a different right than recognizing participation in a "club" (though, again, we endorse any appropriate adornment).

ASSERTION #4: *In response to growing requests by various groups, we have limited our acceptance of graduation attire to only academic honor stoles and cords as a fair, across-the-board policy.*

FACT: To graduate as a Native senior *is* an honor. If the school will not acknowledge this as a measure of honor, then we hope to show how privileging academic honors in the current educational climate disproportionately provides opportunity for non-Native students to be recognized, and creates less opportunity for Native students to receive such recognition. Let it be known that we believe that academic honors should be recognized as well, but if the only justification for doing so is that academic honors are a "neutral" or "fair" way to mediate the situation, a closer look at achievement and graduation data, as well as access to AP and Honors classes, might show that what appears a fair policy in theory, directly becomes a site for inequity in practice. Further, a look at outcomes alone ignores the cost of education for some. For example, a wealth of research shows that Native students, despite educator's best intentions, often endure a host of racial aggressions during their educational experience. These micro- and macro-aggressions often come at a significant personal, emotional, social, and physical cost to students; part of a repertoire of experiences their high-achieving and honors-track peers may never have to

endure in school. We have and hope to honor any and all high achieving Native students, and yet in general, Native students' achievement rates, though growing, still lag behind their peers. Our graduation rates have risen by 4.7% in the last two years, more than any other racial/ethnic minority (NCES, 2015) and yet our numbers are abysmal.

- Native students in the state of Oregon have the lowest graduation rate (51.7%) and the highest dropout rate (7.12% if you're a Native female; 8.76% if you're a Native male) of any racial/ethnic minority group in the state.
- Native students have the highest chronic absenteeism rate at 27% and disproportionate rates of disciplinary referrals.
- Native students are overrepresented in SPED programs, and underrepresented in programs like TAG, making up less than 1% of TAG programs (.58%).
- In 2013, only 2% of Native students fell within the category of advanced for 8th grade NAEP reading scores. In math, the percentage of Native students wasn't even reported. Same with science.
- In Oregon, even though 79% of Native students have met or exceeded high school reading standards, only 57% have met the high school math standards and 46% the writing standard, and 50% the science standard in the state of Oregon (Oregon Department of Education, 2014)

These numbers reflect, in part, the *disproportionality* that we will see in who is represented with academic honors stoles and cords.

We refuse to believe our Native youth can't read, can't do math, can't write, and can't do science. We refuse to believe that they cannot achieve. There is something else contributing to these gaps. To share these numbers runs the risk that you might view our students as less capable of achieving, or that they don't desire success. Our experiences with Native youth and communities refute this notion. They have immense capacity and desire, and like most students they are smart and talented and underserved by systems that are supposed to serve them. We also know that as educators you are doing your best to serve them and are working to address these gaps. And yet, while these gaps exist, to justify academic honor stoles and cords as a "fair" practice in an unfair and inequitable system that Native students have disproportionate access to is inequitable. We hope the day comes when all of our Native youth wear academic honors cords, but we also know that on that day, we would still fight for their ability to express themselves religiously and culturally as Native people if needed, because the ability to do so is one of the highest honors in their communities.

ASSERTION #5: *The processes we used to arrive at these solutions were democratic.*

FACT: At 2% of the population, Native people cannot always rely on democratic processes in decision-making. Not only does our small population size render ineffective for our communities typical majority-wins premises of voting, but decisions made about and for us are often by those who have little knowledge of our communities or Native people in general.

ASSERTION #6: *She only needs to cover it up while she's on stage. She can wear it openly at the rest of the event.*

FACT: Wilma's story, and her wish to see her great-granddaughter proudly walk across the stage, visible as a Native graduate, is part of a longstanding cultural tradition of recognition. To justify hiding the Pendleton stole for that one hour on stage, so that Wilma's great granddaughter

can be part of the graduating class and not her sovereign Native self, is a form of erasure; an erasure akin to the longstanding legal and educational policies in this country designed to, in one way or another, make us disappear.

ASSERTION #7: *Oregon Schools are about the collective and there is tradition in uniformity.*

FACT: There are many schools in Oregon who challenge that "tradition" in order to make visible Native resilience, religion and sovereign rights.

- http://www.tulalipnews.com/wp/2013/05/24/native-american-students-celebrate-rite-of-passage/
- http://archive.statesmanjournal.com/article/20110602/NEWS/106020360/Spirits-soar-Native-American-graduation

Each Native graduate is a testament to the strength, resilience, and survival of Native America, and we also believe that witnessing such a ceremony and engaging in a cultural and religious process of expression and recognition is not only reflective of who we are, but strengthens us as a people. Native communities are winning these fights in schools to be recognized and to engage in their form of cultural and religious expression. We strongly urge you to consider joining these courageous districts and schools who realize that Native students should be able to bring *all* of who they are to their graduation ceremony.

Sincerely,

The Title VII/Indian Education Parent Committee in Springfield

Oregon Department of Education Letter of Support

Office of the Deputy Superintendent
255 Capitol St NE, Salem, OR 97310
Voice: 503-947-5600
Fax: 503-378-5156

April 27, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

With graduation day fast approaching, I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss a topic of great interest to many of our Native American students and their families – the wearing of items of cultural significance such as eagle feathers and stoles during graduation ceremonies.

High school graduation is a time of great excitement and joy for students, families, and our communities as a whole. As we celebrate with our communities and pay tribute to the hard work and achievements of our students, I encourage you to put policies in place that facilitate ceremonies that are culturally inclusive and reflect and honor the diversity of our students and families.

Here at the Oregon Department of Education, we are committed to fostering unique government to government relationships with our federally recognized tribes. We have heard from our partners in the tribes how meaningful it is for many Native students to be allowed to wear certain cultural items during graduation ceremonies as a means of honoring their tribe, their community, and their heritage.

I encourage you to examine your local policies and explore ways for students to honor their heritage by allowing for non-disruptive expressions of Native American culture at commencement ceremonies. We fully support policies allowing students to outwardly wear items that honor their unique tribal cultures. These items could include, but are not limited to, stoles, eagle feathers, beads, and tribal insignias. As you review your policies, you may wish to meet with tribal leaders from your area to gain a better understanding of local needs and thoughts on this issue.

Thank you for all you do to support educational equity in our state and to create a school environment that is culturally honoring and inclusive of our diverse students and communities.

Respectfully,

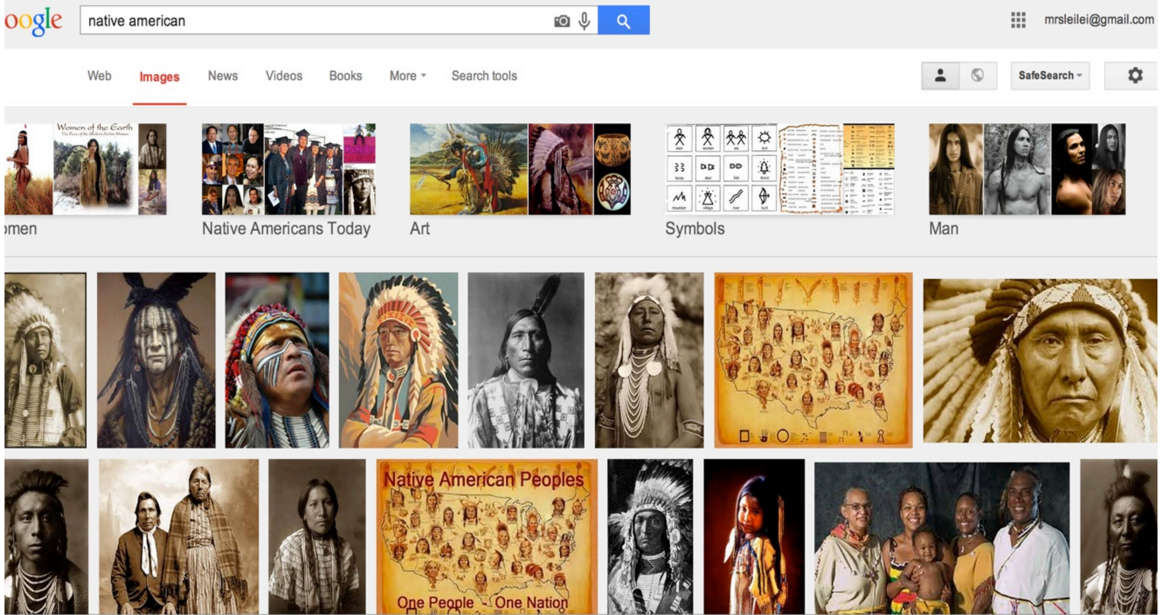
Rob S. Saxton
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

APPENDIX C

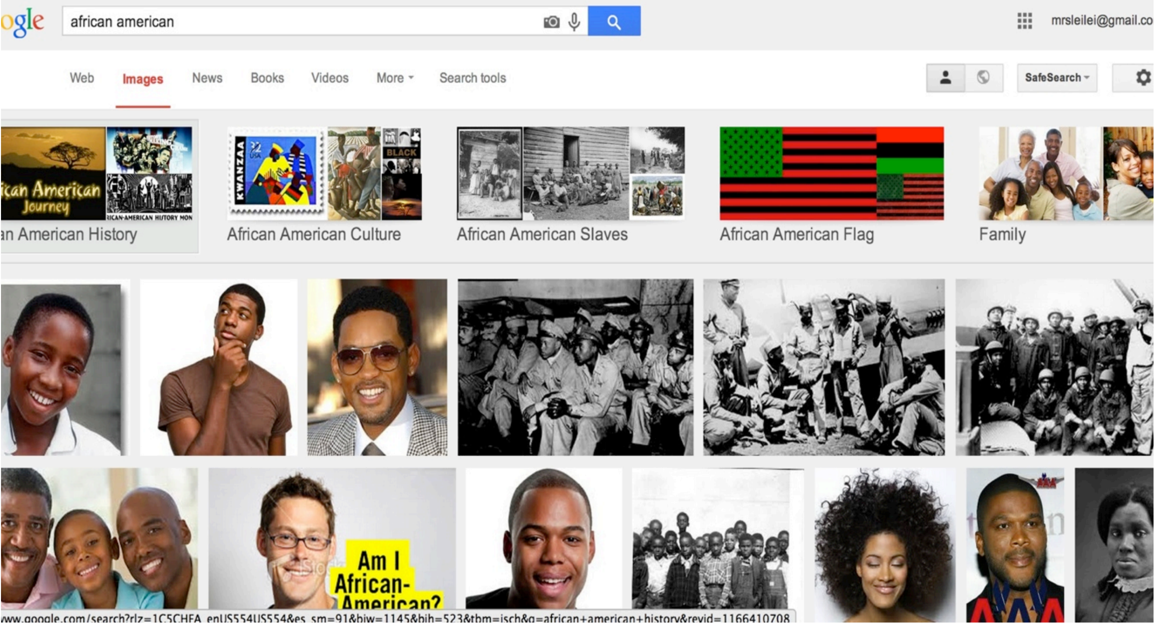
GOOGLE IMAGE SEARCH RESULTS

At the time of this Google Search, there were tabs that had common themes. Google seems to have removed this feature, though I have included a screen shot of these results after the story.

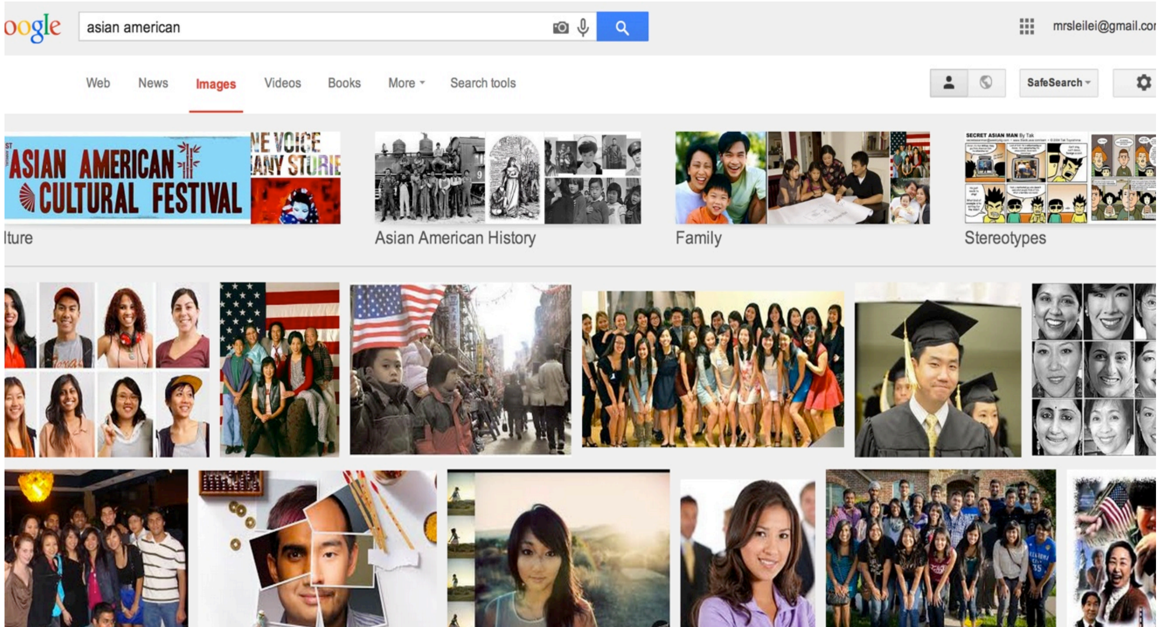
Google Search Results for "Native American"



Google Search Results for "African American"



Google Search Results for "Asian American"



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