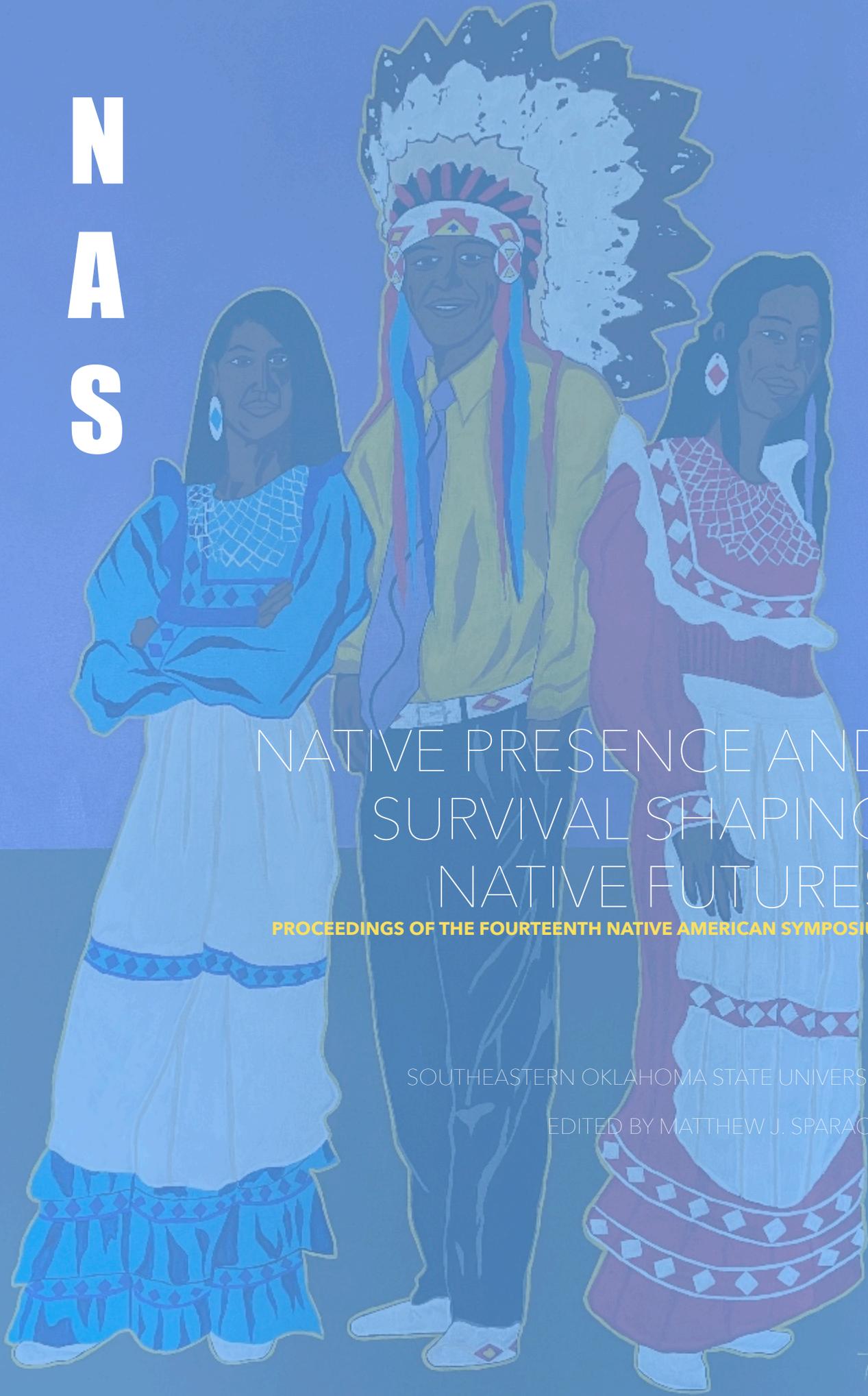




N
A
S



NATIVE PRESENCE AND
SURVIVAL SHAPING
NATIVE FUTURES

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTEENTH NATIVE AMERICAN SYMPOSIUM

SOUTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

EDITED BY MATTHEW J. SPARACIO

TSP/CONIE & NUMUNI
2021

Native Presence and Survival Shaping Native Futures

**Proceedings of the
Fourteenth Native American Symposium
November 12, 2021**

**Edited by
Matthew J. Sparacio**

Southeastern Oklahoma State University

2022

All rights reserved

Native American Symposium
Department of Social Sciences
Classroom Building 143
Southeastern Oklahoma State University
425 W University Blvd
Durant, Oklahoma 74701
msparacio@se.edu

ISBN # 979-8-9867594-0-1

The cover painting was graciously provided by 2022 Symposium Keynote Speaker Eric Tippeconnic (Comanche). The original was gifted to Southeastern and currently on display in the Semple Family Museum of Native American Art in Durant, Oklahoma.

Table of Contents

Introduction <i>Matthew J. Sparacio</i>	4
James Fenimore Cooper’s and George Catlin’s COVID-19 Crisis: The Cultural Impact of Smallpox on Native American Communities <i>Christopher Allan Black</i>	6
“How Do You Know?” <i>B. Steve Csaki</i>	14
In the Shadow of <i>McGirt</i> : Emerging Restorative Justice Opportunities in Oklahoma Tribal Criminal Justice Systems <i>Mike Davis</i>	21
Exploring and Addressing the Stressors and Related Academic Needs of Native College Students in a Time of Pandemic <i>Tara Hembrough and Misty Cavanaugh</i>	28
Mired in [Red]uctive Tropes: Stereotypes of Native Americans in Longmire <i>Jennifer McMahan</i>	50
A Comparative Analysis of Native and non-Native Counseling Trainees during COVID-19 <i>Lindsey Mixon, Amy Madewell, and Donna Wolfe</i>	57
Black Elk’s Life Speaks: “That Much... More” <i>Michael Taylor</i>	75
Decolonization and Early Childhood Education: Programs, Progress, and the Path Forward <i>Alycia West</i>	120
The Fight for Water is the Fight for Sovereignty <i>Robert Whitfield</i>	124

Introduction

Matthew J. Sparacio
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Held on November 12, 2021, the Fourteenth biennial Native American Symposium charted new territory and – we hope – an exciting new trajectory for what has become one of Southeastern Oklahoma State University’s most important institutions. In recognition of the challenges that emerged between 2019 and 2021, our program centered on the theme of “Native Presence and Survival Shaping Native Futures.” We asked speakers and attendees to help put the unique circumstances of the interim years in conversation with longer Native histories of what Anishinaabe theorist Gerald Vizenor refers to as survivance – the Native rejection of victimhood through active presence. Our program provided a forum for considering how recent events – including the fight against COVID-19 and the implications of the *McGirt* Supreme Court decision recognizing tribal sovereignty in Oklahoma – can help shape the future. How do tribal communities and Native-owned businesses continue to navigate both the economic slowdown and the virus? What will the “new normal” look like? We brought together speakers from seven different institutions of higher learning who shared how they believe the past and present will continue to shape Native futures while also considering what form these futures will take.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic forced the planning committee – a group that included myself, Lauren Garner, Patricia Hornback, Marlin Blankenship, Jennifer Kemp, Stephanie Luke, Sheridan Burns, and Rolando Diaz – to have frank conversations about what our ideal Native American Symposium would look like and how to amplify the message of our participants. The reality of COVID allowed us to work from a blank slate, and we used the planning period to completely reconsider the purpose and audience of our Symposium before putting this agenda into action.

Three decisions made the Fourteenth Symposium unique from its past iterations. For the first time, the Symposium was held entirely online. Hosted through the Whova

application, our online format made the Symposium more accessible than ever. Attendees and presenters from across North America – from the states of California to New Jersey – were able to listen to panels, ask questions through the chat function, and connect and network with each other outside of the scheduled sessions, building community through the Symposium on a scale that has not occurred with our traditional in-person meetings held previously on-campus in Durant.

In addition to embracing virtual sessions, as planners we intentionally decided to link the Symposium with Southeastern’s Native American Leadership (NAL) graduate program. We were thrilled that seven NAL students delivered presentations during the Symposium, speaking about a range of topics that included oral histories, matrilineality and treaty-making, Native designs, sovereignty, water rights, early childhood education, and the ongoing efforts to decolonize higher ed. Our virtual format allowed graduate students enrolled in the online NAL program an invaluable experience and opportunity to share their own research and engage with a wider public.

Last, we wanted to partner the Symposium with the recently opened Semple Family Museum of Native American Art by asking an established Native artist to deliver our keynote address. Eric Tippeconnic (Comanche) graciously agreed not only to deliver a powerful keynote address titled “Acknowledging Existence, Acknowledging Our History,” but also provided an original work of art for the Symposium. His work can be found on the cover of these Proceedings and can be viewed in person by visiting the Semple Museum in Durant. Currently a Professor of American Indian Studies at California State University San Marcos, Tippeconnic is the first Comanche to receive a doctorate in the field of History, which he completed at the University of New Mexico.

The papers that follow are intended as a small sampling of those delivered at the conference, and they include the work of established academics and aspiring graduate students. As usual, the entire contents of the proceedings will be available online at our symposium website (<https://www.se.edu/native-american/native-american-symposium/>), and through links in the catalog entry of *WorldCat*.

Both of the innovative changes to past Symposiums – an online format, and the elevation of NAL graduate work – were graciously received and wildly successful. These changes will likely be retained in the future, allowing the Symposium to continue to grow and reach wider audiences and include a variety of unique perspectives. As a reminder, it is never too early to think about the upcoming Fifteenth Native American Symposium. I invite anyone who might be interested in participating to submit a proposal or inquiry. As always, all topics relevant to any aspect of Native American studies are welcome.

In closing, I would once again like to thank these contributors and all the participants in the Fourteenth Native American Symposium for making it such a success. Special thanks are due again to Eric Tippeconnic for providing the keynote remarks and art, the members of the Native American Symposium Planning Committee mentioned above, as well as Southeastern’s Center for Instruction Development and Technology (CIDT) for help in monitoring the virtual platform.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I presented this paper from the city of Memphis, Tennessee built on the stolen land of the Chickasaw people who controlled Western Tennessee and North Mississippi from the 1600s through the 1820s when they were forcibly removed from their territory by Andrew Jackson.

James Fenimore Cooper’s and George Catlin’s COVID-19 Crisis: The Cultural Impact of Smallpox on Native American Communities

Christopher Allan Black
University of Memphis

In March 2020, as Washington State faced a major outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19), NBC News correspondent Erik Ortiz reported on an urgent request for Personal Protective Equipment and testing kits from state and federal health agencies made by a Native American community health center in the Seattle region. What tribal members of the Navajo and Pawnee nations in King County received in response to their request left the Native American community shocked. “My team turned ghost white, said Esther Lucero, Chief Executive Officer, of the Seattle Indian Health Board. We asked for tests, and they sent us a box of body bags” (Ortiz 1). The Indian Health Board’s center, which serves about 6,000 tribal members a year in Seattle and King County, still has the package filled with zippered white bags and beige tags that read “attach to toe” (Ortiz 1). Chief Lucero (Navajo) said the body bags were a mistaken—yet nonetheless macabre—delivery from a distributor “via the King County’s public Health department” (Ortiz 2). Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), Chief research officer with the Washington State Health Board, said that the message the shipment of body bags sends even unintentionally harms Native American communities across Indian Country suffering during the Pandemic. The State of Washington and the CDC have not provided adequate resources and funding for Native American communities to fight COVID 19. The shipment of body bags sends the message that Native Americans will die in high numbers from COVID 19 and that tribal communities and native cultures are not worth saving.

The policy of devaluing Native American life has been a persistent ideology in American biological relations with tribes since the first deadly pandemic outbreak in the New World: Smallpox. There is no historical evidence that suggests that Western Europeans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries intended to infect Indigenous peoples. Yet, Jeffrey Ostler (2019) and Barbara Alice Mann (2009) argue in their studies of Native American epidemics that settlers unwillingly introduced Smallpox into tribal communities and complacently allowed their demise. Virgin Soil epidemics such as Smallpox and Measles

introduced Indigenous peoples to foreign diseases which they had no immunity.¹ Jeffrey Ostler asserts, however, that Virgin Soil epidemics were not as common as we have previously believed. Ostler observes “Contact diseases were crippling not so much because Indigenous people lacked immunity, but because the conditions created by European and U.S. colonialism made Native communities vulnerable” (Ostler 4). While Virgin Soil epidemics did occur, Ostler argues that smallpox like our current COVID 19 pandemic created racial and cultural divisions in the Americas which caused more death than biological infection and contraction alone. The Western European belief in the racial superiority of Whites along with the introduction of alcohol caused Natives to become more susceptible to death from smallpox.

By the 1820s and 30s, frontier settlers informed by the seventeenth-century Calvinist Puritan belief that infectious diseases were a “tainted gift” from God meant to eradicate Indigenous peoples propagandistically employed Smallpox much like COVID 19 to argue that Native American life was not worth preserving and to justify genocide. As advocates for Native American cultural survival and equal rights, James Fenimore Cooper and George Catlin argue that Native Americans’ inability to survive recurring Smallpox Pandemics labeled them as an inferior race who was not entitled to cultural or biological survival. While the policy of Indian Removal attempted to preserve Native American life and culture, tribal people still live with the stigma that they are a race who is not entitled to biological survival.

The belief that Native Americans were an expendable people in biological decline can be traced back to the conflicts between Northeastern tribes and the British during the French and Indian War which inform Cooper’s portrayal of the Hurons and Mohicans in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) as unwilling victims of infectious disease. The successful sieges of the British installations at Fort William Henry (1757) and Fort Pitt (1763) were achieved at the expense of Native Americans who succumbed to Smallpox as a result of their exposure to infected blankets, corpses, and scalps. During the war that France and Britain waged from 1754-1763, British officers came to believe that “Indians who attacked their forts and settlements deserved to be exterminated” (Ostler 36). John Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary ministering to Christian Indians on the upper Susquehanna River, observed that frontiersmen adopted “the doctrine. . .that the Indians were the Canaanites, who by God’s commandment were to be destroyed” (Ostler 37). One way according to the British that the eradication of Natives could be achieved was through biological warfare. In July of 1763 as Colonel Henry Bouquet was preparing the force to relieve Fort Pitt, General Amherst proposed infecting the tribes with Smallpox diseased blankets. British militia leaders at Fort Pitt took it upon themselves to expose the Natives to infected smallpox blankets taken from the “fort’s smallpox hospital, touching off a massive and lethal epidemic that over the subsequent year ballooned north, south, and east of Ohio” (Mann 1). What is clear, according to Ostler and Mann, is that the British contemplated and committed an act of biological warfare that was intended to kill as many Indians as possible.

This attempt on the part of the British to wage biological warfare on Northeastern tribes caused the Hurons to align themselves with the French who they believed would allow them to hold onto their lands. However, while Magua and the Hurons were employed by Montcalm as proxy fighters, the French like the British came to view the Hurons as a savage warlike race that

¹ According to Jared Diamond’s study *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (2017) the theory of Virgin Soil Epidemics maintains that Native Americans were exposed to smallpox through contact with Western Europeans. Natives lack of immunity to these foreign diseases caused their demise. However, this theory does not account for social and cultural factors that contributed to Native Americans becoming more susceptible to infectious diseases.

they could exploit for their own benefit. What the Hurons did not account for was the extermination and dispossession that would result from the French exploitation of gift giving.² The road to successful Native American and French victory was, as Barbara Mann observes, strewn with Smallpox blankets and infected scalps. The gifting economy was deliberately used by both the French and the British to exploit and devalue Native American life.

Cooper portrays Magua and the Hurons in Chapter Seventeen of *Last of the Mohicans* as not an inherently savage and warlike people. Rather their perception as savage and biologically inferior develops as a result of their social contact with the French. Occurring in the middle of the historical romance concerning Native American Removal and extermination Cooper's retelling of the Siege of Fort William Henry as H. Daniel Peck argues "justifies the replacement [of Native Americans] by white European-Americans with their superior values" (Axelrad 34). Peck claims that for Cooper the savagery of the Native Americans in the seizure of the Fort makes them unsuitable and incompatible with the civilized culture of Western European society. As a result of their warlike behavior, Peck believes that Cooper appears to be making the case for Indian Removal as a means to purge civilized society of savage Native Americans. However, Chapter Seventeen of the novel actually demonstrates how cultural contact with the French contributes to the biological demise of the Hurons. I believe, as Allan M. Axelrad asserts that in his analysis of the actions of the Hurons and their French allies, that Cooper is actually "making a case for how cautious we need to be in our historical analysis and moral judgments" (34). On an initial examination, the French and Indian allies appear to be the savage aggressors taking revenge for the British annexation of their lands. Yet, I would argue that the savage behavior of the Natives toward their enemies is reinforced by the exploitation of the gifting practices of their seemingly savage allies.

The inability of Montcalm and the French to believe that their Huron allies can actually exhibit civilized behavior is what ultimately leads to the cultural and biological devaluation of Magua and his people in Chapter Seventeen. From the opening of Cooper's retelling of the siege of Fort William Henry and the subsequent massacre, the Hurons are upset at their French allies for not allowing them to take the scalps of their British enemies. Cooper writes:

What means this! Does not my son know, that the hatchet is buried between the English and his Canadian father? What can the Hurons do? Returned the savage, speaking also though imperfectly, in the French language. Not a warrior has a scalp and the pale faces make friends! (169).

As the Great Chief of the Hurons, Magua is upset at what he perceives to be a betrayal on the part of Montcalm. The Hurons have been promised the scalps of their enemies and they have been denied their desired trophies in battle. The French are attempting to play the English against their Huron allies, and as a result Magua and his people have no choice but to go to war against

² Jeffrey Ostler asserts that the Gift Exchange between the French and Northeastern Tribes contributed to the spread of the smallpox among the Hurons and other tribes because Natives who fought for the French during the French and Indian War carried the infection back to their communities when they returned home.

the English to gain their prized scalps and treasure. Therefore, the violence and savagery of the Hurons is exacerbated by the perceived gifting betrayal of Montcalm and the French.

Montcalm's denial of the scalps that the Hurons desire is a perfect example of the social exploitation of Magua and his people that leads to their biological demise. The inability of the French to enforce civilized morality on their Huron allies is what causes the tribe to violently lash out. The massacre of the Hurons is precipitated by the English colonists desperately clinging to frivolous possessions that the natives desire as treasure and compensation for their service to the French. The carnage begins when a Native proxy fighter is denied a shawl. The Native warrior "advanced to seize it, without the least hesitation. The woman, more in terror, than through love of the ornament, wrapped her child in the coveted article, and folded both more closely to her bosom" (175). The English colonists foolishly attempt to hold onto their material possessions which in turn only causes the Hurons to act more violently toward them in order to gain their desired plunder. The woman attempts to keep her infant safe by wrapping it in the shawl, but this only causes the infant to be murdered when it is seized by the "wild-eyed Huron" (175).

In their attempt to gain plunder from the British, the Hurons kill their enemies and their children. When the savage Huron realized that the colorful shawl had become a prize to another Native warrior his sullen smile changed to a ferocious gleam. The British mother mourning the death of her child and cursing the actions of the savage Huron called on God to curse the Native for his foul deed. In the eyes of the British, these violent immoral actions made them believe that the Hurons were a people without a moral conscience who deserved to be wiped from the land and exterminated by any means possible.

Exploiting the cultural practices of the Hurons and denying them their promised scalps and bounty, Montcalm and the French have caused the tribe to be perceived as immoral savages. Once the British Fort had been dismantled, the French were more than willing to let Magua and the Hurons have free reign to take out their aggressions on the British settlers. This unrestrained violence is ultimately what leads to the devaluing of Native American life in the aftermath of the Massacre. While Cooper does not include the actions of the Hurons following the British abandonment of the Fort, we do know that the Huron's desire for scalps and plunder led to their contracting Smallpox. David R. Starbuck maintains, "Some of the Indians even dug into the graves of the military cemetery that lay outside the fort's walls so they could scalp the dead and steal blankets and clothing" (2). Many of those British soldiers who lay in the cemetery had died from highly contagious diseases including smallpox which the Hurons contracted from taking the scalps. The British came to the conclusion that God had punished the Hurons for their violent actions. The subsequent spreading of the Smallpox furthered the belief that Native American life was not valuable and that the tribes of the Northeast were destined for extermination.

As a Jacksonian Democrat, Cooper viewed Indian Removal as a means to protect Native Americans from further extermination by infectious diseases. For Cooper, Removal represented a type of "Benevolent Colonization" which in theory would prevent the further extermination and oppression of Native Americans by white Western European settlers. Published in 1827 and set in 1804 one year after Thomas Jefferson's acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase, *The Prairie* advocates for the sovereign rights of Native Americans through the development of a separate tribal territory where Indigenous peoples can hunt freely and defend themselves against the social and biological corruption of settler colonialism. However, once the Great Plains were

opened to settlement, Western European frontiersmen swarmed into Indian Country devaluing Native American people who they believed were an obstacle to westward expansion.

Fugitive outlaws and settlers from Kentucky, the Bush family view themselves as members of the “Master Race” who are destined to conquer the frontier and subdue the Native inhabitants of the plains. For the Bush family, the Sioux tribe are a threat to their ability to establish civilization in the wilderness. They believe that they have been given the land by God to settle and it is their duty to eradicate the savages. As settlers driven by Manifest Destiny, the Bushes sought to enclose the land and establish farming. However, the Bush family’s desire to breed cattle and cultivate the land interferes with the nomadic hunting practices of the Sioux. In order to drive the Bush family and the settlers out of their territory, the Sioux chief takes Paul Hover and Ellen Wade hostage. Following Paul and Ellen’s abduction, the Sioux chief Mahtoree sneaks into the Bush camp at night and lets out their horses and pigs. This freeing of the Bush livestock limits their food supply threatening them with starvation.

In the aftermath of the raid on the Bush camp, the squatters come to the conclusion that Mahtoree and his people are the Canaanites who by God’s commandment are destined to be expelled from the land. The devaluing of Native American life in *The Prairie* coincides with the desire of the settlers to seize the lands of the Sioux and ultimately exterminate the tribe by restricting their ability to hunt for food and introducing infectious disease. According to Ishmael Bush, the Native Americans are a savage and lower form of life that does not deserve to exist. This social Darwinist attitude is apparent when the young men of the Bush clan go hunting and begin exhibiting signs of sickness. Examining Abner Bush, Dr. Battius observes, “Abner there are dangerous symptoms of somnolency about thee! You never made a greater mistake doctor, returned the youth gaping like an indolent lion; I haven’t a symptom as you call it, about any part of me, and as to father and the children, I reckon, the Smallpox and the Measles and have been thoroughly through the breed these many months ago” (Cooper 123). According to Abner, the white Squatters have a natural immunity to smallpox and therefore are entitled to survival. The Native Americans are naturally more susceptible to the disease, so it is their destiny to be wiped out. This belief in the biological inferiority of the tribes justifies the Bushes’ attempt to conquer the land and devalue Native life.

In 1832, at the height of Indian Removal, the United States Congress attempted to protect Native Americans from contracting smallpox on the western frontier by passing the Indian Vaccination Act. This legislation enabled the federal government to vaccinate roughly forty to fifty thousand American Indians (Pearson 9). Two years prior to the passage of the Vaccination Act, Indian agents had been authorized by acting Secretary of War Dr. L.G. Randolph to hire physicians on an ad hoc basis to vaccinate or treat American Indian communities across the Central Plains from 1831-832 (Pearson 10). According to J. Diane Pearson, these efforts were not sufficient to stop the spread of the disease. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Elbert Herring argued that the first epidemics of smallpox among the Chippewas resulted because of their political alliances with the French and the British at the end of the eighteenth century (Pearson 10). Resembling the tragic events that Cooper recounts at Fort William Henry and Fort Pitt in the mid-1700s, according to Herring the Chippewas “had brought the disease on themselves by drinking from a forbidden keg of liquor that had been wrapped in a flag poisoned with Smallpox material” (Pearson 10). As a result of the Chippewas victimization by the British and the French in the eighteenth century, Herring absolved the United States of any responsibility for the spread of Smallpox, placed the blame for the disease on the victims themselves, and put forth his

request for federal funding for Smallpox vaccinations. The vaccination bill was vigorously opposed by Southern politicians who objected to inoculating and protecting a people who in their view had abducted White settlers for two hundred years and continued to commit injury to citizens on the western frontier. While the Indian Vaccination Act did result in the tribes becoming inoculated against Smallpox, many Native Americans were distrustful of a vaccine offered to them by the federal government which they viewed like smallpox infected blankets as a tainted gift. Several tribes including the Mandans in North Dakota were excluded, and a few years later, ninety percent of their tribe was wiped out by a major smallpox outbreak.

While Native American Removal was supposed to protect tribes from the social corruption and racist devaluation of Indigenous peoples by Whites as settlers moved into the upper Midwest and Great Plains, Indians became more fearful of Smallpox and distrustful of federal government proscribed vaccines. Based in part on Cooper's time as a land speculator in Michigan in 1837 and published in 1848, *The Oak Openings* is the author's commentary on the westward expansion of New Yorkers into the Great Lakes region following the dispossession of the Potawatomie. Set in Michigan in July of 1812 on the wooded prairie known as Oak Openings, the novel examines the social, biological, and cultural impact of Western Expansion and settlement on the Michigan tribes. In Chapter Twenty-Two, the council of the Potawatomie meet to discuss how to deal with the further incursion of the Yankee settlers into their territory. Much like the Hurons in Chapter Seventeen of *Last of the Mohicans*, the tribe decides to side with the Canadians against the Americans. Cooper writes:

I do not think our Canada father is more our friend than the great Yankee Uncle Sam. It is true, he gives us more powder, and blankets, and tomahawks, and rifles than the Yankee, but it is to get us to fight his battles. We will fight his battle. They are our battles, too. For this reason, we will fight his enemies (699).

In the same manner as Magua and the Hurons, the Potawatomie attempt to pit the French Canadians against the Americans. Yet, they fear that their allies will betray them allowing them to be dispossessed from their lands and exterminated.

While the tribe has decided to align themselves with the Canadians against the Yankee traders and settlers, no amount of powder and weapons can protect them against further exposure to infectious diseases. The Potawatomie worry about their children's health and well-being because of continued exposure to Smallpox. The chief observes, "Smallpox, fire water, bad hunting, and frosts, keep us poor, and keep our children from growing as fast as the children of the pale faces" (Cooper 700). The Smallpox does not affect the Whites as severely as the Natives. As a result of the past history of infection and death, the tribe fears taking the scalp of the Beekeeper or medicine man as they refer to him. Cooper writes, "Until we know more, I do not wish to touch the scalp of that bee-hunter. It may do us great harm. I knew a medicine man of the pale-faces to lose his scalp, and smallpox took off half the band that made him prisoner and killed him" (Cooper 703). The Potawatomie have been exposed to diseased scalps and Smallpox blankets too many times, so they fear the reprisal of the Whites toward them. They fear that the Beekeeper will use his knowledge of science to bring disease and infection on the tribe.

While antebellum biological arguments about the susceptibility of Native Americans to smallpox had been used to portray Indians as a primitive form of life not worth preserving, in the removal period ethnographers sought to employ scientific study to argue for the humanity of Indigenous peoples. In 1830, George Catlin a portrait painter working in Washington DC and Philadelphia was hired to travel with General William Clark as he negotiated the Treaty of Prairie du Chien and to paint American Indians at Fort Leavenworth in Northern Kansas (Mielke 119). Catlin's objective was to "paint Indians still in a natural state" (Hight 119). The artist through collecting cultural artifacts and portraying Native cultural practices in his art hoped that his work would create a sense of sympathy for the suffering of the tribes. Laura Mielke asserts that "Catlin expressed his anger over the degradation of American Indians at the hands of fur companies and the U.S. government" (120). Catlin's Indian Gallery, a travelling exhibition and lecture series, attempted to convince the public that Native American life and culture needed to be preserved and to challenge the belief that Indians were racially inferior. However, the sentimental and sympathetic portrayals of American Indians in the gallery were used to argue that Removal was the only humane remedy to prevent immediate extinction of Native Americans.

In his memoirs, Catlin echoed the position of Andrew Jackson and Superintendent of Indian Affairs Thomas McKenney when he revealed that he went west with the assumption that Indians were doomed, and Removal was the only humanitarian course to follow temporarily preventing the inevitable extinction of the tribes (Hight 120). Catlin believed that Native Americans were destined to be exterminated and that there was nothing that could be done to save their lives. However, the ethnographer artist attempted to slow the demise of the Natives by portraying Indians as living monuments of a noble race. Catlin's attempt to promote sympathy for the tribes ultimately failed. In 1837 the Mandan tribe in North Dakota that Catlin had painted five years earlier in the Summer of 1832, while he was staying at Fort Union, were nearly wiped out as smallpox traveled up the Missouri River. Observing the mass genocidal death from their contact with infected trade goods, Catlin noted that the Mandans were resistant to take vaccine because they viewed the medicine of the Whites as another attempt to infect them.

In the middle of the COVID 19 pandemic of 2020 it is not surprising, based on the United States history of devaluing of Native American life. that tribal peoples would continue to be distrustful of the federal government's attempt to protect them from pandemics. The tainted gift of the body bags to the Navajo and Pawnee tribes in Washington state like the distribution of infected blankets to the Hurons represents the attempt to use smallpox infection to racially devalue Native life that we see reflected in the writings of James Fenimore Cooper and George Catlin. Nineteenth-century American frontiersmen believed that because Native American people were more susceptible to infectious diseases such as smallpox their lives were not worth saving. Cooper and Catlin encourage us to show sympathy toward Native American life. In the midst of the current COVID 19 Pandemic we must value tribal lives as much as we value the lives of Whites. The United States government and its citizens must not assume that Native Americans are destined for biological and cultural extermination as a result of their prior exposure to infectious diseases.

REFERENCES

- Axelrad, Allan M. "The Last of the Mohicans: Race Mixing and America's Destiny." *Leather Stocking Redux: Or, Old Tales, New Essays*. Edited by Jeffrey Walker. AMS Press, 2011, pp 33-57.
- Catlin, George. *North American Indians*. Penguin, 2004.
- Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Last of the Mohicans*. Edited by Richard Slotkin. Penguin, 1986.
- Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Oak Openings*. Project Gutenberg, 2003.
- Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Prairie*. Edited by Blake Nevius, Penguin, 1987.
- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, W.W. Norton, 2017.
- Hight, Kathryn S. "Doomed to Perish: George Catlin's Depictions of the Mandan." *Art Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2 Summer 1990, pp. 119-124.
- Mann, Barbara Alice. *The Tainted Gift: The Disease Method of Frontier Expansion*. Praeger, 2009.
- Mielke, Laura L. *Moving Encounters: Sympathy and the Indian Question in Antebellum Literature*. Massachusetts University Press, 2008.
- Ortiz, Erik. "Native American Health Center Asked for COVID 19 Supplies It Got Body Bags Instead." *NBC News* (May 5, 2020). Accessed from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/native-american-health-centerasked-covid-19-suppliesthey-got-n1200246>.
- Ostler, Jeffrey. "Disease Has Never Been Just Disease for Native Americans." *The Atlantic*. (April 29, 2020).
- Ostler, Jeffrey. *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*. Yale University Press, 2019.
- Pearson, J. Dianne. "Lewis Cass and the Politics of Disease: The Indian Vaccination Act of 1832." *Wicazo Sa Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2 Fall 2003, pp 9-35.
- Peebles, Robert Lawson. "The Lesson of the Massacre at Fort William Henry." *New Essays on The Last of the Mohicans*. Edited by H. Daniel Peck. Cambridge University Press, 1992. pp 115-139.
- Starbuck, David R. "Massacre at Fort William Henry." *Expedition Magazine* 50.1 (2008). Penn Museum, 2008. Web. Accessed from <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=9057>

How Do You Know?

B. Steve Csaki
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Native American philosophy, like many non-Western philosophical systems, does not offer a systematic or formalized epistemological theory. This is probably a good thing. At any rate, what knowledge is, how it is properly understood, how it is acquired and used, plays just as important and central a role in Native thought as it does in any other philosophy. Interestingly, I would argue that while there are multiple Western epistemological theories that exist today, none of them are widely accepted as the Truth, which is of course ironical, but at the same time this indicates that great effort has been made by Western philosophers to address these questions over several millennia. This effort has apparently resulted in failure. Yet, it is fairly clear to me that most Westerners today, particularly non-philosophers, accept the scientific method as being somehow, the ultimate purveyor of truth, regardless of whether or not they do so consciously. This makes the scientific method the de facto prominent epistemological theory in Western thought. In this paper, I shall present some of the philosophy of Viola Cordova, Vine Deloria, Donald L. Fixico, and Lee Hester and Jim Cheney, in order to offer an introductory explanation of how Native American epistemology differs from (as Cordova would say), its European or Euro-American counterpart and the significance, with emphasis on the value of, these differences.

Before I begin this comparative analysis, I should make a few comments as to why epistemology is so problematic and simultaneously so important, because these issues highlight some of the inherent confusion in Western philosophy. I argue that just because there may be too much confusion, that is not sufficient reason to give up. In fact, that is the reason to look beyond Western thought for help. If we start at the “beginning” of Western philosophy, two competing ideas emerge quickly. First, the Platonic notion that knowledge somehow exists as both an independent entity somewhere else, and in our minds at the same time. However, Plato asserts that this fact is hidden from us. His student Aristotle then argues that this is idea of an alternate reality where truth resides is a silly notion, and that knowledge must come to us through our

experience of the empirical world. In my view, Western philosophy continued to argue about this until Christianity emerged and found that the old Platonic dualist conception of reality meshed quite well with the idea of an independent, omnipotent God and a physical world of lesser value. The mind/soul is identified with God while the physical body is identified with the lesser physical world. Later Descartes drove this wedge deeper and more permanently into the collective Western psyche with his mind/body distinction.

There have been some Western philosophical schools that have sought to solve this problem, William James' notion of radical empiricism, non-religious existentialism, or Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy are some examples, but none have been widely accepted. In fact, most have been largely panned by mainstream philosophers as being not "real philosophy."

The question of how we know for Western thinkers cannot be divorced from these original competing ideas because they are part of us. The importance of the question of how we know cannot be overstated because it determines what we know, the limitations of our knowledge, and the relationship that we have with each other and the world. There are vestiges of embedded dualism everywhere we look when we try to understand Western epistemological theories. The analytic notion of "justified true belief" to explain what knowledge is, is just one example. A belief is internal, truth is somehow external (objective), and the process of justification is supposed to bring the two together somehow. Yet, as Lee Hester points out, belief plays too big a role in Western epistemology. He writes,

Indeed, in the Euro-American philosophical tradition, it is unclear how one would go about doing epistemology at all without belief. The nature of justification, defeasibility, facticity, truth and a multitude of other issues are up for grabs in epistemology, but there is one thing that is usually not questioned. Whatever knowledge may be, it would seem that it at least has to be a belief. (327)

I think Hester is telling us that belief steals the stage in Western epistemology. In my view, the requirement that belief be inextricably tied to knowledge is merely a reconfiguring, or re-presentation of that old dualist tradition in Western philosophy. It makes the discussion of knowledge too abstract, and as a result of that abstraction it is all the more confusing.

I argue that we should try to understand knowledge somewhat differently than Western philosophy traditionally has, in the sense of initially keeping the question as simple as possible. We might be able to do that by asking what we mean when we say that we know something and starting with the simplest things that we know. I know my name. In fact, it was probably one of the first words I came to recognize as I began to learn language. Then there were other words that served to identify things in the world. So maybe we can say that verbal knowledge begins with "simple" identification. However, Viola Cordova rightly points out that some critical learning occurs even before this identification process has been established and it is shaped by a modeled attitude towards the world.

In *How It Is*, Cordova offers an account of the different approach her daughter and her daughter's non-native friend take with respect to their infants' first outing together, a picnic.

Cordova's daughter just puts her baby on the ground, allowing it to explore and navigate the world in its own way. The non-Native mother, on the other hand, keeps her baby in the car seat until a blanket has been put down, and familiar toys have been put on the blanket. The non-Native child is then required to stay on the blanket, and when it strays from it, it is admonished. This child is told that the ground is "yucky," and "dirty." (Cordova 82) Cordova's daughter also takes her child around the area, naming the various trees and plants while allowing the child to feel and explore these things. As Cordova points out, the messages about a human's relation to the world could not be clearer, nor clearly any different. One message insists upon difference in kind (Cordova uses the term "alien"), and potential danger, while the other suggests that this world is a place to be explored and experienced, that it is home, that one belongs.

I find this illustration interesting and useful because, although Cordova's point in offering it is to explain why the boarding school attempts to destroy and "cleanse" Native ways of thinking from Native children failed, it also helps to explain the beginnings of Native epistemology. Cordova explains that the boarding school effort failed in its own project because at least some of these Native ways of thinking were already firmly rooted in children before they got to the boarding schools (at around age five). But her story also shows how the actual acquisition of language informs our understanding of the world, and hence provides a basis for knowledge. This process does not occur in a vacuum, rather it is guided by others. So, how the initial identification process that is the basis for subsequent understanding of the world occurs, not only defines the beginning of knowledge itself, but also the "attitude" of that knowledge.

What I have just called an attitude, according to several Native thinkers, ultimately becomes what can be understood as an ethical component that is built into what it means to "know." Western philosophy typically (Plato is a bit of an outlier here)¹ establishes a fairly hard distinction between ethics and epistemology. Knowing, and knowing what is right, or morally good, are more closely married in Native thought than they are in Western thought. In Western philosophy, epistemology is one area of study and ethics is another different area of study, even though the two are obviously, and necessarily connected. How can I know what the right thing to do is without knowing?

As Jim Cheney explains, "The notion of a living world is not part of a Native American world view—a truth claim—it is an everyday observation fitted into a ceremonial world in a way that enhances its epistemological effectiveness." Cordova seems to agree as she writes, "The idea, or definition, of the Earth as the producer of life and the conditions for life's existence lies in the realm of what is real to Native people." (193) In other words, for Native Americans, the fact that the world is living is just that, a fact. It is not an abstraction of reality that serves somehow to better explain reality. It is simply reality.

This is also why, as Hester explains, beliefs about the nature of reality do not supplant personal experience. According to Hester, Native Americans do not see truth as a correspondence theory where beliefs correspond to realities in the world. He uses the metaphor of a "map of the territory" to explain the difference between Native notions of truth and Western philosophical notions of it. The Western notion has a map that, if accurate, is like a high-resolution image of the territory. The images on the map correspond to the reality of the territory.

¹ Plato's ethical "theory" relies on true understanding. If one truly understands what is right and what is wrong, then one must choose the morally correct action. It would be irrational to knowingly choose the wrong act, ironically proving that the actor does not actually possess true knowledge.

“The most extreme version of this is that we can have a completely clear and correct map, a one-to-one correspondence between the map and the territory. Or to put it in the vernacular, we can have the ‘Truth’. This was clearly the project of the Enlightenment. Even though modern thought has cast doubt on this, the West still clings to it.” (329)

Think about zooming down on a Google map and looking at the close-up satellite view of a place you have never been. You can know something from that exercise, but the question is, is *that* knowledge of that place as “good as” knowledge gained from living there for decades? My answer is no, it certainly is not.

Of course, no such knowledge map exists beyond the metaphor. Yet Western thinkers *act* as if one does, or at the very least theoretically does. Hester says that if we (in my view generously) accept this metaphor as a reasonable accounting of what truth is, then “[he] would characterize the attitude of Native Americans as one of agnosticism concerning the relationship between their map and the territory.” (329) He goes on to explain the epistemological value in agnosticism of this type, but I would choose to stress the important point that Native American thought is agnostic with respect to this map precisely because it does not embrace the abstraction of knowledge that this kind of metaphor presents.

The general Western position is that if knowledge is, or can be accurately abstracted from experience, then it theoretically should be universally applicable in all like conditions. Based on the idea that storytelling, or the oral tradition, is both a standard and traditional way that knowledge is shared and conveyed in Native American thought, this Western epistemic notion is too restrictive on the one hand, and too prone to error on the other. Stories are interpreted each time that they are told, both by the teller and the listeners. It doesn’t matter how many times the “same” story might be told. This means that the truth conveyed by these stories is not fixed, nor permanent. It is potentially expansive and almost certainly variable. An individual must consider herself, the situation, the place, and various other aspects of the story and her relation to it, in order to gain knowledge from it. It is possible that the story can convey profound knowledge to one listener while simultaneously offering nothing to a different listener during the same telling.

Native thinkers typically stress that the kind of knowledge gained from storytelling, and the type of knowledge that takes precedence in Native thought is what might be called active knowledge. This is to say it is experiential in the sense of understanding how to do something, how to properly interact with the world and accomplish that which needs to be done. The story also indicates the right way, or the wrong way to go about doing it. This type of knowledge has often been referred to by Western thinkers as “practical” knowledge. Ironically, most Western philosophers have relegated this form of knowledge to a lower tier, with theoretical knowledge the higher goal. This is in part because knowledge of how to best get by in the world is, in fact, variable. It is subject to change precisely because the world is constantly changing. The interpretation of storytelling mirrors that changeable nature of the world, so the truth one takes away from the story isn’t always the same truth. The West has typically frowned upon this kind of knowledge.

By contrast, Western philosophical truth, once established, is typically not open to reinterpretation. It is permanent and everlasting. Even though the scientific method is founded upon the very methodology of an idea of truth that must be constantly reaffirmed, Western philosophers typically reject that notion of truth. This is partly because most Western

philosophers do not consider the scientific method to be an acceptable epistemic theory, probably because it is considered a methodology rather than a static theory.

Perhaps this is quite telling with respect to the nature of truth and the Native American attitude towards it. If truth isn't fixed, if it is actually dynamic, then story telling may be more helpful in understanding the world than a fixed dogma about the Truth. My colleagues in the English Department are probably wondering why this is even a question for philosophers. At any rate, it seems safe to say that story telling is connected to epistemology in important ways in Native thought.

Stories also can help us understand, or at least point to another aspect of Native thought that is critically important when trying to understand what knowledge is. Stories have settings. Native thinkers seem to generally agree that *place* is absolutely critical to understanding how Native Americans view knowledge. Cordova expresses this as something that is accepted by so many North American Native American communities that might be considered "pan-Indian." (193) She writes,

Native existence for thousands of years depended on knowing common practices that allowed groups to survive in specific areas within the boundaries of resource availability...The truth of the matter is that all indigenous people have a very strong sense of identity and that identity includes a sense of belonging in a very specific space. They had, and do have, a very strong sense of bounded space. "I." in the sense of myself as a specific kind of person, do not extend beyond certain boundaries. (193)

So, if we go back to my suggested starting point for how we might start to define knowledge, I said that I know my name. Cordova's assertion would seem to suggest that for a Native person, knowing their place would be just as fundamental, and critically important as knowing their name. Knowing place in the Native sense is challenging and complex, but it is also a practical necessity. This aspect of place in epistemological discussion is not present in Western thought, outside of some existential schools and early American pragmatic philosophy, and even in those it does not approach the importance that it has in Native thought. To speak of knowledge in a way that does not include place in some way, is probably not to speak of knowledge for a Native thinker.

If we take the aspects of Native knowledge that we have identified as central, or important thus far; that knowledge is not abstract, that it is ethical, that it is often conveyed through storytelling, and that place is an integral part of any knowledge, those should point us in the direction of one more critical feature of a Native epistemology. It is relational in both the broadest, and narrowest sense of the word.

This Native American attitude towards reality is not unlike the Buddhist notion of codependent origination or interdependence. This is a doctrine that sees all things defined in relation to other things. This Buddhist worldview holds that there is no such thing as an independent entity. Donald L. Fixico explains the American Indian view in this way.

It is a perspective that involves human beings, animals, plants, the natural environment, and the metaphysical world of visions and dreams. This broader context of perception involves more accountability and responsibility on the part of native people for taking care of and respecting their relationships with all things...This system of relations set the kinship of community for all beings, and with other peoples or tribes. (2)

The term kinship is critical here. This is a relationship of family, not in the metaphorical sense but in the literal sense. The Native American view is that we (all things on the earth) are all related to one another. This way of understanding reality makes the notion of seeing any being as the “other” virtually impossible to hold. This ethical dimension of knowledge is an incredibly desirable aspect to have in an epistemology.

I think that this way of understanding the world is at least part of the reason that Native Americans have been able to persevere the unbelievable hardships that they have been subject to over the last several hundred years and still retain their identities. Further, I think that the fact that Native knowledge is so intricately connected to location or place – a particular place, here, on earth, may also offer some insight as to how those historical hardships as well as contemporary ones, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, are endured.

Finally, I think that all these aspects of Native American epistemology help explain how and why tribes, such as the Chickasaw Nation and the Choctaw Nation, have played, and continue to play a significant role in battling COVID-19, not just for their own tribal members and employees, but also for the general public in Oklahoma and elsewhere. I’ll just mention two things that both of these Nations have done during the pandemic. First, testing was made available, second vaccination was offered to the general public, both at no charge. An epistemology that espouses an inclusive view of community is clearly one that allows Native Americans to reach out and help anyone and anything in the world. That is a pretty good way to know.

REFERENCES

- Cordova, V. F. *How It Is, The Native American Philosophy of V. F. Cordova*. Edited by Kathleen Dean Moore, Kurt Peters, Ted Jojola, and Amber Lacy. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007.
- Deloria, Vine Jr. *God is Red, A Native View of Religion*. 2nd Ed. North American Press, 1992.
- Deloria, Vine Jr. *Red Earth, White Lies, Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact*. Fulcrum Publishing, 1997.
- Fixico, Donald, L. *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Hester, Lee & Jim Cheney (2001) "Truth and Native American Epistemology," *Social Epistemology*, 15: 4, 319-334, DOI: 10.1080/02691720110093333.
- Waters, Anne, Editor. *American Indian Thought*. London: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

In the Shadow of *McGirt*: Emerging Restorative Justice Opportunities in Oklahoma Tribal Criminal Justice Systems

Michael J. Davis
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

On July 9, 2020 the United States Supreme Court ruled in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* (140 S. Ct. 2452) that for purposes of the Major Crimes Act [8 U.S.C. 1153(a)], the U.S. Congress never disestablished the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's reservation in the State of Oklahoma. The logic inherent to the case cross-applied to similarly situated tribes across the eastern portion of the State of Oklahoma. The ruling effectively restored, within the domain of criminal law, broader Tribal sovereignty within reservation jurisdiction called "Indian Country" that had lain dormant since Oklahoma statehood in 1907 (Blackhawk, 2021). With this renewal of expanded criminal jurisdiction, several Tribes now have a broader ability to envision their own future for the adjudication and sentencing of crimes committed by Indians within reservation territory, whether such crimes were purportedly against Indians or non-Indians (Womack, Creel, et al., 2021). Additionally, these tribes continue to exercise jurisdiction over many reservation-located crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, and protective order violations, regardless of defendant Indian or non-Indian status (Larkin & Lupino-Esposito, 2012). Finally, a separate law, the Tribal Law and Order Act (25 U.S.C. § 1302) paternalistically restricts Tribal court sentencing to a maximum of three years of incarceration or a \$15,000 fine per crime, or a maximum of nine years' incarceration for a series of crimes in the same stream of misconduct.

Based on the confluence of the *McGirt* ruling, and its resulting modification of criminal justice practices in eastern Oklahoma, there are now greater opportunities for Tribes to implement restorative justice practices within their respective adjudicative systems. Native American culture and tradition has long been supportive of the implementation of dispensing with purely retributive or punitive judicial motives, in favor of the implementation and further development of restorative principles with greater interpersonal and community-wide healing capacities than much of the traditional American judicial system currently embraces. This paper explores the realistic possibility of more widely utilizing and formalizing the use of traditionally Native restorative concepts such as the Chickasaw Nation's "Peacemaking Court," and other restorative practices

such as expansion of drug-court programs, implementation of alternatives to incarceration, and restorative conferencing for misdemeanor or victimless crimes.

UPTAKE OF THE SUPREME COURT HOLDING

In reversing the conventional legal wisdom that has prevailed since 1907, the year of Oklahoma's statehood, Justice Gorsuch utilized language that chastised the concept of maintaining legal fictions merely out of concern for ease and comfort of governments. Since the passage of the Oklahoma Enabling Act (43 U.S.C. 22 § 944) in 1906, the prevailing sentiment within the legal community had been that the U.S. Congress had disestablished existing reservations and tribal authorities stemming from Indian Country status by implication (Miller & Dolan, 2020). The terse, vibrant, language is worthy of extended quotation:

“...Congress has never withdrawn the promised reservation. As a result, many of the arguments before us today follow a sadly familiar pattern. Yes, promises were made, but the price of keeping them has become too great, so now we should just cast a blind eye. We reject that thinking. If Congress wishes to withdraw its promises, it must say so. Unlawful acts, performed long enough and with sufficient vigor, are never enough to amend the law. To hold otherwise would be to elevate the most brazen and longstanding injustices over the law, both rewarding wrong and failing those in the right.”

The immediate effect of this holding, restoring much of the eastern portion of the State of Oklahoma to its previous legal status as “Indian Country,” was to invalidate the concept of Oklahoma criminal prosecutions of CDIB (Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood) Card holders who commit crimes or allegedly commit crimes on reservation land, since Federal law provides that such prosecutions can only be valid against non-Indian defendants (see **Figure 1** on the following page). Interestingly, the more recent case of *State Ex Rel Matloff v. Wallace* (2021), which was appealed to the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, has made clear that while prior convictions for which appeals have terminated may stand as decided, while pending cases or cases with active appeals are mitigated by the *McGirt* holding. This means the post-*McGirt* world likely requires tricky determinations by Federal and tribal prosecutors about whether to re-prosecute more than 300 cases with CDIB-Card holding defendants, but tamps down speculation about the potential overturning of all prior Oklahoma prosecutions.

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Victim</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>		
		<u>Major Crimes</u>	<u>Felony</u>	<u>Misdemeanor</u>
Indian	Indian	Federal or Tribal	Federal or Tribal	Tribal
Indian	Non-Indian	Federal or Tribal	Federal or Tribal	Tribal
Non-Indian	Non-Indian	State	State	State
Non-Indian	Indian	Federal	Federal – or – Tribal w/ Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction	Federal (Tribal Citation) – or – Tribal w/ Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction
Indian	Victimless	N/A	Tribal	Tribal
Non-Indian	Victimless	N/A	State	State

Figure 1 - Indian Country Jurisdictional Chart

THE PROBLEM OF SENTENCING LIMITATIONS

Under the Major Crimes Act (18 U.S.C. § 1153) tribes in Indian Country could only sentence those found guilty, even of crimes like rape or homicide, up to one year in prison per offense. This sentencing power was later increased to three years of prison per offense with a maximum of nine by the Tribal Law and Order Act. The rationale for the limitation is a mixture of Federal paternalism and distrust of tribes as well as an assumption that Tribes would be generally handling misdemeanors, and that the Federal government would be prosecuting the so-called “major crimes” defined by the Act, which are mostly felonies. However, in reality Federal prosecutors have been markedly hesitant to prosecute crimes that take place in Indian Country, even when they have been properly referred to Federal authorities by Tribal police.

Preferring to prosecute traditional Federal crimes instead of crimes that have traditionally been left to state or tribal jurisdiction, Federal authorities have declined to prosecute approximately 26% of referred Indian Country cases, including approximately 65% of Indian Country rapes and other sex crimes (Owens, 2012). These declinations of Federal prosecutorial authority with greater sentencing power leave a significant number of major crimes to tribal courts with their Federally limited sentencing power, leading to eerie and disproportionate outcomes. [**Content Warning: sexual assault**] An example of this occurred in stark relief when in 2003 a Colville Indian named Ronnie Tom was arrested for attempted rape of a 12-year-old girl, and rape of a 7-year-old girl. Federal authorities with jurisdiction declined to prosecute, leaving the Colville Tribe in Washington State to prosecute him themselves, but only able to extract a sentence of two years – the maximum under the Major Crimes Act at the time with one-year sentence for each crime (Owens, 2012). Compare this outcome to other individuals who committed rapes of children around the same time period in the United States, with one receiving a 25 to 30-year sentence, and another receiving a 20-year sentence (Owens, 2012).

A BURDEN AND AN OPPORTUNITY

The confluence of limited carceral sentencing power, and the *McGirt*-related expansion of tribal prosecutorial jurisdiction, is both a burden and an opportunity for tribes to assert their criminal justice authority in a manner that differs from the pervasive retributive and punitive primacy that exists elsewhere in American jurisprudence. The main burden is that tribal sovereignty is limited – in practical terms dependent on the mercies of Federal power (Kalt & Singer, 2004). The reality is that American Native tribes have not been decolonized, and while the term “sovereignty” is frequently used in relation to the 547 Federally recognized tribes, it has never been meant to represent plenary power in the same sense as an independent nation (Ford, 2010).

This means that tribal nations will continue to be limited in what authorities they may exercise, even in terms of writing their own criminal laws, and the methods by which they enforce those laws in their own court systems (Wirth & Wickstrom, 2002). An explicit example of this, beyond sentencing limitations, is the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (42 U.S.C. § 14043) which is the only current law, referred to as special jurisdiction, permitting tribes to prosecute non-Indian individuals for certain gender-based crimes committed on tribal land, but with the caveat that the due-process provided to the defendant follow all precedent of U.S. public law (Castillo, 2014).

The opportunity is that Oklahoma tribes can wield their reduced carceral sentencing power and limited criminal jurisdiction as an affirmative force in reshaping jurisprudential strategies and the public understanding of what constitutes justice. Unlike many tribal reservations across the United States, the Indian Country of Oklahoma is highly populated by both CDIB-Card holding individuals as well as non-Native individuals in a shared space. In the post-*McGirt* era, reservations now cover the majority of the territory of eastern Oklahoma, and they encompass much of the City of Tulsa, and other sizable municipalities such as Muskogee, Talequah, McAlester, Ada, Ardmore, and Durant. For non-Tribal offenders, the state prosecutors will continue to be permitted to exercise prosecutorial discretion the same as they have since 1907.

For Tribal offenders committing major crimes in eastern Oklahoma, the Federal government has already shown deliberate signs of increased likelihood of exercising their prosecutorial powers, including the addition of additional staff to the Western District of Oklahoma U.S. Attorney’s office and the Federal District Court of the Western District of Oklahoma (Orr & Orr, 2021). For the misdemeanors and property crimes, and perhaps a limited number of felonies that remain, tribes will largely have a caseload full of the ripest fruit for application of restorative justice processes, non-punitive resolution systems, and developmental sentencing. Indeed, a focus on restorative justice has been a primary demarcation between indigenous and Anglo-European criminal justice practices over the course of history (Hand, Hanks, et al., 2012). To the extent that critics of such processes raise may express protest, tribes can rightfully respond that the traditional retributive and punitive pathways that the non-Native Oklahoma population largely prefer have been taken off the table not by the tribes, but by the Federal government itself in a notorious display of paternalism and distrust (Gibbs, 2009).

In fact, tribal criminal justice systems across the United States have been embedding restorative sentencing laws and non-adversarial procedures into their adjudicative systems for centuries, with more recent flourishing of such systems having been incentivized by carceral sentencing restrictions (Clarren, 2017). Many such systems, including the traditional peacekeeping or peacemaking circles that utilize restorative conferencing between the offender, victim, and the

community, explicitly implement tribal religious and ceremonial rites and traditional methods of healing societal rifts caused by crime (Bender & Armour, 2007).

Peacemaking courts are focused on conflict resolution, and are used by some tribes even in cases of minor violence, and not just property crimes. The central feature of these courts is that they are typically a consent based diversionary opportunity from a more traditional adversarial court system for the purpose of mediating an outcome with the input of offenders, victims, and community members, as opposed to the strict parameters of criminal sentencing in a more formal legal setting (Nielsen & Silverman, 2009). Though still referred to as courts, the setting of peacemaking is often more informal involving a literal circle of participants including tribal elders or “peacemakers” that have been appointed for this function by a tribal District Judge or tribal Council.

In this less adversarial setting, victims are empowered to describe the harms they have encountered as a result of the offender’s misconduct and what steps would be necessary to meet their specific post-crime needs, and what would be necessary for them to feel safe once again (Cook-Lynn, 2005). Offenders are empowered to speak to the motivations of their offense and to identify criminogenic factors in their lives that may need repair within the community. Common factors involve alcohol and other drugs, economic insecurity, and a history of childhood abuse or neglect (Butterwick, Connors et al., 2015). Finally, prominent community members, often including spiritual leaders, educators, and tribal elders, are included in the process in order to wrap victims and offenders with the services they need to heal from the past and build a more stable and safe future. The most important aspect of peacemaking is that a written agreement is reached to conclude the proceedings, which may last mere hours, or even a number of days (Meyer, 2009).

The written agreement may include specific stipulations or expectations for the offender to directly repair the harm they have caused, either through monetary compensation or other labor for the victim. The written agreement often involves an admission of complicity and contrition, and verbalizes a willingness to accept counseling or treatment (Nielsen & Zion, 2005). If the offender needs assistance in making those promises a reality, for example in need of employment, the members of the community or family members in the peacemaking circle serve a part of that role, agreeing to connect the offender to the opportunities needed to make good on their own restorative promises. In most systems, a failure to meet peacemaking commitments in good faith requires a reversion to more typically punitive outcomes (Nielsen & Zion, 2005).

The mediators of this process, called peacemakers, are authorized to utilize religious teachings, tribal customs, and more traditional nurturing and persuasion strategies to move the participants toward a workable, holistic, and healing agreement. Often, peacemakers are not permitted to be attorneys or judges, and the parties are not permitted to bring legal counsel with them to peacemaking court. Emphasis is placed on treating the causes of criminogenic problems rather than merely the symptoms. If a crime resulted from lack of adequate mental health treatment, a balanced approach to peacemaking would certainly include such treatments as part of a plan of restoration (Meyer, 2009). If a youthful offender has been poorly socialized and needs more social control, their inclusion in more structured organizations, education systems, and even spiritual mentorship, would be a common type of restorative response. The upshot of this approach, backed up by quantitative research, is a statistically significant reduction in recidivism by offenders, as well as increased reports of post-adjudication satisfaction by victims when compared to traditional retributive or punitive responses (Clarren, 2017; Wilson, Olaghere, et al., 2017; King, 2008).

REFERENCES

- Bender, K., & Armour, M. (2007). "The spiritual components of restorative justice." *Victims & Offenders*, 2(3), 251–267.
- Blackhawk, M. (2021). "On power and the law: *McGirt v. Oklahoma*." *The Supreme Court Review*, 2020(1), 367–421. <https://doi.org/10.1086/715493>
- Butterwick, S. J., Connors, H. T. P., & Howard, K. M. (2015). "Tribal court peacemaking." *Michigan Bar Journal*.
- Castillo, C. (2014). "Tribal courts, non-Indians, and the right to an impartial jury after the 2013 reauthorization of VAWA." *American Indian Law Review*, 39(1), 311–336.
- Clarren, R. (2017). "Righting the scales: one Native American tribal court is showing how restorative methods of justice can succeed where punitive measures have failed." *Nation*, 305(16), 22–22.
- Cook-Lynn, E. (2005). *Justice as healing: indigenous ways*. Living Justice Press.
- Ford, A. R. (2010). "The myth of tribal sovereignty: an analysis of Native American tribal status in the United States." *International Community Law Review*, 12(4), 397–411. <https://doi.org/10.1163/187197310X527775>
- Gibbs, M. (2009). "Using restorative justice to resolve historical injustices of indigenous peoples." *Contemporary Justice Review*, 12(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580802681725>
- Hand, C. A., Hankes, J., & House, T. (2012). "Restorative justice: the indigenous justice system." *Contemporary Justice Review*, 15(4), 449–467. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2012.734576>
- Kalt, J. & Singer, J. (2004). "Myths and realities of tribal sovereignty: The law and economics of Indian self-rule." *SSRN Electronic Journal*. 10.2139/ssrn.529084.
- King, M. S. (2008). "Restorative justice, therapeutic jurisprudence and the rise of emotionally intelligent justice". *Melbourne University Law Review*, 32(3), 1096–1126.
- Larkin, P. & Lupino-Esposito, J. (2012). "The violence against women act, federal criminal jurisdiction, and Indian tribal courts." *Brigham Young University Journal of Public Law*, 27(1), 300–322.
- Meyer, J. A. (2009). "Tribal peacemaking as an alternative to modern courts." *Criminal Justice in Native America*, 17(2), 221–243.
- Nielsen, M. O., & Silverman, R. A. (2009). *Criminal justice in Native America*. University of Arizona Press.
- Nielsen, M. O., & Zion, J. W. (Eds.). (2005). *Navajo Nation Peacemaking: Living Traditional Justice*. University of Arizona Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1jf2d4s>
- Orr, R., & Orr, Y. (2021). "Victory for all, administration for some: an examination of differences in the impact of indigenous jurisdictional expansion in Oklahoma." *Policy Design and Practice*, 4(3), 426–440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2021.1921913>

- Owens, J. (2012). ““Historic” in a bad way: how the Tribal Law and Order Act continues the American tradition of providing inadequate protection to American Indian and Alaska native rape victims.” *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 2(49), 497-540.
<https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/vol102/iss2/6>
- Miller, R. J., & Dolan, T. (2020). “The Indian law bombshell: *McGirt v. Oklahoma*.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, (2020). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3670425>
- Wirth, R., & Wickstrom, S. (2002). “Competing views: Indian nations and sovereignty in the intergovernmental system of the United States.” *American Indian Quarterly*, 26(4), 509–525.
- Wilson, D. B., Olaghere, A. & Kimbrell, C. S. (2017). “Effectiveness of restorative justice principles in juvenile justice: A meta-analysis.” *U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*. NCJ 250995.
- Womack, C., Creel, B., Deer, S., & Adams, A. (2021). “*McGirt v. Oklahoma*: implications of the 2020 Supreme Court decision for Native America.” *Southern Spaces*, 20(2), 210-218.
<https://doi.org/10.18737/W19284.2021>

Exploring and Addressing the Stressors and Related Academic Needs of Native College Students in a Time of Pandemic

Tara Hembrough and Misty R. Cavanaugh
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

EXPLORING AND ADDRESSING THE STRESSORS AND RELATED ACADEMIC NEEDS OF NATIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

For many college students nationwide, the COVID-19 pandemic created a rupture in their academic plans and progress, and affected their jobs, families, and personal lives. Despite differences, students everywhere had to adjust to what everyone was calling “the new normal.” The pandemic interrupted life as most students knew it and, for some, such as tribal students enrolled at our regional, public university in rural Oklahoma, it caused increased stress levels in almost every aspect of students’ existence. During the pandemic, it has been noted that various risk factors associated with Native Americans, including tribal students, made them particularly susceptible as a group to the COVID-19 virus and its resulting devastation as affecting multiple interlocking educational, economic, familial, and healthcare systems. Additionally, for Native peoples, within the pandemic’s timeframe, as many as 16% of homes in tribal locations were multigenerational and considered crowded (First Nations, 2021), a setting common for many Native students in our area as well. Indeed, according to First Nations (2021), living in close quarters made it difficult for some tribal college students to socially distance to protect themselves and their family, as well as complicating their attempts to study for their courses.

Also relevant to discussions of the pandemic and many tribal students’ cultural practices, at our location, some Native students’ tendency to be socially, rather than individualistically, oriented impacted their academic outcomes (see Hembrough & Dunn, 2019), as a number of tribal students were more concerned with maintaining family and community relations than with concentrating on their education during this period. In our area, as well as elsewhere during the pandemic, another problem interfering with some Native college students’ education was the need for them to locate new employment when on-campus jobs were lost (see Blackburn, 2020). Likewise, when many campuses transitioned to online learning, as did ours initially, a greater number of students were unable to attend to courses remotely due to a lack of computer access, with some students forced to share devices with others or not having a high-speed internet connection (see First Nations, 2021; also, see Hembrough et

al., 2018, for a previous discussion of students in this area).

Even when there were no impediments to online learning during the pandemic for tribal college students, many experienced a reduction in their sense of well-being due to concerns about the virus and its possible impacts on them (Zingg, 2020). In some cases, as in ours, students faced obstacles related to transportation and finances that prevented them from seeking medical attention when they suspected they had been exposed to the virus. Compounding such problems, in Oklahoma, public safety guidelines were not established in a timely manner, and, also, in some areas, including ours, testing for COVID-19 was not readily available (see Hilleary, 2020).

Indeed, in our area, the population often had to travel to different counties or even go across state lines to Texas to seek assistance. Furthermore, as another conflict, many Native Americans, including some students located at our institution, remained hesitant to trust a government-supported vaccine because they believed that the vaccine could be an attempt to eradicate them as a group since, in the past, many tribes, including those in our area, were exposed by Caucasian settlers to diseases such as the measles, smallpox, and Spanish flu (see Rodriguez, 2021). Likewise reinforcing a Native distrust of government-sponsored healthcare in locations such as ours and elsewhere, it should be noted that, historically, Native Americans were subjected to unethical medical treatments and testing, as well as forced assimilation that compelled them to attend boarding schools and restricted them from speaking their own language (see Healy, 2021).

Given the scenario described, one concerning the onset and continued presence of the COVID-19 virus in our area as a context predicating the greater need for teachers and students to either consider or implement online learning as a more intensively utilized, course-design format, for the present study, we desired to explore how the pandemic has affected our institution's Native American students and their learning. Specifically, we wished to investigate the nature of students' potential stressors and related needs, especially as impacting the classroom. Correspondingly, we surveyed 114 tribal students in order to discover their potential stressors, if any, before the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as during it, to determine how such stressors might have affected their relationships with teachers and peers and their classroom experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

NAVIGATING THE UNIVERSITY, INCLUDING ONLINE LEARNING

As the COVID-19 pandemic caused many college campuses to shift from in-person to remote learning, the associated students were required to participate in online course designs although they may have disliked the format, as did some at our institution. Of particular importance to some students, depending on their preferences and the context, were the phenomena that online coursework might hamper or restrict them in their opportunities to discuss their backgrounds and otherwise engage with teachers and classmates (Rohman et al., 2020), negative outcomes that some tribal students in our area enrolled in online coursework had experienced similarly in a study conducted a few years prior (see Hembrough et al., 2018).¹ Indeed, during the pandemic, the transition to online learning may have been especially difficult for some tribal students who have encountered more overall impediments to attending colleges and universities, such as ours, regardless, including acclimating to an academic

¹ On the other hand, as one source on this topic, Ware (2004) argues that if the appropriate technology is used, online classes can provide students with the opportunities to effectively interact; collaborate on assignments, such as peer review; and engage in group work.

setting, developing new friendships, procuring mentors, and portraying their culture and worldview within a Caucasian-oriented environment (see Hembrough et al., 2018; see Trammel, 2020). This case-in-point scenario can hold true even if students' institution does feature a large Native faculty and student population, as does ours (Hembrough et al., 2018). Native students, like all students, need social, staff, and faculty support, as well as positive relationships with peers, to feel acceptance (Hembrough et al., 2018; Whipple, 2016), especially when they opt to participate in remote learning (Hembrough et al., 2018). Unfortunately, many universities, including sometimes ours, employ an educational system based on a Western model that does not reward the identities and traits of Native students (Hembrough et al., 2018; Hembrough & Dunn, 2019; see Mosholder et al., 2016). Likewise, in conjunction with this dilemma, many instructors, including some at our own institution, according to some students' viewpoint, also do not utilize curricula that emphasize Native students' skillsets, knowledge constructs, backgrounds, and preferences, especially in designing remotely held courses (see Hembrough et al., 2018; see Mosholder et al., 2016). In response to such a dilemma, teachers need to adopt special pedagogical practices and curricular formats that support Native American students' patterns of success and aid them in being heard (Bowman, 2003; Hembrough et al., 2018; Hembrough & Dunn, 2019; Hembrough, 2020).

TEACHING TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN REMOTE COURSE SETTINGS

Even in remote learning formats, it is possible for instructors to teach in ways that assist students in both expressing themselves on topics that are significant for them (Hembrough, 2019a, 2020; Hindun et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020) and bonding with their peers (Hembrough et al., 2018; Hembrough, 2019a, 2020; Hembrough & Dunn, 2019). Both pedagogical strategies are important, especially when students are isolated, as have been many during the pandemic (Sathishkumar et al., 2020), including at our university, which is rurally located anyway. To that end, as a valuable pedagogical strategy, teachers can facilitate a sense of intimacy and unity amongst students by linking them together through the class's design method and curricular format, with students, who have developed a positive camaraderie, often being able to provide support to their peers who experience anxiety (Chu, 2020; Hembrough, 2017, 2020; Hembrough et al., 2018). As an additional method of bolstering student participation in remote learning, teachers can reduce barriers between the teacher and student, and inspire students to formulate new knowledge constructs related to their coursework by respecting students' previous learning experiences, practices, and beliefs (Sybing, 2019), as well as helping them to develop their identities and thoughts in safe ways promoting a productive collaboration with the curricula (Estep & Roberts, 2015; Hembrough, 2019b).

Although potential challenges exist, teachers of various disciplines do ask students to discuss complex topics, as well as students' backgrounds, in the classroom, with the intents of helping students strengthen their analytical thinking skills and motivating them to become active citizens of a democracy (Hembrough, 2019a; Wilkerson, 2017). It has been noted that students, including those at our university, who attend courses where differing beliefs are debated or examined can develop greater competency in navigating current events and also attain higher levels of political and community involvement (Hembrough, 2019a; see Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Further, some students, including many on our campus, have enjoyed discussing controversial subjects (Hembrough, 2017, 2019a; see Jones & Renfrow, 2018) and presenting their ideas in the classroom, while other students learn more about the material through engaging in such discourses (Hembrough, 2017, 2019a; see Hess & McAvoy, 2015). Similarly, students, including some at our locale, who decide to convey aspects of their identity or traumatic experiences within the classroom may be able to identify personal and collective traumas,

come to terms with those psychologically, and share their stories with a larger audience in a manner that may facilitate change within a larger setting (Hembrough, 2019b; see Molloy, 2016).

Particular to the current picture, students' potential willingness to discuss their backgrounds and hardships in their courses could support them in influencing public perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature exists concerning Native American students' experiencing of some range of stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic, navigating of the university during this period, and being inclined possibly to discuss topics related to their personal identity and community in general. However, in this study, we desired to explore how tribal college students in our area of southeastern Oklahoma, including those at our own institution, might be affected by the pandemic. Specifically, we wished to investigate affiliated tribal students' potential stressors and related needs, especially as impacting the classroom. In following, for our study, we surveyed 114 tribal students regarding the following research questions: What potential stressors did students experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as during it? If students did experience particular stressors during the pandemic, would they wish to discuss them, including the possible effects rendered on themselves or their family? Depending on whether and how students were affected by varied stressors, how could teachers be encouraged to examine and expand their pedagogical approaches to be more effective with their tribal students, as well as other minimalized student populations, during stressful times as defined nationally, such as those students faced during the COVID-19 pandemic?

METHOD

RESEARCH SITE AND SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

We conducted the study at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, which serves the state's lowest income counties. In fact, in Durant itself, 78% of the population falls below the poverty line. Durant, the town where the university is located, is associated closely with the Choctaw Nation, but the university lies beyond tribal nation jurisdiction. As per the university's student demographic, a majority of undergraduate students are low-income. Likewise, 57% are first-generation. Furthermore, 30% of students are Native American. Significantly, of students who graduate overall, only 11% finish their degree in five years, and only 28% receive their diploma at all. Compared with their peers at like universities, 39% of the students at Southeastern Oklahoma State should be graduating (Swearengin, 2020). As elsewhere, at our institution, some students, including ethnic/racial minorities, low-income students, and rural students, grapple with persistence issues as marginalized populations (see Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2020). In light of the study's research site and larger demographic context, it is important to note that the participants were representative of the greater student population. The 114 study participants ranged in age from 17 to 53. Over half ($n = 62$) were in their twenties. Men were 21% ($n = 24$). Women were 76% ($n = 87$). The tribal populations included Choctaw, Cherokee, and Chickasaw. Most students were from low-income areas. Likewise, 39% ($n = 45$) came from rural backgrounds, and 55% ($n = 63$) were from small to middling-sized towns. Refer to Table 1 on the following page for group demographics.

TABLE 1
Students' Demographic Characteristics

Gender	Male	Female	Other		
	21%	76%	3%		
	(<i>n</i> = 24)	(<i>n</i> = 87)	(<i>n</i> = 3)		
Occupation status	Student	Part-time work	Full-time work		
	25%	28%	47%		
	(<i>n</i> = 28)	(<i>n</i> = 32)	(<i>n</i> = 54)		
Age ^a	17-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
	16%	54%	18%	9%	3%
	(<i>n</i> = 18)	(<i>n</i> = 62)	(<i>n</i> = 20)	(<i>n</i> = 10)	(<i>n</i> = 3)
Marital status	Married	Cohabiting	Separated/Divorced	Single	
	29%	14%	3%	54%	
	(<i>n</i> = 33)	(<i>n</i> = 16)	(<i>n</i> = 3)	(<i>n</i> = 62)	
Financially responsible for children under 18	None	1 child	2 children	3 children	4+ children
	64%	10%	13%	7%	6%
	(<i>n</i> = 73)	(<i>n</i> = 11)	(<i>n</i> = 15)	(<i>n</i> = 8)	(<i>n</i> = 7)
Annual household income ^b	\$0-15,000	\$16,000-30,000	\$31,000-45,000	\$46,000-60,000	\$61,000-76,000+
	10%	18%	11%	17%	43%
	(<i>n</i> = 11)	(<i>n</i> = 20)	(<i>n</i> = 12)	(<i>n</i> = 19)	(<i>n</i> = 49)
Residency, town size ^a	Under 5,000	5,000-10,000	11,000-20,000	20,000-50,000	60,000 +
	42%	12%	27%	11%	7%
	(<i>n</i> = 48)	(<i>n</i> = 14)	(<i>n</i> = 31)	(<i>n</i> = 13)	(<i>n</i> = 8)

Note. *N* = 114.

a. Missing data for one participant. b. Missing data for three participants.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Having gained Institutional Review Board approval, we designed this study as an exploratory case study offering a learning opportunity (Stake, 1995). Researchers utilize exploratory research to identify ideas, locate perceptions, and widen the knowledge of a phenomena (Schutt, 2014). Utilizing a grasp of the current literature and the study's aims, we investigated how area tribal students' identities and set of potential pandemic stressors, specifically those associated with students' relationships; housing, transportation, and job; academic matters; and health, psychological, and existential issues, could affect their preference for conversing or writing about the virus within their classes. To produce study results, we used a survey with Likert-style and corresponding open-ended questions (Merriam, 1998), the latter to which students responded by describing and recounting their stressors both before and within the pandemic, as well as their potential to converse and compose about such contexts related to the Corona-19 virus and its associated effects during their courses. Many of the survey's stress-related factors were comparable to David Lester's (2014) "Stressful Life Events Checklist." Concerning the study's timeline, we questioned students about their stressors from August to December 2019, and within the pandemic from January 2020 to July 2021. Furthermore, we selected the SPSS 27 software to produce the survey results and identify statistical findings. The largest variances in stressors were discovered through an independent samples t-test analysis.

Separately, to learn more about students' particular, individual stressors as potentially creating smaller themes generated from the umbrella of stress-factor categories listed in Table 2 (located below), we linked students' responses to the Likert questions with the associated open-ended questions. Of those students who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" about experiencing a particular stressor and commented on it, we selected key quotes that provide both diversity and specificity in student response themes. (See the Appendix for a sample of students' statements as creating smaller themes related to the study's top student stressors, ranked from highest to lowest impact in percentage. All students were voluntary participants and gave consent for their participation through SONA, a software to which our university subscribes.

FINDINGS

STUDENTS' STRESSORS BEFORE AND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Before and within the pandemic, tribal students experienced stressors related to their relationships; housing, transportation, and job; academic status; and health, psychological, and existential issues.² Previous to the pandemic, students' biggest stressors were a concern about their job, social life, the care of a partner and/or child, and the care of a family member with an injury/illness. Moreover, some students displayed a sense of trepidation regarding an existential matter or had a question about the "bigger picture." Additionally, other students were worried

² Indeed, for some students, the set of stressors they experienced was created or compounded by a domino effect involving other stress-related factors. One student stated, "I lost a house, got way behind on bills after being completely on time with no credit issues. I lost my good, full-time job, which caused me to take another job that pays \$22,000 less than what I was making."

about having a psychological condition,³ including depression or anxiety;⁴ eating issue; and/or sleeping problem. By comparison, within the pandemic, many students maintained their sense of worry about their job;⁵ the care of a partner and/or child; a partner conflict; an existential problem; and/or a psychological, sleeping, eating, and/or socializing matter, yet these rates of stress increased overall. Nonetheless, as the largest shifts occurring together with the COVID-19 virus's appearance, students became worried at greater percentages concerning their social life,⁶ ability to eat in a healthy manner, potential to generate an income,⁷ ability to sleep,⁸ and psychological condition(s). See Table 2 for students' set of stressors before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. For greater context about the nature of students' largest stressors, see Table 4 in the Appendix, which provides a sampling of some students' short-answer comments about the top 10 stressors, ranging from 49% to 30%, that students overall "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they experienced as sources of anxiety during the pandemic.

TABLE 2

Students' Stressors Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Personal stressors	Experienced pre-COVID-19		Experienced during COVID-19		Percentage of change %
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	
A family member's /friend's demise	18	20	24	27	35
A family member's injury/illness	25	28	32	37	32
A personal injury /illness	18	21	30	34	62
Caring for a partner and/or child	33	38	40	46	21

³ Concerning her psychological health, one student revealed, "Having a mental illness is always stressful, even more stressful during COVID."

⁴ Another student describes her psychological state during the pandemic here: "My stress, depression, and anxiety were the worst they had been in years. I experienced feelings of isolation, anger, and sadness very often. The feeling of helplessness was the worst."

⁵ Discussing job and income worries, one woman stated, "My husband, our sole provider, lost his job the first week of COVID-19. He was without income for 7 months, and we had to sell our house and relocate our entire family in a short amount of time. The job he finally got was a significant pay cut."

⁶ For instance, one woman stated, "Many of my friends have yet to meet my son. I do not go out or socialize anymore."

⁷ One teacher, along with other students, was anxious about her potential reduction in income. She stated, "I was worried about losing my income or job during the pandemic because I am a teacher, and we were not teaching for a long period of time. I was also worried about funding because the public had such a negative opinion about teachers."

⁸ Describing her sleeping patterns, one woman stated, "I don't sleep well at all, and during COVID, time doesn't exist anyways."

A personal separation /divorce	2	2	1	1	-50
A conflict with a partner	25	28	26	30	7
Being pregnant	4	5	4	5	
Having sexual issues	6	7	19	22	57
A conflict with a roommate	13	15	20	23	53
Housing issues	14	16	19	22	38
A legal issue	5	6	9	10	67
An argument with a parent	22	25	25	29	16
A conflict at one's job	29	33	39	45	36
A reduction in income	29	33	46	53	61
Transportation issues	13	15	15	17	13
An existential issue	28	32	36	41	28
A psychological condition	38	43	43	49	14
Sleeping issues	26	30	47	54	38
Eating issues	29	33	43	49	45
Substance abuse issues	4	5			20
Socializing issues	28	32	49	56	75
Difficulty in choosing a career	15	17	18	21	24
Issues with a teacher	7	8	10	11	38

Note. $N = 114$.

STUDENTS' PREFERENCES FOR DISCUSSING COVID-19 AND PANDEMIC TOPICS IN THEIR CLASSES AND RATIONALES FOR THEIR STANCES

Within the pandemic, many Native students suffered from stressors surrounding their relationships; housing, transportation, and job; academic position; and health, psychological, and existential status. However, when students were surveyed for the study as to whether they would prefer to converse about COVID-19 in any class, including perhaps discussing the pandemic's results upon themselves or their family, especially as potential ways to help others and/or seek aid themselves, most disagreed or were ambivalent about this prospect. Overall, 44% of students

(n = 50) did not desire to speak or write about the virus and its effects in their courses, while another 38% of students (n = 43) were neutral as to this question. Likewise, responding to a related survey question, a majority of students expressed similarly that they had not talked or written about the pandemic in their courses since the virus's inception either. Moreover, separately, only 35% (n = 40) of students had studied with faculty members providing settings in which students could investigate ideas connected to the pandemic, a figure adding to the larger bid for silence and/or lack of concern about or place for broaching pandemic subjects in many faculty members' classes. As a slight counterpoint to these scenarios, only 18% of students (n = 21) had attempted to cover pandemic topics on their own in their courses.

Providing additional detail for students' views as to why they did or did not wish to have a dialogue about topics linked to COVID-19, 41 students offered further optional feedback connected to the larger survey questions. Of this smaller group of students who responded, most reported that either they preferred not to discuss anything related to the COVID-19 virus and its effects in any of their classes, including the pandemic's potential impact on themselves or their family, or they were ambivalent about this possibility. Indeed, only 20% of the 41 students (n = 8) wished to tackle the pandemic in any light, including its possible effects on themselves or their family. As a first rationale for preferring not to cover the pandemic, 39% of students (n = 16) felt that their view of the virus's nature would be minimized, while 37% (n = 15) were ambivalent about their position on this statement. This left only 24% of students (n = 10) who believed that their teacher(s) and/or classmates would identify the former students' conception of the pandemic as being important. As a second reason why many students hoped to avoid COVID-19 dialogues, 61% (n = 25) were "bored or tired" of such discourses, with almost another quarter (n = 9) being ambivalent as to their stance on this matter. As students' third rationale for not wishing to cover COVID-19 subject matter in the classroom, nearly half (n = 20) thought that pandemic conversations were "[ir]relevant to their major or coursework," with another 32% (n = 13) remaining neutral as to their view of this prospect. Indeed, only 20% (n = 8) of students felt that sharing information linked to the pandemic would be valuable to conversations connected to their major. As a fourth reason why some students desired to avoid COVID-19 topics, 34% (n = 14) viewed the virus's appearance as being "an [un]important current event to cover" in class, while over a third more (n = 16) identified as having no opinion on this subject. Remarkably, only 27% of students (n = 11) believed that tackling ideas connected to the virus would be beneficial. As a fifth rationale as to why students did not want to raise pandemic-related matters in the classroom, 27% (n = 11) cited "privacy concerns," with another 24% (n = 10) remaining on the fence as to their stance on this issue. Somewhat surprisingly, almost a quarter of students desired to avoid pandemic issues in their courses due to privacy reasons as being their fifth rationale for disdaining any curricular-related focus on pandemic topics. Yet almost half, or 49% of students (n = 20), reported that they were not bothered by potentially sharing information about their personal lives with their teachers or classmates, and so this justification did not constitute students' main disinclination for participating in pandemic conversations in their classes. See Table 3 on the following page for student views of discussing COVID-19 and pandemic topics in the classroom.

TABLE 3

Students' Views of Discussing COVID-19 and the Pandemic in the Classroom

Questions concerning student inclination to discuss COVID-19 topics	Agree	
	%	<i>n</i>
Would you like to discuss COVID-19 (and the pandemic), including whether it affected you and/or your family, in any of your classes?	20	8
Do you want to discuss COVID-19 (and the pandemic) in any of your classes because you feel that your opinion about it would be valued?	24	10
Do you not want to discuss COVID-19 (and the pandemic) in any of your classes because you are bored or tired of the topic?	61	25
Do you want to discuss COVID-19 (and the pandemic) in any of your classes because you believe that it is relevant to your major or course work?	20	8
Do you want to discuss COVID-19 (and the pandemic) in any of your classes because you believe that it is an important current event to cover?	27	11
Do you not want to discuss COVID-19 (and the pandemic) in any of your classes due to privacy concerns?	27	11

Note. *N* = 41.

DISCUSSION

In one study occurring during the pandemic in universities across the United States, 91% of the students comprising a diverse racial sample saw a rise in their stress rates (Active Minds, 2020). Similarly, according to our study's findings, during the pandemic, Native students also reported observing a rise in many stressors, as compared to before COVID-19's onset. These stressors involved students' relationships; housing, transportation, and job; health, psychological, and existential issues; and academic status. Specifically, before the pandemic's occurrence, the largest stress factors that students experienced were a sense of anxiety about the following issues: their job status, need to attend to a partner and/or child, and psychological condition(s).

Likewise, prior to the pandemic, many students also felt a sense of unease about a family member's injury/illness or demise; conflict with a partner; existential issue; and sleeping, eating, and/or socializing problem(s). However, during the pandemic, the rates at which students experienced these and other stressors grew. Nonetheless, the biggest shift that occurred relating to students' types and levels of stressors during the pandemic was that a greater number of students were anxious about dilemmas linked to a family member's injury/illness; personal injury/illness; necessity of attending to a partner and/or child; roommate, housing, and/or job problem; sleeping, eating, and/or socializing issue; and existential conflict than previously.

In our study, the set of stressors that the Native students experienced both prior to and within the pandemic are comparable with those discussed in the larger literature. Importantly, in our study, within the pandemic's timespan as concurrent with students' study participation, the

Native students showed greater stress rates and a sense of isolation, disruption, and despair in their lives than before, just as did many Native Americans across the country (see Hilleary, 2020). During the pandemic, in our study, 47% (n = 54) of students were upset by the impact that sleeping issues had on their wellbeing, 43% (n = 49) felt worried about a psychological condition(s), and 43% (n = 49) were also vexed about food-related matters.⁹ Additionally, many students were affected by increased anxiety over the state of their relationships; health and existential wellbeing; and housing, transportation, and job statuses. Comparatively, according to a nationwide university study by Active Minds (2020), during the COVID-19 epidemic, 91% of students also reported suffering from stress and anxiety, and in the study by Wang and colleagues (2020) concerning the types and rates of stressors that college students displayed during the pandemic, 85% noted having shifting sleeping patterns, 48% were depressed, and 18% felt suicidal. Of noteworthiness, nationwide, Native Americans were one of the racial groups found at highest risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus (Wade, 2020). Similarly, in our study, within the pandemic, many tribal students also showed greater concern for their family's health, as well as their own wellness, than previously. Specifically, 24% (n = 27) of students showed anxiety about a possible family member's/friend's demise, 32% (n = 37) demonstrated concern over a family member's injury/illness, and 30% (n = 34) felt worried about their own injury/illness. Comparatively, in a study by Aucejo et al. (2020) held at one major university about the stressors that students faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, 35% were anxious about their physical wellbeing, as well as the health of others. In our study, as a last large concern for students during the pandemic, 39% (n = 45) felt a sense of trepidation about a work conflict, while 46% (n = 53) were concerned about a decreased income.¹⁰ Likewise, in the study by Wang and colleagues (2020) about college students' stressors during the pandemic, 20% of participants indicated that they were worried about money and job matters also but at smaller rates.

In our study, besides students suffering from stressors related to their relationships; housing, transportation, and job; and health, psychological, and existential issues, students were also affected by numerous college-related worries that either arose or increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As elsewhere nationwide for many Native students, in our study, students had to endure the university's sudden closing, shift from living in dormitories to moving back home or elsewhere (including becoming homeless and living in their cars), disappearance of campus jobs and course-related internships, and transition from attending classes at a brick-and-mortar campus to engaging in classes remotely. Significantly, such dilemmas impacted students' academically related types and rates of stressors in our study, as well as across the nation (see American Indian Science and Engineering Society, 2020), and they created obstacles to students' ability to access their education and accomplish their academic goals (see Zingg, 2020). Indeed, according to the American Psychological Association [APA] (2020), cross-country during the pandemic, almost 90% of students reported that attending college had become a major stressor for them. Of great impact, according to a study by Aucejo and colleagues (2020) conducted during the pandemic at one large university, 12% of students had switched their majors, and 11%

⁹ For instance, one student stated, "I no longer have direct access to fresh or healthy foods, and what I have is in short supply."

¹⁰ Accordingly, one woman stated, "While I did not lose my job due to COVID, I did go several months where the school I work at was closed due to the pandemic, and my child's school was closed as well. She qualifies for free school meals, so when school closed, she was home with me, and if it had not been for her school doing a drive-through, free-meal program, it would have been something we needed to budget for."

had dropped classes due to pandemic-connected stress. Meanwhile, in our own study, a small but important minority of students were also concerned about their college educational experiences, namely those involving their coursework, and thus potentially their biggest rationale for enrolling in college at all, with 18% of participants ($n = 21$) experiencing difficulty in selecting a major, and 10% ($n = 11$) having problems with a teacher(s).

In the bigger scheme, during the COVID-19 pandemic, university presidents indicated that academia's top mission should be to understand and attend to the needs of students who, during this timeframe, were even more marginalized according to their race, ethnicity, or income-level than usual (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). However, in our study, we found that, from many students' viewpoint, the faculty had either not taken the time necessary or felt it was important to address information tied to the pandemic at all beyond discussing campus quarantining and testing procedures, and social distancing and masking practices. Likewise, compared to before the pandemic, we also found that many students were suffering from a greater number of stressors and/or experienced the increasing impact of them, yet they did not feel comfortable either speaking or writing about events related to the COVID-19 virus either, even if doing so might have provided them with ways of assisting other students in need, including by listening to them; describing the nature of their individually felt circumstances; soliciting teachers' and/or classmates' support; and learning about potential campus and community resources. Probably unsurprisingly, in our study, many students' responses regarding their potential willingness to cover pandemic-related topics in the classroom, or at least their sense of ambivalence about this possibility, are comparable with those of the greater populace, as, according to Pfefferbaum & North (2020), during this time, many people were afraid of the damage that the COVID-19 pandemic could cause to themselves, their families, and their friends in multiple ways, from health-related issues to financial, educational, job, social, and other concerns. Indeed, this group of people had tried not to worry about the virus's possible and impinging effects on their lives.

However, taking into context such popular attitudes in the light of our study findings, a study focused on examining students' types and rates of stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic and the nature and extent to which these stressors impacted tribal students, we urge teachers, as significant players in many students' lives, to continue supporting their students during this catastrophic time, including in ways that some may not have considered or thought necessary before. To do so, teachers can examine their various teaching strategies in order to pinpoint how best they can raise their support level for Native students, as well as other marginalized student populations, living in unique circumstances connected to an uncertain time. Such a pedagogical approach could give students wishing to investigate, communicate about, and/or address their stressors the opportunity to do so in whatever capacity possible, so that the students might remain steadfast in following their college paths and dreams.

Much about the COVID-19 pandemic, including its full nature and effects, continues to remain unknown or under question at this time, as was the case with other past epic crises, such as the 1918 influenza pandemic. Nonetheless, one way that faculty could assist tribal students in navigating this perilous time (or simply more perilous time for many of our students) is by engaging students who wish to express their relationship to the pandemic in open exchanges about this subject matter, as well as providing them with assignments aiding them in exploring

their stressors in a safe, beneficial manner that avoids inflicting any further potential trauma.¹¹ Although each tribe is different, most Native groups favor utilizing the practices of observation and lived experience as ways of constructing knowledge (Bahr, 2015), just as some Native populations also employ storytelling, language, and visuals to depict their individual and communal identities (Brown & Begoray, 2017). Both phenomena are valued by many tribal students at our university (Hembrough, 2020, 2021). Coincidentally, within the pandemic's timeframe, many tribal students, as well as other students, could decide to share their pandemic stories, too, if they thought that their narratives would be received as significant. Besides supporting Native students in creating a forum for debates and storytelling, within the pandemic, faculty should continue to work to understand their Native students individually and to uphold them in formulating relationships with their classmates since many tribal students value the ability to join a community of learners as a mutual support system (see Fletcher, 2008; see Hembrough et al., 2018; see Hembrough, 2020). More largely, by beginning discussions about a subject that has raised much controversy, in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty can assist tribal students who wish to share their stories in formulating links between social concerns related to the virus's appearance and associated stressors impacting students' own lives, educations, and careers more broadly.

Overall, this study is significant in offering faculty information about the benefits and potential obstacles involved in providing associated tribal students in the geographical area with an opportunity to speak and write about the pandemic, so that students can investigate, note, and communicate to others, possibly, the significance of any stressors they may have experienced during this time frame. In doing so, students could listen to and help their peers in the classroom potentially, as well as share and perhaps address their own stressors. Furthermore, the study offers new knowledge concerning tribal students' range of stressors, both before and during the pandemic, as well as their view of discussing the latter, which are rendered in their own words as comprising a dataset involving select student quotes about the top 10 stressors that students experienced during the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

While the COVID-19 virus has, to some degree, impacted the entire world, in the United States, it has been noted within the current literature that the Native American population endured, and continues to endure, unique hardships during the pandemic. In an effort to understand how those hardships affected Native university students, as well as to guide future opportunities to support Native students during difficult times, the authors found that, at the study's university during the pandemic, tribal students experienced increased stress and trauma in many aspects of their lives, yet most preferred to not discuss COVID-19, or its impact, in their classrooms, while others remained ambivalent about this possibility. Students offered various explanations for their reluctance to talk or write about the pandemic, such as their being bored with the topic, feeling that their opinions would not be valued, or believing that the pandemic was not a relevant or important subject to discuss during their coursework. Considering these findings in conjunction with research that has suggested that sharing traumatic experiences within the classroom may benefit struggling students, the authors wish to inspire teachers to develop strategies and curricula that encourage and support Native students as they face

¹¹ For a further discussion of this, see Carello & Butler, 2014.

traumatic and stressful times, such as those confronted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Future studies exploring the academic needs, and/or stress, of tribal students encountering a troubling time, such as that of a similar, future, national pandemic or other crisis, might benefit from including items that specifically relate to the ongoing and fluctuating events or circumstances that students experience within that crisis's timeframe. Such studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how the stressors and needs of students can evolve over time, as students react day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month to the episodic nature of an ongoing epic event

REFERENCES

- Active Minds. (2020). *COVID-19 impact on college student mental health*.
<https://www.activeminds.org/studentsurvey/>
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society. (2020). *The need*. <https://www.aises.org/content/title>
- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Stress in America: A National Mental Health Crisis*.
<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2020/report>
- Aucejo, E., French, J., Araya, M., & Zafar, B. (2020) The impact of COVID-19 on student experiences and expectations. *Journal of Public Economics*, 191, 104271.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104271>
- Bahr, A. (2015). People of place, ethics of Earth: Indigenous nations, interfaith dialogue, and environmental sustainability. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 50(1), 66-76.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecu.2015.0010>
- Blackburn, S. (2020). *How could COVID-19 affect Native American student enrollment in higher ed?* University Business. <https://www.universitybusiness.com/covid-19-affect-native-students-native-american-student-enrollment/>
- Bowman, N. (2003). Cultural differences of teaching and learning: A Native American perspective of participating in educational systems and organizations. *American Indian Quarterly*, 27(1/2), 91–102. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aiq.2004.0022>
- Brown, A., & Begoray, D. (2017). Using a graphic novel project to engage Indigenous youth in critical literacies. *Language and Literacy*, 19(3), 35–55. <https://doi.org/10.20360/G2BT17>
- Carello, J., & Butler, L. (2014). Potentially perilous pedagogies: Teaching trauma is not the same as trauma-informed teaching. *Journal of Trauma and Dissociation*, 15(2), 153-168.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299732.2014.867571>
- Chu, A. (2020). Applying positive psychology to foster student engagement and classroom community amid the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000238>
- Estep, C. & Roberts, T. (2015). Teacher immediacy and professor/student rapport as predictors of motivation and engagement. *NACTA*, 59(2), 155-163.
<https://www.nactateachers.org/attachments/article/2283/15%20Estep.pdf>
- First Nations. (2021). COVID-19 emergency response fund. www.firstnations.org/projects/charting-a-pushforward
- Fletcher, M. (2008). *American Indian education: Counternarratives in racism, struggle, and the law*. Routledge.
- Goldrick-Rab, S., Coca, V., Kienzl, G., Welton, C., Dahl, S., & Magnelia, S. (2020). *New evidence on basic needs insecurity and student well-being*. Hope Center.
<https://hope4college.com/realcollege-during-the-pandemic/>

- Healy, J. (2021). Tribal elders are dying from the pandemic, causing a cultural crisis for American Indians. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/12>
- Hembrough, T. (2017). Offering a first-year composition classroom for veterans and cadets: A learning-community model case study." *Journal of Veteran Studies*, 2(2), 140-171. <http://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v2i2.21>
- Hembrough, T. (2019a). Becoming involved in a university curricular initiative concerning sustainability: A case study of an ecocomposition course model in first-semester composition. *Writing & Pedagogy*, 11(2), 223-252. <https://doi.org/10.1558/wap.34315>
- Hembrough, T. (2019b). Native American students' utilization of comic strips in the writing classroom to explore their identities through digital storytelling. *Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics*, 3(1), 115-160. <http://journalofmultimodalrhetorics.com/files/documents/16e26397-0aff-43ae-b4a2-d37ee450137b.pdf>
- Hembrough, T. (2020). A study of rural and Native-American college students' military identities, military family history, and reading interests." *Journal of Veteran Studies*, 6(1), 46-63. <http://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i1.142>
- Hembrough, T. (2021). Utilizing digital storytelling in composing apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction: A case study of rural and Native American college students." *Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics*, 5(2), 1-28. <http://journalofmultimodalrhetorics.com/files/documents/dbbf042a-44a8-4f09-8074-da64dae44612.pdf>
- Hembrough, T., & Dunn, K. (2019). Supporting Native American student veterans in the first- year composition classroom: Cohort communities. *Journal of Veteran Studies*, 4(2), 203- 228. <http://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v4i2.112>
- Hembrough, T., Madewell, A., & Dunn, K. (2018). Student veterans' preference for traditional versus online course formats: A case study at two Midwestern universities. *Journal of Veteran Studies*, 3(2), 57-93. <http://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v3i2.63>
- Hess, D., & McAvoy, P. (2014). *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education*. Routledge.
- Hilleary, C. 2020). *COVID-19 taking emotional toll on Native Americans*. Voice of America. <https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/hilleary-native-americans-covid>
- Hindun, I., Husamah, H., Nurwidodo, N., Fatmawati, D., & Fauzi, A. (2021). E-Learning in COVID-19 pandemic: Does it challenge teachers' work cognition and metacognitive awareness? *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 547-566. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14332a>
- Jones, J., & Renfrow, K. (2018). Complex social contexts: Students' perceptions of addressing social justice topics in the classroom. *NACTA*, 62(2), 189-198. <https://www.nactateachers.org/attachments/article/2726/16%20J.A.%20Jones>
- Lester, D. (2014). College student stressors, depression, and suicidal ideation. *Psychological Reports: Sociocultural Issues in Psychology*, 114(1), 293-296. <https://doi.org/10.2466/12.02.PR0.114k10w7>
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. Jossey-Bass.

- Molloy, C. (2016). Multimodal composing as healing: Toward a new model for writing as healing courses. *Composition Studies*, 44(2), 134-152, EJ1120653.
- Mosholder, R., Waite, B., Larsen, C., & Goslin, C. (2016). Promoting Native American college student recruitment and retention in higher education. *Multicultural Education*, 23, 27– 36, EJ1119399.
- Pfefferbaum, B., & North, C. (2020). Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 383, 510-512. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp2008017>
- Postsecondary National Policy Institute. (2020). Factsheets: Rural students in higher education. <https://pnpi.org/rural-students-in-higher-education/>
- Rodriguez, A., & Mallinckrodt, B. (2018). Native American identified students' transition to college: A theoretical model of coping challenges and resources. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 23(1), 96–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025118799747>
- Sathishkumar, V., Radha, R., Saravanakumar, A., & Mahalakshmi, K. (2020). E-learning during lockdown of covid-19 pandemic: A global perspective. *International Journal of Control and Automation*, 13(4), 1088-1099.
- Schutt, R. (2014). *Investigating the social world: The process and practice of research*. (8th ed.). Sage.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Swearingin, J. (2020). *Southeastern Oklahoma State University common data set*. 1-32. https://www.se.edu/academic-affairs/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/06/CDS_2019-2020_final.pdfAdd
- Sybing, R. (2019). Making connections: Student-teacher rapport in higher education classrooms. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 19(5), 18-35. <https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v19i5.26578>
- Torney-Purta, J., Lehmann, R., Oswald, H., & Schultz, W. (2001). *Citizenship education in twenty-eight countries*. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
- Trammell, J. (2020). Forces that impact Native American college students. [Dissertation, Wilmington U (Delaware)]. ProQuest.
- Wade, L. (2020). COVID-19 data on Native Americans is 'a national disgrace.' *Science Magazine*. <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/09>
- Wang, X., Hedge, S., Son, C., Keller, B., Smith, A., & Sasangohar F. (2020). Investigating mental health of US college students during the COVID-19 pandemic: Cross-sectional survey study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(9), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.2196/22817>
- Ware, P. (2004). Confidence and competition online: ESL student perspectives on web-based discussions in the classroom. *Computers and Composition*, 21(4), 451-468.
- Whipple, V. (2016). Native American college student perceptions of cultural affiliation and tribal traditions: A mixed methods study. [Dissertation, Fielding U]. ProQuest.

Wilkerson, W. (2017). Review of teaching controversial issues, the case for critical thinking and moral commitment in the classroom. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 13(4), 483- 485.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2017.1337581>

Zingg, L. (2020). *Responding to the pandemic's impact on Native students*. Teach for America.
<https://www.teachforamerica.org/stories>

APPENDIX

TABLE 4

Sample Student Short-Answer Comments for the Top 10 Stressors by Percentage for which Students “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” They Had Experienced Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic

<p>Socializing issues (Rated as students’ greatest issue)</p>	<p>With "social distancing" and "quarantining," it became hard to interact with friends and family, including the closing of schools and gyms.</p> <p>I could not see my friends or family.</p> <p>Many of my friends have yet to meet my son. I do not go out or socialize anymore.</p> <p>I had to change my social habits because of the lockdown, which caused me anxiety. Not being able to see my friends because of the fear of COVID really took a toll on me.</p> <p>I have no life other than school, kids, and work.</p> <p>Being social is hard but even harder during Covid.</p> <p>The pandemic has only made it harder to socialize.</p> <p>No one wants to go near others.</p>
<p>Sleeping issues (Rated as students’ second greatest issue)</p>	<p>Sleeping in because no routine.</p> <p>Cannot sleep</p> <p>My sleep pattern was changed throughout the virus. I couldn't sleep well at night.</p> <p>I don't sleep well at all, and during Covid, time doesn't exist anyways.</p> <p>Anxiety keeps me from sleeping.</p> <p>Changing my sleeping habits caused me stress because I was used to getting up around 6:30 a.m. or 7 a.m. for work or school, but because of COVID, I got my hours cut at work and did not have to be there until 12:30 p.m.</p> <p>My job often requires long nights.</p>
<p>Reduced income (Rated as students’ third greatest issue)</p>	<p>I am now out of a job and have very little income through unemployment.</p>

<p>Reduced income (Rated as students' third greatest issue) (continued)</p>	<p>During the lockdown, my job was changed to "to-go" orders only. When my income is based 90% on tips, it makes it hard to earn enough. People did not have much money; therefore, they were not tipping as much. It caused a lot of stress.</p> <p>When COVID first came about, my hours at work were cut short, which caused me to be short on money.</p> <p>I was laid off of work. I lost my job. For awhile, I was stressed about money.</p> <p>I had to substantially cut back my work hours last year. This year almost returned to normal.</p> <p>I was worried about losing my income or job during the pandemic because I am a teacher, and we were not teaching for a long period of time. I was also worried about funding because the public had such a negative opinion about teachers.</p> <p>COVID-19 closed most dental businesses for a time during 2020 due to government mandates. The dental industry was my entire network of clients.</p> <p>I lost my safety net and had no idea if I would be able to pay for college the next semester.</p> <p>I cannot work due to COVID.</p> <p>I have had to temporarily quit working because my nephew who was born prematurely lives in my household, and I could not risk passing the virus to him.</p> <p>I'm worried about losing my job or having to shut down again.</p> <p>I was furloughed throughout the virus pandemic.</p> <p>I had to substantially cut back my work hours last year.</p> <p>I had my first child in March 2020. I was too scared to return to work in fear I would contract COVID-19 and bring it to my son.</p> <p>Did not work from March until August.</p> <p>Both my partner and I were extremely stressed with how our jobs/income might be affected. This led to stress and tensions at home.</p>
---	---

<p>Reduced income (Rated as students' third greatest issue) (continued)</p>	<p>I lost a house, got way behind on bills after being completely on time with no credit issues. I lost my good, full-time job, which caused me to take another job that pays \$22,000 less than what I was making.</p> <p>While I did not lose my job due to COVID, I did go several months where the school I work at was closed due to the pandemic, and my child's school was closed as well. She qualifies for free school meals, so when school closed, she was home with me, and if it had not been for her school doing a drive-through, free-meal program, it would have been something we needed to budget for.</p> <p>My husband, our sole provider, lost his job the first week of COVID-19. He was without income for 7 months, and we had to sell our house and relocate our entire family in a short amount of time. The job he finally got was a significant pay cut.</p>
<p>Psychological condition(s) (Rated as students' fourth/fifth greatest issue)</p>	<p>Having a mental illness is always stressful, even more stressful during COVID.</p> <p>I wouldn't exactly call it depression or anxiety, but my mental health sure has taken a big hit since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. I don't believe that I was/am depressed, but I certainly have some depressive tendencies, lack of motivation, frequent self-deprecating thoughts, low self-esteem, emotional instability, etc.</p> <p>I have always had depression and anxiety because of my childhood, but it also got worse during COVID because I was inside a lot, not really doing a whole lot, so that caused me to think a lot more and get inside my own head.</p> <p>Getting work done was difficult, little motivation. I was anxious that I wouldn't be able to afford college.</p> <p>Being quarantined was very difficult.</p> <p>It is still a struggle.</p> <p>I think everyone has been a little depressed.</p> <p>The CARES Act had at one point allowed schools to ignore student needs when I was due to graduate high school. On top of that, college transitions with learning disabilities [were difficult for me].</p> <p>The home quarantine intensified my depression and anxiety. Having to stay home with no social contact is terrible.</p>

<p>Psychological condition(s) (Rated as students' fourth/fifth greatest issue) (continued)</p>	<p>My stress, depression, and anxiety were the worst they had been in years. I experienced feelings of isolation, anger, and sadness very often. The feeling of helplessness was the worst.</p> <p>Dealing with a psychological disorder is one of the hardest things I think I have ever had to do. Just as I was coming into a good place with my disorder, COVID hit, so I ended up taking baby.</p> <p>It has given me more depression and anxiety during that period because I had to deal with a whole new way of life, just like others had to. It made me upset having to be away from others and not having that normal life.</p> <p>First off, we all experience depression and anxiety in different volumes. I've never had to go to a doctor for mine as it's not as bad as others. Being under the stress of the pandemic just made it very hard to deal with my feelings. Isolation and being away were hard for me because I'm a social person.</p> <p>Yes. It made it much harder to not be depressed with no human interaction, or very little.</p> <p>I have anxiety, and it is hard to deal with COVID and all the changes, but I just try to accept things I cannot change and live my life to the best of my ability.</p> <p>Since I struggle with depression and anxiety, not being able to see others was very hard because when those people are not continually seeing me, it is harder for them to see just how much I am struggling.</p> <p>I got diagnosed with depression and anxiety at 14, and I usually know how to handle it. However, during this event, it was a struggle.</p>
<p>Eating issues (Rated as students' fourth/fifth greatest issue)</p>	<p>I no longer have direct access to fresh or healthy foods, and what I have is in short supply.</p> <p>Eating fast food too much.</p> <p>I haven't been able to leave as much, so I stay home and eat more, which has made me fat.</p> <p>I've been eating more.</p> <p>I am either eating too much or too little during COVID, usually too little.</p>

<p>Eating issues (Rated as students' fourth/fifth greatest issue) (continued)</p>	<p>After having the baby, I lost a lot of weight. Before COVID, I ate out a lot. During lockdown, I refused to eat anything that could have been touched by an infected person. I would only cook at home after sanitizing all the groceries. I gained weight after a few months because I started to eat out again. My weight and eating habits have fluctuated since the beginning of COVID-19.</p>
<p>Caring for a partner and/or child (Rated as students' sixth greatest issue)</p>	<p>It's always stressful having the responsibility of another.</p> <p>I worked at a daycare in that period of time, so it did cause me stress and anxiety.</p> <p>I endured a lot of stress and anxiety during this time period because COVID was new, and everyone was learning how to manage it. The processes and procedures (i.e. for work, school, healthcare, DHS, etc.) were confusing because we were told different things. No one was on the same page.</p> <p>There are 2 children under the age of 2 who live with me, so I want to make sure they are healthy.</p> <p>Kids are difficult to raise.</p> <p>I had to homeschool mine while raising a 3-year-old at the same time, and going to school full-time myself.</p> <p>I still take care of my sister and brother as their temporary guardian. I have had stress due to their virtual school.</p>
<p>A conflict at one's job (Rated as students' seventh greatest issue)</p>	<p>I lost my job.</p> <p>Because I would not be able to pay for college.</p> <p>The constant changes from my job at school led to complete burnout. Any little change felt like a huge obstacle to overcome.</p> <p>I had a rough patch where several work errors were discovered at the same time. As a result, I could have lost my job due to job performance (not COVID-19) and potentially been unable to find new work because of COVID-19.</p> <p>I was laid off due to the virus, and that was after most of our clients were shut down due to the pandemic. I was out of work for awhile and to employers that did not look good, regardless of the circumstance.</p> <p>Dental businesses closed due to government mandates. Hence, my job was eliminated.</p>

<p>A conflict at one's job (Rated as students' seventh greatest issue) (continued)</p>	<p>I lost my job at the beginning of the pandemic. I did not know how I was going to pay my bills.</p> <p>COVID shut down the job I was on and resulted in many layoffs.</p> <p>Teaching first graders virtually was a nightmare and made me not want to be a teacher. I also had to pay double in daycare to send my kids that should be in school to daycare while I taught in a classroom that was empty.</p> <p>I quit my other job because I wasn't getting enough hours during the beginning of COVID. It was stressful looking for another job.</p> <p>Problems at the job cause me to stress at home about it. This causes lack of sleep for me.</p> <p>At the time COVID started, I had a job I really hated, and when quarantine lifted (I loved my paid time at home), everything got WORSE!</p> <p>I was the only one who wore a mask, and my coworkers refused to wear masks, which caused me to fear more that I would contact COVID-19.</p> <p>I am no longer employed due to the outbreak.</p> <p>When I did work June/July, there was concern about employment and what the landscape was.</p> <p>If there is an issue at my job today, I am less likely to address it. This is because if I were to lose my job over it, I fear if I will be able to find another job. I do not know the availability of jobs in my area, but I know many people who cannot get one.</p> <p>I had to quit my weekend job at a hospital because I was afraid of exposing my family.</p> <p>I cannot work due to COVID.</p> <p>Work started putting more responsibilities on me from the beginning of the Corona Virus.</p> <p>You never when they are going to let you go, especially since they let a lot of people go already.</p> <p>Worry about the safety of the children and the staff.</p>
--	--

<p>An existential issue (Rated as students' eighth greatest issue)</p>	<p>Future is always on the mind.</p> <p>Just questions about the future. What will life be like in the future.</p> <p>I think too much. I get tired of thinking about existentialism and the absurdity of the human condition. Philosophy is interesting but horribly depressing.</p> <p>I don't understand the meaning or purpose in this life. It has often bothered me.</p>
<p>A family member's injury/illness (Rated as students' ninth greatest issue)</p>	<p>This family member died in October of 2020. I changed my entire career path because of it.</p> <p>Half of my family contracted the disease and were very sick. I was told to tell family members goodbye and prepare for this worst. This was extremely stressful and upsetting.</p> <p>My grandma got pneumonia during the pandemic, which resulted in hospitalization, and my father had a heart arrhythmia, which resulted in him getting a pacemaker. I was worried that they might be subjected to people who were not taking precautions while they were being tended to.</p> <p>I did worry about my grandparents. I would have hated for anything to happen to them. But we were also very concerned that skipping holidays would also be detrimental because it could very well be their last without COVID, due to age and cancer. So not seeing them caused a lot of stress.</p> <p>My grandma was diagnosed with cancer in February on 2021, and I was unable to go to the doctor with her.</p> <p>My uncle was hospitalized for months and was near death several times. Knowing that no family was allowed to visit, and seeing my aunt stressed caused anxiety for the whole family.</p> <p>My grandma actually got COVID right after getting out of the hospital with cancer. (They got it all). She made it, praise God, but it did give me major stress to think about losing her.</p> <p>My mom has bad asthma.</p> <p>My mother has been battling cancer since 2017, but with the recent addition of the virus, my family was concerned about how well her immune system could hold up. She did end up contracting COVID-19 and recovered, but there is a possibility she could get sick again. That scares me.</p>

<p>A family member's injury/illness (Rated as students' ninth greatest issue) (continued)</p>	<p>I have been extremely concerned for the health of my family. The entire household of 5 (oldest being 62, youngest being 9) experienced COVID-19 symptoms but have since recovered. My family thought my aunt was going to die from COVID, but she lived.</p> <p>When Mom had COVID, I was scared for her.</p> <p>I feared and still fear for my 10-month-old son. It caused a lot of family issues because I feel they do not take it as seriously as I do. It is still unknown the effects COVID has on infants. It is very scary.</p> <p>I have a nephew who is premature, so his immune system is compromised, but he has not gotten sick since coming home.</p> <p>My mother fell ill to the virus, and I was having to take care of both of my parents.</p> <p>In March, my daughter was hospitalized. We have no answers why; [it was] before the COVID test was available.</p>
<p>A personal injury/illness (Rated as students' tenth greatest issue)</p>	<p>I was worried about dying. I was also worried about being debilitated.</p> <p>I was very worried about getting sick. I was more worried about the loss of income in the event I had to quarantine or be out of work.</p> <p>Was worried more about family and friends. I still am!</p> <p>Having COVID-19 and not being able to work was stressful. I was paid for the two weeks that I was out, which made it less stressful.</p> <p>I was concerned about becoming ill with COVID since it began but have since become less concerned with it. Like I said earlier, there is a now a vaccine, so I am not as concerned about it.</p> <p>Again, I took the measures I could, and prayed I would remain healthy. I was hopeful to not become ill with COVID-19.</p> <p>The unknown of COVID was the stressful part. Not knowing when or if I would even be diagnosed contributed to my anxiety.</p> <p>It was scary. We all adjusted to living with the pandemic.</p> <p>Again, I was pregnant and feared for mine and my son's life.</p> <p>It scared me, and the not knowing what the end looked like was terrifying. I had family and focus to take my mind off of things.</p>

<p>A personal injury/illness (Rated as students' tenth greatest issue) (continued)</p>	<p>When I had COVID, there [were] days I was worried.</p> <p>Yes. I have written letters to my son and stored them just in case something happens to me. I do not know if it is just because of "first time mom" anxiety. There have been many nights I could not sleep in fear that if something happened to me, my son would not have anyone.</p> <p>Illness can happen unexpectedly, and we were at a higher risk at this time.</p> <p>I got pneumonia from COVID.</p>
--	---

Note: $N = 41$. The quotes are lightly edited for grammar and meaning.

Mired in [Red]uctive Tropes: Stereotypes of Native Americans in *Longmire*

Jennifer L. McMahon
East Central University

The television series, *Longmire* (2012-2017), challenges many popular and deeply pejorative stereotypes of Native Americans. Based on the *Longmire* mysteries by Craig Johnson, the series offers a portrait of Native peoples that deviates, in important ways, from the “erroneous” (351) and “unflattering portraits of Native Americans” (Rosenthal 330) that pervade mainstream media. At the same time, *Longmire* invokes many of the conventional stereotypes that it works to defy. *Longmire* begins its representation of Native Americans by foregrounding the familiar trope of cowboys and “Indians” in the character pairing between the title character, Walt Longmire (Robert Taylor), and his friend, and indigenous ally, Henry Standing Bear (Lou Diamond Phillips). From the onset, the series provides audiences with a familiar portrait of a cowboy lawman in Walt; however, it offers a somewhat “unexpected” (Deloria 11) portrait of a “Hollywood Indian” (Vestal 63) in the form of Walt’s friend, Henry. Despite predicating its meta-narrative on the cowboy and “Indian” binary common to the western genre, *Longmire* challenges the traditional portrait of Native Americans in critical ways, not the least of which are its portrayal of Henry and the positive relationship it establishes between Henry and Walt. Indeed, the series has been “roundly praised” (Buckley) for its positive portrayal of first peoples.

The most obvious way in which *Longmire* challenges traditional patterns of portrayal is in its refusal to reproduce the widespread tendency to depict Native Americans in an exclusively anachronistic manner as so many works in the western genre do. Rather than depict Native Americans reductively as either “violent” or “noble savage[s]” (Meek 108) existing in the mode of existence “vanished” (Meek 118) by colonization, removal, genocide, and forced assimilation, *Longmire* offers a contemporary portrait of 21st century Native Americans living in and around the fictional, Absaroka County, Wyoming. *Longmire* also depicts Native Americans in a more diverse way than is characteristic of the western genre, including depicting native characters in a variety of occupations, including as successful business owners (Henry Standing Bear), prominent politicians (Jacob Nighthorse), and law enforcement officers (Chief Mathias). With this more

diverse manner of portrayal, *Longmire* resists rather than reinstates the traditional “dichotomy fable” (Portmann & Herring 194) of indigenous savage or sage.

Longmire also improves upon the standard by increasing the volume of Native Americans present on screen. Despite significant gains in volume of representation for many other minorities, Native Americans remain the most grossly underrepresented minority in popular media (Hunt et al, 2019), accounting for only .3% of screen roles despite being 2% of the population (Buckley). *Longmire* also makes a positive break from this pattern. There are multiple Native American characters in *Longmire*, and these characters are played predominantly by Native American actors. Prominent male characters include Henry Standing Bear (Lou Diamond Phillips), Chief Mathias (Zahn Tokiya-ku McClarnon), Malachi Strand (Graham Greene), and Jacob Nighthorse (A. Martinez). Though no Native American female characters rise to the same prominence as their male counterparts in *Longmire*, a fact that warrants critical consideration, there is nonetheless strong representation of Native women, and these characters are played by Native American actors as well. Characters include May Stillwater (Irene Bedard), Marilyn Yarlott (Tantoo Cardinal), and Lilly Stillwater (Amber Midthunder).

Importantly, the increased number of Native American characters in the narrative produces the potential for another positive feature present in *Longmire*: parallelism in portrayal. Specifically, obvious parallelism exists in number and role between prominent native and non-native characters in *Longmire*. This parallelism is atypical to the western genre, and it at least initially encourages the impression of racial parity. As noted previously, Walt is clearly aligned with Henry. The two are developed in concert becoming almost parallel protagonists in their function as longstanding allies. Likewise, Branch Connally and Chief Mathias are presented as parallel figures serving critical law enforcement roles. Finally, Barlow Connally and Malachi Strand emerge as paired antagonists in the narrative. These parallels in character, however, are not entirely positive. They develop not unproblematically, across both the racial and territorial divide between Absaroka County and *Longmire*'s unnamed Cheyenne reservation, and there are patterns implicit in them that warrant concern.

The most unfortunate feature of the parallels in character present in *Longmire* is the fact that they ultimately erode. The initial parallelism apparent in characters, both in their number and in their roles, is positive; however, as their relationships develop the parallels that appear to exist between major characters give way to more predictable and troubling hierarchies. Rather than preserve the parity between native and non-native characters that it initially establishes, *Longmire* undercuts it. *Longmire*'s invocation of traditional and racially biased tropes begins with the title character, Sheriff Longmire, not being paired with his functional equivalent in tribal law enforcement, Chief Mathias. Rather, from the onset, *Longmire* pairs Walt with his friend and ally, Henry Standing Bear. While this pairing has positive effects, the refusal to pair Walt with his true equal in law enforcement forces Officer Mathias into a lesser role even though he is Walt's functional equivalent. In terms of the volume of focus and character development, Officer Mathias does not approximate Walt in stature. As noted previously, he is more closely aligned to Officer Connally, Walt's “subordinate.” Moreover, while Officer Mathias does not intrude upon police investigations occurring off the reservation unless Walt requests that he do so, Walt repeatedly ignores the fact that his jurisdiction does not extend to the reservation (Banner). He regularly crosses onto the reservation and conducts investigations, never suffering any adverse consequences for this breach of tribal sovereignty. Rather, these breaches often advance the

investigation. Collectively, these features reduce the audience's impression not only of Chief Mathias, but also their impression of the efficacy and influence of tribal police.

Though positive in certain respects, the character pairing between Walt and Henry also becomes problematic when subject to analysis. As intimated at the opening, the most significant character pairing in *Longmire* is that between the title character, Sheriff Walt Longmire, and his friend and confidant, Henry Standing Bear. *Longmire's* emphasis on this character pair foregrounds the cowboy and "Indian" binary and challenges the traditional trope in a positive way by establishing these characters as old friends, not mortal enemies. *Longmire* goes even further to interrogate the traditional cowboy and "Indian" trope by prompting the two lead characters, Walt and Henry, to formally reflect on their respective roles. The characters do so by repeatedly unlocking, removing, and inspecting toy figures of a cowboy and "Indian" that Henry keeps in a safe. As the 2016 episode titled, "The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of" shows, the figure of the safe is as relevant as the toys it contains. It suggests that the conceptual figures of cowboy and "Indian" are long guarded and kept "safe" from alteration. However, by opening the safe, and having the main characters inspect the figures, *Longmire* illustrates not only the longstanding cultural investment in these figures, but it also creates an opportunity for their reconfiguration. And to an extent, *Longmire* encourages this recasting.

To be sure, *Longmire* should be lauded for challenging the traditional cowboy and "Indian" trope. By generating mutuality and trust between Walt and Henry, *Longmire* fosters a positive sense of the relationship that exists between these characters, and by extension, of the trust and mutuality that can exist across the racial "boundary" the characters epitomize.

At the same time *Longmire* all too often invokes the stereotypes it challenges, thereby subverting its ability to genuinely deconstruct the oppressive norms it engages. This is evident in the contrast that develops between Walt and Henry, and between Walt and other prominent Native American characters.

Throughout *Longmire*, the title character, Walt, is shown to be physically and psychically superior to everyone in Absaroka. Though *Longmire* ties Walt most closely to Henry, and the two men respect and rely on one another, the narrative communicates Walt's superiority to Henry repeatedly through features of the plot as well as through visual cues, specifically character size/scale. For example, Henry's subordinate stature is shown in the plot through his dependence on Walt, including the fact that Walt saves Henry from prison. Moreover, though Henry exhibits many positive attributes, he also regularly embodies the stereotype of the faithful Indian sidekick or "confidant" (Bataille xiii) relative to Walt. Walt's dominance over Henry is communicated visually as well. Walt is much larger than Henry; he dominates the screen physically, a feature amplified by the low angle from which he is shot as well as his dark brown coat. Indeed, this disparity between the size of the characters and their relative dependence on one another at certain times results in the uncomfortable reproduction of the power dynamic between the Lone Ranger and Tonto in "The Lone Ranger" (1949-1956).

The audience's impression of Walt's physical superiority is reinforced even more through his engagement with another important Native American character in the narrative: Hector. Walt's superiority is communicated most decisively in the episode, "The Dog Soldier" (2015) when Walt fights Hector. Here, rather than be juxtaposed to Henry, Walt is juxtaposed to Hector, a powerful character in the narrative. Those familiar with *Longmire* know Hector is a revered figure on the reservation. A professional boxer in his prime, Hector is a force to be reckoned with. In fact, it is

Hector who brings justice to the reservation when the law cannot. By all accounts, Walt should lose a fight with Hector. He is many years older than Hector and lacks professional training. Nonetheless, in the fight shown in the episode, Walt wins handily. Walt's decisive victory confirms, through visual means, that he is the superior figure, and that white makes both might and right. Hector may "live," but he loses to Walt.

Longmire also reinforces Walt's dominance as a character in another, deeply problematic way. *Longmire* shows Walt's superiority by appropriating Native American ceremonial practices and embedding Walt in them, suggesting, again through visual means, that he might be a better Indian than his native counterparts. Most notably, in an episode from 2013 ironically titled, "The Natural Order," Walt engages in the sacred "The Vow to the Sun" ceremony, a deeply significant ritual practice that U.S. government prohibited native peoples from performing in 1904. There is notable visual similarity between this scene and the parallel scene from *A Man Called Horse* (1970), which likewise embeds the white character in this sacred Native American practice. As was the case in *A Man Called Horse*, *Longmire's* appropriation of Native ritual for the purpose of placing the white hero at its center communicates the superiority of the white character and the dominance of white culture.

By consistently bolstering the audience's appreciation of Walt, *Longmire* denigrates the indigenous characters it works to elevate in other respects. Of course, virtually all other characters, irrespective of race, end up subordinate to Walt. Through its unequivocal elevation of Walt, the narrative ends up reinforcing and reproducing the long-standing myth of the (white) American cowboy even while challenging some stereotypes of Native Americans. Walt is the Great White Warrior. He is the lone cowboy hero who rides off into the sunset. For all its effort to challenge them, *Longmire* regularly invokes traditional and negative stereotypes of Native Americans. Henry is readily recognizable as the Native guide figure to Walt. Malachi Strand and Jacob Nighthorse fulfill the stereotype of inherently villainous and corrupt natives. And unfortunately, *Longmire* powerfully invokes the anachronistic trope of the "bloodthirsty" (Meek 119) savage in Season 3, Episode 9 "Counting Coup" through its portrayal of David Ridges (David Midthunder). A fierce warrior seemingly immune to death, Ridges is nonetheless no match for Walt.

In the end, even Native American characters who personify law and order in *Longmire* do not operate to elevate Native Americans as much as they could. They do not because they too suffer in comparison to Walt. We see this diminishment clearly when we look at the character in *Longmire* played by Zahn McClarndon, Chief Mathias, and compare this character to its visual double in Sterlin Harjo and Taika Waititi's critically acclaimed *Reservation Dogs* (2021). In *Reservation Dogs*, McClarndon plays Officer Big, who is almost identical in physical appearance to Chief Mathias. While these characters are virtually identical in appearance, they are by no means the same. Despite generating analogous physical impressions, viewers' sense of these characters changes over the course of each narrative. If we compare impressions of characters over time, our impression of Chief Mathias diminishes whereas our impression of Officer Big increases. While Chief Mathias proves to be less effectual than Walt and remains a static and underdeveloped character, Officer Big grows as a character in the eyes of the audience. Although Officer Big is ironically reduced to serving as comic relief in Episode 1 when he is blind to bandits stealing a vehicle in front of him, by Episode 5, Officer Big is aligned with the forces of good. His character is developed as the story progresses and he becomes an important agent in the narrative. This is not true of Chief Mathias who remains predominantly a foil to Walt.

As Chinue Adichie explains in her TED Talk, “The Danger of a Single Story,” failing to provide narratives that reflect the real racial and ethnic diversity that exists in our world precludes individuals of all backgrounds from fully understanding and appreciating that diversity. The comparison between *Longmire* and *Reservation Dogs* illustrates the critical importance of minority representation not just on screen, but in media production. It is not simply the case that the traditional producers of mainstream media need to work at improving minority representation and challenging the tendency to stereotype minorities such as Native Americans. It is not just the *how* and *what* of representation; it is the *who*. It matters who tells the story. It matters because who does the telling changes both the form and content of the story that is told. Stories about minorities need not merely to be told, they need to be crafted and produced by minorities themselves. While *Longmire* should be commended for contesting many stereotypes of Native Americans and for offering a more modern representation of Native American experience, ultimately it is a long way from what we need to see. Unfortunately, *Longmire* undercuts its own success because it is mired in the reductive stereotypes it challenges.

REFERENCES

- Adichie, Chinue. "The Danger of a Single Story." *Ted.com*. 1 July 2009. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story. Accessed December 21, 2021.
- Banner, Adam. "A Look at Netflix's *Longmire*, Indian Country and Battle for Jurisdiction." *Americanbar.org*. 16 September 2020. <https://www.abajournal.com/columns/article/indian-country-and-the-battle-for-jurisdiction>. Accessed January 1, 2022.
- Bataille, Gretchen and Charles Silet (editors). *The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies*. The Iowa State University Press, 1980.
- Buckley, Cara. "Native American Actors Work to Overcome a Long-Documented Bias." *New York Times*. 4 May 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/05/movies/native-american-actors-work-to-overcome-a-long-documented-bias.html>. Accessed September 22, 2021.
- Coveny, John and Hunt Baldwin, creators. *Longmire*. A&E/Netflix, 2012-2017.
- Deloria, Phillip. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. University Press of Kansas, 2004.
- Diamond, Neil. "Reel Injun." *Independent Lens/PBS*. 2010.
- Grande, Sandy. *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2004.
- Harjo, Sterlin and Taika Waititi, creators. *Reservation Dogs*. FX/Hulu, 2021.
- Howe, Leanna, Harvey Markowitz, and Denise Cummings. *Seeing Red: Hollywood's Pixelated Skins: American Indians and Film*. Michigan State University Press, 2013.
- Hunt, Darnell, Ana Christina Ramon, and Michael Tran. "Hollywood Diversity Report 2019." UCLA College of Social Sciences. February 21, 2019. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu>. Accessed October 18, 2019.
- Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn. *Celluloid Indians*. University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Meek, Barbra. "And the Injun Goes 'How!': Representations of American Indian English in White Public Space." *Language in Society*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2006, pp. 93-128., EBSCO Host doi: 10.1017/S0047404506060040.
- Moses, Michael Valdez. "Savage Nations: Native Americans and the Western." *The Philosophy of the Western*. Ed. Jennifer L. McMahon and B. Steve Csaki. University Press of Kentucky, 2010.
- Portman, Tarrell and Roger Herring. "Debunking the Pocahontas Paradox: The Need for a Humanistic Perspective." *Humanistic Counseling, Education, and Development*, vol. 40, 2001, pp. 185-199.
- Price, John. "The Stereotyping of Native American Indians in Motion Pictures." *The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies*. Eds. Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet. Iowa State University Press, 1980. 75-91.

- Raheja, Michelle. *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*. University of Nebraska Press, 2010
- Rosenthal, Nicolas. "Representing Indians: Native American Actors on Hollywood's Frontier." *Western Historical Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2005, pp. 328-352.
- Salzman, M. "Cultural Trauma and Recovery: Perspectives from Terror Management Theory." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2001, 172-191.
- "Globalization, Culture, and Anxiety: Perspectives and Predictions from Terror Management Theory." *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, Vol. 10, No. 4, October 2001, 337-352.
- Silverstein, Elliot, director. *A Man Called Horse*. Cinema Center Films, 1970.
- Soeder, Janna. "Vanishing Images?: Meditations of Native Americans in the Tradition of the Western." University of Maryland. Ph.D. Dissertation. 2019.
https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/22198/Soeder_umd_0117E_19823.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y
- Trendie, George and Fran Striker. *The Lone Ranger*. NBC/Universal, 1949-1957.
- Vestal, Stanley. "The Hollywood Indian." *The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies*. Eds. Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet. Iowa State University Press, 1980. 63-67.
- Warrior, R. *Tribal Secrets: Recovering Native American Intellectual Traditions*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

A Comparative Analysis of Native and non-Native Counseling Trainees during COVID-19

Lindsey A. Mixon, Amy N. Madewell, and Donna Wolfe
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

The field of counseling is growing at a rapid pace. According to the American Psychological Association (2020), since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 29% of mental health professionals recorded seeing more clients, 60% of mental health professionals recorded a surge in demand for the treatment of depressive disorders, and 74% of mental health professionals recorded a surge in demand for the treatment of anxiety disorders. Obtaining professional counseling licensure is both laborious and expensive, and with the average income of counselors in the Midwest being just \$45,780 a year (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021), the career holds little financial reward. Furthermore, due to the stressful nature of counseling, the risk of burnout is prevalent among mental health professionals (Yang & Hayes, 2020). As such, understanding what factors motivate students to enter the counseling field of study is imperative, as these underlying motivations may have an impact on career satisfaction and burnout among counselors.

TIME AND COST OF BECOMING A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

Obtaining a Master's degree in Counseling is both time-consuming and costly. In total, one must undergo eight years of education before licensure, including four years of Undergraduate education, at least two years of Graduate education, and a minimum of two years of Post-Graduate supervised clinical work with little to no pay (Gorman, 2021). In the U.S., the total financial investment of obtaining licensure is approximately \$104,000. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021), a counselor in the Midwest can expect to make around \$45,780 a year after licensure. This begs the question: what motivates one to enter the field of counseling when the career requires extensive education and licensure criteria, involves intense emotional strain, and holds little financial reward?

RESEARCH ON THE MOTIVATIONS OF PRACTICING COUNSELORS

While there is a limited amount of literature detailing the motivations of counselors in training to enter the field of counseling, there is a slightly broader amount of research detailing the motivations of counselors in practice.

Many mental health professionals enter the field because of their own trauma or hardship. In an analysis of the research on the motivations of working mental health professionals for joining the field, Farber and colleagues (2005) found that therapists often undertook the role of the caretaker for family and friends, and thus chose a career in which they could provide support to others. It was found that many therapists felt, “isolated, alone, sad, or hurt in their childhood and entered the profession in order to fulfill some of their unmet needs for attention and intimacy” (p. 1013). Additionally, Farber and colleagues determined that most practicing therapists were insight oriented and had a need to understand others. Another reoccurring theme found among therapists was the positive impact of personal therapy.

NATIVE AMERICAN “CARETAKING” CULTURE

In keeping with the theme of the “Caretaking” nature of counselors, adopting the role of the caretaker is important in Native American culture (Garrett et al., 2014; Heavyrunner & Morris, 1997). Native American culture values community connectedness and caring for others, and many tribal people base their identity on culture and community instead of personal accomplishments or monetary status (Garrett et al., 2014; Heavyrunner & Morris, 1997). With this knowledge in mind, one might assume that Native American students are drawn to the field of counseling not for the financial reward, but to care for others and to give back to their tribal community. Brendtro and colleagues (1990) illustrate the importance of being a caretaker in Native American culture in the following anecdote: “In a conversation with his aging grandfather, a young [Native] man asked, ‘Grandfather, what is the purpose of life?’ After a long time in thought, the [grandfather] looked up and said, ‘Grandson, children are the purpose of life. We were once children and someone cared for us, and now it is our time to care’” (p. 45).

Furthermore, Native American culture highly values the practice of storytelling (Heavyrunner & Morris, 1997). According to Heavyrunner and Morris (1997), “In essence we grow up with our stories. They are protective factors that convey culturally specific high expectations, caring, support, and opportunities for participation” (p. 3). Moreover, Heavyrunner and Morris (1997) state, “Being quiet and still is not uncomfortable to Indian people” (p. 4). As such, one could argue that Native American students might be drawn to the field of counseling to lend a listening ear; to hear the stories of others’ trauma and thereby provide support in times of hardship.

RESEARCH ON THE BENEFITS OF PERSONAL COUNSELING ON COUNSELORS’ PRACTICE

Many counselors, whether Native or non-Native, are naturally inclined to help others with their emotional burdens. However, if someone is constantly sharing the weight of others’ emotional burdens without also having a personal counselor, can they be an effective counselor themselves? To understand why it would be worrisome if a counselor did not believe in personal counseling, we must explore the literature detailing the benefits.

Norcross (2005) states that the personal counseling of practicing counselors, “is designed both to enhance the personal functioning of the [counselor] and to improve his or her professional performance” (p. 845). Many studies have suggested that it may be beneficial for counselors to undergo personal counseling prior to treating clients (Macran et al., 1999; Norcross, 2005; Orlinsky et al., 2005). Macran and colleagues (1999) interviewed seven practicing counselors about their personal counseling and how they believe it affected their clinical practice. In a qualitative analysis of the interviews, several common themes were found: (a) personal counseling helped to alleviate the stress that comes along with practicing counseling, thereby improving the emotional and mental stability of the counselor; (b) personal counseling brought forth awareness of the individual’s own areas of conflict, which helped to prevent these problems from interfering with the counselor’s practice; (c) previously being in the patient’s shoes allowed for the counselor to know exactly how the patient feels, resulting in more empathy and understanding for patients; (d) experiencing the methods that counselors use in their practice firsthand helped the counselors to master their own techniques; and (e) experiencing the benefits of counseling firsthand increases the counselor’s confidence in the efficacy of counseling. This study of seven counselors allowed Macran and colleagues (1999) to understand the various ways that personal counseling can have a positive impact on the professional practice of a counselor.

In keeping with the findings of Macran and colleagues, Orlinsky and colleagues (2005), in a research review across seven studies on the outcomes of personal counseling, found that 90% of counselors that had received personal counseling found it to be beneficial to their practice. Furthermore, Orlinsky and colleagues (2005) acquired data on the personal counseling experiences of over 4,000 counselors in over a dozen countries to find that 88% claimed they benefited positively from the experience. Orlinsky and Ronnestad (2005) also found that personal counseling scored among the top three ways to positively develop as a practicing counselor. Personal counseling was ranked above didactic ways to develop counseling skills, such as going to school and researching (Orlinsky & Ronnestad, 2005). Additionally, Norcross (2005) argues that technical competency is important, but rather than focusing on the techniques of counseling, the focus should instead be shifted toward the counselor as a person. According to Norcross (2005), “The cumulative results indicate that personal therapy is an emotionally vital, interpersonally dense, and professionally formative experience that should be central to the development of health care psychologists.” (p. 840). In his meta-analysis (2005), Norcross claimed that 90% or more of counselors were satisfied with their personal counseling experience, and that it is virtually impossible for a counselor to undergo counseling without emerging with a greater appreciation of the relationship between counselor and patient. With this knowledge, he proposed a few implications. He suggests that graduate school faculty recommend personal treatment for trainees, make personal treatment more available, professors model openness towards counseling, and class meetings should be held to discuss research on personal treatment for counselors (Norcross, 2005).

REQUIRED PERSONAL COUNSELING COURSES

With all the suggested benefits of receiving counseling prior to becoming a counselor, it may come as a surprise that only a few graduate programs and psychoanalytic training institutes require a course of personal counseling (Pope & Tabachnick, 1994; Roberts & Franzo, 2014). A study conducted by Pope and Tabachnick (1994) found that of the 84% of participants that had entered the field of counseling, only 13% had attended a Graduate program that required counselors in training to attend counseling- though 70% of participants believed that counselors in

training should be required to attend personal counseling to graduate. Counseling courses are rarely required to graduate, but that is not to say that counselors rarely seek personal treatment. A review of 17 studies comprising of more than 8,000 participants found that most counselors have received counseling at one point, equaling to about three quarters of counselors (Norcross, 2005).

PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

For the present study, we examined what motivates counselors in training to enter the field of counseling, specifically comparing Native American to non-Native students. Our goal was to determine if Native American students held different motivations and rationales for pursuing a degree in counseling compared to non-Native students. Furthermore, we aimed to determine the attitudes of counseling students towards the personal counseling of practicing counselors. Using a qualitative research strategy, we surveyed 105 students in the counseling department of a Midwestern university.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

We selected 105 students from a Midwestern university. The sample included students from the counseling program. Students could possibly continue in the school counseling or clinical mental health counseling tracks. Of the 105 students, 94% ($n = 99$) were female and 6% (6) were male. Ages ranged from 23 to 59, with an average age of 37.85. The mode age was 40, with a median of 38. The standard deviation was 8.56. Participants received course credit for participating in the study. Of the 105 participants, 79.4% were married, 2.8% were divorced, 9.4% were in a committed relationship, 6.54% were single, 0.93% were widowed, and 0.93% were other. Seventy-five percent ($n = 79$) were white non-Hispanic, 13.3 % (14) were Native American, 5.7 % (6) were Black persons of color, 4.8% (5) were Hispanic/Latino, and one person was Middle Eastern. Regarding the tribal affiliations of Native American students, the sample included eight Choctaw, three Cherokee, two Chickasaw, and one student from the Aroostook Band of Micmac Tribe.

MATERIALS

Students enrolled in an introductory course within the counseling program at the university were asked to complete a short online survey that included questions related to traumatic experiences, coping strategies, and to answer qualitative questions related to their beliefs and opinions on the field of counseling. The online survey was approved by the counseling faculty and the university Institutional Review Board. Due to the nature of the content, students were able to answer anonymously. This online survey resulted in the development of a more detailed understanding of the participants' motivations for entering the field as well as attitudes towards counseling. The use of this online survey was designed to encourage students to reflect on their own mental health. Finally, participants were given information related to counseling resources available to them.

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS AND CODING

To begin the qualitative questions, we asked participants if they had any experience with personal counseling in the past and/or present. Surprisingly, only 48% of participants said they had gone to counseling where 52% of participants said they had no experience with counseling. When focusing on the 14 Native students, only four (28.6%) reported a history with personal counseling. This small number of Native students with a history of personal counseling is alarming and should be investigated further to understand if this small number is related to a lack of resources or cultural perspectives related to the usefulness of counseling. At many counseling programs, personal counseling is not a pre-requisite to graduate, but it is highly recommended. At the current institution, many class activities and projects result in counselors in training thinking critically about their own mental health and locating possible topics that could result in a diminished counselor efficacy similar to the recommendations of Macran and colleagues (1999).

Next, participants were asked to respond to the following qualitative question, “Please explain why you decided to enter into this field of study?” The Native students responded with various topics that focused on a need to help their community, refer to Table 1 below for specific responses.

TABLE 1

Qualitative summary of student motivations for entering the field of counseling –

“Why did you enter the field of counseling?”

Caretaking exemplars	Counseling history (yes or no)
<i>“To be there for someone because no one was there for me when I reached out for help.”</i>	yes
<i>“I have a strong desire to help kids navigate hard times and come out better on the other side of a problem.”</i>	yes
<i>“I think it is a combination of my own life experiences with trauma, anxiety, and depression as well as my strong interest in psychology and mental health that led me to this field. It just happened naturally throughout my undergrad that I began to major in Psychology and quickly decided I wanted to work with individuals who had experienced trauma. Because I understand how severely it can affect one's life, and want to help people who have been traumatized, regain control over their life and find empowerment from it.”</i>	yes
<i>“To help people create an understanding of who they are and recover from experiences of life that may have had a negative impact on their life.”</i>	yes
<i>“I wanted to help others who may have been through similar experiences be happy and successful.”</i>	yes
<i>“I chose this field to help children overcome their traumatic experience in a more positive manner.”</i>	no
<i>“I believe this field of stud(y) is what I am supposed to do with my life. To maybe just help someone know that there is someone they can turn and talk to - to maybe help</i>	no

that person see that as long as you are still breathing, there is still a chance for things to be different.”

“I want to better help the kids that come through junior high that are struggling with emotional or behavioral disorders.” no

“My goal is to help others develop healthy coping skills to trauma. Plan to teach later in life.” no

“See the need in my students for someone to help them cope with life's problems and love them.” no

“I wanted to help those dealing with mental health issues primarily based on helping my husband with his PTSD.” no

Non caretaking exemplars

“I was asked by the current counselor if I would be interested. Students come to me all the time with their problems so I feel like it is just my calling. I also would like to help students with their academic plans.” (personal benefit) no

“As a classroom teacher, I recognized the great need that several students needed counseling services.” (personal benefit) no

“I love to make a difference in people's lives.” (personal benefit) no

Note. Five of the 14 Native students (35.71%) reported a history of personal counseling.

Next, we asked our counselors in training to reflect on the following statement, "Every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist!" In the table below, you can review the responses from the 14 Native students in relation to their self-reported experience with personal counseling.

TABLE 2

Qualitative summary of student thoughts related to ‘every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist’

Exemplars	Counseling history (yes or no)
<i>“I agree. That person may be a therapist, spouse, pastor, or best friend, but everyone needs a way to process life in a healthy way.”</i>	yes
<i>“I feel that in order to empathize or sympathize with our patients, we must have experienced something ourselves.”</i>	yes
<i>“Well, I think that is a little overstated, but I agree with the idea. I think most therapist at one or many points in their life would benefit both personally and professionally from counseling. I think it's important to find the right counselor though, for sure.”</i>	yes

<i>“I believe that everyone needs someone to talk to so that they may have a clearer perspective and find healthy ways to adapt.”</i>	yes
<i>“I think "every" is a strong word, but I certainly think that counselors could benefit from some of their own medicine occasionally or regularly. As needed.”</i>	yes
<i>“I agree. Although I have never seen a therapist, I probably should.” *</i>	no
<i>“My goal is to help others develop healthy coping skills to trauma. Plan to teach later in life.”</i>	no
<i>“I feel that this can be true, now as an intern working in the field I see the need to have a therapist of my own as well.” *</i>	no
<i>“I feel that everyone need some to be able to turn to about anything; for some it may be a therapist, but some peoples therapist could be a friend, family member, or their God.”</i>	no
<i>“Probab(l)y need to be in therapy!” *</i>	no
<i>“I’m honestly not sure how to answer that.” *</i>	no
<i>“I agree with it. I have no aversion to going to therapy, I just haven't seen it as a necessity yet.” *</i>	no
<i>“If a therapist/counselor is not in the right frame of min(d), they will not be able to perform to their fullest.”</i>	no
<i>“I think therapy would be needed to make sure you process the things we will encounter in this field.”</i>	no

Note. * denotes a realization of the importance of their need to begin counseling. Nine students reported no personal counseling experience. Five of the nine students (55.55%) reported a new realization of the importance of counseling after the completion of this activity.

CODING

In the survey, participants were asked open-ended questions such as, “Please explain why you decided to enter into this field of study?” and, “Many therapists state the following statement, ‘every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist!’ What are your thoughts on this statement?” The responses revealed three distinct themes. Some participants were enthusiastic about counseling, whereas others seemed unsure, and then others seemed as though they were not as interested in counseling as a whole. We labeled the groups as passionate, hesitant, and apathetic. If participants had positive responses to both questions, they were classified as passionate. If participants had mixed responses, they were classified as hesitant. If participants had negative responses to both questions, they were classified as apathetic.

PASSIONATE PARTICIPANTS

As shown in Figure 1, Passionate Participants had positive responses to both open-ended questions detailed above. An exemplar of a passionate theme is participant #11, a 44-year-old Native American female. This participant had suffered abuse at the hands of her stepfather for 11 years. As a result, she was in therapy for five years and she found it to be helpful. Supporting the findings of Farber and colleagues (2005), this participant entered the field of counseling because of her own trauma, stating that she wished, "to be there for someone because no one was there for [her] when [she] reached out for help." This response also supports the notion that Native students

may be drawn to the counseling field of study due to the caretaking nature of the career. When asked about her thoughts on therapists needing therapy, she replied, "I feel that in order to empathize or sympathize with our patients, we must have experienced something ourselves." Because she responded positively to both questions, participant #11 was classified as passionate.

Furthermore, participant #115, a 53-year-old female of the Choctaw Tribe, reported experiencing a physical assault. This traumatic experience led her to seek out counseling, which she also claimed to be helpful. Further supporting the findings of Farber and colleagues (2005), this participant entered the field, "to help people create an understanding of who they are and recover from experiences of life that may have had a negative impact on their life," and stated that, "everyone needs someone to talk to so that they may have a clearer perspective and find healthy ways to adapt." This participant's responses back the idea that Native American graduate students might be interested in counseling to listen to the stories of others and help them work through traumatic experiences.

FIGURE 1

Passionate Participants: Native Example Quotes

9 (64%) Native 64 (63%) non-Native	
Please explain why you decided to enter into this field of study?	Many therapists state the following statement, ‘every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist!’ What are your thoughts on this statement?
"To be there for someone because no one was there for me when I reached out for help."	"I feel that in order to empathize or sympathize with our patients, we must have experienced something ourselves."
"I have a strong desire to help kids navigate hard times and come out better on the other side of a problem."	"I agree. That person may be a therapist, spouse, pastor, or best friend, but everyone needs a way to process life in a healthy way."

<p>"I chose this field to help children overcome their traumatic experience in a more positive manner."</p>	<p>"When listening to others' problems, it is good to have someone to release all information to."</p>

HESITANT PARTICIPANTS

Some participants seemed to enter the counseling field for altruistic reasons, but did not agree that therapists should seek therapy, and vice versa. As shown in Figure 2, Hesitant Participants had mixed responses to the open-ended questions. A great exemplar of a hesitant theme is participant #21, a 26-year-old female with heritage in the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Cherokee tribes. This participant was abused by her stepfather from the ages of 11-13. When asked what motivated her to enter the counseling field, she stated, "I think it is a combination of my own life experiences with trauma, anxiety, and depression as well as my strong interest in psychology and mental health that led me to this field." This participant began therapy after attempting suicide at the age of 18. Supporting the findings of Macran and colleagues (1999), she stated, "I went back [to therapy] when I began graduate school and really found a lot of personal growth from it. It also helped me get experience from the other side of counseling, so I can relate better to my own clients." It is interesting, then, that when asked, "Many therapists state the following statement, 'every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist!' What are your thoughts on this statement?" this participant responded, "Well, I think that is a little overstated..." Because she has experienced the benefits of counseling herself, one may assume that she would believe every counselor should receive their own counseling. But because this was not the case, participant #21 was labeled as hesitant. When thinking about how to improve the training of counselors, it is important to determine why a counselor might adopt a hesitant attitude.

A potential reason that participant #21 believes the second question is overstated could be that she is unaware of how prevalent child abuse is. According to the National Children Alliance (2021), approximately 700,000 children in the U.S. are abused each year. The National Children Alliance (2021) goes on to state:

Nationally, neglect is the most common form of abuse. Three-out-of-five (nearly 61%) of victims were neglected only, more than 10% were physically abused only, and 7% were sexually abused only. Yet the statistics indicate a more complex problem where children experience multiple forms of abuse. In 2018, more than 15% of kids were polyvictimized (suffered two or more forms of abuse).

Considering the pervasiveness of child abuse, it is important for counselors to realize that trauma is more common than they might think. Because this participant has not received therapy for her own trauma, this raises the concern that her trauma may resurface when seeing clients that have gone through similar traumas. Regarding her statement that the second question is overstated, her opinion on this question could become more passionate as she matures in age and education, or, in contrast, it could result in an earlier rate of burnout due to her perspective.

Another counselor in training coded as hesitant was participant #15, a married 28-year-old female of the Cherokee tribe. This participant was from a rural community in Oklahoma with almost 40% of the population being of Native American decent, and with 30% of the population being below the poverty line (Census of Population and Housing, 2015). This participant experienced a traumatic event in which her father drug her out of her car and abandoned her because she wanted to go to church. After experiencing this traumatic event, she did not attend therapy. Regarding her motivations, she entered the field simply because she was asked by the current counselor if she would be interested. However, she agreed that every good therapist needs a good therapist, which qualified her as a hesitant participant. A possible explanation for the hesitant attitude of participant #15 could be that because her trauma occurred from her own father, a figure that is supposed to protect rather than abuse, she does not have a strong sense of self. Considering she is from a poverty-stricken area, it is not unreasonable to assume that she did not have the resources available to her to seek therapy, which could have helped her work through her trauma. Similarly, she would be at a higher risk of burnout.

FIGURE 2

Hesitant Participants: Native Example Quotes

4 (29%) Native	
24 (25%) non-Native	
Please explain why you decided to enter into this field of study?	Many therapists state the following statement, ‘every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist!’ What are your thoughts on this statement?
"I think it is a combination of my own life experiences with trauma, anxiety, and depression as well as my strong interest in	"Well, I think that is a little overstated..."

psychology and mental health that led me to this field."	
"I was asked by the current counselor if I would be interested."	"I agree. Although I have never seen a therapist, I probably should."
"I wanted to help others who may have been through similar experiences be happy and successful."	"I think 'every' is a strong word..."

APATHETIC PARTICIPANTS

Furthermore, some participants did not seem to believe in the power of counseling, and these participants were classified as apathetic. As shown in Figure 3, Apathetic Participants had negative responses to both open-ended questions. An exemplar of an apathetic theme is participant #41, a 59-year-old white female. Her motivation for entering the field of counseling was, "I enjoy the energy of young people and feel like I have skills and insight that could help them and help in a school setting." While enjoying the energy of young people is an excellent trait to have, this participant had no mention of counseling in her answer, and her motivations seemed to be self-serving. In addition, when asked, "Many therapists state the following statement, 'every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist!' What are your thoughts on this statement?" She replied, "Scary thought to me that the therapist is in therapy. Suggests poor coping skills and an inability to practice what is preached." It was clear that participant #41 was not passionate about the effectiveness of counseling, and for that reason, she was classified as an apathetic participant. This point of view, a direct contradiction to Macran and colleagues (1999), is especially worrisome, as research suggests that the mental health of counselors is imperative to their practice (Laverdière et al., 2018). A study conducted by Laverdière and colleagues (2018) surveyed 240 psychotherapists, and found that 20% of therapists were emotionally exhausted, and a further 10% were experiencing significant psychological distress. As such, one might assume that the therapists in the study experiencing adverse effects have the same mentality as participant #41.

Another exemplar of an apathetic theme is participant #75, a 25-year-old female of the Choctaw tribe. She entered the field, "to make a difference in people's lives." When asked her thoughts on therapists receiving therapy, she responded, "I'm honestly not sure how to answer that," which suggested a negative attitude towards therapists receiving therapy. It is great that she wanted to make a difference in the lives of others, however, like participant #41, there was no

mention of counseling in the response of participant #75. One could argue that wanting to make a difference in the lives of others would make participant #75 a passionate counselor. However, we argue that there are many professions that enable one to make a difference in the lives of others that do not come along with the emotionally burdening weight that being a counselor carries. Indeed, we believe that the mental health, job satisfaction, and lack of burnout among counselors requires a passion for *counseling*, rather than a passion for helping people alone.

Figure 3

Apathetic Participants: Example Quotes

1 (7%) Native 17 (12%) non-Native	
Please explain why you decided to enter into this field of study?	Many therapists state the following statement, ‘every GOOD therapist has a GOOD therapist!’ What are your thoughts on this statement?
“Wanted out of the classroom.”	"Scary thought to me that the therapist is in therapy. Suggests poor coping skills and an inability to practice what is preached.”
"Want out of the classroom and able to service more students."	"I don't think that a therapist necessarily needs a therapist.”
“It was recommended by my professor.”	"Don't necessarily agree."

RESULTS

ASSESSMENT OF COMMON THEMES

Our hypothesis stated that of the 105 participants, all will fall into one of three profiles: those passionate about counseling, hesitant about counseling, or apathetic about counseling. As hypothesized, three groups were found. Two subject matter experts coded the data to find the interrater reliability was high among coders and is equal to .92 with significance of $p < .001$. Thus, support for the hypothesis was found.

Unexpectedly, the results revealed a significantly higher number of hesitant Native American participants in comparison to non-Native participants. One reason for this result could be the historical trauma related to Native American culture.

The suppression of Native American Activist voices has a long history, dating back to the 1800s. According to Black (2021), “The policy of devaluing Native American life has been a persistent ideology in American biological relations with tribes since the first deadly pandemic outbreak in the New World: Smallpox” (p. 2) Frontier settlers of the New World, influenced by Calvinist Puritan beliefs, believed that infectious diseases such as Smallpox were a “tainted gift” from God meant to annihilate Native American people (Black, 2021). New World settlers used this belief to justify Native genocide, and due to the Native’s inability to survive the Smallpox pandemic, settlers labeled Native Americans as, “an inferior race who was not entitled to cultural or biological survival” (Black, 2021, p. 2).

But the devaluation of Native American life did not stay in the 1800s, as it is present even today. In March of 2020, as Washington State was under attack from COVID-19, NBC News correspondent Erik Ortiz reported on an urgent request made by a Native American health center in the Seattle area for testing kits and personal protective equipment. Instead, tribal members received body bags. This left the tribal community shocked, and sent the message that, just as with the Smallpox pandemic some two centuries ago, Native American lives are not worth saving. It is unsurprising, then, that only 9% of surveyed Native students felt that their opinion would be viewed as important (Hembrough & Cavanaugh, 2021), as for so many years, Natives have been sent the message that their lives are not biologically or psychologically valuable, let alone their opinions.

Furthermore, Black Elk—a traditional healer, holy man, and visionary of the Lakota Tribe, as well as an educator of his culture—“was a tragic prophet who channeled ecstatic visions of Indian pride and independence” (Neumann, 2016, p. 74). Born in 1863 in what later became Wyoming, Black Elk received a vision at the age of nine that altered the course of his life (“Black Elk,” 2020). His vision revealed his higher purpose: to restore the culture of his people to the way it was prior to the arrival of European settlers (“Black Elk,” 2020). In 1930, Black Elk met with writer and poet John Neihardt to tell the story of his life and vision. In the introduction of *Black Elk Speaks*, Philip Deloria stated that, “Black Elk shared his visions with John Neihardt because he wished to pass along to future generations some of the reality of Oglala life and, one suspects, to share the burden of visions that remained unfulfilled with a compatible spirit” (p. 16). However, according to Jackson (2016), Black Elk felt that he was unsuccessful in his educational endeavors, as “every path threw up another obstacle, and too often he thought he failed” (p. 483). Despite his best efforts, European settlers were successful in stealing the lands of his people and diminishing Indigenous culture. Indeed, Black Elk felt as though his role as a cultural bearer did not have any impact (Taylor, 2021).

As evidenced by the research, Native American people have a history of being marginalized, and the culture and opinions of Native people have been disparaged for centuries. Together these aspects could result in fewer Native Americans advocates. As such, one could assume that perhaps Native hesitant participants *desire* to be passionate about counseling and to help others but have so frequently been told their desires are unimportant that they feel as though, similar to Black Elk, their counseling efforts will have little impact, and have thereby adopted a hesitant attitude. Thinking back to participant #15, one could postulate that her Native heritage, in conjunction with abuse from her own father, led her to believe that her life is less valuable and therefore her opinions on counseling are hesitant.

DISCUSSION

Our goal in this study was to understand the motivations of prospective counselors as well as the attitudes of counselors in training towards personal counseling. In doing so, three common themes became apparent: those passionate about counseling (64% Native; 63% non-Native), hesitant about counseling (29% Native; 25% non-Native), or apathetic about counseling (7% Native; 12% non-Native).

In keeping with the findings of Farber and colleagues (2005), many participants sought to enter the field of counseling because of positive past experiences with personal counseling, and most participants had a strong desire to help others. Furthermore, most participants agreed that counselors need counseling of their own. Considering the flourishing body of literature detailing the benefits of personal counseling on counselors' practice, it is reassuring that most participants in the study entered the field with a strong desire to help others and felt that personal counseling would be a beneficial experience for counselors.

However, 37% of participants either entered the field with questionable motivations and/or did not believe that personal counseling is necessary. This is an alarming statistic, considering there is a plethora of literature detailing the benefits that counselors can derive from personal counseling. This statistic also opens the conversation of burnout among counselors, as well as counselor impairment.

According to Yang and Hayes (2020), "Burnout is a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Due to the demands of treating people with psychological problems, burnout is prevalent among psychotherapists" (p. 426). Burnout in mental health professionals is influenced by many different factors, including the mental health history of the individual, the nature of the individual's caseload, countertransference reactions, and lack of supervisory support (Yang & Hayes, 2020). Not only does burnout have an impact on the mental health professional, but it also impacts the extent to which clients benefit from mental health services. Luckily, though, personal counseling can be a very useful tool to combat burnout (Macran et al., 1999). But because some of the participants in the study do not believe that counselors should seek personal counseling, we believe these individuals are at a higher risk of burnout; negatively affecting both the counselor and the client. Additionally, because counseling is such an emotionally draining and stressful line of work, we believe that going into the field with questionable motivations can increase a counselor's chances of experiencing burnout.

Furthermore, failure to treat burnout can lead to counselor impairment (Lawson & Venart, 2005). According to Lawson and Venart (2005), "Therapeutic impairment occurs when there is a significant negative impact on a counselor's professional functioning which compromises client care or poses the potential for harm to the client" (p. 243). The impairment of a counselor as such does not mean that the counselor will engage in unethical behavior. Unethical behavior can, however, be a symptom of impairment, and the stressful nature of counseling can put counselors at risk for impairment. Lawson and Venart (2005) go on to say, "A common myth in the helping field is as follows: Since counselors are well educated about mental and emotional struggles, and because we are skilled at helping others address their concerns, we are somehow immune, or at least less susceptible, to struggles of our own" (pp. 243-244). This quote supports the idea that counselors do, in fact, benefit from counseling of their own. It is interesting, then, that many counselors do not receive counseling prior to beginning their practice, and even further, do not believe counselors should receive counseling in the first place. With that being said, we believe this study has important implications for the training of counselors.

LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that while we have a firm grasp on the motivations of the participants in the study, to date, we were unable to follow up with the participants after starting their practice. An additional limitation is that we do not know the specifics of which program students plan to matriculate. In a future study, it would be important to survey students from the application process to the beginning of their career in order to understand the impact of personal counseling.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Similar to the implications of Norcross (2005), we believe that graduate programs should passionately recommend counseling to students, as well as make counseling more readily available; be it through free counseling on campus or providing a list of counselors with reduced fees for students. In addition, professors should model their own willingness to attend counseling. These efforts may normalize the fact that counseling is a great, and perhaps necessary, tool for counselors to use; thereby reducing the number of counselors that are indifferent towards counseling and increasing the number of passionate counselors. Additionally, it may be beneficial for administrators to gain a firm understanding of a person's motivations for pursuing a degree in counseling prior to accepting them into their graduate program. Going forward, more long-term research needs to be conducted on the outcomes that going into counseling for questionable motivations has on counselors' practice.

Furthermore, for future directions, one could ask: what were the motivations of the 30% of emotionally exhausted and/or psychologically distressed counselors detailed in the study of Laverdière and colleagues (2018)? With such a high number of mental health professionals feeling emotionally exhausted and/or distressed, a longitudinal study could be beneficial to determine what motivated said mental health professionals to join the field of counseling in order to create a better understanding of how to predict and prevent burnout.

CONCLUSION

It is important to understand the motivations of counselors in training for joining their field of study, as such motivations may impact career performance, career satisfaction, and the mental health of both the counselor and the client. It is equally as important to understand why some counselors in training may choose to become counselors if they feel as though practicing counselors should not receive personal counseling. Due to the emotionally demanding nature of the counseling field, counselors are especially susceptible to burnout and impairment, which can lead to the harm of both the counselor and the client. However, personal counseling can be a vital tool for counselors to combat burnout and impairment. That is why it is crucial for counselors in training to join the field for the right motivations in addition to receiving their own personal counseling. Counseling can provide life changing benefits to people from all walks of life-counselors included.

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Psychologists report large increase in demand for anxiety, depression treatment*. American Psychological Association.
- Black, C. (2021) "James Fenimore Cooper's and George Catlin's COVID 19 Crisis: The Cultural Impact of Smallpox on Native American Communities." Paper presented at the 14th Biennial Native American Symposium, Durant, OK, United States.
https://whova.com/portal/webapp/nativ_202111/
- Brendtro, L. K., Brokenleg, M., & Van Bockern, S. (1990). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.
- Farber, B. A., Manevich, I., Metzger, J., & Saypol, E. (2005). "Choosing psychotherapy as a career: why did we cross that road?" *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 61 (8), 1009–1031.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20174>
- Garrett, M. T., Parrish, M., Williams, C, Grayshield, L., Portman, T. A. A., Rivera, E. T., & Maynard, E. (2014). "Invited commentary: Fostering resilience among Native American youth through therapeutic intervention." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43 (3), 470-490. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-013-0020-8>
- HeavyRunner, I., & Morris, J. S. (1997). "Traditional Native culture and resilience." *Research and Practice*, 5 (1), 28–33.
- Hembrough, T., & Cavanagh, M. (2021). "COVID-19 and the stress factors of Oklahoma College Students: Comparing Native Americans and Caucasians." Paper presented at the 14th Biennial Native American Symposium, Durant, OK, United States.
https://whova.com/portal/webapp/nativ_202111/
- Jackson, J. (2016). *Black Elk: The life of an American visionary*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Laverdière, O., Kealy, D., Ogrodniczuk, J. S., & Morin, A. J. S. (2018). "Psychological health profiles of Canadian psychotherapists: A wake up call on psychotherapists' mental health." *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 59 (4), 315-322.
<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.se.edu/10.1037/cap0000159>
- Lawson, G., & Venart, B. (2005). "Preventing counselor impairment: Vulnerability, wellness, and resilience." *Vistas*, 53 (1), 243–246.
- Macran, S., Stiles, W. B., & Smith, J. A. (1999). How does personal therapy affect therapists' practice? *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 46 (4), 419-431.
- National Child Abuse Statistics from NCA*. National Children's Alliance. (2021, September 21).
- Neihardt, J. G., & Deloria, P. J. (2014). *Black Elk Speaks: The Complete Edition*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Neumann, A. (2016). "Black Elk, Woke: On the remaking of a Native American prophet." *The Baffler*, 32, 172–181.

- Norcross, J. C. (2005). The Psychotherapist's Own Psychotherapy: Educating and Developing Psychologists. *American Psychologist*, 60 (8), 840–850. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.8.840>
- Norcross, J. C., Strausser-Kirtland, D., & Missar, C. D. (1988). “The Processes and Outcomes of Psychotherapists’ Personal Treatment Experiences.” *Psychotherapy: Theory/Research/Practice/Training*, 25, 36–43.
- Orlinsky, D. E., Norcross, J. C., Rønnestad, M. H., & Wiseman, H. (2005). “Outcomes and Impacts of Psychotherapists’ Personal Therapy: A research review.” In J. D. Geller, J. C. Orlinsky, D. E., & Rønnestad, M. H. (2005). *How psychotherapists develop: A study of therapeutic work and professional growth*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Pope, K. S., & Tabachnick, B. G. (1994). “Therapists as Patients: A National Survey of Psychologists' Experiences, Problems, and Beliefs.” *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 25 (3), 247-258. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.25.3.247>
- Roberts, L. C., & Franzo, T. B. (2014). “Requiring Personal Therapy for Counselors-in-Training: Application of an Ethical Decision-Making Model.” *Vistas*, 27 (1), 1-12.
- Stobierski, T. (2021). *How to Become a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)*. Northeastern University Graduate Program. <https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/how-to-become-a-licensed-mental-health-counselor/>
- Taylor, M. (2021). “Black Elk’s life speaks: “That much... more”” Paper presented at the 14th Biennial Native American Symposium, Durant, OK, United States. https://whova.com/portal/webapp/nativ_202111/
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2021). *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors*. United States Department of Labor. <https://www.bls.gov/Oes/current/oes211018.htm>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Oklahoma*. Census Bureau QuickFacts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/OK>
- U.S. Department of the Interior. (2020, August 31). *Black Elk*. National Parks Service.
- Yang, Y. and Hayes, J.A. (2020). “Causes and Consequences of Burnout among Mental Health Professionals: A Practice-Oriented Review of Recent Empirical Literature.” *Psychotherapy*, 57 (3): 426-436. <http://doi.org.ezproxy.se.edu/10.1037/pst0000317>

Black Elk’s Life Speaks: “That Much... More”

Michael W. Taylor
The University of Mary

We explore the Fourteenth Biennial Native American Symposium theme “Native Presence and Survival Shaping Native Futures”, via our understanding of how the life of seminal Lakota mystic and healer Black Elk speaks “that much... more” to shaping Native futures in the past, present and future.

In addition, this exploration integrates personal narrative and participant researcher experiences, with foundational/historical and contemporary, researched source materials (see full list of references). An example of foundational research contextualizing this paper is an interview with Black Elk’s great-great-great grandson, Maka Black Elk, highlighting historical, anthropological, and contemporary perceptions of Native people in general and Black Elk in particular (Taylor, M.W., personal communication, June 3, 2021). We then explore linkages between foundational/historical, contextual, and contemporary research.

We culminate by considering how Black Elk’s life “speaks” in terms of implications for shaping Native futures and *survivance* – the Native rejection of victimhood through active presence (Native American Symposium Notice, 2021; Vizenor, 2008).

NEXUS OF PERSONAL LIFE JOURNEYS & PERSONAL PREFACE

Personal life journeys have a way of unintentionally finding a collective nexus, particularly when the journey seemed to have a sense of consistent clarity. One such unexpected congruence includes the author of this paper, the man Black Elk, and his great-great-great grandson Maka Black Elk.

In retrospect, the ways in which these three people’s lives have crossed seem clearer due to stories of spiritual formation and plight. This is by no means to suggest that the three have experienced the same journey. Rather, when each journey is given the opportunity to speak for itself, in relation to other lives afforded the same emancipatory support, then context and complexity can deepen, connect, and even distort a sense of intercultural affinity. This affinity,

upon closer consideration, would appear to be more of a positive inclination to the other; and when such affinity is given space to flourish, this nexus becomes more evident (Taylor, 2019 & 2021).

For this author, a complex, even painful, autoethnographic journey to the self via a dissertation research endeavor provided the foundation for a positive juncture with unlikely 'others'. Though some may wonder how a self-study could structure a doctoral dissertation, those who have knowledge about this process vicariously via words written or directly by the author have seen that it is akin to peeling an onion to the core of one's most authentic self. The onion of this author's layered life was left open for those reading the dissertation study and subsequent publications, beginning with a personal preface (Taylor, 2012). In terms of personal preface, Douthat's (2018) bravery to stand in the face of publishing pressure and advocate for such a personal beginning is helpful company for those believe that such an approach is

a story that cannot be written about neutrality... So it makes sense at the onset to briefly lay out my own background and biases, the experiences and assumptions that I bring to telling of this very fascinating and very much unfinished story (p. xi).

This paper will unfold with scholars such as Michael Steltenkamp (2009, 1993, 1983), who also experienced a personal nexus journey with Black Elk; he describes his experience as illustrating "how the legacy of stereotypes... inherited obscures the flesh-and-blood individuals who are Native people." And like his journey, his focus on the life of Black Elk revealed a man "who has been characterized in ways that have spawned numerous images of the Indian world that are not entirely accurate" (1983, p. xii) – indeed, characterized in such a fashion not only inaccurate but also "expropriated and utilized on behalf of diverse forms of special pleading" (p. xv). Ultimately, by allowing Black Elk's life to speak, as the family stories in which his great-great-grandson Maka Black Elk shared "that much more," then Black Elk's life story "can shed light on the larger, more complex social system within which he lived." And in the process of the unfolding of this paper, the discovery of "far more than just one man's life will be better understood" (p. xii).

Beyond one man's life, are others who have encountered Black Elk at some stage in their lives who also have stories to share, this author included. Deepening the contextual nature of this paper are additional stories, namely those shared in multiple settings with Black Elk's great-great-grandson Maka Black Elk, who like Black Elk resides in the Pine Ridge Reservation, more specifically Manderson. Unlike Black Elk, who learned of others informally through journeys throughout the Great Plains and abroad to Europe, Maka was more formally educated at an Ivy League school, Columbia University, following an education at Holy Rosary Mission's Red Cloud School. Similarly, both Maka and Black Elk were not exposed to the darker chapters of boarding schools in the United States.

Nevertheless, both were not spared the ill effects of colonization which relegated an advanced culture of tens of millions of North American Native people to just below three hundred thousand by 1890, who were forced to live in isolated areas, akin to what some viewed as prisoners of war. If only such an experience was left in the past for only historians to sort out, and emotions to reside only on the pages these historians penned... yet millions today, whose roots flow back to the ancestors and contemporaries of Lakota healer Black Elk, suffer under the historical trauma

created by centuries of colonization. While many may aver that the most dramatic examples of such colonization are merely historical, many like Maka Black Elk, who nobly serve communities that continue to reel from the devastating effects of historical trauma, are enlisting the echoes of leaders such as Black Elk as a way of rediscovering a cultural identity, in the face of past and present attempts to obfuscate such an identity.

For those with some of the strongest historical roots – those who have a present-day impact on not only the restoration of cultural identity among Native people, and seek an opportunity for cultural healing among all people – Black Elk's story, which has been told to many, by many, may need another approach. What is suggested here is his life should speak, as opposed to another speaking for his life. In other words, by creating more access points to Black Elk's life, possibly his life can speak to more hearers whatever their plight, in an attempt to help them recognize one another in spaces once unfamiliar, thanks in part to the modeling of a healer whose life navigated both social mores and faith perspectives of other cultures.

Black Elk's story is remarkable on a number of levels and inspires even myself as a non-Native as I step into more and more cultural spaces and find affinity for those I was once separated from during the decades of the 60s and 70s, when I lived the rural and suburban life attributed to 'White flight'. Black Elk's start in life was not unlike others during his time or even today. Visiting his birthplace "...along the banks of the Little Powder River, [where] White Cross Sees [gave] birth to a baby boy named Kahnigapi ('Choice')", I couldn't help but ponder my own birth in Pontiac, Michigan to Rod and Phyllis Taylor, who were quite advanced in age as they brought two families together during the tumult of the mid-1960's. And yet as Black Elk matured in his younger years, his baby boy Lakota name evolved, as so many did, into his father's, Hehaka Sapa (Black Elk), a medicine man and cousin of the famed warrior and visionary, Crazy Horse. With these roots and family stories forming Black Elk was also a sense of belonging to the Oglala, one of seven bands of the Lakota, and "the name... now ran through four generations" (Oldmeadow, 2018, p. 33).

While most of his people would have lived within a radius encompassing what presently is the Montana and Wyoming border area, Black Elk's life became exceptional. The colonizing pressure exerted by a growing White American presence stretching from the east coast to the Great Plains troubled and displaced his family. While he did stay as rooted with his people as much as would be expected, Black Elk did venture to other lands a few short years following his adolescence, including to Europe. Stories abound regarding his exploits, like the following:

When the queen [Victoria] departed, her subjects bowed in honor to her, but she bowed to the assembled Indians.... Unable to speak English, they wandered around London until they were arrested by police as possible suspects in a crime that would later be associated with Jack the Ripper. An interpreter verified that they were not involved in the incident and suggested they connect with a smaller show that was comparable to Buffalo Bill's (Steltenkamp, 2009, p. 55-56).

Travels abroad are only a fraction of this seminal Native healer's life, which included events such as the Battle of Little Big Horn and the horrors of the Massacre at Wounded Knee. It is no surprise that many wonder at a life that began with participation in a thriving Native culture, experienced travels to Europe, and suffered seeing his people on the verge of total holocaust. DeMallie (1984) aptly drew attention to the salient question which this paper hopefully can bring to surface: "How was it that a nineteenth-century Lakota mystic could live a full half of the twentieth century on the Pine Ridge Reservation in harmony with the encroaching white man's world?" (p. xxii).

The balance of this paper is an attempt to understand more fully DeMallie's query by exploring this period of time through the lens of stories, which are critical to understanding Native culture, Black Elk included. A critical component of the stories threading through this paper is a contemporary view offered by a family member who has heard these stories passed down, namely Black Elk's great-great-grandson Maka Black Elk.

First, this paper will examine the context of stories prior to and during European contact, focusing first on Black Elk and his people as exceptional people, then an exploration of the impact of European contact fueled by the Doctrine of Discovery.

Second, the paper will zero in on representations of the Doctrine of Discovery specifically embodied in missionaries, and the impact their anthropology had on Native people such as Black Elk.

With this contextual backdrop, this paper will present in the final section an understanding of stories told to and by Maka Black Elk, which was shaped by seminal family members such as Black Elk, but also will indicate how such stories represent how Black Elk speaks today and into the future for Native people, in terms of the implications of survivance and decolonization, and how such implications may contribute to and reciprocate cultural healing.

BACKGROUND, UNDERSTANDING, CONTEXT: PRE- & EUROPEAN CONTACT STORIES

In an attempt to discern just how stories from a variety of sources may contribute to appreciating how Black Elk's life speaks, first and foremost a step back to the essence of Black Elk's people is important to understand just who the Lakota people were prior to European contact and colonization.

STORIES OF AN EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE

Both interviews with Maka Black Elk and background research seem to affirm that prior to European contact, as in the present day, the Lakota people self-identify as exceptional. This is in part due to the legacy of leadership demonstrated by people like Black Elk and others, not necessarily as skills exhibited by only a few Lakota, but as the behavior of all members together successfully overcoming the challenges of the Great Plains. As Maka shared,

Lakota people in culture in general, are a community that's just inclined to really accept that they're exceptional people. That was

just in vetted culturally, it was the case that for Lakota people, the way our society worked pre-European contact was that... We have these different words for leadership and for these different positions in leadership. And we have all these senses of different protocols and ways that leaders behaved and where this whole... You have to know the culture to understand that, but there's a real sense that life on the Great Plains... Especially pre-horse culture, but even after horse culture because horses didn't come until the 1500s, was incredibly difficult. And survival was really... Black Elk was perilous; it was a very difficult thing. (Personal communication/interview, 2021, verbatim)

While the exceptionality of the Lakota people at the time prior to European contact was characterized by unified perseverance in the face of the grit of Plains life, it was also grounded in a faith perspective predicated on a belief "...that what the Creator had given us was enough and that the place he had put us was where we belonged. We wanted to learn the Creator's original teachings in the land that he had given us. We were an honoring people, a guardian people..." (Nerburn, 2009, p. 299). Herein is where discord may have come at the hands of contact, as European ideas pervaded the ancestral lands where the Lakota people had lived for centuries, because those who eventually came for colonizing purposes would never quite be satisfied with enough, whether it be purely material or spiritual. Despite this discord and history, as the truth-teller of who ended up on the dominant side of the discord, the exceptional nature of Lakota people is what Frazier (2000) identified, noting, "a surprising amount of Oglala [Lakota] culture is the same today as it was in pre-reservation times... [it] still produce[s] heroes, despite the fact that the wide market for them seems to have waned... ...they have always honored warriors; and... children as well" (p. 19).

When attempting to defend a country or people rendered nearly defenseless by the hands of colonialism, ties to the land that bred such an exceptional people is what some students of Native spirituality would tie to a mystical attitude

toward the world... both practical and mythopoetic in their relations with nature. They knew the environment in impressive details... and... know the world as a connective unit whose parts – including themselves – existed only in relation to each other as a whole... All entities in the Indian worldview were potentially equivalent... American Indians depended on nature for survival, and in recognizing their dependence, they expressed a range of emotions from hope, complaint, and remorse, to fear... as expressed in prayers and offerings. (Vecsey, et. al., 1980, p. 16-17)

Consequently, it was within this legacy of exceptionality both in connection to the land and to one another both physically and spiritually that Black Elk was situated "to adapt to new circumstances and situations. The nomadic life gave the Lakota people a willingness to negotiate many changes

of environment and place... [T]hese qualities... found their source, strength and resilience in the way they lived with the supernatural” (Archambault, 1998, p. 25-26). Maka Black Elk put it succinctly, complementing a sense of the supernatural with the practical:

You had to place profound trust in leaders who show that they were smart enough, capable enough, made the right decisions, and who were humble enough. These are all the characteristics that show up into the Lakota values, that are important... And still to this day because of... Lakota culture, even pre-contact until now. We value people who step up and step forward and who show themselves being incredible leaders. And that's why we have all these significant names, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Black Elk, American Horse, all these people who at some point in their lives, demonstrated profound ability to lead. Black Elk has that status in the community and has had it for a while, where people find Black Elk to be fascinating. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

As a good summary to this section of the paper, Steltenkamp (1993) approaches Make Black Elk's sense of the exceptional. He also pointed to adaptation, noting that what some may try to fix historically

...was in fact still forming or evolving for this non-static Plains culture... [T]heir continued survival was as contingent upcoming a relationship with the Sacred as it was upon the forces they faced in everyday profane life... [which] becomes transparent only after a careful scrutiny of persons such as Black Elk whose generation strove to pass on this legacy. (p. 15)

STORIES OF DISCOVERY

Though stories of an exceptional Lakota legacy persisted for centuries in and around the Great Plains of North America, different stories of discovery were persisting on a broader scope from Europe, passing on a legacy often in contrast and eventually in direct conflict with the Lakota way of life. The blueprint for this story of discovery was the Doctrine of Discovery (DOD), which according to Charles and Rah (2019) emerged from a series of fifteenth-century official decrees, or papal bulls, by Pope Nicholas V that essentially granted permission

to King Alfonso V of Portugal 'to invade, search out, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens (Muslims) and pagans... and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed...and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and to all successors the kingdoms... possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit. (p. 15)

As the Doctrine of Discovery's interpretation expanded to North America, its indigenous people first welcomed those intent on not only discovery but assimilation of culture to the only culture ordained by such a doctrine. And while those indigenous may have been welcoming at first, as John Niehardt's daughter Hilda Niehardt (1995) observes,

...It [became] all strange and wrong to the invaded ones, but they could not stop the oncoming flood of whites, however bravely they fought against it. And so, as people do when faced with seemingly insurmountable difficulty, they turned to dreams and the hope of spiritual intervention... (p. 9-10)

In the attempt to access the spiritual realm for help against the strangers, the Lakota people, like other native indigenous peoples, turned to divine intervention via sacred ritual like dance. As Niehardt (1995) also points out, from initial contact to what most recognize as the time of the near-cataclysmic end of Native people,

Because most white people did not understand the meaning of all that dancing, which seemed foolish to them, it was called the 'Ghost Dance craze.' Thinking the nearly destitute, unarmed Indians were preparing for war, they called on the army for protection – protection from dancing! As history records, this vision of inspired hope of the Plains tribes ended tragically in the bloody snow of the Wounded Knee massacre on December 29, 1890. This happening would mark the end of organized Indian resistance on the plains. (p. 9-10)

“Where is the shame, the outrage, or even a day in court?” Some may ask this question when they become cognizant of such tragic events. With regard to legal considerations, there would appear to be ways in which those establishing a hold on the land with doctrine in hand may argue or have argued both ends of this case. Charles and Soong-Chan (2019) touched on cases in which Native communities were identified as “foreign entities” in terms of their relationship with the U.S. Government. For example, an 1831 ruling concerning the *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* stipulated “that Native tribes were ‘domestic dependent nations’ existing ‘in a state of pupilage. Their relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian’” (p. 103).

Herein lies the struggle even today when considering treaties such as the Fort Laramie Treaty and thousands of acres like the Black Hills and Powder River areas sacred to the Lakota and neighboring indigenous peoples. While it appears that treaties are binding with foreign entities, legal wordsmithing presently translates Indian tribes as wards in relation to the U.S. Government, and arguments for land retrieval seem to go mute, although recent developments among Native people in areas like Oklahoma may show a crack in such legal contortion. Overall, as Charles and Soong-Chan (2019) so fittingly opined,

When you are in possession of stolen property, and the people you stole it from are right in front of you, the only just thing to do is give it back. Whether you are attempting to hoard it or to share it is irrelevant. Both actions are unjust. White Americans are not superior to anybody. Turtle Island is not Europe's promised land. And you cannot discover lands that are already inhabited. (p. 131)

The superiority abounding in this story of discovery seems to be shared by a number of institutions, secular and religious alike – as such domination of a people such as Black Elk's Lakota people may not have been possible without collusion among such institutions. As hard as it may be to read the Doctrine of Discovery relative to the eventual establishment of the United States, along with Christian churches solidifying the superiority of a superior God over Native traditions. It is a story Maka Black Elk called “complicated,” because it is a story

full of a lot of pain, in terms of even just how Christianity came to this country. Just before you all came in, I was on a different Zoom call. I stood on this group that is writing... It's part of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Native American subcommittee. And they're writing the next pastor role plan for Native ministry. So they've got a number of people on, including myself, who are writing these different sections that will eventually come together. And the bishops will, hopefully they also approve it. And the section that I'm working on, that I was having dialogue within this Zoom group, was about that history and about how we have a very delicate responsibility... (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

The delicacy in terms of responsibility, past and present, referring to Maka Black Elk's involvement with the US Catholic Bishops is understandable, yet also considered is the decades of frustration expressed by those before Maka Black Elk, and today by those who express hope yet concern that some rhetoric may be more echoes of the Doctrine of the Discovery and the wreckage in its wake. Maka Black Elk (2021) expresses such an expression of hope yet frustration in this process of acknowledgement and possible action relative to the Doctrine of Discovery as Christian Churches and in particular the Catholic Church through its process of drafting various documents somewhat related to this doctrine,

When it comes to this idea of the continual encountering and conversion toward the Gospel, that that's the thing every culture is called to do. And that every culture can do, and it's not about replacing or changing that culture, it's about perfecting and deepening a relationship to God in any culture. That doesn't have to change who we are. That's often a narrative that's imposed on other communities. We never seriously sit down and say, 'Does white America still like to keep doing that? Or do they do that already? Did they figure it out?' What does the non-indigenous community in

this country, in this Catholic Church, what is their continued call to conversion? And how is that rooted in recognizing how they didn't do that historically, in the way in which they first encountered indigenous peoples? (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

So, it would appear with historical revelations abounding regarding the ills of the Doctrine of Discovery that within Christian churches like the Catholic Church, hierarchal wheels may need to move more promptly, which runs counter to centuries of pragmatism in the face of cultural winds; yet when considering those members of such churches whose ancestors and selves are still under the oppressive thumb of the DOD, it is as Maka Black Elk said in his own draft for the US Bishops that such bureaucracy

really gets in the way because according to the bishops I've spoken with about Doctrine of Discovery, they'll say, 'It was rescinded in 15 something.' Or they'll point to the... pope... Who follow-up, not follow-up, but to a different papal bull, talks about how indigenous people of the Americas have souls and are worthy of... And I think it was 30 some years after the initial Doctrine of Discovery papal bull. And so they'll always be like, 'Well, that's when it was repealed. That's when the pope then said "Nope, that was wrong."' (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

And as the interview continued along the lines of the Doctrine of Discovery and the culpability of Christian churches, especially the Catholic Church, it would appear there is further rationalization of what history's ills are and what distinguishes today's disposition regarding such history. For example Maka Black Elk (2021) shared that the oft-used reference to the Catholic Church's distancing itself from the Doctrine of Discovery centuries prior is a "Catholic cop-out." He went on to share that the Church's apparent distancing from the ill effects of the Doctrine of Discovery may be suspect precisely because of its lack of effect:

to anyone, especially on the side of the indigenous community, or the communities of color in general across the Americas will say, 'Okay. Your period 1520, did that change anything?'... Colonization, horrific violent colonization continued, even after you said that we have souls. Whoop dee doo. It's Catholic doctrine, so the adherence to it and the academic relation, well this idea changed during this papal bull here. The bishops need to recognize that that isn't good enough. That pointing out that it was a period a long time ago, in a different papal bull, isn't good enough because it didn't change behavior. (Personal communication/interview date, 2021)

Stories of discovery, though historically situated for the purposes of this paper, establish a context for Black Elk's life speaking from his life's beginning at confluence of the Powder and Little Powder Rivers to his gravesite in Manderson on the current Pine Ridge Reservation; it would appear such stories persist within the complexity that Maka Black Elk lamented during his 2021 interview. Sweeney (2021) called this story of discovery the colonialism of Christianity, an aspect of colonialism that has become "...the normative explanation for how Christianity functioned in the life of the Oglala and every other tribe of Native people... But we have such a hard time seeing... Black Elk for who he was if we cannot see beyond the mold of this common understanding" (p. 57).

A key point highlighted by Sweeney (2021) regards "seeing" Black Elk beyond this normative sense of the colonialism of Christianity. Herein is the challenge of Black Elk's life speaking past, present and future. Stories like discovery and doctrines such as the DOD must be fully realized as not necessary by those often immune from the historical trauma such readings inflict, and paradoxically, by those whose recognition is critical for a reciprocal sense of cultural healing to occur, with stories such as Black Elk's fully represented and critical as a model of such healing. In the spirit of healing, more stories and understandings must be shared, particularly those that bring into relief Sweeney's sense of the colonialism of Christianity.

STORIES OF CHRISTIANITY'S COLONIALISM

Colonization in general, is as dated in centuries prior to such complexities as the colonization of Christianity in general; nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, such colonization typified Black Elk's formative years, as Enochs (1996) points out: "In the 1870's and 1880's, the government divided the Sioux bands and restricted them to different reservations in the Dakota Territory. This undermined their national unity and obstructed their ability to hold their traditional national councils" (p. 85).

Regarding this undermining of tradition among individual tribes and inter-tribal relations by colonial efforts both Christian and governmental, Dussias (1997) argues that Native Americans are no longer subjected to such obstruction overtly like their "nineteenth-century ancestors," because there still does seem to be a skepticism "over whether their beliefs and practices are religious in nature, [presenting] difficulties in making their beliefs and practices comprehensible in non-Indians, and the privileges of property rights and other interests over their free exercise rights." Further, Dussais acknowledged that though the government's Christianization policy, which featured "overt suppression of traditional Native American religious practices," is not what it once was, still today, "freedom to practice their religion remains illusory for many Native Americans" (p. 851).

Though not as overtly intense, this sense of suppression of traditional Native American religious practice remains, despite the efforts of recent historical titans and some saints in the Catholic Church such as Pope John Paul II, who consistently advocated both in speech and church documents for "the dignity and rights of the native people of the Americas by insisting that they not be deprived of their freedom or the possession of their property" (As cited in Archambault, Thiel and Vecsey, 2003, p. 155).

Pope John Paul II pushed even further during a Pontifical Council for Cultures, issuing explicit instructions for the Catholic Church's contact with cultures by stating that the Church

“must welcome all that is compatible with the Gospel in these traditions of the peoples, in order to bring the richness of Christ...[and] to be enriched herself by the manifold wisdom of the nations of the earth” (Archambault, Thiel and Vecsey, 2003, p. 223). With a sense of momentum garnered from as significant a pope in Catholic Church history as Pope John Paul II, the United States Catholic Bishops affirmed and challenged Native American Catholics by affirming the Pope’s call

to... keep alive your cultures, your languages, the values and customs which have served you well in the past and which provide a solid foundation for the future. Your encounter with the Gospel has not only enriched you; it has enriched the Church. We are well aware that this has not taken place without its difficulties and occasionally, its blunders. However,... the Gospel does not destroy what is best in you... it enriches the spiritual qualities and gifts that are distinctive of your cultures... Here I wish to urge the local churches to be truly ‘catholic’ in their outreaches to Native peoples and to show respect and honor for their culture and all their worthy traditions... All consciences must be challenged. There are real injustices to be addressed and biased attitudes to be challenged. (p. 226-227)

It is hard to mistake the explicit language of the Catholic Church via one of its seminal popes, most noteworthy the urge to be truly catholic, almost echoing those missionaries centuries prior such as the Jesuits, who through their command of language and learning, without blemish, bridged cultural divides and faith perspectives, which is ultimately what drew key Lakota leaders such as Red Cloud and Black Elk into constructive relationship with Christianity via the Catholic Church. Yet, still recalling Dussias’ (1997) hopeful and sobering thoughts expressed earlier regarding overt oppressive barriers to traditional faith perspectives such as those held by “nineteenth-century ancestors,” there is this underlying “skepticism” regarding such Native faith perspectives religious in nature that are embodied in their beliefs and practices. Though Dussias’ (1997) apt analysis does identify a lingering challenge, in terms of cultural understanding and the pervading skepticism aforementioned, there is also implied hope, not only in the fact that outright brutal oppression to the point of genocide does not exist today in the US, but also more pointedly back to the intent of this paper and the ability for a cultural, iconic symbol in the person of Black Elk’s life, given the fully realized ability to speak. As Costello (2005) captured well to this end,

Even today Black Elk’s vision has a message that needs to be heard... [he] teaches us that the problem of Western expansion was not in bringing the gospel to the Lakota; instead... was not hearing the gospel. The focus on nonviolence, equality, and the rejection of greed – the firm rejection of colonialism – is the witness that Black Elk’s vision preached and still preaches to Western Christianity, to the church, and to the broken world. Despite the tragedy of Western colonialism, there is still hope, there is still time to hear and respond to the gospel. Black Elk, a great saint of the colonial era, still calls

all people through his vision and the witness of his life to hear the Lakota Christ; colonialism must end so the sacred tree may one day bloom for all people. (182)

In order to discern further both the skepticism and hope that result from Western colonialism, it may be helpful to turn to the academy, and those who were charged with understanding Native people during the past few centuries' Christian colonialism. Though newer to the field of human cultural anthropology, academics were sent to the field to understand Native people as they wrestled with the rapidly unfolding traumatic events. In many senses, it was this academic discipline that helped establish the sense of skepticism today, despite what we know more accurately of research and stories of Native spiritual tradition and custom.

STORIES OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology is a broad field, but its practitioners provoked strikingly surgical colonizing implications most notably in the area of Native spiritual practice. Even though most in the academy during the initial exploration of Native culture centuries past were aware of the multiplicity of tribes throughout North American, this sense of diversity seemed to abate when considering spiritual practice. Realization of such a phenomenon was affirmed during the interview with Maka Black Elk, who had made reference to a singular as a “misnomer,” because of the varied spiritual beliefs, traditions and practices exhibited by “hundreds of tribes.” Overall, Maka Black Elk described “early anthropologists” as

trying to categorize and make sense of the Native American spirituality, Shamanism and Animism was the main categorical marker. But that really creates a false picture of what, certainly to some Lakota people, what they believe. Because with Shamanism, they did it like you worship the medicine man or you worship the sky, this human being who you believe is holy figure. And that's what our religion was initially classified as, was Shamanism, an Animistic Shamanism. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

Hindsight, if 20/20, may lead some to speculate when judging the errors of the academy past; yet even a cursory review of relations among both religious and/or academic bodies can see some lingering effects of perceptions of animistic shamanism. Even following Niehardt's (1932/1971) seminal work *Black Elk Speaks*, and Joseph Epes Brown (1971), who also had direct contact with Black Elk a few years prior to his death confessed, “...almost all he said was phrased in terms of involving animals and natural phenomena. I naively wished that he would begin to talk about religious matters, until I finally realized he was, in fact, explaining his religion” (As cited in Vecsey, et al., 1980, p. 1). And while some still were convinced of some kind of pagan roots of Native spiritual practice, similar to Epes Brown's realization, others came to see what Maka Black Elk described as “illuminating” in terms of what Native people like the Lakota believed in “one God, one Creator, one Spirit.” In fact he went on further to share as a family descendant that when “Black Elk himself talk about how this idea [one God, Creator, Spirit]...

there's a center and that that center is the Creator. And that part of our job is to recognize that that center is in each of us and is everywhere" (Personal communication/ interview, 2021).

The complexity of Native spirituality and historic misinterpretation from disciplines like anthropology and even additional emissaries of colonization like missionaries did not end with this sense of animistic shamanism; other layers of complexity existed, including the symbol of the Trickster, which was not a static one. According to Radin (1972), the Trickster was another clue into the insight of Native spirituality; paradoxically, "no generation understands him fully, but no generation can do without him," as he helps to personify the differentiation of "god and man... present within every individual" (p. 168-169). Often this paradoxical, symbolic approach via such a Trickster figure was one of other ways that Brown (1971) observed that

The Indian actually identifies... with, or becomes, the quality or principle of the being or thing which comes... in a vision... In order that this 'power may never leave... always carries... some material form representing the... object from which... [he] received... 'power.' These objects have often been incorrectly called fetishes, whereas they actually correspond more precisely to what the Christian calls guardian angels, since for the Indian, the animals and birds, and all things, are the 'reflections' – in a material form – of the Divine principles. (p. 45)

Complexities abounding within Native spirituality, and their parallels with the Christianity of those viewing Native people historically anthropologically and otherwise, seem to have some areas which may be far from intersection or even reconciliation, according to seminal Lakota healer Black Elk, who DeMallie (1984) said, refused to accept a troubling view expressed by missionaries "that the Lakota religion was evil, the work of the devil..." And although Black Elk seems to have accepted Christianity, "he nonetheless still believed that the Lakota religion was good and true and that there was something in it of value not only to the Lakotas, but to all mankind" (p. 93).

Whether deemed evil, pagan, shamanistic or animistic, continued words of encouragement appear at times through cracks in a wall of perception layered by centuries of misperception. One representative thought comes in dialogue and correspondence with Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland and Native Americans:

Their spirituality was called pagan; the boarding schools served to weaken the social system which might have served to sustain many individuals. The Church looks upon the Indian more positively now. One priest... called their old religion the purest form of religion. (As cited in Archambault, Thiel and Vecsey, 2003, p. 193-194)

Again, while these various evolving thoughts about Native spirituality is encouraging, what is required is more dialogue with Native people in general, and Native scholars in particular.

Oldmeadow (2018) aptly pointed to the difficulty for those who view Native tradition from the outside, or the “educated mind”, “to understand their preoccupation... with all things of the Universe, as shown in their myths and hundreds of songs... every created object is important simply because they know the metaphysical correspondence between this world and the real...” – a preoccupation that Black Elk saw as a significant, spiritual understanding within all of us (p. 150).

In terms of Black Elk specifically, Brown (2001) said that he was speaking a language that was sacred and metaphysical and grounded in the living realities, “in the immediacy of one’s experience.” Often this experience was modeled by Black Elk himself who “could describe his religious experience in this manner because he... did not dichotomize human and animal, nature and supernatural.” And in this example often modeled by Black Elk, the typical Western distinctions between animism and animatism made it difficult to validate as present to the Native American experiences, since all forms and aspects of creation are experienced as living and animate...” As Brown continued with his analysis supported by “abundant recorded materials,” it seemed to affirm a Supreme Being “common among most, if not all, Native American peoples well before the coming of white people and Christian missionaries” (Brown, 2001, p. 83-84).

One constant, well before the coming of others in contact with Native people, has been the nature of language in relation to cultural identity, as Vecsey (1991) poignantly describes: Native beliefs “are encased in, and manifested through, linguistic structures that are... foreign to English-speakers... always exist for non-Indians in translation, through filters.” Vecsey also points out that while accessibility is available throughout time, the discernment of Native beliefs, “like all religions,...are historically permutable.” With this shifting sense of change over history, confronting the challenges of colonization, for example, Native people have attempted to “discover ‘access points’ ... to the sacred that are often impossible to know before the dreams or visions that reveal them.” Despite this, Vecsey cautions, where control is properly ordered in terms of underlying regularities concerning where such access points to the sacred are most located in space and time, and where entry into the sacred is most common (although not guaranteed), “the ultimate control of this process is in the hands of the spirits, who must decide if the supplicant or petitioners are worthy of admission to the sacred” (p. 104). This notion of space and time is supported by Jackson (2016) who referred to the “*wasichu* God” as the god of time who acted in history and would come to judge the righteous and unrighteous, the quick and the dead, and the “Indian God as the god of space, not time. “Whereas the white God called people forward to a future kingdom, the Indian God was ever-present, in the plains and lakes, not so much imminent as always there” (p. 287).

The intricate nature of this spiritual devotion, when discerned, can provide perspective. Brown (2001) points to the romantic, superficial nature in which Native religious traditions are depicted. Black Elk once again surfaces as an exemplar who can, as he did for Brown, explode “romantic [ideas] about these manners...” As Brown came to understand, the close relationship between the human and the natural that is shaped by sacred values has a helpful pragmatic dimension, assisting with the perception of the “complexity behind romantic stereotypes [that] can help us all understand that a respectful, sacred relationship with the natural world can still be sustaining” (p. 86). A similar reflection was shared by Maka Black Elk, who said this was Black Elk “expressing what is a very complex view of God.” Further, Maka opined, Christians at the time lacked a full sense of this view expressed by Black Elk. Despite this historic deficiency, Maka hopefully, yet pragmatically said,

We're getting there today, a bit better. But he's talking about this singular force, this singular creator, that is at the same time this one entity. But that is also, at the same time, in all of us and everywhere and in everything that we... Releasing in all those creation, that universality of a creator. That to me is something that he understood. I think he even understood that Catholics at the time probably didn't full get that. And he was trying, in his own way, to enrich the Catholic faith with what he was relating to it. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

Black Elk appears to have been able to navigate the stormy relationship between Native spirituality and Christianity, as a result of his Oglala cultural heritage, which Sweeney (2021) offers as “centered around many ideas and practices wise and valuable.” Sweeney comments further that these earth-honoring ways were undiscovered by Euro-Americans, who customarily believed there was no such thing as Native American civilization. In fact, Sweeney continues, “the perception of Native life was not cultured but stunted and static.” And while this perception persisted tragically as colonization deepened its genocidal grips on Native people, movement away from such tragic perceptions of culture did not occur “until the birth of cultural anthropology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (Sweeney, 2021, p. 8). Such critical notions of culture, as Sweeney alludes, are noteworthy in the field of anthropology, since it has experienced difficult treatment to this juncture of the paper; and it has been the gift of cultural anthropology and research by the likes of Jesuit priest and more modern anthropologist Michael Steltenkamp (1982) that has created more dialogic space among faith perspectives such as the monotheistic notion of God he points as appearing

to have existed... carefully identified with natural features so much a part of daily life. And even though this may sound as little more than a pantheon of spirit-entities comprising Native systems of religious thought, zealous Catholics might be reminded of their own regard for, or entreaty of, saints and angels. The truth is that something more profound seems to have been operative which neither caricature really admits. Both traditions reveal a persistent belief in the existence of a mediating, personal assistance which is supernatural, or wonderful. (p. 94)

Fair enough, in terms of comparisons and contrasts made across spiritual dimensions in which considerations were leveled, pagan and otherwise, and also between Christian denominations. Yet, when it comes to the response from the Native community, Steltenkamp allows that traditionally, Native people

have not constructed boundary-lines for behavior and thought the same as we have. Indian groups did not, as a whole, discriminate between spiritual and non-religious pursuits. Dividing the two would be a meaningless fabrication because the life-cycle was perceived as a sacred, ongoing, and inter-connected process. Theoretically, at least, Christians expose the same. (p. 86)

And finally, relative to this section, the impact of early anthropology and other perceptions of Native spiritual practice and culture overall by seminal historical phenomena such as the Ghost Dance, stand as examples. Native people thought such a dance would restore Native culture from the death grip of colonial genocide. Warren (2015) rightly points to historical phenomena like the Ghost Dance as an anecdotal practice to be resisted in terms of positioning it “within the non-progressive/progressive binary...” Further as Warren highlights when referencing the warning of “many scholars”, singular phenomena like the Ghost Dance

[are] a poor tool for understanding Indian motivations... it divides Indians into two camps: one objectively refusing all change and purportedly destined to be swept aside, the other supposedly willing to assimilate to the American order and ‘progress’ toward whiteness... Indians regularly confounded these expectations by combining old and new in novel formulations, mapping out alternate strategies to remain Indians while accomplishing other goals – and nowhere more so than in the Ghost Dance. (p. 145)

Similar to Black Elk and the complexity of him speaking to John Niehardt and others, including his great-great-grandson Maka Black Elk, there still is a regular confounding of expectations by Native people in terms of tradition and new formulations, mapping out alternative strategies to remain Native. Additional examples and stories must also be accessed of those non-Native who remained in most persistent contact with Black Elk and his Lakota people missionaries such as the Black Robes or more accurately translated Black Gowns.

STORIES OF MISSIONARIES, BLACK ROBES/GOWNS

With a sense of colonizing Christianity established, and the influence of social sciences like anthropology fueling fires of paganism and other “savage”-like descriptors of Native people, essentially crafting a narrative far exceeding the reality of Native culture, there were additional stories. Some of these stories stemmed from particular missionaries who were both precariously fueling such fires and periodically transcending the rapidly forming colonial Christian narrative by actually seeking to discern deeper Native spirituality and other customs through trusting and lasting relationships. While rafts of research exist to demonstrate the work of many other denominations’ missionaries, for this paper a particular group of missionaries, the Jesuits priests primarily from Germany, will be highlighted as an example of those who straddled both the colonization of Christianity and attempted a decolonized approach.

The Jesuits, who served the Plains region of North America where Black Elk and the Lakota people resided, were known through Native translation as the Black Robes or more accurately Black Gowns. These were an exiled group from Germany, which was experiencing rebellion from the bottom up, like other European countries during the mid-1800's. In this upheaval, Jesuits left as refugees from their homeland to North America to only be in community with Native people who were also refugees from their own homelands, if not prisoners of war confined to camp-like reservations (see Red Road documentary...). Both groups, while distinctive in a number of ways, had a common bond of not knowing English well, which was the dominant colonial language in which all manner of education was to be obtained, including religious instruction. This common bond, with the acknowledgement of imperfection given some of the colonial measures levied by the Jesuits, was the basis for some common understanding, if not posited trust, as Maka Black Elk shared through his own family stories (Personal communication/interview, 2021).

These stories shared are not without blemish, as both Natives and Jesuits tried to navigate the chasm of language and custom. A particular story shared that nearly derailed the Jesuits' relationship not only with Black Elk but the Lakota people as a whole were encounters with some Jesuits who perceived Native religion more as Shamanistic Animism. Both John Neihardt's daughter Hilda (1995) and Maka Black Elk recount a specific encounter symbolic of such tension, when Black Elk attempted to heal a sick child as a "youthful medicine man." A Jesuit priest who also came to pray and heal "grabbed young Black Elk and pulled him rudely outside. Then he took Black Elk's sacred rattle, threw it to the ground, and stamped on it, admonishing the surprised young man that he should never use such 'heathen' objects again..." (H. Neihardt, 1995, p. 88-89). Maka Black Elk adds more vivid and emotional description handed down from family stories by recounting the encounter between Black Elk and the Jesuit priest, who admonished him:

"Devil be gone." Or, "Satan be gone." And that's a moment that even his [Black Elk's] own daughter said that he never liked to talk about. Well, there's a reason why he didn't like to talk about that, probably was because it was painful, and certain parts in him that gave him pause. So he was living in a reality, where he was trying to understand what it meant to be a Lakota person in this new existence, that was very different... (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

With language being a common matter, with both Jesuits and Lakota people learning English practically simultaneously, additional stories through Maka Black Elk's family demonstrated an additional gesture by Jesuits that transcended the relationship of exiles learning English to a quality of "more trust" afforded to the "Black Robes" as the result of an effort by the Jesuits to learn and be able to communicate in the Lakota language. This conveyed to the Lakota people in general and healers such as Black Elk in particular a desire on the part of the Jesuits to build relationships "more inclined to starting off as equals... all in the span of these years, which showed extreme commitment to learning the language and communicating with... elderly medicine men." One of the distinctive elements concerning the Jesuits, according to Maka Black Elk's familial accounts through story and subsequent study as a scholar in his own right (thus

illuminating this “affinity”), was an academic inclination of Jesuits to having “dialogue about faith, and intercultural senses of faith, and belief in God.” So exceptional was (and in some senses still is today) this affinity in Maka Black Elk’s recount of story and study, is that he said, “I don't think if the Black Robes weren't around...he [Black Elk] may not have had the same kind of engagement and even theological depth, that he was able to get without that...” (Personal communication/interview, 2021).

Even with this constructive development despite a colonizing Christianity were glimmers of coexistence showing promise, but it was not without overwhelming eruptions of historical trauma embodied in seminal years of tragedy symbolized in just over two weeks, “In the moon of the Popping Trees [December],” when the Lakota people heard that Sitting Bull was dead. News carried fast from the reaches of Sitting Bull’s death at this camp on the Grand River to the Agency [Pine Ridge], where another story of historical trauma was brewing, as Niehardt (1970) gleaned from Black Elk: “soldiers were camped there too, but they did not bother us because we did not dance.” Black Elk recounted further that as the news permeated the people at Pine Ridge, the people “were starving and many of them were sick...” And while this news settled upon a starving people, soldiers began to surround people who were assembled “by Porcupine Butte and took them to Wounded Knee Creek.” As Black Elk witnessed somewhat later and many experienced sooner in what most would today call the Massacre at Wounded Knee, the “next morning... all at once we heard shooting over there across the hills... They kept on shooting fast... They are butchering over there...” (p. 246).

As desperate and traumatic as the histories of both Sitting Bull’s death and Wounded Knee prevailed on a people whose stories started this paper as exceptional and now near extinction due to many examples of massacre such as Wounded Knee, enter again the Black Robes who offered refuge to a fallen Lakota people who sought refuge in many natural settings in the frozen land of Pine Ridge in late 1890, but also the Holy Rosary Mission, where bullet holes remain from soldiers who chased Native people seeking refuge at the Mission. One can only imagine the gathering of a traumatized people at a mission like Holy Rosary, with the Black Robe Jesuits, who “more than any other group, filled the spiritual gulf created by Wounded Knee, and they did so by occupying a middle ground between the old word and the new.” Both Natives and Jesuits shared the story of “exile from one’s native land.... [and] Pain and suffering – their acceptance and endurance – were the nexus of both Catholic and Lakota identity.” (Jackson, 2015, 351-353).

This sense of the complexity of relationship in the midst of a colonizing Christianity, is best summarized in this section regarding stories of missionaries by Surgirtharajah, who describes how missionaries often occupied an “ambivalent social location in a colonial situation.” Further, the author articulated how missionaries “participated in colonial practice and often shared the Western view of the essentialized native.” And with the imbued nature of this practice, there was still a practice that transcended such colonialism with a particular type of

missionary work that put them into close communal contact with the colonized... often influenced or required... to engage in native cultural practices and language, which allowed them to see the colonized as human beings. Despite their inability to extract themselves completely from colonial practices, this contact also led missionaries to critique colonialism explicitly... [creating a]

'dissidence,' where the Christian narrative is used by missionaries to challenge colonialism from within the system. (Cited in Costello, 2005, p. 17).

Black Elk was at the epicenter of this sense of close communal contact, bringing his own version of "salvation history... at least partially influenced by retreats he attended with the Jesuits... from the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. The retreats were called *hamble iciyope* 'crying for a vision'... Black Elk attended eight retreats..." (Costello, 2005, p. 132). Overall, Black Elk and other Lakota people may have felt this opportunity for such contact, due to the Jesuits' ability to stress the "universality of the [Catholic] Church," whether the relationship between Native Americans and Mary via an "ethnic connection to the Mexican Native Americans...." Or, this sense that both "Catholics and Lakotas believed that people had visions and also that supernatural beings appeared to people... The Jesuits tended to accept as inspired those dreams and visions that led people to the Church" (Enochs, 1996, p. 122).

Again, with full consideration of the ills brought also by missionary endeavors, possibly undervalued is the discernment of the Jesuits' understanding of the problems of the Lakota and the desire to advocate for justice and change in areas like "government policy... in a sea of white apathy and hostility" (Costello, 2005, p. 25-26, 33-34).

An important point summarizing this section, and one of the more telling qualities of this particular approach to missionary work that broke some bonds of a colonialist Christianity was "by retaining the indigenous language for mission activity, the Jesuits asserted (perhaps unknowingly) a claim in opposition to colonial ideology...." A noteworthy priest symbolic and still mentioned in various Native communities is "Francis Craft, who was of Mohawk decent, [who] may have participated in the Sun Dance.... Craft later compared the Sun Dance to the Eucharist... [and] called the government-banned Ghost Dance 'quite Catholic and even edifying'" (Costello, 2005, p. 25-26, 33-34). Another priest known even more widely is De Smet, who is often noted for saying that "Native American religion and politics were well-developed cultural institutions... their intelligence was 'far above the medium of uneducated white men'" (p. 38).

STORIES FROM BLACK ELK'S FAMILY TREE AND BRANCHES SPEAKING "THAT MUCH... MORE"

Twiss (2015) aptly noted that when it comes to the value of stories, fundamentally, "stories are people, people are stories, and stories are alive." Ironically, and often unfortunately, such stories are "never fully explained." Paradoxically, while the non-Native community may undervalue or be skeptics of the reliability and validity of such stories, when considering issues germane to this paper for example, in terms of Black Elk's life speaking, Twiss also noted an essential clarification regarding the power and influence of the story, not necessarily lying in the "exact correctness of its telling, but in the life of the 'teller' and in the 'telling (difficult to nuance with a link on a page)" (Twiss, 2015, p. 191).

So, it is these stories, and the context established leading to this point undergirding such stories, that has established a foundation for what Maka Black Elk, via a series of interviews, has gleaned for most of his life just surpassing three decades. And while some of those stories have been already shared, critical to the discernment of Black Elk's life speaking possibly fully and

more accessibly to a more comprehensive range of people, a helpful metaphor is that of the family tree and its various branches that most families tend to identify generally and more particularly situationally.

BEN BLACK ELK BRANCH – “PRODUCT OF HIS TIME”

Maka Black Elk is situated in the branch of the Black Elk tree that follows from Ben Black Elk. And while this branch has thoughts about Black Elk himself, ranging from traditional Lakota healer to devout Catholic convert, it is the alchemy of these stories relative to Black Elk's genesis as a seminal healer among his people that Maka Black Elk seems to embody when he shares,

that's where certainly my own feelings come into it, being a Lakota person myself, who is Catholic, being a descendant of his, coming from the branch of his family who believes that his Catholicism was inauthentic. If you're familiar with that whole split, in terms of his descendants and how they feel about his Catholicism. And so, that has informed certainly my own sense of who he was and what my family told about him. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

As a helpful overview Maka Black Elk assisted with making this interviewer familiar with Black Elk, his descendants' thoughts about him and the condition in which he ascended by elaborating that,

there's one branch of the family that believes that his Catholicism was really just more a product of the time. I just imagine that when he was a young man first entering reservation life, reservation life was incredibly restrictive, moving was restricted, the ability to access resources was really restricted. Poverty was just incredibly high, and freedom was incredibly low. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

And while there wasn't complete consensus among the lineal descendants of Black Elk, according to Maka Black Elk, there appeared to be consensus surrounding a perception of him as “someone who was deeply invested in understanding God, trying to help other people understand... and a deep interest in how people thought about God.” Further, while Black Elk's spiritual prowess crossed all familial branches in terms of consensus, it is important to highlight another agreement among family which was “his academic interest.” (Personal communication/ interview, 2021).

Regarding this academic interest, both Mark Black Elk (2021) and Steltenkamp (1993) sound similar thoughts of Black Elk developing a “worldview that included more than the Lakota Reservation experience. This background provided him with new perspectives... that later proved advantageous in his work as a catechist. His travels gave experiential substance to what he said” (p. 69). One of the motives for expanding his horizons and moving beyond the restrictive nature of the ever-constricting reservation life – though many in his community perceived his ventures with skepticism, envy, if not outright disdain (Sweeney 2021) – Black Elk seems to have believed

that sojourns with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, for example, was a good idea, "because I might learn some secret... that would help my people somehow... Maybe if I could see the great world of the Wascichu, I could understand how to bring the sacred hoop together and make the tree bloom again at the center of it" (p. 36).

So, motive creates opportunity, which echoes why some of the Black Elk descendants view Black Elk as an opportunist in terms of his conversion to Christianity, namely Catholicism. In fact, according to Powers and Rice, they see Black Elk's motives relative to Christianity "...as a strategy to protect his people... dealing with a conscious strategy rather than an inevitable process (syncretism)..." in the attempt to "preserv[e] traditional values and institutions" (As Cited in Holler, 1995, p. 207). Steltenkamp (2009) also echoes familial stories, noting that when it came to Black Elk's exceptional ability as a healer to be a medium for visions, they were "...neither parochially Lakota nor insularly Catholic... they entailed a cross-fertilization of Christian and Lakota traditions that was enriching to both..." (p. 123).

This ability to be a medium of visions persists from Black Elk's youth through adulthood, both among his people and while traveling abroad. Steltenkamp (2009) notes further that it is "not surprising" that Christian themes and images should appear in this vision, considering his familiarity with Christian teaching gained while in Europe. And by bridging his experience abroad with that of a newer spiritual phenomena associated with the Ghost Dance, which promised a return to exceptionality and a release from the shackles of colonization, "...Black Elk's vision was the crucified wanikiye (the man standing against a tree with arms outstretched and wounds in his hands)" (p. 63-64).

LUCY BLACK ELK BRANCH – "TRUE CONVERT"

If the complexities of stories prior to colonial contact, during contact, and now within the wake such contact, particularly mired in the impact of trauma, were enough to put a bow on the discernment of Black Elk, Lakota culture, and implications of survivance today, then this paper could come to a conclusion.

Nevertheless, as with other misconceptions drawn about cultural engagement, complexities, though identified, seem to be avoided or denied for a variety of reasons, usually relating to their ability to not only lend discernment to historical context, but also to present and future implications. The same holds for this alternate branch of the Black Elk family were due to the colonization of Christianity and self-attested to providential reasons. Black Elk's daughter Lucy represents an adaptive development in Native spirituality which Maka Black Elk identified as the "complete opposite" of others related to Black Elk because she felt that,

his Catholicism was a true conversion. And that ultimately, prior to his death, he then spoke against the Lakota tradition and felt that he really fully erased his Catholic faith in that, these traditions that he grew up with weren't worth keeping, that renounces that. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

And while Maka Black Elk shares Lucy's zeal for the Catholic faith and inspiration regarding Black Elk's conversation, his take on Black Elk's conversion is somewhat more tempered than Lucy's. In fact, he likely represents the most nuanced sense of Black Elk's life speaking today, to Native and non-Native people alike. Maka shared that he did not think Black Elk ever "renounced his traditions," rendering his conversion to Catholicism somehow "inauthentic." Rather, Maka pointed to Black Elk as a

complex person, who was really existing in a place ahead of his time, where he had figured out how to be a Lakota person who was also Catholic, and that he didn't find conflict in those things. He saw conflict all around him, but I don't think he felt a personal conflict within himself. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

Jackson (2016) delved deeper into analysis of family thoughts regarding who articulated this complexity, when drawing attention Lucy Black Elk's concern with "Ben [Black Elk] at the helm." Jackson went on to stipulate that, "Given the later direction of his thought, he may have shown too much interest in the old ways to make Lucy comfortable..." In fact Jackson elaborated further that Lucy had "come of age" at a time when her father's old religion was banned and Lakota language and culture had been vigorously suppressed in Catholic and government schools. Overall, similar to what may be evident in any son or daughter honored with the legacy of a father, Lucy Black Elk was in fact "proud of her catechist father: he was an honored man, and through him, she had community standing" (p. 413).

Steltenkamp (1993), who had the most significant contact with Lucy Black Elk prior to her passing, thought that following Black Elk's death in 1950, the funeral closed the book on Black Elk's life "and further illumination seemed left pretty much to anyone's speculation..." Yet, Steltenkamp happened to meet Lucy Black Elk at Holy Rosary Mission while he was teaching at the school during what he identifies as a smoke break. It was a needed break, most likely, as Steltenkamp had been desperately doing his best to enliven a sense of Native culture while attempting to relate to Black Elk's story to students at Red Cloud Indian High School. On a bench outside the mission school, a woman shared, "When I was a little girl, I came to school here, and so did my brother Ben..." It was at that moment that Steltenkamp surmised that the "illumination of Black Elk's life was in fact alive and not left to speculation due to the chance encounter with Black Elk's only surviving child..." Consequently, researchers from that point on, including myself with interviews with Maka Black Elk, share his sentiment that such encounters with Black Elk's lineal descendants provide a critical and distinctive, if not imperative, opportunity "to help... understand more deeply just who her father was" (1993, p. xviii).

It may be possible in summarizing this section of the paper, that Steltenkamp represents a second generation of those privileged to lean into the sacred stories of culture bearers such as Lucy Black Elk, similar to John Niehardt and Joseph Epes Brown, who heard stories directly from Black Elk. There is a temptation to posit that the stories shared by Maka Black Elk indicate another generation of culture bearers. As tempting as this may be, it may be premature, as emerging generation of "digital Indians" as David Treuer (2019) identifies – though wise beyond their years due to direct engagements with Native people through various encounters, such as: the Dakota Access Pipeline and Enbridge Pipeline protests, among other advocacy-based occurrences and

other educational insights gleaned at conferences and with graduate students – should be given room for their stories to unfold and season, otherwise, the risk of the same tired romanticized, caricature of Native people, most often led by non-Native scholars may pervade, reverting progress into the traps set historically and lingering today in terms of colonialism.

MORE STORIES & PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK ELK SPEAKING “THAT MUCH... MORE”

Since it has been established that there is a proposed opportunity for the complexity of Native culture and subsequent stories to flourish with another generation of Native people in general and for this focus on Black Elk and his life speaking to his people relative to survivance, another key focus critical to capitulate here may be inherent in the sage recount of family history and complexity Maka Black Elk's mother shared as another lineal descendant, who had also heard family stories from her father and grandfather.

For example, when the stories were told relative to John Neihardt's book *Black Elk Speaks*, the recounted stories would say that the “level of spirituality discussed is this much.” Maka shared that the accounting of such stories would entail gestures of hands or fingers showing a small gap of just how much Neihardt's book captured, while, “living our lives as Lakota people, are aware of and experience this much.” This assertion would be accompanied by a gesture that “grew bigger than what even Neihardt was able to capture” (Personal communication/interview, 2021). This same account was captured in an interview when another researcher asked Charlotte Black Elk about her great-grandfather and the book *Black Elk Speaks*:

To tell you the truth, I've never had the inclination to sit down and read it... Being related to someone like Black Elk brings a sense of responsibility that's not very gratifying sometimes, especially when you're a kid. I guess I never really felt I had to read it. As my Grandpa Ben told me, the book is about this much (thumb and forefinger an inch apart) and you already know this much (arms wide apart). (As cited in Frazier, 2000, p. 119)

As often is the enticement with various researchers and Niehardt's seminal work (1932/1971) to critique such works with the luxury of hindsight, Maka Black Elk puts in good perspective Niehardt's position as the first generation of those who encountered individuals like Black Elk and the way in which their life spoken and speaking can be responsibly given care and consideration. Maka shared “a revitalization movement toward traditional, spiritual life,” which is to be credited and honored along with the way in which, “Black Elk himself continuing to teach those traditions while he was alive, and the book *Black Elk Speaks* really documenting our traditional practices and beliefs, were major ways in which people were able to go back to those traditions and revitalize those efforts” (Personal communication/interview, 2021).

MAKA BLACK ELK BRANCH – “TRUTH SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE”

The John Niehardt debate continues, in terms of where his seminal work *Black Elk Speaks* situates the discernment of Black Elk per se, but also Native spirituality in general. Lakota spirituality today, in the face of challenges associated with survivance, a few descriptors of this phenomena would appear to be common ground to situate this final portion of the paper. First, due to *Black Elk Speaks*, as a descendant of Black Elk himself, Maka stipulated in an interview that due to this documentation and account of such Native practices and beliefs, there is a reference point from which efforts in terms of revitalization piercing centuries of colonization can occur, therefore leading Native people to more of an authentic cultural identity. Second, since this does not all rest on the shoulders of Niehardt's work, but in company with his work, additional accounts, including Native scholarship, can enter a contemporary dialogue with the next generation of Native people like Maka Black Elk, who can by example and scholarship discover ways in which these historical accounts of Native spirituality have present-day relevance as a means to survivance in the face of oppression and colonization, still in force today.

Maka Black Elk presents his great-great-grandfather Black Elk as someone historically, culturally, and presently imminent, whose life spoke and speaks today as a “straight up theologian... medium, paragon, medicine man...” to Native people, yes, but also in the spirit of the Lakota saying *Mitákuye Oyás'ı̃n*, all are related. And similar to the spiritual path that all embark upon, Black Elk included, there is a development toward what Maka identified as a “truth somewhere in the middle,” which a life modeled and exemplified by Black Elk and Maka for that matter in this author's earlier account from his family experiences. Maka went on further to share Black Elk's spiritual journey in this fashion, as he discerned through his own familial ties:

So Black Elk, I think early on, along with a lot of his fellow medicine men contemporaries, would have been people who were engaged in theological discussion about God, with priests, with each other. And Black Elk was just a paradigm among them, he did have a way of expressing his visions, which we believe. We know in Lakota tradition; visions are directly coming from our creator. That they're for medicine men to interpret, but that they are coming from God. Yeah. Just the way you would think of an educated Catholic, the worldview of the prophets. And so that's what they're given that status of. But Black Elk was just a luminary under that regard. His ability to express deep theological concepts, in these really beautiful and powerful ways, was unparalleled in his time. I think that's just what makes him unique. And I think even for my own family, who again, disagreed that he was authentically Catholic. (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

Once again we see the tension of a community in response to the pressures of outside forces relative to colonization, and then internally as to what the response may be. With the various tensions developed earlier in this paper of viewing Nicholas Black Elk as possibly an “instigator of traditional revitalization in traditional ceremony and practices and belief” or “venerated... being someone who took from that prayer life and was this bridge between cultures and fake traditions”

or even more intensely as a “traitor... giving up these details of our traditions, opened us up to white scrutiny,” which Maka shared came from a “space of our traditions, and our ceremonies were outlawed and banned and even persecuted with punishment.” Which reveals a very real question for others to ponder who struggle with such varying tension among Native people from the outside in which such an exemplar as Black Elk in their midst whose life can speak to an ascendancy through challenges of survivance: “Why would we ever want to reveal those again to the people who condemn them?”

And as Maka shared further, this sacred way of spirituality toward this truth somewhere in the middle is, as he described for some, a “secret. And so he's seen as someone who betrayed that” (Personal communication/interview, 2021). At first blush confusion can rein in terms of how such a significant person to a culture can be perceived as something so alienating as a traitor, yet perspective is key when reflecting on other cultural, spiritual accounts of people who come along within other cultural groups and attempt to be such a “straight up theologian... paragon” or even paradoxically a “Lonestar,” and other significant descriptors as Maka mentioned relative to Black Elk. And while there are many to offer within this paper's limited space, it should be widely held as one example in the story of Jesus of Nazareth, who also experienced discord within his own people, yet by this spiritual tradition he was (and to many still is) the Son of God, who was maligned by those inside and out to the point of execution.

Even though Black Elk died in 1950, and other significant spiritual leaders well before, their legacies still play out within a shroud of tension that runs the gambit of transformation to violence. And with the potential canonization of Black Elk as a saint by the Catholic Church, being currently identified in the early process as a Servant of God, such ranges of tension are currently unfolding. The question is, will history be a guide in the face of such tension and be a product of cultural healing, or will the more tired and historically traumatic story persevere? Maka Black Elk shared the reality of both:

...there are people, who again, see him as Catholic and then when he becomes a saint, that would be a validation of that. If and when he becomes a saint. And then there are people who see him as a product of service, a very complex history. That he, in some ways, is a sell out traitor. Sold our traditions to this highest bidder who then made profit off of it via the book. Makes profit off of our traditions and our stories and our beliefs, and to see him as having basically failed us in a way by doing so. So there's really a gamete of views and I think if Black Elk were to become a canonized saint, that would only intensify. For sure. And there are people who believe the Catholic Church is doing this on purpose because this is another way for them to continue the evangelization process, and to try and sneak Catholicism back in again, to people who don't want to... (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

Yet, with the dire possibility of tension unfolding that could replicate the trauma of history, Maka shared that there may be hope in this process of canonization of Black Elk, as possibly all of the thoughts of Black Elk embodied in this current tension of canonization could be held

differently in terms of a constructive process embracing all tension whereas, “Catholics who have no idea about Lakota people, history, having that being now to confront it in a way that they haven't been asked to, up until that point.” Maka referenced the example of Native American Saint Kateri Tekakwitha as a process approximately ten years ago that held promise for a productive balance of tensions, yet as he mentioned, his “feeling is that her canonization, even though I find her story personally certainly compelling and beautiful.” He shared that the “social impact” may have not had the reach as intended with possible cultural mis-steps regarding historical accuracies of her life to even accounts during the actual canonization where most likely unintended cultural faux pas occurred:

And there are pictures of that celebration, there were these Catholic nuns in full hat with them were wearing these sort of costume store-bought headdresses with orange and green and blue feathers and yellow feathers. And I was like, "No, why did you do that?" And I think that spoke to a lot of what other Catholic people and Catholic people have said, "Yes. We want to celebrate to Saint Kateri." But in a way that made her... That cheapened to extend her potential. And communicate to us that, still the wrong lessons are being given to non... Catholic people, that this felt more like a costume to them... (Personal communication/interview, 2021)

Jackson (2016) echoes this dilemma relative to the cause for sainthood and Native people with his depiction of writers painting Black Elk for example as an “the old man as a bridge between the beliefs of the Old World and the New...” Further, Jackson described the cause for the sainthood of Kateri Tekakwitha as a process in which “not everyone is thrilled by the idea of sainthood: “...a Lakota woman working in the Catholic mission at the nearby Rosebud reservation flinched at the news... She shook her head in disgust, but refused to say more...” And as Jackson notes, “Yet the process has already begun. Two documented ‘miracles’ are required by the Catholic Church to make someone a saint, and the search is under way (for Black Elk)” (p. 15). Healthy skepticism would seem to be warranted based on past precedence when considering cultural missteps within and outside of religious causes such as sainthood. MacCannell approaches such skepticism with his analysis of any case of an “ethnic group” selling itself in an image of itself or “*museumized*,” where the local community “is forced in varying degrees to meet the tourists’ expectations of what qualifies to be exotic” (As cited in Costello, 2005, p. 143).

And with such a newer exposure of Native culture and spirituality misinterpreted with an expectation of what qualifies to be exotic, Kidwell (2001) distilled even more preciously as issues with “control of sacred knowledge,” which is “essential to the integrity of native religions.” What is at stake relative to control of such knowledge is historically,

Non-Indians have seized on this idea of esoteric knowledge to sell workshops and sweat lodges to people seeking spiritual enlightenment. Articulate political leaders are sometimes cited as sources of traditional knowledge, but they are generally not the

custodians of tradition. Sacred knowledge resides in the elders who have heard the stories of previous generation. (p. 3)

So, with the benefit of stories of previous generations – and overall all the blunt history it has when shared from multiple cultural perspectives, as this sense of Black Elk speaking again – the critical point may be not as either saint or Lakota, but possibly both/and. Something Sweeney (2021) points out is, “Christians who are troubled by Black Elk’s conversion seem to expect that he will disdain his Native background in ways that he clearly did not” (p. 78). And among other reasons articulated in this paper, Kidwell, et al. (2001) articulates well at its root of seeing one religious progress as solely binary, let alone Black Elk, “It is not reasonable to expect that any human being is ever able, consciously or not, to jettison all the cultural and spiritual baggage of experience” (Kidwell, et al., 2001, p. 133). Continued contemporary voices offer insights here with Black Elk’s place historically as if at times as a wishbone among spiritual forces, both Native and non-Native, centered around questions such that as posed by Sweeney (2021) and answered by another contemporary voice David Treuer: “Was Black Elk a true Lakota in the second half of his life?”

Many Indians prefer not to think about Black Elk’s later years and consider his conversion as a kind of surrender, a confirmation that the old ways were in fact dead. Maybe, maybe not. Black Elk was determined to live and to adapt. That doesn’t make him less of an Indian, as I see it; it makes him more of one. (Cited in Sweeney, 2021, p. 86).

A point of “both/and” instead of “either/or” relative to Black Elk’s determination to live and adapt making him not less of an Indian, but more of one, is illuminated by Maka Black Elk. When considering the impact of a newer story shared about Black Elk as a possible saint and those who may come again to his homeland areas as they did when inspired by *Black Elk Speaks*, Maka notes, “it’ll be really important to start to make sense of where they’re coming from and who’s bringing them, and what’s the relation there, and what learning are they getting or not getting. And then when they get here, what learning are they getting?”. And what “they” are learning and getting in relation to one another as again Native and non-Native people encounter one another around this person of Black Elk, there is a “potential” and “inevitability” for cultural healing to occur, yet again Maka offers a caution in terms of additional learning and “getting,” on the way to such healing and discernment:

The Lakota community is not a monolith, and so there will be people who deeply struggle with what will happen if he becomes a saint, there are people who will be deeply affirmed. There’ll be people who just see it as another attempt at forced assimilation and just ongoing conization. And all of the in-between, and I think it may just be a mixture of. So there will be diverse reaction, certainly from the Lakota community, just like there might be diverse reaction from the

non-Lakota community. The problem I see, that I hope that can be different this time is, what the church didn't do with Saint Kateri, is it didn't engage in a deep conversation about the complexity of its history with indigenous peoples. We sort of all took it at face value, that this Mohawk woman was made a saint and there was nothing wrong with that, and that her story was unique and representative of the ease that native peoples in Catholicism have had. (Personal communication/ interview, 2021)

Within in this complexity and tension inherent in a process of canonization of a Native American such as Kateri Tekakwitha – or Nicholas Black Elk, for that matter – is what Reverend P. Michael Galvan said, at least for “Native Catholics” is a tension that “has been well documented in such classic works as *Black Elk Speaks*, *The Sacred Pipe* and *The Sixth Grandfather* to see the Lakota holy man’s struggle...” Galvan continues:

For many... the tension between practicing the Native ways and the Catholic ways has been paramount. To deny either our Native or Catholic roots causes some identity confusion... We need to remember that transformation, conversion, does not occur in relation to certain abstract principles, but in response to one’s experiences and stories... this conversion must take place within the context of their own experiences and stories.” (As cited in Archambault, Thiel and Vecsey, 2003, p. 209)

And so, the conversation about the complexity of history with indigenous peoples’ own experiences and stories continues, and hopefully carries forward a number of stories that have emerged within this paper. As Thomas Merton keenly observed, what is needed for others to participate in this conversation about complexity and cultural healing is an understanding of “a certain level of mysticism...like on a spirtual illumination beyond the ordinary conscious...” (cited in Oldmeadow, 2018, p. 18). While this illumination is not exclusive to any particular cultural group it can be “taken for granted as normal part of life in an archaic culture,” often missing an “essential component in the concept of a mature human personality” (p. 18). If anything can be gleaned from the stories shared, and scholars supported thoughts in this paper, it would be the opportunity for more shared spiritual illumination that while perceived as separated by cultural barriers like language, often are not separated by symbolic representations. As Holler (1995) observes:

Freud decisively misunderstood the truth claims of religion, which are not the same logical type as scientific propositions, but are instead symbolic. It would then be religion ‘means’ in somewhat the same way as a work of art means – through the medium of culturally conditioned symbolic expression. (Holler, 1995, p. 216)

Included in what Holler constituted as symbolic progress would be a form of communication not only bound in words, as Brown (2001) elaborates; rather “silence itself constitutes language” for many Native cultures, and conversely for those of us in Western culture, there is often a “fear of silence....” Due to this fear of silence in Western culture, Brown postulates that “we do not let the power inherent in silence communicate with us... [W]ithout silence, there cannot be language... [and] in silence there are profound modes of sacred, humanizing communication.” Furthermore, to remain consistent with the role Black Elk can play as a symbol both historically and today, he is known as sharing with Brown in translation, ““Silence is the voice of the Great Mysterious”” (p. 48).

Herein is the key to furthered dialogue and cultural healing, along with an understanding of the challenges associated with Native people relative to survivance, in terms of the medium of art and other forms of communication via silence, for example, as something that can perpetuate intercultural symbolic expression and discernment. These steps toward the other in this vein is not one to take lightly, of course, because cultural tensions today and accounts from those who have attempted such steps or those in the midst of the process can quite possibly resonate with Fools Crow’s testimony of Black Elk spending hours conversing with others such as priests. Holler (1995) offers that perhaps “Black Elk’s susceptibility to religions went hand in hand with susceptibility to visions...” Meaning Black Elk’s ability to see this synthesis of religions hand in hand with visions, gave him the opportunity to promulgate “creative and courageous confrontations with Christianity and his engagement with the problems of his people make him so much more than simply a boy who fell sick and dreamed spectacularly of heaven.” And as Holler comments further, this ability to confront other faith perspectives like Christianity with courage and creativity was and to many is symbolically represented in his life and work, which “embodies the best that was in his people and justifies his position as the greatest religious thinker yet produced by native North America” (220-221).

A point by Holler that cannot be overemphasized and that is supported by Oldmeadow (2018) is that it is “salutary” to remind ourselves that Black Elk did not “*create* his vision, he *received* it; he did not *author* the vision but only *transmitted* it....” Oldmeadow astutely observes that, “while a great deal of the recent scholarly discourse has obsessively focused on Black Elk and on Neihardt as individuals,” collectively such discourse was “missing the overarching truth that each man was an instrument of larger forces which are not to be accounted for in the categories of ‘biography’ or of an impudent ‘psychoanalysis’” (Oldmeadow, 2018, p. 71).

Archambault (1998) described such a missing of the overarching truth accounted for in such stories as Oldmeadow (2018) referred to as “being ineffable,” most likely due to story-shrouded “experiences” often cloaked from the Western imagination therefore begging such an imagination via “articulation” through “symbol and metaphor, through poem or story, or... whatever mode that one can utilize as a vehicle for expression.” And what appears to be a primary example of others as a vehicle of expression is what Archambault identified as “Black Elk’s conversion [to Catholicism] narrative seems to have been a product of this very personal, and very profound, experience” (p. 43).

Context in relation to the symbolic and the overarching truth as Oldmeadow (2018) opined and Archambault (1998) described as ineffable, often only discernable through the articulation artistically of metaphor and symbol as a vehicle for expression, is critical while engaged in the complexity of story and discernment among cultures; and again, Black Elk’s navigation and witness while doing so as a product of his times according to Costello (2005) demonstrated the

“reformulation of Lakota tradition [as] an expected product of economic [i.e. Great Depression] and demographic change....” In a religious context, Costello viewed Black Elk’s navigating his times as one who “incorporated Christian thought into the Lakota cultural world... and use[d]... creativity to confront a changing world” (Costello, 2005, p. 90).

Within the rafts of research available on something as historically significant as a symbol of this developing thought, Holler (1995) points to the essential history of the Sun Dance “in modern times is its survival of change, repression, and neglect.” And while such symbolic, spiritual expression was banned during the latter part of the 1800’s, “the ban did not produce its intended result, the complete destruction of traditional belief and ritual...” Rather, Holler indicates that the attempt to destroy such a traditional belief and ritual “resulted in the present pluralistic situation, in which traditional religion coexists with a wide diversity of religious expression...” And while the intended result according to Holler, “has not been the hoped-for replacement of traditional religion with Christianity,” the actual result may in fact be the “acceptance of both.” Holler pointed to a sense of “bireligious” faithfulness among many Lakotas who “profess belief in some form of denominational Christianity while continuing to practice traditional religion” (Holler, 1995, p. 202-203). And whether perspectives shared here may see this sense of bi-religiousness as the end product of a forced assimilation over centuries of colonization, or a more natural, spiritual progression to both forms of spiritual practice embodied in the Sun Dance, which as Holler highlighted was a synthesis of traditional and Christian communities, one view that is hard to argue is the present-day existence of Native people like the Lakota whose spiritual practice was to be fully replaced, if not also the people themselves via genocide-like tactics.

This would seem to speak to what Archambault (1998) noted in the person of Black Elk, a prime example of “the resiliency of Black Elk’s spiritual genius...” Along with this genius Archambault refers to the resiliency of “his people”, who “had been pushed violently into a historic period for which there was no comparison, no reference point to prepare them for such catastrophic changes.” And what seems to escape the consciousness of most who profess to be in touch with history, is the “almost overnight their free, nomadic, self-directed existence became a life hedged in geographically, restricted at every level to the confines of the reservation... he served as a healer among his people in those early reservation years...” And in this overnight change of what Maka Black Elk called an exceptional people, Black Elk, with all the accolades of a significant healer among his people, was not exempt from this dark history of the near extinction of an honorable people and was in fact “part of the generation forced ‘to create their own patterns of behavior’” (p. 25).

And finally, before examining the implications of Black Elk’s life speaking “that much... more” in terms of present-day challenges associated with Native people and survivance, DeMallie (1984) summarizes this section of the paper well, noting that “the far-reaching influence that Black Elk’s teachings have on the idea and attitudes of countless individuals today,” for Indians and non-Indians...” And how such teaching testifies “to basic religious and philosophical dilemmas generated by a sense of increasing alienation from the natural world.” This reflection on alienation from the natural world cannot be overemphasized, as it is not exclusive to indigenous peoples of North America. Similar issues have arisen and continue their challenges in places like Ireland, where the Irish are also in the process of decolonization, striving to retrieve their spiritual roots grounded in the Divine while also rooted in the natural world.

As DeMallie (1984) articulated further, while Black Elk is what Maka Black Elk called earlier a “paragon” for his Lakota people in particular, in general, “for many, Black Elk suggests

a perspective on a prior, more satisfying relations between man and nature.” And for still others, “his teachings are a blueprint for religious revitalization” (p. 80). Internationally, this phenomenon would hold to be true as witnessed by the revival of *Black Elk Speaks* due to CG Jung and others who discovered his mystical writings. Closer to home, “Black Elk’s teachings appear to be evolving into consensual American Indian theological canon...” (p. 80). Within the formation of such a consensual canon, DeMallie presents critical questions to not only be further discerned and facilitated by dialogue throughout a variety of communities of learning, but also within the final portion of this paper, questioning implications with the intent of not falling into the trap of what DeMallie called a discussion that “usually dissolves into political rhetoric rather than objective assessment” (p. 80).

Let us not fall into the trap of rhetoric or even the blindness associated with the sterile Petrie dish of objective assessment. Let’s approach the following questions and the implications considered in the final part of this paper, as paragons in our own humble way considering the stories told here and many more to come as culture unfolds in an intercultural way:

What is Black Elk’s place in the history of Lakota religion? Does he truly represent the old Lakota way, or history of Lakota religion? Does he truly represent the old Lakota way, or was his thinking profoundly affected by Catholicism? (DeMallie, 1984, p. 80)

STORIES OF SURVIVANCE & IMPLICATIONS: BLACK ELK’S LIFE SPEAKING AS...

This paper concludes by examining the implications of Black Elk’s life speaking “that much... more.” Under the banner of the symposium’s focus which is survivance, there are summative stories that bring forward the primary areas of the paper into concluding areas in which Black Elk’s life may be speaking as. First, this paper will examine Black Elk’s life speaking as an educator in particular and from the field of education at large. Secondly, we will move from education to that of cultural and spiritual bearer. Third, we will look at him as a model of and for survivance, and finally the implications of the life of Black Elk, the “Old Man,” and his dreams and visions yesterday, today and beyond.

...EDUCATOR & EDUCATION

As an educator who strives to be a social constructivist, I am always hoping to build knowledge collectively within a community of learners, often echoing the seminal works of models such as John Henry Newman, Parker Palmer, and Padraig Pearce. Black Elk would be a recent edition to the list, primarily because like Irish education activist Pearce, he seemed to model a return to culture at its most natural essence as a first step into a broader world with feet firmly planted in cultural self identity .

Strikingly, as the latter examples of cultural identity, while in their own right profound, historically seem to be very keenly aware of one another’s challenges associated with this quest for identify while peeling back layers of colonization. Black Elk’s son Ben, along with others,

made note of this, commenting, “I found out that European people know more about us Indians than people in the States. They study us... our culture... history right from the start, from the schools. Well, we don't here” (DeSersa, 2000, p. 21). The sense of “we” here is important, as often this is intended on a systemic level in terms of cultural awareness, which is often led by the academy or institutions of higher learning.

So, if Ben Black Elk's perception is still accurate, and it may not be too much of a risk to assume so, then possibly Taiaiake Alfred's thoughts of “indigenizing the academy” as a move to bring about change in universities so that they, along with society at large, can “become places where values, principles and modes of organization and behavior of our people are respected in.” Further, Alfred opined that the possibility of such change would include a process of integration “into the larger system of structures and processes that make up the university...” Indigenous researcher Twiss takes Alfred's call to action personally, and I would imagine more broadly in the academy, to

come into confrontation with the fact that universities are intolerant of and resistant to meaningful indigenizing... our experiences in universities reflect the tensions and dynamics of our relationships as Indigenous peoples interacting with people and institutions in society as a whole; an existence of constant and pervasive struggle to resist assimilation to the values and culture of the larger society...

Similar to sharing Twiss's commitment to Alfred's invitation overall, it would appear the implications for educators and education would be to a more particular vocational call, to work “to ensure the survival of our culture and nations,” as we pursue higher education for future generations as a means of creating a collaborative independence as coinhabitants in the land and establishing our places in the modern world” (As cited in Twiss, 2015, p. 58-59).

Generally, Alfred's call and Twiss' (2015) affirmation, along with other scholars' call to action, reflect in a broad sense in what way Black Elk's life has spoken and continues to speak. Insofar as how Black Elk's life speaks today, it would appear his life can speak to a serious scholarly critique and cautionary dialogue – as “rereading a contemporary position of Lakota society back into history is questionable scholarship” (Costello, 2005). Questionable indeed, and this is why cultural models of education such as Black Elk symbolically and Twiss (2015) today, among others, should be the basis for such scholarly critique before doing what Costello fears: “privileging the interpretations of cultural outsiders as more accurate and valuable than those living and creating the culture is anthropological discrimination that completely disregards Lakota communal memory, destroys their agency, and borders on racism” (Costello, 2005, p. 71).

It is strong language indeed, but in reality, based on the stories shared in this paper, from Native people in general and Lakota in particular as exceptional, to more contemporary stories of survivance, without those voices, anthropological discrimination persists in the face of a developing Indigenous-based and ally scholarship that rather builds on communal member and agency in the face of bordering and outright racism.

Again, Black Elk's life enters as one that has run the risk of disregard as Costello (2005) mentioned in general, and has been known to also develop in more recent history of Black Elk's account as a Catholic, which Costello viewed as “real as any other part of his life and cannot be

separated from his Lakota world. The 'gap' between indigenous American culture and Christianity is not a part of Black Elk's Lakota worldview but merely a reflection of modern academic bias" (p. 71). This may push the envelope with those who may have followed this section in terms of disregard or bordering, if not outright racism when it comes to representing Native culture, yet bias in the context in which Costello asserted is important within the entire consideration of scholarship on Black Elk as a critical beacon addressing such challenges with cultural accuracy and agency.

Frankly, without the more recent scholarship by Costello, Steltenkamp, Jackson, etc., Black Elk may not even be a factor in such dialogue within and beyond the academy, which would be sorely missed and potentially a setback in terms of cultural healing. The academy does have a role to play in cultural healing, if scholars are willing to address modern academic bias and research gaps between Native American culture and Christianity. Consequently, academicians' own reticence regarding Christianity should not deny the opportunity for cultural healing.

At its best, the academy and other allies have the opportunity to bring all voices to the fore, not to subject them to an irreversibility or dominance of thought in what Palmer called a "conceptual club," but rather to dignify all voices, most notably indigenous, in this process of healing. All academic and other parties involved in such healing would acquire what Holler (1995) identifies as a result of his work with the Lakota in particular: a "perspectival shift in my philosophical thinking, something the anthropologists call 'acquiring a cross-cultural perspective'..." Holler further articulated best what I tried to encapsulate regarding Costello's (2005) thoughts about modern academic bias, when Holler confesses,

We humanists have mostly ignored the religion of technologically primitive cultures, perhaps because of an uncritical tendency to equate primitive technology with primitive thought... [N]ative North America is a fascinating study that casts new light on religious change and adaptation... [M]y encounter with Native North America has been the greatest intellectual challenge and adventure of my adult life. I recommend a similar encounter highly to those of my colleagues in the humanities who have ears to hear, for this is an endeavor that greatly repays serious thought. (p. xviii)

Holler offers key thoughts to ponder for the academy far and near and beyond, as the implications of his recommendation should be strongly considered based on his modeling and that of other academics who have actually invested time with other cultures in order to come to such profound thoughts as those expressed above.

These thoughts and serious academic studies, by the way, lead ultimately to a change in manner and delivery for both educators and education. As Owens (1998) points out through the enlistment of Luther Standing Bear, the realization of such serious thought is not devoid or empty in this world. If we fail to engage with it and neglect to

create it... not only does our environment become more fragile, but we are forever cut off from a part of our inheritance as living beings in a richly interconnected web of life. We must learn to ask the trees and stones for permission to take them into our lives for our survival, and we have to lay ourselves close to the earth for a long, patient time in order, along with N. Scott Momaday's grandfather, actually to see the powerful reality that is before us and part of us. Such closeness of vision, reciprocity, and respect are powerful medicines, the only... that may... save humanity from itself. This is a lesson Native Americans and all indigenous peoples really do have to teach, and it is time the world began to listen carefully. (p. 236)

Such a vision no doubt accords with those of Black Elk, along with other Native Americans and indigenous peoples who are interesting to those outside looking in. These exemplars are best positioned to save humanity from itself, based on an educational credo to share this vision of reciprocity and respect as a powerful medicine, with an invitation and call to the world to listen carefully.

Again, this may come as news to some from the outside looking in, as some may feel they are charged with this responsibility to save humanity, yet as Owens (1998) shares, what is novel today is a growing recognition of the subversive survival of indigenous Americans.

Five hundred years after Columbus' first voyage, this survival is being illuminated in the United States through a proliferating body of literature by Native Americans demonstrating the 'Discoverer' succeeded beyond his more earnest expectations... Native Americans are ensuring, as Robert Young has written, '...the First World is now having to come to terms with the fact that it is no longer always positioned in the first person with regard to be Second or Third Worlds'... Native Americans are beginning... to demand that non-Indian readers acknowledge differing epistemologies... across a new 'conceptual horizon,' and learn to read in new ways. (Owens, 1998, p. 4)

Summarizing this section relative to Black Elk's life speaking as an educator and in education, there is this sense of him speaking to Native Americans in terms of Owens' (1998) clarion call, in the face of an academic emergence, for others to acknowledge and dignify profound thoughts and belief spiritually, and across a horizon. This horizon is only perceived as new, frankly because, after centuries of oppression, the resiliency of Native people has persevered and returned perceptively to others as new, but in reality is only unfamiliar to those "non-Indian," and is now "beginning" to be in concert with other cultures. Most likely, as Owens (1998) comments, Native Americans and all indigenous peoples are embodied in cultural and spiritual bearers like Black Elk, and will have to teach (again) in order to save humanity from itself (again).

...CULTURAL & SPIRITUAL BEARER

Black Elk's life speaking as cultural and spiritual bearer would appear to be replete historically in a number of given contexts. Furthermore, when considering those contexts in relation to today, it is often similar to what many Native Americans tend to share; as Anton Treuer (2012, 2021) has been known to state, "Indians we are so often imagined, but so infrequently well understood" (p. 1). Or, as some would contend, "we are still here," as if the romanticized view of Native Americans has taken over the fact that millions are still not only surviving in North America for that matter, but in a sense thriving in a number of demographic categories (D. Treuer, 2019).

This perceived paradox of perception and reality relative to Native American people's presence, and the way in which Black Elk speaks as a cultural and spiritual bearer, tends to gravitate to Deloria's (1944) expressed seminal thoughts regarding the appearance that the quest to discern what lies hidden in the past may be of interest "to be sure," as she affirmed; nevertheless, the fact that Native people are still here today, and Black Elk's life still speaks, connects with Deloria's focused thoughts that the past is "not so important as the present and the future. The vital concern is not where a people came from, physically, but where they are going spiritually" (Cited in Jacobs, 2008, p. 136).

Further, in the context of where Black Elk's life is going as a cultural and spiritual bearer, Steltenkamp (1993) pinpoints this direction in terms of his life going "beyond the neat construct of total nativism... or complete absorption of Western ways..." Further, in terms of the biographical nature of Black Elk, Steltenkamp boldly stated that such nature is not a "profile in syncretism... rather an example of reflexive adjustment to new cultural landscapes that previously have not been explored" (p. xxi). This statement to those not impacted by the comment on syncretism is bold, due to those who seem to advocate for syncretism as if the outdated concept of melting pot – or more directly forced assimilation – has merit.

Steltenkamp (1993) illumines this point further by holding that Black Elk symbolically and spiritually was (and I would add 'is') "neither an artifactual relic of the bison-hunting era, nor was he a prisoner to its substance, even though much literature and opinion suggest this was the case – for him and most others" (p. 148). And hopefully breaking the shackles of binary thinking that would isolate the person of Black Elk historically, culturally and spiritually, would permit a more holistic view of Black Elk contextually. According to Archambault (1998), more appropriately "Black Elk is a culture bearer," which is a more inclusive descriptor of Black Elk,

means he embodied and enacted values which led to a spiritual transformation and cultural change...described as '...individuals who...are deeply transparent to the Holy Spirit [Wakan – Tanka] and give voice to ideas that express the loving will of the Spirit for humankind as a whole.' (p. 93)

Bolstering Archambault's (1998) description of Black Elk as culture bearer, Jesuit writer Paul Manhart brought a helpful image to what this description looks like metaphorically as someone who fitted (and still fits) "cultures together like a puzzle and thus neither was dissolved" (As cited in DeSersa, 2000, p. xv). This is a helpful image, considering that all the puzzle pieces, while distinctive as cultures are, together represent a mosaic of cultures that collectively can

represent an image of expressed affinity, in contrast with dated metaphors of assimilation (Taylor, 2019). Those with religious vocations, like Jesuit Manhart and others, tend to lend helpful imagery when navigating the often parochial, troubled waters in a spiritual context.

Nevertheless, Kempis (1999) shed further light on why many Jesuit Catholic missionaries, though not without scrutiny in their missionary history, did find resonance with a culture bearer like Black Elk due to their belief that Native people felt alienated, as if “strangers to the world but close and familiar to God.” Further, Kempis shared their self-perception that although “this present world saw them as contemptible,” “in the eyes of God they were precious and beloved.” And due to this grounding in in “true humility, lived in simple obedience, and walked in love and patience,” Native people “profited daily in the spirit and obtained great grace in God’s sight.” And possibly not solely in God’s sight, as Kempis further notes, for indigenous believers serve as an example spiritually

to all religious people, and they should stimulate us to strive for spiritual excellence far more than all those who live lukewarm lives should tempt us to be lax... Their footsteps still remain to testify that they were indeed holy and perfect people who fought valiantly and trod the world under their feet. (Kempis, 1999, p. 52-53)

So, to summarize Black Elk’s speaking as cultural and spiritual bearer, with the example of footsteps remaining to be followed by all religious people, stories enter into the fabric of importance when discerning the relevancy of Black Elk’s life speaking. Speaking as Costello (2005) highlighted in his careful consideration of Neihardt’s encounter with Black Elk and stories shared. Black Elk, according to Costello, “shaped his story for his audience, not deceiving or being dishonest, but sincerely telling about those aspects of his life in which Neihardt was interested.” And with this earnest approach to imparting Native wisdom and understanding, Costello also enlisted another familiar author, Louis Owens, who described this phenomenon of story being shaped for various audiences as a

mask... realized over centuries through Euro-America’s construction of the Indian Other... to be recognized, and to have a voice that is heard by those in control of power, the Native must step into the mask and be the Indian constructed by white America. Paradoxically, like the mirror, the mask merely shows the Euro-American to himself, since the Native [remains] behind the mask unseen, unrecognized... While the historical and cultural dynamics limited an accurate sharing and later telling of Black Elk’s sacred vision, Neihardt enabled Black Elk’s vision to survive. (Cited in Costello, 2005, p. 155-157)

We will return to Neihardt to bring this paper to a close following the next section on survivance, but Owens articulates a key point regarding the central, seminal role in which Neihardt (1932/1971) contributed to Black Elk’s speaking at the time of his interviews, and then through

countless editions of *Black Elk Speaks*. Neihardt's interviews and assessments remain equally critical today as Black Elk speaks through this paper and among still throngs of generations, particularly those Native Americans who with Black Elk's life speaking – among other culture bearers – as looking to them as models of and for survivance in the face of a landscape desperately fighting a losing battle to retain the last vestiges of colonialism.

...MODEL OF AND FOR SURVIVANCE

Regarding Black Elk's life speaking as survivance, Jackson (2016), whose blunt analysis seems to be devoid of partiality, seems to encapsulate well this relation of Black Elk and survivance today, particularly as it builds on the previous, spiritually focused section.

To that end, Jackson (2016) notes the difficulty of carving out a particular brand of spiritual worship among Native American people whose “religion often does not orbit around a church, can be as diverse as the nation’s 567 legally recognized tribes or its 5.22 million half and full-blood individuals.” Interestingly, Jackson enlisted one of the primary “fathers” of the boarding schools, “Richard Henry Pratt, who said, ‘made the Indian, Indian,’” in terms of identifying what spiritual worship aligns with what tribe. This is also akin to understanding the development of the term *survivance*, which Jackson attributes to “Native American intellectuals,” who coined a “cold and distant word for a struggle waged on the black road... here on the Great Plains one can feel the relentless grind of history....”

As stark as this struggle has been, Jackson (2016) painted a light at the end of the tunnel, with Black Elk as a model of survivance and whose speaking life “lay at the heart of this resurgence when he chose to save the ancient ways.” And even in this light as the heart of resurgence, Black Elk did express despondence, as any model of survivance would be permitted, as “every path threw up another obstacle, and too often he thought he’d failed” (p. 483). Some may see this perspective as not ideal for a model of survivance, yet others have also painted their “dark night of the soul” experiences which have been helpful to many in times of travail – so why would Black Elk’s expression of humanity be denied? These mystics are the company Black Elk has held – and I would submit still holds today – as his voice speaks at large, particularly under often the historically traumatic weight in the process and path of and for survivance.

Once again, Jackson’s (2016) candor enters with research recounting the mind of Black Elk as he choose to bear cultural responsibility for his Lakota people and even “for all nations, even his enemy,” as he wrestled with “his choice though he always wondered if he’d choose wisely.” And again, this sense of a “dark night of the soul” brings forth an even more inspirational humanity of Black Elk, most intensely exemplified in his direct experience with the 1890 Massacre at Wounded Knee leading to an emotion of “hatred” due to his desire to “die with them, but it was not to be. To the end of his life, he would never think that he’d done enough to save his people.” Black Elk lived the balance of his extensive life with “pictures of the dead [that] would not go away,” according to Niehardt’s accounts. While interviewing Black Elk later in life, who also graphically shared the traumatic events of Wounded Knee as, “bodies lay in heaps; sometimes, scattered down a ravine. Sometimes bunches of them had been killed and torn to pieces where the wagon guns hit them. I saw a little baby trying to touch its mother, but she was bloody and dead” (p. 332-333).

With regret and consternation overall for Black Elk, questions pondered by Jackson (2016), may have very likely pondered by Black Elk himself: “What if he’d used his power? Would it have saved the slaughtered and innocent?” Pointedly again, Jackson gets to the heart of why Black Elk life is a model for and of survivance, in reference to this experience of trauma impacting even those who are models among models, because along with their perceived glory as models, also comes their humanity, for “even those we call holy can dream of revenge” (p. 332-333).

So, in the stories of Black Elk that have unfolded throughout this paper, and those most recently embodied in his ultimate questioning of what real purpose his life may have served (particularly in the face of a calamity like Wounded Knee), is what Vizenor (2008) identifies: survivance as “invariably true and just in native practice and company...” because similarly it is “unmistakable in native stories, natural reason, remembrance, traditions, and customs and is clearly observable in narrative resistance and personal attributes...” And again with the model of Black Elk’s life speaking to and for survivance, in addition it speaks to the overall

character of survivance and how this creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimity... [It] is an active sense of presence over absence and oblivion... [It] is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent... [and] is greater than the right of a survivable name... The practices of survivance create an active presence, more than the instincts of survival, function, or subsistence. (p. 1, 11)

An important distinction posited by Vizenor (2008) in terms of the practice of survivance superseding the instinct for survival, function or subsistence, speaks directly to the imperative of Black Elk’s speaking “that much...more” as his family, including Maka Black Elk, shared within the context of this paper, with support from others who have been in company of such stories. This is the active presence Vizenor points to, along with the adherence to the continuance of stories. The final section concludes in an exploration of the implications of Black Elk’s life speaking as the “Old Man” with dreams and visions of yesterday, today and beyond.

... “OLD MAN”: DREAM/VISION YESTERDAY, TODAY & BEYOND

For those who revel in the weeds of research, or even just a good book that takes one to unexpected places approaching a climax that borders on ecstasy, I share this experience within the confines of this paper, as I never intended, in exploring the implications of Black Elk’s life speaking “that much...more,” to end up essentially at the start with John Neihardt’s (1932/1971) interviews of Black Elk. My intention was to explore the more contemporary sense of how Black Elk’s life may speak today via the family tree and branches of his great-great-grandson Maka Black Elk as the word to date on Black Elk, which I do believe has been established and most likely will continue to be developed beyond this paper.

Accordingly, with all the voices that have spoken concerning Black Elk, be they familial, scholarly, Native and Non-Native, and others, I had thought it would lead me further from Neihardt’s (1932/1971), and even Brown’s, follow up in the twilight of Black Elk’s life. Nevertheless, it will be these two who will synthesize – ironically, and even paradoxically enough – the final word here regarding Black Elk’s life speaking in the context of what Neihardt’s affinity for Black Elk called an “old man,” with expressed

dreams and visions, that I assert collectively forward this paper demonstrating Black Elk's life speaking "that much...more" yesterday, today, and beyond.

I have hiked what today is Black Elk's Peak several times in the past few years, since I have been awakened by the tremendous way in which Black Elk's life speaks of the tremendous impact Native American culture can have in terms of deepening the sense of place spiritually for those still here, and those who have come. So, when Niehardt (1932/1971) shared his climatic communion with Black Elk on previously named Harney's Peak, as an echo to the colonial impact of what Maka Black Elk called his Lakota people as "exceptional," I could indeed feel and see the geography of this Peak which at 7,000 feet stands above any other in the present day state of North Dakota. This vision was clearer to me, as others Niehardt has painted in terms of the geography of Black Elk's domicile in the Manderson area of the Pine Ridge Reservation, along with his birthplace at the confluence of the Little Powder and Powder Rivers near the board of Wyoming and Montana. So, geography is vivid and discernable when Black Elk via Niehardt speaks; nevertheless when it comes to dreams and visions expressed, this is more complex in terms of affiliation. And maybe that is the point, like the "dark night of the soul" experiences shared earlier when considering the implications of Black Elk speaking as a culture bearer.

Undoubtedly, Black Elk's gift to Native and Non-Native, while not necessary alike, is the opportunity to share in his lament and at the same time triumph of survivance over survival, as was highlighted earlier by Vizenor (2008). Even amidst the depiction Niehardt (1932/1971) paints of the Peak itself when Black Elk reflected on his life as "black above the far sky rim," the reflection began distinctively, yet possibly common to those most rooted in one's culture spiritually with a vision of spirits taking Black Elk "to the center of the earth [to] show me all good things in the sacred hoop of the world." This reminds me C.S. Lewis's Irish roots taking him to an ancient grounding of pure joy in his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*, particularly when Black Elk refers to his spiritually blissful moment and the hope to stay in that bliss, as Niehardt recounts,

I wish I could stand up there in the flesh before I die, for there is something I want to say to the Six Grandfathers... (to his son Ben)... If I have any power left, the thunder beings of the west should hear me when I send a voice, and there should be at least a little thunder and a little rain... (p. 231-234)

Neihardt describes further the contrast of these beatific-like moments with a day bright and cloudless, though in a season of drought – in fact, "one of the worst in the memory of the old man..." And with the "old man", as this unfolds for the two, Neihardt shares how they "listened now, noted that the thin clouds had gathered around us. A scant chill rain began to fall and there was low, muttering thunder without lightening..." Notable here is how silence is the forebearer of discernment, significant for me as I contemplate my Benedictine call to serve in Christ, and within this order of monks the first word of the Rule of Benedict, "listen." A period of listening is what Niehardt shared as he witnesses the twilight of this seminal Lakota healer: "for some minutes the old man stood silent, with face uplifted, weeping in the drizzling rain. In a little while the sky was clear again" (Neihardt, 1932/1971, p. 231-234).

One can only pause, and if one resonates enough with this moment shared intimately, and vicariously for the rest of us, maybe this is inherent in at least the Non-Native speculation of Neihardt's (1932/1971) account – could it be envy? I will admit, yet the words are still here and so are those who bear this culture sustained by this poet from Nebraska, which may be the point

of it all, as has also been mentioned in so many words earlier. Neihardt models his own transformation to a broader sense of cultural awareness as he admitted, "It was not information that was lacking for my purpose... What I needed for my purpose was something to be experienced through intimate contact, rather than received through telling..." This is a significant admission by Neihardt, which is critical modeling for me and I would suspect other scholars who walk the tightrope of intercultural understanding. And it would appear with this awareness that Neihardt models the responsibility of being cognizant of the spiritual depths, if not "sacred obligation", that he not only felt per se, but more deeply felt "to be true to the old man's meaning and manner of expression," that Neihardt was convinced "there were times when we had more than ordinary means of communication" (p. 231-234).

The layers of witness, within a witness of modeling the way in which Black Elk's life speaks directly, and then the impact on someone like John Neihardt (1932/1971) is a tremendous example of the impact of this life speaking to someone whose original scholarship was not intended to be rooted within the cultural realm of a Lakota healer; yet as Neihardt testified on a personal level, including the impact of his experience via his scholarship,

for the last forty years it has been my purpose to bring Black Elk's message to the white world as he wished me to do... The general public, with practically no knowledge of Indians, gave it a very modest reception... A generation passed, but the book refused to die. Somehow a copy found its way to Zurich, Switzerland and was appreciated by a group of German scholars, including the late Carl Jung... The news of the book reached America and found some friendly appreciators... it became 'the current youth classic,' (and with TV exposure)... exploded into surprising popularity... spreading throughout the US and Europe, having been translated into eight languages. The old prophet's wish that I bring his message to the world is actually being fulfilled... Perhaps with this message spreading across the world he has not failed. (Neihardt, 1932/1971, p. ix-xii)

Perhaps. This very paper, along with other current dialogue regarding the potential of Black Elk's canonization would be further evidence to support Neihardt's (1932/1971) last sentence above, along with his successor Joseph Epes Brown, who encountered Black Elk at the very twilight of his life until his death, as someone to advance the torch of not only particular scholarship about this Lakota healer, but also witnessed the direct personal impact that intercultural relations can have in a more vulnerable and overall authentic way.

Brown (1971) reflected pointedly on the last time Black Elk had literary last spoken, regarding the changes that must take place and the "new perspective and in a new light" that Black Elk speaks to a modern world. At the time, according to Brown, Black Elk was lamenting the "broken hoop of his nation, it was... to be only a matter of time before the Indians with their seemingly archaic and anachronistic cultures would be completely assimilated into a larger American society convinced of its own superiority and the validity of its goals." Toward this concern regarding assimilation Brown comments, "we still are far from being aware of the

dimensions and ramifications of our ethnocentric illusions..." And though challenging, to climb out of such an impact of assimilation, Brown offered a possible constructive process of

intense self-examination and to engage in a serious reevaluation of the premises and orientations of our society... almost all Indian groups that retain any degree of self-identity are now reevaluating, and giving positive valuation to, the fundamental premise of their own traditional cultures... (p. xv-xvi).

Since Brown's (1971) thoughts were expressed decades ago, whether his analysis and ties to Black Elk hold relevance today, or in his words "if there is validity," Brown said that it may be premature to speculate the on impact of Black Elk's mission to "bring people back to 'the good red road,'" or even if Black Elk "failed as he thought it had." Another critical perspective shared by Brown, and inherent in the overall thrust of this paper in the way that Black Elk's life speaks "that much...more," is "his mission may be succeeding in ways he could not have anticipated" (Brown, 1971, p. xv-xvi). What remains to be seen is, in the face of challenges associated with cultural healing in general and survivance in particular, how Black Elk's life continues to speak as the mystical, Lakota healer that he is, and continues to be.

REFERENCES

- Archambault, Marie Therese (1998). *Black Elk: Living in the Sacred Hoop*. Cincinnati: Saint Anthony Messenger Press.
- Archambault, Marie Therese; Thiel, Mark G., Vecsey, Christopher (2003). *The Crossing of Two Roads: Being Catholic and Native in the United States*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Bears, Backward (2020). "Berdache, Buffoons; Beings, Bluejays." *Contrary Native Other*. Amazon.com.
- Black Elk, Maka (June 3, 2021, August 17, 2021). Interview with Black Elk Great, Great, Great Grandson Maka Black Elk. (Taylor, M.W., Interviewer).
- Black Elk, Wallace; Lyon, William S. (1991). *Black Elk: The Sacred Ways of a Lakota*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Bruner, Jerome (Spring, 1987). "Life as Narrative: Reflections on the Self." *Social Research*. 54 (1), pp. 11-22.
- Brown, Joseph Epes (1971). *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Brown, Joseph Epes (2001). *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions*. Oxford University Press.
- Carroll, Alex K., Zendeno, Nieves M., Stoffle, Richard W. (2004). "Landscapes of the Ghost Dance: A Cartography of Numic Ritual." *Journal of Archeological Method and Theory*, Vol.11, No. 2 pp. 127-156.
- Chapman, John (2021). Didache. *Catholic Answers*. Retrieved from www.catholic.com.
- Charles, Mark; Rah, Soong – Chan (2019). *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter/Varsity Press.
- Costello, Damian (2005). *Black Elk: Colonialism and Lakota Catholicism*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Clandinin, J.D. & Connelly, M.F. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Clow, Richmond L. (1990). "The Lakota Ghost Dance after 1890." *South Dakota Historical Society*. pp. 323-333.
- DeMallie, Raymond J. (1985). *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- DeSersa, Esther Black Elk; Pourier, Olivia Black Elk; DeSersa Jr., Aaron; DeSersa, Clifton (2000). *Black Elk Lives: Conversations with the Black Family*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- DiAngelo, R.J. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Douthat, Ross (2018). *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Dussias, Allison M. (April, 1997). "Ghost Dance and Holy Ghost: The Echoes of the Nineteenth – Century Christianization Policy in Twentieth – Century Native American Free Exercise Cases." *Stanford Law Review*. Vol. 49: pp. 773-852.
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A.P. (2011). *Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as Subject*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Enocks, Ross (1996). *The Jesuit Mission to the Lakota Sioux: A Student of Pastoral Ministry, 1886-1945*. Kansas City: Sheed and Ward.
- Foley, Thomas, W. (2002). *Father Francis M. Craft: Missionary to the Sioux*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Foley, Thomas, W. (2009). *At Standing Rock and Wounded Knee: The Journals and Papers of Father Francis M. Craft 1888-1890*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Frazier, Ian (2000). *On the Rez*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.
- Goodhouse, Dakota Wind (2019). "Makhoche Waste, The Beautiful Country: An Indigenous Landscape Perspective." M.A. Thesis, North Dakota State University.
- Grande, Sandy (2004, 2015). *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Holler, Clyde (1995). *Black Elk's Religion*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Huel, Raymond (2003). "Albert Lacombe." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto/Universite' Laval. Accessed February 4, 2021, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lacombe_albert_14E.html.
- Jacobs, Alan (2008). *Native American Wisdom: A Spiritual Tradition At One with Nature*. United Kingdom: Watkins.
- Jackson, Joe (2016). *Black Elk: The Life of An American Visionary*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Kempis, Thomas A' (1999). *The Imitation of Christ*. Alachua, Florida: Bridge – Logos.
- Kidwell, Clara Sue; Noley, Homer; Tinker, George E. (2001). *A Native American Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Neihardt, John G. (1932/1971) *Black Elk Speaks: The Legendary "Book of Visions" of an American Indian*. New York, NY: Washington Square Press.
- Neihardt, John G. (1951) *When the Tree Flowered: The Fictional, Autobiography of Eagle Voice, A Sioux Indian*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Neihardt, Hilda (1995). *Black Elk Flaming Rainbow: Personal Memories of the Lakota Holy Man and John Neihardt*. Lincoln: Nebraska University Press.
- Nerburn, Kent (2009). *The Wolf at Twilight: An Indian Elder's Journey Through a Land of Ghosts and Shadows*. Navato, CA: New World Library.

- Oldmeadow, Harry (2018). *Black Elk, Lakota Visionary: The Oglala Holy Man & Sioux Tradition*. Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom, Inc.
- Owens, Louis (1998). *Mixed Blood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Portillo, Annette (2013). "Indigenous-Centered Pedagogies: Strategies for Teaching Native American Literature and Culture." *The CEA Forum*. pp. 155-178. www.cea-web.org.
- Purzycki, Benjamin G. (2006). "Conceptions of Humor: Lakota (Sioux), Koestlerian, and Computational." *Nebraska Anthropologist*. 24.
- Radin, Paul (1972). *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Romero, Della, Wolfchild, Crystal (January 25, 2017). Tiospaye. <http://makingrelatives.org>
- Steltenkamp, Michael F. (2009). *Nicholas Black Elk: Medicine Man Missionary Mystic*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Steltenkamp, Michael F. (1993). *Black Elk: The Man of the Oglala*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Steltenkamp, Michael F. (1983). *The Sacred Vision: Native American Religion and Its Practice Today*. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Sweeney, Jon M. (2021). *Nicholas Black Elk: Medicine Man, Catechist, Saint*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.
- Taylor, M.W. (2021). "Perpetuating Joy in Ephemeral and Temporal Affinity Spaces Through Intercultural Pedagogy." Paper presentation to the University of Mary Faculty Colloquium April, 2021.
- Taylor, M.W. (2019) "The Red and Green "Problem Peoples": Shared Cross-Cultural Affinity of Native Americans and Irish." Paper presentation to the 13th Native American Symposium, November 1, 2019, Southeastern Oklahoma State University.
- Taylor, M.W. (2017) "The Dakota Access Pipeline Educational Experience: Embracing Visionary Pragmatism." Paper presentation to the 12th Native American Symposium, November 3, 2017, Southeastern Oklahoma State University.
- Taylor, M.W. (2012). *An Autoethnographic Journey to the Self*. Doctoral dissertation, Marian University. 109 pages; UMI 3553248.
- Thiel, Mark G. (Winter, 2009). "Catholic Ladders and Native American Evangelization." *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Comparative Studies of Native American Catholics, pp. 49-70.
- Thiel, Mark G. (August 28, 2018). Three Pamphlets by Father Henry I. Westropp, S.J., ca. 1906-1916. Reference: <http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/HRM/HRM-jesuits.shtml>.
- Treuer, A. (2012, 2021). *Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians but Were Afraid to Ask*. Saint Paul, MN: Borealis Books.

- Treuer, A. (2019). Personal communication regarding shared “affinity” among Native American and Irish.
- Treuer, D. (2019). *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*. USA: Penguin Publishing Group.
- Twiss, Richard (2015). *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books.
- Vecsey, Christopher (1993). *Handbook of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Crossroad.
- Vecsey, Christopher and Venables, Robert W. (1980). *American Indian Environments: Ecological Issues in Native American History*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Vizenor, Gerald (2008). *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Warren, Louis S. (Summer, 2015). Wage Work in the Sacred Circle: The Ghost Dance as Modern Religion. *Western Historical Quarterly* 46, pp. 141-168.

Decolonization and Early Childhood Education: Programs, Progress, and the Path Forward

Alycia West
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

The prevailing question to surround Indigenous education is whether it is a means to assimilate and establish success or whether it for the purpose of preserving traditions and cultivating leaders (Reyhner & Eder, 2017). These opposing viewpoints on the role of education in many ways reflect the conflicting perspectives about what it means to decolonize. One perspective believes that “decolonization is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing indigenous liberation (Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012). Another view of decolonization believes that it is not necessary to reject all of Western knowledge but that “...[instead, to] decolonize one’s thinking comes from the recognition that colonization operates on not just the political and economic level but on the ideological level as well.” (Tuhiwai – Smith, 2006, p.39). When considering education policy and how best to prepare Indigenous students for the future, decolonization offers us a lens to look at life before colonization and also a way to imagine a world free of the constraints that colonization offers. When we do that, we are able to plan for the type of educational system that would support Indigenous students fully. Head Start, and other early childhood programs, could be useful for preparing Indigenous students so that they are not entering public school at a disadvantage to their peers. Tribes could use Head Start programs as language and culture nests. Additionally, tribes could reimagine early childhood education for Native children completely. Programs such as these could ensure that traditions, stories, and language are passed onto future generations.

EDUCATION AS WEAPONIZATION; EDUCATION AS PRESERVATION

Education was used since the very beginning of colonization as a weapon against Indigenous people, as a way to separate them from their families and culture. As Reyhner and Eder (2017) said, “Schooling in American ways was meant to destroy Indian tribal life [and] rid the U.S. government of its trust and treaty responsibilities” (p.4). Repeatedly, by missionaries and by

the federal government itself, schools became a battleground for Indigenous students, a place where they were sent, often by force or coercion, to have their culture stripped away. Although these schools were meant to “civilize,” what actually happened was “cultural disintegration, not cultural replacement” (Reyhner & Eder, 2017, p. 5). Some tribes, however, soon recognized the necessity of education, especially in speaking and writing in English. The Chickasaw Nation, in particular, felt that “their very continuance as a nation was dependent on their ability to negotiate in a white world. [...] Education became their weapon.” (Cobb, 2000, p. 120). This led to what some in the tribe viewed as assimilation of white culture, while others viewed it as transformation (Cobb, 2000, p. 37).

As the self-determination movement took hold, more tribes wanted an increased role in shaping education policy both at the local and federal level. Schools like Rough Rock and Rock Point showed increased tribal involvement. Language and culture preservation became an increasing priority and tribes worked together to pass important legislation to support this goal. The Indian Education Act passed in 1972 and provided public schools that had at least ten Native students additional funds so that they could provide cultural materials and bilingual programs (Reyhner & Eder, 2017). NALA, the 1990 Native American Languages Act, was another step of culture and language preservation. NALA stated that Native languages should be protected and that they could not be restricted in any public forum, including in educational settings. Likewise, the Esther Martinez Native American Language Preservation Act brought multiple tribes together in the 21st century to support Native students.

DECOLONIZATION EFFORTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Kennedy Report, in its description of failures said that “the dominant policy of the Federal Government toward the American Indian has been one of coercive assimilation,” and that this policy has been “destructive” to both individuals and to tribal communities as a whole (U.S. Office of Education, 1969, p. 21). Additionally, the report found that these efforts at cultural replacement have caused schools to become a battlefield for students where they are fighting not only to learn in an unwelcoming environment, but also struggling between assimilation and their own identity. (U.S. Office of Education, 1969, p. 21). It’s unsurprising, then, that the Kennedy Report found that Indigenous students were not faring well in schools. Still, fifty-two years after its release, Indigenous students are still floundering in public schools. The Education Trust (2013) found that “only 18 percent of Native fourth-graders were proficient or advanced in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)” and only 17 percent of Native eighth-graders were proficient or higher in math (p.5)

One of the recommendations from The Kennedy Report was a preschool program for children ages 3 to 5, and this would have been possible to implement since the federal government had a model based on the Head Start Program they had begun a few years previously. Head Start was founded in 1964 by the Johnson administration as part of its “war on poverty” and one of its main tenets--besides providing a comprehensive preschool program--was that it would be culturally responsive to the families it served (Office of Head Start). According to the most recent reports, released this year, there are 144 American Indian and Alaskan Native Head Start programs today, serving over 22,000 children--though 22,000 more Indigenous children attend non-AIAN Head Start programs (National Head Start Association, 2021). Tribes can and should use these Head Start classrooms as language and culture nests. As part of the Head Start Performance

Standards, tribes are encouraged to “preserve, revitalize, restore, or maintain the tribal language” by the Office of Head Start, and these efforts can include “full immersion in the tribal language, modifying curricula to reflect tribal culture, [and] culturally relevant activities” (National Center of Tribal Early Childhood Development, 2018). This could look like teaching tribal songs and dances during music and movement time. Telling traditional stories during read alouds. Introducing games, art, celebrations. Like language nests, culture nests surround children so that they as they grow their identity is firmly planted and nurtured by their peers, teachers, and all adults in the program.

Although many tribes have made substantial progress at language revitalization efforts, especially with adults, language nests and immersion programs in Head Start could ensure that a whole generation grows up as native speakers of the language. It could ensure that another generation grows up with stories and traditions, that they are not lost. Currently, of the tens of thousands of children enrolled in tribal Head Start programs only 2% list their home language as a Native language (*Office of Head Start - Services Snapshot*, 2019). Parents cannot teach what has not been taught to them, and tribal languages and culture have been stolen from so many.

While there are considerations and fair criticisms to be made about whether the Head Start policies and the Head Start system in and of itself is the best option for Native children, there are many positives as well. There have been pilot programs for home visiting implemented in conjunction with several AIAN grantees, a comprehensive list of resources for curriculum modifications and supports is easily available, as well as a program designed for meshing culturally relevant traditions with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework for children birth to five. A downside is that while tribes can make modifications to curricula, most “evidenced-based” early childhood education curriculum were not made by Natives, for Natives, and the evidence they have that the curriculum works does not come from Native children. There are options to consider. Decolonizing ECE may mean staying in Head Start and continuing as we have been. It may mean creating our own curricula. Decolonizing ECE may require working with the system we have while simultaneously creating our own.

CONCLUSION

Since colonization, education has been, and perhaps forevermore will be, a battleground for Indigenous students. This is because “decolonization must begin in the mind and spirit of Indigenous Peoples” (Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012). Colonizers have attempted to shape Indigenous thoughts since the beginning, believing their way the best and only way to be. When considering education policy and how best to prepare Indigenous students for the future, it is impossible to forget colonization, but we must look to life before colonization and also attempt to imagine a world free of the constraints that colonization offers. When doing that, it is more possible to plan for the type of educational system that would support Indigenous students fully. I believe that early childhood education is important and that the benefits it could provide to Indigenous students both in terms of academics as well as language and culture could be immense.

REFERENCES

- Cobb, A. J. (2000). *Listening to Our Grandmothers' Stories: The Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females, 1852–1949* (Reprinted Ed.). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- National Center of Tribal Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Comparison: Tribal Child Care and Development Fund and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Requirements*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/comparison-tribal-child-care-development-fund.pdf>
- National Head Start Association. (2021). *2021 American Indian / Alaska Native Head Start Profile*. <https://www.nhsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-Head-Start-Fact-Sheet-AIAN.pdf>
- Office of Head Start. (2021, May 4). *Head Start History*. The Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/about/history-head-start>
- Office of Head Start - Services Snapshot*. (2019). Office of Head Start. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/service-snapshot-aian-2018-2019.pdf>
- Raheja, M. H., Smith, A., & Teves, S. N. (Eds.). (2015). *Native Studies Keywords*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Reyhner, J. & Eder, J. (2017). *American Indian Education: A History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- The Education Trust. (2013, August). *The State of Education for Native Students 2013*. https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/NativeStudentBrief_0.pdf
- Tuhiwai-Smith, L. (2006). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New York: Zed Books.
- U.S. Office of Education. (1969). *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. National Indian Law Library. <https://narf.org/nill/resources/education/reports/kennedy/1-1.pdf>
- Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, M. (2012) *For Indigenous Minds Only: A Decolonization Handbook*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

The Fight for Water is the Fight for Sovereignty

Robert Whitfield
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

What is sovereignty? Simply put, it is the idea that a group can self-govern without outside interference. Usually, these self-governing entities exist within a specific geographic sphere of influence. There is no one uniform method of self-governing and as such these groups can be collectives, theocracy, autocracy, oligarchies, democracies, republics, dictatorships, tribalistic, or any combination of these or other possible governing styles; regardless of any differing governing style, these self-governed groups almost always provide for its own members. Typically, these self-governing groups provide basic functions such as access to food, water, safety, security, a common culture, a common language, and the ability to enter in agreements with other self-governing bodies (James, 1984; Glanville, 2010). This paper will focus on the water sovereignty rights of Native Americans and how the use and control of water is fundamental not only for their survival but also is a precursory requirement for self-governing.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

PRECONTACT TRIBES

Prior to European contact, a multitude of indigenous groups lived across what is now known as North America. These groups of people lived in groups and depended on the land for survival; typically, their cultures were focused on the availability of the resources within their sphere of influence. As such, some of these communities were nomadic, following hunting herds; others relied heavily on agriculture to produce their foods. In either case, water was one of the pillars of these societies as both the hunting herds and their agrarian pursuits relied heavily on water for life; so important was water that it is theorized that several indigenous civilizations ceased to exist as a result of long-term severe droughts. Water was necessary for more than survival, it is the building block for civilization (Worthington, 2013).

POST-CONTACT TRIBES

Utilizing the Discovery Doctrine, European powers declared ownership of any land of they encountered in North America and even lands that they had not even fully explored. The fact that these lands were already occupied by indigenous tribes and communities was irrelevant; the Eurocentric view held that these indigenous communities were uncivilized and undeserving of the land they occupied. This view would create the foundation for Indian law in the United States. Typically, great conquest requires great bloodshed; however, in one ruling the Supreme Court of the United States in *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823) validated the idea that lands occupied by indigenous communities could be discovered and claimed without the consent of those same communities that occupied those lands; in essence, Indians only had the right to occupy their lands but not actually own them (Wilkinson et al., 2017; Robertson, 2011).

Although the federal government did enter into treaties with many of the tribes, the congressional plenary of unilateral abrogation meant that these treaties could be unilaterally broken (Wilkinson et al., 2017). Interestingly enough, the Calling Forth Act of 1792 allowed the President to call forth militias to suppress insurrections, foreign invaders, and Native Americans (Coakley, 2011). Native Americans were not seen as equals, they were not citizens, treaties greatly limited how they could interact with the growing non-native population.

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French diplomat, and aristocrat, observed during his sojourn to the United States that,

“The conduct of the United States Americans towards the natives was inspired by the most chaste affection for legal formalities. As long as the Indians remained in their savage state, the Americans did not interfere in their affairs at all and treated them as independent peoples; they did not allow their lands to be occupied unless they had been properly acquired by contract; and if by chance an Indian nation cannot live on its territory, they take them by the hand in brotherly fashion and lead them away to die far away from the land of their fathers. The Spaniards, by unparalleled atrocities which brand them with indelible shame, did not succeed in exterminating the Indian race and could not even prevent from sharing their rights; the United States Americans have attained both these results with wonderful ease, quietly, legally, philanthropically, without spilling blood and without violating a single one of the great principles of morality in the eyes of the world. It is impossible to destroy men with more respect for the laws of humanity. (Bragaw, 2006, p. 159).”

The discovery of gold, the need for arable farmland, and an ever-burgeoning non-native population precipitated the creation of Indian Removal Act of 1830, federal action would require that tribes move west of the Mississippi River (Reyhner & Eder, 2017).

The General Allotment Act of 1887 and the Curtis Act of 1898 took the reservations that tribes had received west of the Mississippi River and broke them up into individual parcels that

were allotted to individual members of each tribe in an effort to break them away from their collectivist lifestyles and impose Eurocentric values. Native Americans were encouraged to become yeoman farmers (Reyhner & Eder, 2017; Bragaw, 2006). It goes without saying that in order for the practice of farming to be successful, there must be access to a reliable, consistent source of water.

LEGAL CASES

There are several cases that are the foundation for water sovereignty rights for tribes. In western, arid states, water is especially precious; as such, competition for water between Native Americans and non-natives can be quite contentious. Generally, there are two schools of thought regarding water usage, east of the Mississippi river tend to follow a proximity based riparian doctrine, meaning that those that are close to the source of water can use it reasonably; however, west of the Mississippi the prior appropriation doctrine is used, this is because not all development occurs near a water source. To facilitate growth, water was funneled through irrigation canals and similar water works to transport it for use of farming, mining, or other industrial/agricultural needs (Royster, 2011; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

Winters v. United States (1908) is the oldest and most prominent of the precedent setting cases involving water for Native Americans. In this case the Supreme court determined that reservations were created by treaties as places for Native Americans to live and become self-sufficient through yeoman farmer practices. Although no explicit language in this applicable treaty gave water rights to the tribe, it was found by the court that the treaty implicitly granted water rights as a lack of water would contradict the purpose for the reservation. Tribes would have a prior reserved appropriation to utilize water (Royster, 2011; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

In *Arizona v. California* (1963) the states of California, Nevada, and Arizona each claimed prior appropriation to the Colorado river; the states could not agree on how to divide and share the water equitably; however, the court found that when the Boulder Canyon Project of 1928 fairly allocated each state a sufficient portion of the river for use: 2.8 MAF (million-acre feet of water) to Arizona; 4.4 MAF to California; and 300,000 to Nevada. The states argued that their use of the water also trumped that of the Native Americans use, as they claimed to have used the water for beneficial consumptive use first; however, this claim is contrary to archaeological evidence which demonstrated that Native Americans had used the water for irrigation purposes prior to non-natives settling in the area. The court affirmed the previous *Winters v. United States* case (known now as the Winters Doctrine) and held that tribes did have a right to the water to use for their current and future use in the amount necessary to irrigate all feasibly arable land within the reservation; this is referred to as the concept of a practicably irrigable acreage (PIA). The tribe was reserved 1 MAF (Wilkinson et al., 2017; US Bureau of Reclamation, n.d.; Rusinek, 1990).

In the *Colorado River Water Conservation Dist. v. United States* (1976) case, the state of Colorado via the Water Rights and Administration Act was broken up into seven (7) water districts. Each district would then have to make an application to the state each month for use of water. The state would then decide based on the applications what amount of water was apportioned to each district. Colorado's water distribution law did not recognize the preexisting, reserved allocation of water granted to tribes from the federal government; however, as the parallel cases on the state level existed, the Supreme Court abstained from making a decision and ruled that the dismissal of

the case in the lower level court was justified – this case allowed Native American rights in this instance to be adjudicated on the state level outside of the federal court (Wilkinson et al., 2017).

The *United States v. Adair* (1983) case found that non-consumptive use of water for the purposes of hunting and fishing was also reserved to tribes. Specifically in this case the Klamath Tribe, held by treaty, reserved hunting and fishing rights and were entitled to as much water as needed to preserve those rights. This case is very unique in that it preserves a non-consumptive use of water not directed towards agriculture needs (Wilkinson et al., 2017); however, *Adair* continues to be a complicated issue that has been revisited multiple times regarding the actual quantification of what amount of water is needed to for the tribes' purposes of sustaining their fishery (Sudbury, 2004).

The *Nevada v. United States* (1983) case the court found that tribe must rely on a previously made agreement regarding water quantification, in this instance the Orr Ditch Decree; however, in this agreement the federal government represented both sides of the decree and as such did not act in the best interest of the tribe. This case severely limits the rights of tribes to bring up future stipulations regarding previous agreements (Wilkinson et al., 2017; Scott, 1984).

The *Wyoming v. United States* (1988) case was a large setback for the tribes, as the court moved away from the PIA standard set in *Arizona v. California* and moved towards a more needs-based criteria that considered what the tribe would be doing with the water, the historical use of the water, and what other parties needs are for that water. The court in essence returned to a reasonably foreseeable needs standard that was rejected in *Arizona v. California*. The Court rejected that a reservation is a permanent homestead for tribes that also primarily exist for agricultural purposes (Rusinek, 1990; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

CURRENT IMPLICATIONS OF WATER SOVEREIGNTY

POPULATION DISPARITY

The nationwide population of Native Americans is far below that of the non-native population. Given the vast difference in population, it would seem that using the standard set in the *Wyoming v. United States* (1988) case, that tribal reservations of water can be greatly diminished. Prior to the *Wyoming* decision tribes enjoyed a great surplus of water that was granted to them from the PIA standard. The precedent set in *Wyoming v. United States* (1988) implies that a non-native need that is not agriculturally related could trump a tribe's reservation of water (Rusinek, 1990).

COMPETITION FOR WATER

The availability of water has strong economic ramifications on cities, states, and industries. Oddly enough, bottled water is perhaps the newest, biggest threat to water sovereignty. In 2018 bottled water sales reached \$19 billion with projected growth to exceed \$24 billion. Commercial competition for water affects both non-natives and Native Americans as large companies secure rights to pump massive amounts of water from streams, causing damage to watershed environments; local governments and citizen groups are voicing their concern about protecting their water reserves (Brown, 2020a). Further complicating matters, California is now allowing water to be sold on their state's commodity market; the value of water in this context is strictly

based on scarcity. Unfortunately, this means that hoarding of water by corporations could create false shortages driving up both the price of water and competition for water from other sources, such as tribal water reservations (Repeckaite, 2021; Tappe, 2020). One could conclude that tribes reliant on the Colorado River may be especially vulnerable considering that California has been allocated a considerable portion for its use.

TRIBAL PROTEST

Tribes have taken an active interest in not only preserving their reservation of water, but also in seeking to maintain the integrity of their water supply. In recent news, many tribes protested against the construction of the Keystone Pipeline. Tribes expressed concern over the risk of oil leaks that could contaminate their water. Interestingly, the Fort Belknap community from the *Winters v. United States* (1908) case was one of the primary leaders in the fight against the Keystone Pipeline. Fort Belknap Indian Community President Andrew Werk Jr. stated concerning the pipeline:

“Our land, water, and people are under direct threat from the KXL pipeline. It is a project that has moved forward without regard to legality or safety. Our water sources are threatened by the dirty tar sand crude, our ancestral homelands are in the direct path of the pipeline, and our people already are suffering the effects of nearby construction worker man camps. (Native American Rights Fund, n.d.)”

Some tribes are taking an active environmental approach to protect their environments; however, it can be difficult for tribes to find the appropriate legal standing to fight against large corporations, states, or other entities when the action does not occur strictly on the reservation; however, this has not dissuaded some tribes from creating laws that protect their environment such as the Ojibwe’s law recognizing wild rice as having a right to exist (Brown, 2019b).

CONCLUSION

Historical precedent set by years of racist policies by the federal government such as forced education, forced migration, imprisonment, and death have left Native American communities in a state of generational disenfranchisement. Any sovereign power must be able to supply basic necessities and meet the needs of its community. Water is instrumental in meeting the needs of tribal sovereignty as reservations were originally designed to support self-sufficiency through farming; an erosion of this right is tantamount to dissolution to reservations all together (Fairbanks, 1996; Glanville, 2010); complicating this matter is the unspoken provisions that exist between the lines in treaties that at the time viewed water as so ubiquitous that no special mention may have been given regarding the reservation of its use (Wilkinson et al., 2017).

Regardless, as populations increase so does the need for reliable water sources, especially for historically disenfranchised groups such as Native Americans. The future for water usage is in question for Native Americans, legal precedents such as *Winters v. United States* preserved water usage and imply that if Native Americans were to become yeoman farmers, they would of course need water to make their land arable; however, *Wyoming v. United States* compromises the Winter Doctrine altogether (Wilkinson et al., 2017). The pendulum of jurisprudence swings to

extremes and it would seem that at present, tribal water sovereignty is at risk of being further diminished. Without water there is no sovereignty for tribes.

REFERENCES

- Bragaw, S. (2006) "Thomas Jefferson and the American Indian Nations: Native American Sovereignty and the Marshall Court." *Journal of Supreme Court History*. 32(2) pp. 155-180.
- Brown, A. (2019a, February 12). "Lawmakers Open Groundwater Fight Against Bottled Water Companies." Pew, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/02/12/lawmakers-open-groundwater-fight-against-bottled-water-companies>
- Brown, A. (2019, October 30) "Cities, Tribes Try a New Environmental Approach: Give Nature Rights." Pew. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2019/10/30/cities-tribes-try-a-new-environmental-approach-give-nature-rights>
- Coakley, R. (2011) *The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders 1789-1878*. U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington D.C.
https://history.army.mil/html/books/030/30-13-1/CMH_Pub_30-13-1.pdf
- Fairbanks, R. (1996) "Native American Sovereignty and Treaty Rights: Are They Historical Illusions?" *American Indian Law Review*. 20(1) pp. 141-149.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20068787>
- Glanville, L. (2010) "The Antecedents of 'Sovereignty as Responsibility.'" *The European Journal of International Relations*. 17(2). Pp. 233-255.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066109346889>
- James, A. (1984) "Sovereignty: Ground Rules or Gibberish?" *Review of International Studies*. 10(1). Pp. 1-18. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20096996>
- Native American Rights Fund (n.d.) Keystone XL Pipeline. <https://www.narf.org/cases/keystone/>
- Repeckaite, D. (2021, February 3) "Water Futures: the latest battleground in the defiance of the fundamental right to water." *Equal Times*. <https://www.equaltimes.org/water-futures-the-latest#.YI9WDcCSIPY>
- Reyhner, J. & Eder J. (2017) *American Indian Education: A History*, 2nd Edition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Roberston, L. (2011) "The Judicial Conquest of Native America: The Story of *Johnson v. M'Intosh*." In *Indian Law Stories*, C. Goldberg, K. Washburn, and P. Frickey, Eds. Foundation Press. pp. 29-60.
- Royster, J. (2011) Water, Legal Rights, and Actual Consequences: the Story of *Winters V. United States*. In *Indian Law Stories*, C. Goldberg, K. Washburn, and P. Frickey, Eds. Foundation Press. pp. 81-107.
- Rusinek, W. (1990) "A preview of Coming Attractions? *Wyoming v. United States* and the Reserved Rights Doctrine." *Ecology Law Quarterly*. 17(2). Pp. 355-412.

- Scott, William (1984) “The Continuing Saga of Pyramid Lake: *Nevada v. United States.*” *Natural Resources Journal*. 24 (4).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2218&context=nri>
- Sudbury, R. (2004) “When Good Streams Go Dry: *United States v. Adair* and the Unprincipled Elimination of a Federal Forum for Treaty Reserved Rights.” *Public Land and Resources Law Review*. 25. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/232673978.pdf>
- Tappe, A. (2020, December 7) “Investors can now trade water futures.” *CNN*.
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/07/investing/water-futures-trading/index.html>
- US Bureau of Reclamation (n.d.). “Supreme Court Clears The Way For The Central Arizona Project.”
https://www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix/AZ100/1960/supreme_court_AZ_vs_CA.html#:~:text=The%20Arizona%20v.%20California%20Supreme,the%20Supreme%20Court%20in%201952.
- Worthington, G. (2013) “Indians and Civilization: Shaping Society into the Future.” In *Encyclopedia of American Indian Issues Today*, Russell M. Johnson, Ed. Greenwood Press. pp. 318-317.



COVER ART

© ERIC TIPPECONNIC



Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Tippeconnic & Numuni
2021