Perpetuating Colonization Through the Gaze of US Media

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Abstract

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Mass media play a significant role in maintaining unequal systems of power and perpetuating inequality and injustice. Using a Media Studies and Indigenous Epistemological framework, this thesis posits that news media deploy stereotypes of Native Americans in order to serve the primary goal of the U.S. government in relation to Indigenous peoples in the United States: the gradual elimination of Indian cultures through gendered violence, destruction of natural environments and exploitation of natural resources, and severely limiting indigenous sovereignty. My research design allows me to examine the construction of race and gender as processes of social interaction and power relations, and to analyze the media's role in colonization. It also allows me to illustrate some of the legacies of settler colonialism through telling the stories of my family. In this thesis, I analyze stereotypical representations of Native Americans in media in relation to the displacement of Diné people from their ancestral land in

the period surrounding the Long Walk of 1863-1864, and the internment of Diné people at the Bosque Redondo until 1868. I employ a partially autoethnographic approach to highlight not only the generational impacts of settler colonialism, but also the impact on individuals. I also interviewed family members, searched for official documentation of deceased family members, searched church records, and have attempted to create a family archive with the data produced by these methods. This approach allows me to contrast dominant cultural narratives, many of which are constructed in the media, with the oral histories passed along through my family and the experiences of still-living family members in order to illuminate settler colonialism as a pervasive, ongoing process that impacts communities, families, and individuals in vastly different ways.

Keywords: settler colonialism, Native Americans, Indigenous Studies, decolonization, media studies, oral history

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One: Introduction

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"'*You are here because of what happened to your great-grandmother long ago*.'"[1]

***

In May 2017, I sat down to interview my mother for a class project. We talked for about an hour and a half, spanning many years, many relatives, and many topics. Though I didn't hear much that was new to me, I heard it all in a new way. Perhaps it was because I was older, an adult with life experiences and children of my own; perhaps it was because it was all being told at once, in an almost linear way. Probably both are true. Throughout my life, I got scraps of information about my family. Half a story might slip out of my grandmother's mouth, or a distant relative mentioned, but the subject always changed, almost immediately. If I or any of my cousins expressed interest in their conversations, they would switch form speaking English to Spanish. If I asked for more, I was spurned. It's not important to you, I was told. It's in the past, gone, practically forgotten. Except, it wasn't forgotten. They remembered, my mom and aunts and uncles, my grandmother and grandfather, and they still talked about the past with each other. As I grew up and older, the names and stories faded from my memory. I forgot many of the stories I had heard, until the interview with my mom brought them back to me. My scholarly interests in race, gender, media, colonialism, consumer culture, and wildly uneven power structures in the United States helped put my family's stories into the larger context and history of ongoing colonization and violence toward indigenous peoples. I began my quest to learn more about how mass media shape discourse and "teach" us about ourselves, each other, and how the world works, and in turn impact social and political policy and action. Most importantly, I began to examine how discourse has affected my family – our memories, our identities – and demonstrate the legacy of the trauma of colonization on families and individuals, across generations.

[1] Luci Tapahonso, "In 1864," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 12, no. 3 (1992): 1-4.

My research examines Indigenous perspectives on representation and sovereignty in order to explore media complicity in furthering a settler colonialist agenda. The conquest myth allows Americans to consider "colonized peoples as inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable," and that opinion has been and still is continually validated in the media.[2]

My thesis examines how the mass media selectively overlook particular historical and social contexts, and deploy racial stereotypes of Native American people in order to reinforce dominant capitalist and patriarchal frames within public discourse. Representation is a huge issue with implications in multiple areas. In this thesis, I primarily address representation in media. I explore how Native American people, the Diné (Navajo) most specifically, have been represented in the news and how representations influence public opinion as well as political action and ideological agendas. My research also examines a range of historical, legal, and cultural issues pertinent to Indigenous sovereignty and identity. Ideas around gender and gender roles, race, and sovereignty are some of the primary frames through which I examine the media's role in reinforcing capitalist and patriarchal agendas.

Background and History

Diné Nation

In the 1840s, the U.S. federal government attempted to "kill the Indian" and put an end to resistance by the Diné.[3] In the southwest U.S., Diné and Mescalero Apaches were targeted for "removal, isolation, and incarceration"[4] and, later, "segregation and assimilation."[5] The plan included the placement of Indians on federal trust land, or reservations, and was meant to force them to assimilate into American life. Designed as "an alternative to extinction for Native peoples," the reservation system also allowed

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[2] Emma LaRocque, "Metis and Feminist: Ethical Reflections on Feminism, Human Rights, and Decolonization," in *Making Space For Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce A. Green (New York: Zed Books 2007), 312.

[3] Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center, "'Kill the Indian, and Save the Man': Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans," accessed December 24, 2017 http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu.

[4] Lisa Donaldson, "'Indian Rolling': White Violence Against Native Americans in Farmington, New Mexico" (PhD dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2006), 48.

[5] Ibid., 50.

non-Indian people to settle and develop the territory.[6] Beginning in 1863, the Diné and Mescalero Apaches would be forced to relocate to the Bosque Redondo reservation at Fort Sumner near the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico. The area was desolate, the river alkaline; in this place, Brigadier General James Carlton, commander of the Department of New Mexico, insisted that the Indians would learn to be farmers, instructed in Christian values, and their children would be educated in the ways of white America.[7] Carlton ordered the Indian fighter Christopher "Kit" Carson to take his message to the Diné : they would go to Bosque Redondo, and peace would not be made on any other terms. Carson dispatched forces to burn crops, destroy food supplies and hogans, poison water and shoot livestock. By late 1863, thousands of Indians had surrendered, and by 1864, 7,384 Diné were interned there, and by 1868, two thousand internees - one out of four - died there, of dysentery, exposure or starvation, and are buried in unmarked graves on the present 250-acre historic site.[8] Further, no records of the Indian internees were kept by name, only by number; in contrast, the Army did record the names of every soldier stationed there.

By early 1868, "federal officials had judged the Bosque Redondo experiment a disaster that had to be quickly rectified."[9] A treaty was negotiated to move the Diné to a new location, but they wished to return to their homelands. The Navajo Treaty, signed June 1, 1868, established the Navajo reservation.[10] It soon became apparent that the negotiated area was not large enough to accommodate the Diné, and they were told that they could use any off-treaty land which was not already occupied by white settlers.[11] At that time, few whites lived in the area, so the Diné were able to return to much of their sacred homeland.[12]

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[6] Ibid., 48.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Cindy Yurth, "Hwéeldi at 150," *Navajo Times* (October 2, 2014).

[9] Garrick Bailey and Roberta Bailey, *A History of the Navajos: The Reservation Years* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1986), 25.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

Around 1870, the first white settlers began to move into the region, developing farms and ranches in the river valleys around Farmington, in San Juan County, New Mexico.[13] Farmington eventually became an agricultural and trading center. In the early 1950s, oil and gas discoveries brought a surge of people and a new prosperity to the area. By 1956, nearly $1 billion had been invested in oil, natural gas production, uranium, and other minerals in the county, and a large number of people migrated there as employees of such industries.[14] Many of the uranium mines, oil wells, and gas wells were (and still are) located on Diné land. As the oil and gas business boomed in the 1950s, many outsiders came to the area, bringing with them significant resources.[15] White oil and gas workers were able to establish their own institutions and control the political and economic systems in San Juan County, to the exclusion of indigenous peoples. In 1974, Mayor Mario Webb of Farmington suggested that the Anglos that had moved to the area during the gas and oil boom had no prior contact with or understanding of Diné culture.[16] They brought different attitudes and prejudices, causing new problems to emerge between whites and Diné.[17] This kind of settlement was not uncommon throughout the U.S., nor was the prevailing notion that tension between whites and Indians over land and resource extraction, as well as the resulting displacement of Indigenous people, was an inevitable result of a growing economy. In the 19th and early 20th century, the U.S. government encouraged whites to relocate to and settle in or near Indigenous territories, in part to aid in the civilization of Indians by being "good examples," and also to contribute to the eventual disappearance of reservations through the sale and occupation of Indigenous land. Changes to Indian policy in the 1930s precluded the disappearance of reservations, however, and

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[13] United States Commission on Human Rights, New Mexico Advisory Committee, *The Farmington Report: A Conflict of Cultures* (1975).

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Donaldson, "'Indian Rolling.'"

today many reservations, including the Diné Nation, have a "checkerboard" pattern, in which "Indian land under federal trust status and non-Indian deeded land are interspersed."[18]

I have a strong personal investment in this research, as my family was impacted by the Long Walk and subsequent oil and gas boom in San Juan County. I grew up hearing stories about the terrible injustices done to my great-great-grandparents, and I was encouraged to keep my family background to myself when in public. I did not realize it at the time but some of my family, my mother included, moved to the Pacific Northwest to escape racial discrimination against Native American people in New Mexico. My family background and history shapes my perception of the social and political forces that surround all people at all levels of society, especially those at the bottom who have few actual rights and little recourse. It also has shaped my perception and understanding of justice, and violence, and equality/inequality. I see how easy it is for those who have not directly experienced the weight of structural inequality to discount it. I see how those who do experience it are invisible to the rest of society. Unequal power structures are perpetuated in the media, when those in power are given a platform while the marginalized remain invisible and voiceless, or at best are inaccurately represented in ways that uphold the status quo.

Media have the power to shape public perception, and that power is frequently deployed to justify and validate laws and policies that disproportionately impact Indigenous people by privileging economic and corporate interests and simultaneously perpetuating racial and gendered stereotypes. Analysis of news coverage illuminates how the media deploys controlling images of Native Americans and omits historical contexts, thus effectively silencing indigenous voices and perspectives. This thesis employs Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to examine media complicity in ongoing colonialist domination and oppression of Indigenous peoples in the United States. The omission of historical and cultural contexts distorts the stakes, oversimplifying the issues and dehumanizing those involved. My thesis posits that

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[18] Thomas Biolsi, "Imagined Geographies: Sovereignty, Indigenous Space, and American Indian Struggle," *American Ethnologist* 32, no. 2 (2005), 244.

news media deploy Indian stereotypes in order to serve the primary goal of the U.S. government in relation to Indigenous peoples: the gradual elimination of Native Americans through gendered violence, destruction of natural environments and exploitation of natural resources, and severely limiting indigenous sovereignty.

This thesis also utilizes indigenous research methods in the creation of a family archive. The archive itself and the process involved in making it demonstrate the ongoing intergenerational impacts of colonization on people, in the past and the present.

A Note on Naming

I chose to use the term "Indigenous" when referring to concepts or policies that could potentially apply to Indigenous peoples very broadly. I use the term "Indian" when discussing the myths and narratives perpetuated by the dominant culture (including in the newspaper articles analyzed in this thesis), and "Native American" when referring to Indigenous people in the territory that is now called the United States. Similarly, I use "Navajo" when referencing a specific newspaper article and the tropes and/or narratives it presents. I use Diné when referring to the actual people being represented and discussed. As "Native American" and "American Indian" seem to be more or less equally represented in terms of preference, I chose Native American merely in order to distinguish it on the page from the word Indian. I use Indian as a reference to the construction of the racialized category "Indian," which connotes a very specific set of myths that have been continually perpetuated through mass media and other modes of communication.

Literature Review

Settler Colonialism

Colonialism takes many forms, but settler colonialism in the United States is a distinct formation that is important to understand in relation to Indigenous sovereignty. Settler

colonialism is an ongoing system of power that seeks to eradicate Indigenous peoples and cultures through the acquisition of land and exploitation of natural resources. Settler colonialism is distinct in that settler colonizers seek not only to displace but replace the Indigenous populations and cultures with Western European people, values, and "morals." Further, in settler colonial societies "invasion is a structure not an event."[19] This specific form of colonialism imbues all social structures, becomes normalized, and is continually perpetuated through generations.

Patrick Wolfe theorized a "logic of elimination" in which he argues that settler colonialism is not simply an historical event, but an ongoing structure. Wolfe writes: "elimination refers to more than the summary liquidation of Indigenous people, though it includes that. In its positive aspect, the logic of elimination marks a return whereby the native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society."[20] In other words, "elimination" in this context does not necessarily mean genocide, but is no less destructive toward Indigenous peoples and cultures. Settler colonialism requires the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples by various means, including the process of racialization and the reinforcement of the conquest narrative which places Indigenous peoples and cultures as both inferior to Western European culture and anachronistic, frozen in the past.

The notion of *terra nullius* or "empty land" is also key in understanding settler colonialism. The Discovery Doctrine is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, but essentially it held that Europeans upon "discovery" had the right, granted by their sovereign, to claim ownership of the "discovered" land without concern or consideration for the people already

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[19] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 388.

[20] Ibid., 390.

living there. The land was certainly not "empty." Because "territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element"[21] and "land is what is most valuable, contested, required...because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital,"[22] the Indigenous people there needed to be removed. Throughout history, the removal of Indigenous people from American land has shifted from their physical removal through violence and war, to the eradication of Indigenous cultures by rendering them invisible and fragile through various discursive practices. One powerful type of discourse that provided an ideological justification for removal was the notion that the Native Americans were not using the land "properly," while settlers from Western European nations could put the land to "better" use.[23]

The idea that settlers knew how to use the land better than Indigenous people set up a social hierarchy that positions the settler as "superior and normal; the settler is natural...more developed, more human, more deserving than other groups or species."[24] Hierarchical social structures pave the way for the construction of the "us versus them" mentality. The settler is normalized. Native Americans are racialized. American social, political, and legal structures are in turn shaped by ideology:

> In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward. Made savage.[25]

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[21] Ibid., 388.

[22] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 5.

[23] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism."

[24] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization," 6.

[25] Ibid., 5.

Chapter 3 of this thesis demonstrates how the news media in the mid-nineteenth century characterized Native American people as primitive, settlers as innocent victims of Indian savagery, and the land as untapped wealth. The racialization of Indigenous peoples in the United States was a critical tool in the expansion of the United States:

> Native Americans are constructed to become fewer in number and less Native, but never exactly white, over time. Our/their status as Indigenous peoples/first inhabitants is the basis of our/their land claims and the goal of settler colonialism is to diminish claims to land over generations (or sooner, if possible). That is, Native American is a racialization that portrays contemporary Indigenous generations to be less authentic, less Indigenous than every prior generation in order to phase out Indigenous claims to land and usher in settler claims to property.[26]

Settlers' access to territory was impeded by Indigenous people, and any increase in their numbers was detrimental to expansion. Restricting their status through racial categorization helped further the "logic of elimination."[27] Wolfe reminds us that "race cannot be taken as a given. It is made in the targeting."[28] The process of racialization contributes to the continual dehumanization and displacement of Indigenous peoples in North America, which perpetuates the hegemonic settler colonial system of power in the United States.

Erasure and forgetting are essential to the perpetuation of settler colonialism. Rowe and Tuck describe some of the ways that settler colonialism in the United States requires the "continuously renewed erasure of Indigenous people," including the use of Native American stereotypes and the present (yet often invisible) conquest narratives in various forms of media.[29] Media tropes serve the function of affirming that settlers are right where they belong, "that their

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[26] Ibid., 12.

[27] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism."

[28] Ibid., 388.

[29] Aimee Carrillo Rowe and Eve Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies: Ongoing Settlement, Cultural Production, and Resistance," *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies* 17, no. 1 (2017): 6.

place in the social order has been hard-won through the taming of savages."[30] The United States was built on the horrific systematic violence perpetrated against Indigenous people (and also the Black slaves brought to the United States to labor on stolen land in order to exponentially increase the wealth of settlers), but mainstream cultural productions typically erase this aspect of American progress. Native American people are often portrayed in the past. When portrayed in contemporary settings, they are usually shown to be mystical, impoverished, or addicted, all of which cast Native people as endangered, which is essentially another form of erasure as it renders them inferior and irrelevant. In the next section I discuss media representation in more depth.

Media Representations of Native Americans

The roles, ideological functions, and influence of mass media have been studied extensively. According to Hall, the "mass media 'provide the guiding myths which shape our perception of the world and serve as important instruments as social control.'"[31] In his analysis of news media in particular, Hall not only addresses the power of media but also critiques the relationship between media and what he calls the "gatekeepers" - government officials, politicians, corporate spokespeople, "experts" - in keeping those who exist outside of this relationship on the margins and misrepresented.[32] Kellner argues that "media culture" plays a large part in the creation of identity, helping people understand not only who they are but their place in the world.[33] The world is highly mediated, in which people and events become synonymous with their representations, regardless of whether they are factual or accurate; the news thrives on immediacy and, increasingly, eschews context which results in distorted representations and upholds the

[30] Ibid., 6.

[31] Helen Davis, *Understanding Stuart Hall* (London: Sage, 2004), 41.

[32] Ibid., 43.

[33] Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern*, (London: Routledge, 1995).

dominant political and social landscape. However, Hall's theory of the politics of representation posits that media representation is more complex than a simple cause-and-effect relationship between media and consumers. Power strives to solidify meaning to support its agenda, and audiences receive meaning, but meaning cannot be fixed; individuals constantly remake or "decode" meaning as it is received, and therefore meaning is constantly changing regardless of the author's intent (encoding).[34] Encoding and decoding are discursive practices in a constant state of motion and flux, in a "dialectic of cultural struggle"[35] which occurs at the point where "different, opposed traditions meet, intersect."[36] Thus, the consumption of media is not a passive act; consumers make meaning out of various texts by, in part, pulling from previous interactions with media.

By reinforcing already widely-held stereotypes, "the press has given these images the weight of factuality."[37] Thus, the news media wields a particular power over public opinion and public policy, by defining and constructing social problems in ways that reinforce unequal power structures. Hall argues that "the media's main sphere of operations is the production and transformation of ideologies."[38] Ideologies are not created and followed in a vacuum, but rather are made up of a complex set of meanings which determine social formations and conditions, or how people make sense of the world and their place in it.[39] Ideologies also influence individual identities.

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[34] Davis, *Understanding Stuart Hall*; Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003); Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular." In *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: a Reader*, John Storey (Ed.), (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

[35] Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," 447.

[36] Ibid., 450.

[37] Mary Ann Weston, *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press, (*Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), 2.

[38] Stuart Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media," in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*, Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez (Eds.), (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), 18

[39] Ibid.; Kellner, *Media Culture*.

Race has long been a site of cultural struggle, and mass media often contribute to racist ideologies. Hall addresses racism as "an internal problem of imperial economics"[40] which provides a lens through which "fear and anxiety are distorted," turning attention away from the causes of major economic, social, and political inequities, and projected onto the marginalized.[41] Thus alternative perspectives to dominant ideology and discourse are often shut down. Especially during times of crisis, the state must contain dissenting voices by deploying ideology to justify the use of racial stereotypes, and also the use of both symbolic and actual physical violence against those who disrupt the status quo. Scholars broadly agree that spectacle and conflict tend to be newsworthy on multiple levels, sending a clear message; Kellner argues that "media culture spectacles demonstrate who has power and who is powerless, who is allowed to exercise force and violence, and who is not. They dramatize an legitimate the power of the forces that be and demonstrate to the powerless that if they fail to conform, they risk incarceration or death."[42] Scholars also argue about the role of media as watchdog, protector and defender of democratic principles, and whether media live up to such ideals. Larson argues that various forms of media help maintain the racial status quo by frequently excluding and stereotyping racial minorities in news coverage, and using tropes and myths to explain and justify racial inequality.[43] Larson explains that many Americans prefer to deny the existence of systemic racial inequality, and rely on narrative tropes to "disprove" racism.[44] The myth of the American Dream and the meritocracy is a prime example, which emphasizes the notion that personal responsibility is behind the success or lack of success of racial groups. Media focuses on either individual success stories that "prove" the American Dream is accessible by anyone, as long as they act the "right" way; conversely, mass media often gives attention the "wrong

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[40] Davis, *Understanding Stuart Hall*, quoting Hall, 31.

[41] Ibid., 31.

[42] Kellner, *Media Culture*, 2.

[43] Stephanie Larson, *Media & Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 13.

[44] Ibid.

kind" of racial minority. Both kinds of portrayals help maintain the racial status quo by playing upon white anxiety, in part by serving as the primary means by which many white people feel they "know" people of color. In short, media greatly contributes to an "us versus them" mentality.

Stereotypes of Native Americans have a long history and are well-known. The noble and ignoble savage, the warrior and the Indian princess, the drunken Indian, the lazy Indian, and the squaw, for example, are ingrained in the American consciousness and vocabulary. Scholars trace the simultaneous fascination with and subordination of Native Americans from "first contact" with Europeans.[45] Early images of Native American people frequently portrayed them as either innocents in a bucolic natural setting, or as ruthless savages brutalizing white explorers and settlers; images of Native American women were (and still are) sexualized, portraying them as docile sensualists willing to give up their land and culture to the superiority of white men. European Christianity subsumed Indigenous religions, so that broad notions of Native Americans as lacking religion became a common assumption. Indian characters in stories and dramatizations, even when romanticized, were always eventually conquered, proving the righteousness and superiority of white Western culture. Such characterizations and scenarios were created and perpetuated by white Americans and Europeans, and have played out time and again over decades; representations of Native Americans, even those considered "positive," normalize public conceptions of Indians as a monolithic group of people with universal characteristics, and also normalize conceptions of their inferiority and resultant justifiable subordination to whites. Stereotypes of Native Americans as primitives also situate them in a discourse of the level playing field and personal responsibility, indicating that the higher-than-average rates of poverty, unemployment, and other social issues in Native American communities are a natural, inevitable result of flawed, backward, primitive cultures that "refuse" to join the "civilized," "American" way of life.[46]

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[45] Gretchen Bataille, *Native American Representations : First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Stephanie Larson, *Media and Minorities*.

[46] Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Larson, *Media and Minorities*; Mary Ann Weston, *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press, (*Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996).

Native Americans are stereotyped in familiar ways, yet the relationship between white America and Native Americanss is complex and rife with contradictions. Media representations, even early texts and images, “served as pedagogy and knowledge production for spectators”[47] of white America’s paradoxical perspective on and appropriation of Indigenous cultures. The United States has a long history of “cultural fusion and violent appropriation” of its indigenous peoples,[48] what Raheja terms redfacing, “the process and politics of playing Indian.”[49] Deloria details the complexities of white America’s relationship with Indians, arguing that “the practice of playing Indian has clustered around two paradigmatic moments - the Revolution, which rested on the creation of a national identity, and modernity, which has used Indian play to encounter the authentic amidst the anxiety of urban industrial and postindustrial life.”[50] The “Indian” and American identity are connected, and Deloria questions what it means to be American and points out that even in the 21st century, this question is perhaps too complicated to answer. Further, Indian play mirrors the reality of white domination, “in which the exercise of power was hidden, denied, qualified, or mourned,” allowing white Americans to hide from or deny the existence of racial inequality.”[51] Along with American identity, the American Dream and meritocracy are also questioned, as Deloria argues that “the self-defining pairing of American truth with American freedom rests on the ability to wield power against Indians--social, military, economic, and political--while simultaneously drawing power from them.”[52]

News and entertainment media wield the power of representation regularly, and there are many examples of stories that offer seemingly sympathetic images of Native Americans, while at the same time asserting and reinforcing their marginalized place in American society. The occupation of Alcatraz Island

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[47] Michelle H. Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans on Film*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2011), 2.

[48] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 5.

[49] Raheja, *Reservation Reelism*, 3.

[50] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 7.

[51] Ibid., 187.

[52] Ibid., 191.

by Indians of All Tribes between 1969 and 1971, exemplifies the ways news media objectifies and vilifies Native Americans. Local news coverage was initially positive and sometimes even light-hearted; the San Francisco press was largely liberal, and portrayed the event as original and creative, which was appealing to much of their audience.[53] Larson states that the event was planned with the media in mind as well, providing an interesting story and visuals, and allowed reporters access. However, the coverage tended to be too superficial to effectively convey the activists' objectives, limiting its usefulness. Stories often focused on the occupiers' physical appearance, and romanticized the occupation as a noble pursuit by good Indians who simply wanted to reconnect with traditional cultures.[54] As time passed and conditions changed, coverage turned negative. "Bad Indian" stereotypes emerged. When buildings were destroyed by fire, images of Indians as savages replaced the more jovial representations that had previously dominated the local news. Wetzel argues that news photographs portrayed the Indian occupiers as lazy or inactive (during the earlier days), or being arrested, which played upon multiple stereotypes and rendered them ineffectual.[55]

Hollywood's treatment of Native Americans is notorious. The Indian as noble savage or bloodthirsty savage dominated the popular media, and people never seemed to tire of stories of the conquest of the American frontier. *Dances With Wolves*, released in 1990, is a sort-of revision of the Wild West frontier myth in that it attempted to portray the Indians sympathetically, used authentic Native actors and indigenous language.[56] Yet the main character in the film is a white man, and the story is told from his perspective; he is able to "go native" and "become Indian," and assuage any audience guilt over the genocide of Native Americans by asserting that white America can be virtuous. Further, the film is a

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[53] Larsen, *Media & Minorities;* Weston, *Native Americans in the News.*

[54] Weston, *Native Americans in the News.*

[55] Christopher Wetzel, "Envisioning Land Seizure: Diachronic Representations of the Occupation of Alcatraz Island," *American Behavioral Scientist* 56, no. 2 (2012).

[56] Richard King, *Media Images and Representations* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House) 2006.

lamentation of "the tragic destiny of a proud people,"[57] pulling out an old, familiar stereotype of Indians as anachronistic, primitive, and destined to be conquered. Though the Indians in the film are "good guys," they are also portrayed as mystical, exotic, holding knowledge that is unavailable to white people.[58] In the end, the white man is the hero, marries the one white woman in the film, and rides off into the sunset. Ultimately, *Dances With Wolves* is a fairy tale about a white man, told from the white perspective, and provided a healthy profit for Hollywood.

Indigenous Media and Cultural Production

Indigenous media and cultural production offer stories told from an Indigenous perspective, providing alternatives to mainstream news, film, art, and other forms of expression. Non-stereotyped Indigenous people and perspectives are largely absent from most mainstream commercial media fare, which is concerning because media have an increasingly significant impact on politics on multiple levels.[59] Politicians use the media to campaign and promote agendas, and because the news privileges such "authority" figures, they are regularly interviewed and quoted, which in turn means that their perspectives and agendas are prioritized and legitimized. News media also covers Native Americans and other racial groups in specific ways that influence public opinion by perpetuating stereotypes and belittling (or just not covering at all) the lived realities of people of color. This simultaneous cycle of media production and reception has direct, dire consequences for marginalized communities. This thesis highlights the use of racial stereotypes to further a settler colonialist agenda in historical news media.

Indigenous Feminisms

By focusing on common ways of representing Native Americans in news media, scholars contest these essentializing narratives. A feminist perspective is important for such a project. Indigenous feminisms disrupt monolithic or essentializing accounts of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous women.

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[57] Ibid., 26.

[58] Weston, *Native Americans in the News*.

[59] Larson, *Media and Minorities*; Kellner, *Media Culture*.

Indigenous women are frequently invisible in mainstream feminist movements (as are other women of color), hence the need for a form of scholarship that critiques the social, political, and economic conditions of Indigenous women. Mainstream feminisms often focus on issues of individual rights, and are often based in Eurocentric constructions of the female experience as universal, and universally white. Its purpose is to decolonize feminism and reimagine feminist theory, critique, and practice by situating Indigenous women and values at the center of feminist thought and inquiry rather than at the margins. Indigenous women are diverse but share certain common ontologies, epistemologies, and experiences, including an emphasis on local cultures and ways of being, opposition to economic oppression and environmental racism, and a commitment to decolonization within and outside of academic research.[60] A primary concern is analysis of systemic gendered and racialized power relations, and a primary goal is social change through emancipation and empowerment on a global scale; Indigenous women around the world have "experienced patriarchal and colonial oppression in both the settler society and in their own communities."[61] Indigenous feminisms have emerged from not only North America but also India, Africa, New Zealand, and various other regions, and "they embody a critical politics of representation that is embedded in the rituals of indigenous communities. Always already political, they are relentlessly critical of transnational capitalism and its destructive presence in the indigenous world."[62]

Western scholars have "constructed and interpreted marginalized peoples as 'artifacts,'"[63] while women of color have "implicated Western White feminisms in the creation of the 'other.'"[64] Indigenous

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[60] Lorraine Code, "Indigenist Feminism," in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Lorraine Code (Ed.), (New York: Routledge), 2000.

[61] Green, Joyce. "Introduction: Indigenous Feminism," in *Making Space For Indigenous Feminism*, Joyce A. Green (Ed.), (New York: Zed Books, 2007), 14.

[62] Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith. "Introduction," in *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, Denzin, Norman K., Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Eds.). (Los Angeles: Sage 2008), 4.

[63] Code, "Indigenist Feminism," 5.

[64] Ibid., 2.

feminisms recognize that women “share much...but are entirely different in so many ways”[65] and attempts to place women from marginalized groups at the center, and to place value on multiple and varying lived experiences. Many place partial blame for the oppression of Indigenous (and other) peoples on a combination of patriarchy and hypercapitalism.[66] This “patriarchal hypercapitalism...imposes market domination”[67] and the result is that Indigenous people become impediments to capital, impediments that need to be removed either through extermination or genocide.

Though opposition to mainstream ways of thought is a central tenet of Indigenous feminism, it is not purely oppositional. Many argue for the re-envisioning of feminism as a more truly egalitarian pursuit. Such feminist inquiry would not “assume the right to know, understand, or name ‘others’”[68] and requires a continual questioning from the inside, while questioning social and political structures of power and power relations. It also argues for an acknowledgement of and attempt to relate to various, multiple ways of being in and understanding the world. It argues against modern binary conceptions of male/female, etc., and argues for a more “organic feminine archetype represents an egalitarian position from which multiple, even contradictory, epistemologies can engage equitably.”[69]

The ongoing effects of colonialism are also a primary focus, arising from common experiences by Indigenous women from various locations. Stoler argues that “the very categories of ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’ were increasingly secured through forms of sexual control which defined the common political interests of European colonials and the cultural investments by which they identified

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[65] Ibid., 3.

[66] Ibid.; Joanne Barker, “Indigenous Feminisms,” in *Oxford Handbook of Indigenous People’s Politics,* edited by Jose Antonio Lucero et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Joanne Barker, “Introduction: Critically Sovereign,” in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

[67] Gaile S. Cannella and Kathryn D. Manuelito, “Feminisms from Unthought Locations: Indigenous Worldviews, Marginalized Feminisms, and Revisioning an Anticolonial Social Science,” in *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies,* edited by Norman K. Denzin et al. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014), 6.

[68] Ibid., 7.

[69] Ibid., 11.

themselves."[70] Historically, white European women were important to securing racial divides and hierarchies, and the role of white European women in settler societies often served to define and police notions of respectability and legitimacy, states of being from which Indigenous women were usually excluded.[71] Social control through sexual domination has, and continues to be an effective tool in the subordination of Indigenous people. Further, in most Western nations, white women define normative womanhood, reinforcing patriarchal and racial hierarchies of power.[72] The work of Indigenous feminism "looks both at the genesis of colonialism and its consequences, and at the internalization and perpetuation of colonial practices."[73] Thus, colonialism as an ongoing, pervasive act of cultural violence, and cultural erasure is a central concern of this thesis project.

Indigenous Feminisms in the United States

Broadly, Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies examine intersections of race, class, gender, and other marginalized populations and states of being in relation to power structures, usually within a colonial system. The lived experiences, contextual perspectives, and collective histories of people of color should be brought to the forefront in the production of knowledge. Indigenous ontology allows for "multiple realities" and is relational, as is its epistemology; Wilson argues that "an Indigenous ontology is actually the equivalent of an Indigenous epistemology."[74] Indigenous epistemology is contextual, collective, geographical and localized, and includes "interpersonal, intrapersonal, environmental, and spiritual relationships."[75] The relationship between people, societies, and the natural environment is

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[70] Ann L. Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures," in *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 634.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2002), 246.

[73] Joyce Green, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism," in *Making Space For Indigenous Feminism*, edited by Joyce A. Green. (New York: Zed Books, 2007), 23.

[74] Shawn Wilson, "Indigenous Ontology and Epistemology," in *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods.* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 73.

[75] Ibid., 74.

important, often with a spiritual element. Science and social science research are not necessarily devalued, but are not entirely trusted; this distrust is in part based on historical injustices against Indigenous peoples, as even well-intentioned research on Indigeneity is undertaken from an outsider's perspective. Knowledge is less reliant upon science and technology to answer questions or solve problems, and more reliant upon holistic, collective wisdom that is shared and passed down through oral traditions. Beliefs must also be relevant to and useful in everyday life. Indigenous epistemology is embedded within specific cultures and value systems, and is therefore variable and multiple - there is no universal knowledge, no absolute truth, although there are common experiences. Overall, it is a circular system of knowledge; knowledge is not compartmentalized, but coexists with belief as part of a whole system.

Drawing on a long history in the United States of Indigenous peoples' opposition to imperialism, Barker describes how "indigenous scholars, activists, and artists...demonstrate the primacy of sovereignty and self-determination in their understandings of how feminism is or is not relevant to them,"[76] emphasizing the roles that imperialism and racism play in mainstream feminism. Barker further argues that Indigenous feminisms are defined by two main ideas: "one is that indigenous life matters. The other is that feminism cannot mean the same thing as it has in those modes of analysis and organizing that have failed - even unwittingly - to undo the empire's logics."[77] Indigenous people struggle against the notion that they are "already dead-and-gone,"[78] relegated to the past and without a place in contemporary life and politics. Indigenous feminisms also challenge gendered power relations, arguing that U.S. imperialism was "strategically geographical and violently enacted" and "codified and carried out through gender and sexual based violences."[79]

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[76] Barker, "Indigenous Feminisms," 1.

[77] Ibid., 2.

[78] Ibid., 2.

[79] Cannella and Manuelito, "Feminisms from Unthought Locations," 21.

Colonialism and social control is exacted through gendered sexual violence. Smith argues that "sexual violence in Native communities was inextricably linked to processes of genocide and colonization."[80] Further, many argue that mainstream feminism considers the "U.S. colonial stranglehold on Indigenous nations" as a "given,"[81] strengthening the push toward assimilation and relegating Indigenous women to the margins of the movement. Indigenous struggle "for land and survival" complicate more mainstream feminist pursuits, and highlight the ways that intersectional critiques of sexism, racism, and classism are complex and varied.[82] Further, many Indigenous American cultures recognize multiple genders. Some scholars have studied such "Two-Spirit" people and how the introduction of white Christianity significantly changed how gender is conceptualized amongst Indigenous people. Lang provides some examples and describes Two-Spirit people as occupying their own other or third gender, in terms of "occupational preferences" and personality as opposed to sexuality.[83] The introduction of Western Christianity complicates the relationship between Two-Spirit people and those who conform to more traditional (Western) gender roles, but there is an acceptance of gender variation in indigenous cultures that is distinct. This acceptance, Land argues, "can be seen as part of a worldview that realizes and appreciates transformation, change, and ambiguity in the world at large as well as in individuals."[84] This realization and acceptance exemplifies Indigenous onto-epistemologies in which relationships are key, and knowledge is contextual and circular. Rigid categories do not exist.

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[80] Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty and Social Change," in *Making Space For Indigenous Feminism*, Joyce A. Green (Ed.), (New York: Zed Books, 2007), 93.

[81] Ibid., 93.

[82] Ibid., 95.

[83] Sabine Lang, "Various Kinds of Two-Spirit People: Gender Variance and Homosexuality in Native American Communities," in *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, edited by Sue-Ellen Jacobs et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Wesley Thomas, "Navajo Cultural Constructions of Gender and Sexuality," in *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, edited by Sue-Ellen Jacobs et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

[84] Lang, "Various Kinds of Two-Spirit People," 114.

Diné culture provides one example of how many Indigenous cultures conceptualize gender, and gender roles and norms. The Diné believe that they were created by the Changing Woman, from whom the tribe's original four clans were born and who represents the importance of women in their culture. Tohe describes how "there is no word for feminism" because of the Diné matrilineal culture "that valued, honored, and respected" women.[85] The creation story emphasizes balance amongst genders, and traditional culture recognized the importance of women and their roles in society. That women's roles were just as important as men's was not something that needed to questioned, let alone fought for; women "didn't need to fight for our place in our societies because it surrounded us constantly."[86] Rather, it was Western Christian culture that introduced patriarchy and sought to devalue women and their roles in societies in order to conquer Indigenous nations and peoples.[87]

Environmental Injustice

Many scholars connect gendered violence to environmental degradation and exploitation. Gender violence is a powerful tool of colonialism, and "it is through sexual violence that a colonising group attempts to render a colonized peoples as inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable."[88] Allegedly "progressive" Western social movements have not adequately addressed heteropatriarchy and gender/sexual violence against Indigenous women, and so movements for social change often mirror and replicate sexist and racist social structures. Similarly, many argue that the exploitation of land and natural resources is akin to sexual violence against women, and that environmental degradation is more than mere pollution--it is also another form of control over the bodies of Indigenous women.

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[85] Laura Tohe, "There Is No Word for Feminism in My Language," in *Wicazo Sa Review* 15, no. 2 (2000): 103.

[86] Ibid., 110.

[87] Emma LaRocque, "Metis and Feminist: Ethical Reflections on Feminism, Human Rights, and Decolonization," in *Making Space For Indigenous Feminism*, edited by Joyce A. Green (New York: Zed Books 2007), 312.

[88] Ibid., 312.

Toxic pollution and environmental contamination disproportionately impact people of color and poor communities. Indigenous scholars and activists argue, however, that disproportionality is not the whole story, and that the solution is far more complex than the simple return of land.[89] Not only is the overall health of Indigenous communities affected, but so are the reproductive rights and freedoms of Indigenous women. Entire cultures and populations have been all but annihilated, and continue to be threatened by American colonialism and capitalism.[90] Nixon cites the Mohawk tribe's fight against General Motors. General Motors dumped toxic chemicals on the Akwesasne reservation in New York, which contaminated the Saint Lawrence River and groundwater with heavy chemicals, which in turn created a public health threat when contaminants were found in the breast milk of women living on the territory.[91] Such examples are not isolated incidents but rather yet another in an ongoing, culminating history of neglect and exploitation. The recent protest on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota of the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline is a high-profile example of one recent incidence of a long history of abuse of Indigenous people by the U.S. federal government and corporate big business.

Toxic waste and contamination are not the only threats caused by capitalist resource extraction. Extractive industries such as mining and oil drilling bring with them a corresponding increase in sexual exploitation and violence in areas on or near Indigenous land. The compounding effect of environmental contamination and sexual violence on Indigenous women, coupled with the neglect of not only the judicial system but also of mainstream feminism to address the blatant oppression of Indigenous communities, amounts to the insidious, ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples. Nixon states that "this is why many indigenous feminists argue that environmental justice is reproductive justice"[92]; the lives of

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[89] Lindsay Nixon, "Eco-Feminist Appropriations of Indigenous Feminisms and Environmental Violence," in *The Feminist Wire* (2015).

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 3.

Indigenous women are closely tied to land and community, all of which is under the dire threat of capitalist exploitation of the environment.

Indigenous Sovereignty

The meanings of Indigenous sovereignty in the United States are contested and complex, and steeped in the American conquest myth. Barker asserts that "there is no fixed meaning for what *sovereignty* is."[93] In the U.S., there is a distinct difference in how sovereignty is conceptualized by government and Indigenous people. Social and political movements organize around the term, and it signifies many things: legal rights, political, economic, and cultural self-determination, land rights. It is both global and local, and efforts to reclaim land, land resources, cultural knowledge and practices are tied to it. A sovereign nation exercises authority and control over its own affairs, and it is understood that other nations cannot interfere. Yet what does the term mean to a nation within a nation, like the many Native American nations located in the United States of America?

The essence of what Tully calls "internal colonisation" is "the appropriation of the land, resources and jurisdiction of the indigenous peoples, not only for the sake of resettlement and exploitation (which is also true in external colonisation), but for the territorial foundation of the dominant society itself."[94] Tully argues that both sides view internal colonization as a "temporary" situation; the U.S. government has historically and continues to employ strategies to eliminate Native American peoples by extinguishing their rights to land and self-government, by unilateral law and/or policy-making, and assimilation.[95] As a result, Native American nations are subsumed under U.S. federal and geopolitical control rather than exist as separate nations, and thus Native Americans are a minority in the U.S. as opposed to citizens of

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[93] Joanne Barker, "Introduction: Critically Sovereign," in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 21.

[94] James Tully, "The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples for and of Freedom," in *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, edited by Duncan Ivison, Paul Patton, and Will Sanders. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 39.

[95] Ibid.

separate nations.[96] This status as racial minority also extends to political thought and theory, wherein indigenous perspectives constitute "a subaltern language which, when noticed at all, is normally taken to be some kind of minority language within the dominant language of western political thought."[97] In this way, assimilation emerges in dominant discourse as the most viable means of survival for Indigenous peoples.

The real intent, according to many scholars, is the eventual elimination of Native Americans cultures, through "gradual and forced assimilation."[98] Assimilation is considered the "more humane" way to subordinate and exterminate indigenous peoples.[99] This approach is particularly effective now, as "today's empire of global network-power has no outside"[100] and the enemies reside within U.S. borders. It is imperative that the state defines who is an "internal enemy," and also that it be recognized by other states as sovereign.[101] Discussions of sovereignty were historically less about the "recognition and provision for the sovereignty of indigenous peoples than they were about the assertion of the respective nations' status as the more powerful sovereign within a given territory."[102] Sovereignty is also expressed through physical violence, and is exercised over individual bodies and whole populations.[103] Violence or the threat of violence has been and still is always linked to Western sovereignty because "sovereign

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[96] Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005).

[97] Tully, "The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples," 37.

[98] Robert Odawi Porter, *Sovereignty, Colonialism, and the Indigenous Nations* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), xx.

[99] Ibid., xx.

[100] Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, "Introduction," in *Sovereign Bodies*, edited by Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.

[101] Ibid., 1.

[102] Joanne Barker, "For Whom Sovereignty Matters," in *Sovereignty Matters,* edited by Joanne Barker. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 5.

[103] Hansen and Stepputat, "Introduction," 2.

power...is always a tentative and unstable project whose efficacy and legitimacy depend on repeated performances of violence" although it portrays a veneer of naturalness and stability.[104]

Native American sovereignty is the United States "is a profoundly limited one--limited, in fact, to the point that it does not make logical sense to many Indian people, is not really sovereignty at all from their point of view, and can only be understood as bespeaking a profoundly racist view of Native Americans on the part of Congress, the courts, and white people in general."[105] The nation-within-a-nation reality of tribal nations in the US means that tribal self-determination is limited by the plenary power of Congress and the judicial system. In short, Congress has the power to violate treaties and otherwise legislate without the consent of the tribes involved because Native Americans are "wards" of the U.S.[106] Alfred describes the wardship of American Indians on the state as such: "colonially-generated cultural disruption...compounds the effects of dispossession to create near total psychological, physical and financial dependency on the state."[107] This comprises the lived experiences of many Native Americans: "colonialism is made real in the lives of First Nations people when these things go from being a set of imposed externalities to becoming causes of harm to them as people and as communities."[108] Assimilation is offered as the primary, "best" way to ameliorate such harm, but Alfred argues that such "conventional approaches are based on an accession to the colonial-capitalist agenda…with integration into the market economy and cultural assimilation advanced as the only viable pathways to a better life..." so that "survival is redefined strictly in the terms of capitalist dogma and practical-minded individualist consumerism and complacency."[109] This kind of approach, however, does not take historical trauma and

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[104] Ibid., 3.

[105] Biolsi, "Imagined Geographies," 243.

[106] Ibid.; Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, "Colonialism and State Dependency" *Journal of Aboriginal Health* 5, no. 2 (2009); K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "The Mutuality of *Citizenship* and *Sovereignty*: The Society of American Indians and the Battle to Inherit America," *The American Indian Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2013).

[107] Alfred, "Colonialism," 42.

[108] Ibid., 42.

[109] Ibid., 44.

its ongoing psychological and generational effects into account, and amounts to the gradual elimination of Indigenous values and cultures.[110]

Decolonization and land are central to the survival of Indigenous peoples, as is the rejection of Western industrial capitalism as the destroyer of all that is important to Native Americans. Today colonizers continue to exercise control over Indigenous peoples; "the surviving Indigenous nations in North America have been a continuous source of obstruction to the development and expansion of Euro-American society."[111] Porter argues that an "historical amnesia" regarding the history of relations between Native Americans and colonizers, however, makes decolonization impossible.[112]

Biolsi describes the "unique legal and political status of American Indians" in terms of the tensions between racial and nationalist discourse, and the political and legal spaces in which Native Americans live as "imagined geographies" in which they live in various states of being, with various levels of control and authority.[113] By including Indigenous people in American citizenship, by making them legally and politically indistinguishable from others, "the more or less unconcealed, unilateral, and coercive nature of colonial rule"[114] is apparent. Colonialism has been modified, from one that was oriented around the overt elimination of Indigenous peoples to a kind that is now made up of a "conciliatory set of discourses and institutional practices that emphasize...recognition and accommodation" which, Coulthard argues, appears on the surface to value the cultures and interests of indigenous people, but in reality deflects attention from the realities of political, social, and economic oppression occurring on indigenous territory to Indigenous people across the United States.[115]

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[110] Ibid.

[111] Porter, "Sovereignty, Colonialism," xx.

[112] Ibid., xx.

[113] Biolsi, "Imagined Geographies," 239.

[114] Glen Sean Coulthard, "Introduction: Subjects of Empire," in *Red Skin, White Masks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 4.

[115] Ibid., 4.

Though tribal nations are sovereign in name, in practice the United States is able to exercise a more absolute power to ensure that the interests of the state are not overridden. The legal rights of tribal nations are also limited. Although Native Americans are subject to the laws of both the tribal nation and the United States nation, the inverse is not true and Native Americans are generally not able to enforce tribal law on non-Native people, and thus tribal sovereignty is a "dependent sovereignty."[116]

Graduated Sovereignty

Ong's theory of graduated sovereignty is relevant in this discussion of tribal sovereignty. Ong writes of "a more dispersed strategy that does not treat the national territory as a uniform political space. Market-driven logic induces the coordination of political policies with the corporate interests, so that developmental decisions favor the fragmentation of the national space into various noncontiguous zones, and promote the differential regulation of populations who can be connected to or disconnected from global circuits of capital."[117] Biolsi explains further, quoting Ong: "'graduated sovereignty, whereby citizens in different zones that are differently articulated to global production and financial circuits are subjected to different sets of civil, political, and economic rights'...and 'what results is a system of variegated citizenship in which populations subjected to different regimes of value enjoy different kinds of rights, discipline, caring, and security.'"[118] This, argues Biolsi, belies the assumption of "panoptical sovereignty," or a type of political space wherein the rights of all citizens of the nation are assumed to be equal across a flat plane of political and economic space. Biolsi argues "the list of ways the state variegates its gaze--graduates or zones its sovereignty--so as to benefit some citizens systematically and, just as systematically, to disempower or otherwise harm other citizens, of course, goes on."[119]

Indigenous Feminism and Sovereignty

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[116] Biolsi, "Imagined Geographies," 245.

[117] Aihwa Ong, "Graduated Sovereignty," in *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 77.

[118] Biolsi, "Imagined Geographies," 241.

[119] Ibid., 241.

Indigenous feminists question the legitimacy of the American nation-state itself, and posit that recognizing the United States as a legitimate sovereign nation-state also legitimizes the colonization of Indigenous peoples. Smith argues that "there could be no 'America' without...genocide."[120] Mainstream feminism is critiqued as an "imperial project that assumes the givenness of U.S. colonial stranglehold on indigenous nations," and Native women activists are called to action "to support sovereignty...reject feminist politics."[121] Nation-states are governed through domination, power, and control, while indigenous sovereignty is "predicated on interrelatedness and responsibility."[122] Yet sexism exists in Indigenous communities as well as within political movements for sovereignty and self-determination. Smith argues that "before Native peoples fight for the future of their nations, they must ask themselves, who is included in the nation?"[123] There is often a tendency to separate and marginalize women's issues; Smith illustrates, quoting Winona LaDuke: "'...the Feds only recognize Indian Sovereignty when a First Nation has a casino or waste dump, not when a tribal government seeks to preserve ground water from pesticide contamination, exercise jurisdiction over air quality, or stop clear-cutting or say no to a nuclear dump."[124] Smith asks, "is it possible to simultaneously affirm tribal sovereignty and challenge tribes to consider how the impact of colonization and Europeanization may impact the decisions they make and programs they pursue…? Rather than adopt the strategy of fighting for sovereignty first and then improving Native women's status second...we must understand that attacks on Native women's status are themselves attacks on Native sovereignty."[125] Decolonization is not possible if Western patriarchal systems are not challenged.

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[120] Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change," 128.

[121] Ibid., 117.

[122] Ibid., 129.

[123] Ibid., 121.

[124] Ibid., 121.

[125] Ibid., 124.

Valaskakis points out that Indigenous people in North America share a gendered experience as subalterns in a Western colonialist culture that is based in, and still operates under, the idea that treaties and other facts of Native American life are the "historical products of benevolent conquest, artifacts of reasonable (if not equitable) surrender."[126] Dominant American culture considers Indians alternately as "the villain or the victim" depending which stereotype suits the colonialist endeavor; Native Americans are also, thanks in part to media representation, as stuck in the past, and still in need of "saving" from themselves.[127] Such representations, of "Indians as romanticized or primitive historical artifacts"[128] allows the general public to consider Indians as inferior, and treaty violations resulting in governmental land-grabs and natural resource exploitation as not only reasonable, but necessary in the still ongoing project of "civilizing" Indigenous people.

Conclusion

This research asks: how is the media complicit in the oppression of Indigenous people in the United States? How have stereotypes of Native Americans in media contributed to their colonization? What does popular discourse mean and do in the context of sovereignty, self-determination, human rights, land rights, environmental justice, gendered violence, and cultural traditions of Indigenous people? How are discursive processes, deployed through media, operate within and influence political rhetoric and action, realized and internalized across generations? Where do my family history fit in relation to these questions, and what do their experiences say about the erasure of Indigenous identity in the United States?

I attempt to answer these questions in the chapters that follow. In Chapter 2, I discuss the research methods utilized in this thesis. In Chapter 3, I use Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze 25 historical newspaper articles written about Navajo Indians, the Long Walk and internment at Bosque Redondo, and land use in the Southwestern United States. In Chapter 4, I build a family archive using

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[126] Gail Valaskakis, "Parallel Voices: Indians and Others: Narratives of Cultural Struggle," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 18, no. 3 (1993): 287.

[127] Ibid., 287.

[128] Ibid., 287.

Indigenous methods including oral histories, genealogical records, and other documents. The archive demonstrates how one family (my own) was affected through the processes of colonization from the late 1800s to the present day.

Two: Research Methods

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary paradigm. The term “culture” itself captures the existence “of a social group as it is structured by representation and power.”[129] In contrast to examining modes of “high” culture, cultural studies concerns itself with “subcultures, popular media, music, clothing, and sport” and how ordinary people process them.[130] It is also concerned with how culture and discourse shape identity, community, and the self *vis-a-vis* the other. Cultural Studies draws upon different disciplines in its examinations of culture, power, representation, language, and other signifying practices that influence shared meanings amongst groups of people.

Cultural Studies epistemologies are difficult to pin down because as a paradigm it is comprised of many disciplines. The objects of cultural studies research must be situated in a particular place, time, and geographical location, as well as in historical context. From there, “embedded practices and representations (texts, images, talk, codes of behavior, and the narrative structures organizing these)” provide the means to understanding the self and others.[131] Cultural studies is particularly interested in lived experience; by looking at regular people’s ordinary accounts of daily life, ways that the dominant culture functions are revealed. In short, the dominant culture upholds certain ideologies around what is normal and natural (and conversely, what is not) to maintain social order and hierarchies, which in turn upholds uneven power

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[129] John Frow and Meaghan Morris, “Cultural Studies,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000): 316.

[130] Toby Miller, “What it is and What it isn’t: Introducing…Cultural Studies,” in *A Companion to Cultural Studies* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001): 1.

[131] Frow and Morris, “Cultural Studies.”

structures. The experiences of those at or close to the lower end of such hierarchies are sought out.

Examining representation, especially language, as a means of understanding and meaning-making is also important within Cultural Studies. Representations are produced and consumed in specific social contexts, by individuals, which means that the discursive process of meaning-making through representation, though powerful, also is dynamic and unpredictable. Cultural products can be considered texts, in that they impart meaning,[132] and Cultural Studies questions who controls cultural production, and what are the consequences, again in order to discover and examine how power functions and impacts social groups. One consequence is the creation and maintenance of binary relationships between social categories (us versus them), and the "othering" of social groups who do not adhere to hegemonic norms or modes of behavior, as a form of social control. In this way, power is a dynamic, not static, force that runs through almost every social interaction, even those at a local and intimate level.

Media Studies addresses the almost ubiquitous presence of media in everyday life and its strong influence on identity, culture, and politics. Hill Collins argues that "mass media spectacle may appear to be mere entertainment, yet they serve political ends."[133] The work of pop culture analysis "is not a coy celebration of this or that pop item but a critical investigation of media as a force that not only acts upon existing social conflicts, desires, and power relations, but continuously helps to produce them and sometimes to change them."[134] Mass media-produced texts that contain representations of race, class, and gender, for example, frequently convey

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[132] During, *Cultural Studies.*

[133] Patricia Hill Colllins, *Intersectionality* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016): 11.

[134] Frow and Morris, "Cultural Studies."

dominant meanings and discourses, reinforcing the "cultural domain of power."[135] Mass media thus reproduces societal ideologies, dominant culture, and influences the popular imagination. Deregulation and media conglomeration have resulted in an intensification of this process, yet there is hope in alternative forms of media as potential sites for change.

Cultural Studies draws upon various disciplines in examining culture, representation, and power (among other things), while media studies analyzes how various messages and representations are deployed through media, and also media influence on identity, culture, and politics, all of which inform each other in an interplay where the ultimate payoff is the reinforcement of the status quo on multiple complex levels. Dominant discourses and patterns of representation, frequently accessed through popular culture, both produces and reproduces dominant modes of social organization and power dynamics. Mainstream media, through both entertainment and news, operate within the dominant culture, and therefore it is not surprising that negative stereotypes of marginalized populations are common features in both. Media influence what we know about ourselves, and what we think we know about others. Media also have the power to reinforce subordination; by excluding and stereotyping the Other, the dominant culture not only allows but justifies their subordination. Media typically portrays racial minorities as responsible for their own conditions without addressing forms of systemic oppression, and normalizes inequality as normal and natural. Such images are incorporated into the collective popular imagination, stereotypes are normalized, and the "Other" is rendered irrelevant and all but invisible. These kinds of images normalize both our conceptions of American Indians as a monolithic group of people with universal characteristics, and normalize conceptions of their inferiority and resultant subordination to whites.

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[135] Hill Colllins, *Intersectionality,* 11.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) "engages in concrete, linguistic textual analysis of language use in social interaction"[136] in order to examine power relations between groups of people.[137] Fairclough explains, "'discourse' is use of language seen as a form of social practice, and discourse analysis is analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice."[138] Jørgensen and Phillips argue that the use of language has three dimensions: text, discursive practice (the production and consumption of texts), and social practice, which affords dominant social groups the ability to exert power over other social groups through ideology and hegemony.[139] Van Dijk describes ideology as "inherently social" whose purpose is to "serve to 'define' groups and their position within complex societal structures and in relation to other groups."[140] Ideologies are "constructions of meaning that contribute to the production, reproduction and transformation of relations of domination"[141] and are frequently employed to produce and reproduce unequal power differentials in societies.[142] Media provide an effective means of communication, and a

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[136] Marianne Jørgensen and Louise J. Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis," in *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, eds. (London: Sage Publications, 2011), Ebook, 4.

[137] Jørgensen and Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis"; Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, (Essex, England: Pearson, 1995); Lazar, Michelle M. "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis." *Critical Discourse Studies* 2, no. 2 (2007): 141-164; Teun A. Van Dijk et al., "Discourse, Ethnicity, Culture and Racism," in *Discourse as Social Interaction* (London: Sage, 1997).

[138] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 7.

[139] Jørgensen and Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis."

[140] Van Dijk et al., "Discourse, Ethnicity, Culture and Racism," 26.

[141] Jørgensen and Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis," 15.

[142] Jørgensen and Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis"; Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*; Michelle M. Lazar, "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis," *Critical Discourse Studies* 2, no. 2 (2007): 141-164; Teun A.Van Dijk et al., "Discourse, Ethnicity, Culture and Racism," in *Discourse as Social Interaction* (London: Sage, 1997).

rich area for analysis of gendered and racialized discourses and the institutions that depend on the perpetuation of inequality on multiple levels.

Fairclough explains that “institutions construct their ideological and discoursal subjects; they construct them in the sense that they impose ideological and discoursal constraints upon them as a condition for qualifying them to act as subjects” … “these ways of talking and ways of seeing are inseparably intertwined in that the latter constitute a part of the taken-for-granted ‘knowledge base’ upon which the orderliness of the former depends.”[143] People acquire their ways of seeing things and talking about them by assuming a subject position, to include the modes of thought and communication associated with them, and are almost unaware of how ideologies influence them.[144] Hegemonic power perpetuates itself by making people think and act as if the status quo were “natural, normal, or simply a consensus.”[145] Further, “discourse is not only a means in the enactment of power...but at the same time itself a power resource”[146] The powerful have access to resources, both material and symbolic, so people in power control public discourse. Conversely, “the exercise of power limits the options for action, and thereby the freedom, of others.”[147] The power to control public discourse both perpetuates systems of social control and actively disempowers marginalized populations at the same time.

Feminist CDA

Feminist CDA extends the work of CDA by closely examining gendered power structures in discourse. In discussing “why” a feminist CDA perspective is important, Lazar writes: “the

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[143] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 39.

[144] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*.

[145] Van Dijk et al., “Discourse, Ethnicity, Culture and Racism,” 19.

[146] Ibid., 20.

[147] Ibid., 18.

interest of feminist CDA lies in how gender ideology and gendered relations of power get (re)produced, negotiated, and contested in representations of social practices, in social relationships between people, and in people's social and personal identities in texts and talk."[148] The ultimate goal is social transformation that opens up possibilities for all people by, in part, performing "discursive critique of the prevailing restrictive structures" of power.[149] Its aim is to reveal how discourse maintains prevailing social structures and unequal power relations, and, once revealed, advocate for social change. In feminist CDA, "language-as-discourse is *both* a form of action through which people can change the world *and* a form of action which is socially and historically situated and in a dialectical relationship with other aspects of the social."[150] Drawing on Gramsci's discussion of hegemony, Lazar describes gender ideology as hegemonic because "it does not appear as domination at all, appearing instead as largely consensual and acceptable to most."[151] Societal institutions and practices are enacted through patriarchal gender ideology, and feminist CDA examines how this ideology is discursively produced "through textual representations of gendered social practices."[152]

Feminist CDA is also interdisciplinary, as the relationships between gender, race, power, ideology and discourse are complex and may be examined through multiple lenses.[153] Gender intersects with other systems of power (race, class, age, sexual orientation, and others) which means that "gender oppression is neither materially experienced nor discursively enacted in the

[148] Lazar, "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis," 150.

[149] Ibid., 153.

[150] Jørgensen and Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis," 3.

[151] Lazar, "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis," 147.

[152] Ibid., 149.

[153] Ibid.

same way for women everywhere."[154] Lazar stresses the need to be reflexive of our own positions and practices in order to not reproduce dominant structures. We must avoid the pitfalls of universalism; one of many indigenous feminist critiques of liberal feminism is that it "assumes the sameness of all women" which denies the reality of intersecting oppressions, and excludes the experiences of many.[155] We must also examine context; Van Dijk explains that "when we study discourse and communication within and between groups that are defined in terms of their ethnic or cultural specificities and differences, the fundamental contextualizing framework of societal structures, power and dominance also needs to be accounted for."[156] Feminist CDA provides tools to bring complex nuances to the surface, to "get at the subtle and complex renderings of ideological assumptions and power relations in contemporary modern societies."[157] I need to use a research design which allows me to examine the construction of race and gender as a process of social interaction and power relations, and to analyze structures.

My thesis employs feminist media analysis, through an Indigenous feminist lens, to analyze stereotypical representations of Native Americans in news media in relation to the displacement of Diné people from their ancestral land in the period surrounding the Long Walk of 1862 - 1864, and the subsequent internment of Diné people at Bosque Redondo until 1868. This thesis uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model wherein "discourse refers to *language use as social practice,*" "discourse is understood as the *kind of language used within a specific field,*" and is used as a "count noun...referring to a *way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences*

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[154] Ibid., 149.

[155] Ibid.; Michelle M. Lazar, "Politicizing Gender in Discourse: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as Political Perspective and Praxis," *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power, and Ideology in Discourse* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

[156] Van Dijk et al., "Discourse, Ethnicity, Culture and Racism," 147-148.

[157] Lazar, "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis," 151.

from a particular perspective."[158] Morton defines this model as analysis at the micro, mezzo, and macro level, and I focus on the micro and macro levels of discourse within the chosen texts. Micro level analysis involves close analysis of the texts, "including word choice, the use of metaphors, the sentence structure, and other language choices."[159] The macro level "examines how particular text functions within socio-cultural practices."[160] (morton 308) Examining the relation between ideology and power is important in illuminating a continuum of stereotypical representations of Indigenous people to illustrate how settler colonialist oppression is justified and celebrated in public discourse through media. I also examine what is omitted from the texts because, as Fairclough argues, "what is absent from a text is often just as significant from the perspective of sociocultural analysis."[161] Further, my analysis examines the ways in which dominant histories of American Indians have been manipulated "since colonization, not only with the assumption that (mostly) males of European descent had the 'right' to represent (interpret and judge) the lives of 'others' but through the construction and continued use of inaccuracies, misinterpretations, misrepresentations."[162]

Indigenous Research

To effectively analyze discourse about American Indian history and the structures of power that make oppression possible, I turn to Indigenous forms of inquiry.

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[158] Jørgensen and Phillips, "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis," 7.

[159] Katherine Morton, "Hitchhiking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Billboards on the Highway of Tears," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 3 (2016): 308.

[160] Ibid., 308.

[161] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis,* 5.

[162] Gaile S. Cannella and Kathryn D. Manuelito, "Feminisms from Unthought Locations: Indigenous Worldviews, Marginalized Feminisms, and Revisioning an Anticolonial Social Science," in *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies,* edited by Norman K. Denzin et al. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014).

Ethnic Studies

Broadly concerned with the Other, Ethnic Studies as a paradigm is the interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity, and how race, racism, and imperialism/colonialism impact social, cultural, and political aspects of human existence. It seeks to bring the lived experiences, contextual perspectives, and collective histories of people of color to the forefront in the production of knowledge. It is an intersectional and interdisciplinary paradigm, examining race, class, gender, and other marginalized states of being in relation to power structures within a colonial system.

Ethnic Studies ontology begins with a collective, "that the individual's existence...is contingent upon relationships with others."[163] Reality is both material and constructed, shaped by the force of historical events and the experiences of individuals and the groups to which they belong in equal measure. For this reason, the line between ontology and epistemology is blurred, as reality is constructed through experience and is dependent on relationships. Reality is also shaped by geographical location, as it is locally constructed and understood, which means that multiple realities exist and are not monolithic or universal in nature, but rather are highly variable depending on who and where a population is located.[164] Ethnic Studies is concerned with difference, and though realities are variable and there are no universal thruths, the status of Other can be considered a universal way of being in the world for those studied within this paradigm. White Western hegemony partially defines reality for many marginalized populations, but it is also partially defined in opposition to the dominant culture and "colonial relationships"

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[163] Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Racialized Discourses and Ethnic Epistemologies, in Handbook of Qualitative Research, ed. By Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000): 257.

[164] Ibid.

within it.[165] Thus, realities are changeable depending on the geographical locations, lived experiences, and the forces present in the material world.

The dominance of the "Euro-American epistemological tradition" has had dire consequences for multitudes of people of color across time and place as non-white, non-Western systems of knowledge have been devalued, and people of color dehumanized, in the name of Western science and social order.[166] Ethnic Studies epistemology stands in opposition to the dominant viewpoint. To characterize it as complex is an understatement, as there are huge numbers of people and cultures under the Ethnic Studies umbrella, and therefore it is important not to essentialize any group or even consider individuals within a group as part of monolithic systems of belief, knowledge, or experience. However, there are common experiences and common issues stemming from Western imperialist ideologies and constructions of race. Many in oppressed populations develop a double or multiple consciousness, speaking from the margins but also seeing and understanding the mainstream because they live both within and outside of it; multiple consciousness does not belong to only one racial group but to any people "who are constructed outside of the dominant paradigm."[167] This inside/outside perspective can also be thought of as a liminal space, one that does not adhere to the "normal" versus "other" dichotomy. Further, there is no desire to flip the script, to move "from the margins to the mainstream," but rather to expose how "dominant perspectives distort the realities of the other in an effort to

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[165] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Introduction," in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 2012): 6.

[166] Ladson-Billings, "Racialized Discourses," 257-258.

[167] Ibid., 260.

maintain power relations that continue to disadvantage those who are locked out of the mainstream."[168]

Ethnic Studies asks questions such as, who exploits and benefits from the oppression of the Other? Why are certain types of knowledge privileged over others? What constitutes that "other" knowledge? Multiple social positions inform a person or group's production of knowledge. Scholars of Ethnic Studies value other forms of knowledge, and search for ways not only to counter dominant forms but to carve out spaces of their own, where othered epistemologies stand alongside dominant ones. Experience is important, as the experience of culture is both material/physical and symbolic. Knowledge is gained by way of narrative, oral tradition, and lived experience; this kind of contextual and experiential knowledge provides an important means not only of individual expression, but of understanding the shared histories and experiences of those who are considered Other. Ethnic studies is intersectional, and the "intertwined and mutually constructing" social divisions and power relations based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and other categories must be examined in the production of knowledge.[169]

My own research stems from Indigenous Epistemology, a subparadigm of Ethnic Studies. Indigenous ontology is relational, allows for multiple realities to co-exist, and does not privilege one reality over another. An individual being exists as part of a whole; people, other living beings, the land, and the spiritual realm are interconnected. Indigenous epistemology is also relatable; in fact, Wilson argues that "an Indigenous ontology is actually the equivalent of an

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[168] Ibid. 263.

[169] Hill Collins, *Intersectionality,* 7.

Indigenous Epistemology."[170] Like its ontology, Indigenous Epistemology is contextual, collective, geographical, and localized, and includes "interpersonal, intrapersonal, environmental, and spiritual relationships."[171] The relationship between society and natural environment is important, and there is often a spiritual element in that relationship. Science is not devalued, but it is not entirely trusted either; knowledge is less reliant upon science and technology to answer questions or solve problems, and more reliant upon holistic, collective wisdom that is shared and passed down through oral traditions. Beliefs must also be relevant to and useful in everyday life. Indigenous Epistemology is embedded within specific cultures and value systems, and is therefore variable and multiple--there is no universal knowledge, no absolute truth, although there are common experiences. Overall, it is circular system of knowledge; knowledge is not compartmentalized, but knowledge and belief coexist, part of a whole system.

Indigenous Epistemology informs the aspects of this research that require a more personal, even intimate, approach to my work in order to bring the underlying assumptions to light. Broadly, Ethnic Studies provides an intersectional lens through which to view social divisions and power relations based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other categories; Indigenous onto-epistemology is relational, contextual, localized, and experiential. The inspiration for this research arises out of my own family history, and I employ an autoethnographical approach to highlight not only the generational impacts of settler colonialism, but also the impact on the individual. Combining this approach with Media Studies necessitates another kind of media analysis, one that examines whether historical and/or other contextual

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[170] Shawn Wilson, "Indigenous Ontology and Epistemology," in *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008): 73.

[171] Ibid., 74.

information is included in media representations of American Indians, both more generally and also in relation to the case study presented. Historical and cultural context would potentially provide audiences with a broader view of what is at stake. What information is omitted, and why? Who is allowed to speak, and who is not?

Indigenous inquiry and methods are interested in dismantling and decolonizing traditional forms of research, which are linked with European imperialism and colonialism. Denzin and Lincoln argue that "the very act of labeling some research as 'evidence-based' implies that some research fails to mount evidence-a strongly political and decidedly non-objective stance."[172] So-called objective, evidence-based research is inherently colonial, providing researchers the authority to "know" and report on the "Other," and the results of such research often used as evidence of the inferiority of Others, while "the decolonizing project reverses this equation, making Western systems of knowledge the object of critique and inquiry"[173] and privileging other ways of knowing. Indeed, "native epistemologies and marginalized feminisms can actually serve as foundational for the construction of an anticolonial, egalitarian social science"[174] as an approach which places the marginalized at the center and acknowledges their lived experiences as contextual information alongside other forms of data.

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This research analyzes newspaper articles published between 1855 and 1880. The texts analyzed in this research were collected from the Library of Congress Chronicling America, an online directory and database of U.S. newspapers from 1786 - 1963. I chose a range of dates

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[172] Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Introduction: Critical Methodologies and Indigenous Inquiry," in *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, edited by Denzin et al. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008): 5.

[173] Ibid., 8.

[174] Cannella and Manuelito, "Feminisms from Unthought Locations," 17.

before, during, and after the Long Walk, as well as a range of newspapers from various geographical locations in the U.S., and I examine early examples of news stories and visual images that deploy racial and gendered stereotypes about American Indians generally, and Diné people specifically. I argue that the deployment of stereotypes acts as a means to explain and justify the need for Indian conquest and colonization to a white American public. The purpose of news is to inform, but also to entertain; representations of Indians as violent savages who threatened the safety and well-being of white settlers and the U.S. military perpetuated the racialized separation of between civilized Americans and deviant Indians, which was crucial to the development of the American nation-state.

My research also involves an attempt to create a family archive. The purpose of autoethnography is to describe and analyze a personal experience in the context of larger cultures and systems, in order to better understand them. My subject position as a descendent of Diné people who has grown up with both the harrowing oral histories of injustice and also to keep those stories, and my ethnic background, a secret from the outside world, gives me a unique perspective on the generational impacts of settler colonialism. An autoethnographic approach allows me to contrast dominant cultural narratives with the oral histories passed along through my family. My methods include conducting interviews with family members; my mother is my research partner in this endeavor, as she was my first interview subject, and the keeper of some family knowledge. I also travelled to New Mexico to interview other relatives and family friends. I searched public records for official records of my family members. My family history is one built primarily from the memories of stories told to my elders during their childhoods, and that were passed along to me and my cousins. In this way, it may be impossible to verify through Western means the factuality of much of what I have been told; what is clear, however, is that

my family does carry the wounds of historical trauma, even if the defining events are now unclear, and if lineages cannot be proven with official documents. My goal is not to construct a linear narrative, but rather to piece the history together into an experiential narrative that highlights one family's experience with settler colonialism across generations.

Three: "Indian Outrages" and In/Justice

"Who can be in good neighborhood with people who live by murder, robbery, and outrage? *If they are not civilized, of necessity they must be exterminated."* [emphasis in original][175]

In the 1800s, newspapers used racial stereotyping and called upon the ideologies of the Doctrine of Discovery, Christian dominionism, and Manifest Destiny in order to justify the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands. The discursive processes employed by news media influenced public opinion and political action resulting in multiple forms of removal, isolation, and extermination, including Indian boarding schools and the reservation system. My analysis demonstrates how, in the years leading up to, during, and immediately following the Long Walk of the Navajo, news media deployed specific kinds of narrative tropes in order to argue about the "proper" use of land. The argument functions as validation for attaining Indigenous territory, and also to justify the oppression of Indigenous people who lived on the coveted land.

In this chapter I analyze newspaper articles between 1848 and 1868. The articles were found in the Library of Congress' Chronicling America online database of historical newspapers. I looked for evidence of colonialist discourse that utilizes racial stereotyping and economic framing to validate and justify the colonization of Indigenous people in the US. Feminist CDA allows for exploration of the connections between language and social practice by performing critical analysis of texts, as well as of social and cultural structures and processes. CDA provides an approach that is critical in that it examines the relationships between language, power, and ideology, and a feminist lens allows for critique that also examines how societal power relations are gendered. An Indigenous feminist approach further allows me to analyze the texts in the

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[175] "Indian Outrages in New Mexico," *New York Daily Tribune,* November 20, 1850.

context of gendered power relations in the context of settler colonialism. Language is shaped by ideologies. Discourse, then, in feminist CDA, can be understood both in a linguistic sense (language communicates meaning) and in a social theoretical sense as a form of social practice.

Fairclough[176] argues that discursive processes are three dimensional (text, discursive practice, and social practice). Language is perceived as neutral and transparent, but in actuality it works ideologically and socially by producing and reproducing social structures and relations. In other words, language is used to construct realities from an ideological perspective. What social processes are uncovered through an analysis of language? Discursive practices have real-life effects, and operates by representing unequal power relations as natural and normal. Feminist CDA focuses on how such practices work to sustain hierarchical, gendered social structures.

I collected 25 newspaper articles published between 1848 and 1868 from various locations across the United States. I chose this date range because it includes three major historical markers: the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the end of the Long Walk in 1864, and the Navajo Treaty of 1868. I chose articles that were over 2 paragraphs in length, were not reprints of earlier articles, and were substantive in content (contained more than one passing mention of “Indian,” “Navajo,” or other pertinent terms). I also tried to find articles in newspapers that represent as many states as possible; though most represent New York and New Mexico newspapers, I found several articles from other states. Four main themes emerged from these newspaper articles: Indian Depravity, Threat to Property, Saving the Indian, and Misuse of Land. The themes overlap in various ways across multiple papers and articles, yet each all represent the mutable arguments made by the US government to justify the removal of Indigenous people from their ancestral land. The Indian Depravity theme plays on “savage

[176] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis.*

Indian" tropes and contrasts them with notions of Christian morality. At the same time, Indian Depravity dehumanizes Native Americans generally, but also Diné specifically. Threat to Property extends the depraved Indian stereotype, and applies it to Western European conceptions of property and gender. Saving the Indian highlights the shift in approach to dealing with the "Indian problem," from military warfare to the extermination of culture. The Misuse of Land theme calls upon the themes listed above as justification for the elimination of Indigenous peoples and cultures for the acquisition and exploitation of territory for capitalist gain. This theme is clearly identified through references to land rights, land use, and the displacement of Indigenous peoples for colonialist settlement, presented as "American progress."

The themes described above surfaced in my close reading of the texts. I use Fairclough's[177] three-dimensional approach to CDA combined with Lazar's[178] feminist approach to CDA. The texts were analyzed at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, with particular attention paid to gendered language and rhetoric. Morton describes the three levels as such:

> The micro level analysis consists of an in-depth analysis of the text including word choice, the use of metaphors, the sentence structure and other language choices. The mezzo level of analysis considers how the discourse is presented/published and how it is consumed… Finally, the macro level of critical discourse analysis examines how the particular text functions within socio-cultural practices.[179]

In this study I focus primarily on the micro and macro levels. My analysis at the micro level is based on naming, transitivity, modality, and equating/contrasting. Naming examines how the news reporters refer to various people, entities, or even abstract concepts by choosing a particular noun or noun phrase to describe them. Descriptions reveal underlying ideologies contained

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[177] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*.

[178] Michelle M. Lazar, "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis," *Critical Discourse Studies* 2, no. 2 (2007).

[179] Morton, "Hitchhiking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women," 307-308.

therein and influence a reader. Transitivity is centered around verbs and processes, and is indicative of an ideological perspective of the author. Modality also looks at verbs, as well as adverbs, adjectives, and conditional sentence structures, to convey the level of desirability or possibility of something. Specific words and syntax convey not only the authors' individual prejudices and beliefs, but also broader ideological positions.

First, however, it is important to contextualize some of the legal and philosophical dimensions that shaped the relationship between the American legal system and the Indigenous peoples of North America. The Discovery Doctrine originated from a series of Papal Bulls issued in the 1400s, which declared war on all non-Christians across the world by promoting the "conquest, colonization, and exploitation of non-Christian nations and their territories."[180] In 1493, Pope Alexander VI issued a papal document that granted the right to conquer any lands "discovered" by Christopher Columbus (and any other future discoveries by Spanish explorers) to Spain.[181] The Doctrine, rooted in Christian dominionism, applied not only to the Americas but any and all other "discovered" land across the world. The Doctrine was adopted by the US in 1823 by the Supreme Court case Johnson v. McIntosh. Chief Justice John Marshall "observed that Christian European nations had assumed 'ultimate dominion' over the lands of America during the Age of Discovery, and that - upon 'discovery' - the Indians had lost 'their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations,' and only retained a right of 'occupancy' in their lands."[182] In other words, Indians had no rights to land or property because they were not Christians when Europeans arrived in North America. Newcomb argues that "Johnson was

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[180] Steve Newcomb, "Five Hundred Years of Injustice: The Legacy of Fifteenth Century Religious Prejudice," *Native Web*, 1992. http://ili.nativeweb.org/sdrm_art.html.

[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.

premised on the ancient principal of Christian dominion and a distinction between paramount rights of 'Christian people' and subordinate rights of 'heathens'"[183] and that distinction formed the basis of any further determinations on the rights of American Indians. With the Marshall ruling, the Doctrine of Discovery became the basis for US law and policy in relation to Indigenous peoples.

Manifest Destiny emerges from the same principles as the Doctrine of Discovery.[184] Miller argues that Manifest Destiny has three main aspects: "First, the belief the United States has some unique moral virtues other countries do not possess. Second, the idea the United States has a mission to redeem the world by spreading republican government and the American way of life around the globe. And, third, that the United States has a divinely ordained destiny to accomplish these tasks."[185] Taken together, beliefs that the United States is more virtuous than other nations and has a divine duty to disseminate "the American way of life" and government across the world imply an assumed inherent superiority on the part of the Christian European colonizers. Miller further argues that the main justification for Manifest Destiny and the Doctrine is religion; non-Christians were inferior and therefore should not be allowed the same legal, economic, or political rights as Christians.[186] The belief that Christians are superior to non-Christian people is at the heart of settler colonialism, which refers to the "specific formation of colonialism in which people come to a land inhabited by (Indigenous) people and declare that

[183] Steven T. Newcomb, "The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law: The Doctrine of Discovery, Johnson v. McIntosh, and Plenary Power," *NYU Review of Law and Social Change* 20, no. 303, 1992: 304.

[184] Robert J. Miller, "American Indians, the Doctrine of Discovery, and Manifest Destiny," *Wyoming Law Review*, 11 (no. 2), 2011.

[185] Ibid., 332.
[186] Ibid.

land to be their new home."[187] Settler colonialism is about the acquisition of territory, the displacement of Indigenous peoples, and is an ongoing social structure.[188]

The themes that emerged in this analysis (Indian Depravity, Threat to Property, Saving the Indian, and Misuse of Land) are all part of a larger settler colonialist logic and agenda, in which notions of white Christian supremacy, dominionism, civilization, and territory are all of a piece. My analysis attempts to deconstruct that logic, which combined work together to discursively constitute and justify the grand logic at play: the displacement and extermination of Indigenous peoples who stood in the way of the acquisition of territory and the exploitation of the land for capitalist gain.

This chapter largely focuses on micro- and macro-levels of analysis, but I do want to include a brief note on the mezzo. The 25 articles analyzed are structured in various ways. There are shorter articles of approximately two to three paragraphs in length, and longer ones that tend to consist of either reports from the field (from both soldiers and journalists) or travelogues that describe landscapes, settlements, people (Indians, settlers, and others), dwellings, and crafts. Many of the articles cited in this thesis, along with many others that are not cited, contain rather lengthy descriptions of Diné lifestyles, physical appearance, and personal habits, and speculate on their racial origins. Some examples are discussed later in this chapter, but continued research may unearth further connections between media discourses around such "proof" of monogenesis and the emergence of American capitalism, in relation to Native Americans and other people of color.

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[187] Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies," 4. See also Wolfe, Veracini.

[188] Ibid.

Across the timeline analyzed, articles about the Diné increase in number and frequency, beginning in 1857 and heaviest between 1861 and 1863, when the use of stereotypes and strong modality ramps up and lays the groundwork for the major violent campaign of forced assimilation and extermination.

Indian Depravity

Language paints a vivid picture. “Savage Indian” calls up a striking image, one that is well-known and well-represented in this research. Also well-represented in this research are descriptions of Native American people and cultures as primitive, barbaric, animalistic, and childlike. During the time frame analyzed, I found many battle scenes, reinforcing the image of Indigenous people as “savage.” Tallies of property stolen and lives taken are also common, reinforcing the image of Native Americans as thieving and untrustworthy. There are also many references to Indian domiciles, habits, and lifestyles as distinctly different and inferior to those of settler society. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, representations of Native Americans portrayed them as not merely different, but intrinsically uncivilized, anti-progress, anachronistic, unknowable and menacing.

While Indian primitiveness, savagery, and barbarity are common tropes, in my research I found that many of the articles sampled leaned less on the Diné as childlike or primitive. Rather, the Diné are portrayed as naturally wicked and morally corrupt, as in a *Santa Fe Gazette* article from 1862 which calls the Diné “devils...whose desire for plunder is never satisfied.”[189] The noun “devil” clearly draws upon Christian belief and imagery, while the “desire for plunder” employs an essentializing representation of the Diné as naturally thieving and corrupt. Another

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[189] “Navajo Treaty,” *Santa Fe Gazette*, May 31, 1862.

article from 1863 further essentializes, describing the "aggressive, perfidious, butchering Navajos."[190] The adjectives used in this example ("perfidious, butchering") are vivid and lurid, playing upon white settlers' fears of Indian savagery. There are also numerous references to robbery and murder, either naming the Diné "robbers and murderers," or naming their acts as robberies and murders. Others contain tallies of the numbers of animals allegedly stolen by Diné (robberies), or tallies of the number of settlers killed in attacks (murders). Both words imply a lack of or disregard for morality on the part of the Diné. Further, several articles use the noun "depredation/s" in describing Indians' actions. Depredation implies not only theft of property, but willful violence, pillaging, and dishonesty, all of which paint a vivid picture of Indians as morally corrupt. The image of the Diné as depraved was reinforced in part through contrasting images of settlers as innocent victims of Indian violence. The stories were frequently sensationalized, sometimes macabre, as in this example: "The Navajos met us with very hostile feelings...three days before we arrived, [they] had killed, boiled and eaten a white man."[191] Racial stereotyping of the Diné is not only found in how they and their actions are named, but also in terms of transitivity. This is often deployed by portraying the Diné as a threat to life and property. The specific threat to property is discussed later in this chapter, but the threat to the lives of white settlers is embedded in most reports out of Indian territory through the use of transitive verbs like "plundering" and "infested," both of which are, like the nouns described above, imbued with menace and the implication of imminent violence. Further, the verb "infest" is typically used in reference to animals, and it effectively dehumanizes those to whom it refers.

[190] "Indian Policy," *Santa Fe Gazette*, November 21, 1863.

[191] "Ruins of Ancient Cities in America," *Washington Sentinel*, March 1855.

White supremacy was reinforced through the use of racial stereotyping to debase and dehumanize Indigenous people and other people of color in the U.S. in order to justify the theft of Indigenous land by the federal government. Stereotypes function as proof of the superiority of Western Christianity and European culture, as well as justification of the Doctrine of Discovery and the conquering of Indigenous land and peoples. Christian dominionism and the subordination of Indigenous people in the U.S. was grounded in the regular, forceful deployment of racial stereotypes, branding Native Americans as heathens. Media representations "served as pedagogy and knowledge production for spectators"[192] of America's war on Indigenous peoples and cultures. If news media provided one of the only ways that white settlers knew their Diné neighbors, then it is no wonder that they were vulnerable to the racialized and gendered representations of the Diné in the news. Kellner argues that "media culture spectacles demonstrate who has power and who is powerless, who is allowed to exercise force and violence, and who is not. They dramatize and legitimate the power of the forces that be and demonstrate to the powerless that if they fail to conform, they risk incarceration or death."[193] The news media played upon and legitimated the fears of their readers by presenting dehumanizing and stereotypical representations of the Diné.

Threat to Property

"...the public should know *the full extent of the horrors to which* [the people of New Mexico] *have been and may again be subjected by the neglect of Congress to fulfill its duty*." [emphasis in original][194]

Many articles in this analysis refer to the Diné as a threat to settlers' property. The depraved Indian stereotype is extended, in some cases, beyond their allegedly violent and

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[192] Raheja, *Reservation Reelism*, 2.

[193] Kellner, *Media Culture*, 2.

[194] "Indian Outrages in New Mexico," *New York Daily Tribune,* November 20, 1850.

immoral nature into the realm of arrogance and entitlement, referring to them as "insolent and independent," as seen in an 1862 article: "[Navajo] depredations have been flagrant and continuous almost from the date of the acquisition of the Territory by the government and the amount of stock they have plundered from the citizens."[195] Here, the depraved Indians and their "depredations" and plundering are on full display. Use of the word "flagrant" implies that the Diné are conspicuously corrupt. Inflammatory language also obscures the context of the situation; the "depredations" began "almost" since the territory was acquired by the United States government, which may not be surprising given the lack of social or political status afforded to Indigenous people. Occasionally, the Diné are also described as "rich" or otherwise possessing an abundance of livestock or other supplies, as in 1858: "These Indians are *rich*, possessing immense flocks and herds - sheep, cattle, horses, and mules - the fruits of their industry in plundering the New Mexicans..."[196] and "they are becoming richer every year."[197] The contrast between the Diné as simultaneously barbaric and materially wealthy is interesting. Attributing their wealth to "plundering" the property of "New Mexicans" emphasizes the divide between settlers and Indigenous people in the region, as does the implication that the Diné would not have possessed livestock or other property except by theft. Examples like this one also contain the familiar "lazy Indian" stereotype. Indian laziness is presented as both a part of their nature and as evidence of the lack of civilization. According to the rhetoric, Indians are, by nature, violent, thieving, lazy, dishonest, and cunning: "The grand obstacle to Indian civilization is their idea that labor is derogatory to the dignity of a warrior. There is no remedy but to thrash

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[195] "Navajo Treaty," *Santa Fe Gazette*, May 31, 1862.

[196] "From the Seat of the Navajo War," *Washington Union*, October 23, 1858.

[197] Ibid.

this idea out of them."[198] The "lazy Indian" stereotype also emerges from the discourse in the context of "saving" them from themselves through punishment - removing them from their land, policing their activities, and re-educating them to the ways of American Christian culture.

The notion of endangered property also extends to white women and children, frequently in captivity narratives, as in this 1853 excerpt from Washington DC paper *The National Era*: "the Apaches and the Navajos come down from the mountains and carry off your sheep, and even your women, whenever they please."[199] Described as coming "down from the mountains," the Indians are distanced from civilized white spaces and implies that they do not belong there. Comparing white women with sheep demonstrates the status of both as property. An 1862 *Santa Fe Gazette* article makes the notion of women-as-property even more clear: "[Navajos] do not confine themselves to the seizure and appropriation of stock, but they make captives of women and children whom they bring in and reduce to a state of servitude."[200] Again, white women, and also children, are portrayed as property, though perhaps a more prized good than livestock. The statement also recalls the image of the depraved Diné, who are not able to "confine themselves" to merely stealing livestock but who steal innocent Americans in order to enslave them. Captivity narratives were an effective way to highlight the contrast between Western Christian civilization and Indian savagery, and the implications were multi-dimensional. White settlers' fears found expression in captivity narratives, fears of Indian brutality, theft, and sexuality, all of which were reported and sensationalized in the newspapers as well as in other forms of media such as dime novels and advertising. The purity of white women and the innocence of children

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[198] "Indian Outrages in New Mexico," *New York Daily Tribune,* November 20, 1850.

[199] "New Mexico and the Indian Marauders," *The National Era*, March 24, 1853.

[200] "Navajo Treaty," *Santa Fe Gazette*, May 31, 1862.

were threatened in such stories, and both represented the entirety of white Christian society as American expansion spread westward, in pursuit of both fulfilling Manifest Destiny, capitalist pursuits, and economic prosperity. Indians pose a threat to both property and patriarchal/paternalistic ideologies, as well as a threat to Christian morals and Christian women's purity. In 1850 the New York Daily Tribune published an article titled "Indian Outrages in New Mexico" about the Diné. One excerpt reads: "robbery and murder are absolutely as nothing compared to the making captives of women."[201] The depraved nature of the Diné is reinforced by reminding their audience of Indian "robbery and murder," and by describing it as "nothing" compared to the taking of white women heightens the spectacle and sense of lurid danger. The article continues: "New Mexico is, on all sides, surrounded by hostile Indians, who, in small bands, penetrate the country in every direction, crossing the public roads, driving off cattle, murdering, and carrying into captivity women and children."[202] Again, the depraved, savage nature of the Diné is reinforced by naming them "hostile Indians" and using the verb "murdering." The transitive verb "penetrate" is used similarly, implying violence and forcible entry into white spaces such as "public roads" and, more broadly, "the country." White property is also threatened, first mentioning cattle, and then "carrying into captivity women and children."

News stories containing captivity narratives also frequently contain pleas to the U.S. government and military to take action against Indian savagery and protect innocent white settlers and their property. Treaties and the use of force were considered inadequate in dealing with Indians. Rather, news reports oftentimes made a case for government and military intervention, typically first by reiterating alleged offenses perpetrated by the Diné. In the

[201] "Indian Outrages in New Mexico," *New York Daily Tribune*, November 20, 1850.

[202] Ibid.

following excerpt, the author presents an argument for additional troops to be sent to the region as protection against Indians:

> "...a portion of the inhabitants of New Mexico have become exceedingly disaffected towards the Federal authorities in that Territory, both civil and military, because of an alleged neglect on the part of the latter to protect them from the incursions and ravages of the Navajo Indians - a charge which our readers do not now hear for the first time"[203]

This excerpt contains more examples of racial stereotyping of Indians as violent and depraved barbarians who do not belong in the territory ("incursions and ravages"), as well as the argument that the government has not done enough to protect "the [settler] inhabitants of New Mexico" from Indian depravity. "Inhabitant" seems a rather neutral word on the surface, but deployed to provide a contrast between whites and non-whites, it carries significant and powerful meaning. The inhabitants of the New Mexico Territory in this example are assumed to be American citizens, (likely white) innocent victims of Indian barbarity who deserved the protection of their government, and conversely that the Indigenous people who also lived in the same region were not "inhabitants" but, rather, a menace to presumably proper, moral, Christian society which had the right to be protected from them. Characterizing settlers as "inhabitants" and then naming "Navajo Indians" as separate in this context indicates that the Diné were not considered citizens of the United States, afforded with any of the rights and protections available to the settlers.

Saving the Indian

Articles such as the one above make a clear delineation between those who were considered "Americans" and Indigenous people in the United States. In many cases, the distinction is clear, as in the following: "...years of hostility between the people and these Indians..."[204] where "the people" are assumed to be settlers, and the term "these Indians" applies

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[203] "New Mexico Abroad," *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, November 17, 1860.

[204] "Navajo Treaty," *Santa Fe Gazette*, May 31, 1862.

to the Diné specifically, and other tribes as well. The statement bolsters the difference between "Americans" and the Other, in pointing out the "years of hostility" between them, highlighting the contentious nature of coexistence between Indigenous people and settlers. The statement also functions as evidence to readers that not only were hostilities ongoing, but also that the two populations, Americans and Indians, are simply not compatible. "Saving" the Indian in this context refers to a shift in the narratives about the Diné. The end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 did not end with the elimination of the Indigenous population, and so the tactics needed to change. Utilizing some of the same tropes that justified the wars (Indigenous people as savage, barbaric, depraved), a new kind of Indian emerged: one that could be saved through containment, re-education, and eventual assimilation into "American" society. Instead of physical annihilation, Indigenous culture came under attack. The approach was no less violent. It was just different.

Oftentimes the argument that some Indians might be "saved" through incarceration and assimilation is upheld through the reporting of Indian savagery and depravity, in the hope that their nature might be influenced by Christian education. At other times, the Diné are presented as "semi-civilized." When a semi-civilized image is presented, the supposed inherent promise of the Diné is attributed to European ancestry and an association with Christianity, as in this excerpt:

> "I look upon them as finer material for improvement and civilization than any other tribe under the jurisdiction of our government...[their] elements of progress and pursuits of civilization, have been inherited and are not the result of any system of management adopted by our government - evidencing clearly that at one time this country must have been inhabited by a race superior in all respects to those who now occupy it."[205]

First, the article argues that assimilation and "improvement" of the Diné is promising yet at the same time supports the belief that Indians are less than human. The article also implies that there is only one acceptable, effective form of "improvement" - assimilation. The assertion that the

[205] "From the Seat of the Navajo War," *Washington Union*, October 23, 1858.

Diné posses some "elements of progress" upholds two arguments that are seen in other articles. First, the article argues that any hint of "civilization" was "inherited" by "a race superior in all respects to those who now occupy it." Such a phrase again calls upon dehumanizing stereotypes and tropes, while at the same time highlighting the supposed superiority of the white race. The second argument seen here is that the government had not yet developed "any system of management" that effectively kept Indians in line. That the government had failed up to this point to manage (in other words, eliminate) Indians properly is reiterated in many articles.

Another excerpt highlights multiple tropes and discourses within a single sentence:

> "The chiefs of the Navajos and Apaches are quite as intelligent, brave, and chivalrous, as the Frasers and Rob Roys of a century ago in Scotland; and their people, if judiciously dealt with by our government, and instructed in the arts, and introduced to the comforts of civilization, as the reward of industry, might be made a respectable portion of the inhabitants of the territory--equal in all respects to the Christian Pueblos, or even the Mexicans of Spanish blood."[206] (3-24-1853)

First, the statement indicates a shift from emphasizing Indian depravity and savagery to their potential for "improvement," based in part on the government's ability to properly manage them. The statement equates Indian intelligence, bravery, and chivalry to that of notable Scottish clans, recalling the notion that any positive qualities expressed by Indians must be attributable to white ancestry. It also provides a gendered element to the argument, in both its examples (Rob Roy and the notable members of the Fraser Clan of Scotland were all male folk heroes) and in applying these positive attributes to Indian "chiefs" assumed to be male. Gendered rhetoric helps impose a patriarchal system of power on the Diné, a traditionally matrilineal society. The paternalistic view that Indians needed to be dealt with "judiciously" by the government, and "instructed' in how to be civilized is evidenced here, as is the lazy Indian stereotype in the "reward of industry"

[206] "New Mexico and the Indian Marauders," *National Era*, June 24, 1854.

comment. Lastly, the notation that the Diné and Apaches could possibly become "equal" to "Christian Pueblos...or...Mexicans of Spanish blood" supports the idea that such civilized manners and behaviors come only from European ancestry and Christianity.

This shifting narrative is evident in this article from 1858: "The Navajo Indians present a most inviting field for the growth of a genuine good, and the erection upon the destruction of savage usage and barbarity a system of polity which would eventually bring forth the fruits of peace, prosperity, civilization, and Christian happiness."[207] This statement functions on multiple levels, contrasting Indian "savage usage and barbarity" with Christian "genuine good," while also pointing out the special, different nature of "Navajo Indians" as compared to other tribes, as seen in the previous section of this chapter. The excerpt is steeped in essentialism, implying that the Diné are violent by nature and need the help of white settlers to "bring forth the fruits of...Christian happiness." The following excerpt makes the case for "saving" the Diné and proposes removal, isolation, and re-education: "Were a reservation set apart for them and they placed upon it under judicious management and afterwards properly encouraged and instructed, a marked improvement in their condition would in a short period of time be observable."[208] Again, the strong emphasis on "judicious management" and education highlights the belief that the Diné were incapable of governing themselves. Further, though the author does not define or describe the conditions of which they speak, but the reader is surely reminded of the barbaric, non-Western, non-Christian (or, in other words, "uncivilized") Diné way of life upon reading the word "condition." The "improvement" in relation to those ways of life perpetuates the Otherness of the Diné, and simultaneously holds white society and Christianity up as morally and

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[207] "From the Seat of the Navajo War," *Washington Union*, October 23, 1858.

[208] "Navajo Treaty," *Santa Fe Gazette*, May 31, 1862.

intellectually superior. The statement also suggests that the government is in the business of supplying a Christian education.

To characterize the Diné as “promising” yet not equal is no less dehumanizing than to rely on savage Indian tropes; it is simply less overt. There is a distinct contrast between the characterizations of the Diné as depraved savages, and others, such as the examples in this section, which acknowledge some elements of their humanity yet at the same time remind readers that Indigenous people are not, and will never be, equal to whites nor will they achieve the rights afforded to citizens of the United States of America. When viewed through the lens of settler colonialism, the shift in narrative did not matter in regard to the end goal. The Diné would never be assimilated, because the agenda remained the same: the displacement of Indigenous peoples and the acquisition of their land.

While at times the forcible removal of the Diné from their land is presented as a mode of saving/civilizing, at other times it is clearly meant as a form of punishment for their past wrongdoings. The *Santa Fe Gazette* wrote of Kit Carson’s campaign: "The campaign which is about to start into the Navajo country will, it is to be hoped, put a stop to these enormous outrages and punish the guilty Navajos for their many misdeeds of the past."[209] Readers are reminded of Indian depravity (“enormous outrages,” “guilty Navajos”), and persuaded that the campaign will not only end the alleged crimes committed by the Diné but more importantly punish them for their crimes. It seems that the kind of justice afforded to white American citizens would not have been given to Indigenous people. Additionally, any notion of saving or improving the lives or conditions of the Diné is absent; rather, it appears the “welfare of the Territory,” which when juxtaposed with mention of Diné “outrages” and “misdeeds,” makes

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[209] “Navajo Indians,” *Santa Fe Gazette*, June 27, 1863.

clear that what is most important is the welfare of the white settlers who live on the territory, but also the use of the territory itself.[210]

While punishment is a common trope, especially in the one- to two-year period leading up to the Long Walk, it is often presented as a binary choice between colonization and annihilation, as seen in this passage:

> "The barbarous practices of the Indians must be broken up, and they taught the art of peace and civilization, or *they must be exterminated*.
>
> The tendency of the present policy is extermination - experience shows it to be so - necessity makes it so. Who can be in good neighborhood with people who live by murder, robbery, and outrage? *If they are not civilized, of necessity they must be exterminated.*
>
> To civilize is the humane policy." [emphasis in original][211]

The use of modal verbs in this passage is common in many articles with similar arguments. Presenting civilization as something that "must" occur to avoid extermination operates on two levels: 1. There are only two choices, and 2. Colonization is the more humane of the two options. Presenting the situation as a binary choice completely occludes the possibility that Indian people are capable of peace with white settlers, affirms that notion that Indians are separate from and incompatible not only with white settlers but also with "Americans" more generally, and upholds the narrative that "New Mexicans" hold the moral high ground. The either-or argument also places responsibility on the Diné for their circumstance, presenting the situation as a choice that they must make for themselves: forced assimilation or death. It is clear, however, that the end result would be the same: theft of Indigenous land, loss of Indigenous cultures, and the primacy of white settlers.

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[210] See next section, "Misuse of Land," for more discussion.
[211] "Indian Outrages in New Mexico," *New York Daily Tribune*, November 20, 1850.

This "saving the Indian from themselves" rhetoric is also seen in reporting on Diné women. As discussed in chapter 2, gender in Diné society was multi-faceted and much more complex than the male-female binary gender construction in Western Christian culture. The roles and responsibilities of Diné women encompassed all aspects of social and political life, and their input was sought and valued. Christian Americans found Diné conceptions of gender baffling at best; to them, Diné gender equality was further evidence of Indian depravity. An 1853 article states, "Navajos are great pilferers and thieves, the women more than the men."[212] As many other examples cited in this analysis, this statement reminds the reader of Indian depravity by naming them as "pilferers and thieves," and then compounds the issue by characterizing the women as even more depraved than the men of the tribe. According to Christian patriarchal norms and modes of behavior, Diné men did not adequately control their women and ensure that they conformed to Christian standards of purity and morality, as was expected of "good" Christian women. As such, a significant aspect of "civilization" involved enforcing strict gender roles and norms for women; that Diné women had important roles in their societies contributed to the argument that Diné culture was uncivilized, immoral, and in need of Christian intervention and re-education. Accordingly, the Diné possess a morally corrupt nature, evidenced in part by their failure to conform to Western gender norms, and pose a threat to Western Christian values. This failure was evidence of Indian depravity and further marked Indigenous people as the Other.

Three articles in the sample discuss women's roles in Diné culture as surprising in contrast with the roles of white women in colonial America. Christian Americans adhered to a strict patriarchal hierarchy which placed white women in a subordinate position to white men,

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[212] "New Mexico and its People," *Spirit of the Times*, March 15, 1853.

and gave them specific duties in the colonization of Indigenous people and land. Discussion of gender in the news helps further define the Diné as "Other" by calling attention to the difference between Diné culture and Christian patriarchal gender roles, such as: "A more striking singularity with [the Diné] yet is the position and influence of their women. Some of these have as large property, and their opinions are as much respected, if not more, in grave matters affecting the weal of the nation, as the men."[213] Characterizing the "position and influence" of Diné women as "striking" calls attention to the contrasting roles of white settler women, whose opinions were not sought or respected, and for whom land ownership was difficult at best, even after the Homestead Act of 1862. The article emphasizes that Diné women were not only intimately involved in decision-making processes around "grave matters," but their input was highly valued. Comparing Diné women's status in their society to that of Diné men highlights both the elevated status of Diné women and the subordinate status of white women. Another article mentions that "in the Navajo councils the women have a voice and a vote,"[214] again contrasting the status of Diné women with that of white women by highlighting the extent to which they were involved in social and political processes and negotiations.

The status of Diné women was not only surprising to white settlers, but also framed as further evidence of a morally corrupt and dangerous culture. An 1853 articles reads: "Their women...are independent enough to leave their husbands whenever it so pleases them, and thus to dissolve the marriage bond...Navajos are great pilferers and thieves, the women more than the men; nothing is safe within their reach."[215] The emphasis on Diné women as "independent

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[213] "From the Seat of the Navajo War," *Washington Union*, October 23, 1858.

[214] "The Navajo Campaign," *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, April 11, 1861.

[215] "New Mexico and its People," *Spirit of the Times*, March 15, 1863.

enough to leave their husbands whenever it so pleases them" illustrates the stark contrast between the agency of Diné women and white women, and also between conceptions of gender in Diné culture and the patriarchal power relations between white Christian women and men. Further, the threat to the "marriage bond" indicates a threat to Christian values and morals, and harkens back to the image of the Diné (and indeed, all American Indian cultures) as un-Christian and morally depraved. The categories "colonized" and "colonizer" were reinforced through sexual control, the cornerstone of "patriarchal and colonial oppression."[216] White women exemplified normative womanhood, which did not include participation in political realms. The participation of Diné women in social and political decision-making processes in Diné culture contributed greatly to notions of Indian depravity, and strengthened the argument that they needed to be saved from themselves.

This argument was deployed through contending rhetorics of punishment and "benevolent conquest."[217] This complementarity blurs, however, when viewed through the lens of colonization. Rhetoric of benevolence was used prior to the military's forced removal, as seen in 1862: "The people of New Mexico are deeply interested in any measure that may change the condition of the Navajo Indian for the better."[218] This author refers to "the people of New Mexico" and then the "Navajo Indian" as separate entities, indicating that Indians were not considered people. Use of the noun "condition" in this context carries a negative connotation, and reinforces makes the assertion that the condition must be changed "for the better" seem not only necessary but benevolent, just, and humane. Benevolent conquest as an ideal is extended to

[216] Green, "Introduction."

[217] Valaskakis, "Parallel Voices," 287.

[218] "Navajo Treaty," *Santa Fe Gazette*, May 31, 1862.

Bosque Redondo itself, which was frequently described in the news in positive terms, as in the same 1862 article: "at the Bosque Redondo, there is arable land enough for all the Indians..."[219] (5-31-1862) This kind statement is clearly intended to justify internment, and also to glorify the benefits of colonization by not only extolling its virtues for settlers, but for Indigenous people as well. To describe the land at Bosque Redondo as "arable" is not inaccurate, although an exaggeration; the interned Diné were able to grow corn crops, but due to poor soil and water quality, crops were not adequate for the number of people interned and many went hungry.[220] Starvation was one of the most common causes of death in the camp.[221] While some claimed that "the purpose [of internment] is...to feed and take care of them until they have opened farms and become able to support themselves…[and] this year those Indians have been contented and happy,"[222] the reality was much different. Reports during the internment period comprise an important piece of the "saving the Indian" narrative. In the period leading up to the Long Walk and internment at Bosque Redondo, news reports were framed in a manner that justified the forced removal of the Diné from their ancestral land, extolled the virtues of colonization, and, later, painted life in the camp as idyllic and pastoral. In other words, colonization was having a positive influence on the Diné, because their living conditions and their souls were being saved.

Misuse of Land

Christian dominionist ideology, the Doctrine of Discovery (and its legal aftermath), and the capitalist imagination operated together to justify the displacement of Indigenous peoples and

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[219] Ibid.

[220] Bailey and Bailey, *A History of the Navajos;* Peter Iverson and Monty Roessel, *Dine: A History of the Navajos*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002).

[221] Ibid.

[222] "Indian Policy," *Santa Fe Gazette*, November 21, 1863.

the theft of their land throughout the US. The seizure and exploitation of land is a tool of colonization, and a form of control over the bodies of Indigenous people. As Alfred argued, Indigenous "survival is redefined strictly in the terms of capitalist dogma."[223] The question "what are the richest boons of nature to one who cannot use them?"[224] demonstrates a narrow capitalist perspective on land and nature, one that views the "boons of nature" as economic assets with a sole purpose: profit. The example also illustrates the belief that Christian people have a God-given right and a duty to "use" these assets. Indigenous people living on, in, or near these assets "cannot use them" because of their status as non-citizens and sub-humans, unable and unwilling to fully participate in the American capitalist system. Fundamental ontological and epistemological differences between Indigenous and Western ways of knowing are apparent in the news throughout the time period analyzed. The Diné, for example, "could be converted from destroyers into producers...add[ing] to the prosperity of the country they now keep in a state of impoverishment."[225] Naming the Diné "destroyers" reminds readers of Indian depravity and savagery. In contrast, "producers" refers to Western beliefs about the productivity of land, use of natural resources, and participation in the capitalist accumulation of wealth. American "producers" are at the top of the social and political hierarchy in the US. Further, the term "producer" is imbued with the notion of development, a Western ideal that contrasts with Indigenous beliefs grounded in relationality, including the closely-tied and mutually dependent relationship between people and land. The assertion that the Diné "keep" the area in a "state of impoverishment" implies intentionality, but does not acknowledge the context of their situation;

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[223] Alfred, "Colonialism," 42.

[224] "New Mexico and the Indian Marauders," *National Era*, March 24, 1853.

[225] "Navajo Treaty," *Santa Fe Gazette*, May 31, 1862.

the region had experienced waves of colonizers over many decades, twenty years of warfare during the Mexican-American War, and had been living in a new reality within newly created borders, wherein their land and livelihoods were under constant threat. Further, the author places responsibility for the current economic state of the area on the Indigenous people there; the impoverishment of the region is caused, according to the author, by Indigenous misuse of the land. If they would participate in the American capitalist system by becoming "producers" by exploiting the land, the author implies, the Diné may be saved.

The same *Santa Fe Gazette* article furthers the argument for the colonizer-capitalist agenda, as well as the ideal end result:

> "Capital, properly directed, in developing the natural resources of a country, is always beneficial…[and] it is most ardently to be desired...that some law will be passed, which will...define the limits of the Navajo tribe of Indians and extinguish their title to lands over which they roam."[226]

Again, the idea that Indigenous people do not properly use the land upon which they "roam" is upheld in this excerpt. The productivity of land is a critical component of the argument that capital and natural resource development is "always beneficial" forecloses counterarguments and validates any action, no matter how destructive or unjust, that results in profit. The hypercapitalist perspective plays an important role in the extermination of Indigenous cultures, as it provides further justification that Indians stand in the way of (white) American progress and prosperity.

In 1854 the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* published an article titled "Shall We Make an Effort to Develop the Mineral Wealth in New Mexico?" in which the ideals of Christian dominionism are celebrated. It reads:

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[226] Ibid.

> "Deep in the busom of our rugged mountains, nature has placed riches of untold value, consisting of gold, silver, copper, iron and coal: and which have slept quietly in their native beds...the world, in its giant strides to greatness, in all departments of human industry, demands the development of every species of wealth that lie entombed in the busom of mother earth. The four quarters of the globe are pouring in their golden streams to the marts of commerce, and contributing a rich quota towards the universal prosperity and happiness of the age."[227]

Nowhere in the entire article are the Diné or any other Indigenous tribes mentioned, though the natural resources named are located on and within Indigenous land. By glorifying the "riches" of the land but not acknowledging the people who lived there for centuries renders them invisible to readers. The concerns of Indigenous people are of no matter to the colonizers. Rather, what concerns them is the as-yet "entombed" wealth contained there, "demanding" to be discovered and exploited for monetary gain, which is what, in turn, defines "greatness" according to the ideals of capitalist Christian dominionism. Not only is the exploitation of natural resources a means to great wealth, but it is right, just, and moral from this perspective. The patriarchal social hierarchy is referenced when the noun "busom" is used twice, once in relation to "mother earth." LaRocque argued that colonizers "render a colonized peoples as inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable" and the use of gendered language in the 1854 article demonstrates the belief that Christians had a God-given right and duty to extract the "riches of untold value" from the land, even if it meant ecological degradation and the elimination of entire peoples who were perceived to be an impediment to the accumulation of wealth. The oppression of Indigenous people hinges on a combination of patriarchy and hypercapitalism, as "patriarchal hypercapitalism...imposes market domination"[228] so that Indigenous people became an impediment to development, and must be removed either

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[227] "Shall We Make an Effort to Develop the Mineral Wealth in New Mexico?" *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, January 7, 1854.

[228] Cannella and Manuelito, "Feminisms from Unthought Locations," 6.

by internment or extermination, both a form of extermination - one of culture, tradition, and identity, the other of life. The “marts of commerce” constitute the ultimate good, and success there constitutes the culmination of a campaign of destruction and death for profit. Though the author describes the result as “universal prosperity and happiness,” it is clear that this sentiment extends only to white Christians, and not the millions of Indigenous people who were dehumanized, displaced, and killed in the pursuit of capital.

Settler Colonialism Between the Lines

Power structures strive to make meaning in order to support an agenda. As Hall reminds us, racism provides a lens which distorts social and political issues by projecting them onto marginalized groups, capitalizing on fear and difference, and also that racial stereotypes are an essential component in the deployment of ideology. Stereotypes remind the audience who is in power and who is allowed to exercise force. Stereotypes also remind the powerless that they are required to conform, or risk physical and/or structural violence and death. The use of demeaning and dehumanizing rhetoric functions to remind Native Americans that they are less-than-human, and also as a precursor to state-sanctioned violence and destruction. Characterizing the Diné in the news media as not only primitive but morally depraved plays upon the fears of white settlers of the Diné as both a threat to their lives and property, and also to economic development and prosperity of the region and indeed the entire nation.

Fear-mongering is an effective tool in influencing public opinion. By characterizing violent campaigns against Native Americans as necessary for the safety of American “citizens,” the US government was able to justify and carry out the destruction of Indigenous peoples and cultures based on a “clash of cultures” narrative. The purpose and function of the clash-of-cultures narrative, as well as the other rhetorical devices discussed in this chapter, is to cloak the

ultimate goal of the colonizers: to gain unrestricted access to Indigenous land and resources. For this reason, assimilation would never be achieved, and would never be enough to grant Native Americans personhood. Instead, through processes of racialization and colonization, the Diné and other Indigenous peoples of North America would always be "Indian" and never "American."

The news articles analyzed in this thesis placed more emphasis on racial and cultural differences between Native Americans and settlers, with a dual purpose: to both hide and justify the US government's settler colonialist agenda. This agenda is apparent in the articles that emphasize land use, and the untapped potential contained within the land, without mention of the people who had been living there. Instead, the agenda is framed as progress. The removal of Indigenous people from stories about the unlimited potential of their land erased them from the land in the minds of the settlers. The erasure and forgetting of Indigenous peoples and cultures are critical in the ongoing process of settler colonialism.[229] What happened in the past is not relegated to the past. The Long Walk of the Navajo still lives in the descendants of the people who experienced it.

[229] Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies."

Four: Storytelling as Healing

My Grandmother's Granddaughter

"You are not just gaining information from people; you are sharing your information...research is not just something that is out there: it's something that you're building for yourself and your community."[230]

"Our ancestors are with us at all times and our families/communities are the foundation of our lives; therefore, what would our research be without them in it?"[231]

Indigenous research methods are relational, meaning that "As a researcher you are answering to all your relations when you are doing research. You are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgments of better or worse."[232] As I embarked on this portion of my research, I don't think I really understood what it meant to "answer to my relations." I was also, at first at least, looking for validation. Indigenous research recognizes oral narratives and other forms of storytelling as important ways to learn about and understand the world, and it also privileges the voices and experiences of ordinary people as important contributors to the telling and retelling of history. I was equipped with a few of the family stories, and initially began this portion of my research in order to verify or prove that what happened in the stories were actually true. Eventually, though, I began to understand that what I was looking for was not proof, at least not by Western standards, but something more like a connection to the past. I've never felt particularly connected to or close with my family; my mom moved from New Mexico to Washington when I was a baby (this story is told later in this chapter), and we had a few relatives in the vicinity but not many. My mom moved us far away and raised me mostly on her own. We visited family occasionally but were not close. My mom didn't say much about her feelings

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[230] Shawn Wilson, "What is Indigenous Research Methodology?" *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 25, no. 2 (2001), 179.

[231] Onowa McIvor, "I am My Subject: Blending Indigenous Research Methodology and Autoethnography Through Integrity-based, Spirit-based Research," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 33, no. 1 (2010), 147.

[232] Shawn Wilson, "What is Indigenous Research," 177.

directly; she warned me that if I got too close I would get hurt. We had to pretend a lot. We did not go to church except for when we visited family; we went to church with them and allowed them to think it was usual for us. We did not have conservative political beliefs but never admitted it to family, allowing them to make their own assumptions about who we were. My mom raised me to be independent and cautious, distrustful of just about everyone. Most of my extended family are very religious and have very traditional, conservative views on most things. There was so much we couldn't say to them, and I never knew for sure if it was to protect them or us. I was raised to protect myself by keeping myself secret. I grew up feeling like an outsider among my people, which makes this part of my research uncomfortable for me in many ways. To do it, I must expose parts of myself that I rarely (if ever) have done before. I must be vulnerable, but I also must be strong by pushing through the discomfort for a larger purpose.

I barely feel connected to my living family. I hardly ever see them; how do I talk to them about difficult, sensitive, emotional subjects? How do I make a connection to my ancestors? In other words, when thinking about the relationality of Indigenous research in regard to my family's story, what is my role in this relationship? I gain courage and strength from Shawn Wilson, who writes about the researcher's role: "...when I am gaining knowledge, I am not just gaining in some abstract pursuit; I am gaining knowledge in order to fulfill my end of the research relationship."[233] So my pursuit of knowledge about my family is not about me collecting information or evidence or proof in some kind of effort to validate who they were and are, but rather it is about the relationship. It is about placing myself in the continuum, about claiming my place in the family, and using what I learn to honor them while at the same time critiquing (and maybe changing) the socio-political circumstances that have led to this moment.

[233] Shawn Wilson, "What is Indigenous Research," 177.

As you will see, claiming my place anywhere has been an ongoing struggle in my life. Again, this is not about me, although I am a part of this story.

Before I dive in to the stories, I must talk a bit about my process. This entire thesis started with my mom. I interviewed her for a class project, and the interview brought together pieces of my family's history in ways that were new to me. This led me to combining historical research with genealogical research, neither of which I had ever really done before. After the interview with my mother, I began searching genealogy websites, and began an ongoing conversation with my mom and other family members. Just about everyone in my family is guarded and reserved when it comes to talking about how they feel. Our stories are connected to profound emotions which makes this aspect of my research the most challenging, and has required the most patience and care. There are days when I speak with my mom, for example, when she is willing to talk rather freely about her memories of childhood and relatives. On other days, she is prickly and unbending, acting almost as if I was forcing her to talk. This happens with my extended family too; I can tell by a look or the tone of a voice when to ask questions and when to back off. I know my mom well enough to understand that there are times when the emotions are closer to the surface and she is unwilling to "go there," even with me. Not going to emotional places applies to my extended family as well: we just don't do that. Sometimes I have to abandon my objective and talk about other things. Talking with extended family members requires a lot of care and patience. I travelled to New Mexico in June 2018 in order to interview two of my uncles, and perhaps others if the opportunity arose. My approach was even more cautious than the one I take when talking to my mother. I had three specific questions I wanted to ask, but I let my uncles drive the conversation. As you will read later in this chapter, their responses were

quite different from each other, and each was telling of something beyond the words they spoke to me.

In doing this research I also utilized a variety of internet tools: genealogical websites like Ancestry.com, Catholic church records, federal census data, and vital statistics offices in New Mexico and Colorado. My primary goal initially was simply to find my great-grandparents names. My mom had told me that neither she nor her siblings knew their names for sure. She was certain that it was my great-grandmother's parents who had had their home destroyed by Kit Carson, and who were forced onto the Long Walk to Bosque Redondo. I knew that her name might have been Martha, and my great-grandfather's name might have been Manuel. My mom told me that after she and her siblings had searched for many years, they all thought that he had been born in or near Marvel, Colorado, but she wasn't sure anymore how they came to that knowledge. The early days of my research were spent searching various sites for my grandfather's name, Seb Maestas. Seb is the short version of his name; his full name was Sebedello, or Sebadayo, or Sebidel, or Savido, depending on which relative/census/other document I consulted. When I was not finding any trace of my great-grandparents anywhere, I started looking at message boards for other descendants of Maestases. I found two other people who were looking for information on a female ancestor whose story sounded a lot like my great-grandmother's and I thought maybe I had found her. I began to write about Manuela/Manuelita, someone else's great-grandmother, even though I found no evidence connecting us other than the similarities of the stories we had been told. It still felt wrong, though, mostly because I could not find any documented connection between Manuela/Manuelita and any of my known family members.

I had just about given up and claimed Manuela as my ancestor when in a last-ditch effort I posted on an Ancestry.com message board, asking if anyone knew anything about my grandfather Seb Maestas. Several people responded right away and sent links to information I had already found. About three or four weeks later, after I had mostly stopped checking the responses, I happened to check and received a message that would change everything. A woman in Albuquerque messaged me and asked about the spelling of Seb/Sebedello's name, and whether he had ever lived in Colorado. I responded and said yes, probably. She replied back with an obituary, dated January 8, 1971 for an Elvinia Pacheco:

> Obit Jan 8. 1971 Mrs. Elvinia M. Pacheco, 55 of Bloomfield. Survivors: Tobe-husband 4 sons : Eugene B. Pacheco- Gallup : Tony O. and Tobe E. - Farmington Leroy Pacheco - Bloomfield 3 brothers: Mike Atencio and Joe Maestas of Marvel, Colo. Seb Maestas of Bloomfield 3 sisters: Juanita Babcock Hesperus, Colo.: Susie Ferguson Modesto, Calif. and Sofronia Candelaria - Marvel Colo. 11 grandchildren.[234]

So, Seb was real, on paper. He had siblings, real names I could search. I quickly realized that the reason I had not found them before was that their names, both first and last names, were spelled differently in different documents (for example, Maestas is spelled three different ways on three separate census reports: Maestas, Mastes, and Mestas). I broadened my search to include each variation of a name, which is what led me to find Martha and Manuel, my great-grandparents—I searched for Elvinia Pacheco which led to me right to them. Once I found their names, I was able to search federal census data to learn where they had lived and what they had done for work, along with varying amounts of other information. Census data does not provide a fully three-dimensional picture, however, so this chapter is a patchwork of family oral histories, memories, and historical scholarship (both dominant and Indigenous narratives).

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[234] *Farmington Daily Times*, "Obituary," January 8, 1971.

McIvor writes about autoethnography as one aspect of Indigenous research methodology.[235] Specifically, she writes that telling her story is a door to the past, a means not to glorify herself but to discover her ancestors, the aspects of her Swampy Cree culture that were lost over generations through colonization, and "to break the cycle of loss" in her family.[236] McIvor also describes her struggle to write her story "in 'the right way.'"[237] She describes "a compulsion to frame, justify, and defend what I was doing within a Western framework that would...be 'acceptable.'"[238] I presented a five minute talk on my research at a university-sponsored event toward the end of my master's program. I chose to spend the five minutes on my family research, mainly because at the time I was just beginning my critical discourse analysis (see Chapter 3). I also thought the personal nature of this portion of my research would be more compelling for an audience of my peers. The talk seemed well-received. About a week later, I received copies of the written feedback given by the audience members; the overwhelming response was to tell me that what I presented, while interesting, was not "academic." It was "rambling," "too personal," and I was advised to make it "more academic." I am the first to admit that it was far from a perfect presentation, and I am sure I could have done a better job elaborating what indigenous research entails. My research was still in an early stage of development and so I was not as equipped to discuss it fully, yet I also feel that the response comes from a place of rigid Western standards of what constitutes "legitimate" "academic"

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[235] Onowa McIvor, "I Am My Subject: Blending Indigenous Research Methodology and Autoethnography Through Integrity-based, Spirit-based Research," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 33, no. 1 (2010).

[236] Ibid., 137.

[237] Ibid., 138.

[238] Ibid., 138.

research.[239] In chapters 1 and 2, I discuss some of the ways that Western scholarship excludes Indigenous knowledge, and how Indigenous scholars have responded. My own understanding of what constitutes legitimate research by Western standards included objectivity as an ideal, official documentation as proof or evidence of a claim or even the existence of a person, and quantitative data as superior to qualitative data. Very little in this thesis would be considered legitimate by these standards. Upon receiving negative feedback after my presentation, I was momentarily discouraged, but it quickly dissipated (in other words, I got angry) and spurred me to double-down on the narrative aspects of my work.

McIvor discusses the necessity of beginning Indigenous research by first telling the audience who I am, who my ancestors are, why I am doing this work.[11] I am Erica. I am a person full of fear and self-doubt, never entirely sure who I am. I am doing this work to decolonize. I am also doing this work for deeply personal reasons. I don't know a lot about who my ancestors were, but what I do know, what I have learned, makes up the rest of this chapter. I am building an archive. It is structured episodically, each episode centered around an event or person. I tell the story in this way because it is how my family's history has been told to me, and how other information has come to me: in fragments. There are gaps. There are inconsistencies. There are emotions and opinions and mysteries. Many of my sources come from people's memories, including my own. Official documentation is scarce but does help provide a skeleton on which to hang the rest. I have also organized this chapter in chronological order, as much as possible given the fragmentary and incomplete nature of my findings, starting with the Long Walk to Bosque Redondo. My hope is that by presenting this archive I demonstrate the long-term, ongoing, generational, destructive forces of settler colonialism on one family, my own. In

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[239] See Chapters 1 and 2 for more discussion of what does and does not constitute "legitimate" scholarly research, and how indigenous research methods offer counter-narratives to dominant ones.

this chapter, I illustrate what has been lost, and what trauma and loss does to individuals and families. I do this research to connect with the past in order to better understand who we (me, my mom, my family) are today.

*

Bosque

103	103	Herrera	Juana	W.	F.	70	alone	without occupation
104	104	Duran	Benino	W.	M.	32		Common Laborer
		—	Benina	W.	F.	28	Wife	Keeping house
		—	Benito	W.	M.	6	Son	
		—	Pastora	W.	F.	5	Daughter	
		—	Seferina	W.	F.	4	Daughter	
		—	Marta	W.	F.	11/12	Daughter	

Fig. 1. Benino and Benina Duran, my great-great grandparents, listed in the 1880 United States Federal Census.

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When I interviewed my mom, one of her most striking memories was of hearing the story of her paternal great-grandparents' involvement in the Long Walk and the impact it had on them, in both material and emotional ways. When I asked what she knew or remembered, she said:

> I knew the story, I know the story. My father, my family, the whole family used to talk about that, because it was the most horrible thing that had ever happened to them...they were stripped of everything. Their clothing, their homes, their livestock, their gardens, their orchards - things that had kept them alive. They had nothing else in the world...this was everything that they had! Everything was destroyed. It would be like, somebody coming to your house and just putting you out on the street, just taking everything away. It affected them all of their lives...[12]

She later says, "it had a terrible effect on them for years...for generations they talked about how horribly they were treated."[13] When I was young I had heard my relatives talk about the horrible thing that happened, not knowing that the story was of my ancestors' experience of the Long Walk. The United States government's slash-and-burn campaign, led by Kit Carson, against the

Diné and Mescalero Apaches started in Canyon de Chelly, "the heart of Navajo country,"[240] where my great-great-grandparents lived. The campaign began just prior to and continued throughout a particularly harsh winter, which compounded the suffering.[241] United States soldiers destroyed people's water wells, cut down and/or burned crops and orchards, killed livestock and left them to rot, burned homes, then forced Diné who faced starvation and freezing temperatures to march over 300 hundred miles south and east to Bosque Redondo, the internment camp located at Fort Sumner, New Mexico. My great-great-grandparents lived in Canyon de Chelly when Carson and his troops arrived:

> They came to round them up and take them to Bosque Redondo, and they were living in Canyon de Chelly. And in Canyon de Chelly they had orchards. And the soldiers came through, the Army came through, and not only burned their homes, but destroyed their orchards. And my, you know, in the Southwest if you have a fruit tree or a hundred fruit trees that produce, you've really got something because life is hard. Life is really difficult in a place like that, where there's very little rain, where the soil is not very good, where the soil is not very rich. It's very different from what we have here in Washington. Very different. And the soldiers destroyed everything. Destroyed their homes, burned their homes, destroyed everything. Burned their orchards, cut down their orchards, destroyed all the granaries and...the corn that these people, that my great-grandparents...that was their life to get them through the winter, to get to the next summer when they could have gardens.[242]

Our family is not the only one by far with a similar story; "almost every Diné family has a Long Walk story that has been handed down, either about going to Hwéeldi (Bosque Redondo) or escaping the cavalry somehow."[243] My mom remembers, "It had a terrible effect on [our family] for years...for generations they talked about how horribly they were treated, what a horrible thing

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[240] Iverson and Roessel, *Diné: A History of the Navajos*, 51.

[241] Ibid., 51.

[242] Martha Bufkin, interviewed by Erica Tucker, Tacoma, WA, May 2017.

[243] Yurth, "Hwéeldi at 150," *Navajo Times*. (October 2, 2014).

that was done to them."[244] Growing up, my mom heard this story in full on many occasions. During my childhood I never heard this story in full, or from beginning to end, but rather in fragments. By the time the story got to me, it had changed from a linear narrative to a series of impressions. In fact, until the recent interview with my mom I did not know that the "horrible thing" that had happened to my family was the Long Walk – I remember the loss of sheep being emphasized, and I assumed the horrible thing must have been related to the livestock reduction act in the early 20th century (which is briefly discussed later in this chapter).

The rest of this chapter of my family history is unknown. I was kind of surprised to hear that the story of what came after the Long Walk was not told:

> I didn't hear anything about their forced march to Bosque Redondo. I don't know...I never did hear anything about that. What I heard was the destruction of the food...that's what that was about. Um, killed all their livestock, killed their horses, killed everything. They were allowed nothing.[245]

Our family history was not focused on what historians consider the major event, the Long Walk itself, but rather on what the "horrible" destruction of their livelihood meant to their survival. It is possible that this stems from Diné tradition: talking about suffering or death was taboo. Yet so many families have the Long Walk in their past. On the 150th anniversary of the Navajo Treaty in June 2018, Nashville Public Radio published a story on the Long Walk and subsequent historical trauma. Part of the story is about how many families did not (and in some cases still do not) discuss it: "Lorencita Willie is a student at Diné College, located on the Navajo Nation in Tsaile, Arizona. Willie grew up without knowing her family's story of the Long Walk. She says, 'We don't talk about it. It's just something you don't talk about. It was a painful time, the Long

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[244] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

[245] Ibid.

Walk, and what happened to our people and why we are the way we are now.'"[246] Jennifer Nez Denetdale, a Diné professor at the University of New Mexico, in her book *The Long Walk* quotes one of Chief Manuelito's band: "'We take our tragic story with us, but we can't talk about it. It is so terrible. Only if somebody would ask us a question, then we talk about it.'"[247] I cannot help but wonder if my ancestors felt the same way. There are many written accounts of what Diné people endured during the Long Walk to and from Bosque Redondo, describing the suffering of the people, the cruelty of many of the soldiers, the fear and sorrow, and the sense of relief and wonder upon returning to their ancestral land.[248]

What happened in the years following the most horrible thing that ever happened to my family is not known, and perhaps never will be. The return to Dinétah was complicated for many, and the ways people rebuilt their lives during this period were not entirely well-documented. Some returning home, mainly women and children, were captured and enslaved, working in New Mexican households.[249] What happened to them varied, as Denetdale further explains:

> Captive Navajo women and children were baptized as Catholic Christians and entered Hispanic communities as servants in a hierarchical society in which race and class were demarcated...Although many women experienced violence and rape, others carved out spaces within their host society, within which they rebuilt their lives with some autonomy. It was possible for slaves to change their status to become full-fledged members, either by marriage, whereby their children were considered Navajos, or

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[246] Alix Blair, "On the 150th Anniversary of the Navajo Treaty, Young Navajo Grapple With Their Traumatic History," June 1, 2018, https://www.nashvillepublicradio.org/post/150th-anniversary-navajo-treaty-young-navajo-grapple-their-traumatic-history#stream/0.

[247] Jennifer Nez Denetdale, *The Long Walk: The Forced Navajo Exile* (New York: Chelsea House, 2008).

[248] Jennifer Nez Denetdale's book *The Long Walk* is an excellent starting point for anyone interested in learning more about this tragedy.

[249] Denetdale, "Reclaiming."

> through their skills and intelligence. Navajo society was fluid...identity was not based solely upon biology, but also on culture.[250]

Diné have a complicated relationship to Catholicism and "Hispanic"[251] culture, but many were able to carve out a living and achieve some level of independence. Because Navajo society and identity are fluid, as Denetdale points out, there was no one rigid or typical way that Diné survivors went about re-establishing their lives. The oldest record I have found of my great-grandmother Marta (Martha), born around 1879, is the 1880 United States Federal Census. Her parents are listed, Benino Durán age 32 and Benina Durán age 28, as are three other children: Benito age 6, Pastora age 5, and Seferina age 4. Very few questions were asked on this census. Under "Personal Description," there are three categories: Sex (male or female), Age, and Color. Under "Color" there are five options from which to choose: White, Black, Mulatto, Chinese, or Italian. All of the Duráns marked "W" for White. Benino was a "Common laborer" according to this census, and Benina's listed occupation is "Keeping house." All are reported to have been born in New Mexico, though no towns or counties are listed, but at the time of this Census they were living in Precinct No 1 of Embudo, located in Rio Arriba County (see Figure 2).

For now, I can only speculate about what happened to my ancestors during the years following the Long Walk. If Benino was 32 in 1880, he must have been born in 1848, and Benina in 1852. They would have been teens, around 14 and 16 years old, in 1864, and young adults in 1868 when allowed to leave Bosque Redondo. How did they get to Embudo?

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[250] Denetdale, "Reclaiming," 141-142

[251] I don't like this term, and typically try to limit my use of it. It seems to fit here, though, as it is vague and can refer to Mexican, Spanish, and/or other Latinx cultures and identities all at the same time. It is also the term my Grandma Josie used to describe herself.

Marta/Martha Durán Atencio Maestas/Mastes/Mestas

My great-grandmother Marta Durán was born between 1878 and 1881. In 1880 she is listed as 11 months old, and the Census report is dated in June of that year, which would make her birthdate around July 1879 (see Figure 1). In June 1885 she is listed on the New Mexico Territorial Census as age 7, which would make her birthdate around 1878. However her birthdate is listed on the 1900 US Federal Census as January 1881. My mom says this about Marta:

> I know nothing about my father's mother and father. They died before I was born, so I don't have any memories of my own. I don't have any story about my father's father, but I do have a couple stories about my father's mother. She was...see, this is where I think that Native American on my father's side of the family comes from. My grandmother, my father's mother, was … I don't know how to describe her but she had many different families all over. My father had brothers and sisters scattered all over Colorado and New Mexico that he didn't even know about. She seemed to have met somebody, and had a family over there, and then she'd leave, and she'd leave her husband, or the man, and the children and go someplace else, with or for somebody else and have another family someplace else. That's the only story I know about her. She had lots of children.[252]

These comments are the first bits of information I had ever heard about Seb's parents, my great-grandparents. Neither my mom nor her siblings were sure about their names until I found them. I remember hearing the adults talk through the years of my grandfather Seb having siblings, or that one of them talked to a neighbor who thought they had heard Seb say once that he was born in Embudo, New Mexico, or that "no he must have been born in Hesperus, Colorado," or Marvel, or Ignacio. Or, "Seb's mother wasn't Navajo, I think she was Apache." Apparently he didn't talk about his youth or family very much to anyone.

According to the 1885 New Mexico Territorial Census, Marta age 7, her parents (listed as Begnino and Begnina Durán), and the other children (Juan B. age 10, Pastora age 9, Malaquio age 3, and Teodoro age 1) lived in Rio Arriba County Precinct 1, which at the time extended

[252] Martha Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

from its current approximate location to the eastern border of California, an area of land that would have included some portion of Diné land. New Mexico was made a territory of the United States in 1850 (Territory of New Mexico) and a state in 1912. I have not been able to determine the Duráns' exact location in Rio Arriba County. The image of the 1885 Census report is very difficult to read, so I do not include it. I cannot make out much of the text on the document, but there are at least two additional categories when compared to the 1880 US Federal Census: one checkbox for "Cannot read," and another for "Cannot write." Both boxes are checked for Benigna and Juan B., but not for Benigno or the other children.

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Indigenous and mainstream historical accounts of the post-Bosque period differ. Mainstream histories describe how the Diné brought the knowledge gained during their interment back to their land, and were able to improve their lives using Western approaches to agriculture and economic development. Native families were encouraged to send their children to American schools to receive an American education in which their outdated knowledge and practices were to be replaced with modern ones, and their savage nature tempered with Christianity. The role of women in Diné society also changed under American rule, from one of respect and influence in multiple settings to one of subordination in public and in private. Indigenous history recognizes how tumultuous this period was for the Diné. Denetdale explains, "after 1868, the People [Diné] came under American rule and were assaulted with American values."[253] Every aspect of life was impacted, and they grappled with how to preserve tradition and connection to the past while participating in American social, economic, and political systems. Conflict arose regularly over land use. During the late 1800s, pasture and grazing land

[253] Denetdale, "Reclaiming," 140.

disputes were common on Diné land, as it was highly desirable to settlers as their numbers increased in the region.

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Marta appears next in the 1900 US Federal Census, at which time she was married to Federico Atencio. They lived in Embudo, New Mexico. According to this Census report, Marta age 19 and Federico age 32 were married in 1900 and had no children. Marta apparently did not read, write, or speak English. Federico was a farmer who owned his farm, and it seems could read, write, and speak English. It seems that he and Marta had one child, Miqueas (Mike) Atencio, who doesn't show up on any record until 1920 when he was 20 years old and living with Marta and Manuel.

By 1910, according to the US Federal Census Marta was living with Manuel Maestas, my great-grandfather (their last name is spelled Mastes on the document, and Marta is listed as Martha). They are listed as married, and under "Number of years of present marriage" the number 11 is recorded – but in 1900 she was listed as Federico Atencio's wife. Also, Marta/Martha and Manuel's marriage certificate is dated 1914. When I noticed this inconsistency, I searched for Manuel in earlier Census reports. I had not noticed before, but

State of Colorado
Division of Vital Statistics
MARRIAGE RECORD REPORT
No. 68649
County La Plata
Husband's Name Maestas, Manuel Age 48 Race Unkn.
Wife's Name Atencio, Marta Duran Age 30 Race Unkn.
Place of Marriage Oxford, Colorado Date 1/5/14
Name of Official who Performed Ceremony A. J. Rodriguez
Title Minister Address Ignacio, Colorado
Reported by Velma L. Dunlap
Address Durango, Colorado

Fig. 2. Marta and Manuel's Marriage Record Report, dated 1914. (Accessed October 2018. *Colorado County Marriage Records and State Index, 1862-2006* [database online].)

Manuel was on the 1900 US Federal Census, just under Benigno and Benigna Durán. They were neighbors in 1900. Manuel was married to a different woman (I cannot read the name) at that time. It is possible that Manuel met Marta through his proximity to her parents. My mom says that she had always heard that Marta and Manuel were not married.

On the 1910 Federal Census Marta is listed as Martha, and she was 32. According to the data, she did not read or write, and her "Native Tongue" was Spanish. Manuel was 45, a laborer who did read and write, whose "Native Tongue" was English. They were living in Kline, La Plata, Colorado. Under the topic of children, the report says that five children had been born and four were living:

Magaes, age 10

Sofrania, 7

Zacharias, 4

Moses, 2

In 1920 Marta and Manuel were still married and living in Red Mesa, La Plata, Colorado (Red Mesa is very close to Kline, and in between these two towns is Marvel, where my mom always thought her dad Seb was born). The 1920 Federal Census lists Marta's birthdate as "about 1880," her age listed as 40. The space under "Native Tongue" is blank (as it is for all people on the same page). This 1920 report states that Marta did read and write (but the space under "Attended school?" is blank), and "yes" under "Speaks English." Under "Occupation" is written "None." Manuel was 54, listed as Head of Household, his occupation "Rancher." There are also more children:

Candido, 21 (is this Magaes? The age would be about right)

Zacariz, 14 (Zacharias, I assume)

Moses, 12

Savido, 10 (I think this is my grandfather Seb)

Juanita, 9

Alivenia, 5

Jasusita, 2

Mike Atencio, a 20-year old who I assume to be Marta's son from her previous marriage, also lives with them, as does daughter Sofrania, 17, and her husband James Candelaria, 26.

By 1930, Marta was a widow. The US Federal Census lists her as age 50, Head of Household, widowed and living with some of her children:

Joe, 24 (I don't know where this guy came from, unless Joe is a nickname for Zacharias/Zacariz)

Moses, 22

Sebidel, 19 (my grandfather)

Juanita, 18

Elvania, 15

Susie, 12 (I think Susie was Jasusita's nickname. I met her twice when I was a kid)

Alfonso, 9

Marta lived on Upper Red Mesa Road in Precinct 26, La Plata, Colorado, an area that encompassed Kline, Marvel, and Red Mesa. According to this Census, she did not read or write, did not speak English, and had never attended school (but all of her children did all of the above), which is consistent with all other Census reports except 1920. Under "Occupation" she is listed as Farmer, and the "Industry" as General Farm. Marta's three eldest children were also employed (though it is not clear whether they worked with Marta or elsewhere); Joe was a Farm Laborer, Moses a Sheep Herder, and Sebidel (my grandfather) a Farm Laborer.

By 1930, Diné economy had shifted, from a lifestyle based largely on subsistence farming to one that incorporated wage work. Wage work for men was typically found in railroads and mining, and for women in domestic work.[254] At the same time, the number of Diné sheep had dramatically increased, as did the number of settler ranchers and farmers and their respective livestock. Conflict increased as both parties needed more land to graze their sheep.[255] The notion of proper land use was further complicated when oil and gas were discovered in northwest New Mexico around the turn of the century.[256] As far as I can tell from the Census data, my ancestors probably practiced a combination of subsistence farming and market-based farming.

Fig. 3. Marta and her sons on the 1940 U.S. Federal Census Report. (1940, Census Place: Marvel, La Plata, Colorado; Roll: m-t0627-00466; Page: 5A; Enumeration District: 34-39, accessed October 2018, Ancestry.com.)

According to the 1940 Census, Marta was age 62. She lived with her sons Joe, 33 (who is listed as Head of Household) and Alfonso, 19. This Census also lists her birthplace as La Plata, Colorado and that she completed school through the third grade. Her Occupation is listed as Housekeeper/Wage Worker and she made $250 in 1939. She worked 48 hours the previous

[254] Bailey and Bailey, *A History of the Navajos*; Denetdale, "Reclaiming."

[255] Bailey and Bailey, *A History of the Navajos.*

[256] Navajo livestock reduction in the 1930s was the second of two major tragedies in Diné memory (the first being the Long Walk). It was the primary cause of a massive shift in Diné labor practices and shaped a new form of economy on the Navajo Nation. I cannot directly connect the reduction program to my family, but it perhaps was the cause of my grandfather's move from farm labor to the oil fields. For a brief but thorough overview of the importance of sheep to Diné economy prior to the 1930s and the impact of the Livestock Reduction Program from the Diné perspective, read Robert S. McPherson, "Navajo Livestock Reduction in Southeastern Utah, 1933-46: History Repeats Itself," *American Indian Quarterly* 22, no. 1/1 (1998): 1-18.

week, and 52 weeks out of the previous year. I have not found a death certificate or other document that provides a date of death, but my mom was told that Marta died before she was born. Somewhere between April 1940 (the date given on the Census page) and June 1950 (my mom's birthdate) Marta passed away.

*

One of the more interesting aspects of reviewing Census data is in how race is handled. In 1870, for example, there were five choices under the category "Color:" White, Black, Mulatto, Chinese, or Italian. Later Census reports also contained a question regarding "color" or race with similar categories, although the column was sometimes left blank by the Census taker. Each of my ancestors discussed in this thesis was marked "White" (if any race was marked at all; often the race category was left blank). It appears that the Census was perhaps one of many tools used to "whiten" or erase indigeneity. I think this is perhaps most evident over generations as seen later in this chapter, especially in my interview with and discussion of my mother.

***

I also feel strongly that it is important for me to name each of my ancestors listed in the Census reports, even though it is repetitive and probably less-than satisfying for a reader than a fully-realized narrative, and even though their names changed slightly (or in some cases greatly) every ten years that the Census was taken. I understand that it may not be satisfying for the reader. However, I need to name and repeat the names of my ancestors who were lost, and whose names have not been written or spoken for many decades in order to counteract, even in a small way such as this, the erasure of their memory through colonization.

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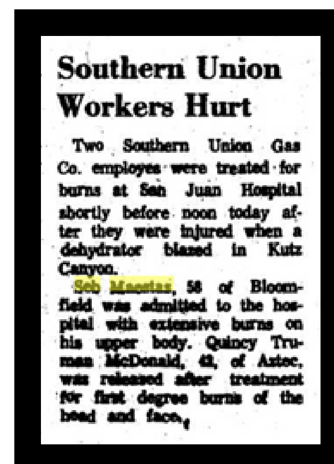
Seb

My grandfather, my mom's father, Sebedello "Seb" Maestas was born June 18, 1910 in Colorado. As my mom mentions, she was not very close to him. My only memories of him are from my childhood in the 1970s and early 1980s (he died in 1983) as a very sick old man who spent most days in his fuzzy orange recliner. Seb seems to have been born in rural La Plata County in southern Colorado, very near the border with New Mexico. I have not yet been able to find a copy of his birth certificate, but his birthdate is listed on other documents, like his 1940 draft card. His place of birth is listed on various documents alternately as Colorado or La Plata, Colorado, which refers to the county but does not specify a town or city. Seb worked as a Field Pressureman for the Southern Union Gas Company. He must have started around 1953 (in 1968, he received an award for 15 years of service), and for a few years he and his family were provided company housing. According to my mom and uncles, the housing was typically pretty meager and isolated. My uncle told me that when my mom was a baby (so it must have been 1950 or 1951), my grandfather was out in the field and my grandmother home alone with the kids one night. She went to light the oil heater, tripped and accidentally started a fire. They all ran outside as the fire grew, and my grandmother had been pretty badly burned. They realized that baby Martha was still in her crib in the house, so my aunt ran in, grabbed the baby, and ran back outside. The house burned to the ground and they lost everything. They eventually bought their own home sometime during the 1960s – my mom was a teenager at the time and remembers her dad negotiating with the family from whom he bought the house.



Southern Union Workers Hurt

Two Southern Union Gas Co. employes were treated for burns at San Juan Hospital shortly before noon today after they were injured when a dehydrator blazed in Kutz Canyon.

Seb Maestas, 58 of Bloomfield was admitted to the hospital with extensive burns on his upper body. Quincy Truman McDonald, 42, of Aztec, was released after treatment for first degree burns of the head and face.

Fig. 4. 1969 article about Seb from the *Farmington Daily Times.*

In March 1969 Seb was admitted to the hospital with "extensive burns on his upper body."[257] The mid-twentieth century brought a massive boom to San Juan County and the Navajo Nation as natural resources were continually discovered. Coal, copper, uranium, oil and natural gas were all mined on Navajo land, extending beyond its borders. Bloomfield during the mid-twentieth century was essentially built around the oil and gas industry. Many of my family members over the years worked in the oil fields. For years it was considered a desirable job, reliable with room to advance. Though oil and natural gas companies still operate in the area, the heyday is over. I have two first cousins who still live in Bloomfield; one is in his mid-40s and has worked off and on in the oil fields all his adult life. He was laid off about two years ago and hasn't been able to find work since. My other cousin there, his sister, owns a housecleaning business. She cleans the homes of doctors and other professionals in Farmington.

Fig. 2. My grandfather Seb. Commemorative photo marking 25 years of service to Southern Union Gas Company in 1978. Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

According to the 1940 census, Seb was 28, living in Bloomfield, New Mexico, and married to my grandmother Josephine (neé Saiz), age 20. No children are listed. He is documented in various places as having been born in Colorado, but I have not found a birth certificate. It is possible one was never issued for him. He grew up in rural La Plata County, Colorado, and

[257] *Farmington Daily Times*, "Southern Union Workers Hurt," March 24, 1969.

seems to have moved from town to town with his family, but once he arrived in Bloomfield, New Mexico, he did not leave until approximately 1980 when he and my grandmother moved to Washington State. He had become very ill and difficult for my grandma to take care of, so my mom and her older sister Norma promised to help my grandma and grandpa if they moved here. He was distant, it seems, as there are few stories to tell about him.

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Martha, My Mom

Fig. 3. Martha and her goat. Year unknown. Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

My mother, Martha Maestas, was born June 27, 1950 in Bloomfield, New Mexico. Bloomfield is located in the northwest corner of the state, in San Juan County, in an area known as “the Checkerboard” where the Navajo Nation extends beyond its more defined borders to the south and west for hundreds of miles in a more-or-less checkerboard pattern. She describes it as such:

> the Navajo Nation...just about goes all the way around [Bloomfield]. It’s part of what is called the checkerboard. There’s sections of reservation, then there aren’t, then there are,

> then there aren't, then there are...and it's in the checkerboard. You can be in the not-reservation, and a mile later you'll be on the reservation. It's just the way that the reservation was set up there, those patterns, and I don't know why.[258]

Fig. 7. Bloomfield. Year unknown. Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

This area is remote, and, in many ways, forbidding. It is a seemingly barren, harsh desert landscape, yet it contains a specific kind of beauty that is beautiful from afar, but becomes enchanting up close and personal, preferably on foot (just be sure to wear closed-toe shoes). It's dry and rocky. It's prickly. It's desolate and harsh and either blazing hot or frigidly cold. Based on these descriptors, it might seem like a terrible place, but it's not. It's the kind of place where, when you go there, you might feel physically uncomfortable, but it doesn't matter because you also feel the vastness of the cosmos, like you are tiny and insignificant in the scheme of everything, but also a part of everything and in that way, you are significant. I have loved the land and sky in this region ever since I can remember. My mom's feelings about it are more complicated and less positive.

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[258] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

My mom describes her hometown Bloomfield as "a very tiny town, with nothing there, absolutely nothing for anybody...for the kids to do. My growing up...what we would do is we would go to the arroyo where there was lots of really nice, soft sand, and make pictures, you know, draw pictures in the sand, make sand angels and make sand castles...that was our kind of

Fig. 8. "The Boys." Year unknown. Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

entertainment."[259] Some of my mom's memories are sweet, like this one, but most are about how hard things were. Life in this region was very difficult, in part because our family was "very poor...you know, it was hardscrabble time."[260] My mom's earliest memories are of their house that had dirt floors. My grandma worked hard, growing and canning vegetables each summer to last through the winter until it was time to do it all over again the next year. They also had "a goat and a few sheep."[261] I think they had chickens too. I remember my grandma talking about killing and plucking chickens, and skinning jack rabbits that my uncles hunted for dinner. Families in the area shared and traded food resources. Subsistence farming was a way of life not

[259] Ibid.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Ibid.

only for hers and other families in the area, but was a traditional way of life for Indigenous people and was also truly necessary in this part of the country. The harsh conditions of the region meant that survival was a constant battle: "you know, in the Southwest if you have a fruit tree or a hundred fruit trees that produce, you've really got something because life is hard. Life is really difficult in a place like that, where there's very little rain...where the soil is not very rich. It's very different from what we have here in Washington."[262] Growing and preserving food for survival meant hard work throughout each year, yet, as my mom recalls, "we were very poor but actually we really never lacked for anything as far as food was concerned."[263]

Though punctuated with moments of positivity, my mom describes her childhood in 1950s and 1960s Bloomfield as very difficult overall. She is reluctant to delve into emotional territory when asked about her parents. When I ask her to tell me about her family, she answered, "what do you mean, my family background? I had three brothers and one sister. My father was a nice man, but he was not present in the family...he just wasn't very present for us kids. My mother was very strong, and strict. Is that what you wanted?"[264] This exchange illustrates how my family often

Fig. 9. Maestas siblings Richard (top right), Roger (top left), and Martha (bottom left). Pictured with unknown child (bottom right). Year unknown. Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Ibid.

communicates with each other. When I asked my mom to tell me about her family, I wasn't asking about her father specifically at all but that is where she went. I hit a nerve and she responded in kind. I knew, though, immediately, what was happening – I already knew how she felt about her father based not on any conversations she had ever had with me but other things (this is hard to explain, and I'm not going to elaborate), and I knew it wasn't positive. With this (vague, yet not vague) knowledge, I knew to shift the conversation. I asked about her mother: "My mother's family was entirely different [from her father's family]. They were very strict Catholics, and my mother was one of 17 children."[265] Mom refers to her mother at various points as "strong," and also to her family being "strict Catholics."[266] I know my mom loved and respected her parents, but there clearly is some emotional territory that she does not like to discuss. This was the case during my interview with her, but it is also true generally; I cannot recall a time when my mother talked about her father with affection, and I do not remember her telling stories about him. I could push it with her, but I do not want to. She does, however, tell anecdotal stories about her maternal grandfather, with whom she lived from the age of about 11 to 17. Her memories of him are warm and affectionate, and she describes him as a kind and forgiving person who had a strong influence on her, even when the details are not altogether

Fig. 10. Grandma Josie and Grandpa Seb at the kitchen table. This is in their New Mexico house where I visited once a year through my childhood until they moved to Washington in the early 1980s. Year unknown. Photo courtesy Martha Bufkin.

[265] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

[266] Ibid.

clear. My mom's earliest memories are of the family home in a remote area outside of Farmington called Pump Canyon. Then, when she was "about 10 or 11, the family moved to Bloomfield, New Mexico. It was a small community but it was bigger than where we were out there in the country. It was a real small town. It was really...it was a hard place to live."[267]

Bloomfield's population in 1960 was 1,292.[268] As the oil and gas business boomed in the 1950's, many outsiders came to the area, bringing with them significant resources but also particular attitudes about the locals.[269] My mom recalls, "[Bloomfield] was a poor, tiny town. Very poor. And we got treated very poorly by outsiders. The only people that we got along with, really, were people that lived there…it was a hard place to live because...there were lots of oil field workers that came through, and they were not very nice to people of mixed backgrounds, Native American and Mexican American backgrounds."[270] White oil and gas workers were able to establish their own institutions and control the political and economic systems in San Juan County, to the exclusion of Indigenous peoples. Asked whether she was aware of racism during her youth in Bloomfield, mom replies:

Fig. 11. My mom Martha. Year unknown. Photo courtesy Martha Bufkin.

> Oh yeah! Absolutely, yes. It was overt at that time in Bloomfield. I don't know how it is today but then it was everywhere, and it was what was expected, and it was what you lived with. You know, people would kill drunk Navajos on the road, hit and run. And

[267] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

[268] Donaldson, "'Indian Rolling.'"

[269] United States Commission on Human Rights, New Mexico Advisory Committee, *The Farmington Report: A Conflict of Cultures* (1975).

[270] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

they would, they would just leave them. It was just a Navajo, it didn't matter. It was out in the open. It was...it was bad.[271]

Fig. 12. Some of my family, from top left: Richard, Roger, Martha, Sydney. From bottom left: Aunt Terri (neé Robles), Seb, Josie, Norma Jaquez (neé Maestas), Max Jaquez. The children pictured are Norma and Max's kids, from left, Henry, Clarence, Joel, and Theron Jaquez. Year unknown. Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

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In 1974 the United States Commission on Civil Rights investigated the relationship between Diné people and whites in Farmington following the brutal torture and murder of three Diné men in April of that year. The men, Herman Dodge Benally age 34, John Earl Harvey age 39, and David Ignacio age 52, were beaten, tortured, burned, murdered, and then left in a remote canyon by three white male teenagers. The teens were convicted and sentenced to short stints in reform school. The injustice of the sentences prompted daily protests through the streets of

[271] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

Farmington by Diné people, who demanded that the Civil Rights Commission investigate the racial climate in and around Farmington.

The murders of the three Diné men were not anomalies but emblematic of the vitriol and violence that characterized daily life for Diné people in the area. The Civil Rights Commission report notes, for example, that witnesses registered many complaints against the Farmington police. One account states: "there are many policemen in Farmington where they go up to a drunk and start hitting them or beating them up or using their blackjacks on them."[272] One Navajo teenager who was arrested for a curfew violation said he was lectured by a police officer, who said: "you Indians ain't nothing but red dogs and animals. Your folks are living off welfare and run behind the bars."[273] A Chicago reporter testified that a police officer told her that Indians "don't have any sense of life or death. They would just as soon go ahead and kill you for a bottle of wine or liquor. They have no sense of moral values."[274] Police were using stereotypes and other forms of racist language to degrade and dehumanize Native American people, which in turn lent legitimacy and even moral righteousness to their brutality. The implication is that Indians deserve to be beaten, even killed, because they are subhuman and in need of punishment simply for existing. The white murderers of Benally, Harvey, and Ignacio each spent under two years in juvenile reform school. What does that say about the value of their lives in relation to the lives of the three Diné men, and by extension all Diné people?

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[272] United States Commission on Human Rights, New Mexico Advisory Committee, *The Farmington Report: A Conflict of Cultures* (1975), 48.

[273] Ibid., 48.

[274] Ibid., 48

Though my mom left the area prior to the Chokecherry Canyon murders, the racial climate was the same. The examples provided above mirror the way she describes life in San Juan County when she was growing up. She recounts a conversation overheard during high school, before which a teacher had asked students whether they wanted to be involved in a school play. To do such things required resources, resources that neither my mom nor most of her friends and neighbors had, to fund accoutrements like costumes. The teacher, apparently disappointed that no one volunteered, made a derisive comment that my mom remembers:

Fig. 13 "Love, Martha." High school photo. Year unknown. Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

> Mrs. Reichart said, "well what do you expect from a Navajo?" And all of my life, I have carried that with me. All of my life. Every time...every time I don't do something right, that comes back. If I don't do something properly, I hear Mrs. Reichart say those words. And it...while it no longer stings now like it did then, to this day it affects me. I'm still haunted by her saying that. That's the way it was. That's the way Bloomfield was.[275]

I had never heard this story before. I have always thought of my mom as one of the strongest people I know, unafraid and almost supremely confident, so this story made me sad. It also illustrates a clear line from the larger discourse about the value of Indigenous lives transmitted through means like news media, to how discourse is used to justify police brutality and other forms of racially motivated violence, to how individual perceptions are influenced and deployed on an ordinary day-to-day basis.

The impact of racism against Diné affects my mom and the rest of our family to the present day. She moved to Sumner, Washington in 1972 when her husband was admitted to the

[275] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

University of Washington. I have an aunt and uncle (and an ever-increasing number of cousins) who live in Washington, but most of the rest of the family have remained in New Mexico. She will not speak for them, but describes how one brother processes their experiences:

> My younger brother, he was very bitter. To this day...it wasn't very long ago, about ten years ago, somebody said something about us being Native American, and he said, 'oh no. I am NOT.'...he does not, he will not recognize that. That is not him. It's better to be anything but Native American whenever you are in New Mexico or Arizona or Colorado. You don't want to be that, because you are a second-class citizen. You are somebody who can be treated poorly and nobody will stand up for you. And he lives down there still...people call him 'chief.' He has a Mexican surname so that's what he's sticking to. It's better to be Mexican than Navajo. There's no respect for Navajo down there. None. Zero.[276]

My uncle's comment illuminates how complex and fluid identity is, especially for the colonized. When I visited New Mexico in June 2018, we gathered for a meal at another uncle's house. When our family's Diné ancestry came up, he said, "those are your people, not mine" and he left shortly after. Each of us has a different relationship to our history, but his flat-out denial is the most extreme. My mom acknowledges that "for me it's not so bad because I live here [in Washington state]. And another thing is, for me it's not so bad because I don't look it. There's a difference. There's a distinct difference. I don't look it, but he does."[277] She was able to make a significant move across the country, and in many ways assume a different identity because she does not bear the phenotypical traits of many Mexicans and American Indians. In this way, she was able to compartmentalize the painful memories of her youth, put them aside, and live life as a white American. She explains, "life here was so much easier, because unless I absolutely have to, I don't tell anybody that I'm Native."[278] She expands:

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[276] Ibid.

[277] Ibid.

[278] Ibid.

> Yeah. It's...um...yeah. It's better here 'cause I don't have to face that. I don't have to deal with it. It affects your life! Every bit of your life, all the time. It's a hard thing to live with when you are a second class citizen. Very difficult. There's nothing that is easy when you're second. So I don't tell anybody about anything. Unless I know them really well. Unless I can trust them...I've already been there, done that, had that, and it's not a good feeling. I guess I'm kinda like my younger brother: I hide.[279]

I have, at various points in my life, felt resentful that my family heritage and cultural practices were not fully shared with or passed on to me, but I now have a much greater understanding of why that is. My mother was able to relocate to a place where, because she does not look Indian or Mexican, she was able to reinvent herself as a white person, which gave her a sense of security and safety, and this is what she passed on to me, her only child.

Fig. 14. My mom and me, around 1973. "You just live with it. You live with it all the time, it's a ever-present thing. It's not a pretty thing. It was hard growing up there. It really was. In every way." Photo courtesy of Martha Bufkin.

[279] Ibid.

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Erica

So many parts of this story are very difficult to write. Part of the reason is that it can just be hard to put yourself or your family "out there" for others to see, and it can also be a bit intimidating to try to represent an entire family history in a few short pages. A bigger reason this is so hard, though, is the part that is related to me and my identity. I have always identified as Mexican American. I've known all my life that there was some kind of Indigenous ancestry in my family but no one seemed to know much about that. I have no tribal affiliation, and my family didn't emigrate from Mexico. My family comes from New Mexico, and we have been there for a very long time. All my life, when I choose to tell someone that I am Mexican, they ask when my family came to the US, or if I still have family in Mexico. It used to catch me off guard because I didn't have an answer to either question, but now I understand that we were always there, even before there was a United States of America.

I remember being ashamed of my heritage and sometimes of my family, and the peculiarities of my home life as compared to my white grade school peers. My mom moved us to Washington when I was three years old, and we lived in suburban areas throughout most of my youth. There were very few people of color in my schools or neighborhoods when I was growing up. Seriously. I remember a kid with the last name Torres in the 5th grade, and one African-American girl who attended the same middle and high school as I did. Everyone around me, it seemed, was white; they ate white bread and bologna sandwiches with yellow mustard and iceberg lettuce. We ate beans and tortillas, and green and red chiles with everything. My mom and my aunts and uncles and grandparents, pretty much every elder family member, all spoke Spanish to each other. They called me "mi hijita" (or "mija" when I was trouble) so that it was as

much my name as Erica. We seemed really strange when compared with the white families of my friends. I rarely told anyone where I came from.

Clearly, few of my mother's generation even knew a lot about their family history. My mom told me:

> My father's side of the family was Native American, was Navajo and Mexican. And I don't know how Mexican but I'm assuming a little bit Mexican because of our surname. My mother was Portuguese and she said Hispanic, but I don't know exactly what that meant - I'm assuming it meant Mexican but I'm not sure.[280]

Her statement speaks not only to how little we know about ourselves, but also to the racialization of the Indigenous population what is now the southwestern United States and the impact on family and individual identity. This chapter is focused on my grandfather's side of the family, but my grandmother's side is just as complicated and interesting. She always described her ethnicity as "Hispanic," and claimed that her parents came to the United States directly from Portugal. This thesis is not about Josie and her family history, but I will say that some quick research revealed that her parents probably did not come from Europe. I can't help but speculate as to whether the story originated to cover up the fact of her/our true ethnic identity, maybe to fit in (or at least not stand out) in some social or other scenarios.

Back to the original point – one thing that makes my family history so hard to write about is me. I am very fair-skinned, and like my mom, the world perceives me as white. I am able to walk through the world as a white woman, with many of the privileges that status entails. Except one thing – in order to do so, I have to hide most of myself. My mom spoke of hiding as one way to navigate through and survive the world, and I have done a lot of that in my lifetime. I see now that in this way, we are erasing our own indigeneity, generation by generation, when we hide.

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[280] Bufkin, interview, May 2017.

Colonization works by erasing, by making us forget, and we have been doing just that. Some of us look white and are able to hide in plain sight, while others hide by actively denying their history, or by adopting particular American values. I suppose this is one kind of Indigenous identity and experience, but I am nervous about claiming it.

The idea of authenticity haunts me. Jennifer Nez Denetdale writes that "identities are cultural constructions that differ across time, culture, and race," and I think my family history presents one example of how that construction takes place and evolves across generations.[281] It is a silent process. Untangling the past, discovering who and where I came from, it's mostly an internal process. I am not doing this to claim an Indigenous identity, or become a tribal member, or any other appropriation of Diné culture. I do, however, have something to claim. This research is, of course, an academic pursuit, but more importantly I undertook it in order to both process my experiences and my family's experiences to better understand us, but also to place those experiences in a larger context and demonstrate how colonization works. How forgetting happens, and how it helps the colonial project of erasing Indigenous culture so that at some point indigeneity is just gone. I see it most starkly now in my own children. I am discovering my own family, and sharing my discoveries with my children, but none of us knows how to be who we are.

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I tell my family's story to demonstrate that colonization is traumatic and ongoing. It is a process that impacts individuals and families almost without their knowledge for generations. In my family's case, the Long Walk had a devastating impact for generations. The initial trauma may have been a distant memory by the time I was born, but its effects are still in motion, still

[281] Denetdale, "Reclaiming," 142.

eating away at our identities and connections to the past and to each other. In the early months of researching my family's history, I oftentimes did not really know why I was doing it. I have never felt connected to my ancestors, and never understood why it might be important to be so. All along the way I asked myself why am I doing this? What am I trying to learn? It has only been here at the end of this thesis writing process that I begin to understand all the ways the past informs the present. I mean, I get that in an abstract way, for other people, but for me? It is a revelation.

The feelings I express in this chapter about myself and my family, about not knowing who I am or where I belong, they are a direct result of my ancestors' experiences and of the process of colonization. Settler colonialism has become naturalized, so that it seems normal and inevitable by destroying "the transfer of Indigenous identity, politics, and culture to the next generations."[282] Colonization eats away at culture and identity across generations. It erases, and makes us forget who we are and where we came from. That's what happened to me and my family. Indigenous research requires accountability. I have to be accountable to my relations, past present and future. How do I do that when I have not felt connected to the ones in the past? By uncovering and learning what I can about them. By trying to find out about them. Now, I carry them with me, and I feel the weight of responsibility; not a heavy burden of a weight, but more like a weight that grounds me, that reminds me of them and of my purpose.

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[282] Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections Between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (2013): 15.

Five: Concluding Thoughts

Colonialism isn't over. It's in every pipeline, every water settlement, every police bullet that kills a person of color. It's in media and the American educational system. It's also in every person whose ancestors were harmed by settler colonialism, through war or forced "assimilation" or slavery or theft of land. I grew up knowing and not knowing where I come from. By extension I did and didn't know who I am. I am not alone, existing in this liminal space, not fully belonging anywhere. Each of my family members have different ways of identifying themselves. I grew up knowing that I should aspire to whiteness, that white equaled "American." I knew that my non-white background would cause me harm and pain if exposed to anyone outside of the family. That background was mostly hidden from me. I was always confused about being both not-white and white. I have always felt the need to be small, humble (invisible?), to limit the scope of my life in order to take care of myself but not call too much attention to ourselves. I see clearly now that my family history has been colonized. Many of my family members have to some extent bought into and internalized the belief that Native Americans are "less than," that the stereotypes are true, that our ancestry does not matter, that to get along in this world we must play white as much as possible.

We, many of my family members and most of the American public, buy the idea that American imperialism is normal, natural, superior. I had that, I believed it. I believed the "way things are" are how they are supposed to be, and any discomfort I felt was MY problem, a function of the "Other" that is within me, something that needed to be squashed and destroyed. But, it doesn't work that way. I see how language, disseminated largely through media, truly does shape our perceptions of ourselves and each other, teaches us how to think and be in this world. And for the most part, it's teaching us wrong. We all learn about the glories of American

expansion and progress, but not a word is spoken about how that "America" is possible thanks to genocide. How race is a tool of imperialism and colonialism, manipulating identities and placing them in a hierarchical system of power which in turn creates a self-perpetuating hegemony, an efficient system of domination and oppression. This project has documented how Indigenous peoples have been and still are simplified, minimized, and re-defined by the colonizers.

Racialization is part of the colonizing process, a process of producing difference for a particular purpose – colonization, domination, oppression. Empire can't exist and function without ensuring domination over large groups of people, and racialization is an effective way to categorize the dominators and the dominated. I found evidence of this in old news articles, and I still and I see this today. I wasn't surprised to find racial stereotypes used in mid-nineteenth century news, though it was jarring to discover such overt racist rhetoric. In my analysis, I found that some themes – *Indian Depravity, Threat to Property, Saving the Indian* - racialize Indigenous people, and the other – *Misuse of Land* - symbolically removes them from the land. The biggest revelation as I wrote this thesis was my discovery that Indigenous people are completely invisible in the *Misuse of Land* theme, where journalists emphasized the "untapped potential" of the land and the exploitation of natural resources. There are clear parallels with current discourse about land and resources through the lens of economic development by way of natural resource development. Indigenous people are still being removed from the land, symbolically and physically. News stories about natural resource development are typically framed as positive (job creation, American fossil fuel "independence," impact on the larger economy), while choosing to ignore Indigenous voices on sovereignty and environmental destruction. Journalists write from and reproduce the white, Western, settler colonialist gaze,

rendering "cultural productions…complicit with ongoing settlement."[283] Indigenous people are the objects of the gaze, and are alternately objectified and rendered invisible in media as much now as in the past.

Media also helps make colonial violence and genocide invisible. The focus is instead placed on Indigenous dysfunction. In the 1850s, it was savagery, and now it's visible in tropes about poverty and addiction. The "Indian" is a construct, a tool for controlling Indigenous people, a "colonial enactment."[284] The construct of "Indian-ness" creates a monolithic image of Indigeneity; one singular identity is defined by the oppressors, and erases the identities of individual tribes and nations. Indigenous identity is erased, as are claims on the land. In my research I found that the US Federal Census, for example, provided very few racial categories. Indigenous, Native American, even "Indian" or Mexican were not included categories, and my ancestors were almost always marked "White." They clearly were not Black or Chinese. One census offered Spanish as a racial category, but my ancestors were not that. They weren't even offered an "Other" category. How much of their identity was shaped by these constricting categories? There's no one around anymore to answer this question. But there are plenty of us around, dangerously close to forgetting where and who we came from. We can only imagine, based on a limited archive and decolonial approaches to history.

Forgetting is critical to colonization. The perpetuation of settler colonialism requires the erasure of Indigenous cultures and identities. It requires ignoring that Indigenous identity is connected to relationships between people, animals, land, water, and the cosmos, not in a hierarchy but in a circular manner. The perpetuation of settler colonialism also requires a veneer

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[283] Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies," 6.

[284] Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: PostIndian Warriors of Survivance* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

of morality, of rightness, of the dominion of white men and an inequitable system as merely a reflection of the natural order of things. Forgetting is critical to the invention of an American shared history. The version that glorifies the conquest of Indigenous peoples and the exploitation of land and natural resources wants us to forget the horrific violence perpetrated against Indigenous people, the theft of their land, and the re-invention of Indigenous identities into imperialist ones. It makes Indigenous people responsible, in a way, for their own displacement because they did not "use" the land "properly." As a result the land was fractured, fragmented, and so are identities. My family's unwillingness to talk about their history or identity is a result of this process, the active process of forgetting and erasing. I keep thinking about the fragility of subaltern histories. We need to interrupt the colonial process to avoid perpetuating structures of dominance and oppression and violence. We will lose so much more if we cannot speak our histories:

> What is *Hwéeldi Bééhó̧niih* [The Long Walk of the Navajo] and why should it be remembered? Although the Long Walk happened more than a hundred years ago, it is still with us. We must know what happened and we must remember. It is part of Diné history, as it is part of American history. The Long Walk, the Trail of Tears, the Dakota incarceration, and other death marches like it are part of American's holocaust, and each deserves a place within the larger story of America. To gloss over or to omit the costs of colonialism is an injustice, not only to those whose ancestors were imprisoned but to the future generations who will want to know the past. To speak of these injustices is a way to heal from these wounds. These stories hold connections to current U.S. foreign policies that have already deeply impacted this country (Tohe, hweeldi, 82)

I remember being told that stories like this one in my family aren't important anymore. The elders retold the stories to each other, but when we kids wanted to listen we were told that we should look ahead, not back. It was my first lesson in forgetting; when those old story fragments occasionally surfaced in my later years, I pushed them aside, but they always returned. As I got older the details faded but the stories never quite disappeared, nor did the sadness and indignation in the voices of my elders as they spoke years ago. When we don't talk about the

horrific things that have happened to Indigenous people in the United States (and other populations who have suffered generational trauma due to colonization), we forget. We can't work through the trauma without first confronting and speaking the pain. If I hadn't written this thesis now, any memory of what happened to my ancestors would have been completely lost to me and my descendants. Once I recognized this in my own experience, I understood the healing power of memory and storytelling. We also can't fully understand how the United States government and legal system continue to victimize Native Americans until we understand settler colonialism as an ongoing process, and most importantly until we allow them to speak for themselves.

Representation Matters

Popular culture is a site where dominance is perpetuated. Discourse in media creates and perpetuates "knowledge" about Indigenous people (and other racialized groups of people) broadly, and Native Americans specifically. I found this in my research, and it continues today, the way the dominant culture defines Native Americans (and so many others) without knowing them, instead presenting a false image that has real, tangible effects. Native people are homogenized and highly stereotyped, often as "Indian warriors" situated only in the past, dysfunctional, poverty-stricken addicts in the present, or cartoonish caricatures in the form of sports mascots, to name only a few. Such representations have real-life impact and consequences. Negative stereotypical images, for example, when shown to Native children have an immediate negative impact on their self-esteem, identity, and academic performance.[285] In my

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[285] See, for example: Rebecca Covarrubias, Stephanie A. Fryberg, Richard M. Lee (editor), "The Impact of Self-Relevant Representations on School Belonging for Native American Students," *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 21, no. 1 (2015): 10-18; Dana Mastro, Riva Tukachinsky, Peter A. Leavitt, Rebecca Covarrubias, Yvonne A. Perez, Yvonne, Stephanie A. Fryberg, "'Frozen in Time": The Impact of Native American Media Representations on Identity and Self-Understanding," *Journal of Social Issues* 71, no. 1 (2015): 39-54.

research I found, even with a limited date range and number of newspaper articles, racialized characterizations of Indigenous people as savages abound, as does the glorification of the Discovery Doctrine, Christian dominion over all, and the exploitation of land as means to wealth and capital. These ideas, foundational in the "American" identity, are imbued with violence, including the displacement and genocide of Indigenous people.

I believe my family history adds to the deconstruction of dominant narratives. Indigenous feminism centers the voices and lived experiences of Indigenous people, Indigenous women in particular, in the context of ongoing colonization. Joanne Barker characterizes the work of Indigenous feminism as "demonstrat[ing] the primacy of sovereignty and self-determination,"[286] both of which are continually threatened by the perpetually colonizing systems of power in the United States. Land is a central aspect of Indigenous onto-epistemology, identity, and sovereignty, and none of these things can be separated one from another. This nation, currently called the United States of America, was founded on violence, genocide, and a hierarchical belief system that places White men at the top and allows (even today) the theft of Indigenous land based on dominion and the alleged inferiority of Indigenous peoples. Emma LaRocque argues that "it is through sexual violence that a colonising group attempts to render a colonized peoples as inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable."[287] I used this same quote earlier in this thesis, but I intentionally repeat it here because it has served as one of the drivers of my research. The phrase concisely expresses the ways that colonizers construct a "reality" that validates violence against Indigenous people and Indigenous land. It also obstructs Indigenous people's ability to define themselves under their

[286] Joanne Barker, "Indigenous Feminisms," 1.

[287] Ibid., 312.

own terms, exercise agency, and achieve sovereignty on material, political, social, and philosophical terms.

In my research I learned that my family was displaced from their ancestral land, and also that the process was enacted well past 1868 when the internment at Bosque Redondo ended. The dominant culture tells the story of Indigenous assimilation, of how the Navajo people learned how to farm and build houses from the soldiers at Bosque and brought those valuable skills to the newly defined Navajo reservation so that they might live more civilized lives and participate in the American market system. I do not know just what happened to my great-great-grandparent and my great-grandmother Marta in those years immediately following the signing of the Navajo Treaty. I do know that the family's livelihoods shifted from subsistence farming to wage work. Extractive industries do not only exploit the resources in the land, but also the bodies of workers. My grandfather Seb ended up working the oil fields most of his adult life, and his body was wrecked by the work. His/our displacement from the land occurred gradually, over a couple of generations. His eventual livelihood contributed to the pollution and degradation of our land. I will never know how he felt about that (if he felt anything at all), but I still feel a kind of tension when I speak to my family members who still live in Bloomfield where the economy relies on oil and natural gas, and who are in close proximity to the Dine Nation where the people live with the lingering toxic effects of coal and uranium mining, among other degradations.

Toxic pollution is not the only threat caused by capitalist extractive industries. Such industries do indeed contaminate the land, but violence against Indigenous people (and especially Indigenous women) is a corresponding effect. The compounding crisis of environmental exploitation, violence against Indigenous women with little to no legal consequences for perpetrators, the neglect of mainstream feminists and other groups to the

realities of Indigenous people, and the wildly inaccurate, dangerous characterizations of Native Americans in all types of media (including their frequent invisibility), constitutes a multi-level kind of violence that results in a quiet form of erasure and ongoing displacement.

My feminist critical discourse analysis of historical newspaper articles clearly demonstrates how the news media characterized Indigenous peoples in the United States, and how the theft and exploitation of land were framed as American progress and expansion. Stuart Hall and others have argued that popular culture is hugely influential on micro- and macro-levels, shaping Americans' most fundamental beliefs about themselves and the nation in which they live. The American myth perpetuates the idea that "America" is fair and just, morally superior, and our social and political hierarchies are normal and natural, and this myth is continually upheld and maintained by popular culture.

So, popular culture is a site where dominance is perpetuated, but also resisted. Indigenous cultural production is not yet a part of the mainstream but is out there if you look for it. To me, a lover of pop culture, one of the most exciting parts of this research is the continual discovery of media produced by Indigenous people, who are using and engaging with old and new media in exciting and innovative ways as a means of entertainment, activism, and a vital way to define and describe themselves on their own terms. Self-definition is a powerful way to decolonize: "since decolonization as a political process is always a struggle to define ourselves in and beyond the act of resistance to domination, we are always in the process of remembering the past even as we create new ways to imagine and make the future."[288] We should not only think or act in opposition or defiance to the oppressors, but think, act, and *be* in spaces that are purely our

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[288] Cornell Pewewardy, "Renaming Ourselves on Our Own Terms: Race, Tribal Nations, and Representation in Education," *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal* 1, no. 1 (2000): 20.

own, that we define for ourselves. To do so, we need to look to our past, present, and future. We need to tell our stories as we experience/d them.

How does my family's story connect to the here and now, and does it matter? It absolutely does, on both counts. Diné poet Luci Tapahonso's poem entitled "In 1864" contains the line: "'You are here because of what happened to your great-grandmother long ago.'"[289] I would not be here if my ancestors hadn't survived, hadn't persisted in whatever way they could in the face of settler colonial violence and destruction. I think of Tapahonso's poem every day, and ask myself isn't it incredible that they survived? They must have been so strong, and so full of love for their people, their families, and their land. And isn't it incredible that I found the names of my ancestors, something that even my mother and her siblings never knew for sure? I gave my elders a gift that no one else has given them.

There is no singular, linear, or universal way to describe or define Indigenous identity or history. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I am not comfortable defining myself as Indigenous, but my family did have a certain kind of Indigenous experience that is often invisible. The dominant culture cannot recognize my experience neatly within its narrow categories. Until writing this thesis, I couldn't either.

Survival is resistance. Telling stories is resistance. I remember feeling bored, when I was a kid, at the old folks' stories, but now I wish I could hear them all again. Now, I continually ask myself: why didn't I know more? Why didn't I ask more when I had the chance, when more of my elders were still alive? What do I tell my children? How do I ensure that tradition, a tradition that almost died in my family, continues? I used to ask myself, "who am I?" but now I ask, "who are we?" I see myself now as connected to my ancestors. I see that I have a responsibility to keep

[289] Tapahonso, "In 1864."

telling our stories. I see how our story is part of the American experience, part of the story of a violent, horrific, genocidal colonialism. I see what is missing every time I consume media, whether it's news or television or movies or books – the voices of the colonized are missing, but most especially those of Indigenous people. It is time to remember, to see the past, present, and future all at once, to take our stories and make new ones.

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