

So We Beat On: How Native Interpreters at Living History Museums Experience Racial
Microaggressions

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Abstract

So We Beat On: How Native interpreters at Living History Museums Experience Racial
Microaggressions

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For a long and painful time, dominant society has chosen how and for what purposes Indigenous history and identity is portrayed to the general public. From the racist ethnographic displays of yesteryear to the often problematic living history museums of today, Native American interpreters have had to cope with the fundamental disconnect between the *reality* of contemporary Native American culture and non-Native individuals' *expectations* of it. The purpose of this study is to understand the extent to, and ways in which, Native American interpreters at living history museums experience and deal with instances of racism while interpreting their Native history. This study was guided by Indigenous research methodologies, and includes interviews with six Native American interpreters working at sites across the United States. Using Derald Wing Sue's racial microaggression framework, this study found that all of the interpreters experienced racial microaggressions, and that they have found ways of mitigating the effects of their negative experiences. Living history museums can consider some of these mitigation techniques in order to encourage and maintain Native participation at their sites.

Dedication

To Dad and Pop

I used my head for something besides a hat rack.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“These Indians didn’t have to simulate life in the early 1800s. They were already comfortably living history. As with the Amish, it was the contemporary world of the twentieth century that was the anachronism.” So states Jay Anderson, author of *Time Machines: the World of Living History*, one of the foundational works surrounding the study of living history museums.¹ This quotation demonstrates the fundamental disconnect between the *reality* of contemporary Native American culture and the *expectations* of non-Native individuals. We see this disconnect particularly at living history sites that interpret Native American history, the object of the present study. Native Americans have long been exiled to the past; a phenomenon scholar Johannes Fabian terms the “denial of coevalness” or the “persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent (s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of the anthropological discourse.”² This phenomenon is not only representative of anthropology but society as a whole. A study by Sarah Shear found that 87% of K-12 academic standards ignore Native history post-1900. Shear states that this lack of knowledge and resulting misconceptions has “led to the invisibilization of Indigenous people.”³ The “invisible” Native community struggles to have their painful history of genocide, treaty violations, and cultural imperialism heard by the general population.

The general public’s ignorance of Native history as well as Native Americans’ contemporary culture, among many other factors, has perpetuated racial stereotypes and other forms of racism directed at Indigenous peoples. In recent years, the study of racism and racial

¹ Anderson, Jay. *Time Machines : The World of Living History*. Nashville, Tenn: American Association for State and

² Fabian, Johannes, and Matti Bunzl. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. Reprint edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, 31.

³ Landry, Alysa. “‘All Indians Are Dead?’ At Least That’s What Most Schools Teach Children.” Text. Indian Country Today Media Network.com, November 17–17, 2014. <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/11/17/all-indians-are-dead-least-thats-what-most-schools-teach-children-157822>.

microaggressions has developed and matured. While psychiatrist Chester Pierce first coined the phrase “racial microaggression” in 1970, it was not until D.W. Sue’s foundational 2007 article on the subject that research surrounding microaggressions began.⁴ For the purposes of this study, racial microaggressions shall be defined as the “commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to people of color.”⁵ These microaggressions can be expressed through microinsults, communications that “convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage”; microassaults, “explicit racial derogations”; and microinvalidations, communications that “nullify the psychological thoughts . . . of a person of color.”⁶ Scholars have described Microaggressions as akin to water torture, the constant drip, drip, drip of which slowly wears the individual down mentally and physically.⁷ Indeed, studies have found that the daily stress of racism has both psychological and physical effects on people of color. The stress of racism has been linked to a wide range of ills including general illness, sleep problems, headaches, hypertension, stomach and heart problems, and a reliance on unhealthy habits as a way of dealing with the stress.⁸ Racism has also been shown to cause psychological pain in the form of depression, anxiety, fear, and worry.⁹ In the workplace, racism

⁴ Gloria Wong, Annie O. Derthick. “The What, the Why, and the How: A Review of Racial Microaggressions Research in Psychology.” *Race and Social Problems* 6, no. 2 (2013), 181-182.

⁵ Derald Wing, Sue. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2010, 29.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Perry, Barbara. *Silent Victims: Hate Crimes Against Native Americans*. The University of Arizona Press, 2008, 102.

⁸ Feagin, Joe R., and Karyn D. McKinney. “The Physical Health Consequences of Racism.” In *The Many Costs of Racism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, 65.

⁹ Feagin, Joe, and Karyn D. McKinney. “The Psychological and Energy Costs of Contemporary Racism.” In *The Many Costs of Racism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, 54.

has been known to cause a loss of personal energy, motivation, and the desire to participate in family and community activities.¹⁰

One of the main ways in which Native peoples and those concerned have attempted to alleviate racism is through education.¹¹ The Department of Education and the Department of Justice recently co-published a manual, *Preventing Youth Hate Crime*, in the hope that in-school anti-hate programming will diminish the number of race related hate crimes.¹² With their acknowledged role as informal educators, museums may seem like an obvious venue for programs and exhibits addressing the issue of racism towards Native Americans. Museums, as institutions intimately linked to Western Imperialism,¹³ however, are filled with objects from their Native creators through imperialistic methods.¹⁴ It is for this reason that museums can be very painful sites for Native Americans.¹⁵ Efforts have been made, though, to decolonize museums by “privileging indigenous voices and prospective.”¹⁶ Museum decolonization is a healing process for those Native Americans involved, and also serves as an opportunity for Native peoples to regain a venue for telling the public about their Native history.

Living history museums have been more explicitly incorporating minority groups’ histories since the social history movement came on the scene in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁷ In her book, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*, Laura Peers discusses those Native American individuals who choose to interpret their own history at living history sites. Peers lists a number of uncomfortable assumptions, slurs, and questions directed at

¹⁰ Ibid., 59.

¹¹ Perry, *Silent Victims*, 125.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums : Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. 1st ed. The University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 5.

¹⁴ King, Duane H. “Exhibiting Culture: American Indians and Museums.” *Tulsa Law Review* 45, no. 25 (2009): 28.

¹⁵ Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., 171.

¹⁷ Handler, Richard, and Eric Gable. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Duke University Press, 1997,4.

Native interpreters by non-Native museum visitors.¹⁸ Visitors to living history sites interpreting Native history “bring with them the baggage that holds . . . stereotyping images”, images of the Native American as “savages, as backwards, as uncivilized or as unintelligent.”¹⁹ As Peers states, “not only do visitors say these things, they say them over and over again, making the irritating monotony of interpretation . . . into a potentially degrading situation for interpreters.”²⁰ To make matters worse, few living history sites “provide standard preseason training for interpreters to assist them in dealing with such comments by visitors.”²¹ It is no great surprise then that this stressful working environment has led to difficulties finding and keeping Native people willing to work as interpreters.²²

Today, the remarks described in Laura Peers’ book would be considered racial microaggressions. When Peers’ book was published, however, the term “microaggression” had not yet been popularized within academia. My research is significant in that it serves to update the field of living history and racism as it pertains to Native Americans, as the majority of the literature on these subjects dates from the late 1980s to mid-1990s. Due to the age of this literature, terminology and academic paradigms have shifted within the field, leaving previous literature outdated and possibly erroneous. Also, the dated literature does not reflect more recent societal trends, such as the controversy surrounding Native American sports mascots, cultural appropriation, and the legitimacy of Columbus Day as a federal holiday in the United States. Additionally, little available research has examined the ways in which Native interpreters react to any potential racism they experience; be it by altering their method of interpretation or the ways

¹⁸ Peers, Laura. *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, U.S., 2007, 69.

¹⁹ Perry, *Silent Victims*, 53.

²⁰ Peers, *Playing Ourselves*, 70.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 70-1.

in which they go about preparing themselves for their role. Finally, the racist treatment of Native interpreters at living history sites is disturbing not only because of the obvious injustice innate in racism, but also because this racism has the potential to effect Native people's desire to work as interpreters and telling visitors their history. Museums should be concerned about any potential silencing of Native voices through the mistreatment of their employees, since museum decolonization can be a healing process. If, however, all of the Native interpreters quit or no Native people are interested in participating, who is left to tell Native history and continue the healing that Native interpretation produces? Some would argue that the task of interpreting Native history, would fall then to non-Native interpreters, but as seen in the introductory quote by Jay Anderson, non-Native individuals often have different expectations of what it means to be Native American than the reality of the matter.

The purpose of this study is to understand the extent to, and ways in which, Native American interpreters at living history museums experience and deal with instances of racism while interpreting Native history.

The research questions that I explore in the following pages are:

1. To what extent do native interpreters experience racism in their work interpreting native history?
2. What kinds of racial microaggressions do native interpreters experience in their work?
3. Have native interpreters found any professional practices that limit racial microaggressions or equip them with tools to better deal with these microaggressions?

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Native Americans, Colonialism, and Modern Racism

When Christopher Columbus first stepped on the Bahamas' sandy shores, there were 10 million indigenous people living in what is now the United States. By 1900, less than 300,000 American Indians survived.²³ Native Americans have experienced over 500 years of what many can only consider genocide. According to the "United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," genocide is defined as the "intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group" via "killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting . . . conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destructing, imposing measures intended to prevent births, and transferring children to another group."²⁴ The United States and its colonial forefathers committed genocide in every sense of the definition given above through relocation to reservations, forced assimilationist boarding schools, prohibition of language and religion, and violence. Yet mainstream society has not acknowledged these past atrocities to the same degree as it has the more recent genocides such as the Holocaust. Genocide has long lasting effects on not just the direct victims but also future generations. Researchers have found that the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder are generationally cumulative,²⁵ meaning that Native peoples are indeed both literally and metaphorically, haunted by a "legacy of trauma and unresolved grief."²⁶

Injustices against Native Americans continue today in a number of ways, but I focus my efforts here on the subject of this thesis: racism and racial microaggressions. According to the

²³ "Atrocities Against Native Americans." *United to End Genocide*, n.d.<http://endgenocide.org/learn/past-genocides/native-americans/>.

²⁴ United Nations. "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," December 9, 1948.

²⁵ Duran, Eduardo, and Bonnie Duran. *Native American Postcolonial Psychology*. Albany: SUNY, 1995, 30.

²⁶ Belcourt-Dittloff, Annjeanette, and Jera Stewart. "Historical Racism: Implications for Native Americans." *American Psychologist* 15, no. 10 (October 2011): 1166.

United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, 4.5% of racially motivated hate crimes are against Native Americans or Alaska Natives.²⁷ This statistic, however, is based on the premise that these crimes are *legally* criminal. In her book “Silent victims: Hate Crimes Against Native Americans,” Barbara Perry defines hate crimes more loosely, as any “acts of violence and intimidation that are not always technically criminal in nature, and that are usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups.”²⁸ Perry draws on Iris Young’s “Five Faces of Oppressions,” in articulating the ways in which hate crimes occur. Young’s Faces of Oppression are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.²⁹ Many Western academic practices are based in one of these faces of oppression: cultural imperialism. An example of this cultural imperialism would be academia and society’s “denial of coevalness,” Johannes Fabian’s phrase signifying the “persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse.”³⁰ As Laura Peers similarly states, “by relegating Native people to the past, members of the dominant society refused to take “Native peoples seriously.”³¹ Paradoxically, Western hegemony simultaneously denies Native people coevalness while also denying them their place in history. Historian David Lowenthal commented that “possessing little human history, Americans early adopted natural history,” a statement that completely ignores Native history.³² Lowenthal’s disregard for Native history can be seen as what Albert Memmi describes in his discussion of the

²⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation. “2013 Hate Crime Statistics.” The FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d. https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2013/topic-pages/victims/victims_final.

²⁸ Perry, Barbara. *Silent Victims: Hate Crimes Against Native Americans*. The University of Arizona Press, 2008, 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-4.

³⁰ Fabian, Johannes, and Matti Bunzl. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. Reprint edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, 31.

³¹ Peers, Laura. *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, U.S., 2007, 38.

³² Lowenthal, David. “The American Way of History.” In *A Living History Reader*, Vol.1:157–62. American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 162.

colonization process as the colonized “being removed from history.”³³ That being said, it is likely that Lowenthal includes Native Americans in his definition of natural history. Indeed, it is exceedingly common for indigenous peoples to be lumped in with the natural world — particularly in museums. Cultural imperialism, however, is most obviously seen in academia and in Indigenous scholars’ participation within the academy. Borrowing a term from Franz Fannon, Eduardo and Bonnie Duran discuss the “lactification” of Indigenous scholars’ work, which is the racial whitening or westernization of Indigenous academic work in order for “the produced knowledge to be palatable to the academy.”³⁴ This lactification of Indigenous scholarship mirrors many scholars’ belief that traditional indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing are “typically overlooked or rejected outright” by academia.³⁵

The Faces of Oppression discussed above all have their roots in racism. Racism takes different forms, including, but not limited to: personal racism, “racist acts, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior on the part of the individual persons”; social racism which are beliefs that are “widely shared within a given population and expressed in cultural and social modes”; and institutional racism, racism “perpetuated by specific social institutions such as schools, corporations, hospitals, or the criminal justice system as a totality.”³⁶ Most racism arose out of Colonial Racism, which according to Memmi, is based in three components: “the gulf between the culture of the colonist and colonized; two, the exploitation” of said gulf in favor of the colonizer, and finally the use of these socially constructed differences as “standards of absolute.”³⁷ The

³³ Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967, 91.

³⁴ Duran, *Native American Postcolonial Psychology*, 4-5.

³⁵ Perry, *Silent Victims*, 50.

³⁶ Blum, Lawrence. *I’m Not a Racist, But...: The Moral Quandary of Race*. 1st. ed. Cornell University Press, 2002, 9.

³⁷ Memmi, *The Colonizer and Colonized*, 71.

construction of the Other through stereotypical images, actions, and beliefs serves as a mirror for the colonizer, showing them what the colonizer believes is everything they are not.³⁸

Many studies have shown the negative effects of racism on both the body and mind of the victims. The stress of racism has been shown to cause or worsen numerous physical ailments including “general illness, commonplace headaches, hypertension and heart problems, [and] stomach problems.”³⁹ Additionally, many victims of racism deal with this stress via unhealthy habits such as the excessive drinking of alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and overeating.⁴⁰ Psychologically speaking, racism has been shown to cause “depression, demoralization, and hopelessness” as well as “anxiety, fear, and worry.”⁴¹ Racism in the workplace can cause a “loss of personal energy” including the loss of “motivation to work hard or to participate in . . . family and community activities.”⁴² Considering the deleterious effects of racism, it should be no surprise that Native American populations have a “disproportionately high rate of suicide, homicide, accidental deaths . . . alcoholism, and mental health problem.”⁴³

Many scholars believe that overt expressions of racism have declined over the past few decades, and instead have been replaced with a more “invisible, subtle, and . . . indirect” form of racism.⁴⁴ In today’s society, where explicit acts of racist violence against Indigenous peoples are generally an exception to the rule, racism is now covert, hidden within our cultural assumptions at a subconscious level. Today, most members of the dominant society believe themselves to be

³⁸ Ibid., 81.

³⁹ Feagin, Joe R., and Karyn D. McKinney. “The Physical Health Consequences of Racism.” In *The Many Costs of Racism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, 59.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁴¹ Feagin, Joe, and Karyn D. McKinney. “The Psychological and Energy Costs of Contemporary Racism.” In *The Many Costs of Racism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, 59.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Belcourt-Dittloff, *Historical Racism*, 1166.

⁴⁴ Sue, Derald Wing. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2010, 8.

good people, incapable of racist beliefs and actions.⁴⁵ A 2009 *Washington Post-ABC News* Poll, however, indicates otherwise. This poll found that while 75% of blacks surveyed said that they experienced discrimination, only slightly more than 25% of all Americans see racism as a large societal problem.⁴⁶

In recent years, academics have begun to study these more subtle forms of racism through the lens of racial microaggressions, defined as the “commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to people of color.”⁴⁷ Using racial microaggressions as a way of understanding and studying racism is relatively new to academia. While the term was first coined in 1970, academia did not begin any significant research on microaggressions until the publication of Sue et al.’s 2007 foundational article, “Racial Microaggression in Everyday Life,” which served to stimulate research on microaggressions.⁴⁸ Sue et al. found that microaggressions manifest in three forms: microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations.⁴⁹ Microassaults are the most similar of these microaggressions to overt racism as they are “explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal, nonverbal, or environmental attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.”⁵⁰ Microinsults are “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage,” whereas microinvalidations are “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁶ Fletcher, Michael A., and Jon Cohen. “Far Fewer Consider Racism Big Problem: Little Change, However, at Local Level.” *Washington Post*, January 19, 2009.

⁴⁷ Sue, *Microaggressions in Everyday*, 29.

⁴⁸ Wong, Gloria. “The What, the Why, and the How: A Review of Racial Microaggressions Research in Psychology.” *Race and Social Problems* 6 (2014): 181.

⁴⁹ Sue, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life*, 20.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color.”⁵¹ Racial microaggressions, much like water torture, have a relatively small impact in and of themselves but when experienced incessantly their negative effects are cumulative.⁵² Studies have also found that microaggressions contribute to a hostile work environment, devalue group identities, lower work productivity, and effect mental and physical health in the same way as more overt forms of racism.⁵³

Not everyone agrees, however, on the effects of microaggressions or even whether they exist at all. Racial microaggressions are difficult to study because of their subtle nature, and because they are often committed subconsciously by members of the dominant society.⁵⁴ Additionally, not only is research on microaggressions largely based on recall and self-reporting, it is also mostly correlational, making it difficult to determine whether or not it is actually the microaggressions causing the damage reported.⁵⁵ Scholars cynical about the existence of microaggressions include K.R. Thomas, who called microaggressions “pure rubbish” as “everyone regardless of race, occasionally experience[s] verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities.”⁵⁶ Finally, researching microaggressions has been difficult because of the sensitive nature of the topic. When academics question scholars who are people-of-color (POC) studying microaggressions about their studies, these minority academics often feel that their racial reality is being called into question since they cannot always back up these experiences with “proof.”⁵⁷ On the other hand, minorities are forced to demonstrate their racial reality using methods

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Sue, Derald Wing, ed. *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics, and Impact*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2010.

⁵³ Ibid., 14-5.

⁵⁴ Wong, Gloria, Annie O. Derthick, E. J. R. David, Anne Saw, and Sumie Okazaki. “The What, the Why, and the How: A Review of Racial Microaggressions Research in Psychology.” *Race and Social Problems* 6, no. 2 (October 24, 2013):183.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 193.

⁵⁶ Derald Wing Sue, Christina M. Capodilupo. “Racial Microaggressions and the Power to Define Reality.” *American Psychologist* 63, no. 4 (1970): 277.

⁵⁷ Sue, “Racial Microaggressions and the Power to Define Reality,” 278.

prescribed by Western hegemonic academia, which as discussed above, is a clear example of cultural imperialism.⁵⁸

Native Americans occupy a unique position within these discussions of racism and racial microaggressions. Whereas overt forms of racism have declined with most marginalized groups this is not the case with Native Americans, who experience both covert *and* overt racism.⁵⁹ Native people are routinely called racial slurs such as “redskin,” “injun,” and “squaw” while both their images and imagery are used as sports mascots and cigarette advertisements.⁶⁰ Additionally, Native Americans experience microaggressions unique to their race, and these microaggressions are not described in generic descriptions of microaggressions such as the framework put forth by Derald Wing Sue. For example, in a study surrounding the microaggressions directed towards Native Americans on an online forum discussion about the use of Native Americans as mascots, some of the microaggressions identified by researchers are only experienced by Native peoples.⁶¹ Clark et al. found that many white individuals demanded that Native Americans assimilate into the dominant society, and expressed the belief that Native people are going or have gone extinct.⁶²

From the arrival of the first Western colonists, Native Americans have been the victim of atrocities, resulting in generations of unresolved grief and sorrow. Today as in the past, Native peoples have experienced both overt and covert racism in their daily life leading to mental and physical health issues.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Robertson, Dwanna L. “Invisibility in the Color-Blind Era: Examining Legitimized Racism against Indigenous Peoples.” *American Indian Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (2015): 113-4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 114.

⁶¹ Clark, D.A., Lisa B. Spanierman, Tamilia D. Reed, Jason R. Soble, and Sharon Cabana. “Documenting Weblog Expressions of Racial Microaggressions That Target American Indians.” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 4, no. 1 (2011): 39-50.

⁶² Ibid., 42, 45.

Native Americans and Museums: Representing the Other

Indigenous peoples have a long and painful history of the dominant society choosing how and for what purposes their identity is portrayed to the general public. These depictions of their culture ranged from ethnographic showcases (also known as human zoos) to anthropological exhibits in Natural History museums. Western institutions' depictions of identity were arranged by non-Natives to benefit Western audiences and the nation-states of which they were a part. Rather than portraying their own identity, they were forced to portray the "Other," an identity crafted by Western imperialism to justify the exploitation of the Indigenous peoples and their lands.⁶³ The construct of the Other is a necessity in colonialism as the "existence of the colonizer requires that an image of the colonized be suggested."⁶⁴ Native peoples thus performed this identity as an example of everything the colonizer should not be.

Dating back to the "discovery" of the New World, human beings and their objects were displayed in museums and ethnographic showcases. These showcases displayed not only Native people but also the Western audiences' "colonial" fantasies, serving as the location where a place in the Western "imagination for non-white peoples and their cultures were forged."⁶⁵ These showcases, like museums, also served to "produce, disseminate, and order knowledge" about the people on display for mass consumption by Western audiences.⁶⁶

⁶³ Sadiyah. Qureshi. *Peoples on Parade : Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth Century Britain*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

⁶⁴ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 79).

⁶⁵ Fusco, Coco. "The Other History of Intercultural Performance." *TDR: The Drama Review* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 144.

⁶⁶ Magubane, Zine. "Ethnographic Showcases as Sites of Knowledge Production and Indigenous Resistance." In *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith, 45–64. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009, 45.

Museums can be “very painful sites for Native peoples as they are intimately tied to the colonization process.”⁶⁷ Instead of viewing museums as edifying institutions as the dominant society perceives them, Native Americans often view museums as “storehouses for pawned heirlooms and stolen grave goods.”⁶⁸ Most museums and other public historic sites have perpetuated a hegemonic view of history focusing on “prosperous and powerful men of European descent or on nostalgic views of European pioneers,” writes Peers, while downplaying the historic contributions of Native Americans.⁶⁹ The depictions of Native Americans included in museums often reflected “stereotypical and ethnocentric assumptions central to the control of Native peoples by the dominant society.”⁷⁰ Relying on stereotypes to represent an entire race of people diminishes individuals to symbols rather than people.⁷¹ By dehumanizing Indigenous peoples, it is easier for the dominant society to set Native peoples up as the “Other.” This symbol, as opposed to an individual, can be more easily violated both physically and ideologically.⁷²

In recent decades, Native Americans have been working to strip museums of their colonial heritage. Recognizing museums’ power to educate the general public, many tribal leaders have sought to decolonize and then use museums for their own purposes.⁷³ At its core the movement to decolonize is a movement towards, as Lonetree puts it, “privileging Indigenous voices and perspectives, challenging stereotypes that have dominated museum representations of

⁶⁷ Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums : Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. 1st ed. The University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 1.

⁶⁸ King, Duane H. “Exhibiting Culture: American Indians and Museums.” *Tulsa Law Review* 45, no. 25 (2009): 28.

⁶⁹ Peers, Laura. “Revising the Past: the Heritage Elite and Native Peoples in North America.” In *Elite Cultures: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Chris Shore and Stephan Nugent, 178–88. Association of Social Anthropology Monographs no.38. London: Routledge, 2002, 173.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁷¹ Meyer, Carter Jones. “Introduction.” In *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures*. The University of Arizona Press, 2001, xii.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ King, “Exhibiting Culture: American Indians and Museums,” 31.

the past” with the purpose of making knowledge and remembering within Native communities.⁷⁴ Many scholars see decolonizing museums as a powerful healing process aimed at “addressing the legacies of historical unresolved grief” and “restoring dignity and respect” to Native Americans.⁷⁵

Native peoples have gone about decolonizing museums in different ways. Some aim to decolonize museums through the incorporation of Native “demonstrators, speakers, and interpreters” in their institutions,⁷⁶ while others create their own tribal museums, appropriating the hegemonic infrastructure of the museum for their own use.⁷⁷ Others have gone about “self-commodifying,” a process through which an Indigenous individual “chooses to construct a marketable identity product while striving to avoid alienating him- or herself.”⁷⁸ Academic Alexis Celeste Bunten studied Native tour guides in Sitka, Alaska, stating that while these guides create for themselves commodified persona built around “cultural uniformity as simplifying trope, self-exoticizing through the Other” and they also reject stereotypes through covert acts of resistance.⁷⁹ It is unclear, however, how Bunten finds it possible for people to simultaneously depict themselves as the Other, an identity based in stereotypical images, while resisting these stereotypes. If individuals can, indeed, show themselves as the Other while resisting these stereotypes, what they cannot control is how audiences interpret and understand their performances. Additionally, Bunten states that the tourism worker does “express free choice over the way he constructs a commodified persona but these choices affect the market value of the

⁷⁴ Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 5, 171.

⁷⁶ Bench, Raney. *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, 77.

⁷⁷ King, “Exhibiting Culture: American Indians and Museums,” 30.

⁷⁸ Bunten, Alexis Celeste. “Sharing Culture or Selling out? Developing the Commodified Persona in the Heritage Industry.” *American Ethnologist* 35, no. 3 (August 1, 2008): 381.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

self as a commodity.”⁸⁰ One must ask then, whether these workers truly have free choice, as their livelihood is dependent upon the success of their commodified persona.

Native Americans have a long history of having their identities represented by the dominant, Western society. Native groups, however, have been making significant strides in decolonizing museums and other public historic sites. From increased inclusion in traditional museums to the creation of tribal museums and cultural centers, Native Americans have made great progress in their efforts to heal and resolve historic grief through the decolonization of museums.

Living History Museums: Representing the Past

“Living history means different things to different people,” declares the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums’ website.⁸¹ Jay Anderson defines living history as an “attempt by people to simulate life in another time.”⁸² Living history sites almost always incorporate elements of theatre into their depictions of history including the use of costumes, props, sets, and roleplaying.⁸³ Anderson compares living history to a life-sized diorama into which museum visitors can enter and experience the past.⁸⁴ Proponents of living history believe

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ ALHFAM. “Living History.” *ALHFAM: The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums*, n.d. http://www.alhfam.org/index.php?cat_id=153&nav_tree=153.

⁸² Anderson, Jay. “Living History.” In *A Living History Reader*, edited by Jay Anderson, Vol. 1:3–15. American Association for State and Local History, 1991.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Anderson, Jay. *Time Machines : The World of Living History*. Nashville, Tenn: American Association for State and Local History, 1984, 45.

that this presentation of history has great power over the visitor, transporting them both mentally and emotionally into the past in order to learn about it.⁸⁵

The goal of living history museums, as opposed to traditional museums, is largely to provide a more immersive, somatic experience for the museum visitor.⁸⁶ Assuming that people learn best when all of their senses are engaged, academics and practitioners favoring living history view it as a way to “stimulate a visitor’s interest, involvement, and understanding” to a greater degree than traditional museums (that most typically use only sight).⁸⁷ Many curators believed that living history would provide an “antidote to museum fatigue” and would be a “pedagogical tool that could enliven their programs and historical sites.”⁸⁸ The value of experiencing history this way, according to Scott Magelssen⁸⁹, rests on the premise that the “body becomes a site of knowledge production superior than that of books or archives.”⁹⁰ Anderson claims that living history seeks to provoke in visitors, what T.S. Elliot called, “felt-truth,” in order to better empathize with those who lived in the past. For Anderson, this ability to emphasize with past individuals is important as it allows guests to better understand history.⁹¹

This “felt-truth” can be misleading, however, since living history museums can never *truly* get at the reality of the past. While living history “museums pride themselves on being

⁸⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁸⁶ Anderson, “Living History,” 6.

⁸⁷ Fortier, John. “Thoughts on the Re-Creation and Interpretation of Historical Environments.” In *A Living History Reader*, edited by Jay Anderson, Vol.1:18–24. American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 21.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Dr. Magelssen has since reneged on this statement. For his current views see *Magelssen, Scott. Simming: Participatory Performance and the Making of Meaning. Theater: Theory/Text/Performance. University of Michigan Press, 2014.*

⁹⁰ Magelssen, Scott. “This Is a Drama. You Are Characters’: Simming the Fugitive Slave in Conner Prairie’s ‘Follow the North Star.’” In *Simming: Participatory Performance and the Making of Meaning*, 29–47. University of Michigan Press, 2014, 35.

⁹¹ Anderson, *Time Machine*, 191.

historically accurate,”⁹² the historical truth would “upset the sensibility of the present-day museum-going public,” as well as most of the interpreters.⁹³ Issues of “bodily functions, eroticism, and sexual perversity” have been left out of sites such as Plimoth Plantation, regardless of these institutions’ mission and quest for authenticity.⁹⁴ Additionally, living history museums rarely include conflict⁹⁵ or instances of human suffering⁹⁶ in their interpretations of the past. Besides simply offending the sensibilities of museum visitors and employees, authenticity is often difficult to attain because of the cost and effort involved. Indeed, living history is expensive, requires extensive training of interpreters as well as a historical environment, free of modern-day intrusions, in which to work.⁹⁷ The desire to create authentic “experiences” filled with accurate sights, sounds, and smells often drives the price of museum admission up. The high admission fees and avoidance of historical conflict and hardship has led to what some scholars call the “Disney Effect.”⁹⁸

Living History Museums are a product of how Western society views history and the past. One of the main issues surrounding the ways in which people view and understand living history is the distinction between the past and history. As Richard Handler and Eric Gable state in *The New History in an Old Museum*, “the dream of authenticity is a present-day myth. We cannot

⁹² Anderson, Jay. “Serious Play.” In *A Living History Reader*, edited by Jay Anderson, Vol.1:215–22. American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 215.

⁹³ Snow, Stephan Eddy. *Performing the Pilgrims : A Study of Ethnohistorical Role-Playing at Plimoth Plantation*. University Press of Mississippi, 2008.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁹⁵ Schlereth, Thomas J. “It Wasn’t That Simple.” In *A Living History Reader*, edited by Jay Anderson, Vol.1:163–69. American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 165.

⁹⁶ Snow, *Performing Pilgrims*, 117.

⁹⁷ Fortier, “Thoughts on the Re-Creation and Interpretation of Historical Environments,” 21.

⁹⁸ Walsh, Kevin. *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*. London : New York: Routledge, 1992, 94, 97.

recreate, reconstruct, or recapture the past” as the past is lost to us.⁹⁹ History, on the other hand, is what fills books, archives, and museums. The difference between the past and history is an important distinction to make as it effects how we as a society view the “facts” of history. Due to the concrete nature of living history, the fact that much of the past is unknown, undocumented, or misunderstood is overlooked by museum visitors.¹⁰⁰ Living history museums provide visitors with only the final product of history, leaving all of the gaps and contentions within the field out of their interpretation. Living History Museums are presented as *fact*, rather than a “deliberate selection, ordering, and evaluation of past events, experiences, and processes.”¹⁰¹ For some academics, the “museumization” of history creates the same oversimplifications present in textbooks, leading to the public’s distorted view of the past.¹⁰² Also, the events of the past are often caused by conflict, be it internal strife, war, or any number of other disagreements. As I discussed previously, however, living history museums often leave out moments of conflict and human suffering.¹⁰³ Understanding that living history is often in a mythical time, free of conflict and therefore free of a future, runs contrary to Anderson’s view of living history. Anderson believes that living history allows individuals to understand “how mankind managed to travel from the past into the present” and how “we are going to move from the present into the future.”¹⁰⁴ The decontextualization of historical events in living history museums is indicative of

⁹⁹ Handler, Richard, and Eric Gable. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Duke University Press, 1997, 223.

¹⁰⁰ Ronsheim, Robert. “Is the Past Dead?” In *A Living History Reader*, edited by Jay Anderson, Vol. 1:170–74. American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 172.

¹⁰¹ Wallace, Michael. “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States.” In *A Living History Reader*, edited by Jay Anderson, Vol.1:184–99. American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 196.

¹⁰² Schlereth, It Wasn’t That Simple, 163.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 165.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson, Living History, 9.

the idea that Americans “prefer history parceled out in segments because it is easy to describe, thematic and represents no threat to the present.”¹⁰⁵

Living History Museums such as Colonial Williamsburg have been mocked by many academics for being “Republican Disneyland[s].”¹⁰⁶ Scholars accuse living history sites of being “overly patriotic,” and “historical shrines to which [American] visitors are beckoned to make pilgrimages.”¹⁰⁷ These accusations largely stem from the fact that most living history museums are seen as hegemonic institutions, created by the dominant class to support their privileged positions in society.¹⁰⁸ For many academics, museums are institutions aimed at “Americanizing” the immigrant working class into the “cult of flag and constitution.”¹⁰⁹ That being said, museums and other cultural institutions have made significant strides towards consciously including minority and marginalized groups within their interpretation of the past. Since the 1960s, the Social History movement has been at work at living history museums, focusing on the life of the average individual rather than the lives of “great men.”¹¹⁰ Many practitioners of living history and visitors to living history sites, however, exhibit an aversion to social history, feeling that it is “rubbing Americans’ noses in their collective villainy or victimhood.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Lowenthal, David. “The American Way of History.” In *A Living History Reader*, Vol.1:157–62. American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 161.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew O’Hehir. “Colonial Williamsburg: Where the Tea Party Gets Schooled.” Accessed November 19, 2015. http://www.salon.com/2013/04/07/colonial_williamsburg_where_the_tea_party_gets_schooled/.

¹⁰⁷ Schlereth, *It Wasn’t That Simple*, 163.

¹⁰⁸ Wallace, *Visiting the Past*, 184.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹¹⁰ Handler and Gable, *New History in an Old Museum*, 4.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

Living History Museums: Representing Minorities

While museums have tried to incorporate social history into their representation of the past, “historical texts and villages are still largely populated by White, Anglo-Saxon, non-denominational, Protestant males,” despite material on minorities being more plentiful than ever.¹¹² In 1973, Plimoth Plantation incorporated Native American history with the addition of the Wampanoag Summer Encampment, a separate village from the Pilgrim site staffed by Wampanoag interpreters.¹¹³ Nanepashemet, an interpreter at the Wampanoag site, stated that “sometimes to our embarrassment [we are] often known as ‘the Indians who met the Pilgrims.’”¹¹⁴ This interpreter’s statement reflects the fact that Native history did not become central to living history sites until the 1990s, and even then the inclusion of Native peoples often amounted to tokenism. The number of Native peoples employed as interpreters never *accurately* suggests the size of historic Native communities, relative to those of the white communities with which they interacted.¹¹⁵

There are a number of reasons why Native Americans occupy such a small portion of those who work as interpreters at living history museums. According to Peers, recruiting Native interpreters can be difficult, as many Native communities “in general tend to be suspicious of historic sites because the sites are government-funded” and the sites have traditionally perpetuated a hegemonic view of history, focusing on “European-oriented history.”¹¹⁶ Moreover, Native Americans often see these historic sites as reminders of the traumatic history surrounding colonialism. For example, every year on Thanksgiving Day, hundreds of Native Americans

¹¹² Schlereth, *It Wasn't that Simple*, 165.

¹¹³ Snow, *Performing the Pilgrims*, 98.

¹¹⁴ Magelssen, *Undoing History*, 19.

¹¹⁵ Peers, *Playing Ourselves*, 44.

¹¹⁶ Peers, *Revising the Past*, 179.

gather at Plymouth Harbor, a site intimately connected with the heritage industry as well as the metaphorical beginning of the end, for a Day of Mourning.¹¹⁷ It would indeed be difficult to work at a site so symbolically linked with the “demise of their people.”¹¹⁸

Not only do Native interpreters have to contend with reminders of their communities’ trauma, they also have to cope with modern-day slights. Native interpreters are almost always the minority at living history sites, and, unlike some White interpreters, tend to be employed seasonally rather than permanently.¹¹⁹ While Native interpreters work these temporary positions, they must deal with any number of insensitive and rude comments from visitors. As Raney Bench states in *Interpreting Native American History*, interpreters must “be prepared for visitors to say the most ignorant, silly, or even racist things about and to Native interpreters.”¹²⁰ Visitors not only say these things to interpreters, they repeat them incessantly, “making the irritating monotony of interpretation . . . into a potentially degrading situation.”¹²¹ With hundreds of interactions between visitors and staff each day, many of which are negative for interpreters, it can be difficult to recruit and keep Native interpreters at living history sites.¹²²

With such an uncomfortable work environment, the question begs to be asked: why do Native interpreters do it? According to Peers, “the educational function of historic sites is primary” for Native interpreters.¹²³ Native interpreters use their job to “affirm and articulate

¹¹⁷ Snow, *Performing the Pilgrims*, 158-9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹¹⁹ Peers, *Revising the Past*, 180.

¹²⁰ Bench, Raney. *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

¹²¹ Peers, *Playing Ourselves*, 70.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 70-1.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 71.

Native identity to themselves and to visitors,”¹²⁴ while educating the non-Native public about Native history and breaking down contemporary and historic stereotypes.¹²⁵

Today the negative remarks of visitors described in books like Laura Peers and Janey Bench’s would be considered racial microaggressions had the term already been popularized within academia. My research is significant in that it serves to update the field of living history and racism as it pertains to Native Americans, as the majority of the literature on these subjects dates from the late 1980s to mid-1990s. Due to the age of this literature, terminology and academic paradigms have shifted within the field, leaving previous literature outdated and possibly erroneous. Also, the dated literature does not reflect more recent societal trends that I mentioned in Chapter One. Additionally, little research has examined the ways in which Native interpreters react to any potential racism they experience. Finally, the racist treatment of Native interpreters at living history sites is troublesome not only because of the obvious injustice racism presents, but also because this racism has the potential to affect Native people’s desire to work as interpreters and to educate visitors about their history. As I have already discussed, museums should be concerned about any potential silencing of Native voices through the mistreatment of their employees, since museum decolonization can be a healing process.

The purpose of this study is to understand the extent to which, and ways in which, Native American interpreters at living history museums experience and deal with instances of racism while interpreting Native history.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 45.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 72.

I explore the following research questions:

1. To what extent do native interpreters experience racism in their work interpreting native history?
2. What kinds of racial microaggressions do native interpreters experience in their work?
3. Have native interpreters found any professional practices that limit racial microaggressions or equip them with tools to better deal with these microaggressions?

Chapter 3: Methodology

The Indigenous Research Paradigm

The purpose of this study is to understand the extent to, and the ways in which, Native American interpreters at living history museums experience and deal with instances of racism while interpreting Native history. As a white woman researching a topic involving Native American individuals, I found it imperative to use the Indigenous research paradigm and methodologies to guide my study. The Indigenous research paradigm differs in a number of important ways from the positivist paradigm traditional in much of academia. It is outside the scope of this thesis to enumerate the great many ways these two paradigms differ from one another. I will, however, briefly discuss the components of the Indigenous research paradigm that most influenced the approach and methods used in this study.

Unlike the positivist paradigm's goal of "discover[ing] laws that are generalizable," the Indigenous research paradigm focuses researchers' efforts on deconstructing "pathological descriptions of the formerly colonized" while creating a "body of knowledge that carries hope and promotes transformation and social change among the historically oppressed."¹²⁶ The goal of my research is to draw attention to the treatment of Native interpreters while on the job and how this treatment affects them. In this regard, I believe that my study falls within the goal of the Indigenous research paradigm, in that it aims to inspire positive change in the museum field.

The most influential force guiding my methodology is what Shawn Wilson terms "relational accountability." In his book, "Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods," Wilson states that many believe a "relational way of being [is] at the heart of what it means to be

¹²⁶ Chilisa, Bagele. *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2011, 40.

Indigenous.”¹²⁷ Relational accountability means to be accountable and respectful of the relationship of which you are a part (this includes your relationship with people and the cosmos). Wilson views the relationships we are a part of as the source of our identity, stating: “we *are* the relationships that we hold and are part of.”¹²⁸ The acknowledgment of the relationship between researcher and participant differs from the positivist paradigm, which demands complete objectivity.

The focus on relational accountability is mirrored in the code of researcher conduct put forth in Linda Smith’s book, “Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.” This code of conduct was suggested for researching in Maori communities, but I find it an excellent guide for all ethical research. The guiding principles are as follows:

1. *“Aroha kit e tangata (a respect for people).*
2. *Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is, present yourself to people face to face).*
3. *Titiro, whakarongo....korero (look, listen....speak).*
4. *Manaaki kit e tangata (share and host people, be generous).*
5. *Kia tupato (be cautious).*
6. *Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people).*
7. *Kaua e mahaki (don’t flaunt your knowledge). ”¹²⁹*

Guided by the idea of relational accountability, it has been my goal to create a safe, comfortable environment for my interviewees to express themselves. This is particularly important since the focus of this study is on such a sensitive, and for some possibly even

¹²⁷ Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Fernwood Publishing Co., Ltd, 2009, 80.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. London: Zed Books, 2012, 120.

triggering topic. Additionally, relational accountability suggests that researchers show respect to their participants by sharing information about themselves, so that the interview is more of a reciprocal experience.¹³⁰ I did this by introducing myself, and telling the participants about my hometown and family. I aimed to create a comfortable interview for my participants in the following ways:

1. I conducted my interviews with an informal set of guiding questions as to allow for a more conversational interview.
2. I used colloquial speech, free of specialized language, in my interview.
3. I tried to limit the number of triggering words and phrases that I said during the interview.
4. I provided multiple reminders that the participant could stop the interview at any point, particularly before the more stressful, race-related questions.

My Approach

My thesis is a qualitative study of six interpreters of Native history representing five living history museums that employ Native Americans to interpret Native history. I selected these sites by searching online for sites that employ Native interpreters who interpret their own history, emailing the organization, and interviewed those who, after reading the interview questions I emailed them, agreed to my request. I emailed the participants my interview questions so that they were aware of the intensity of the subject matter being discussed before they agreed to participate. I conducted one-on-one phone interviews with those who replied to my email. The interviews varied in length due to their conversational design, ranging from forty-

¹³⁰ Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*, 221.

five minutes to an hour and forty-five minutes. The interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder, and the interviews were then transcribed. After I transcribed the interviews, I deleted the audio recordings per the consent form read and verbally agreed upon by all participants. After transcribing the interviews, I coded the transcripts using the reductive coding method and conducted iterative reviews of the coded data and transcripts to identify trends and common themes.

Description of Sample

To protect the identity of those I interviewed I have changed the names of some of those involved per their preference. Also, I do not refer in the pages that follow to their tribal affiliation or the state in which they work but rather the region they represent. For the purposes of this study I interviewed six interpreters of Native history at living history sites. Of the six interviewed, five are Native American interpreter and one is European American. The Non-Native interpreter was recommended to me by one of the Native interpreters I interviewed, who served as her manager. Four of those interviewed are male and two are female interpreters. I sampled living history museum from across the United States. The interpreters interviewed represent the following regions: Eastern Woodlands (two different sites), Southeastern Woodlands, Coastal Pacific Northwest, and the Northeastern Woodlands (Lenape/Delaware). Three of the five sites sampled represented specific cultures or tribes whereas two represented a generic or “hodgepodge” representation of the region’s Native cultures. Again, most of the tribal names have been removed to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees.

Region Represented	Name of Interpreter
Eastern Woodlands	Janet and Taylor
Southeastern Woodlands	Ace
Coastal Pacific Northwest	Charlie and James
Northeastern Woodlands (Lenape/Delaware)	Michael

Table 1: Name of Participating Interpreters and the Region They Represent

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

Research Question #1: To what extent do native interpreters experience racism in their work interpreting native history?

Based on the results of this study it is clear that Native interpreters I interviewed experience racism in their work interpreting Native history. Five interviewees gave responses in regards to the percentage of museum guests who they, the interpreter, considered problematic, rude, or racist. Of those responses, the percentages of problematic guests range from 5% to 15%. One interviewee I am calling Taylor did not give a percentage but stated of her guests that “most of them aren’t [problematic].”¹³¹

Furthermore, the interpreters’ responses seem to point to a societal-level change towards better treatment of Native interpreters by museum guests. Four of the six interviewees stated that they believe their guests have become more polite and respectful in their treatment of Native American interpreters over the last five to ten years. One interviewee was unsure of whether their guest’s behavior has changed over time whereas another interpreter felt that the guests had not improved. Taylor stated that over the past fifteen years Americans have become more sensitive and politically correct:

[A]t least when you say ‘oh don’t say that word’ now they really do feel bad about having said that word. Fifteen years ago some of those people couldn’t have cared less. Yeah, that’s a good thing that we’re trying to become a kinder, gentler group of people.¹³²

Finally, four of the six interpreters responded that they felt that their guests are more informed about Native culture and/or history than they were five to ten years ago. One interpreter

¹³¹ Taylor. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 18, 2016.

¹³² Ibid.

felt that their guests' knowledge about Native peoples had stayed the same over time, and another did not answer. Two interpreters discussed that museum guests living in areas with relatively large Native populations were more likely to be exposed to Native culture and therefore to be more knowledgeable about Native American culture and history. Another two interpreters mentioned that they felt museum guests were more informed due to the increasing media coverage of Native-related news stories such as the controversy surrounding the appropriation of Native American images as sports mascots.

Research Question #2: What kinds of racial microaggressions do native interpreters experience in their work?

All of the interpreters that I interviewed either experienced or saw their fellow Native interpreters experience what can be defined as a racial microaggression. I found examples of microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations in each of the interviewees' responses, many of whom I believe have experienced all three. All six of the interpreters gave examples of what I consider to be microinsults either experienced firsthand or by their Native American co-workers. The most common microinsult discussed by the interpreters, reported by five of the six interviewed, was the stereotyping of Native Americans. Many of the interpreters felt that non-Native visitors had a set of expectations as to how Native people should act, live, and look. Four of the interpreters blamed these stereotypes on the representation of Native Americans in television shows and movies such as those found in John Wayne era westerns and old children's cartoons. One interpreter, who I will call Charlie, explicitly discussed the painful nature of racial remarks while interpreting. The interpreter felt that the openness needed to interpret his own culture with non-Native guests made the racial microaggressions all the more painful:

And it hurts. [Chuckles ruefully] It hurts to have that. . . . When you're in that area and you're kind of open and most people are respectful and then somebody says something harsh or rude, it's kind of hard to pivot and respond to that without just being taken aback by it.¹³³

Five of the six interpreters interviewed reported that they or their coworkers had experienced microassaults in their work interpreting Native history. The most commonly reported microassault was the use of racial epithets including “squaws,” “redskins,” “chief,” and “brave.” A non-Native interpreter who I am calling Janet, witnessed some of her guests’ avoidant behavior of her Native coworker, stating that non-Native guests “are intrigued by her [her Native coworker], want to know things about her but they won’t go up to her and ask questions. . . . Almost like intimidated by her.”¹³⁴ Charlie, who works at a site that serves alcohol perceived that the number of racial epithets spoken by non-Native visitors increased with alcohol consumption, and also in the rare occasion when a visitor is injured. As both of these examples involve a lowering of inhibitions, it seems to suggest that these non-Native guests would likely have suppressed their racist behavior were it not for the alcohol or injury.¹³⁵ At the same time, it may also be that guests, while still experiencing racist thoughts, are now better at or more willing to control how and if they express these thoughts than they were five to ten years ago.

Additionally, half of the interpreters I interviewed reported that they or their Native coworkers experienced microinvalidations. The most common examples of microinvalidation were instances where non-Native guests would question the interpreters “Indian-ness.” Charlie stated that “some of the people [coworkers] who don’t look stereotypically native they get asked

¹³³ Charlie. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, February, 17, 2016.

¹³⁴ Janet. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 22, 2016.

¹³⁵ Charlie. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, February, 17, 2016.

if they're bona fide, they'd kind of challenged whether they can or should be saying those things. . . ."¹³⁶ Taylor felt that people sometimes discriminate against her as she is not a "full-blooded" Indian even though, according to her response, her tribe likely has not had a full-blooded member in more than one hundred and fifty years.¹³⁷ Additionally, Janet, who has worked at two different sites interpreting Native history, felt that unlike her first experience interpreting, her current workplace does not value indigenous ways of knowing.¹³⁸ She felt that the managerial staff at her current site do not value the oral histories and traditions of Native peoples to the same degree as the more Western academic written sources. Janet also was uncomfortable with the fact that the management and costume department, a name of which she did not approve, made those employees interpreting Native history wear more European-style trade clothing as they felt that buckskin clothing did not cover enough of the interpreters' skin thus putting their Western sensibilities before both historicity and the preferences of any Native (or in this case Native-taught) interpreters.¹³⁹

One of the common themes discussed by the interpreters during the interviews was, that which scholars would see as, examples of the denial of coevalness. Of the six interpreters, four felt that non-Native guests had expectations of Native people that, I consider, denied them coevalness. An interpreter I will call James stated that he feels that non-Native guests, "expect that we're still wearing loincloths and small pieces of leather, you know like they did one hundred years ago."¹⁴⁰ Taylor stressed that Native American groups both have history and a viable contemporary existence, stating:

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Taylor. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 18, 2016.

¹³⁸ Janet. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 22, 2016.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ James. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, February 18, 2016.

I want them [visitors] to understand that we're here today! You know we live in regular houses, we drive regular cars, we do the things that everybody else in society does. We have survived! We have, we're still here but not like we were in [the 1600s¹⁴¹].¹⁴²

Taylor, who is the manager of her exhibit, went as far as to change the name of the exhibit from including the word "village" to "town." She explained that the word "village" only fueled non-Native visitors' expectations of finding an unsophisticated group of people at the site.¹⁴³

Finally, it is an intriguing that four of the six interpreters mentioned that racial remarks and attitudes occur at a higher rate in older populations more than the younger ones. Also, it is important to note that the two women interpreters specifically mentioned older *men* whereas none of the male interpreters made this distinction. Janet perceived that older visitors are more "blunt" and that "they're not very tactful a lot of the times . . . they're not necessarily sensitive about it [their interactions with Native interpreters]."¹⁴⁴ Additionally, Ace discussed how it is more difficult to change the ideas and opinions older people, as older guests are "going to see things the way that they want to see them especially when we get to our age."¹⁴⁵

Research Question #3: Have native interpreters found any professional practices that limit racial microaggressions or equip them with tools to better deal with these microaggressions?

The interpreters that I interviewed for this study had a number of ways of mitigating the racism that they experienced as well as ways to limit any racist methods of interpreting Native

¹⁴¹ Exact year redacted to protect interpreter's identity

¹⁴² Taylor. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 18, 2016.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Janet. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 22, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Ace. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January, 25, 2016.

history in general. One example of this is that most of the interpreters stressed the importance of living history sites consulting the tribes that they are interpreting. By involving tribal members in the interpretation process, either through consulting or employing Native individuals, the institutions allow Native people to voice concerns about any possible racist, incorrect, or insensitive interpretations of their history. Living history museums seem to lie on a spectrum in regards to how much they involve tribal members. This spectrum ranges from living history museums that are tribal owned organizations to museums that do not involve tribes at all. On one end of the spectrum, Ace works for a living history site owned and managed by his tribe.¹⁴⁶ Taylor's site is the middle ground as she developed the program and now serves as its manager; however, the institution is not Native-owned. Taylor stressed the importance of Native Americans being able to have "some ownership in the stories that were being told and how that information would be told."¹⁴⁷ And finally, on the opposite end of the spectrum, Janet, who now works at a site without any major Native involved or collaboration, felt that the site, because of this lack of Native involvement, "lacks soul" and that the site "feels empty [in that it is] like just a very static sort of thing."¹⁴⁸

In a similar vein, four interpreters discussed the importance of having support from upper management in regards to honoring Native beliefs and practices in the museums are run. Michael stated, in regards past conflict over the ideal balance between education and entertainment at his site, "that some of the ideas that come down [from management] are still, you know, not correct or some cases they might even be demeaning to the tribe."¹⁴⁹ Also, at Charlie's institution he felt that the management, while trying their best to be fair to Native beliefs and practice, sometimes

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Taylor. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 18, 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Janet. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 22, 2016.

¹⁴⁹ Michael. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 20, 2016.

do not realize that “there’s various things that maybe if you’re not part of the tradition, you don’t know the significance.”¹⁵⁰ Due to the etic perspective of the managerial staff (in most cases), some decisions regarding interpretation have needed to be struck down by the Native employees as being culturally inappropriate.

Another way in which interpreters limit the racism they experience is by avoiding first person interpretation. Two of the interpreters explicitly mentioned that they felt first person interpretation lacking for what they are trying to accomplish. Michael felt that because he is speaking as a representative of his tribe and as himself, “it works better that way for me.”¹⁵¹ Additionally, he pointed out the illogical situations first person interpretation can cause such as speaking English instead of his Native indigenous language. First person interpretation seems to foster the “denial of coevalness” phenomena by forcing interpreters to silence their contemporary identities, speaking only as individuals from the past as Taylor stated first person “limits your ability to move beyond the time period that you are representing.”¹⁵²

Many of the interpreters felt that dealing with racism and difficult guests became easier with time and experience. Four of the six interpreters felt that dealing with problematic guests became easier with time (and with it a higher degree of confidence). Charlie stated that over time he developed a “thicker skin” when it came to reacting to racist or impolite remarks about his ethnicity.¹⁵³ Janet felt that limiting and dealing with racial remarks and behaviors improved with “your own comfort as an interpreter. . . . I’ve become a lot more comfortable with the material, with what I’m telling people, and you get more confident that way.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Charlie. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, February, 17, 2016.

¹⁵¹ Michael. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 20, 2016.

¹⁵² Taylor. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 18, 2016.

¹⁵³ Charlie. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, February, 17, 2016.

¹⁵⁴ Janet. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 22, 2016.

Finally, and I would argue most importantly, all six interpreters agreed that, in all but the worst cases, educating guests about why their behavior is inappropriate led to a reduction in their use of racial epithets and racially-motivated behaviors. Michael went as far as to say that it was his job to diminish stereotyping and to change visitors' attitudes by exposing them to accurate information about Native American culture and history.¹⁵⁵ Taylor felt that racist remarks provided her with a teaching opportunity, and that when the museum guests are corrected "most people go 'I didn't know that. Wow, thank you for telling me that!'"¹⁵⁶ All six interpreters stated that they used instances of racism as teaching moments where they can address racist remarks through education.

Implications and Limitations

The information gathered in this study seems to support many of the older findings from my review of the literature such as the importance of "privileging Indigenous voices"¹⁵⁷ in museums and the prevalence of guests denying Native interpreters coevalness.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, the fact that all six interpreters stressed the importance and effectiveness of their role in educating non-Native museum guests out of their racist habits shows that, for these interpreters, what they do is important and beneficial to Native American communities.

Finally, I feel that it is important to note the difficulty I had with applying Derald Wing Sue's microaggression framework to this study. The definitions of the three sub-microaggressions given by Sue overlap with each other a great deal. For example, the definition of a microinsult is given as a "communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and

¹⁵⁵ Michael. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 20, 2016.

¹⁵⁶ Taylor. Interview by Sierra Young. Phone Interview. Seattle, WA, January 18, 2016.

¹⁵⁷ Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 16.

¹⁵⁸ Peers, *Playing Ourselves*, 38.

demean a person's racial heritage," however that can be said of almost every form of racism or racial microaggression.¹⁵⁹ With this in mind, I did my best to categorize the interpreter's statements into the appropriate sub-microaggression. Additionally, I found that, like in Clark et al.'s study "Documenting Weblog Expressions of Racial Microaggressions That Target American Indians," Sue's generic framework to not encompass the entirety of the racial reality of Native people.¹⁶⁰ There was no category in which examples of the denial of coevalness fit as, to my knowledge, only Native people experience individuals questioning whether Native Americans are "extinct" or not. Finally, in order to mitigate these issues surrounding the categorization of the interviewees' statements I conducted an inter-rater reliability test.

¹⁵⁹ Sue, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life*, 20.

¹⁶⁰ Clark, D.A., Lisa B. Spanierman, Tamilia D. Reed, Jason R. Soble, and Sharon Cabana. "Documenting Weblog Expressions of Racial Microaggressions That Target American Indians." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 4, no. 1 (2011): 42, 45.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

This study was a qualitative study of six interpreters of Native history, representing five living history museums that employ Native Americans to interpret their Native history. The study addressed the extent to which, and ways in which, Native American interpreters at living history museums experience and deal with instances of racism while interpreting their Native history. I explored the following questions in the preceding pages:

1. To what extent do native interpreters experience racism in their work interpreting native history?
2. What kinds of racial microaggressions do native interpreters experience in their work?
3. Have native interpreters found any professional practices that limit racial microaggressions or equip them with tools to better deal with these microaggressions?

As a white woman researching a topic involving Native American individuals, and in order to do my utmost to avoid committing the racial microaggressions that I, myself, am studying, I employed Indigenous research methodologies in the planning and execution of this study to the best of my ability.

The key findings of this study are that Native interpreters experience all three subcategories of microaggressions laid out by scholar Derald Wing Sue: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations.¹⁶¹ Native interpreters also experience non-Native guests who deny them coevalness in their ideas about Native Americans. The Native interpreters I interviewed perceived that the number of problematic guests has decreased as non-Native museum guests become more knowledgeable about Native American culture and history. As of this

¹⁶¹ Sue, *Microaggressions in Everyday*, 20.

study, the Native interpreters give the percent of problematic guests to be anywhere from five to fifteen percent of the total number of guests. In summary, this study found that Native interpreters have a number of methods for mitigating the number of racial microaggressions they experience as well as their impact on the Native interpreters.

These methods include:

- Educating the museum visitor as to why their behavior is inappropriate
- Avoiding first person interpretation
- Soliciting the support of museum upper-level management
- Advising and working for the museums that are interpreting their history
- Becoming more comfortable with interpreting over time and used to dealing with the racism which they then turn into teaching moments.

Regardless of the small-scale of this study, it is clear that it is both beneficial and ethical for living history museums that interpret Native history to listen to Native advisors, employee Native interpreters, and support these Native interpreters' decisions regarding the way in which they tell their stories and history. This study has left me with a number of questions that require further studying. First, this study only looked at interpreters that still work as an interpreter and not those who quit. While none of those interviewed ever considered quitting their job over museum guests' racist remarks or behaviors, it would be interesting to talk with those interpreters who quit their job interpreting or those who choose not to interpret their history. Also, further study is required to identify the causes and any possible methods to alleviate the generational-based differences in racism experienced by Native interpreters.

Appendix A: Consent Form and Interview Guide

Research Interview Consent Form

Introduction

My name is Sierra Young, and I am a researcher from the University of Washington. I am studying Native interpreters who work at living history museums. I live in Seattle but originally I am from Daytona Beach, Florida. I am the eldest of three sisters (21 and 12), and when I am visiting home I live with my paternal grandmother. I am asking you to take part in my thesis research about how Native American interpreters at living history sites experience discrimination.

I will be asking for your verbal consent to research with you, so please listen carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What I will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about your work interpreting Native history, your experiences with non-Native museum guests, and your feelings surrounding their behavior towards you. The interview will take about 1 hour to complete. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits: There is the chance that you may find some of the questions about any negative experiences at your workplace to be sensitive and psychologically upsetting. To help make you feel as comfortable as possible, I will provide you with the interview questions before the interview. After reading these interview questions you may decline to participate at any time. Please understand that there are no direct benefits to you. Living history sites are an understudied

area of Museum Studies and I hope to learn more about how interpreters at these sites are affected by their work.

Compensation: You will not be compensated. However, if you wish I will acknowledge your gift of time and knowledge in any publication based on your interview by name or anonymously.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. Unless you would otherwise prefer to be cited by name, in any sort of report I make public I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. You may go by a pseudonym or “stage name” if you wish. If you so choose, I will not refer to the site at which you work for your protection. The recordings of your interview will be deleted once I have transcribed them, which I estimate will take 1-2 months.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with your place of employment or the University of Washington. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Sierra Young. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at sierray@uw.edu or at 386-316-8803. You can also reach my supervising professor, Dr. Scott Magelssen at magelss@uw.edu or 206-616-9792.

You will be given a copy of this statement to keep for your records.

Do you consent to the interview I have just explained?

Would you like to be identified by your given name or a stage name? If you prefer your interview or name to remain confidential, do you have any concerns about that process?

Interview Guiding Questions

Topic	Questions	Probes
First, I'd like to ask you a couple questions about yourself...		
<i>Icebreaker Questions</i>	How long have you lived in the area? Were you raised around here?	
	How long have you worked as an interpreter? Have you ever worked at another living history site?	
Next, I am going to ask you some questions about why you decided to work as an interpreter...		
<i>Motivation</i>	Why did you choose to work as an interpreter?	
	Do you think what you do is important?	In what ways is it important? Who do you want to benefit from your work? Do you think your work changes any of your visitors' beliefs?
I am now going to ask more specific questions about your day-to-day work...		
<i>Daily Routine</i>	What does your daily work routine look like for you?	How do you spend most of your time at work?
<i>Training</i>	When you started working as an interpreter did you receive any training?	Training about: What to do and say? How to interact with museum visitors?

<i>Likes/ Dislikes</i>	What are some of your favorite things about working as an interpreter?	
	What are some of the things you don't like about working as an interpreter?	
<i>Visitors</i>	Can you tell me about who usually comes to your site?	Are they mainly any race, age group, families, etc.? Do many Native people visit your site?
	Can you describe the perfect type of visitor for me?	They can be imaginary or real.
	Can you describe the worst kind of visitor for me?	
	How do you deal with difficult visitors?	
<p>Next, I am going to ask you some questions about any discrimination you may have experienced at work. Remember, you don't have to answer anything you don't want to and may stop the interview at any time.</p>		
<i>Expectations</i>	Do you think non-Native visitors come to your site with expectations about what a Native person should be?	How Native people should act?
<i>Racism</i>	At work, do visitors discriminate against you?	Are they rude? Call you names? Ignore you? What does the discrimination look like?
	How do you respond to visitors when they say or do something inappropriate?	
<i>Interpretation Styles</i>	Have you found that interpreting history in a certain way improves how visitors treat you?	

<i>Change over time</i>	Do you think people are more or less polite than they were, say, 5-10 years ago?	Are visitors more informed than they were 5-10 years ago?
	Have you ever wanted to quit your job? Was it because of visitors' behavior?	
<i>Concluding Questions</i>	Is there anything else you'd like to say or ask before we finish?	

Conclusion

That is all of the questions I have for you. If you would like to see a copy of the transcripts from this interview so you can make sure it's accurate, I can mail or email it you.

Thank-you very much for your time. When this study is finished, I will be writing a report and will gladly send you a copy of the final product.

Appendix B: Coding Rubric

RQ1: To what extent do native interpreters experience racism in their work interpreting native history?	Themes	Taylor	Janet
	Amount of Problematic Guests as Defined by Interviewee	“Most of them aren’t.”	No Data
	Change Over Time in the Politeness of Guests	<p>“Wow! I think there’s been an awakening of sorts, somewhat because as you know if you’ve been watching TV, we’ve become the nation of you can’t say anything politically incorrect.”</p> <p>“Because people, at least when you say ‘oh don’t say that word’ now they really do feel bad about having said that word. 15 years ago some of those people couldn’t have cared less. Yeah, that’s a good thing that we’re trying to become a kinder, gentler group of people.”</p>	“I guess you could say that (it’s always depending on the visitor, you know some people are much more obviously polite than others) but I think a lot of it too comes with your own comfort as an interpreter”
	Change over time in the Degree to Which Guests are Well- Informed about Native culture/history	“Actually, I do because of, we’ve made a lot of strides in teaching about Native Americans.”	No Data

<p>RQ1: To what extent do native interpreters experience racism in their work interpreting native history?</p> <p>(Continued)</p>	Themes	James	Charlie
	Amount of Problematic Guests as Defined by Interviewee	“...90%, I would say 95% are genuinely interested in the Native culture, and respect it, and like it”	“I would say 90% of the people are polite, friendly, and just want pictures, and then another five percent maybe are a little bit more interested in culture things, and another 5% are maybe rude.”
	Change Over Time in the Politeness of Guests	“No. It’s tough to say.”	“Less stereotypes, less rude, I think”
	Change over time in the Degree to Which Guests are Well- Informed about Native culture/history	<p>“Yeah, I believe so. You know a lot of the stuff, a lot of the things that have been going to in the news and all over the place, people are getting more educated about the Native American culture”</p> <p>“Everyone [in Washington] kind of knows about them [tribes] already, I mean if you go to a casino...”</p>	“I think it’s about the same, yeah. Again my example rate being two years cruise directing, being the most contact with the guests, and the dancing being the other four and a half, five years.”

<p>RQ1: To what extent do native interpreters experience racism in their work interpreting native history?</p> <p>(Continued)</p>	Themes	Ace	Michael
	Amount of Problematic Guests as Defined by Interviewee	“I would say maybe around 15%...12-15% I really don’t get a lot of people like that.”	<p>“... Well I would say maybe 10% range” [of impolite people]</p> <p>“It’s not very prevalent here... Very seldom”</p>
	Change Over Time in the Politeness of Guests	<p>“I think so...the Native American people seem to be more accepted”</p> <p>“...at least we’re progressing, at least we’re at the point where people can proudly say [they’re Native]”</p>	“No I don’t think it’s changed at all.”
	Change over time in the Degree to Which Guests are Well- Informed about Native culture/history	“...what with the genealogy program, a lot of people are finding out they have Native American blood in them...It’s become a popular thing to be Native American. People really want to know about it...”	<p>“Absolutely they do because they walk away with a much different perspective and a lot of people actually keep in touch...”</p> <p>“Yeah, I think so, if they come to Conner Prairie”</p>

RQ2: What kinds of racial microaggressions do native interpreters experience in their work?	Themes	Taylor	Janet
	Microinsults: includes stereotyping, “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage”	<p>“And then I still have people who come in and ask us about the redskin thing... And I’m like would you name a football team the New Jersey Negros?”</p> <p>“...thinking about the Indians they saw in a John Wayne movie. And that’s their idea of what an Indian should look like”</p> <p>“...statements such as ‘let’s go in here and look at the Indians’ like we’re in a zoo...”</p>	<p>“...people who come with preconceived motions...people who are not willing to listen to you and try to change their understanding of things...”</p> <p>“But that and they’ll say ‘shouldn’t you be having a Pow Wow,’ ‘shouldn’t you be running around beating a drum and hootin’ and hollerin’...”</p>
	Microassaults: “explicit racial derogations...meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions”	<p>“...Older guys will do this a lot, they’ll come in and say we want to see the ‘squaws’...when you call an Indian women that you have reduced them to basically the ‘c-word”</p> <p>“Now here in Virginia or here with the Monacans, Monacan people were called ‘race issues’ or ‘issues’ ...”</p> <p>“...please don’t call is squaws, they’ll call us redskins...those kinds of things that we’re getting on a daily basis”</p>	<p>“...see Vicky and are intrigued by her, want to know things about her but they won’t go up to her and ask questions...Almost like intimidated by her”</p> <p>“...it wouldn’t be uncommon for older men especially, to call us ‘squaws’...”</p>
	Microinvalidations: “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color”	<p>“They actually discriminate sometimes because I’m not a full-blood...’well you’re not a full-blood’ and I’ll go ‘no there probably hasn’t been a full blooded Monacan in 150 years!”</p>	<p>“...to stay away from the buckskin and things like that because they feel like it’s not, it doesn’t you enough...”</p> <p>“...at Natural Bridge we were able to I think rely on oral traditions and other sources like that. Vicky has a lot of knowledge that has been passed down through her family and other people in the area....but in [another institution] I guess it’s not taken...as seriously I feel like as a lot of the academic stuff”</p>

	Denial of Coevalness	<p>“The issue that we have though is we continue to teach about Native Americans only from a historical perspective...”</p> <p>“They think that we don’t exist, they see us as a group of people who are relegated to the past.”</p> <p>“We don’t want to be stuck in the past; like I don’t want everybody to walk out and think of us from a 1699 time period. I want them to understand that we’re here today! You know we live in regular houses, we drive regular cars, we do the things that everybody else in society does. We have survived! We have, we’re still here but not like we were in 1699.”</p> <p>“Here at the site we prefer to use the term town because they are set up like towns with a governing body and so we used to have a problem with people who came down who actually expected that we were still living in a village like we lived 300 year ago”</p>	<p>“...especially if you’re trying to get across to people that Native people are still here and they’re still a viable, active group of people...”</p>
	Older generations are more problematic than younger generations	<p>“...Older guys will do this a lot, they’ll come in and say we want to see the ‘squaws’”</p> <p>“Now here in Virginia or here with the Monacans, Monacan people were called ‘race issues’ or ‘issues’ and around our area older people would use that term”</p>	<p>“And some people are worse about it than others, but I particularly find it in more elderly populations.”</p> <p>“I guess bluntness is a good way to put it. I guess they, they’re not very tactful a lot of the times...they’re not necessarily sensitive about it”</p> <p>“...it wouldn’t be uncommon for older men especially, to call us ‘squaws’...”</p>

RQ2: What kinds of racial microaggressions do native interpreters experience in their work? (Continued)	Themes	James	Charlie
	Microinsults: includes stereotyping, “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage”	“There’s a lot of stereotypes, people they think that they’re supposed to see Natives in a certain way and that’s the only way that you should see them A lot of it has to do with movies and television shows...”	<p>“I mean you occasionally get people, this isn’t job related, you know you’re going to encounter these people on the street but occasionally you get people who are rude or racist or those kind of things. And it hurts. [Chuckles] It hurts to have that. ... When you’re in that area and you’re kind of open and most people are respectful and then somebody says something harsh or rude, it’s kind of hard to pivot and respond to that without just being taken aback by it.”</p> <p>“One thing is, and this isn’t necessarily rude it’s just an example, the regalia that we wear a lot of times people will call it costume and so I’ll say well you know we actually call it regalia and then I say a costume is when you’re pretending and this is supposed to be regal and it’s something different.”</p>
	Microassaults: “explicit racial derogations... meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions”	No Data	<p>“But there are people who go out there with the intention of calling people squaws or Chief.”</p> <p>“And the other one was to people who fall, and because they’re injured they start screaming racial epithets to everybody...”</p>
	Microinvalidations: “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color”	No Data	<p>“The whole ‘well you don’t look Native, what tribe are you’...”</p> <p>“I think some of the people who don’t look stereotypically Native they get asked if they’re bonafide, they’d kind of challenged whether they can or should be saying those things...”</p>
	Denial of Coevalness	“You know we have to kind of make sure that people who are coming out expect, they expect that we’re still wearing loincloths and small pieces of leather, you know like they did 100 years ago. We’re supposed to make sure that people know that this is 2000-something now. And that people are just like everyone else”	“...I hope to do is impress upon them that this wasn’t a simple group of primitive people that were running around...”

	Older generations are more problematic than younger generations	No Data	<p>“And you know sometimes that may be a generational thing...”</p> <p>“Again I think it might have been a retirement home or something, and a high amount of people from a different generation and I got ‘Chief’ like four times...”</p>
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RQ2: What kinds of racial microaggressions do native interpreters experience in their work?	Themes	Ace	Michael
(Continued)	Microinsults: includes stereotyping, “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage”	<p>“...tons of stereotypes about Native Americans in general...”</p> <p>“And we really want people to know that we’re not just Indians...we are Chickasaw people, we are a specific people...”</p> <p>“It’s not what you see in Dances with Wolves and Bugs Bunny cartoons”</p> <p>“...wondering where all the war bonnets wee and our people didn’t wear any”</p>	<p>“Well I think that today, still today, there are a great many stereotypes about Native Americans, and to be able to show them a different side and show that we’re not savages and I’m not going to chop their heads off”</p> <p>“She didn’t get it from her parents, she got it from movies, she got it from Hollywood, stuff like that. It just, people don’t know where they get these prejudices, they grew up with them and so those are the things that [chuckles] you have to kind of get over and say ‘hey’ that’s strictly a stereotype”</p>
	Microassaults: “explicit racial derogations...meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions”	“We do get some that just don’t care to listen...they’ll ask questions and as soon as we get started answering they’ll ask the next questions, and have no intention of listening to us whatsoever.”	“I’ve had a few people who come in and start calling me chief and, you know, talking about the braves and the squaws.”
	Microinvalidations: “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color”	No Data	No Data
	Denial of Coevalness	No Data	No Data
	Older generations are more problematic than younger generations	“They’re going to see things the way that they want to see them especially when we get to our age. That’s when we get really bad, it’s hard to tell us anything once we become an adult”	No Data

RQ3: Have native interpreters found any professional practices that limit racial microaggressions or equip them with tools to better deal with these microaggressions?	Themes	Taylor	Janet
	Consulting tribes/tribal members	“...Native people had some ownership in the stories that were being told and how that information would be told because it makes a difference.”	<p>“Why do we not have some kind of collaborative thing with some people?”</p> <p>“You have to have some kind of guide at an advising level or something to a Native community if you’re going to represent them and it’s just good museum practice.”</p> <p>[On lacking collaboration] “...it’s almost like it lacks soul...It feels empty. It’s like it’s just a very static sort of thing.”</p>
	Interpreters Do Not Use of First Person Point of View	“We do not do first person down there because I’ve found that first person really limits your ability to move beyond the time period that you are representing.”	No Data
	Need to Develop Confidence as an Interpreter/ “Thicker Skin”	No Data	“...I think a lot of it too comes with your own comfort as an interpreter...I’ve become a lot more comfortable with the material, with what I’m telling people, and you get more confident that way and I think that makes a big difference to people”
	Educating Guests to Combat Racism	<p>“And you’re sitting there going ‘oh we get to enlighten this one!”</p> <p>“So I have developed a pretty intense sign, I have a sign posted as you come into my exhibit, and it explains to them that we’re talking from the time of 1699...”</p> <p>“meet and greet, suggest, know the answer, friendly farewell, those kinds of things, and we have this little six step process that we try to do [when interpreting]</p> <p>“most people go ‘I didn’t know that. Wow, thank you for telling me that!’ [on telling guests why the term ‘squaw’ is inappropriate]</p>	<p>“And it’s one of those things where we try to correct people, not do it in a nasty way...”</p> <p>“I mean I’ll try to give them kind of a very basic sort of foundational understanding of what we’re doing and what we’re trying to accomplish, and if they bite there, that’s great, and if they don’t, you know you can’t get everybody”</p>
	The Need for Support from Higher Management	“Management is something else. The guests? I can deal with them! Management they can be a bit trying from time to time, some of the old management...going to open you’re exhibit in March and there’s eight inches of snow...”	“I mean I feel like the resources are out there, if they wanted to they could research out, they could contact somebody [to collaborate with]

<p>RQ3: Have native interpreters found any professional practices that limit racial microaggressions or equip them with tools to better deal with these microaggressions?</p> <p>(Continued)</p>	Themes	James	Charlie
	Consulting tribes/tribal members	<p>“A lot of Native Americans don’t feel like that’s something that should be owned by a non-Native company which Argosy is a non-Native company.”</p> <p>“All the songs and all the dances, everything that is performed at [redacted] are gifted... So a lot of people they don’t know that, they don’t realize that, and so they kind of just think that it’s being stolen or being used improperly but most people that I talk to that are upset, they have a better understanding of what we’re doing and why we’re doing it, but are still upset in a way”</p>	No Data
	Interpreters Do Not Use of First Person Point of View	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Need to Develop Confidence as an Interpreter/ “Thicker Skin”	No Data	<p>“I think over time you sort of develop a thicker skin about it. I have... I mean sometimes it still, if you encounter it in that context, I think it still hurts because I’m expecting a more open approach...”</p>
	Educating Guests to Combat Racism	<p>“I definitely educate them as possible [people with expectations]”</p> <p>“We’re all kind of trained and coached to make people know what we look like today...”</p>	<p>“...I hope to do is impress upon them that this wasn’t a simple group of primitive people that were running around...”</p> <p>“And so I’ll try, if I can if it’s not too obtuse, I try to turn it into a teaching moment and I’ll engage them. So if they call me chief, I’ll go actually I’m not a chief, I’ll talk to them about rank maybe if I can.”</p> <p>“But if I can I try and, in a positive manner, redirect them and use it as an opportunity to at least provide more information on the other side. You may not change their opinion but you got to give them that information”</p>

	The Need for Support from Higher Management	No Data	“...non-traditional choices for the masks with carvers that only have a small understanding of the principles of the art or not using the real, legitimate resources like using fiber glass or a different kind of wood other than cedar or alder or those that would have traditionally been used for the masks. Or hanging up button blankets as dividers. There’s various things that maybe if you’re not part of the tradition, you don’t know the significance. Sometimes the decision making process is already down the way before we hear about it.”
<p>RQ3: Have native interpreters found any professional practices that limit racial microaggressions or equip them with tools to better deal with these microaggressions?</p> <p>(Continued)</p>	Themes	Ace	Michael
	Consulting tribes/tribal members	No Data (Tribal Run Site)	<p>“The reason basically was that Conner Prairie wanted to have an actual Lenape there to talk about it. They didn’t want to take white interpreters and have them act the role because they thought that would be improper. So as an advisor, we were teaching them those things, and we never would allow them to dress or, you know, act as Lenape. So that’s why they wanted to have this connection. To have an actual tribal member there to talk about the history and language”</p> <p>“It’s something that you don’t see very often because I’ve been to a lot of museums and way back east...maybe up at Plymouth village, they do have a few Wampanoags people that work there but most of them are white. You go out to Jamestown and so how they reflect the Native American people there is not quite correct”</p>
	Interpreters Do Not Use of First Person Point of View	No Data	“No I do myself. I don’t do a character. We did have people in the camp that did character types but myself no. I do not do a character. I speaking from the tribe itself...it works better that way for me...they were wondering why I was speaking English. OK, I start in with [Speaking Lenape]”

	Need to Develop Confidence as an Interpreter/ "Thicker Skin"	"Got to keep our opinions to ourselves. Sometimes if we do have people down that just don't get it, it's hard to smile and say 'okay'. I've travelled around quite a bit...I've met a lot of different kinds of people, and it makes it easier to smile and wave"	"And of course at my age and at my time doing this, I can solve just about any problem..."
	Educating Guests to Combat Racism	<p>"Help them learn, help them understand, and whatever questions they want to have answered, to make sure they get them answered because you know it's that lack of knowledge that makes people feel, have negative thoughts or anything like that."</p> <p>"...one of the biggest comments is 'oh I had no idea that was how you do things' or 'oh that's information I never even thought of'. It's good to hear that because I know I'm educating them and then helping them understand."</p>	<p>"And so [inaudible] interact with people, and give them that different perspective, and the ideas that they may have and you know, to try and some of the stereotypes that you get and be able to change that."</p> <p>"Well it's just these old stereotypes, you know they're talking about scalping [laughs] they're talking about savage or even how promiscuous tribes were and it's those kind of things which people grew up with...they don't have anything to reference it to. They didn't live next to <i>actual</i> tribes and find out that they're not actually not anything like that at all. But they really can't help it, that's what they grew up with...so that's my job. I gotta change that attitude"</p>
	The Need for Support from Higher Management	No Data	"...that some of the ideas that come down [from management] are still, you know, not correct or some cases they might even be demeaning to the tribe."

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