

RUNNING HEADER:  
The One Drop Rule While Being a Black Indigenous Woman

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## **I Am From**

By Ada Marie McDaniel

I am from the precious roots of the Cedar Tree and the Pecan Tree

Both made from the precious Mother Earth of the Muckleshoot Reservation and the precious  
Mother Earth of Beaumont, Texas

I am from my Native ancestors' homelands in the Cascade Range

I am from my enslaved black grandparents of East Texas

I am from the back seat of a Cadillac car

I am from the back porch of my grandmother's reservation home

I am from the hazel nuts, baked breads, beans, soups and stews from my mother's kitchen

I am from the soul food, the fried fish, chicken, neck bones, greens, cornbread and beans made  
from my father's kitchen

I am from the river and water that were used by my Native mother to wash my clothes in

I am from the wind and sun used to dry the clothes I wore my mother washed and dried them in<sup>7</sup>

I am from the fish in the catfish holes and bays my black father fed us fresh fish from

I am from the red and yellow roses that I was called names from to match my skin color

I am from the cement jungle of hilltop, Washington where our mother moved us to in order to try  
and avoid the racism of the Muckleshoot Reservation

I am from my Aunt's Foster home, where she conditioned me to know religion and education

I am from a blended family of 10 children whom my mother gave birth to not caring what other people thought about her

I am from surviving brother and sisters who protected me from the monsters that tried coming into our home when our mother and father were gone

I am from a blended family of 10 siblings, either black or native from the Muckleshoot Tribe and Yakama Nation

I am from survivance skills used throughout my life taught to me by my siblings, mother, father and aunt so that I would not become a victim inflicting more pain upon my family. My black father allowed us to remain within the Native culture with our relatives to learn the traditions and culture of my mother's people, the Muckleshoot Tribe and Yakama Nation. I am a survivor.

## **Dedications**

My dissertation is dedicated to my five children, James IV, Micah, Savannah, Phillip Jr, and Catherine, and to my 21 grandchildren, who are enrolled Muckleshoot Tribal members but still face the daily challenges of the One Drop Rule and being a person of color within their own environments. My dissertation is also dedicated to the Black Indigenous and mixed heritage children of the Muckleshoot community, whose lives will forever be impacted by the One Drop Rule through no fault of their own.

May each of you learn from my dissertation that being a person of mixed lineage is a gift given to each of us by our ancestors that will always reside within us. Your Indigenous ancestors from each lineage will guide you, and protect you in your daily endeavors, you will need to learn to listen to them to learn the signs they are sending to each of you for ways of survivance.

I have faith in each of you that you will carry this message onto each of your children as they learn to survive in this multi-race world in a non-violent manner that will allow them to teach their own families to learn to use these precious gifts of what a person of color has to offer.

## **Acknowledgments**

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Being raised in both Black and Indigenous communities, both maternal and paternal parents have instinctively instilled their own life skills for ways of survivance inside of me. I am now able to share a part of my story through this Autoethnography for others to read and learn from knowing that the Black Indigenous Woman has been in existence for a long time and one by one we will share and listen to each other's stories adding support with our original ways of knowing.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction of Using Autoethnography as a Method**

My method in this study of "self" or my "Autoethnography" Barone, (2001), p. 153. is a result of my character since my conception, I have been labeled since my birth in 1960 as a Black American or "Negro child" As time evolved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century I am now described, labeled and identified as a Black Indigenous Woman of Color, I am now identified describing my two lineages, both the Black and Native American.

### **Why I Chose to write my Autoethnography**

When I interviewed for this program I did not know I was going to write a reflection of my life story of how living in my two worlds, and identifying with my two lineages, or my ancestors have helped to condition the character I have today. I have been compelled to share my story about being a Black Indian for approximately 20 years prior to this course which I can now label as a part of my heart work.

This story has been on my mind since I went on my first canoe journey over to Canada with my tribe over 15 years ago. I was able to witness firsthand how the Black Indigenous person was treated and mistreated, even the children. I said, “Not much has changed since I was their age.” I witnessed teasing from the full-blooded native towards the person of color or the “black Indian.”

I saw what I witnessed as modern-day slavery methods of the Black Indigenous person being used in most laborious positions, only to be placed out of eye – sight when the time came for interviews and photos with the local journalists. They did all of the hard work and there was no recognition, it was thankless, to me it was injustice and unfair. I always told myself “I was going to do something about this one day!” I may even purchase our own canoe like the other ethnicities have done, if they can than why can’t we? The young Black Indigenous people was not fazed by the name calling and teasing at the time, but I knew it would become a negative impact and memory one day, just like it has done for me.

This is one of the reasons why I chose to write this Autoethnography, because it assists me in a healing process that I have not been able to discuss with anyone. The Black Indigenous

person is not seen or rarely appreciated for who they are or for their ways of knowing. We were raised with two or more lineages, heritages and cultures, it is a gift that we were born with.

When I write about Colorblindness, even though we crave our own identity, and we don't look the part of one race, we are placed automatically placed into the category "Black "because of the One - Drop rule. I am not complaining, but we do have our own identity that a majority of the communities we reside in do not see, either you are black, red or white, there is no in between.

### **My Audience**

The first audience I chose my story for is for the person of color that can place themselves into my shoes and can relate and reflect on the issues I will write about throughout this process. The second audience I would like to engage with is the school age children, teenagers and young adults because each of them will experience similar experiences as mine through each of the stages of life. It has been apparent to me this story has not been taught or discussed within my tribal community or at any grade level even though there are Black Indigenous school age children attending our tribal schools and public schools. These children of all school ages will find the need to identify with their two or more lineages in their lifetime hopefully sooner than later, just like I did.

I have witnessed the different heritages, cultures, and traditions in just about every ethnicity celebrate their traditional given holiday except the Black Indigenous holiday and celebration. This lineage is rarely discussed because we have learned to be comfortable in identifying with either the Black or Indigenous race and not a combination.

The label Black Indigenous is a new word or label being used in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to describe the same ethnic group of people with the One Drop rule definition-colored, meaning a race of black people. The Black Indigenous person is in a category of our own, we have our own identity and would prefer to be recognized as our own race of people who can celebrate and define our two or more lineages within the communities we choose to reside in.

I have a vision that one day my Black Indigenous audience will learn to celebrate and enjoy their mixed lineages with respect for themselves, families and ancestral ways of knowing.

I pray they learn that through the macroaggression's we endure in the classrooms and work on a daily basis it is not our fault or the aggressor's fault but we have all been wounded in a way that has not brought out the best in us, but at times the "beast in us."

### **My Mindset**

The process of sharing my story will be from my Black Indigenous mindset in which my character has been formed over the last 63 years. It has not been a pleasant journey being part of two worlds, the red and black, both being led by the colonizing rulings, but there has never been a dull moment. I have learned that I am from the best of two worlds and I am willing to share those experiences through my trials, tribulations, and from the guidance my ancestors from both worlds have tasked me with.

Although the names and labels have changed over time to protect the innocent, there is one Rule that has not changed for me, I am a product of the One Drop Rule, a rule used to segregate people of color based on their skin tone, but still defines me as "black".

The term is used to give our skin tones an order from light to dark. The lighter our skin was, the smarter we appeared and were given priority because we looked "white", but they never

forgot we had the lineage of a black ancestor and we were still treated less than white because of our appearance of not being 100% white. My light-skinned ancestors were placed in the slave master's home instead of the fields because of their lighter skin tones.

### **Paternal Traits**

I will always carry those traits and some of the genetics of my native ancestors. Even though my Indigenous Paternal Black grandmother did not carry me inside her womb, it was through her son, my paternal father, sharing his DNA with my mother adding to my native lineage, I was conceived to become a Black Indigenous Woman of Color.

### **My Father and Paternal Grandparents and the Jim Crow Era**

My Black American father Jesse B. McDaniel Sr. was a survivor of the Jim Crow era and laws which begin in the 1870s in the town of St. Augustine, Florida spreading throughout the south affecting all Black Americans. My father's mother Ada Marie McDaniel was born out of slavery. Her mother and father were brought to America through the Gulf Coast during the slave trades, having no choice but to become enslaved in East Texas where they settled until the laws begin to change for the person of color.

My Father was one of five children born in 1916. He was drafted into WW2, he decided to remain in the military for another 20 years after the war to avoid going back home to East Texas to continue to witness impacts the Jim Crow Laws had on his family. His childhood and adult traumas combined with the United States Military caused PTSD issues which later on were reflected upon me while being raised by a single Black American man in the 1960's.

My father decided he was going to retire and settle in the Pacific Northwest at Ft. Lewis, Washington. This is where he met my Native American mother Pauline. He had no other family or children, he decided to enter into an Indigenous family to try and make my mother and her eight Indigenous children a part of his family. My maternal mother Pauline had two more children, me and my brother. I was born into an Indigenous family; this is how my Black Indigenous lineages began.

### **My Paternal Grandmothers and Mother**

“My grandmother carried me” My grandmother Isabelle carried my mother inside her womb and at the same time she carried me inside her womb. Isabelle’s mother Betsy Stillman carried my grandmother (her daughter) and my mother (her granddaughter, my mother.) My mother carried me and my daughters, and my two daughters carried their daughters and their granddaughters, this cycle will continue throughout eternity. It is because of this belief system we carry within my native culture that I exist today.

My Indigenous great-grandmother was born in the early 1800’s, my Indigenous grandmother was born in the late 1800s, and my mother was born in 1926, they were all born in the Pacific Northwest with lineages from five different tribes named by colonization. I was born in 1960, this is over 120 years of me being tucked inside both my maternal mother’s and grandmothers’ wombs and they didn’t even know it! I had lived and survived through each of their trial and tribulations that life had to offer, their DNA has been passed onto me along with some of their genetics, traits and trauma.

When I reflect back at the traumatic experiences my maternal parents endured while carrying me, through all of their trauma, it has become a pattern of generational trauma that I

inherited. I was protected from physical violence, but not the emotional violence. I will carry the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for the rest of my life, it is in my Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) or the “molecule of life” I cannot help it, but I can change it for my future generations.

### **Maternal and Paternal Eras of Trauma**

The Jim Crow, and Civil Rights, World War 2 eras impacted the ways a black family could live in any daily routine. The Jim Crow laws made for racism were based on the different shades of skin color. The lighter you were, there smarter you appeared to the community. This is where the One Drop Rule still plays a key role in our Black Indigenous Communities of Color, especially for the female of these two lineages.

Being a female born from these two lineages, being raised in two cultures black and Indigenous or “Indian” back then. I was protected by my father. I am the ninth child of my mother, so she was very tired by the time I was born, there was not much time for me to bond with her. My father had the paternal instincts to know soon he would have to become the stronger parent in order for me to survive.

It was because of the Boarding school era and trauma my Indigenous ancestors endured, I was not allowed to learn my Indian language. It was hidden from me, but I could hear my grandmother, and aunties speak it fluently but it was always in another room away from me. I have to respect them now because it was their way of protecting me from the colonizer. My maternal Indigenous grandmother was afraid that if the colonizer knew they were teaching me the Indian language, we could be taken away from her daughter. Not allowing me to learn the

Indian language was a form of protection not a form of punishment from my maternal Indigenous grandmother's side of my family.

Being raised in both Black and Indigenous communities, both maternal and paternal parents have instinctively instilled their own life skills for ways of survivance inside of me. I am now able to share a part of my story through this Autoethnography for others to read and learn from knowing that the Black Indigenous Woman has been in existence for a long time and one by one we will share and listen to each other's stories adding support with our original ways of knowing.

### **The “colored child” and the native language**

Because I was recognized as a “colored” child most of my young life, I was not given the privilege to learn my Muckleshoot language. To this day I do not know if not learning my native language was a defense or a protective mechanism. I use the word defense to describe the protection used by my elders so that I would not learn the language in fear that I could have been taken by the colonizer from my mother and father and placed into a boarding school never to be seen or heard from again. The Indian language was not to be taught or spoken in public only in private amongst each native family for protection of each other and the only communication they knew that was being taken from them. To this day I feel traumatized with memories of seeing my ancestors hiding in different rooms while speaking our language so the children of color could not hear it being spoken, this way we could not learn it.

I believe this is a barrier why I cannot speak our native language today even though my younger brother can, and the language is being revived in our tribe again. I cannot bring myself to speak the language because of these memories I carry.

## **Impacts**

The impacts I endured have conditioned me to become the person I am today reflecting on both the black and red cultures along with the traditions I was raised with, both negative and positive. I have always lived on or near my reservation in Auburn, Washington, but my fathers' Indigenous lands of Beaumont, Texas I rarely visited.

I will describe the timelines of experiences of being raised in both of my Black and Indigenous environments, and how both of my lineages and their environments have impacted me having to abide by the colonizing rules and laws.

I am sure I am not only describing myself and there are many others born in this time and eras who are not accepting of the changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We were conditioned with laws of segregation and hatred based on our skin tones which have proven difficult to erase the images from our hearts, minds and souls.

There are three stages of my life that I can recollect to share my story in the Autoethnography of the two communities I was fortunate to have been raised in. They are: 1<sup>st</sup> stage: Wounded child years, 0 – 6 years of age. 2<sup>nd</sup> stage: The adaptive years 7 – 17: 3<sup>rd</sup> stage: 18 – present, the functioning adult along with my Indigenous “Ghost Sickness” still protects me to this day.

## **Positionality Statement**

Colorism of my mixed lineage perspective along with my own experiences is important to me because my upcoming generations will need to know the challenges they will experience in their own Black Indigenous communities they may choose to reside in. I need them to know

because they are enrolled Native Americans, they may not be looked at as Native Americans.

“Skin color matters because we are a visual species and we respond to one another based on the way we physically present.” Tharps L.L, (10/6/2016).

My Native brother and sisters state that “you are not dark enough to be a full-blooded Indian, therefore you are a light-skinned Indian Aka White Indian.” My native brothers and sisters also see the One drop rule you carry from your Blackness; therefore, you are only a “nigger.” My Black American brothers and sisters have colorism issues of their own but are similar to the “full-blooded Native American.” You cannot be of mixed heritage and be a whole “Black “person, especially if you are light-skinned, the lighter the skin color, the less black gene you carry so therefore you are a half-breed Indian or maloti, etc.

We have to continuously mark our grounds to prove ourselves, our bloodlines, our ancestors, know our culture and traditions hoping the colorism will soon pass. 1) am I seen as the racist within my tribal and black communities? 2) what has society done to make me look at my relatives this way? 3) is there another way I can teach my grandchildren about colorism so they won't be so offended by it or will it continue to be accepted as normal?

How has the One Drop Rule affected me as a Black Indigenous Women in both of my tribal and black communities? The definition below shows that even though a person can be born into an “all white” clan, no matter how much the blackness shows up on the family member, they are considered black by the family, or of hypo descent. This applies in native American families too.

**Figure one: Definition of the One Drop Rule**



<https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=google+images+the+one+drop+rule+images&->  
retrieved on 4/1/2023.

The One Drop Rule was created by the colonizer to protect and to separate the darker skinned slaves from the lighter-skinned slaves. If the slave had one drop of African ancestry, they were considered black no matter how light the skin was and placed into another category of the human race or not considered human at all.

The One-Drop Rule has been taught and passed onto other communities of color to continue the oppression the name was originally designed for and to this day the Black Indigenous person falls under this ruling.

The Black Indigenous Woman is seen as the “person of color” and is treated different from either group of people within the black and Indigenous races, because of the One Drop Rule we inherited from either our mother, father or ancestors. I use the word “different” it is a word I chose to use describing the space I have been placed in, while not being looked at as either Red or Black but in between both races.

The One-Drop Rule is a social and legal principle of racial classification that was prominent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of the United States. It asserted that any person with even one ancestor of black ancestry is considered black or negro.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One-drop\\_rule&oldid=1087283077](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One-drop_rule&oldid=1087283077).

Being a Black Indigenous Woman of Color I am a minority and get treated less than my “full blooded” members both in the workplace and in both the Red and Black communities even though I show workplace dedication and have been committed to my communities.

I used the term “full-blooded” because this is a common term used by some tribal people who believe they are 100% “Native American”. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>, retrieved on 5/29/2023).

My Black Indigenous children, grandchildren and other black Indigenous children are bullied from birth throughout their entire life. For instance, if a Black Indigenous child is raised on his or her Indigenous reservation as soon as they are old enough to interact with other children, they are described as the black child no matter the skin tone. If there is no straight hair, if the skin tone is a shade darker than most, or if the child is seen with the Black parent, the name calling and bullying begin for the child.

The name calling and bullying will continue throughout the life of the child of color until it feels normal, the names will become nicknames and soon they learn to live with it because it all they knew when they were and labeled as a child within their own Indigenous community.

There are tribal members in my community who could learn to reap the rewards if we could treat each other as equals and not allow the color of our skin to stand in the way and let internal colorism take over.

Name calling is a learned behavior; it happens in all communities of color. Rank downs on a person's physical appearance as a form of joking aka "ranking" began in the slavery era. Slaves would rank or make fun of each other if they were hard to sell or trade to the enslaver. They would tease, rank or joke on the physical make-up of each other, example: "You can't be sold or traded, master or no one wants to buy you cause your lips are too big," "your hair is too nappy," "your skin is too dark or ashy" or "your just plain ugly and no one wants you." Even in today's society the Black race still conducts these type rank downs on each other no matter the time or place. They have become used to ranking on each other because it has been passed down into the family units and has become a part of the norm.

If other races see that we don't mind ranking on each other, then they will believe it's okay for them to rank on us as well. This also is a contributor to why we are prejudged in the employment world and have to prove ourselves no matter what our qualifications, experience or education is, even if we are "over-qualified." Because the One Drop Rule applies to me, I fall into this category.

The One Drop Rule applies to me in the three worlds I reside in, the Black, Indigenous and white. I am not ashamed of my two lineages anymore, although there was a time when I believed I had to decide which color to be. I based my decisions on racial biases and perspectives on the Black, Red and white communities I was raised and resided in.

I have learned to tolerate the non- traditional colonizer ways that have been engrained into a majority of our hearts, minds, bodies and souls, through no fault of our own, but because of the skin color descriptions along with the definitions they placed upon us because of the One Drop rule definition.

### **My Children and the One Drop Rule**

My children will always carry the One Drop Rule, it will be passed onto generations into the future and will show up genetically in some form or fashion. It can be seen through the nappy – straight hair, the full lips, the shape of the nose, physically or through the dialect when they speak. It will be noticed and they will fall into the category of the Black Indigenous person of Color, still under the original definition of the One Drop Rule.

I will always carry those traits and some of the genetics of my native ancestors. Even though my Indigenous Paternal Black grandmother did not carry me inside her womb, it was through her son, my paternal father, sharing his DNA with my mother adding to my native lineage, I was conceived to become a Black Indigenous Woman of Color.

### **The role of One Drop Rule**

The One Drop Rule still plays a key role in my Black Indigenous Communities of Color, especially for the two lineages I carry. Although I have been motivated to continue my education and gain workplace experience, I feel as though I am still seen as less than or not “smart” enough, etc. I am moved into another category, neither with my fellow Indigenous or white co-workers, but to the Woman of Color category.

Through this writing process of sharing my story, my truths, my perspectives on how the traumatic turn of events has impacted me, my story will allow me to begin my own healing process during my stages as a “functioning adult or Elder.” I will be able to reflect back on each of those stages of my life to try and understand and accept those teachings and ways of survivance that were meant for me. I will have learned to forgive during my functioning adult life.

### **Reciprocity Statement**

By me writing/researching and introducing the Black Indigenous subject matter with a user-friendly approach to my tribal community and to children that are Black Indigenous, it will open doors for being a much-needed conversation for these two races. The children of mixed-heritage are living the same childhood experiences that I did decades ago. The mixed-heritage children are hearing the same racist comments from their own native cousins and other non – native children while at school, just like I did in my schools during the most impressive years as children. The racism has made a lasting impact on my image as a Black Indigenous Woman as I am named today. The photo below is the year 1968, the Civil Rights Act was passed four years earlier in 1964. The Civil Rights Act did not matter; racism was very active in my community.

### **A Cohesive Tribal Community of Color**

It has been 50 years and we are a now host to a diverse community of families consisting of Black, Samoan, Japanese, Filipino, and other mixed races that make up our tribal population. We are becoming a cohesive community of color sharing cultures and traditions but I can only write and describe the two lineages I was born into, the Black and Indigenous families. The children of these diverse groups of families will have similar struggles being raised with two or more lineages because of the One Drop Rule or because of their skin tones and genetic make-up.

After we go through and survive the three stages of life and enter into the functioning adult they can begin to understand, accept and begin to identify with themselves their lineages, ancestors, and their original ways of knowing and survivance, they will have a purpose.

### Definition of key Terms

Autoethnography: The scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures.

Retrieved November 13, 2022, <https://anthropology.princeton.edu>

1. Person of Color: People of Color or persons of color is used to describe any person who is not “white.” In the U.S. people of color including African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, Multiracial Americans, and some Latino Americans. Though these communities may prefer to identify themselves by their culture rather than by color-related terms. Jackson & Yo (2006).

2. Colorism: prejudice or discrimination especially within a racial or ethnic group favoring people with lighter skin over those with darker skin. [ebster.com/dictionary/colorism](https://www.oxford.com/dictionary/colorism)

3. Racism: a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism>

4. Discrimination based on skin color: a form of prejudice or discrimination in which people who share similar ethnicity traits are treated differently based on social implications that come with the cultural meanings that are attached to skin color. Wikipedia contributors. 2022, May 7.

Discrimination based on skin color. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 18:35, May 15, 2022,

from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Discrimination\\_based\\_on\\_skin\\_color&oldid=1086665018](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Discrimination_based_on_skin_color&oldid=1086665018)

5. Ethnicity: An ethnic group or ethnicity is a group of people who identify with each other on the basis of shared attributes that distinguish them from other groups. Wikipedia contributors.

(2022, May 10). Ethnic group. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 18:39, May 15, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ethnic\\_group&oldid=108705355](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ethnic_group&oldid=108705355)

6. One-Drop rule: The one-drop rule is a social and legal principle of racial classification that was prominent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of the United States. It asserted that any person with even one ancestor of black ancestry is considered black or negro. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, May 11).

One-drop rule. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 18:30, May 15, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One-drop\\_rule&oldid=1087283077](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One-drop_rule&oldid=1087283077)

7. Woman of Color: a woman whose skin pigmentation is other than and especially darker than what is considered characteristic of people typically defined as white. Merriam-Webster. (n.d.).

Women of color. In the Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/woman%20of%20color>

8. Blood purity: pure blood, pure-blooded, full-blooded, full blood, half blood, half-blood: all terms which are or have been used relating to racial purity. Wikipedia contributors, 2022, March 3, In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 18:54, May 15, 2022,

from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Blood\\_purity&oldid=1075062904](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Blood_purity&oldid=1075062904)

9. Racial Color Blindness: When people do not notice race when perceiving others. Perceptual differentiation of race occurs rapidly, in less than one-seventh of a second, and emerges as early as 6 months of age. (Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy, & Hodes, 2006; Ito & Urland, 2003).

10. Ghost Sickness: Ghost sickness is a cultural belief among some traditional indigenous peoples in North America, notably the Navajo, and some Muscogee and Plains cultures, as well as among Polynesian peoples. People who are preoccupied and/or consumed by the deceased are believed to suffer from ghost sickness. Reported symptoms can include general weakness, loss

of appetite, suffocation feelings, recurring nightmares, and a pervasive feeling of terror. The sickness is attributed to ghosts or, occasionally, to witches or witchcraft.

11. Tribal: A word used when asking another Indigenous person in the Pacific Northwest if they are Native American and which tribe are they from.

12. Mixed Race: When your parents and/or your grandparents are of different races or ethnicities. Sometimes the terms biracial, dual heritage and mixed heritage are used instead.

13. Homogenous society: a strong sense of group and national identity and little or no ethnic or racial diversity.

14. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, March 3). Blood purity. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 18:54, May 15, 2022.

from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Blood\\_purity&oldid=1075062904](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Blood_purity&oldid=1075062904)

15. Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy, & Hodes, (2006; Ito & Urland, 2003).

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/submission/23825/...> Retrieved on 04/07/2023.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter will show the literature I used to determine the goals and vision used on how readers will interpret my Autoethnography. I will show how the impacts colonization had on both my black and native lineages and the positive and negative reflections these historical traits have on me since my birth in 1960 into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The title of my Autoethnography is The Impacts of the One Drop Rule and the Black Indigenous Woman of Color. I will show when the One Drop Rule became law and where it originated from only to divide people by the color of their skin. The lighter you were the more intelligence you were, but you were still considered to be a black person because of your

ancestral traits. Being “black” was the lowest skin color ever named, you were less than and not considered human.

While the One Drop Rule was forming in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was another law forming in the United States and its was named the Jim Crow Law. These laws were made specifically for the Black person of color, men, women and children during the Reconstruction era, restoring of white privileges in the South and the passage of the Jim Crow era.

(<https://www.commentary.org/articles/wilfred-reilly/the-tragedy-of-the-one-drop-rule/> retrieved on 1/22/2023).

The Jim Crow era 1865 – 1877 and segregation. The form of Black Codes were laws passed in the South beginning in 1856 that dictated the way Black people lived, worked, received educations, and just about every routine they conducted in their daily lives. These Jim Crow laws applies to the Black Indigenous person because of the One Drop Rule, we were considered black and had to follow the rules or face the consequences. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/segregation-united-states#black-codes-and-jim-crow> retrieved on 3/5/2023.

The Muckleshoot reservation was an original fort filled with soldiers who fought against the surrounding communities and other tribes. Ballard, A.C. (1927), *The Puget Sound Native Americans* sharing insight into how the Natives co-mingled with other races. Ballard, A.C. (1935), “Southern Puget Sound Salish Kinship Terms. This research goes back decades to show the consanguine/bloodlines of families of the Puget Sound. Bells, M. (1887), “Decrease of Population among the Indian of the Puget Sound.” The lands that were allotted to the Indians by the past Presidents have slowly disappeared over time.

Ewers, J.C. (1973), Forbes, Jack D., *Africans and Native Americans: the language of race and the evolution of Red-Black peoples*. Black Africans and Native Americans Oxford and

New York: The African Native experience is a valuable piece of history not only in the Americas, but internationally known as well. Even though the rich history these two shares are especially important when combined is very enriching to the listener when the history is shared.

Glover W.B. (1935), *A history of the Caddo Indians of the Louisiana Territories*, one of the original Native American tribes of the Texas, Louisiana Territory. Harrington, L. (2021), *Both sides of the water: Essays on African-Native American Interactions*.

*Black Indian Slave Narratives (Real Voices, Real History)* When we hear the word “slave” we automatically think and perceive a black man or black woman. Native Americans were captured and sold on the auction block too. Indians were considered a high commodity during the slave trade. As time evolved the acts of slavery did not. The Blacks and the Indian slave had to find common ground in order to survive. Newcomb Jr., W.W., (1969).

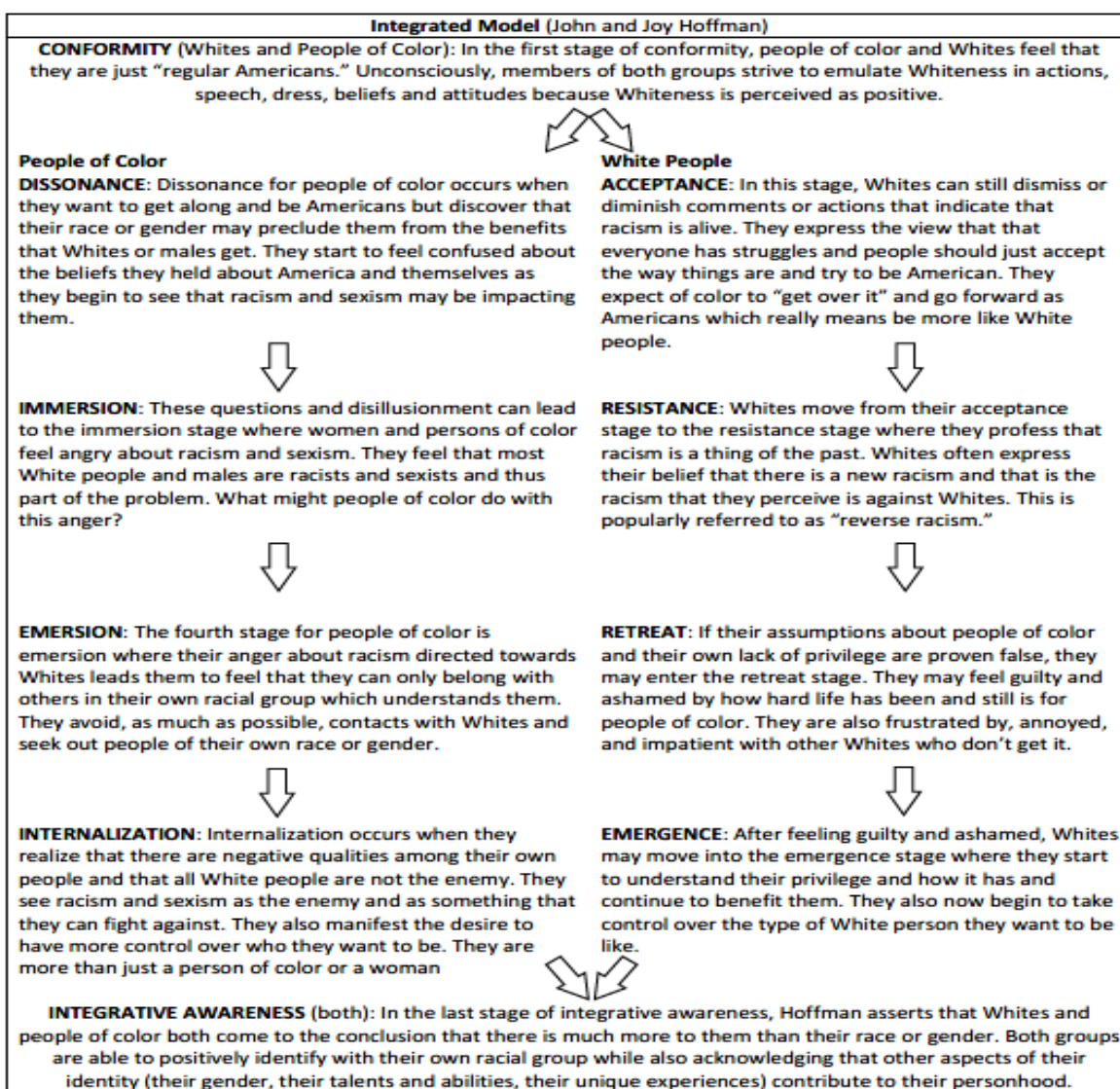
*The Indians of Texas from Prehistoric to Modern Times*. The authors, researchers of the Indians of Texas have published a product to assist with the research of the Indians of Texas. Although some of the mentioned tribes are not “federally” recognized in the United States, the Indians of Texas cultures and traditions are. Newcomb Jr., W.W, (1969).

A Woman or a person of Color does not always have to be from a Native American recognized tribe. William L. Katz, (1986), *The Person of Color is no longer a hidden heritage in the educational or workplace systems*. The word Color Blindness is used as a title to stereotype the Person or Woman of Color. They are recognized as a part of the melting pot across the United States and abroad it is not their fault that they were born not either black or red but with color.

**Table 1: People of Color vs. Biracial People vs. White People**

Table 1 shows the differences that have been studied and categorized segregating all people, their beliefs, ethnicities, pre-encounters, encounters, internalizations, enmeshment/denial, appreciation, integration all ending with reintegration and accepting the common fact that whites do have more privileges than most people of color or the bi-racial lineages.

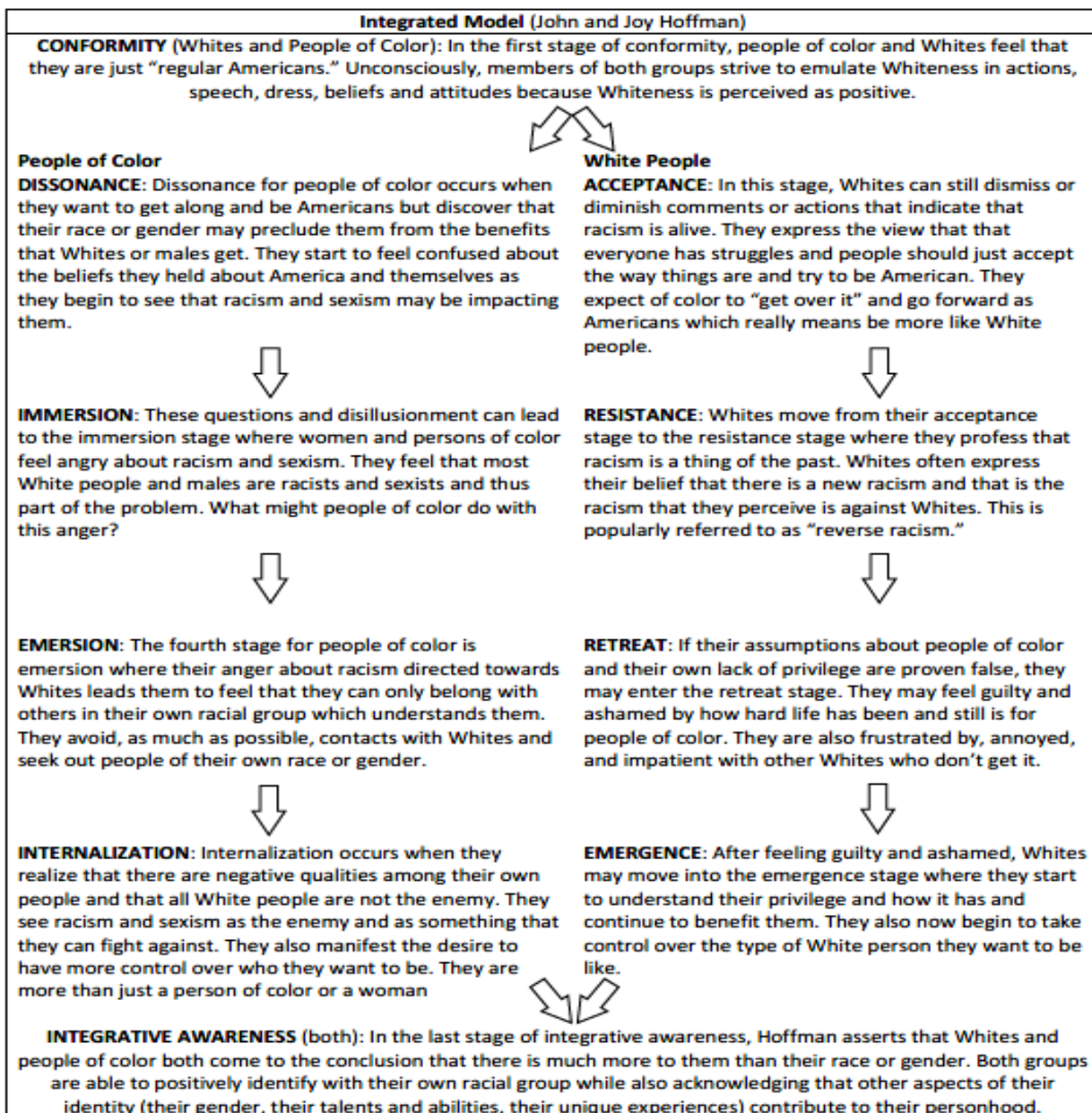
### Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development



**Table 2: Conformity**

Table 2 shows People of Color and Whites that enter into their first stage of conformity will both feel they are the standard American. People of Color slowly lose their traditions and cultures accepting the “white way” to live, dress adhering and admiring the role of the superior race. Integrative Awareness happens when the race war is near the end. When both the Black and White race begin to accept each other lineage for who they are and the gifts they can share with their communities of color. This is when mixed lineages begin to appear and a new race of people are born known as the People of Color because of the One Drop Ruling.

## Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development



This heart work would not only open the discussion to the tribally enrolled Black Indigenous Woman of Color but to the tribal leadership and tribal families letting them know that racism is an issue and we would like to discuss it as a tribe. We will begin to learn to uncover the differences, only to discover that we have many similarities as well.

Together with other enrolled Black Indigenous Woman of Color and families we can form support groups to begin the healing process we were afraid to ask for in the past because of the racism that existed between the tribal membership and communities of color.

We can form a tribal network that will support our eighth generation showing support to our leadership so they can be enlightened to our struggles and to some of their own. I am sure we share similar stories of racism, because none of us are 100% native within my tribe, but if the Black Indigenous Person of Color has been given another name or label, it may as well be understood.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The five methods I will use are: 1) am the data source 2) My grandmother carried me 3) Pia Melody's versions of the Wounded Child 4) I will give 10 examples that prove white privilege, white supremacy still exists 5) Timetable of life events 1965 – present. These methods and discoveries will explain my years of surviving in both the black and red worlds while being carried inside my maternal parents' womb, it will explain my character and the vision I have today. <https://www.piamellody.com/articles.html>-retrieved on 2/12/2023.

### **Method one: Using myself as the data source**

I will use myself as the data source for my Autoethnography. In the beginning of my research I did not realize the topic I chose was going to be a self – reflection of my life before birth to present including my ancestors. I learned to combine my own story (Auto-biography) and the culture, traditions and belief systems I was raised with (ethnography) into a story assisting the reader with a view of my perspective on my bi-racial views of the Black Indigenous Woman or Person of Color.

I know there are many mixed lineages of people from all over the world that have decided to live, work and create families in my black and tribal communities which was rare in my early life. I am writing this Autoethnography to be used as a tool for the audience who may choose to read and interpret the similarities that still exist and, in some cases, history is repeated.

### **Method two: Our grandmothers carried us**

I am using a model created by women of color in my family who believe we are products of our grandmothers, in other words, our grandmothers carried us in their wombs while carrying our mothers. There is very little research in this area but used as a strong belief system in my family unit.

**Figure two: Left:** Our Maternal grandmothers carried us. **Right:** A family photo of my maternal Indigenous lineage and my future female lineage consisting of my two daughters and granddaughters.



<https://themindsjournal.com/quotes/did-you-know-that-your-grandmother-carried-part-of-you-inside-her-womb/> - retrieved on 4/13/2023.

### **Method three: The beginning of my life as I know it**

The Wounded Child ages 0 – 6 years of age: Through the birth of my Indigenous mother, her mother and my great mother. The trauma they endured still managed to flow through my DNA and has affected me, their genetics have been passed onto me and they are very difficult to change and cannot be erased. Although these are supposed to be recollected as my tender and loving years, they were not. Being conceived and born in 1960 was anything but glamorous,

especially being the ninth child born into a bi-racial family. Some of memories of my wounded years that have formed my character today are:

- ✓ Being hidden from my mothers' Indigenous families because I was a colored child.
- ✓ Witnessing the death of three of my siblings during these years.
- ✓ Being separated from my biological mother by the state of Washington to be raised with other children who were my relatives but not my siblings.
- ✓ Being placed on a visitation schedule with my biological Black American father because he had little support because of laws still being passed during the Civil Rights Era.
- ✓ Attending all – white schools, being “teased” because of the tone of my skin, my hair and my physical appearance.

The adaptive child ages 7 – 17 years of age: These are the years I had to learn to adapt to my environment I was placed in for survivance and reassurance that my life was going to be “okay.” These were the years I had to become a student in all white or black public-school systems. I was raised on the Muckleshoot Reservation and was not comfortable in any other environment even if I was a Person of Color. These were the years I was given “labels” by both Black and Red linages, and by the whites, all because I carried the “One Drop Rule” which made me a Black person in the Red and white communities, but because of my red and yellow skin tones, I was labeled a “Savage/Indian” in my Black communities. I was confused until I could form my own identity as a Black Indigenous Woman of Color in my late adult years. During these adaptive years I had to learn how to physically fight either the black, red or white person because all they seen was the One Drop Rule and I was not accepted by any of them, learning to “mark’ my ground was a rule of thumb in order to survive. I learned to separate myself from each of them and begin to isolate, I begin having children at the age of 17, the father of my child was not

Black or Indigenous but was Black and German otherwise labeled as a bi-racial person. Our lineages combined still formed the genetics and characteristics enough to label our child as a person of color because of the One Drop Ruling.

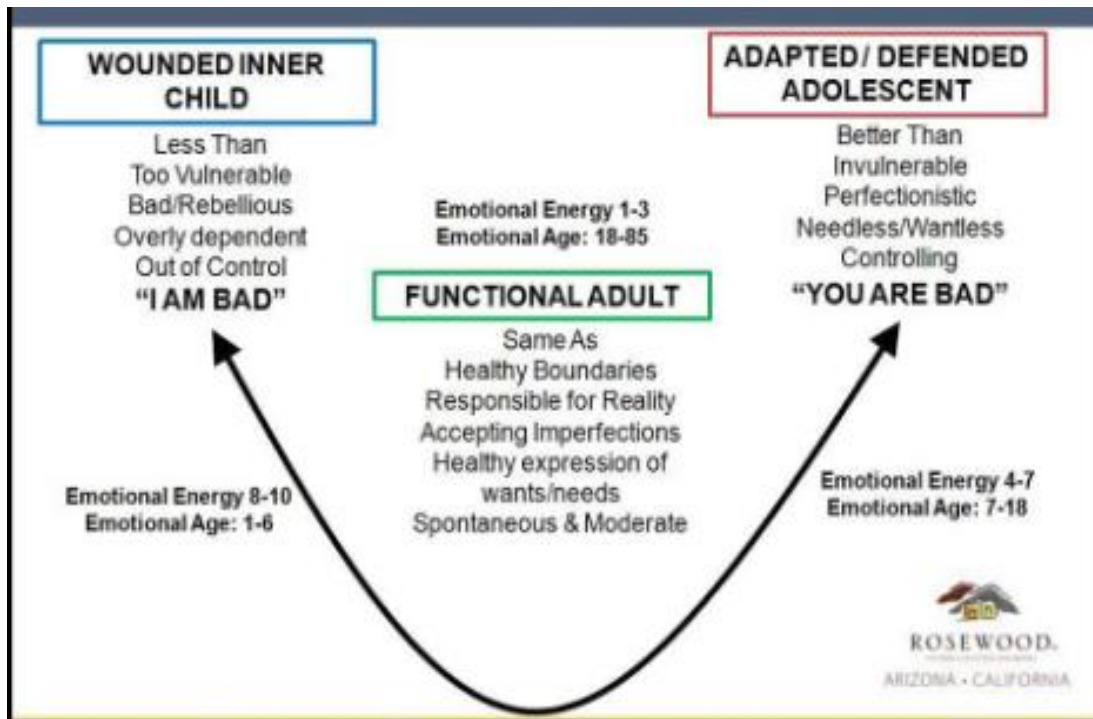
The functioning Adult 17 years of age to present: Because of the “placement” of my soul, my skin tone, my hair texture, and my tone of voice, I had to use all the lessons and skills I learned from the ages of 0 – 17 for survival against life’s lessons, I had to prepare myself for what the world had to offer as I begin to mature. I had to function as the adult I was conditioned to become.

### **My physical appearance**

I couldn’t change my physical appearance although there were times I wished that I could just blend in with my dominant environment. My environment has not changed through my eyes, my mind has been scarred because of the eras I am from on both Black and Red sides, both of them being colonized and conditioned by the white man placing labels upon us based on our skin tones, causing an everlasting divide amongst us.

The emotional stage I am entering into now ages 60 + years has proven to be very challenging for me to accept my past and to forgive myself and my ancestors and parents for what I have been handed throughout my lifetime and survived. It has not been easy, but I have tried to take the path of least resistance occupying myself with education and a family of my own.

**Figure three:** Ego states resulting from trauma



<https://www.google.com/search?q=pia+mellody+model+of+developmental+immaturity&tbm=isch&sxsrf=AJOqlzU0Tpy5nLrHK5etHzgx8b-XQ9RJ9g%3A1677957> – retrieved on 03/03/2023.

What is an ego? It is basically my identity of who I think I am. My ego has been constructed of my name, my personality, and my story. (Lonerwolf.com/what-is-the-ego/ retrieved on May 30, 2023).

#### **Method four: Time Table of Narrative's**

The narrative below will explain my truths experienced after my wounded years beginning at five years of age. I can recollect memories of my wounded years age 0 – 5, but cannot list them in order. They are vague memories in my mind, that I will label as my most traumatic years, which is why they seem surreal, but they did exist through my maternal and paternal parents' families. Some of trauma I experienced was the death of three siblings, and separation from my biological mother and racism from being placed into an all-white school system when it was okay for white supremacy to exist. I was the 'colored girl' in the eyes of my Indigenous relatives and from the white kids, they both were the majority, I was the minority because of my genetic make-up of the One-Drop Rule and that is all they seen first was my skin tone and that it was a shade darker or lighter than theirs, but it did not matter, they believed they were both the supreme race against me.

**Figure four:** Time Tables of Narratives

Year	Age	Significant Event	Cultural Influences	Historical Influences	Community Support	Barriers	Leadership Lessons
1965	5	Deaths of siblings, being put into a family foster home	Muckleshoot Aunty/Yakama Uncle	Deaths of siblings/Entered into the Indian Shaker Church Religion	Living in Both Native and Black American communities	Absence of a mother	Aunty was very strict, Biological father was very protective
1970	10	My own birthday party	Muckleshoot Grandparents/Black American Father	Native/Black family events	Aunty, Uncle, brother, friends, German babysitter	Absence of a mother	Father taught me to keep moving forward
1972	12	Re-united w/ biological mother	Moved off reservation into an inner-city diverse neighborhood	Malcom X, Black Panthers, Angela Davis,	Tacoma Hilltop Neighborhood	Two parents, two separate households	Stay positive keep moving forward. Be your own woman
1975	15	Moved back home w/ my mother	Native American Mother	Native American Religion (Shaker faith)	Mothers two best friends were also of the Shaker faith	No understanding of the Shaker Faith in the HT neighborhood	Admiration of my mother for not shaming her religious practice in the inner city.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Significant Event</b>	<b>Cultural Influences</b>	<b>Historical Influences</b>	<b>Community Support</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Leadership Lessons</b>
1977	17	Birth of first child	Black American Father/Indigenous Mother	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	My son had a German grandmother along with my blended family	None	Keeping ahold of my son, raising him w/ help from the women in my family.
1980	20	Birth of second son	Black American Father/Indigenous Mother	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	Other young single women sharing the same situation I was in.	Single and alone	Keeping ahold of my son, raising him w/ help from the women in my family.
1984	24	Marriage w/ third child on the way!	Black American Father/Indigenous Mother	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	My parents, his parents, family and friends	Physical/emotional abuse, husband suffered from PTSD/childhood abuse	Oldest sister guided and counseled me on what to expect from the marriage
1988	28	Birth of fourth child	Black American Father/Indigenous Mother	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	My parents, his parents, family and friends	Not enough trust in relationship	"here I go again!"
1990	30	Birth of fifth child	Black American Father	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	My Father, my children	My children's father became mentally ill	"when is it going to stop?"
1994	34	MIT Casino opened	Indigenous relatives	N/A Shaker Faith	Indigenous relatives	Very young children to continue to raise	memories

Year	Age	Significant Event	Cultural Influences	Historical Influences	Community Support	Barriers	Leadership Lessons
?	?	Death of Mother	Black American Father	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	Indigenous family members, children cousins and friends	Sister who had power of attorney over mother	My world was changing, I only had one parent now.
2002	32	Death of Father	Black American Friends of father	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	Indigenous family members, children cousins and friends	Father was the "glue" to the family and now he was gone.	No parents, had to finally grow up. No one to depend on.
2006	38	Enrolled into college at MIT	Indigenous relatives & friends	MIT College Staff	College Cohort	None	All students had goals to achieve through higher ED.
2011		Completed all college degrees enrolled for.	Indigenous children, relatives & friends	MIT College Staff, Indigenous cohort	College Cohort, MIT Council	None	I found out I was not alone on this course of achievement.
2011		Applied for a doctoral program	Indigenous children, relatives & friends	MIT College Staff, Indigenous cohort	College Cohort, MIT Council	Application was denied.	Wait it out research and find a program that is right for me.
2020	59	Applied for a doctoral program and was accepted!	MIT College Staff, Indigenous cohort	Native American Religion (Shaker Faith)	Indigenous children, relatives & friends	COVID – 19 viruses took over and was and is a very emotional time for all!	Somehow received the motivation to apply and go through the process, even though I almost gave up! (never give up)

### **Method five: Me vs. The White Privilege aspect**

Listed are 10 examples that prove white privilege exists in every aspect imaginable: (Greenburg, Jon July, 2017). I have added my true lived experience and thoughts of how their privilege(s) has affected or impacted me.

#### **1. Them: I have the privilege of having a positive relationship with the police, generally:**

**Me:** While I was growing up in either the red or black neighborhoods or with family, I often wondered where the people were at. My native families were being arrested for fishing on their own lands and waters, they were in jails and prisons. My black families and friends were either hiding, in jails or prisons or forming their own militias for ways of survivance against the white powers that were so prevalent. It is now 60 years later, not much has changed except for the use of technology which makes white supremacy even more prevalent because they want to remain in power and control of all people no matter the skin tone as long as it is not white.

#### **2. Them: I have the privilege of being favored by school authorities:**

**Me:** This has been the truth since I started school in a white privileged school district. I was one of three Black Indigenous children enrolled into an elementary school near my reservation in the mid-1960's. There were over 30 students in each class with one teacher assigned. I remember being literally slapped by my teacher, I still do not know why, I just remember the embarrassment. These were the years I have managed to black out of my memory, these were a part of my wounded years.

#### **3. Them: I have the privilege of attending segregated schools of affluence:**

**Me:** Segregation may have ended in 1954 but now it is in the form of materials supplied to inner city schools of color and into the reservation school systems. They still received outdated material, another form of racist education. Segregate the materials used if we cannot segregate the people.

**4. Them: I have the privilege of learning about my race in school:**

**Me:** “They” have formed a movement to make it illegal to teach Critical Race Theory and African American studies in public schools now across America. They only want us to know their white

**5. Them: I have the privilege of finding children’s books that overwhelmingly represent my race:**

**Me:** I have been so ‘whitewashed’ by television and books throughout my life, I began to believe in the fairytales I was reading and everything seemed like life was going to be perfect or just one beautiful fairytale.

**6. Them: I have the privilege of soaking in media blatantly biased toward my race:**

**Me:** For decades I had no choice but to admire the “blonde-haired, blue-eyed person, man or woman. This was all that was televised and used as a form of brainwashing to get used to the way the world was going to be- full of white privilege.

**7. Them: I have the privilege of escaping violent stereotypes associated with my race:**

**Me:** Although I am 63 years old, the media still points to the person of color for most violent crimes or this is what they show. This is what is shown to us, this is all we know, hardly ever anything positive about the person of color.

**8. Them: I have the privilege of playing the colorblind card, wiping the slate clean of centuries of racism.**

**Me:** “They” have support from each other and still feel privileged. They act like they have done nothing to continue to oppress the Black Indigenous Woman or a person of Color. “History does repeat itself”.

**9. Them: I have the privilege of being insulated from the daily toll of racism:**

**Me:** I don't know where "they" are all at these days, probably placed in private schools well protected from the racism we colored people will always face in our daily routines.

**10. Them: I have the privilege of living ignorant of the dire state of racism today:**

**Me:** No some are only acting "ignorant" they know where they came from and what was done to a class of people based on skin tones. They have passed these rituals on to their future generations of today. They cannot hide anymore; education is the key to life.

Since then I have learned that I can have many names, moods, and environments I can adapt to because of the negative impacts that were actual lessons learned. I now write about those lessons to teach other black Indigenous families of color the ways of survivance.

Once my time table is understood, it will show there was no room for diverse teachings throughout most of my lifetime which is another method of conditioning that has formed my character today.

#### **Chapter 4: Presentation and Research Results**

Being an enrolled Indigenous Tribal elder with two lineages I can identify with comes with benefits. It is because of the enrolled Indigenous status I have I am eligible for both land and monetary benefits. I could not claim those same benefits if I were to identify as a Black Woman of Color because unfortunately the Black American still struggles with being identified as a human being and therefore cannot justify receiving monetary or land benefits from the colonizer even though they were brought here against their will to the United States of America.

Although I am an Indigenous Elder, there are times when I still have to prove my lineage to communities of color who do not know me. The non-indigenous person sees me and defines

me with the One Drop Rule, no matter what my skin tone reveals or the regalia I may wear at the time showing my Indigenous heritage that I was raised with. They do not believe me and I still have to prove my Indigenous lineage with my tribal identification. Before the colonizer arrived, there was no identification based on skin color. Colors were used to separate and divide people of color.

### **The Environment(s)**

The environment does not seem to matter, whether professional or non-professional the white person is always chosen first, even if they have the wrong answer or do not understand the racial issues being discussed. I can be in a room full of whites and the discussion will be about tribes or other nationalities and they will always seem to have the answer, because they seem to think that they know what is best for us. I will choose not to identify myself in certain situations just to see if I can get the favoritism that Whiteness Property contains. Unless I am in a room full of Indigenous or Black people, my word gets heard last or not at all.

There should be no shame or embarrassment for any child or person of color in today's society. When I write and express myself it's from a place I was born in, the 1960's. My parents were from a place before the Civil Rights Era begin, there was little or no protection for a couple that chose to give birth to mixed heritage children. They did all they could do to protect us from the European Linear societies they were both raised in, societies who were against both the "Red Woman and the Black man, especially if they were forming families and having children, children born from two or more lineages, now describes as Black and Indigenous.

### **The One Drop Rule still applies to Black Indigenous tribal member**

“The One Drop rule still applies to any enrolled Black indigenous tribal member of color, we will always be labeled with the “N” Word or as the “Black girl, Black boy, Black woman or Black man, or half breed, any name but an Indian”.

The younger generations have learned to live with the name-calling or branding, the older generations like me and before me still have a difficult time accepting these behaviors and still recognize, white power, white privilege and white supremacy when it is near, and to us it is not okay. There are many Indigenous people who do not care to be named an Indian, it is just as bad as using the “N” word to describe them.

### **Descriptions based on our skin color**

There are many names to describe the colors of our skins throughout the world, “they” are always coming up with new descriptions for us as if we are a commodity or some type of invention. We will always be the same people of color underneath our skin tones that will never change no matter which decade or century the world evolves to.

The word Indigenous is a new to me, I have to get used to the name but still using the same definition to describe the same race of people. They have now combined it with the word Black to describe a mixed lineage person of color. The labels have changed but the definitions are the same or similar.

### **A combination of similarities**

The Black Indigenous experience is a valuable piece of history not only in the Americas but internationally known as well. The similarities of the history these two ethnicities share are especially important when combined, enriching to the listener when the true stories are told.

(Forbes, Jack D. Africans, and Native Americans: the language of race and the evolution of Red-Black peoples Jack D. Forbes – 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. p. cm. Rev. ed. Of Black Africans and Native Americans Oxford and New York: bibliographical references (p.) and index. ISBN 0-252-06321-X (pb)

The traditions combined with cultural experience in both worlds have transformed me into the functioning adult I am today while being viewed as an “Elder” of my Native American community but not yet an “Elder” of my Black American community. The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe defines an Elder as being an enrolled tribal member who is 50 or over. The age was recently changed from 55 to 50 because of community concerns regarding priority status. In the outside white and black communities, the elder or “senior citizen” ages are 65 and above. There is a difference in how the Indigenous people treat their own compared to the non-indigenous people, there are differences in the benefits each community receives.

In today’s world, it’s more important than ever for kids to learn to accept and appreciate diversity. I did not know the meaning of diversity until the 1980’s. My Indigenous mother moved from the reservation to Tacoma, Washington to become an “Urban Indian mother”

Since then I have learned that I can have many names, moods, and environments I can adapt to because of the negative impacts that were actual lessons learned. I write about and teach other tribal families of color the ways of survivance through this never-ending battle that most children of color will endure throughout the different phases in their entire life.

The One Drop rule still applies to any enrolled Black Indigenous tribal member of color, we will always be labeled with the “N” Word or as the “Black girl, Black boy, Black woman or Black man, or half breed, any name but an Indian. The younger generations have learned to live with the name-calling or branding, the older generations like me still have a difficult time

accepting these behaviors and still recognize, white power, white privilege, and white supremacy when it is near, but to us, it is not okay.

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### **Theoretical Framework**

Before the Common Era (BCE) of the Pacific Northwest and onto the land we now claim as our own the Muckleshoot Lands of Auburn, Washington, and ancestral lands of the greater Puget Sound area. Key elements of research design, the scope of the study, (Ballard,1935) “Southern Puget Sound Kinship Terms.”

A theoretical framework for my Autoethnography is based on the Kinship Terms, Ballard, (1935). Kinship Terms explains the ideology behind the make-up of the family tree along with the explanations for the hierarchy and the bonding that was important to the Indigenous families in the Puget Sound for the families to continue honoring the original ways of the ancestors. These findings have important theoretical implications; the implications will assist me in developing evidence in the breakdown of my family kinship as I came to know it.

My ancestor’s kinship family rules dissipated, and the co-mingling of other races began, even with the white settler. I am sure I have more than two linages described in my research, but I am writing and describing one- the Black Indigenous person I am today.

The disruption and dismantling of colorism have already begun with the minority now becoming the majority of the human race. I have learned that naming the white man a “settler” is an honor to him for all the chaos, death, and destruction he has caused since he settled here. The name has given him the privilege that has led to white privilege. I have chosen to not identify the white male or female as a settler anymore when I speak or write about them since I found this definition of what settler means to them, they are proud of what they have done to my ancestors, I am not.

I can be critical of all three races that I have had to be surrounded with since my birth date. It has not been an easy journey for me to this date, in turn, it has made me a critic and I am beginning to see the power in each of the races as “privilege” used by either the Black, Red, or White people in the communities of color I have resided in.

Before contact was made Black Indigenous people were not identified by their skin colors. The Europeans settled and begin to place labels on people based on skin tone to degrade them, make them feel less than each other because they were not light enough to be thought of as being smart or superior. The light-skinned slaves were kept in or near the slave masters' house, the darker people were kept in the field and considered dumb, too dumb to be enslaved in the masters' house.

I have met different ethnic groups of people from all over the world that make up the skin tones of the Black Indigenous communities. If the choice is to ignore the different skin tones based on Color Blindness we will not get far, we will be stuck by taking the path of least resistance, doing what is convenient, and giving in to the European ways of colonialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Muckleshoot reservation was an original fort filled with soldiers who fought against the surrounding communities and other tribes. (Ballard, A.C. 1927), *The Puget Sound Native*

Americans share insight into how the Natives co-mingled with other races. (Ballard, A.C. 1935), “Southern Puget Sound Salish Kinship Terms. This research goes back decades to show the consanguine/bloodlines of families of Puget Sound. (Bells, M. 1887), “Decrease of Population among the Indians of the Puget Sound.” The lands that were allotted to the Indians by the past Presidents have slowly disappeared over time.

Boyd, R. (2000), there were approximately 30 diseases across Indian Country pre-contact of the white settler, now there are too many diseases to name that is being designed to continue to make us annihilate ourselves.

Ewers, J.C. (1973), Forbes, Jack D., Africans, and Native Americans: the language of race and the evolution of Red-Black peoples. Black Africans and Native Americans Oxford and New York: The African Native experience is a valuable piece of history not only in the Americas but internationally known as well. Even though the rich history these two shares are especially important when combined can be very enriching to the listener when the history is shared.

Glover W.B. (1935), A history of the Caddo Indians of the Louisiana Territories, one of the original Native American tribes of the Texas, Louisiana Territory. (Harrington, L. 2007), Both sides of the water: Essays on African-Native American Interactions. The privileges of having both perspectives on both African-Native relationships telling our own stories through individual essays.

Minges, P. (2004). Black Indian Slave Narratives (Real Voices, Real History) When we hear the word “slave” we automatically think and perceive a black man or black woman. Native Americans were captured and sold on the auction block too, Indians were considered a high

during the slave trade. As time evolved the acts of slavery did not. The Blacks and the Indian slave had to find common ground in order to survive.

Newcomb Jr., W.W., (1969). *The Indians of Texas from Prehistoric to Modern Times*. The authors, researchers of the Indians of Texas have published a product to assist with the research of the Indians of Texas. Although some of the mentioned tribes are not “federally” recognized in the United States, the Indians of Texas cultures and traditions are. (Newcomb Jr., W.W, 1969). A Woman or a person of Color does not always have to be from a Native American-recognized tribe.

The Person of Color is no longer a hidden heritage in the educational or workplace systems. William L. Katz, (1986). The word Color Blindness is used as a title to stereotype the Person or Woman of Color. They are recognized as a part of the melting pot across the United States and abroad it is not their fault that they were born not either black or red but with color.

### **The One Drop Rule-defined from my lens**

How does the One Drop Rule affect me as a Black Indigenous Woman in both of my tribal and black communities? The definition below shows that even though a person can be born into an “all white” clan, no matter how much the blackness shows up on the family member, they are considered black by the family, or of hypodescent. Hypo descent applies in Native American families too, placing the mixed lineage person into the lowest socially ranking group in their ancestry. (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/submission/23825/...> Retrieved on 04/07/2023).

**Figure five: The One Drop Rule defined**



<https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=google+images+the+one+drop+rule+images&>-  
retrieved on 4/1/2023.

The One Drop Rule was created by the colonizer to protect and to separate the slaves from the lighter-skinned slaves. If the slave had one drop of African ancestry, they were considered black no matter how light the skin was and placed into another category of the human race or not considered human at all. The One-Drop Rule has been taught and passed onto other communities of color to continue the oppression against the person with African American lineage as it was originally designed for.

### **The Treatment of the Black Indigenous Women of Color**

The Black Indigenous Woman is seen as the “person of color” and is treated differently from either group of people within the black and Indigenous races, because of the One Drop Rule we inherited from either our mother, father or ancestors. I use the word “different” it is a word I chose to use describing the space I have been placed in, while not being looked at as

either Red or Black but in between both races. The One-Drop Rule is a social and legal principle of racial classification that was prominent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States. It asserted that any person with even one ancestor of black ancestry is considered black or negro.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One-drop\\_rule&oldid=1087283077](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One-drop_rule&oldid=1087283077)).

Being a Black Indigenous Woman of Color I am a minority and get treated less than my “full-blooded” members both in the workplace and in the community even though I show workplace dedication and have been committed to my community. I used the term “full-blooded” because this is a common term used by some tribal people who believe they are 100% Native American. I do not carry enough African American to be considered 100% Black American either. There are times I have to decide which color should I be today or at the moment just to avoid the racism both these lineages can carry when placed amongst each other. Having to choose can be a challenge depending on the situation I am placed in.

### **Children and Bullying**

My Black Indigenous children, grandchildren, and other Black Indigenous children are bullied from birth throughout their entire life. For instance, if a Black Indigenous child of color is raised on his or her Indigenous reservation as soon as they are old enough to interact with other children, they are described as the black child no matter the skin tone. If there is no straight hair, if the skin tone is a shade darker than most, or if the child is seen with the Black parent, the name calling and bullying begin for the child.

The name calling and bullying will continue throughout the life of the child of color until it feels normal, the names will become nicknames and soon they learn to live with it because that is all they knew when they were and labeled as a child within their own Indigenous community.

There are tribal members in my community who could learn to reap the rewards if we could treat each other as equals and not allow the color of our skin to stand in the way and let internal colorism take over.

### **Name Calling AKA Ranking**

Name calling is a learned behavior; it happens in all communities of color. Rank downs on a person's physical appearance as a form of joking aka "ranking" began in the slavery era. Slaves would rank or make fun of each other if they were hard to sell or trade to the enslaver. They would tease, rank or joke on the physical make-up of each other, example: "You can't be sold or traded, master or no one wants to buy you cause your lips are too big," "your hair is too nappy," "your skin is too dark or ashy" or "your just plain ugly and no one wants you." Even in today's society the Black race still conducts these type rank downs on each other no matter the time or place. They have become used to ranking on each other because it has been passed down into the family units and has become a part of the norm.

If other races see that we don't mind ranking on each other, then they will believe it's okay for them to rank on us as well. This also is a contributor to why we are prejudged in the employment world and have to prove ourselves no matter what our qualifications, experience or education is, even if we are "over-qualified." Because the One Drop Rule applies to me, I fall into this category.

### **Skin Tones and Features**

I could never use "whiteness as property" with my skin tone and features, (Cheryl I. Harris, June 1993) meaning: being a black person with white features, using my white anonymity to gain preference, because I carry the "one drop rule" of my ancestors on my black fathers' side

which identifies me as being a black woman of color. I will carry the One Drop Rule until my passing, there is no getting around it. I learned not to be ashamed of it, but to embrace both of my lineages and to learn from the best of both worlds.

I learned the term “best of both worlds” from a friend that united with our family in the early 80’s, he was a black man whose wife was Indigenous, she passed on and left him with two young sons to raise. Reflecting back, this man already knew the struggles of what being a Black Indigenous person of color was going to be for us including his own children. He engrained in our minds that we were from the best of both worlds meaning our Black and Indigenous worlds, thank you, Joe Moore Sr.

It doesn’t matter the environment I am in whether professional, or non-professional the white person is always chosen first, even if they have the wrong answer or do not understand the racial issues being discussed. I can be in a room full of whites and the discussion will be about tribes or other nationalities and they will always seem to have the answer, because they seem to think that they know what is best for us to hear and to believe.

I will choose not to identify myself in certain situations to see if I can get the favoritism that Racial Color Blindness contains. Unless I am in a room full of Indigenous or Black people, my word gets heard last or not at all, I am overlooked and not seen at all. Because of the traditional Indigenous manners, I was accustomed to, I remained silent, sat, and observed.

“The One Drop rule still applies to me being a Black Indigenous tribal member, I will always be labeled with the “N” Word or as the “Black girl, Black woman or half breed, any name but an Indian.” I will not blame these fictitious labels used on me by my Indigenous relatives, I will blame the names used on me coming from the colonizer used for segregation.

I grew up using and listening to the word Indian used to describe enrolled members of my tribe. The labels have changed from Native American to Indigenous, but there are still some that prefer to be called Indian and they are the Baby Boomers and Boarding school survivors, this is the era my research is based on.

There are many names to describe the colors of our skins throughout the world, “they” are always coming up with new descriptions for us as if we are a commodity or some type of invention.

I will always be a Black Indigenous Woman, my skin tone will never change no matter which decade or century the world evolves to, I will remain the same color and through genetics, I have passed the One Drop Ruling onto my children and grandchildren.

The Black Indigenous experience is a valuable piece of history in the Americas and internationally known. The similarities of the history these two ethnicities share are especially important when combined, enriching the listener when the true stories are told. (Forbes, Jack D. 2013).

### **Three Worlds**

The One Drop Rule applies to me in the three worlds I reside in, Black, Indigenous, and White. I am not ashamed of my two lineages anymore, although there was a time when I believed I had to decide which color to be. I based my decisions on racial biases and perspectives on the Black, Red, and White communities I was raised and resided in. I have learned to tolerate the non-traditional colonizer ways that have been ingrained into a majority of our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls, through no fault of our own, but because of the skin color descriptions along with the definitions they placed upon us because of the One Drop rule definition.

### **Implications of the One-Drop Rule**

Listed are some of the implications the One Drop Rule has had on me being a Black Indigenous Woman of Color since my birth in 1960 to the present are:

- ✓ Being misrepresented by both the Black and Red communities of color.
- ✓ Being named “black” in an Indigenous community or named “red” in an African American community.
- ✓ Feeling “out of place and rejected” in both identified lineages because of my appearance as a mixed-breed person of color.
- ✓ Overlooked for talents or experience based on bias and prejudging factors.
- ✓ I had to decide which side to take – be either black or red, there is no “in-between.”
- ✓ Not being able to identify with my Black American side only the negative stories history had to share.
- ✓ Not being able to identify with my Native American side because of oppression that still exists within the community, causing elders to silence themselves and not share stories of their past.
- ✓ Communication Efforts

There are rarely any communication efforts for the Black Indigenous Women of color in the workplace environment. The colonizer bases me on their One Drop Ruling which is the definition they created to describe a person like me for hundreds of years. Society has gotten used to this ruling, it continues in both tribal and non-tribal community and workplace environments.

### **Genetic Traits**

I am light-skinned with freckles, straight and nappy hair, and full lips, sometimes my black ancestral dialect will come out becoming my dominant tone of voice. When I am in my Indigenous tribal community the One Drop Rule applies to me through their eyes, even if we are related and all they can see is my “blackness,” even though I am enrolled into the tribe and recognized by the federal government as being an Indian.

When I am in my Black communities of color and even though my physical appearance is the same, my genetics have not changed, they see me as being the “Indian in the room,” when I am in my Red community, even though my genetics are still the same, I am seen as the Black Indigenous Woman of color in the room or the Colored person.

### **Using my weakness as my strength**

Being raised in both Black and Indigenous communities, both maternal and paternal parents have instinctively instilled their own life skills for ways of survivance inside of me. I am now able to share a part of my story through this Autoethnography for others to read and learn from knowing that I am not alone sharing my story as the Black Indigenous Woman. We have been in existence for a long time and one by one we will share and listen to each other’s stories adding support with our original ways of knowing. We have been gifted by both sets of ancestors from both of our lineages combined with DNA that has been passed on for generations that will continue to flourish. The One Drop Rule will always exist created by the colonizer for identification purposes so they know who we are, thank you.

### **Justification or Rationale**

The Muckleshoot Tribe and its people are a close-knit community, it seems everyone knows each other, their backgrounds, families, and kinships. When I chose this research and wrote about the Colorism I face in my daily routines, I believe that it will be taken into consideration for the system to change in regards to racism against our people of color and our relations.

Colorism is the root cause of evil of the damage that is preventing us from moving forward as an Indigenous nation. We are a melting pot of Indigenous people, we cannot change the colors or shades of our skin, but we can change the words that have been ingrained into our European policies that have caused dramatic change, shifts and unfairness in just about every department we operate. This is why we divide each other by the colors and shades of our skin tones, even though we are related and have the knowledge and a wide range of experience to all work towards the vision our ancestors envisioned.

Research studies have shown that skin tone and other racial features play powerful roles in who gets ahead and who does not. These factors regularly determine who gets hired, who gets convicted, and who gets elected.” (THARPS L. OCTOBER 6, 2016 3:49 PM EDT).

Lori L. Tharps is an associate professor of journalism at Temple University and the author of *Same Family, Different Colors*.

Colorism creates more problems than it solves, you know that it is happening to you in the workplace or environment you are in, you just cannot prove it. It is noticeable along with a feeling of being left out, being ignored, even if you are dedicated, experienced, and educated you may still be treated like a slave in modern times. A Black Indigenous Woman or a person of color

can go for decades being unnoticed in the workplace and be the first to be laid off for being committed to their job.

Colorism is often thought of as only being an issue in black communities, leaders igniting transformation (6/1/23). Colorism affects any community of color, except the colonizer. The colonizer used the different skin tones to divide people, and turn them into races, and ethnic groups based on skin tone was how they were pre-judged.

Colorism relates to my mixed lineage because it still exists in both my communities of color and is still surreal to me because I did not believe it would exist in this modern day and time. After I witness the colorism and look at how the different skin tones affect people's actions and decisions towards each other, it is humiliating, especially when we are supposed to be in a "safe" place within chosen communities we reside in.

### **Colorblindness in the Tribal Employment Arena**

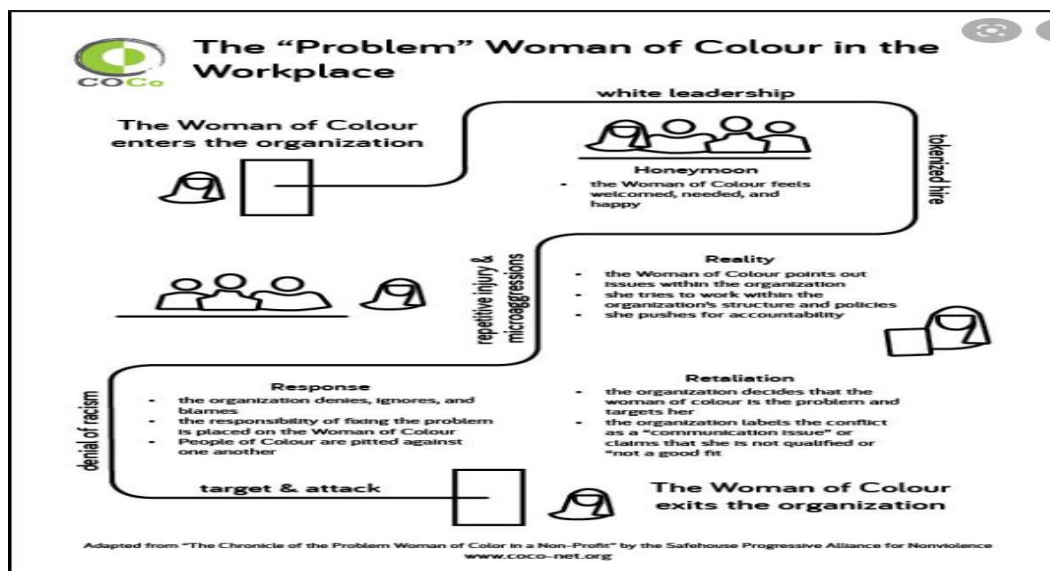
Colorblindness relates to my mixed lineage because it still exists in my tribal community and is still surreal to me because I did not believe it would exist in this modern day and time. After I witness colorblindness and look at how the different skin tones affect people's actions and decisions towards each other, it is very disappointing, especially when we are supposed to be in a "safe" place within our communities of color.

The skin tones set the employment moods in both the tribal and non-tribal work environments. "Color Blindness" sets precedence for wage rates, promotions, demotions, terminations, and eligibility for certain jobs even if you are qualified, experienced, and educated. The logic is simple: "If we don't even notice race, then we can't act in a racist manner." (Norton, M. Forbes, 1/23/2013).

Color Blindness creates more problems than it solves, you already know that it is happening to you in the workplace or environment you are in. It is noticeable along with a feeling of being left out, being ignored, being dedicated, experienced and, educated only to be treated like a slave in modern times. The Black Indigenous woman of color can go for decades without being recognized in the workplace and be the first to be laid off for being committed to their job.

The Woman of Color is misrepresented in the workplace, she is often given the most work details with the least amount of pay, it's never-ending for her, she is intelligent and is multi-talented but she is not acknowledged for it, this is only a fraction of the Color Blindness disease of the work environment for the Black Indigenous Woman. Even though we are all "colored" if your blackness shows and is dominant, you are mistreated as an enrolled tribal member, the One Drop Rule applies and you have to prove your lineage.

**Figure six: The problem for the Woman of Color in the Workplace Environment**



<https://coco-net.org/problem-woman-colour-nonprofit-organizations/>

## Skin Tones

Skin tones help to build the hierarchies in our indigenous systems and communities.

When I read articles about colorism, they seem to stem from the Black community. I have lived in both communities of color and have received the same treatment from both races because of the color of my skin. The Native Americans see the One Drop Rule, the Black Americans see the Native and the defamation character begins for me being a Black Indigenous Woman of Color. “Dark Skin just isn’t deemed as beautiful, whereas light skin just isn’t truly black” (Dark Girls 2011).

I believe that it is because the truths in this statement are what have conditioned me to be the person that I am. I am a late bloomer, I have separation anxiety issues, I have PTSD, I still don’t care to be around either race for long periods because of the issues of the past I have had with both cultures.

Colorism still exists to this day in both the Black Indigenous communities of Color. I still have the same feelings I did as before and cannot seem to let them go, I believe the mixed bi-racial people are a race of their own and should have their own set of rules and policies to adhere to for the greater good of their types of people.

I have learned about the Critical Race Theory and the effects it has had on people of color. The added value of bringing the information learned to the forefront of my Indigenous community and the leadership could be invaluable. The Tribal Leaders are from bi-racial backgrounds and have similar issues because they are not “100%” Indian either.

### **A close-knit community**

The Muckleshoot Tribe and its people are a close-knit community, everyone knows each other and their backgrounds, families, and kinships. When I research and write about Colorblindness that we face in our daily routines, I believe that it will be taken into consideration for the system to change in regards to the racism within our people, our relations, this is the root cause of evil and damage that is preventing us from moving forward as an Indigenous nation. We are a melting pot of Indigenous folx, we cannot change the colors or shades of our skin, but we can change the words that have been ingrained into our European policies that have caused dramatic change and unfairness in just about every department we operate.

There is a new and different generation being raised in our tribal community, they are becoming educated and soon the old racist ways will have to be changed, we will adapt to changes created by the new upcoming geniuses we are raising to create positive change. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender, and Queer (LBGTQ) along with the Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) communities are forming allies now and want to be included in the successes of the tribe moving forward, they have a right to be included in decisions that will impact the future of the tribe.

There are comments along with advertisements stating the word “Decolonize” but what does it mean? and why are our people wearing it but not practicing it? They seem to go along with the Color Blindness that is plaguing our community too. This is why this Autoethnography needs to be seen at every level of the tribal government so that it can be taken seriously and to let them know that change is necessary and that we are not going to allow Color Blindness to be a practice anymore inside our workplace or in our tribal community.

There are employees who need to be enlightened to the fact that we are waking up to what our ancestors warned us about and it will never be too late to fix or repair the damage and start over again from the beginning with a new set of Indigenous rules inspired by the Indigenous people, meant for the Indigenous people, but only if we can set our skin tones, biases, and racism to the side and not allow them to become barriers interfering with our ancestors' visions.

Our eighth generation can help to ease the colorism problem soon because we are a melting pot of Indigenous people with nowhere to go. We want to make positive changes in our communities and we cannot allow the color of our skin tones to cause negative impacts on our decisions for our future.

My grandchildren are made up of many different colors, shades, nationalities and they are all enrolled into one tribe, the Muckleshoot Tribe. I see many other tribal families that are very similar to mine that we did not have in the past, having the same issues because they carry the One Drop rule in their bloodline and it is dominant.

We have many different genetic makeups now from all over the world that makes up our skin tones and the tribal population. If the choice is to ignore the many different skin tones based on Color Blindness we will not get very far, and again we will be stuck in the past by taking the path of least resistance, doing what is convenient for the European ways of colonialism.

This has become a sensitive subject for me and my immediate family who are all human subjects of Color Blindness in the Muckleshoot workplace environment. As a mother, I worry about future employment efforts with the tribe if no solution is found or agreed upon.

As an Elder, I can now see the effects colorism has on other families of color who are enrolled tribal members because they don't fit the description of what it looks like to be "100%"

Indigenous, native or Indian, the redness does not show. They do not act or know the culture and traditions like they should so they are displaced within their tribe. It is as though the color of our skin is based on a point system in a new day and time with the same definition as it was meant for 600 years ago.

## **Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion**

### **Stance of Leadership and Healing**

My stance of taking the ownership and believing in my capabilities of Leadership and Healing practices comes from believing in my ancestors from both lineages I speak and write about. “In this way, this writing material can be used as a method for honoring difference and speaking together across difference, in traditions of Indigenous, Black, Women of Color, and Third World feminisms. (Tuck E. and Wayne Y. 2019) (xii).

Through my own experiences in the Pacific Northwest I have met Black Indigenous people from across the United States who have settled here but do not receive much recognition or acknowledgement for who they are. They seem to be walking the fine line of both lineages and have to decide which culture to believe in based on the community they have chosen to reside in. In our minds this is not a fair or equal choice, we are from two cultures, we believe we are one, the Black Indian.

When slavery was first brought to this land, the black and the Indian families formed allies for each other against the colonizer for ways of survivance. They soon formed languages, kinships and families segregating themselves by building “safety nets” for each other.

The African and Native ways of traditions and healing practices is hundreds of years old and still share similarities with each other. The rituals, regalia, medicines, and traditional ways of knowing seem to stem from both of our ancestral lineages that have been engrained and passed on through our DNA. The genetic make-ups of both of our lineages can never be deleted from history, which is why we will always be and cannot be named no other than the Black Indigenous person of color otherwise known as the Black Indian.

### **A Cohesive Tribal Community of Color**

It has been 50 years and we are a now host to a diverse community of families consisting of Black, Samoan, Japanese, Filipino, and other mixed races that make up our tribal population. We are becoming a cohesive community of color sharing cultures and traditions but I can only write and describe the two lineages I was born into, the Black and Indigenous families. The children of these diverse groups of families will have similar struggles being raised with two or more lineages because of the One Drop Rule or because of their skin tones and genetic make-up.

Figure seven: A Child of Color in an Indigenous and White environment



The aha moment that repeats itself as I meet most Indigenous people is they all want and need “teachers who look like us, talk like us, and think like us.” (McKinley B. & Brayboy March 14, 2006, Pg. 426). To me, this phrase is not only for the standard education but applies to all people of color in most situations.

I have had three decades of official service to my tribal community to be able to engage with most employees and tribal members on a level using common sense. I don’t feel that I am prejudged for my behavior or for speaking my truths, maybe it’s because I am an elder now and I have earned trust and respect and I am finally able to write my story and take accountability for my truths in action.

### **Community Engagement**

My efforts of community engagement have been seen and acknowledged, you never know who is watching you, “you must learn to regulate yourself in a manner to earn respect.”

The career decisions I made for myself were always placed within the tribal public eye, where I could be of service to my tribal community. I enjoy interacting with diverse populations, this is where I learned my heritage from and why this heart work is so important to me. This is where I learned that other diverse and mixed lineage history and information may be important to others as well.

I have learned to regulate myself by learning the differences of others comfort zones. If they do not want to share the same space with me or need their own space, I can respect their decision. I will continue to circle myself with people who are just like me, especially the mothers of children who are of mixed lineage. I am here to share my story so they can compare their own story in order for the legacies of each woman, person and families of colors will continue.

I have over 12 years of work committed to Emergency Management in Native Country. This has assisted me in earning the title of Skopabsh Kiyah, a reign of royalty for the Muckleshoot tribe. I was selected for my commitment in helping people in preparing for man – made and natural disasters. It was a humanitarian effort on my part as was most of my career decisions were based on, serving my tribal community for the last 28 years.

To a majority of my tribal community, it did not matter if I was seen as a Black Indigenous Woman or not, but there was the minority who took their turn in speaking out about my Black lineage which was not a positive experience. My crown was made four months after I was announced as the Royalty because not many Indigenous people wanted to see me with a crown or did not feel I deserved one. I made two crowns by the time they finished one, and it did not have the correct year and had to be returned.

I was never given a photo shoot or an interview with my own tribal newsletter even though there were countless former and present royalty always in the newsletter. I have always felt it is because of my skin tone or my “attitude” there are times when I can feel the racism, I just cannot prove it, especially in the workplace.

Figure Eight: Me as a Black and Indigenous Royal Kiyah for Muckleshoot Tribe 2019



### **My Theory**

My theory of the One Drop Rule and the impact it has on the Black Indigenous Woman of Color is based on my own lived experiences and peer reviews. Through my own experiences in the Pacific Northwest I have met Black Indigenous people from across the United States who have settled here but do not receive much recognition or acknowledgement for who they are. They seem to be walking the fine line of both lineages and have to decide which culture to believe based on the community they reside in. In our minds this is not a fair or equal choice, we come from two lineages or more, seen and identified as one, the Black Indian, now named the Black Indigenous person of color.

When slavery was first brought to this land, the black and the Indian families formed allies for each other against the colonizer for ways of survivance. They soon formed languages and families segregating themselves by building “safety nets” for each other.

The African and Native ways of traditions and healing practices is hundreds of years old and still share similarities with each other. The rituals, regalia, medicines, and traditional are similar, the only thing different is the different shades of the skin tones.

I am confident that there will be listeners along with readers that this message and story will be made clear, especially to the mothers of the families of the Black Indigenous Woman of Color. This message is coming from me to you that we do exist, we acknowledge who we are, we respect who we are, we know both our lineages and our ancestral traits.

As we learn we cannot forget the One Drop Rule was made to define us and put us into a category according to our skin tones by the colonizer. Times have changed, names have changed

but the perception has not, it will take many educated generations of non-biased people to try to erase what history has done to both sides of my ancestors.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

I am comfortable where I am today with my own self-reflection and research of my lived experiences of being a Black Indigenous Woman of Color because of the One Drop Ruling. The label being placed upon my ancestors is still used “traditionally” in most communities throughout the United States, that is how we are identified and labeled as “black.” Although I am identified as black by most tribal communities and identified as native by most black communities, it’s all okay with me now. I can write my truths about my past, present and future for others who are curious and may want to learn from my lived experiences to begin to share their own stories. This is the only way we can begin our healing process is through storytelling, we need to vent to each other because we understand each other. I used to be offended by the name calling I would receive by either race; I forgive them for not knowing before they speak about who I am or who I stand for or what I believe in.

I am confident that my research will become an asset to the Black Indigenous Communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. The work will continue into the next generations of both lineages of the red and black native, this type work will be understood and accepted. Although my main audience I am writing to in the Black Indigenous person, this Autoethnography will reach out to and open the minds of most mixed lineage people, children and families of color.

I started writing about Jim Crow and the Native Boarding schools’ eras. They both caused traumatic events in the lives of my maternal and paternal parents and grandparents.

Before I was conceived I was being carried in the womb of my grandmother, she was protecting me and her daughter from the trauma she became a part of and had to witness. Those feelings were passed on through the DNA we share through the bloodlines. European science is recently discovering the impacts and effects the trauma has on the unborn child and how it can affect us the rest of our lives. This is why I explained the three stages of my life from zero – 63 years of age and how I am managing how to forgive and let go in order for me to begin to heal my mind, body and soul. I have been in the stages of protecting my inner child for so long, I have become numb and stuck in the past from the negative experiences I have had, it is time for me to move on.

Colorism is predominant in my society, maybe they will come up with a new name or label for this soon, but it will always have the same definition. Depending on the culture you are from or the community you choose to reside in, your either too dark or too light when you are a person of mixed lineage. It is not fair to the innocent child who did not fully understand why they were being called the colored child while being bullied at play because of the color of their skin. They believed they were in a safe place and were being loved. It is not the fault of either of my ancestors who were forced to use the English language made up of harsh racist words used to identify and hurt each other. We were placed us into categories to be used as slaves for different jobs according to our skin tone from light to dark, but the One Drop Rule took precedence and Colorism was evident in the communities, schools, and in the workplace environment.

I have adjusted to the racism I have had to endure from both of my lineages, but my upcoming generations should not have to learn to adjust and accept the old ways of prejudging a person based on skin tones. Introducing the words that will be placed upon them at a young age

in a user-friendly manner might help to ease the frustration that will take place throughout the lifetime of the Black Indigenous Person of Color.

My children are from mixed lineages and had to face the same racial issues I did when I moved them to the reservation from the city. Being called the N word, they did not understand why their own Indigenous cousins were calling them names and thinking it was okay. They had to mark their ground, either physically or with explicit words, they have grown out of those stages. They have children of their own now and are trying to prevent them from having to go through the name calling for being Black Indian children. I would like to believe that with so many mixed lineages moving into our communities of color that soon this name calling will go away so that we won't see the color of the skin as an issue anymore.

I cannot help but to look into the sky when I need support from my ancestors because I know they are watching every move I make and sometimes putting words in my mouth when I speak or when I write. I was told that when I begin to "stutter" do not be ashamed, it is my ancestors trying to speak through my tongue. I am dependent upon them to give me guidance through this project assisting me with the picking and choosing of who I can talk to without upsetting anyone and guiding me to the right people that can relate this subject matter to.

I have a host of family and friends I have had these discussions with in the past even before I entered into this doctoral journey. I know they are wondering whatever happened to the project and with the discussion, well here it is! I was determined to write, talk or speak about the Black Indian but I didn't have the right credentials to do so, that was my mind set and now I have the credentials, knowledge and respect to make a positive difference in both of my communities of color the black and the red.

I would like to complete my circle by going back to the Hilltop community where the Urban Clan mothers reside, in Tacoma, Washington. I can host parties of discussions and gain the support we both need to bring this topic to the surface. The Indigenous parent who chose to give birth to a mixed lineage child and to cherish and love them regardless. They have been patiently waiting, which is why I have to ask myself, “how much more time do I really believe I have?” I need to get busy!

The Urban Clan Mother is the Indigenous Woman who left her reservation before or after she had children to begin a life in the city. She became an Icon, her home became a place where any native could go to for comfort, safety and reassurance that they were all one and the creator guided them to be together as one family unit in the city. They lived together, prayed together, celebrated together they all knew each other and became close allies amongst each other.

As I learned to walk my ancestral lands in silence I listen to my ancestors they keep me grounded, they keep me motivated in knowing they are assisting me to remain balanced while supporting me in this line of work I have been chosen to do, thank you ancestors.

These are the roots that I am from in my leadership role today. I write and mention my ancestors and relatives. These were the woman warrior leaders of my past that helped to form the present. I walk the same land they did in silence daily continuing their unfinished work. I often wonder what made each of these powerful women come together to form the most powerful demonstration in the history of our tribe. My role model leader was Bernie – Lozier – Tanewash, she raised me, educated me and ensured I had a religious foundation. When I look at this photo, I don't have to wonder where she was at when she was not at home, she was planning along with the other women for our future for the entire tribe. She was my inspiration as a woman and as a

leader. I often have dreams that as a leader, I may have to re-enact this demonstration to remind some of our visitors whose land they are walking on and that they are only our guests.

**Figure Nine: Women Ancestors at Muckleshoot**



Since then I have learned that I can have many names, moods, and environments I can adapt to because of the negative impacts that were actual lessons learned. I now write about those lessons to teach other black Indigenous families of color the ways of survivance.

I inserted my time table from 1965 to present, these were the years I could remember in detail. There was no room for diverse teachings throughout most of my lifetime which is another method of conditioning that has formed my character today.

I can only suggest to the maternal and paternal parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or guardians of the mixed lineage or the Black Indigenous person or child of color that they learn at a young age to take pride in the color of their skin, their genetic makeup, along with any physical or mental attributes they inherited from their ancestors. Allow the child at young age what the future may hold for them being a person of color. Follow the seven steps written in my dissertation and add to them if you need to. Be sure and take the child out to Walk their

ancestors' lands in Silence and teach them where they came from, teach them their lineages and do not be ashamed of their cultures and traditions, teach them to respect and honor themselves and others and they will be able to make the adjustments needed for survival. Be sure and ask them throughout their formative years, "what type of ancestor do you want to be remembered as?"

### **Recommendations for future research**

Future research in this area of study can include for schools and communities to form focus groups. Look at the holiday calendar and add a special day for the Black Indigenous person of Color, other groups have their own holiday set aside for them, why not us? Begin to bring in teachers, consultants that look like us, talk like us and act like us, so our children can begin to feel more comfortable with their presenter. Ensure the instructor has a matching background as the student so the reflection will be mutual and less conflicts. Encourage the students to conduct research because it is an interesting subject and to bring the teachings home to the family, especially the parents both maternal and paternal. The best way to lessen the pain or the wound is to learn to mitigate the incoming issues that will arise and cause catastrophic damage if there has been no healing effort from the beginning stages of life.

This is a subject that is rarely discussed but thought about amongst the Black Indigenous person of Color. We need more public gatherings named for us so that we can feel that we are noticed and will not have to choose which side to be on for the day or turn into a chameleon to fit in with either community.

I feel positive about this story I have been tasked with to share in the form of a dissertation, I am also a very proud grandmother of a variety of mixed lineage children who are Black, German, Spanish, Irish, just to name a few. We are direct descendants and survivors of Slavery and the

Boarding schools' areas, some of those wounds will never heal, but through writing, storytelling the truths about our families past we can begin the healing process of those who will participate and listen.

Thank you,

Wamp – shush- ta-he-tum (Forever Beautiful)

Ada McDaniel

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