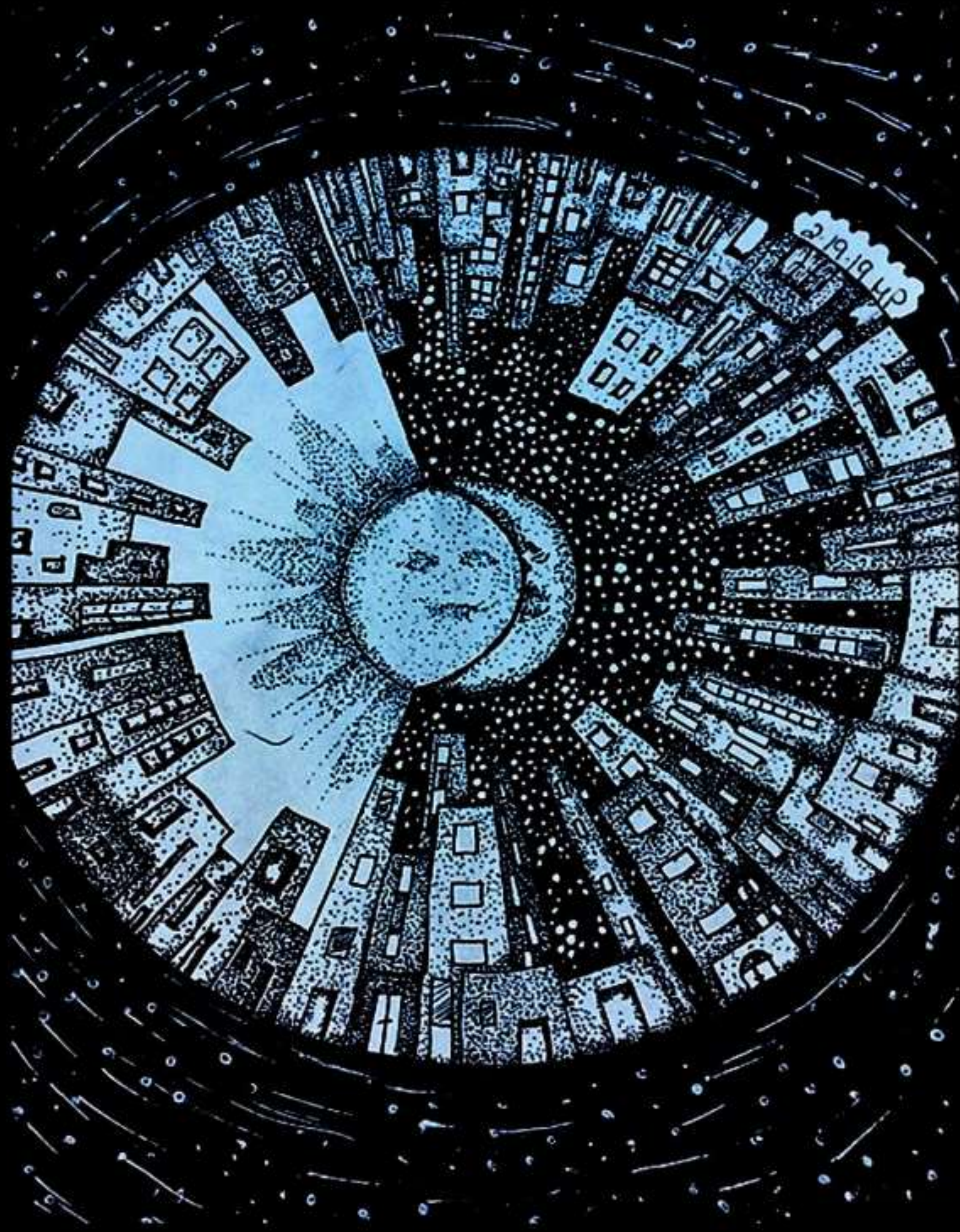
Penumbra

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF
CRITICAL AND CREATIVE INQUIRY



Volume 6, Summer 2019

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UNION
INSTITUTE & UNIVERSITY

Penumbra: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Critical and Creative Inquiry

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Penumbra is the official, refereed, scholarly journal of Union Institute & University’s Ph.D. Program in Interdisciplinary Studies. The journal is published at regular intervals and dedicated to challenging traditional academic and creative disciplinary boundaries in the context of social change.

Penumbra’s purpose is to promote theoretically informed engagements with concrete issues and problems. The journal publishes socially engaged, innovative, creative and critical scholarship with a focus on ethical and political issues in the humanities, public policy, and leadership. Penumbra is a peer-edited and peer-reviewed journal committed to spanning the divide between scholarly and creative production, and to fostering work from graduate students, junior scholars and emerging artists, in addition to more established critical and creative voices.

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Penumbra invites scholarship of all kinds, creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and visual works that address any aspect of the journal's mission and scope. We seek submissions from graduate students, junior scholars, and emerging artists, in addition to more established critical and creative voices. All submissions undergo double-blind peer review. We do not accept previously published work. Simultaneous submissions are acceptable, but the editors should be notified immediately upon a work's acceptance for publication elsewhere.

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All visual artwork and proposed artists' projects must be submitted electronically. A proposal for an artist's project or portfolio should comprise a one-page written description accompanied by ten or fewer uploaded sample images. Also acceptable are hyperlinks to an online gallery of up to ten images, or up to three videos/multimedia pieces. Projects that do not meet these requirements will also be considered. Please contact the co-editors regarding artists' projects that do not meet our submission requirements. If an original artwork for Penumbra is proposed, samples of comparable work should be submitted along with a one-page written proposal. All work must be submitted electronically. Please contact the co-editors if you have concerns about submission format.

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Editor's Note

Contemporary issues manifest in narratives, driving them to utopian or dystopian conclusions. Barnita Bagchi describes utopia as an imaginative creation of a possible world, while understanding "the fictiveness and the perpetual state of incompleteness that such worlds enshrine." The state of the world has never been described as *utopian*, but many might attribute *dystopian* to the current sense of warped truth and turn from empathy perpetuated in the social consciousness. A lack of truth is ironic, because the shift in politics has largely resulted from the idea of "narrative as truth."

Storytelling and iconography play a large part in how humans perceive the world around them, particularly narratives of any kind. Narratives can become a tool for positive and negative purposes. While several of the world's politicians utilize them for manipulation, narratives can also illicit positive change. The researchers featured in this volume demonstrate

how imagery, difference, and interpretation can challenge the current scholarly narrative to include greater perspective.

Variance leads to innovation. Difference encourages greatness. Without knowledge of varied perspectives, empathy is simple to dismiss. What is needed is an expansion of empathy, and the knowledge that *difference* isn't synonymous with *dangerous*.

§§

This volume of *Penumbra* includes six critical articles, and one short story. The work comes to us from scholars in academe and out, established and emerging writers and artist in the U.S. and abroad, individuals using traditional and experimental styles to explore the power of critical and creative expression as it relates to the interdisciplinary approach.

The first essay, "Engaging in Difference Using Restorative Practices", Linda Kligman examines microaggression and Critical Race Theory as barriers to discussing race, especially concerning her role as a White woman. Beginning with her career in education, Kligman analyzes how Restorative Practices are used to create intentional and inclusive dialogues.

Similarly, Jennifer Kramer-Wine's "How to Find a Blackhole in Your Kitchen" considers how James Baldwin's body of work represents a strong example of the intersection between politics and poetry. Her research indicates that Baldwin's work is experiencing a resurgence, facilitating a better understanding of present-day race and culture.

Grappling with ideals and their practical applications is exactly what happens in "Church Burning." This short story by Dr. Zac Showers takes place in a post-apocalyptic North Florida town, where deeply religious farmers must join together and burn a church that has been infected with otherworldly monsters. In an attempt at deconstructing the power of consumerism, protest, and fashion, Matt Grinder offers his essay, "Fashion as Protest: Conversant Imagery in Jared Yazzie's Protest Fashion Line." He posits that Western controlled narratives have continued to remain ignorant of past transgressions against Native Americans. Despite this, Jared Yazzie produces a fashion art that points to a legitimate protest that engages in contemporary protest, seeking honest and meaningful conversation to promote lasting change.

Miya Fowler also considers how art can encourage change in her essay "Black Performance Theory." Using two theorists as a framework, Fowler interprets Black Dance and corroborating claims made by the critics about the presence of Black sensibilities in Black performance whether Black bodies are or are not present. She argues that research demonstrates the transformational nature of the Africanist dancing body on, through, and by the mainstream,

and that connectivity and communal practice underlie the authors' analyses, providing further evidence of the interaction of Black sensibilities with mainstream and global spaces.

The next critical article demonstrates practical applications of social justice in "Simone Weil's Metaxu: Interrogating Truth" by Dr. Christopher Peyton Miller. Through a Lacanian lens, he underscores three constructs from Simone Weil: Metaxu, Attention, and Decreation. Ultimately, he focuses on Weil's construct Metaxu to exhibit its potential in unhinging hegemony.

Lastly, Bruce Maggi's "Art Interrupted: Where are the Indigenous Women?" analyzes the portrayals of indigenous women through art and media, then discusses where those women are found today.

Although the writings included in this volume were approved for publication following a double-blind review, the cover art is a solicited piece graciously shared by Misti Porter, titled "Night in the String of Lights." The piece is 5" wide by 7" tall. Porter was inspired to create the pen and ink pointillism drawing after listening to the song *Life in the City*, by Turkauz. Her artwork often mixes media, time-periods, and methodologies, thus her work reflects the journal's mission.

Enhancing understanding through layered perspectives is the mission of this journal. Indeed, the cumulative submissions display a melding of disciplines, such as visual art, history, psychoanalysis, creative writing, poetry, education, and dance.

In *Zen in the Art of Writing*, Ray Bradbury categorizes writing as a "cure." If so, I present that the writings compiled for this volume are not a cure or deconstruction, lest they be over-simplified. Rather, the following writings are considerations of something better, something far from dystopian. To move beyond dystopian is to embrace identity on an individual and societal level.

Recognizing and engaging differences is a positive step towards understanding and collaboration. Still, in order to engage difference, a dismantling of expectation must take place. What we hold to be true is merely based on what we've been taught, and as researchers, we should look past the lens we've been shown.

—JONINA ANDERSON-LOPEZ

Engaging in Difference Using Restorative Practices

Six hundred people from diverse backgrounds were seated in a hotel listening to a panel discussing the impact of Restorative Practices in schools. A director and a White woman shared the promising results of a randomized control study; elementary schools implementing Restorative Practices had decreased suspensions (Augustine et al. 1). Even more encouraging, this was the first time a disciplinary intervention had significantly reduced the racial disparities of school suspensions in this large urban district. Throughout the district, staff reported stronger relationships, and surveys indicated a more positive school climate when implementing Restorative Practices(Augustine et al. 2). Also on the panel was another school's Chief Officer, an African American man, who spoke about the racial disparity within school districts. He challenged the audience of restorative practitioners, stating that before we begin the work of Restorative Practices, we must first address the inherent bias in our schools. He criticized the prominence of White administrators and teachers instructing Black and Brown children, stating children need to see more people like them in positions of authority. Calling for more equity, he stated that White people will need to make space for emerging leaders of color. When asked what he meant, he took a breath and clarified that this applied to some of the White people here at the conference today; White people will need to step aside to make space for minorities. Met with some applause, there was also a tension in the room. After the panel members spoke, the microphone became available to take questions from the audience. A White man, who identified himself as a retired teacher, congratulated the

panel on addressing bias. Trying to signal his own repugnance towards racism, he continued "we are colorblind here" and went on to talk about diversity while members of the audience murmured.
While one panelist is seeing data that shows progress in achieving racial equity, another panelist reads the data as addressing only a symptom. I recognized the familiar arguments of Critical Race Theory. The slow pace of racial justice has created a phenomenon termed, "a contradiction-closing case" (Delgado and Stefanic 38). There is a perception gap; one person sees the changes, the other sees the hindrances. To unconsciously defend the gap between ideal and practice, we simplify the narrative to demonstrate incremental progress and point to a reduction in suspension in these piloted elementary schools. The Chief Officer saw the suspensions of Black and Brown children part of a larger systemic racial problem, one of bias in the classroom, that is exacerbated when people of color are denied authority to lead our school systems and educate marginalized children.

As a restorative practitioner, I felt proud of the research making a dent in discipline inequity. And yet, I felt a moment of shame when I looked around the room and noticed the prominence of Whites, like myself, in leadership positions. Were the White leaders blocking progress by taking seats away from others?

Where I work, I feel pride that women are well represented in leadership. However, I cannot help but notice that though we employ people of color, fewer minorities participate at the leadership level. Perhaps I am too quick to embrace incremental gender diversity while overlooking the Whiteness of leadership. While Restorative Practices is about sharing power and authority, it is scary to think that my White colleagues would need to step aside to make jobs for others. I would like to think we could make space by widening our circles. Rather than perpetuate hierarchies, Restorative Practices can provide examples where widening the circle of participation distributes power. Perhaps by understanding race, and looking to other examples such as workplaces, social services, and courts, we can glean lessons to understand how Restorative Practices might help create more just systems.

Roots of Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices is an emerging field focused on improving relationships building social capital and relational networks through participatory learning and decision making (Wachtel, *Defining Restorative* 1). The fundamental hypothesis of Restorative Practices is "human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions

of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them" (Wachtel *Defining Restorative* 3). At its core, it affirms people's dignity, needing to feel a sense of belonging, and have more voice and choice in decisions that impact them (Bailie 11). Beyond interpersonal interactions, to impact civil society we must examine normative assumptions that shape society. Naturally, through evolution we tend towards tribalism;

> This bias is to favor those that are closer to us in general- it influences who we readily empathize with, but it also influences who we like, who we tend to care for, who we will affiliate with, who we will punish, and so on. (Bloom 95)

The dialogue processes inherent in Restorative Practices prompt empathetic conversation to help people recognize the humanity in one another, thus combatting the tribalism instinct. My experience in the field has allowed me to work with people across the globe, of many backgrounds, that all shared a value of honoring the dignity of others and wanting to create more empowering relationships. Specific elements of Restorative Practices are built on community-based justice; having dialogue in circles and honoring the primary influence of family over larger governing systems trace back to many indigenous models of community building (Mattaini and Holtschneider 130; Hopkins 21). When applied in schools, as was being discussed at the panel, this dialogue process brings a struggling student together with peers, teachers, and administrators to engage in affective communication. Facilitators pose questions and people respond with an emotional tenor that encourages empathy that brings the participants closer together. Rather than expel a student as punishment, the student is held accountable for poor behavior and attempts to repair the harm caused. In the circle process, cognitive empathy strengthens social connections and builds more resilient relationships that can counter natural biases.

Restorative Practices builds upon Jürgen Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action in which dialogues within communities can create new shared understandings (Finlayson 57). Habermas explains, there exists a modern discord between the life-world, in which community and family are connected through networked relationships, and the system-world, in which institutions and paid professionals networks have authority in law, economy, and social structures. In modern society, "the colonization of the life-world" prevents the effectiveness of interpersonal communication (Finlayson 56). Similarly, Nils Christie perceived that when lawyers escalate crime into the state's justice system they "steal" the conflict from the community and take away the "potential for activity, for participation itself"'(Christie 7). The question of who owns these conflicts in our schools, and who is best

suited to address the racial inequity, persists. Howard Zehr saw wrongdoing as a violation of people and their relationships (183). By changing the lens to focus on relationships, there is a path forward towards healing. Through dialogue, people can identify the needs caused by misbehaviors and the obligations in these relationships. Inclusive dialogue and mutual agreement could then heal and restore relationships.

Restorative Practices has been used to address issues caused by individual and structural racism. For example, in 1979, a Truth and Reconciliation committee was established after five people were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in Greensboro, North Carolina (Beck 395). To tackle systemic racism, in 1995, the government of South Africa used restorative justice to convene a Truth and Reconciliation Committee that offered amnesty to perpetrators of crimes during the era of apartheid in exchange for taking accountability for the harms they caused (Tutu 45). The government selected restorative justice, as opposed to traditional public trials, with the intent of creating a shared understanding of the impact of racist policies. Participants hoped that by creating a shared understanding and reminding the public of the humanity of the perpetrators as well as the victims, they could restore a divided country and build a new national identity.

Since race itself is a social construct, Whiteness is best understood and defined as a “constellation of processes and practices rather than a discrete identity” (DiAngelo 56). Race is based in a historic, political, economic, and social position that places Whiteness in a place of privileged cultural normativity. The effects marginalize and silence other perspectives and allow public narratives around race to be constructed by those in positions of power (Delgado and Stefanic 9). At the panel, it was possible to overlook the absence of people of color in positions of authority because it was what White leaders have been used to doing and have come to accept as normal. It was not until the Chief Officer challenged the assumption that the current education leaders assume a universality, having an unracialized identity, that we can explore how others see themselves as outsiders, defining themselves and their culture. Recently, as part of conference proceedings, Tim Chapman posed that practitioners' focus on harm has diverted us from the critical work of undoing injustice (The future of Restorative Practices – Big questions for the 21st century). Perhaps while school administrators were focused on diverting students from punitive measures, they overlooked the deeper structural racist systems that favor Whiteness for employment and economic justice.

Displays of White Fragility

In the United States, following the Black Freedom Movement, there was a sense of national progress as constitutional amendments and state laws sought to remedy the marginalization of African American citizens (Eisenberg). However, these social interventions failed to achieve real equality in schools, workplaces, and at the voting booths, resulting in new cultural myths that “the real thing holding people of color back – especially black folks – is not racism, but rather their own behavioral pathologies, personal choices, and dysfunctional cultural values” (Wise 40). This was constructed as a narrative in which America had just displayed valiant leadership to overcome racism, that in our country people should be able to work hard to overcome barriers based on merit (Sue 38). Harking back to our racist past would only keep minorities in a victim mentality.

Probably the myth of merit is most played out in our segregated neighborhoods where the loss of people of color and access to good education goes unnoticed (DiAngelo 58). Schools that serve African American students employ teachers with less experience, have fewer advanced courses and are “also more than ten times as likely to be in places of concentrated poverty” (Wise 33). Segregation creates a coded language that hides race;

White people are taught not to feel any loss over the absence of people of color in their lives and in fact, this absence is what defines their schools and neighborhoods as “good”; Whites come to understand that a “good school” or “good neighborhood” is coded language for “White.”(Johnson and Shapiro qtd in DiAngelo 58)

When the White man stepped to the microphone at the hotel, I imagine, like me, he might be uncomfortable that the Black man had pointed out that he was a White man with more access to power. It is a challenge to the very socialized codes we practice, directly addressing individuals by their racialized identity (DiAngelo 57; Delgado and Stefanic 8). White people are not used to the moment of racial discomfort, yet for most minorities, it is a daily occurrence. The very construct of Whiteness has allowed us, White people, to be unracialized, while people of color are the ones described as “the Black man” (DiAngelo 60). The White man at the microphone wanted to deny his place in this reality. But as Myles Horton notes, when confronted about his place as a White man amidst the Black Freedom Movement, “when acting out of guilt, you’re trying to get rid of guilt, that means you’re trying to serve yourself, not the other people. That’s never constructive” (Horton 197).

When the man at the microphone stated the familiar microaggression; “we are colorblind” his intent was to show solidarity, but instead, he dismissed the Chief Officer’s concern about a lack of

minority role models in our school. The microaggression disregarded the evidence of racial bias that impacts the daily lives of people of color and makes a hurtful denial of their reality (Sue 32). Because people fear appearing racist, we sometimes keep our mouth shuts. Sometimes are words belie our intent. The Chief Officer did not criticize this man's words, he patiently tried to listen for the speaker's intent.

But as a White woman in the room, I am left thinking about White privilege, the advantages afforded to people perceived as White. I may feel "other" at times based on my gender or religion, but I am still part of the White identity. Judith Butler notes the institutionalized separatism pits forms of oppression in competition with one another rather than uniting for social progress (Butler 21). As restorative practitioners, we might become defensive because we, White restorative practitioners, can see ourselves working to empower others. Rather than becoming defensive, what might we do? Exercises that look inward help us understand the intersectionality of our identity and how that affords us privileges and power (Delgado and Stefanic 58). Fania Davis suggests that before trying to implement restorative justice in schools, it is critical to couple bias training, especially Whiteness trainings, in order to dismantle the prevalent racism in our educational system (55). Restorative Practices demands we reflect on our willingness to share our privileged power. White people sitting in positions of authority can question the narrative that we got here solely on our merit and look at our own individual bias, face the norms of Whiteness and the resulting practices and policies. Fortunately, there are some good examples around the world that show how implementing restorative practices can create redistribute power.

Examples of Inclusive Restorative Practices

There are lessons we can learn from restorative practitioners applying specific processes in workplaces, criminal justice, and communities. First, in the United States, Black Lives Matter has called for restorative justice and urges workplaces to look beyond individual offenses to lead restorative conferencing processes that create a safe place to discuss various perspectives to understand impacts of bias (Opie and Roberts 711). Second, in Canada, the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission paired with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People has funded their own court systems (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation). Lastly, in the Netherlands, laws have been developed in accord with principles of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF et al. 9) to ensure the rights of children to participate in family group conferencing ensuring their voice in decisions that impact

them whenever possible. Each of these examples points to intentional changes made by people in positions of authority to widen their circle to share their power.

In the United States, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 aimed to create fair and equal workplaces but never truly addressed Martin Luther King Jr.'s call for economic justice and failed to protect basic human rights (Honey 7). Whiteness was no longer a privileged legal category to be protected, it simply transformed into a social norm (Bhandaru 233). This caused subtle forms of bias to become more difficult to prove in the court. If an employee fails to prove overt racism and harm, a manager can easily ignore the dynamics that led to the racism. Even if proven, managers might attempt to individualize any action and try to weed out one offending coworker rather than look at the hostile work climate. Similar to how we address the individual suspension rather than the racial bias in the schools, in a workplace a manager can disregard the climate in the workplace that caused "institutional and cultural dynamics that reproduce patterns of under participation and exclusion" (Eisenberg, Sources of workplace inequalities).

Discrimination, like microaggressions, attacks one's sense of self; "Violations of identity are like gunshot wounds to our heart" (Hicks 38). Instinct might have the hurt person try to exert more power to control the situation and sometimes this can cause more retaliation in the workplace. Therefore, the acknowledgment of harm is critical to healing and stemming further harm. Rather than have a cross-examination, a restorative conference can create a structured, and dignified dialogue. "When dignity is engaged, it is assumed that both parties are in need of understanding – that both contributed to the breakdown of the relationship, that both played a role, though perhaps not an equal role" (Hicks 191).

Restorative conferencing provides an alternative mechanism to address bias in the workplace. Increasing the interaction between races through dialogue provides an opportunity to gain perspectives of different races is and is critical to improving workplace climate (Opie and Roberts 711). Restorative conferences do not focus on determining intent and then assigning blame for bad motives or declaring a singular truth from the point of authority. Because conferencing's aim is not to dispute facts, there is an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of how harm occurred. Instead, as Habermas explains, using the power of relationships, social order gets constructed based on creating a shared meaning through dialogue (Finlayson 43). It is about pulling in multiple truths, taking turns in a dialogue, and then through hearing perspectives, turning together to a new understanding. Instead of asking the offender why he did something, the dialogue is based around questions of; what

happened, what were you thinking at the time, what have you thought about since the incident (Wachtel et al. 166). This leaves room to discuss unrecognized bias; what one was thinking at the time of the incident might evolve based on hearing other perspectives. The person harmed gets to share his perspective responding to what happened, what was his reaction, what has he you about since, and most importantly, what was the hardest part (Wachtel et al. 166). Further, because it is not punitive, it is a safer place to begin to explore and learn about difference and create a new shared understanding. Using a restorative conference, the dialogue focuses on hearing perspectives from people in their own words. People who are witnesses, or even silent bystanders, have a voice to share their perspectives. Together they take responsibility for their actions and identify harms that were caused. Together they discuss what needs to happen to make things right and ensure that people are reintegrated back into prosocial norms of the workplace. By hearing from those involved restorative conferences create a learning environment and also build stronger social networks (Eisenberg). Facilitating opportunities for diverse groups to participate in sharing perspectives has been shown to reduce prejudice (Opie and Roberts 712).

Another example of how people of color successfully challenged White authority using Restorative Practices can be found in Canada's justice system. Following Canada's Truth and Reconciliation process exploring harms against indigenous people, new court systems were created by First Nation, Inuit and Métis people. Unlike the United States, where Lady Justice appears blindfolded atop many court buildings, the 1999 Gladue ruling mandated Canadian courts to consider the indigenous background to culturally relevant sentencing in the justice system and consider restorative justice principals (Nicholls). According to Don Nicholls, Director of the Department of Justice and Corrections in the Cree nation, restructuring the shape of courtrooms into circles allowed all people to see and be seen, offenders and prosecutors all sat on the same level, and the inclusive nature of the circle that ensured "no issue gets trapped in the corner" (Nicholls). Conducting dialogues in circles is a symbolic way to show equality and non-domination (Pranis 34). Members of the Cree community now attend court administered by the Cree, not by the Quebecois justice system, and ascribe to their own definitions and deliberations. This ensures people are having court proceedings governed by their peers, with outcomes deliberated by their peers, to support community reintegration. For example, in the Cree system, a youth offender can be as old as thirty years of age. Instead of thinking that a nineteen-year-old boy struggling in school has the cognition to control impulsive

behaviors, the indigenous way recognizes that even in their twenties an individual is deeply dependent upon community connections to develop sound judgment. If they are a danger to the public and need to be incarcerated, they remain in local confinement, so their families can visit and participate in rehabilitative services. But often youth may be diverted from prisons to receive social services improving physical and emotional health, to attend summer camps building a positive sense of community, or to engage with elders identifying ways to offer material and symbolic reparations for their harms.

As a final example, in the Netherlands, the restorative circle process has been used to ensure families, rather than government systems, are empowered to make decisions for their children with the intent of keeping families intact whenever possible (van Pagée). Family Group Conferences are circle processes that protect the rights of children by creating space for them to learn, speak and participate in decisions impacting them. Before a child is removed from any home, the child's support is widened by pulling in not just immediate family members, but extended members of the family, and people who are in their circle of care. Following Christie's observation, when the family conflict is not pulled out of the family into the government's welfare system, power remains within the family. In the Netherlands, *EigenKracht*, a social service organization, has successfully trained more than 800 volunteers who speak dozens of languages to facilitate circles to help families make plans to help themselves (van Pagée). Instead of relying on social workers employed by local municipalities, they train community volunteers. National law mandates volunteers are to be used as facilitators, and while professionals can offer knowledge of resources they are mandated to allow private time for families to meet and decide what is best for them (Wachtel, "Restorative Practices and the Life-World Implications of a New Social Science."). What would it look like in our schools if instead of a White professional deciding what was best for a Black child, they provided resources and trusted children and their families to decide what to do to support the struggling child? The rights of children to have Family Group Conferences have been formalized into national legislation in the Netherlands based on data-driven studies of the successful results of this restorative process (van Pagée).

Continuing My Journey

One of the most compelling challenges of the Black Freedom Movement was how leaders could marry the principles and practices of nonviolence to achieve social change. Today, we still must attend to the alignment of

our principles and practices to advance social justice. The assumptions of Restorative Practices are based on creating participatory and empathetic dialogue processes. But how we express ourselves is bound by culture. A reliance on restorative circles tries to create nonhierarchical communication mechanisms speaking sequentially and listening to others. While a White normative view might agree that giving everyone chance to speak without interruption distributes power, some studies have shown that positive interruptions actually encourage African American women to speak up and persist in being heard (Mendelberg et al. 27). African American girls are tone-shamed and their questioning in school can be read as confrontational rather than as curiosity (Morris). Recent research examining bias in Restorative Practices warns that basing communication on verbal expressions favors those that work in the service-economy confident in their "people skills" to express themselves (Willis 12). This can adversely affect people who feel inadequate expressing themselves in front of others. It is, of course, possible to sit in a circle, hear others, and remain closed-down to your own social reflection and social responsibility. With this in mind, we must keep our field focused on community dynamics, not just prescriptive processes.

So we require a sensitivity to others and the willingness to discover and confront our own biases. In examining my own racism, the hardest part for me to decipher is my own sense of individualism. As a White American, I was raised thinking of myself as having agency and seeing my parenting and social success as earned by my intellect and hard work, not as the benefits afforded a girl with access to a solid education, born into a family where I did not have to worry about affording my time to study, nor having to fear about being treated with dignity as I traveled between communities. Unlike some mothers, I never had to miss time from work because my daughter was seen as a troublemaker because of how she was asking questions at school, and I never worried about my son's physical safety when he was stopped by the police. As I have grown to have more power and authority, perhaps now I must stand as an agitator, challenging the institutionalized patterns of oppression where I've been privileged.

Engaging with others is one of the best ways to ensure that my sense of the world is not based on any singular story but creates a diverse and interwoven tapestry of connections. We would benefit hearing more stories and developing more sensitivities to other's stories. Like the comments at the panel, the truth was not either or, it was both opinions and truths, even the perspectives that are hard to hear. Storytelling prompts self-reflection, and in a group environment, listening will create an opportunity for dialogue and true reconciliation

(Fellegi 213). We must create a space where it is safe to have difficult conversations. It is sometimes hard to be honest, sometimes our words fail us, but we need to hear each other's intents and aspirations. How we move forward matters, we must focus on our goals as well as the dignity of one another.

Participation, reparation, and reintegration are fundamental ideals of Restorative Practices. It is not something one just learns. It is something one must practice in the lived interactions of day to day life. In my family, in my studies, in my work, and in my community, I must be vigilant not just to my own bias, as the Chief Officer asked. In addition to looking out to others, I need to be mindful of the structures that sustain my privilege and be willing to challenge them. Only then will we make bigger steps to a more inclusive civil society.

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James Baldwin's Interpretation of Stagger Lee: Poetry and Politics

James Baldwin's body of work represents a strong example of the intersection between politics and poetry. His keen sense of Black culture and how it bumped into White culture is reflected in his novels, essays, screenplays, speeches, and poems – he knew the context of racism and translated the context into several different art forms. While many were able to access his essays in publications such as *The Progressive* and by reading his novels once the first was published in 1953 at the time it was written, Lynn Orilla Scott and D. Quentin Miller bring to life his work today. In their synopses of trends in literary criticism of Baldwin's body of work, both illustrate how the relevance of Baldwin's body of work is resurging so that we, in 2019, can access his art in order to understand the present day (Lynn Orilla Scott; D.Quentin Miller). In that spirit, this essay will analyze his poem, "Staggerlee wonders", to illustrate how Baldwin is able to weave together politics and poetry in order for his readers to see how Black and White culture clash with each other.

Biographical and Historical Context

Born in 1924, James Baldwin experienced the Great Depression first hand and intensely: Baldwin came of age in Harlem in a family of 11. In biographical

interviews, he reveals that he did not experience overt discrimination based on race until his late teens, after he graduated from high school and worked in New Jersey laying railroad tracks (Field). To add to his mystic, Baldwin served as a preacher at a Pentecostal church while in high school in Harlem; one of his teachers in high school was another aspiring writer Countee Cullen (Field; J. Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*).

By 1958, at the age of 34, Baldwin was an established American writer. His life as a writer enabled him to meet several well-known thinkers such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1957, just as King was in the midst of writing *Strive Toward Freedom* (Field). Baldwin found King to be "a younger, much-loved, and menaced brother" who was "very slight and vulnerable to be taking on such tremendous odds" (Oates 128). There was a sense of awe of King by Baldwin, who, a few years after their first meeting, was present during a sermon that King preached in Atlanta after King had stood trial in Montgomery, Alabama. In the sermon, King surmised that Whites, like those who were part of the trial, "who knowingly defended wrong," were ruled by fear, to which Baldwin reflected: "He [King] made the trials of these White people far more vivid than anything he himself might have endured" (Oates 156). In several historical accounts of King's life and of the Civil Rights Movement, Baldwin emerges as a muse, a critic, and an activist (L. V. Baldwin, *There Is a Balm in Gilead: The Cultural Roots of Martin Luther King, Jr.*; L. V. Baldwin, *Behind the Public Veil: The Humanness of Martin Luther King Jr.*; Oates; Payne).

Baldwin, the Poet

Nikki Finney, who wrote the introduction to the most recent edition of Baldwin's poetry called *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems*, argues that Baldwin's writing style was poetic in and of itself, and, further, that he wrote poetry to distill his thinking (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems*). Baldwin's need to distill is supported by his prolific writing. For example, by simply reading the first paragraph of the two-page epilogue to *No Name in the Street*, the reader is exposed to the breadth and depth of Baldwin's reflection

upon the 1960's. Read with a 2019 lens, Baldwin's perspective is utterly profound:

This book has been much delayed by trials, assassinations, funerals, and despair. Nor is the American crisis, which is part of a global, historical crisis, likely to resolve itself soon. An old world is dying, and a new one, kicking in the belly of its mother, time, announces that it is ready to be born. This birth will not be easy, and many of us are doomed to discover that we are exceedingly clumsy midwives. No matter, so long as we accept that our responsibility is to the newborn: the acceptance of responsibility contains the key to the necessary evolving skill. (J. Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* 196)

His use of metaphor brings to life the intense cultural evolutions that America experiences at it evolved from its independence in 1776 until now, and easily defines our role in the evolution: we need to support the evolution. Or we readers need to serve as midwives in America's re-birth to follow Baldwin's metaphor.

This re-birth that Baldwin sees can be found in "Staggerlee wonders," a poem that was originally published in 1982, just a few years prior to Baldwin's death in 1987. In this poem, Baldwin takes on the voice of Stagger Lee, who is legendary (Brown). One legend has it that Stagger was a pimp in St. Louis and that he shot Billy, another Black man from the underbelly of society, because Billy stole Stagger's white Stetson hat. It is a legend pregnant with symbolism and is revisited over and over again through generations of African Americans (Brown). White folks celebrate the legend in songs, including those by The Grateful Dead and Amy Winehouse (the Dead have a twist on the story where a woman takes down Stagger, for killing "my Billy") (Hobart; Andrewes; *The Annotated "Stagger Lee"*). On the one hand, this is a legend that reinforces the White stereotype that Black people will kill each other over a hat – especially Black people who live in the city; especially Black people who are pimps; especially Black people who drink while gambling in the wee hours of the morning. On the other hand, Stagger can represent truth and justice, because sometimes in the oral history of Stagger Lee, Billy is a police officer. Baldwin presents this representation of truth and justice masterfully (Miller).

The Poem: Staggerlee wonders

Baldwin's "Staggerlee wonders" poem is seventeen pages, written in four parts, and alternates between statements by Staggerlee and imagined conversations between Staggerlee and White folks such as "the Great Man's

Lady" – these conversations are indicated by italicized words: "*Ma! he's making eyes at me."* Taken as a whole, the poem serves as a near-perfect mirror of how minority and majority cultures bump into each other and tumble with each other and how Black people persist through their oppression by White people.

The first part begins with Staggerlee wondering what "pink and alabaster" people think of Black people. Baldwin poignantly uses the term "nigger" to refer to Black people, emphasizing the negative origins of the word, after all, it is Staggerlee who is wondering – Staggerlee, the legend, whose story emphasizing negative stereotypes of the other is told over and over again in song and verse (Jerry; Mencken; Motley and Craig-Henderson). While this dehumanizing term is used for humans that Staggerlee relates to best, "they" is used to explain a culture that he at once understands, yet does not understand. In setting this stage about how Staggerlee wonders about Whites, Baldwin sequences observations about how they (White people) interact with the world:

> They have never honoured [sic] a single treaty
> made with anyone, anywhere.
> The walls of their cities
> are as foul as their children. (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 4)

This section ends with a conversation between Staggerlee and a White lady:

> *No,* said the Great Man's Lady,
> *I'm against abortion.*
> *I always feel that's killing somebody.*
> Well, what about capital punishment?
> *I think the death penalty helps.*
>
> That's right.
> Up to our ass in niggers
> on Death Row.
>
> *Oh, Susanna,*
> *don't you cry for me!* (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 6)

This opening part gives portraits of the hypocrisy that sometimes exists with oppression, particularly with the image of who is most likely on Death Row:

Black men who White people are okay killing. In this case of hypocrisy, Baldwin illustrates how absurd it can be to fight for the rights of the unborn, yet not fight for the rights of the living. Why not stand up for those who land on Death Row, especially given what we know about police discrimination and, in particular, unlawful practices in the South? (Alexander; Stevenson). This illustration sets the stage for the subsequent parts that lead the reader through the evolution from this oppression.

Part two begins with Staggerlee wondering "how niggers should help themselves," again from a majority perspective. The lyrics to "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" are used to emphasize that a common answer for the majority is for divine intervention. Or maybe the hope that the minority would just disappear (Brown). Yet, Staggerlee moves on to emphasize the difference between he and the majority culture:

> My days are not their days.
> My ways are not their ways. (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 7)

Then Staggerlee begins to wonder about the notion of color blindness, which when one takes into account that this was written in the early 1980's, highlights a concept that began to emerge in the popular press by people who aimed to raise awareness about race (and to quell racial incidents) (Vogel). This notion of color blindness led Staggerlee to wonder about what they do not want to see:

> What is it that this people
> cannot forget?
>
> Surely, they cannot be so deluded
> as to imagine that their crimes are original? (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 8)

After a list of ways Whites have attacked Blacks, Staggerlee wonders whether or not they realize that "we are all liars and cowards" but then a thought occurs to him:

> Then, perhaps they imagine
> That their crimes are not crimes? (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 9)

These philosophical questions bring to the forefront one theme of the poem: the hypocrisy of the majority White culture in America. Baldwin keenly points out that Staggerlee is not engaged in these thoughts to clarify the beliefs of the majority:

> They know that no one will appear

to turn back time,
they know it, just as they know
that the earth has opened before
and will open again, just as they know
that their empire is falling, is doomed,
nothing can hold it up, nothing.
We are not talking about belief. (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 10)

Rather, Staggerlee takes the reader step-by-step through the evolution of America that occurred in the mid- and late-20th century, acknowledging that change has occurred. And Staggerlee anticipates the change will not stop: the majority will become the majority-minority population by the mid-21st century (Frey).

Part three – the shortest part – begins in a similar tone to part two, but acknowledges a change: that "the niggers made, make it…the niggers are still here." In this section, Staggerlee is wondering about how Whites think about Black survival, and ultimately debates what survival means. Staggerlee illustrates one survival technique using a character named Beulah, who works for "the alabaster lady of the house" – she "gives me a look, sucks her teeth and rolls her eyes in the direction of the lady's back, and keeps on keeping on" (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 11). This alludes to a shift in the conversation between Beulah and the alabaster lady, who "changes the subject to Education, or Full Employment, or the Welfare rolls" as if there was a start to building a more equal relationship:

…Don't be dismayed.
We know how you feel. You can trust us.

Yeah. I would like to believe you.
But we are not talking about belief. (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 13)

Staggerlee is acknowledging that the road to restoring the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor is long and hard; the road is not about belief, but about action.

The fourth and final part represents a shift from Staggerlee thinking about the "Great Man" to thinking about the "Kinsmen" in this life.

Ah! Kinsmen, if I could make you see

the crime is not what you have done to me! (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 17)

The reflections that Staggerlee cites in this part explain how White domination is ending and how his people survived:

During this long travail
our ancestors spoke to us, and we listened,
and we tried to make you hear life in our song (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 19)

Yet, in the last lines of the poem, Staggerlee knows there is not hope even if there is kinship and focuses on "life everlasting" and to

…decline to imitate the Son of the Morning,
and rule in Hell. (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy's Blues and Other Poems* 19)

This final part as a whole ties together much of Staggerlee's thinking throughout the poem and grounds his life experience in that of his ancestors, creating imagery that makes the reader recall all of the wonders of Africa. There is a strong sense is that White domination is ending in Staggerlee's mind – literally and figuratively.

Discussion

Every stanza in the seventeen-page-long poem "Staggerlee wonders" can be unpacked to reveal how Black and White cultures clash with each other throughout American history, and in particular throughout contemporary American history – about the period of time that Staggerlee is reflecting upon (1950s through the 1970s), about the period of time Baldwin wrote the piece (early 1980s), and about the present day (2019). It is a stunning example of how a poem can be political and remain beautifully poetic. It recalls heartache, yet raises up humanity. It gives White people the benefit of the doubt, yet also questions whether or not the oppressor will really change. What's more, Baldwin does so without using the word Black or White. Rather "nigger" and "Great Man" and "pink alabaster lady" are used to describe the people who are in Staggerlee's reflections.

Given this significant example of a poem that is political, there are only two published literary critiques of "Staggerlee wonders": a comparison of Staggerlee in Baldwin's and Toni Morrison's work (Miller) and a quick analysis within a broader conversation about the legend of Stagolee.[1] This poem seems like gold for literary critiques. For instance, there might be much

[1] (Brown 206–11) This citation also highlights how the legend of Staggerlee also has varying spellings of his name.

to learn from the fact that Baldwin does not use “Black” or “White” throughout the piece, which in and of itself is a strong statement on social constructions. Baldwin makes a statement about how language can be used powerfully to illustrate truth and justice. Nikki Finney’s Introduction to the *Jimmy’s Blues and other poems* – by itself, an example of the power of language – explains the impact of Baldwin’s language:

> I do not believe James Baldwin can be wholly read without first understanding White men and their penchant for tyranny and “unrelenting brutality.” If you read Baldwin without this truth, you will mistake Baldwin’s use of the work *nigger* as how he saw himself, instead of that long-suffering character, imagined, invented, and marched to the conveyor belt as if it was the hanging tree, by the founding fathers of the Republic, in order that they might hold on for as long as possible to “the very last White country the world will ever” (J. Baldwin, *Jimmy’s Blues and Other Poems* xiv)

Finney’s framework leaves no doubt that Baldwin’s poem “Staggerlee wonders” is a political statement about Black-White relations. Indeed, Brown suggests that Baldwin might have used Bobby Seale, who was integral to the rise of the Black Panthers during the 1970s, as his mental model for Staggerlee. If so, this is a strong political statement given the Black Panthers’ effect on politics, which at one point led then Governor Ronald Regan of California (Republican), to call for a ban on guns. In other words, Black people led White people to ban guns, a concept that seems foreign today when many White people refuse to give up their Second Amendment right to own a gun.

As Baldwin is analyzed with this political lens, several other nuggets of contextual clues emerge within the notes peppered in his publications of the few scholars who analyzed “Staggerlee wonders”. For example, the politics that Baldwin engages in with “Staggerlee wonders” are the same the politics described in less-than-beautiful ways by Lee Atwater, who was Republican strategist – an advisor to Presidents Reagan and Bush in addition to serving as the Republican National Committee Chairman in the 1980s. Atwater was recorded in 1981 as saying:

> “You start out in 1954 by saying, ‘Nigger, nigger, nigger.’ By 1968 you can’t say ‘nigger’— that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states’ rights and all that stuff. You’re getting so abstract

> now [that] you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is [that] Blacks get hurt worse than Whites. And subconsciously maybe that is part of it. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that if it is getting that abstract, and that coded, that we are doing away with the racial problem one way or the other. You follow me—because obviously sitting around saying, 'We want to cut this,' is much more abstract than even the busing thing, and a hell of a lot more abstract than 'Nigger, nigger'." (Rick Perlstein, "Exclusive: Lee Atwater's Infamous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy," *Nation*, 13 November 2012)

Atwater is explicit in his description about how Black and White culture clashes, so explicit that one cannot help by wonder: Can there be hope for America? Baldwin's writing and his way of framing the two cultures give some rays of hope because of the poetic nature of it. A poem is not the likely place to confront race. Yet, this concept is exemplified in "Staggerlee wonders", as the poem disarms readers and makes them think. The prose clarifies that Baldwin listened to the various meanings of the legend described within other forms of art – music and oral histories – and continued to ask questions about the meaning of the legend. Then, Baldwin created a poem illustrating his thoughts on race as the politics of America ebbed and flowed during his lifetime.

Conclusion

The nature of poetry and politics has a foundational question: when is poetry political? If politics is a fight for change, when we know the context of the poet, we begin to understand how the poet translated the political context into art and, therefore, the poem becomes political. A deeper analysis might be to understand who was able to access the art (in this case a poem): where was it published? Did librarians buy it and include it in the stacks? Another analysis could be to understand the impact of art. For example, organizational theorists have introduced the multiple stages of grief as a way to understand the change process (Kübler-Ross). And, to manage grief, sometimes a poem is in order. For example, a recent biography of Baldwin by Joseph Vogel analyzes Baldwin's life in the 1980's. At the time, Vogel argues, Baldwin felt a strong force pulling him back to America from France, where he sought intermittent sanctuary throughout his life. Baldwin needed this sanctuary in the 1970's as he needed time to reflect on the Civil Rights era of the 1960's. In one

interview given during the 1970's Baldwin offers thoughts about intersectionality, a term that summarizes his life as a gay, Black man rather succinctly:

> I'm in the process of experimenting. I say a new language. I might say a new morality, which, in my terms, comes to the same thing. And that's on all levels—the level of color, the level of identity, the level of sexual identity, what love means, especially in consumer society, for example. Everything is in question, according to me. (Vogel 25)

Baldwin's poem and the chance to analyze it offers us the chance to take steps to understand the long and deep history of racism in America and to read beyond the canon of literature that is present throughout the curricula in high schools, in colleges, and in graduate schools – even when you are an activist scholar. And, in perhaps the best way to honor the legacy of Baldwin's body of work, to use the fodder that Baldwin gives the reader to identify ways to be a co-conspirator in making the dream of a just society – a society where its members care for each other regardless of race – a reality.

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Church Burning

It got to the point where the town decided they'd just have to burn it down. There didn't seem to be any other way to it, though this realization came after many hours of discussion and sometimes heated argument. The church-elder meeting that Wednesday evening ended with the menfolk agreeing with the Methodist preacher at last; the Baptist church down by the eastern outskirts (which had up until recently been a gathering place for sings and barbecues and kickball games) had become tainted with the Wormwood, and no amount of prayer or inaction would cleanse it. To the Methodists this was no great loss; they bore no ill will towards the Baptists, naturally, but by this sign it became clear to all concerned which establishment was blessed by God, and which was not. The Baptists refuted this, and their pastor had indeed given a powerful sermon on how the Wormwood was a test, not a punishment, but the Methodists and their fair-weather allies the Pentecostals were rightly afraid, and whatever the cause or reason for the tainting, all agreed that something must be done lest it spread and perhaps breed more hideous things to crawl under and about other houses and barns. The Baptists had argued for clemency, continued prayers and blessings, and there were whispers in the back of the room about sending for an Exterminator, but this was struck down as soon as it was offered. The people of Malone were proud if they were anything, and even the Baptists agreed that this was an internal affair, and of no concern to Dothan city-folk or any of their ilk. With options failing superstition and rumor ruled the meeting, for there were only two

certainties: one, the Baptist church had Wormwood growing, and two, the taint came from the east, from whence all unnatural things come. By raised hands and solemn nods even the Baptists agreed, some with tears streaming down their faces, to gather together and burn their former house of worship to the ground.

Counting only willing and able-bodied men, the town of Malone contained fifty-eight firebugs that evening. With the rest stowed safely away in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Methodist Church, the Methodist men as well as the Baptists and the Pentecostals joined together at the Volunteer Fire Department to plan the method of attack. They ranged in age from sixteen to seventy-one. A precious few had shotguns or pistols, the rest were armed with farming implements such as pitchforks and machetes. Some had torches made of "fat-lightern," but these remained unlit, and appeared as huge, knotted clubs in the dark. One boy had a slingshot which he fingered nervously, sliding a stone into its leather cradle, taking aim, and then bringing it down again only to repeat the process. There were dogs too, mutts mostly, and there were some that could be recognized by a nearsighted judge as some large working breed or other. The clamor of dogs and men would have been deafening had the occasion been to fire steaks and shuck oysters, and there would have been wives and babies crawling all over, playing games and laughing and such, but the womenfolk were crowded in Methodist pews, clutching their babies and praying hard. Even the dogs seemed to know the severity of the situation, so they laid their ears back and were silent. Just as their masters were silent.

The preachers talked together briefly, in whispers, and it was decided that they would wait for dawn to start the burning. Rumor told that only a fool would hunt the creatures of the Wormwood at night, and for once the messenger had spoken true. The men huddled together and didn't sleep, nor did they talk to each other; instead spending the five hours between midnight and dawn in prayer, clutching to the iron of their guns, and moving their lips to the Apostle's Creed or to the Lord's Prayer, those staples of poor and frightened men called upon to do bloody but necessary work. The dogs were turned out of doors to range as they would. Dogs could be counted on to smell evil and report it. And the men were confident enough in their dogs to know that each of them would die before allowing the Wormwood into the town proper, and none would be quiet about it. Thus Malone kept watch, waiting and listening, and only the smallest of the children slept at all.

Dawn broke with pink and orange and no sign of Jesus, just as it had for countless days before. Gabriel had held off blowing his trumpet for another day, and so the men rose of one accord and prepared themselves. The firehouse, situated in the center of town between the

general store and the Pentecostal church, was a good quarter of a mile away from the Baptist Church, and was the last building passed if a traveler was moving east towards Mount Olive, but the first encountered if coming from the other way out of the Wormwood. Mount Olive, as far as any of them knew, was still a grouping of a dozen or so houses and farms exclusively for colored and Freewill Baptist, whom had lived in quiet harmony with the people of Malone for time immemorial. However, that information was almost two weeks old, having been conveyed by a peddler of some repute for whom Mount Olive was the last stop on a route that extended back far to the west. He had come through town speaking only of having done decent business with the coloreds and told no other news. It was thought that with the way things had progressed the peddler would be turning around in Malone the next time, for no wagons had come from Mount Olive since, and it was on the following Sabbath that the taint was discovered at the Baptist Church. The fate of Mount Olive was clucked about, but only briefly, for the taint was a more pressing concern now that it had spread even into Malone itself.

The preachers led the way each with an open Bible in one hand held out in front, like a salute or a warding, and a jug of precious kerosene in the other. The Methodist minister began quoting the Twenty-Third Psalm and his two companions picked up the cadence, each in the powerful, sonorous voices that had made them so impressive in the pulpit. The men clustered behind them not in military formation, but in a sort of ordered disarray. They walked in scattered groups of two or three, fathers with sons, neighbors with neighbors, and yet all remained in step, either consciously or unconsciously, mimicking exactly the determined strides of their leaders. The dogs formed a sort of half-circle around the men and faced straight ahead forsaking the horseplay and barking of any other less important day. When the Psalm ended it started again among the preachers, and then someone in the back started singing an old hymn with a strange-sounding but appropriate name. The Psalm mingled with the strains of "The Battle-Hymn of the Republic," and those men who had torches lit them.

The main street of Malone was dirt mostly, though it had been paved at one time in its history, and time had reduced the asphalt to large rocky patches irregularly spaced and forever pushed together by grass and clay. West of Malone the road still carried some of the dignity of its former life. It was still called Highway 2, an ancient name less important-sounding than perhaps it should have been. But Malone was almost as far east as anyone dared to go and Dothan felt further upkeep to be wasteful of precious funds so the Malonians had made do with what they had and spread clay everywhere to even things out. On this

day, however, even the road itself had a sort of prideful bearing because an army was marching down it. With red dust swirling in their wake and hymn and Psalm projecting in front the villagers did seem more like an avenging army than a mob. They had a purpose, a cause, and their cause was righteous. They could see the First Baptist Church of Malone not long after they began, a yellow-brick, squat building with a wooden roof and a decently tall steeple, white, topped by a cross. There used to be two pecan trees between the army and its destination–tall ancient trees that had once spread out over the roof of the church and, when green, almost completely obscured it from view. They were gone, or at least transformed, for one had lost all its leaves and was black and oozing from the highest branch to the lowest root. The other was much worse for the wear. Somehow it had been sheared off at a point about as high as a man and its great forty-foot bulk had crashed into the road, leafless and ashen. The men said nothing about these portents. They did not whisper about what could have killed two huge trees, broken off one, and blighted the grass in a great circle with the church at its center. They all knew what had done it, and it wasn't anything natural or cleansing like fire. It was the taint of Wormwood which no green thing could survive for long.

The men did not break stride, did not falter, until the preachers themselves stopped at the edge of the blighted grass. Psalm and hymn ceased. The Methodist preacher, as the leader, turned his back to the church and faced his men. The other two preachers kept their eyes and Bibles focused on the church from which a phosphorescent glow emanated and a sound like a hundred rattlesnakes struck up.

"Let us pray," intoned the Methodist preacher, his voice carrying over the rattlesnake-sound. For the first time ever, no one bowed their heads or closed their eyes, instead staring straight ahead at the church, casting their prayers against it.

"Lord God in heaven, we are gathered here in Your name, to raise our hands--"

One of the blue stained-glass windows blew out with a crash, the rattling increased, and something that looked a lot like a gigantic octopus tentacle shot out and wrapped itself around the trunk of the still-upright pecan tree. The Methodist men and Baptists prayed silently, eyes open, while the Pentecostals prayed aloud, joining their voices with that of the preacher, as is their custom.

"--against Satan and his evil seed, the Wormwood. Dear Lord, we ask for Your protection, and if it be Your will for us to prevail today, we ask for Your strength, in this our hour of need--"

The main church doors were facing the street, and they exploded outward, clattering across the road. Another huge tentacle, mottled gray

with suction cups spaced irregularly around it, followed one of the doors and picked it up. It then reared high in the air like the neck of a dinosaur and flung the door towards the preachers. No one so much as flinched as it fell harmlessly short, the prayers continued even over the rattling.

"For it is written that You will never leave us, or forsake us. Lord Jesus, march before us today, give us Your holy blessing, so that we might be victorious! In Jesus' holy name we pray--"

"*Amen!"* yelled the throng together, so that it sounded more like a battle cry than the ending of a prayer. Then, with undaunted purpose, the preachers stepped into the blighted grass-circle, and the men spread out around it. Those with shotguns and rifles took aim and at a shouted command shot at the tentacle of their choice. The standing tree collapsed as the tentacle retreated while the rattling intensified until it was a hissing whine.

"Prepare, foul demons, for the wrath of God!" shouted the Pentecostal minister, striding towards the church, lighting the rag stuffed in the mouth of his jug. A third tentacle shot out through the shingles, and then a fourth, but the Pentecostal's aim was true, his jug shattered on the roof. As the kerosene blazed up the middle window collapsed in on itself and a flood of jet-black things scurried out. Whether they were mostly beetle, spider, or hyena is up to dispute. They were huge, awful conglomerations of legs and teeth and hair, the size of dogs with hard carapaces and clicking, slathering mouthparts. They moved like cockroaches, streaming away from the fire and towards the circle of men.

The dogs intercepted as best they could spurred on by that fierce loyalty to master and home that only dogs know, but the resulting battle was like a naked man fighting a lawnmower. Half of a large brown retriever-mix hit the Baptist minister in the knee as he was in the process of lighting his kerosene. He fell sprawling and in a trice the beetle-things were on him, half a dozen of them clicking and slashing. The feast would have lasted longer, but the jug of kerosene ignited and flamed the lot. The beetle-things did not burn like normal creatures; something in their foul nature caused them to be more flammable then perhaps the kerosene itself. As the men with torches charged in the remains of the Baptist minister burned brightly with six or seven hollowed out and crispy exoskeletons burning with him.

This event proved, in less than a second, yet another storybook rumor about the vile things of Wormwood–that fire is the cleanser of God among them. The torches were as useful as the shotguns against the beetle-things, merely a touch and a dodge was enough to dispatch them. Some of the men were too slow to dodge and they paid dearly for it. For the rest it was a turkey-shoot since a sharp-eyed farmer with buckshot is

more than a match for anything under the sun. Some of the things were blown into unrecognizable bits of shell and ichor, others burned as quickly as a gasoline-soaked cotton ball. Soon the dogs and men presided over a burning field of thing-corpses, and, though the men and dogs who lost their lives lost them in gruesome ways, thankfully there were not many dead. The men advanced on the church with renewed vigor like soldiers who had breached a barricade. The Methodist preacher lit his jug and threw it, with the blessing of God it seemed, for the jug disappeared into the window from whence came the black things. It exploded soon after, shaking the foundations. The rattling became a squeal, and the tentacles spasmed briefly and stopped.

The men with axes and shovels attacked the dying tentacles, chopping and hacking; it wasn't long before the tentacles caught fire as well and were consumed. Then there was nothing left to do but watch the church burn.

Fashion as Protest: Conversant Imagery in Jared Yazzie's Protest Fashion Line

Protest fashion presents an external visualization of an interior life that should lead to a meaningful dialogue that leads to tolerance and understanding if not affirmation and agreement. Sarah Maisy noted that "the outfits we choose- or refuse- to wear becomes the front we offer the world…what we wear tells everyone who we are" (2). However, issues facing contemporary protest fashion seem to grow from the idea that protest creates commodification of dissent, exemplified by the proliferation of goods that bear various protest images and slogans of revolutionaries such as Che Guevara. The production of these goods allows individuals to purchase designer labels signifying a transgressive expression that becomes, as Thomas Franks recognizes, a:

> Capitalist orthodoxy, its hunger for transgression upon transgression now perfectly suited to an economic-cultural regime that runs on an ever-faster cycling of the new; its taste for self-fulfillment and its intolerance for the confines of tradition now permitting vast latitude in consuming practices and lifestyle experimentation. (34)

Promoting lifestyle experimentation capitalism constructs a corporate story for consumers designing them as reactionary suggesting protest fashion is a one-sided conversation. Unfortunately, when this one-sided

conversation becomes a trend, the corporation, through the individual, homogenize cultures.

Homogenization has been a constant issue for Native American communities, in particular where fashion provides a cultural context for protest. Non-Native designers appropriating Native culture to produce protest fashion inevitably divorce the style from the issues further denigrating Native Americans. Connie Wang, quoting Adrienne Keene, suggests that:

> The public needs to shift their thinking and realize that knowing the story behind a piece- the community it comes from, the meaning behind it- is far cooler than buying a cheap knockoff that will disintegrate after a few washes. Respect is letting Native peoples represent themselves in fashion, rather than having outsiders represent us. (Wang 10)

Knowing the story behind a fashion piece suggests that meaningful conversation must take place stylizing fashion protest as a dialogue.

One such contemporary pioneer of protest fashion as dialogue is Jared Yazzie (Dine). Beginning his fashion line while attending the University of Arizona in 2009, Yazzie began designing cultural misrepresentation experienced by indigenous peoples, filled it with irony and wordplay, and "spits it back out onto a tee shirt" (Bais-Bille). Yazzie's fashion line bridges the chasm between Native American culture and mainstream American culture at the benefit of the indigenous designers (Bais-Bille). Yazzie uses OxDx (overdose) to describe the state of modern society, "Sometimes we need to pull back and remember our culture, tradition, and those who have sacrificed for us" (Yazzie).

Considering Yazzie's protest fashion as dialogic, this paper examines how a deaf and blind Western-controlled narrative has dictated Native American voice for the last five hundred years through considerations of counter-history.[2] Secondly, Yazzie's work raises a voice for Native women and the abuses that they have and continue to suffer at the hands of a racist judicial system. Finally, Yazzie's unique protest fashion provides a voice for the greater Native American community by opposing the fetishizing of Native cultures through mascots. Overall, Yazzie's fashion protest confronts historical discourse intentionally revealing the reality of the present by unveiling a counter-history in the past. However, before considering Yazzie's unique conversational protest, a brief discussion of underlying philosophies of Native American fashion appropriation must first be considered.

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[2] "Counter-history" draws on Foucault's conception of "subjugated knowledges" that have been buried by formal systemization, and that have been disqualified as "inferior ways of knowing" due to their lack of civilized scientific foundations (7-8).

Appropriation through Photographic Projection

Perhaps one of the hardest projections to overcome is the romanticized view of Native Americans through photography. Photography of Native Americans promoted a sentimentalist fallacy that romanticized the "noble savage" from a realist point of view. Consider, for example, John Riis photography of the destitute in New York City at the end of the nineteenth century. Riis framed the "realistic" vision of poverty that became a voyeuristic window for the middle class and the wealthy to safely view what was socially problematic without endangering themselves. While Riis may have, eventually, moved some toward action, the majority of viewers seemed to have been emotionally moved to superficially consider the injustice of the situation without acting superficially. Protest without action represents, as Christopher Voparil suggests, "the lack of connection between ideas and action" (104).

Just as Riis contributed an awareness of poverty leading people toward sentimentality rather than action, photography captured the idea of Native American identity. However, photography negatively preserved and projected that identity. One photographer that excelled at Native American photography at the turn of the twentieth century was Gertrude Käsebier who was known for her softly allegorical images of women and children (Carr 207).

Figure 1 Käsebier, Gertrude. The Red Man. 1900. Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/200668488/.

The Red Man, Figure 1, taken in 1900, captures a contrary vision of Native Americans. It captures a gentle warmness as there are no feathers, no war paint, and no jewelry of animal bones, merely a relaxed human wrapped in a blanket (Carr 208). Käsebier imagery evokes healthy skin with rough folds of the blanket. The Red Man inhabits a maternally gentle sphere. What Käsebier, captures, however, can also be considered a separation of the Indian from humanity projecting an "innocent child" in need of maternal compassion (Carr 208). Thus, the romanticizing of Native Americans takes the shape of a photograph contextualized by a vision of romantic simplicity characterizing "the noble savage."

Another eminent photographer who sought to capture and preserve American Indians as traditionally as possible was the Seattle based

photographer, Edward S. Curtis. Curtis desired to help protect traditional aspects of Native American life that he believed was vanishing due to boarding schools and Indian removal policies (Makepeace). N. Scott Momaday said of Curtis:

Taken as a whole, the work of Edward S. Curtis is a singular achievement. Never before have we seen the Indians so close to the origins of their humanity…Curtis' photographs comprehend indispensable images of every human being at every time and every place. (Curtis and Cardozo)

Many Native Americans were excited at the prospect of a Curtis revival as he captured aspects of their heritage in ways they believed were lost (Makepeace).

However, Curtis also reinforced the identity of the "noble savage" by staging romanticized and sentimentalized scenes that deflected the attention from the real plight of Native Americans and their loss of human rights. Curtis removed all Western trappings, parasols, suspenders, wagons, and houses that many tribes had been forced to adopt to be considered civilized. In *Ogalala War Party*, Figure 2, Curtiss photographed ten Ogalala men wearing formal feathered headdresses and riding down-hill on horseback with the caption, "a group of Sioux warriors as they appeared in the days of inter-tribal warfare, carefully making their way down a hillside in the vicinity of the enemy's camp."

Figure 2 Curtis, Edward S. Ogalala War Party. 1907. Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b46977/.

While there is no denying Curtis' talent, and that he had a deep respect for those he photographed, the portrayal of the war party is wholly constructed. Head-dresses may have been worn into battle, but usually they were reserved for ceremonial purposes. Whether head-dresses were worn or not, the men would not be, "carefully making their way to the enemy camp" in broad daylight where they would be easily seen and, most likely, intercepted before they made it down the hill. The photograph projects an imagined identity.

Curtis, despite his benevolent designs to capture authentic Indians, projects a modernist construction of cultural dominance. In "Edward

Curtis: Pictorialist and Ethnographic Adventurist," Gerald Vizenor suggests that:

> The modernist constructions of culture, with natives outside of rational, cosmopolitan consciousness, are realities by separation, a sense of native absence over presence in history. The absence of natives was represented by images of traditions, simulations of the other in the past; the presence of natives was tragic, the notions of savagism and the motive images of a vanishing race. The modernist images of native absence and presence, by creative or representational faculties, are the rational binary structures of other, an aesthetic, ideological disanalogy. (180-181)

Modernistic conceptions of "Indian" tended toward romantic images projecting what Vizenor suggests in *Crossbloods*, "We were caught in camera time, extinct in photographs, and now in search of our past and common memories we walk right back into these photographs" (90). For Vizenor, camera time meant walking back into a word, "Indian," that was a simulation of constructed and projected identity that imposed, "the simulation of the indian that is the absence of the native" (*Fugitive Poses* 152). These images and an attempt to remember and define an end, "imperialist nostalgia [that] uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' to both capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with the often brutal domination" (Rosaldo 70).

Using photography to capture the authentic Native American is to hunt for a "true Indian." Louis Owens suggests that any concept of a "true Indian" is an artificial construct and Euro-American invention:

> The Indian in today's world consciousness is a product of literature, history, art, and a product that, as an invention, often bears little resemblance to actual, living Native American people. (4)

Photography suggests definition, capture, and possession through photographic simulation projected upon the Native American community.

Holding the same philosophy as photography fashion appropriates Native Americans through an "honor" and "respect" justification of cultural preservation. Adrienne Keene suggests in her blog "Native Appropriations:"

> Most often people who engage in cultural appropriation use the 'respect' and 'honor' argument to justify their actions- 'But I think Native culture is so beautiful!' or 'I'm honoring Native Americans!' To me, there is no respect in taking designs or cultural markers from community, divorcing them from their meaning and context, and selling them for monetary gain. (par. 10)

Further, Native American fashion becomes appropriated by those who seek to "play" Indian without all the negative Western stereotypes attached to the term (Delroia 1). Karen Kramer, defining appropriation in fashion in *Native Fashion Now,* describes how these designers:

> Appropriate Indian style for their own purposes…often [using] it to assert a kind of 'true' Americanness, or to stand for reductionist concepts like 'freedom' or 'authenticity.' Their garments may be handsomely executed; they may raise the profile or prestige of Native Aesthetics. But when symbols of Native culture are deployed by people who don't understand their meaning, it's like a game of 'telephone,' where the message comes garbled. After all, the 'America' these designs now represent is the same one that has oppressed indigenous people for so long. (19)

Through fashion as a "telephone game," Native American culture becomes misunderstood, absented, and replaced with a simulation of what Indian fashion is imagined to be separated from any cultural significance while consumers misapprehend what their "costume" means. Where there is no discernable context regarding the clothing, there can be no respect, and if there is no respect, there can be no appropriate action leaving current trends of Native American fashion appropriation locked in a sentimentalist fallacy. Autonomously "feeling" that wearing misunderstood designs supports Native American communities reveals parasitic lifestyle experimentation.

However, there are ways that non-Natives can respect Native tradition while still supporting Native causes through fashion protest. Again, Adrienne Keene suggests:

> The way to truly respect Native communities in the fashion world is to support and buy directly from Native designers- these designers know the boundaries of their own cultures, know what elements are appropriate to incorporate in their work and sell to non-Natives, are building generations of culture and design, and very importantly, the sales are benefiting members of the community the designs come from, not large corporation or non-Native designers. (par. 8)

Generally, despite Native designs representing a particular community, it would seem that Native American designers produce artifacts that can be appropriately worn by anybody. On the other hand, Native American fashion, even though it may find marketability towards general audiences, still requires a balanced education to intelligently speak about the issues that the clothing presents or there is the risk of falling into a protest based on sentimentalism and "lifestyle experimentation" (Franks 34). In short, we are asked to provide an answer when confronted about our fashion that transcends individualism making the person wearing the

clothing a viable conversationalist able to address deeper issues honestly. Jared Yazzie's fashion provides just such an example combining the Western historical narrative with a rich Native American counter-history.

Giving Native Voices to Honest Views of History

Seeking to open transparent and honest conversation, Yazzie subverts "bastardized symbols of Native culture," by founding a tradition of deconstructing clothing, while also personalizing, the untold side of American history (Blais-Billie). Yazzie's fashion creativity seems to be influenced by his mother and how she made mundane government issued school clothing unique:

> There's government-issued tribal clothing that our parents used to get as Navajo kids on the first day of school. My mom would fashion it into different stuff- it was super unique. We weren't the richest people, but she would make it a little different so everybody would think she bought all her clothes. (Wang 10)

Small alterations, adornment, and illumination can take inconsequential clothing and transmute them into a fashion statement that reflects community and social concerns. In many ways, clothing becomes a ceremony exemplifying both the individual and community in which they live.

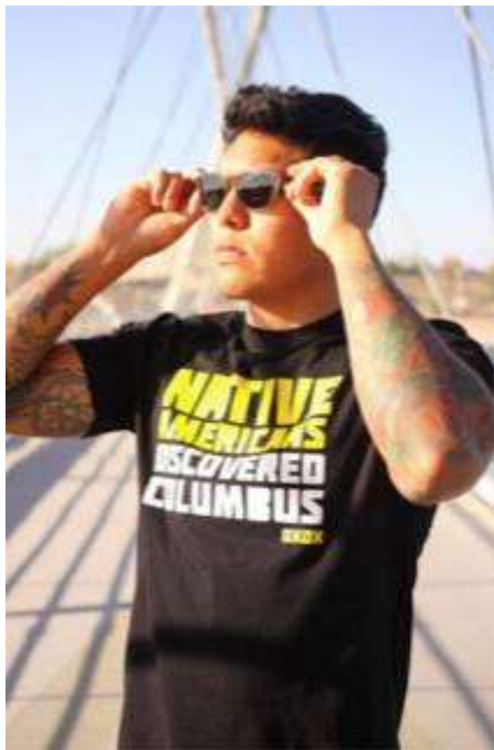

Figure 3 Yazzie, Jared. Native Americans Discovered Columbus. OXDX Clothing. www.oxdxclothing.com products/native-americans-discovered-columbus-tee.

Yazzie's brand, OxDx, carries a mission statement that seeks, "To preserve culture by passing on stories through art, fashion, and creative content. To be socially conscious, constantly connected to our community, and ambitious as hell" (Yazzie). Here, clothing becomes more than a fashion accessory. Fashion connects to a social conscience raising awareness and participation in communities allowing fashion to tell stories in the way we dress, what adorns our clothing, and how we are constructing ourselves creatively by wearing that clothing. Yazzie gives a voice to the voiceless by drawing attention to the messages that illuminate his t-shirt designs.[3]

[3] Yazzie's cprotest fashion has been featured in the *Native Fashion Now* exhibit which toured the nation in 2017, and he also received a commission from the Smithsonian in the same year during the exhibition (White).

Figure 3 presents Yazzie's most popular design, and it is also the shirt that formally launched him into the world of fashion. Baring the message "Native Americans Discovered Columbus," the shirt itself is quite understated, and that seems to be part of Yazzie's goal making it an everyday protest through ordinary fashion. Even though "OxDx is about resistance, anti-conformity, and a departure from the toxic traps of society" the statement itself is visually arresting drawing the eye to the text imprinted on the t-shirt (Blaise-Billie). Rather than an aggressive protest action, the shirt takes a historical "fact," Columbus coming to the New World, and turns it around. Discovery becomes double-sided rather than historically one-sided. The simplicity of the statement allows the design to be considered and questioned turning the realization of the shirt into a teaching moment reversing the Western historical narrative to accuse Columbus of genocide in the New World openly.

Since Yazzie's design promotes conversation, an honest and balanced view of Columbus' genocide must be explored as it is not accurately taught in Western education. In this case, Columbus' own words condemn his actions as he recorded in his journal, "They [Native Americans] would make fine servants…with fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want" (Zinn). Slavery of the indigenous population become necessary to cater to Columbus' greed. His obsessive mantra became, "Where is the gold?" (Zinn).

So contagious was Western greed that in 1508, historian and social reformer Bartolome de las Casas reported that Spaniards, "thought nothing of knifing Indians by tens and twenties and cutting slices off them to test the sharpness of their blades" (60). Native Americans were enslaved and separated from their families. Violent and dehumanizing, the Native American population began to die from torture, starvation, exhaustion, and depression (las Casas 66). Estimations of the death toll between 1494 and 1508 declared over three million Native Americans were killed in Columbus' search for gold (Zinn).

Columbus' violence against Native Americans eventually became the hallmark of the American Empire. Yazzie's work embodies both sides of this historical event. Factually, Columbus came to the Americas. However, when Columbus came to the New World, the indigenous population did discover him. However, they also unmasked the West and a crueler way of life void of hospitality, humanity, and compassion that Native Americans had initially extended to these visitors. They discovered that they were the slaves of an imagined empire that violently absented their voices through conquest. As long as the person wearing the shirt is willing to engage honestly in this incredibly difficult

conversation about this imbalance of historical information, then, perhaps, they can wear the shirt appropriately.

Giving Voice to Native American Women

A second important goal in Yazzie's fashion provides a voice to indigenous women. Stemming from biological determinism, as Edward Said suggests in *Culture and Imperialism,* scientific colonizing tactics are first made popular at home, and, so, to understand how Native women have been silenced, it becomes crucial to examine how the "civilized" world used a separate spheres dichotomy to divide their world while forcing this Enlightenment on the New World.

Separate spheres ideology rested on scientific definitions based on biological determinations of men and women. Barbara Webster notes in "The Cult of True Womanhood," that women were interpreted, phrenologically as inferior since a "woman is a constantly growing child, and, in the brain, as in so many other parts of her body, she conforms to her childish type" (4). According to Kathryn Hughes article "Gender Roles in the 19th Century," women were biologically determined to be physically, intellectually, emotionally, sexually, and constitutionally inferior to men, yet remained morally superior due to their mental and spiritual simplicity. Because of this moral superiority, women segued men into a state of relaxation and moral balance when they came home as men could become tainted by the immorality of the public sphere. American print culture promoted a reduction of women's rights to piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity, as portrayed in *Godey's Ladies Book*:

> The right to love, whom others scorn,
> The right to comfort and to mourn,
> The right to shed new joy on earth,
> The right to feel the soul's high worth,
> Such woman's rights a God will bless
> And crown their champions with success. (Hughes)

The childishness of the poem captures women in a sphere of domesticity that corresponds closely with ideals of women as only capable of being domestically familial, moral, and spiritual caregivers.

Eventually, these two spheres approach became a colonial tactic that assimilated "savage" cultures by seeking to restructure Indigenous values with the woman as the "light of the home" (Welter 152). Sharon Harrow notes in *Adventures of Domesticity* that, "Domestic discourse was deployed as a colonizing tactic…cultures were called civilized or savage based on their domestic practices" (9). Essentially, if the domestic environment in America did not mirror the "civilized" notion

of domesticity, then it was savage. Andrea Smith suggests that colonialism through missionary societies used the tactic to civilize North America. However, it led to widespread sexual abuse of ethnic women, prostitutes, and destitute women as they became equated with "dirty bodies" that were considered sexually violable (Smith 73). Because the public sphere was not concerned with morality, the violation of a "dirty" body was not considered rape (Smith 73).

Within these conceptions, Native American women were considered "dirty" women perceived as childish sex slaves and work drudges in need of rescue (Barman 237-266). On the other hand, Indian women were considered sexual to the point of unbridled appetites that demanded discipline and containment (Jacobs 118-199). In many cases, every act of a Native American woman was perceived as an overtly sexual act due to the perception that they were wild, out of control, and full of debauchery (Barman 264). Nowhere was this consideration of the sexual more apparent than in the nineteenth century "Prairie Pornography" of Will Soule who photographed Native women as half-naked, ignoble savages, whose bodies were twisted into erotic positions that left scientific discourse and entered into the pornographic (Ringlero 191-192). Tragically, many Native women are still considered "dirty bodies" even today.

The consequences of colonial policies turning Native women into "dirty bodies" have continued to perpetuate this myth of Native women as nothing has reversed the narrative.[4] According to the Indian Law Resource Center, four in every five American Indian and Alaskan Native women experience violence, and one in every two have experienced sexual violence (indianlaw.org). More than half of all Native American women have been sexually assaulted, and over one third have been raped during their lifetime putting Native American women at nearly 2.5 times greater risk than white women (Bleir and Zolediowski). Part of the issue stems from the fact that until recently, United States law had stripped Indian nations of all authority to prosecute non-Indians on sovereign land (indianlaw.org). Sexual violations by non-Natives were reported at 96%, and the cases, even now, tend to go uninvestigated as the U.S. Attorney Offices have declined to prosecute two-thirds of the reported cases (indianlaw.org; Bleir and Zolediowski).

[4] "Dirty bodies" concepts have also been termed the "Pocahontas Perplex," Rayana Green (1975), a myth that continues to endure due to the Disney animated movie, and the "Celluloid Maiden," explored by M. Elise Marubbio's *Killing the Indian Maiden: Images of Native American Women in Film* (2006), who sacrifices herself for a white man. In both cases the Native women may not be directly "dirty," but they are sexualized as exotic Princesses who is purely sexual and sexualized.

Sexual assault against Native women is not the only disconcerting statistic. The Center for Public Integrity reported that, as of 2016, there were 5,712 cases of missing Native American women reported to the National Crime Information Center (Bleir and Zolediowski). Annita Lucchesi, from the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, collected a database of 2,600 cases of missing and murdered Native women in Alberta (Bleir and Zoledowski). The numbers here become more startling considering that Native American tribal nations did not gain access to FBI databases until 2015 rendering all these numbers an undercount (voanews.com). At the end of 2017, the FBI's National Crime Information Center database had only 633 open missing-persons cases involving Native women (voanews.com). Sarah Deer from the University of Kansas has suggested that violence and the rate of missing Native women are due to a broken legal system that is not providing justice on behalf of Native women (Deer).

Figure 4 Yazzie, Jared. The Future is Indigenous. OXDX Clothing. www.oxdxclothing.com. /collections/oxdx-clothing/products/future-is-indigenous-womxns-plus-tee.

Considering the human status of Native American women, Yazzie's design, Figure 4, provides a fuller picture of injustices against women protesting the current legal culture with the simple design of a woman wearing traditional Native American clothing sitting on a stack of books while typing on a laptop contemplatively, and probably unconsciously, embodying two cultures. The words, "The Future is Indigenous" illuminate the young woman. The shirt suggests that it is time to consider the intelligent humanness of Native women while also building a healthy respect for their culture and traditions, which include respect and honor of woman as an essential part of living in a stable society. As human beings, women are not just domestic slaves nor are they sexually deviant people. Instead, Yazzie's shirt proclaims the self-determination of Native women as they seek to live educated, vibrant, and beautiful lives embodying both their traditional heritage while also pursuing higher education.

Giving Voice to the Tribal Nations

Finally, Yazzie's work magnifies the collective voice of Native Americans as a Nation by standing against the use of American Indians as mascots for sports teams. Historically, using American Indians as

mascots would not have been considered insensitive since Native Americans were not scientifically considered human. Again, biological determinism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries separated what was considered civilized and savage. Students learned the ethnographic/biological species of human division as having three primary races and three secondary races: white, which included European, North Africa, through India; yellow, China, Japan, and the Middle East; and, Black, Africa, West Indies, Central America, and South America (Warren 17; Merrill 16-17; Guyot 9; Atwerp 16; Colton 16). As primary races, they were characterized by their ability to build civilizations with recognizable social hierarchies. Caucasian races were considered superior able:

> To actively engage in agriculture, manufacturing, commerce, and other pursuits. They make laws for the protection of life and property, possess an (established) literature, establish schools, and devote much time to intellectual improvement. (Atwerp 16; Houston 128; Guyot 9)

Not only did Caucasians establish civilized order, but thinkers also considered the white races as the most intelligent, scientific, and moral having the only true religion, Christianity (Merrill 17-18; Hurst 38-41).

Native Americans were a secondary race identified as the "Red race," a human subspecies defined as:

> Savages (Indians) are the lowest and most degraded class. They have no political divisions or towns, few and rude occupations, cruel or weak government, degrading religion, and no education. Very few savages cultivate the soil. The greater part subsists on roots and wild fruit, or by hunting and fishing. Some tribes are ignorant of the use of fire, and eat their food raw. The American Indians, some Negro tribes in Africa, and all the native tribes of Australia are savages. (Warren 17)

Within this narrow consideration, Native Americans were no more than simple children, at best, or ferocious animals, at worst. From these definitions, it should not be shocking that Native Americans would become mascots that are projections of predatory animals or pejorative caricatures that have been projected onto Native Americans.

In 1999 the Society of Indian Psychologists, standing against the use of Native Americans as mascots, argued:

> Stereotypical and historically inaccurate images of Indians in general interfere with learning about them by creating, supporting and maintaining oversimplified and inaccurate views of indigenous peoples and their cultures. When stereotypical representations are taken as factual information, they contribute to the development of cultural biases and prejudices, (clearly a contradiction to the

> educational mission of the University). In the same vein, we believe that continuation of the use as Indians as symbols and mascots is incongruous with the philosophy espoused by many Americans as promoting inclusivity and diversity. (Gray et al.)

Nowhere does pejorative representation become more apparent than in sports. Currently, the number of professional sports teams using Native Americans as mascots has been reduced to five: one baseball team, the Atlanta Braves; two football teams, the Kansas City Chiefs and the Washington Redskins; and two hockey teams, the Chicago Blackhawks and the Edmonton Eskimos.[5]

Linguistically, a mascot is, "a person or thing, animate or inanimate, that acts as a charm or talisman, whose presence is designed, or believed, to bring good luck or good fortune to the possessor" ("Mascot" 197-198). "Mascot" can be traced to Medieval Latin, *Musca*, meaning mask, specter, or nightmare, explaining why a particular mascot may be chosen to represent a sports team (Sciolist). Linguistically, it is possible that the word developed from the Latin to the Old Provencal word *masca*, witch, to the Provencal word *mascot*, sorcerer's charm or fetish, that aided in casting an enchantment ("Mascot" 197; Sciolist). Sports franchises inappropriately project pejorative concepts of identity by fetishizing Native Americans.

Figure 5 Yazzie, Jared. MIS-REP. OXDX Clothing. www.oxdxclothing.com. /collections/oxdx-clothing/products/misrep-unisex-raglan-tee.

Yazzie's fashion recognizes the mascot from Cleveland Indians who had one of the most recognizable mascots in baseball. Figure 5 mashes the Indians mascot "Chief Wahoo" with the Misfit skull. Yazzie draws inspiration from the lyrics of "Skull:"

> *The corpses all hang headless and limp*
> *Bodies with no surprises*
> *And the blood drains down like devil's rain*
> *We'll bathe tonight*
>
> *(Chorus):*
> *I want your skulls*
> *I need your skulls*
> *I want your skulls*
> *I need your skulls*

[5] The Cleveland Indians, while not changing their name, have agreed to drop the Chief Wahoo logo beginning in the 2019 season ("Cleveland Indians").

Demon I am and face I peel
To see your skin turned inside out, 'cause
Gotta have you on my wall
Gotta have you on my wall, 'cause

(Chorus)
(Misfits, “Skull”)

The mashup fits well with the idea that “Chief Wahoo” is a fetish hung on the wall of a genocidal conquistador that feels violently compelled to “hack the heads” off the colonized. The song and the symbol become reminiscent of the Indian Wars where scalps, and other body parts, were taken and sold for a profit. Chief Wahoo represents a trophy, bodiless, his smiling head taxidermied and displayed representing a violent testament to American empire.

Conclusion

While much more could be said for Yazzie’s fashion, he does prove that protest can be generally marketed to a broader audience. However, protest does not come without context. Finding context, doing the research, having conversations, and understanding why and how protest should happen is necessary to pursue meaningful protest that leads to change. Yazzie’s work becomes powerful as his fashion allows for positive dialogue “that can bring about change, for what is said can come into actuality” (Peat, 225). Conversations centered on history/counter history remain painfully contentious, yet to begin healing hearts must be examined through meaningful dialogue. Yazzie’s fashion line pursues healing that can only happen through constructive and honest conversation. His fashion line represents a human story that transcends lifestyle experimentation setting protest toward lasting change.

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Black Performance Theory: The Africanist Dancing Body and Transformations Within the Mainstream

Black Performance Theory, a collection of essays edited by Thomas F. DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez, establishes Black expressive culture as an area of academic inquiry and acknowledges the emergence and dynamism of Black performativity (Gonzalez and DeFrantz 1). In the introduction, DeFrantz and Gonzalez chronicle the emergence and transformation of Black Performance Theory from Zora Neale Hurston's "Characteristics of Negro Expression," to Robert Farris Thompson's "Africanist aesthetics," to contemporary efforts by scholars to provide a nuanced discussion of Black performance as historically and artistically significant (2-5). Undergirding Black Performance Theory are ideas and negotiations of Black/Blackness, Diaspora, Black sensibilities, performance, and theory -- what they are, where they happen, how they happen, and their implications. A primary and crucial claim made by DeFrantz and Gonzalez is that Black sensibilities emerge in performance whether Black bodies are present or not, but underlying this point is that Black performance is always enabled by Black sensibilities, expressive practices, and people (1). While the collection spans a wide variety of performative practices and works, I focus this critical analysis on two essays that explicitly deal with Africanist dancing bodies and Black sensibilities within the mainstream dancescape. The first essay, written

by Carl Paris, explores the question of imminent spiritual potentialities in the works of two postmodern Black male choreographers (Paris 99). The second essay, written by DeFrantz himself, "explores slippage from Africanist performance histories to global hip-hop corporealities" (223). I argue that both essays, though different in dance topic and critique, exemplify the transformational nature of the Africanist dancing body on, through, and by the mainstream. Furthermore, the concepts of connectivity and communal practice underlie both analyses, highlighting the interplay of Black sensibilities with mainstream and global spaces.

In his essay, "Reading 'Spirit' and the Dancing Body in the Choreography of Ronald K. Brown and Reggie Wilson," Carl Paris, dancer, choreographer, and a scholar of Dance and Cultural Studies, engages a variety of Black dance, Black theology, and anthropological sources to read "imminent potentiality" through the works of Brown and Wilson (Paris 102). Citing key Black Dance scholars, like Brenda Dixon Gottschild, Robert Farris Thompson, DeFrantz, Sterling Stuckey, and Halifu Osumare, Paris begins his argument by discussing the role of spirit and the spiritual in the African Diaspora worldview and how it permeates all aspects of Black life (100). He then goes on to discuss the inherent spirituality in modern dance, as discussed by Gerald Myers (101). Combining the inherent spirituality of both Black life and modern dance, Paris then interprets the work of Brown and Wilson, demonstrating how they merge Africanist cultural elements and modern dance to produce choreography that links the negotiation of identities with Africanist cosmological and cultural elements that are grounded in community practice.

Noted Black Dance scholar, DeFrantz, in his essay, "Hip-Hop Habitus v. 2.0," examines the transformation of hip-hop from a site of local social resistance to an aesthetic of pleasure and cool. For DeFrantz, this transformation is a result of hip-hop's entrance into the mainstream and its subsequent commodification and consumption on a global scale. *Habitus* provides the conceptual framework for DeFrantz to argue that hip-hop, like other forms of Black social dance, exemplifies how Black expressive culture can emerge as an agent of social change, but once compressed into popular culture, loses its vitality as a resistant aesthetic practice as it begins to comply with the very system to which it creatively responded (237). Thus, DeFrantz is in conversation with not only other Black Dance scholars as he reviews the literature on hip-hop, but also with sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose quotes on *habitus* from *The Logic of Reason* outline the sections of the essay.

My decision to group these two essays in the same critical analysis arises out of the way that they both provide examples of the transformational nature of Black Dance, particularly the negotiation of

identities that happens through Black Dance. In the introduction, DeFrantz, and Gonzalez provide their definitions of "Black." DeFrantz describes it as "the manifestation of Africanist aesthetics" (5) and "action engaged to enlarge capacity, confirm presence, to dare" (5), while Gonzalez describes it as "a response to histories" (6) and "a dialogic imagination. . .[that] responds to imaginations about black identities" (6). These descriptions of "Black" are found in the works of Brown and Wilson, as analyzed by Paris, and in DeFrantz' discussion of hip-hop habitus. For example, in Paris' essay, he notes the dualistic nature of Brown and Wilson's choreography as they integrate Black aesthetics/culture and postmodern dance (102). In doing so, they engage how the sense of self interacts with the dominant culture and the histories that produced it, and at the same time, they use the spiritual element of the dance to transform the sense of self beyond the monolithic notions of the dominant culture.

DeFrantz's "Hip-Hop Habitus v. 2.0" also confirms the negotiation of identities through Black Dance. In reference to the shifting purpose of hip-hop dance once it is taken out of its original, local contexts, DeFrantz writes, "Public dance competitions change the idiom and its possibilities. . .But in black communities pleasure must be aligned with aesthetic purpose and social function of one sort or another. Global stages overwhelm social function beyond their local identities. . ." (234-235). This suggests that where hip-hop in its local contexts serves as the manifestation of African aesthetics and the confirmation of presence, on the global stage, it becomes imaginations about identities, and therefore, exemplifies the dialogic nature of Black performance even when there is no conscious consideration of the performers' identities or the histories out of which they emerge. This flexibility is a key component of Black performance which allows Black Dance to transform and be transformed by the mainstream.

In this negotiation of Black identities, there also lies a connectivity and communal element that both Paris and DeFrantz note as key components of the choreographic works and expressive idioms discussed. In the introduction, DeFrantz and Gonzalez describe Diaspora as a "process of community and unification" (11), so "[p]erformance becomes a dialogue between ourselves and others as we 'make sense' of diasporic journeys" (11). According to Paris, Wilson and Brown's choreographies are underscored by the community/unification aspect. Paris notes Brown's use of a circular formation to convey a sense of antiphonal interaction between individual and community (104), as well as how the unfolding of the choreography suggests the interplay between the spiritual individual and the well-being of the community (107). In addition, Paris maintains that in Wilson's work, "the dancing body

conveys spirit and meaning through community and cultural representation" (112), and Wilson draws in the unification aspect of Diaspora by bringing together three different companies from three different cultures with different backgrounds in dance and training. This serves to amplify "a unified sense of spiritual and community practice" (112).

In a different way, DeFrantz suggests how hip-hop dance and its global reach exemplifies the connectivity and community underlying Diaspora and its representations in Black performance. In his review of previous hip-hop scholarship, DeFrantz writes that for the second generation of hip-hop scholars, hip-hop "became a connectivity for youth across a geography, practiced locally" (226). As he goes on to discuss these "youth" and those engaged in hop-hop dance, he notes that not all of them are Black, or even consciously connected to the socio-historical contexts out of which the dance style emerged. However, something important to consider is the endurance of the *imperative to innovate* and what that suggests about identity formation within the social landscape. Like Brown's choreography, hip-hop exemplifies the capacity to work as an individual within a group dynamic. It also demonstrates how that individuality simultaneously influences the group dynamic, much like how the spiritual individual interacts with the well-being of the community. Furthermore, while DeFrantz argues that the "aesthetic of the cool" and the driving force of pleasure behind hip-hop's global popularity is problematic through the *habitus* framework, the aesthetic/pleasure aspect is the unifying force across various borders. This is significant because it corroborates DeFrantz and Gonzalez's introductory claim that even when Black bodies are not present, Black performance is made possible by Black sensibilities, expressive practices, and people (1). Thus, there is an important interaction between Black sensibilities and mainstream spaces that demonstrates the capacity of Black Dance to reach beyond the individual and not only extend out into already-established communities, but to carve new spaces of community, as well.

Black Performance Theory is a critically important work because it introduces various frameworks by which Black expressive works can be interpreted, and in doing so, it establishes the dynamic nature of Black Performance, and by extension Black Dance. This makes it a key source for my exploration into Black women's capacity to use Black Dance as a vehicle for restructuring boundaries. As they discuss in their introduction, the editors of this collection of essays are not wedded to any framework, but they do make it explicit that their goal is to demonstrate the reach of Black sensibilities and the possibilities of Black performance through Black sensibilities, expressive cultures, and

people. One shortcoming of the two essays, due to my focus being on Black women, is that both essays are concerned with men and masculinist performances. However, they still provided valuable information on the role of Black Dance in negotiating identities and carving spaces that simultaneously work within the dominant culture and transform or get transformed by the mainstream. Furthermore, while Paris and DeFrantz focus on men and masculinist performances, Daphne A. Brooks provides an analysis of work by Nina Simone and Adrienne Kennedy to highlight negotiations of Black womanhood through sonic forms in her essay "Afro-sonic Feminist Praxis: Nina Simone and Adrienne Kennedy in High Fidelity." She examines how sonic distortions found in "Four Women" and *Funnyhouse of a Negro* exemplify Black women's discursive practice of speaking in racial and gendered voices, the (dis)identification these dual voices signify, and the histories out of which these voices emerge (Brooks). Like DeFrantz and Paris, Brook draws attention to the interplay between self-identification and hegemonic structures, and how performance is the method for negotiating these identities. Overall, *Black Performance Theory* is a crucial collection of work and adds much to Black Studies and Performance Studies scholarship, while also raising questions for further examination.

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Simone Weil’s Metaxu: Interrogating for Truth

Dorothy Tuck McFarland (1983) views Simone Weil as a "writer with profoundly holistic vision of man [*sic*] and his [*sic*] relationship to the world" (pp. 168-169). This vision is demonstrated in Weil's use of Attention, Decreation, and, most specifically, Metaxu to integrate her words into a singular and consistent corpus of literature that we find today. As a hysteric, Weil demands all the knowledge that she possibly can and then is not satisfied and desires more knowledge. The hysteric's discourse demands knowledge beyond what is given by the master narrative, by the hegemony of the time, and this is exactly what Weil does in her discussion of Metaxu.

I understand the word Metaxu to refer to three main cognitive actions which Weil employs in description of the term: 1) Weil uses action when she postulates that a wall or veil is both a barrier and a way through, 2) She further uses an insistence on looking for and holding together contradiction, 3) And Weil intends the view of the idea of a means versus an ends. This demonstrates the ways I see Weil’s ambiguous use of Metaxu and its multiple, complementary meanings. These themes run throughout Simone Weil’s prose. I note work from *Gravity and Grace*, as well as *The Power of Words*.

Weil (2002) does acknowledge a Platonic understanding of Metaxu as a "between" which she refers frequently to "the distance between the necessary and the good" (p. 105). However, her concepts explored in this article demonstrate that Weil is concerned not with middle ground between two contradictories, but the bridge that allows one the means to travel *back-and-forth* between these points. This use is somewhat different that the traditional use of Metaxu.

For Weil, Metaxu has many different connotations including suffering, contradiction, impossibility, and certain contradictions that connect us to our humanity. What is of premium importance in understanding Weil's use of Metaxu is its process or action. Weil takes her action use of Metaxu to accept challenges, contradictions and power struggles as they lead her further along the path of the hysteric's search for more truth or knowledge.

I have found Weil to be a hysteric, especially from the perspective of the psychoanalytic characterization of the hysteric based on the theory of Jacques Lacan. The hysteric, in this conception, is the person who cannot accept authorities' definitions. The hysteric seeks the fill lack; it should be understood that in Lacanian theory lack can never be filled. Therefore, though not accepting truth Weil continues to seek it out.

Weil was a political activist and thinker who also used theological notions in her writing. Weil does not make a distinction between political and spiritual realms in her idea of Metaxu. The message of Metaxu refers to the transcendent or a "higher plane." Therefore, Weil's methods of Metaxu also lead her to an understanding of a move, which is never fully complete, which conflates the spiritual and the political.

The following quote expresses Weil's statement about her intentionality and missionality toward seeking more and more knowledge of inviolability of God, while demonstrating her ambiguous use of the term Metaxu: In Weil (2002):

> What is it a sacrilege to destroy? Not that which is base, for that is of no importance. Not that which is high, for even should we want to, we cannot touch that. The Metaxu. The Metaxu form the region of good and evil. No human being should be deprived of his Metaxu, that is to say of those relative and mixed blessings (home, country, traditions, culture, etc.) which warm and nourish the soul and without which, short of sainthood, a human life is not possible. (p. 147)

This missionality is holistic in nature and she is speaking of that which cannot be put into language, which reaffirms Lacan's acknowledgment that communication cannot truly take place. It is that dissonance of the Lacanian split subject and the dissonance of all experiences of difficulties, hardships and injustices which are approached by Weil through Metaxu.

Weil (2002) *first cognitive action* helps us to understand Metaxu with the metaphor of a barrier or a wall:

> Two prisoners whose cells adjoin communicate with each other by knocking on the wall. The wall is the thing which separates them, but it is also their means of communication. It is the same with us with God; every separation is a link. (p. 145)

Weil (2002) also writes, "This world is the closed door. It is a barrier. And at the same time it is the way through" (p. 145). This is a cognitive exercise of seeing obstacles as something more. Necessity is a barrier and a bridge between us and the holy. Weil attempts to reach an understanding from the hysteric’s point of view, note here that this understanding can never be reached.

Weil uses the concept of "necessity" to apply this cognitive exercise on a grand scale, as demonstrated in the following quotes. Weil (2002) states that "God has committed all phenomena without exception to the mechanism of the world" (p. 104). The mechanism of the world rests on necessity and the obligation that the sun and all stars do shine and all matter does create gravity. These are necessary elements and fundamental to the continuous nature of the cosmos. Necessity is the subsistence of all things both finite and eternal, earth and heaven. Weil (2002) supposes that "There are necessity and laws in the realm of grace ... Even hell has its laws (Goethe). So has heaven" (p. 92).

It is important to define what Weil means by “necessity.” To Weil, necessity encompasses all the laws that the physical world we know are ruled by; these laws apply equally to all people. Weil repeatedly returns to the idea of necessity as a foundational concept in her philosophy and uses it in a variety of ways to resolve subjective angst. In spite of her obsession with necessity, Weil is always in pursuit of more knowledge (as a hysteric).

From Weil's point of view, the mechanisms of the physical and metaphysical world cause man great suffering. However, these mechanisms also provide protection from being consumed by God's full power and holiness. Once more, this is an illustration of how the barrier, or the wall, is also the way through, or the means of communication. Weil's pessimistic views of necessity prove to be, according to McFarland, (1983) "no less threatening to the future of civilization now than they were in the 1930s" (p. 169).

McFarland brings forward necessity as the driving force for the whole cosmos, which is very fundamental to Weil's work. Weil (2012) writes of it this way:

> This universe where we live, of which we are just a particle, is that distance placed by divine love between God and God. We are a point in that distance. Space, time and the mechanisms that govern matter are that distance. All that we call evil is only that mechanism. God made it so that His grace, when it penetrates to someone's very center and illuminates their whole being, permits that person to walk on water without violating the laws of nature. But when someone turns away from God, they simply give

> themselves over to gravity. Then they believe they will and choose, but they are only a thing, a falling stone. (p. 39)

Without the protection of space, time, and matter humanity would evaporate as water in direct sunlight. Per Weil (2002), "Necessity is God's veil" (p. 104). The veil is necessity which keeps humans from being scorched by God's radiance; necessity perpetuates the universe in its increasing infinitude, necessity guarantees the ex-sistence of space, time, and matter (p. 32). For Weil (2002) "Necessity is the screen set between God and us so that we can be" (p. 33), indeed, that which prevents our evaporation.

Metaxu, demonstrated as seeing obstacles and as something more, is perpetuated by the gravity of laws in the universe which preserve life. As I have said, Necessity is a barrier and a bridge (Metaxu) between us and the holy. Weil (2002) theorizes that "The distance between necessity and good: this is a subject for endless contemplation" (p. 105). This is an example of the way in which Weil thinks with Metaxu.

The mechanisms of necessity display ultimate obedience to divine Wisdom; therefore, being subject to necessity can be our bridge to obedience to divine Wisdom as well. In terms of the veil, it is used in the following way: “In such cases suffering, emptiness are the mode of existence of the objects of our desire. We only have to draw aside the veil of unreality and we shall see that they are given to us in this way. When we see that, we still suffer, but we are happy" (Weil, 2002, p. 23).

Weil's approach to the somatic aspect of life is explained well by Charity K. M. Hamilton (2013), who refers to "the body [as] that space which can connect us with God or separate us from God" (p. 93). The body is a site of Metaxu for Weil according to Hamilton. It serves as a theological bridge between a person and God. The physical world was strangely inviting to a woman with such an emotional and physical struggle with anorexia.

Out of Weil's compassion, she sees a different reality than that of the Lacanian discourse of the master; again, as a hysteric, she seeks knowledge beyond what is known even to experts. Weil's political thought focuses on justice, morality and recognition of the hard-working individual who was oppressed and exploited. Fred Rosen (1979) reminds readers about "Weil's insight into the double deprivation of the workers which consisted not only of low wages but also of loss of dignity." (p.306) As Weil (2002) proclaims:

> The true earthly blessings are metaxu. We can respect those of others only insofar as we regard those we ourselves possess as metaxu. This implies that we are already making our way towards the point where it is possible to do without them. For example, if

we are to respect foreign countries, we must make of our own country not an idol, but a stepping stone toward God. (p. 147)

Weil's approach is spiritual, humanistic and compassionate, not highbrow and elitist. She found herself in the factory with the worker and single-handedly negotiated a philosophy honoring what she refers to as Metaxu, man's [*sic*] connection with "earthly blessing." Weil is focused on the person one at a time; her compassion led her to the conclusion that she does not have comprehensive solutions but rather individual approaches. Each works out justice through attentive labor and practice. Weil's sense of Metaxu as involving contradiction plays out in her view that what is transcendent is also lowly. Weil believed that the entire world is contradiction.

In Howe's (2009) estimation, "Weil's conception of roots is heavily influenced by the Greek idea of Metaxu: in this case the existence of intermediaries that form bridges between earth and heaven. Weil placed such importance on these aspects of human [*sic*] existence" that the result was that she was inclined to embrace earth and heaven. Weil believes all of the cosmos is contradiction, and this contradiction is what grounds us, connects us to the transcendent, or gives us roots. The world is the social and physical realm in which there is "baseness," "lowness" and a "property of evil," (p. 77) in Weil's writing it is apparently the social realm that creates a barrier "which keeps evil away" from some.

For Weil (2002), Metaxu is acceptance of contraries, e.g. "every man is the slave of necessity, but the conscious slave is far superior." Weil (2002) conflates "necessity" and "submission" in "The only way to preserve our dignity when submission is forced upon us is to consider our chief as a thing. Every man [*sic*] is the slave of necessity, but the conscious slave is far superior" as well as stating Metaxu with the following: "if one day we are driven, under pain of cowardice, to go and break ourselves against their power, we must consider ourselves as vanquished by the nature of things and not by men [sic]" (p. 157- 158); here that Metaxu is applicable to "the nature of things" and "men [*sic*]." It again is seeing more when faced with a barrier, remembering that very barrier is our aid.

The *second cognitive action* Weil uses as part of her doing Metaxu is to retrieve a picture of the whole by looking at extremes. Weil as the hysteric (in the manner of the hysteric's discourse) questions the master signifier. This is because the full truth can never be spoken; she considers truth as something to pursue, even though she can only get glimpses of it. The balancing of the challenges she faces include finding the complication with the use of dichotomies, or finding the contradiction in the way we typically think of opposites.

These typical notions have to be taken apart, which happens through suffering, so we can have a better understanding of the true relationship of these ideas. Weil seeks out the "right union" of opposites, which is not about a between, but about what is found on a "higher plane." Dialectics for Weil are not seen as dichotomous, but rather as meeting and joining by way of a bridge for *getting back and forth*, and even in contradiction, often being in both places at the same time, which may appear as coalescence, but not a compromise.

This is the nature of Metaxu, to bring together contradictories in spite of their contrariness. Weil (2002) writes that "We must seek equilibrium on another plane" (p. 6). This plane might seem difficult to conceive of or even entertain cognitively, but Weil gives the following metaphor to assist in understanding "another plane” by stating:

> If I am walking on the side of a mountain I can see first a lake, then, after a few steps, a forest. I have to choose either the lake or the forest. If I want to see both lake and forest at once, I have to climb higher. (p. 99)

Weil kept her own philosophical position and did not give way to the thoughts of the day, especially political ones. Fiori attests to the potential contradictions and inconsistency in Weil's ideas which only positions Weil as truly a human [sic] and unpretentious political figure. Fiori (1989) writes, "de Kadt declared at the same time that he did not at all share Simone's ideas, which were drawing ever closer to Gandhi's" (p. 93) approach to protest. According to Fiori, "The nonviolent editors of the Dutch monthly, *Liberation*, published a translation of her articles in the form of a booklet. They had quickly discerned her detachment from every separatist scheme and from all factionalism" (p. 93).

Weil was not a joiner, according to her friend Simone Pétrement. Towards the last part of her "political life" Weil differed in opinions from many, an example, for Bataille, "(the Russian) revolution is the triumph of the irrational,” for Weil, it is the triumph of the "rational." What for him is a "catastrophe," for Weil is a "methodical action for which we should strive in every way to mitigate the damage." While for him the revolution is “liberation of the instincts, especially those considered currently to be pathological," for Weil it means the need for, as in Fiori (1989) "a superior morality" (p. 96).

Weil seeks to find truth when the opposite is true, and seeks the balance which opposites bring into the foreground. Weil's likelihood to contradict theories in order to bed within the confines of the discourse of the hysteric is, which is indicated by her symptoms. Those would be the desire to fight on the front lines while refusing to eat or stay healthy. These problems did not prevent her from voicing and conveying her political-self.

Weil had particular understanding of the political era she lived in and she presented a holistic and unique perspective on the nature of revolution; one could say that Weil was not interested in the same sort of revolution than that which Trotsky had in mind. Weil didn't fit into a particular camp of thought on the matters of political import. Whereas Trotsky was interested in revolution within the whole of social order, Weil understood the needs of the individual worker as more important than a revolution that would just instate a new rule.

Blum and Seidler (1989) contend that in Weil's view "revolutionary insurrection has nothing to do with genuine radical change ... [she also thought such insurrections] ... do not touch the real sources of oppression and dignity, which concern the structure of work and work relationship" (pp. 62-63). Weil interprets change as illusory to the masses and theorists, a contradiction in their thought to the extent that Weil can see through it into the psyche and have a further knowledge, again as the hysteric seeking what is beyond the truth of theorist.

Again, Blum and Seidler remind us that "Weil suggests that genuine radical change can come about without a violent insurrection" (p. 63). Metaxu interestingly is used by Weil to find the abolition of all political parties. Weil (1977) explains that "revolution is the opium of the masses" (p. 120). It is quite clear that Marxism "constitutes an improvement on the naive expressions of indignation which it replaced, one cannot say that it throws light on the mechanism of oppression" (p. Weil, 1977, 127).

Weil again states that even the French Revolution left people standing by, "helpless, watching a new oppression immediately being set up," (p. 127) even after the beheading of the aristocrats. Metaxu is an active way of understanding the moment of actual change, not a conceptual or cognitive construction of an understanding of a historical process. Metaxu is the active process of dealing with contradictions to be worked through starting with action-based awareness (which Weil terms Attention) on the part of the people with which she worked side-by-side.

This can only happen through being-with the workers and educating them on the nature of the action-based awareness, "Attention," which is state akin to mindfulness and concentration. Weil's insistence on Metaxu as a cognitive action continues her search for truth, which leads her to the use of Attention. Weil agrees with Marx that oppression can only end if the structure of power has changed. However, Weil contends that what society sees as change is not genuine change, but further oppression.

When Weil uses Metaxu she works through oppositions and contradiction related to *work life*. This is a union of opposites not in the typical conceptual understanding, but rather through *concrete happening*. This is due to the political and public sectors being not as they seem. Weil dismantles both sides of the opposites and finds through active awareness that the right union of opposites happened on a higher plane. Weil (2002) writes to the worker, "The desire for vengeance is a desire for essential equilibrium. We must seek equilibrium on another plane" (p. 6).

There is another division in the thought of Weil which demonstrates the nature of dichotomies, as Weil understands it. Thus, she writes in Oppression and Liberty,

> As Plato said, an infinite distance separates the good from necessity. They have nothing in common. They are totally other. Although we are forced to assign them a unity this unity is a mystery; it remains for us a secret. The genuine religious life is the contemplation of this unknown unity. The manufacture of a fictitious, mistaken equivalent of this unity, brought within the grasp of the human faculties, is an inadequacy as a philosophy through the description of Marxism as being a religion in the bottom of the inferior forms of the religious life. (p. 165)

Weil on the same page indicts Marxism as being a "fully fledged-religion," in the "impurest sense of the word" (p. 165).

Weil continues to develop the notion that Marx is only a shade away from Plato's spirituality in comparison to materialism (p. 165). Weil states elsewhere in the same work that "it is possible to say, without fear of exaggeration, that as a theory of the workers' revolution Marxism is a nullity" (p. 175). Revolutionary Marxism is based on a reductive ideology, whereas Weil emphasized revolution is a hope that never fulfills its promise. Hence, the nature of the hysterics reality comes alive in the non-fulfilling nature of revolution.

In addition to seeing a barrier as a way through and seeking out contradiction, the *third cognitive action* that Weil frequently takes in this process of Metaxu is looking at the means versus the ends. The metaphor of the bridge illustrates the concept of means, nicely. The summarization of Weil's use of the bridge comes in the following text from Gravity and Grace:

> The bridges of the Greeks. We have inherited them, but we do not know how to use them. We thought they were intended to have houses built upon them. We have erected skyscrapers on them to which we ceaselessly add stories. We no longer know that they are bridges, things made so that we may pass along them, and that by passing along them we go towards God. (p. 146)

Bridges are necessary in order to cross terrain that is impossible to cross otherwise; Weil was only interested in the means, the bridge itself, or the crossing over. Weil's focus was not on the ends; for her that would be a trap, the end of knowing. Because of the hysteric's need to continue toward truth, Weil felt nothing was as important as the bridge as the means not the ends.

Weil pictures the bridge as that which can readily be passed over to connect and investigate difference. Weil writes "Only he who loves God with a supernatural love can look upon means simply as means" (p.146). Weil's concern that humans not use ends, but rather continue with means is for her as being of high importance. When ends come to be a prospect, as a solution to problems or as a way to complete a transaction or communication, this is the lowest of notions, it is the completion of desire.

Desire as means leading to desire as a means is the essence of beauty, because of the infinite nature of such; therefore, ends in themselves or means to an end are like blowing out candles in order to save wax, which is turning the world into darkness and bitterness (because of Weil's anorexia, this concept of beauty makes sense). Means is a significant philosophical and theological concept and can be applied to Weil's representation of the human [*sic*] ends in the case of endeavors completed, finite, objectified or totalized. Weil saw great distress in a world of only ends.

The importance of means for means' sake and means leading to further means emphasized synchronicity and spontaneity of the world. It was godly and noble to be of the understanding that means are fluid and related to the flux of life. Weil has numerous commentaries on power, money and resources; and on how they are indeed means that produce more means as they are applied correctly to life.

Weil speaks, the "miser's treasure is the shadow of an imitation of what is good. It is doubly unreal. For, to start with, a means to an end (such as money) is, in itself, something other than a good. But diverted from its function as a means and set up as an end, it is still further from being a good" (p. 52). Good was for Weil a function or cognitive action entailing means only.

Weil maintains a moral sense which informs her political and religious scruples. She is strongly against what she considers harmful in the shaping of humans, individually and collectively. Weil states that "The Metaxu form the region of good and evil" (p. 147). For Weil, good and evil are equivalent when on the transcendent plane; they are separate otherwise in human [*sic*] existence.

In the discussion of good and evil, the work that Weil does covers the divide between good and evil which demonstrates a just and spiritual

understanding of these realities. Weil reinvigorates those who would give her voice and delivers a sense of values that are above discriminatory morals and provides an approach toward a way of truer liberty. She had, again as Blum and Seidler (1989) have pointed out, escaped the terms of moral relativism that have become the common-sense assumptions within social theory and anthropology because they seemed to be the only alternative to nineteenth century rationalism, which tacitly judged other cultures in terms of the values and institutions of Western culture (p. 213).

Weil seeks to connect philosophy to concrete history. Weil' s accumulation of writing as collected by Gustav Thibon, from Weil's work which he entitled Gravity and Grace, amasses material that covers many topics; nonetheless, throughout Weil's work there is the thread of material on Metaxu.

In various passages of her writings, Weil comes close to a depiction of imagination which coincides with the Lacanian notion of the imaginary. For Weil as for Lacan, as Evans (1996) has it, "The imagination, filler up of the void, is essentially a liar." (p. 16) A Lacanian understanding of the imagination sheds light on Weil's understanding of the imaginary. As Evans (1996) puts it,

> The imaginary is the realm of image and imagination, deception and lure. The principal illusions of the imaginary are those of wholeness, synthesis, autonomy, duality, and, above all, similarity. The imaginary is thus the order of surface appearances which are deceptive, observable phenomena which hide underlying structure; the effects are such phenomena. (p. 82)

Weil (2002) points to the aspect of evil which is the "Monotony of evil: never anything new, everything about it is equivalent. Never anything real, everything about it is imaginary" (p. 69). All aspects of evil manifest in the same monotony participated in when on farm and in factory. Weil honors work and the worker as doing the equivalent of divine work, when attended to in the proper way.

If the imaginary is filling the void, then it seems to follow that the cosmos is imaginary or illusion. This is why the image is so powerful in determining the outcome of one's deliberation about subjectivity. This is where our values are implicated, as Weil (2002) says: “Illusions about the things of this world (e.g. the image in the mirror, as I see it) do not concern their existence but their value” (51). Again, Weil thinks positive outcomes of revolution are illusory, because the outcome is always the same; meaning a power structure is still formulated and a bureaucracy remains. Within the filler of the void is where Weil's words given capital letters come to play. For many would shed blood for this illusory state of

affairs based on the perception of a greater good found in the revolutionary spirit, as defined by those words.

But according to Weil (1977) "when empty words are given capital letters, then, on the slightest pretext, men will begin shedding blood for them and piling up ruin in their name" (p. 270). For example, Greeks experienced frenzy for Troy; Christians retaliation for the sake of good over evil, Knights for chivalry, or Liberty for Americans. Means are the bridge that Weil envisions, while ends are the capital letters. Bracher (1993) suggests that "the more fully these master signifiers are exposed, the less capable they are of exercising their mesmerizing power" (p. 59). Weil exposes the master signifier in the moves which the powerful make in order for them to remain the hegemony.

Three cognitive actions are in place in Weil’s prose; they represent cause for a significant and meaningful understanding of revolution and work. They help Weil deliver a message of hope, justice, and ethical politics. These add-up to a move toward the illusion of the world found in contradiction. This does not refer to paradox; Weil quite frankly understands opposites to stand side-by-side and not coalescing or forming some One notion. Therefore, Weil can write about the abolition of all political parties, seeming disarray, and the revolution of work-practices. The nature of Weil’s subversive thought indicates that “revolution is the opium of the masses” and that meaningful work is necessary for hope and justice.

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Art Interrupted: Where are the Indigenous Women?

In my research to better understand the influence of Native American cultures on the art created by artists of the United States, I read about the history of contact between the indigenous people of North America and the ongoing appearance of immigrants from Europe. Through North America's history of interaction between these two groups, there have been poles of promotion towards cultural extinction contradicted by mass amounts of cultural appropriation from Native American cultures. This becomes quite evident when reviewing the effects of the Removal Period on the eastern parts of the United States. Along with the absence of indigenous people first from east of the Mississippi River and then from most areas of the United States outside of government reservations, the lack of indigenous people leaves room for misunderstanding and misinterpretation. From the absence of interaction with indigenous people, myths about the Native American people snowballed into stereotypes that fall into three main categories: the doomed warrior, the wise elder, and the princess or squaw. In this paper, I will focus on the objectification of indigenous women as they are portrayed, moving on to the true history of several indigenous women and, finally, conclude with where we can find indigenous women making a difference in today’s world.

The Objectification of the Indian Princess

The stereotype of Native American women was not only prevalent in the past but is still seen today. One can head to the grocery store and still see these stereotypes on packages of butter, cornstarch, and, even, hair products. The objectification of Native American women has been part of the culture in the United States for more than a century. In the article, “Images of Native Americans in Advertising”, William M. O'Barr explains that:

> Native American women are typically presented as one of two quite different images: the American Indian princess (of which Pocahontas is perhaps the most familiar example), and the squaw (typically depicted in gendered roles like collecting and preparing food, caring for children, and so on). Advertising imagery, in particular, alternated between these two depictions of Native American women (O'Barr, 20).

Later in his article O'Barr writes, "By the end of the 19th century, images of Native Americans had become commonplace in American advertising. Almost all of these images had nothing to do with the real lives of Native Americans nor even advertising products and services to them" (7). Further evidence of this objectification can be seen in S. Elizabeth Bird article "Savage desires the gendered construction of the American Indian in popular media." She details that:

> From early times, a dominant image was the Indian Princess, represented most thoroughly by Pocahontas, the seventeenth-century sachem's daughter who, according to legend, threw herself in front of her tribe's executioners to save the life of colonist John Smith. (78)

This role of the Native American woman being represented as Pocahontas has been portrayed throughout cinema and media alike. We see this in movies such as Walt Disney's 1953 *Peter Pan* and the 1956 movie *White Squaw.* The question then arises, why does Pocahontas epitomize the indigenous women in North American culture? Bird answers this question when she quotes Robert S. Tilton:

> The Pocahontas/Princess myth became a crucial part in the creation of a national identity. The Indian Princess became as important, non-threatening symbol of white Americans right to be here, because she was always willing to sacrifice her happiness, cultural identity, and even her life for the good of the new nation (79).

Tilton's quote gets to the heart why this role was so important to the people that killed, stole, and removed the indigenous people from their lands. If Pocahontas is portrayed as this selfless "Indian Princess" willing to give up her whole life for this new nation, then others among her people should be willing to do the same. This convoluted story allowed the American people to legitimize the horrific policies and practices that the American Government was then enforcing on the indigenous people of North America.

Indigenous Women as Heroes

While viewing the documentary *The Men Who Built America: Frontiersmen,* I heard a word that to this point in my research into Native American history I have never heard used. That word was "hero", and the narrator was not talking about a European settler, but instead a Native American named Tecumseh. It was a word that through all my years of education was never assigned to an indigenous person when written by a person of European descent. Native Americans were always depicted in film and literature as evil

savages that were always taking advantage of situations. They were the enemy of the U.S. Cavalry and the cowboy. They were never portrayed as heroes; instead, they were relegated to the role of the adversary. For this reason, I chose to write about several indigenous women that are heroes, even though they don't show up in any history books used in schools when explaining the contributions of strong individuals to the U.S.

The first of the three indigenous women I want to discuss is Nancy Ward. She was a member of the Cherokee people and amongst her people is seen as a great hero, and is known by her designation as "most beloved woman". In the article "3 Historical Native American Women You Might Not Know, But Should" by Dina Gilio-Whitaker, she writes about the amazing things Ward accomplished. She details how:

In the early 1750s, Nancy Ward married the noted war leader, Kingfisher of the Deer Clan, and was at his side when in 1755 he was killed by Creek warriors at the battle of Taliwa. She immediately picked up his weapons and rallied the Cherokee warriors to overwhelming victory. (Gilio-Whitaker 2)

It's also important to understand that Ward did this while only being seventeen at the time of this battle. By showing her bravery in battle, the Cherokee saw Ward as a powerful and important person among their people. For this reason, Ward was chosen to take part in the following events:

- Ward was the only female among the voting members of the Cherokee General Council and was the leader of the Women's Council.
- As a "beloved woman" she served as a negotiator in important meetings with whites. When the Cherokees met with U.S. officials, Nancy Ward was present, often to the surprise of the assembled white men.
- In 1781, she addressed the U.S. treaty commissioners after settlers attacked Cherokee towns. She believed that peace would come only if Indians and whites saw themselves as one people, and she thought only women on the two sides could make this happen. (New York Historical Society 1)

Ward's bravery, intelligence, and experience helped her lead her people, and due to her incredible accomplishments, she is still celebrated by the Cherokee today.

The second indigenous woman that stands out as a hero is Toypurina. She was born in 1760 into the Kumvit tribe of Southern California. By age 24, she was a respected religious leader and medicine woman amongst her people. Where Toypurina truly shined was in her ability to lead her people. This becomes evident when learning how she dealt with the mistreatment of her people by the Spanish. Gilio-Whitaker explains:

In addition to rebelling against the violence of widespread rape, forced labor, and conversion, the final straw had been the banning of

> traditional dances. Toypurina, widely known as a powerful Tongva medicine woman, 25 years old and pregnant at the time, emerged as one of the primary planners of an attack against the mission. After receiving word of the plan, the Spanish launched an ambush, thwarting the revolt. (2)

When questioned about her involvement in the attack, Toypurina bravely admitted to her part in the planned coup, which took her captors by surprise. For her bravery, Toypurian is celebrated today with murals of her in the Los Angeles area; one of them is 60 by 20 feet in size.

The next hero's name is Mourning Dove, and she was from the Upper Columbia River Plateau region and was born a Colville Indian around 1884. Unlike the two other indigenous women mentioned who were recognized for their bravery in battle, Mourning Dove was a writer. Originally named "Morning Dove, she changed the spelling to "Mourning Dove" after a trip where she observed a mounted bird of the same name and wished to reflect the mournful nature of the bird. Gilio-Whitaker explains that Mourning Dove thought of herself as a woman between two worlds, "Her first language was Salish, but her Catholic mission school education and later at a business school gave her enough command of the English language to compose manuscripts that would be published into books" (3). Her ambition was to break the stereotype of Native Americans as unintelligent savages. She felt by that writing books she would show how stereotypes of indigenous people were false. Jack and Claire Nisbet document Mourning Dove's journey to this goal, in their biography of her life. They write:

> By 1915, she had completed a draft of a novel with a mix-blood Indian girl named Cogewea as the protagonist. In that same year, she met Yakima businessman and tribal advocate Lucullus McWhorter, who had founded the *American Archeologist* and encouraged Mourning Dove to tell her peoples' stories. At her death Mourning Dove left behind 20 folders of miscellaneous writings, which it was discovered that they included many autobiographical fragments. These writings later appeared in 1990 as a book titled, *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography* (3).

Although she made not have lived to see her goal of the breaking of a stereotype happen, I believe she helped others in accomplishing that goal.

With plenty of evidence of past heroes found, I look to our present to find where modern heroes are. All one needs to do to find these indigenous women is an Internet search of "Native American women today" and evidence of different women breaking the stereotypes of the past is easily accessible. One example of the ways that indigenous women are leading the world today is exemplified in the federal government; two indigenous women are the first to be elected into the United States Congress. In the article "First Native American Women Elected to Congress: Sharice Davids and Deb Haaland" by Eli Watkins, it's evident how these women have been heroes.

When researching the accomplishments of both women, it's obvious that their lives have been devoted to helping others. Several of the accomplishments that I found on Sharice Davids' (Ho-Chunk) website include:

- Sharice was raised by a single mom, who spent more than 20 years in the Army followed by a career in civil service at the US Post Office.
- Sharice is highly trained in martial arts and has competed as both an amateur and professional in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA).
- Sharice was one of 16 selected to participate in the prestigious White House Fellowship program (2016-2017).
- Sharice has lived and worked on Native American reservations, working with tribes to create economic development opportunities, programs, and initiatives.
- Sharice regularly speaks at conferences as a nationally recognized expert on economic and community development in Native communities.
- Sharice, along with her brother, created Starty Pants - a video podcast that highlights entrepreneurs in the Greater Kansas City area with a focus on women, people of color and LGBTQ founders. (shariceforcongress.com)

Accomplishments, such as these, allow others to see the impact that indigenous women are having in our society today.

When viewing the accomplishments of Deb Haaland one can see her commitment to change. Her website lists:

- Deb was the Democratic Lieutenant Governor nominee of New Mexico in 2014.
- Deb served for one year (2012-2013) as Native American Caucus Chair for the Democratic Party of New Mexico (DPNM).
- She was the New Mexico Native American Vote Director for Organizing for America NM (OFA NM) in 2012.
- Deb was the Native American Vote Manager for the Diane Denish gubernatorial campaign in 2010.
- Deb volunteered full-time for Barack Obama's 2008 campaign.
- Deb has volunteered for dozens of local and statewide Democratic campaigns and, for over a decade, has worked to engage the Native American community as voters and active constituents.
- In 2005, Deb led passage of SB 482 in the New Mexico Legislature, which she authored to allow members of New Mexico Indian tribes in-state tuition at higher education institutions - regardless of their residency.

- In 2017, Deb partnered with state LGBTQ civil rights leaders to help pass a ban on Conversion Therapy in New Mexico - one of few progressive legislation signed by the Governor. (debforcongress.com)

Considering her past achievements, there is no doubt that Ms. Haaland will go on to do great things for the American people.

While searching other indigenous women who have made a change, I was lead to the biography of Wilma Mankiller. Mankiller was the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation but her life was filled with activism. After overcoming several setbacks in her personal life, Mankiller became energized with a new sense of purpose in her life. She soon found the perfect project for her drive and talent in the tiny community of Bell, Oklahoma. Bell was a small village on the Cherokee reservation where most of the residents were poor and spoke only Cherokee. Most were living in unsafe, run-down housing without running water. Using money from grants and the federal government, Mankiller organized a community self-help project. Volunteers from Bell constructed an 18-mile long water system and repaired the dangerous housing. As Chief, Mankiller focused on education, job training, and healthcare for her people ("Wilma Mankiller Biography" par. 2). What all three of these women have in common is that they weren't only making a difference within their culture but for all American people. They show that they are willing to give of themselves to benefit the lives of others. These women and many others like them should emody the stereotype of what it is to be an indigenous woman in The United States.

Indigenous Women in the Art World

I will conclude with viewing how indigenous women who are visual artists convey their messages in the works they create. The three women artists that I will discuss are viewed as three of the top indigenous artists in the United States today. They are Merritt Johnson, Wendy Red Star, and Margaret Jacobs.

Figure 6 Cleopocahontra as she appears to the Governing Bodies of the New Romantic School of Vampire Colonialism by Merritt Johnson. Reprinted with permission of the artist.

Merritt Johnson is of mixed Mohawk, Blackfoot, Irish and Swedish heritage. Her artwork falls under mixed media since she uses numerous types of materials, including placing herself in her art pieces, which also makes the artwork a performance piece (Turner 1). One of her artworks that stand out to me is titled is Figure 1.

The power of this art piece comes from the implications it conveys to the viewer. Without being able to see the character, the viewer must use his or her own assumptions based on the dress that she is wearing. Johnson is pointing out how in today's society there are still stereotypes made about different cultures.

Artist Wendy Red Star works across mediums to explore the intersections of Native American ideologies and colonialist structures, both historically and in contemporary society. Raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation in Montana, Red Star's work is informed both by her cultural heritage and her engagement with many forms of creative expression, including photography, sculpture, video, fiber arts, and performance (Wendy Red Biography 1). Her piece here titled, *White Squaw* (permission to use image was not received) has the artist returning to one of many pieces of media the objectified indigenous women into a stereotypical role. S. Elizabeth Bird wrote, in her previously cited article, that these roles were never given to indigenous actors, but instead were played by people of European descent (76).

The last artist whom I'm introducing is Margaret Jacobs, is from the Mohawk tribe. Jacobs is a recipient of the Harpo Foundation's prestigious Native American Residency Fellowship and works almost exclusively in one style, which is an abstract metal sculpture (Margaret Jacobs Biography 1). One critic says of her works that they are, "Emotive and sharp edge with knowledge and heavy with history, but not violent or threatening" (Sullivan 1). The piece I found iconic is Figure 2, which shows her talent and proficiency in metal.

Figure 7 Cultural Continuance Margaret Jacobs, reprinted with permission of the artist.

My original goal was to show how far indigenous women have traveled to overcome the stereotypes introduced at the beginning of this paper. I would like to say as a society that we have moved past the earlier centuries' stigmas of indigenous people, but unfortunately, it has not changed. All one needs to do is to Google images of "Native American woman" and along with photos of a proud people, you will still see stereotypical comics and costumes amongst them. Critics might say that this happens within all cultures. I would respond by asking them to do an Internet search of other cultures that reside within the United States and let me know how many derogatory images they find.

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