

EDUCATING FOR SOVEREIGNTY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND
THE JOURNEY HOME

by

Lee Francis IV, B.A., M.A.

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Education, School Improvement
December 2014

Committee Members:

Miguel Guajardo, Chair

Melissa Martinez

John Oliver

Lia O'Neill M. A. Keawe

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DEDICATION

*Mah'meh schtriyah-matsenee. Hushta'meh, ku'meh, shrostita, stru'we'shats shus,
eant'eh'aw,wah-strus eh hopa. Dawa'eh Nyah Nysteah. Dawa'eh.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my most amazing and incredible wife, Liza Jean Wolff-Francis, who set out on this journey with me almost a decade ago and who has been so remarkably generous with her time and her spirit. We moved to Texas so I could pursue this dream and you were there every step of the way. I can only hope to spend the rest of my days giving you the same time, love and support you gave me throughout this adventure. And to my beautiful son, Elias Xavier Francis, who carries the family name and who gave up many evenings playing with “Dada” so I could attend classes, conduct research, and write, write, write. You are the light of my life and I am so proud and humbled to be your Dad. Thanks for choosing me.

To my father, Elias Lee Francis III, my grandmother (Gaga), Ethel G. Francis, and my grandfather (Papa), Elias Lee Francis II, your words and wisdom are with me throughout the years even though you have continued your journey in the next world. May these words ring true and guide my spirit to you in the beyond place many years from now.

To my dear mother, Mary Elaine Francis, who cultivated in me a love of learning and has been my rock for thirty-seven years and counting.

To my chair, Miguel Guajardo, I have no words to express my sincere thanks for all you have done to help me. And to my fantastic committee members, John, Melissa, and Lia, your guidance made this work better and made me better, too.

To Monica Valadez, your words and your work were a continuous inspiration for

me when I needed direction for my inquiry.

To Cohort 11, especially Neil Bonavita and Lyn Crowell, my partners in crime. We made it through some trying and exhilarating times to find the other side of this thing. If it had not been for you both, this would have been a much more difficult ride.

To my brilliant writing team, Patricia, Ken, Susan, Benjamin, Daniel, Sarah, and Yvette, I was terrified to let me be me and my work be itself, y'all got me over that fear and for that I am eternally grateful.

To Gil Sanchez, my long-time mentor, you were a great friend to my father and you have been one for me as well.

To my Research Team, the truth of your stories will be with me until it is my time to journey to the other side. Thank you for taking the time to share and be vulnerable.

To my brother, Samuel Garcia, you were always there to listen to me run on about this work, I hope someday I can be there for you.

To my CLE Family, especially Francisco Guajardo, who told me way back in Park City, Utah, that I should think about getting my Ph.D. and there was this school in Central Texas that might be a great fit for what I was interested in pursuing.

To Joellen Coryell, you let me explore and experiment and pushed me to clarify and think deep, thanks you for that space.

To Alison Borden, from M.A. to Ph.D. you have had nothing but kind words and encouragement.

To the memory of Dr. John Mondragon, years ago you asked me to join you in the

Ed Leadership program at UNM, who would have thought this is where I would end up?

You have been missed but your great work is evident in my efforts.

And to all of you who gave me good words, thoughts, and blessings, I can only hope to return your kindness and consideration in time.

Dawa'eh, thank you all.

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this inquiry was to gain an understanding of the process by which Indigenous people in the United States come to know their own indigeneity and specifically how local ecologies can inform the ways in which Indigenous communities can approach decolonizing their systems of knowledge while continuing to exert self and collective sovereignty and self-determination. Seven Pueblo Indigenous community members, including the researcher, participated in the inquiry. Utilizing an ethnographic approach, the inquiry looked at traditional learning within an Indigenous context and how that has played out in their lives. The community members were invited to participate as part of a research team to be learners and researchers in collaboration with the primary researcher as a way of asserting an Indigenous process throughout the inquiry. Conversations, field notes, visual media, and artifacts were utilized to collect observables which was then presented in a Readers Theater format in order to underscore the organic and Indigenous methodologies woven throughout the inquiry. Implications of this study look at the role of the sovereign leader in developing and sustaining schools and systems, which are in alignment with the local Indigenous ecology as a means of decolonizing schools that primarily serve Indigenous students in the United States.

I. INTRODUCTION (GU'WAH'TZE SE HOPA)

And so.

For those of you accustomed to being taken from point A to point B to point C, this presentation may be somewhat difficult to follow. Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider's web - with many little threads radiating from the center, crisscrossing each other. As with the web, the structure emerges as it is made and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made. (Silko, 1981, p. 1)

Story of Self

In the long ago time, before there was anything, there was thought. Tsitschinako, Thought Woman, looked and saw there was nothing and she began to think. She closed her eyes and thought of what a new world should look like and when she opened them, there was the world; the trees, the dirt, the water, the sky. She closed her eyes and thought more and soon more objects came into being: the moon and sun and stars. And she thought again and thought of her sisters and they were there and together they began to build the world. To the North, the West, the South and finally to the East, they brought forward the corn, the animals, the lakes, the rivers, the insects, the birds, and finally the People. And then they were done and the People began to think for themselves and began to journey into the new world.

My father told me this story when I was five years old. We had gone to the far end of my grandmother's property, where there was a little frog pond. Sitting on the dock, my father's large hands animated a story that had been told to him when he was

about my age, growing up on the Pueblo of Laguna, a small reservation forty-five miles West of Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is my first recollection of a Laguna story and though memory has blurred the details, that moment on the dock and my first Laguna story have always remained with me.

Thirty years later, I would find myself at the edge of the water once again. Six thousand miles from home, beside the Caspian Sea, I had been selected as a representative of the Pueblo of Laguna to study 15,000 year old petroglyphs at the Gobustan National Preserve in Azerbaijan. Looking at the vast expanse of sea and mountain, I was reminded of home, the Pueblo where my father grew up and where I spent a decade teaching Pueblo children to write and explore their curiosity. Reflecting on the many paths I had traveled from that point on the dock to this point thirty years and miles away, I had what Tisdell (2008) refers to as a "shimmering moment" (p. 31); a transformational experience more broadly defined as a spiritual encounter. These are the moments that cannot be entirely described in words but can only be summarized, can only be described in metaphor and simile and contribute to that "journey toward wholeness" (Tisdell, 2008, p. 28).

I feel I have had many experiences such as this where my reflections on the paths I have taken have led to personal insight and helped provide direction for future travels and encounters. These comparisons offer perspective and a chance to gain understanding about my actions and my learning in context. This is the true concept of scaffolding or spiraling wherein our reflections on transformational experiences spiral back on themselves and create change within ourselves, taking us to a higher level of

understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). It is a continuous process of learning and reflecting that points toward a synthesis of ancient ways of knowledge construction and modern frameworks, which provide guidance and a systematic approach toward meaning-making within a dynamic world.

Ultimately, in this quest I am confronted by the questions that have been a part of our stories and formation of knowledge since time immemorial: how did I/we get here? Curiosity about the nature of self and collective, of time, space and thought, are hallmarks of human consciousness (Maturana & Varela, 1987) and lie at the heart of Indigenous ways of being and knowing: the desire to explore and experience while remaining grounded in a sense of wholeness, connectedness and interrelation (Armstrong, 2000; Cajete, 1994). The Pueblo creation story, of Thought Woman and her sisters, highlights something Pueblo people have known for millennia, that “all doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing” (Maturana & Varela, 1987, p.26). The journey is not separate from the knowledge of the journey.

This inquiry, then, is a reflection of many journeys, the migrations of people through thought, space, and time. It is an exploration of celebration and ceremony. And it is an authentic attempt to gain some small understanding of where I/we have come from and how we can create a framework for passing on knowledge unto the seventh generation as did our ancient ancestors who carved their stories into the stone and breathed them into our lungs to be carried in our blood. These ancient stories which formed the map of knowing and being for all people.

Therefore, I entreat you to listen and trust and do as Pueblo people do in allowing the meaning of this work to be created like the spider-web, a deliberate and joyous process of learning and being.

Purpose and Scope of Study

This exploration has profound impact on all Indigenous systems but especially in surveying our current Indigenous education systems, which are built upon a colonial framework. In order to address the educational needs of our youth, we must first reorient ourselves as “the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens” (Brayboy, 2006, p. 439). Understanding the process by which we come to know our own indigeneity by accessing our own local ecologies can inform how we approach decolonizing our systems of knowledge and continue to exert self and collective sovereignty and self-determination. Moreover, as our education systems continue to become more multicultural, this work is not merely confined to Indigenous people, but extends to all those who struggle within an imperial and colonial system that was designed specifically to reinforce the oppressive notions of learning and conformity to hegemonic ideals.

At issue is how we approach our systems and our people in a way that is not an assault on an individual or community but rather as a way of awakening the mind and soul (Freire, 1970; Horton, 1998) so that we may find ways to create educational experiences that focus on decolonization, revitalization, and rehabilitation. This inquiry seeks to give insight on the process by which we come to understand our own Indigenous identities and how we may frame that process as a pedagogical strategy. I also seek to

explore the concept of sovereignty as a manifestation of critical consciousness from an Indigenous perspective. In reframing sovereignty in this manner, I hope to add a new understanding to a complicated concept, wherein sovereignty is not simply an end goal but rather a process of critical consciousness and self-determination. Ultimately, I look to explore a process, which I believe can help “[unravel] the long history of colonization and [return] well-being to our people” (Wilson, 2004, pp. 70-71).

Research Questions

1. How do we develop an understanding of Indigenous sovereign consciousness based on our own local ecology: place, mind and spirit?
2. How do we name, map, live, and make meaning of our ontology in ways that are in balance and harmony with our ecology?
3. How do these understandings inform our work as educators in creating sovereign spaces of learning and exploration?

Indigenous Terminology

Before continuing, it is important to note that throughout this work my use of the term Indigenous, rather than Native American or American Indian, is entirely deliberate. The term Indigenous has been gaining more traction of late, as globalization has created connections between those groups who have identified themselves as first peoples of a particular location (Stewart-Harawira, 2005). Since I do not presume to determine an individual’s identity based on antiquated, colonial rules involving dehumanizing fractions, my assumption is that by self identifying as Indigenous, an individual is accepting the various epistemological and ontological tenants that have been collectively determined by scholars, elders and communities of First Nations, Native American,

Aboriginal and Indigenous people around the world. Further, the use of the term Indigenous taps into to a collective consciousness, which connects the individual to other individuals, tribes, nations, and communities who also accept the philosophical frameworks.

What is critical to understand is that in reframing the terminology I am looking to utilize a very broad understanding of the concept of Indigenous, which can also be inclusive of those who do not wish to use the term Indigenous yet adhere to the various philosophical constructs. For example many people claim Native American or American Indian, either from heritage stories, or blood quantum, or a desire to connect beyond their own heritage. I wish to signal a collective, intellectual shift toward a global understanding of oppressed peoples who have maintained close paths to their original life-ways in the face of genocide and continued colonial oppression.

However, for practical purposes, I intend to contain this study within the continental United States. Therefore, my reference to Indigenous peoples is situated in this place which has been called Turtle Island (Bruchac, 1992) and in using the term Native, Native American, or American Indian, interchangeably, I am specifically referencing those individuals and communities residing within these boundaries. I will also clearly indicate when I am speaking of a distinct group of Indigenous peoples (i.e Hawai'ian, Maori, Alaskan) or specific Indigenous community (Tlingit, Mvskoge, Haudenauonee, etc.).

II. SITUATING THE WORK (EH'KA'EH)

There are three guiding understandings that are present throughout this work. The first, which serves as the conceptual framework, was developed at a gathering of community activists and organizers at the University of Hawaii, Manoa - School of Hawaiian Knowledge. During that gathering a group of Pueblo participants and scholars, including myself, created a Theory of Change/Theory of Action illustration to represent the process for our work at home. The illustration or map contained symbology and visual representations of philosophies and ideologies unique to Pueblo peoples. I have expanded upon this graphic in order to provide a deeper cultural meaning for this inquiry that cannot be fully explained by text alone as the illustration contains a particular life-force that transcends the written word and allows for a fuller exploration of the intersection of self and topic from a Pueblo Indigenous perspective (Silko, 1981).

The second, which serves as the theoretical framework, is the use of Trickster Discourse that was developed by Anishinaabe philosopher, Gerald Vizenor (1989). This framework looks at the role of the Trickster in Native American literature and stories as a figure that unsettles the entrenched colonial narratives by occupying a communal space which does not conform to the Western binaries of Indigenous and non-Indigenous. In this way, the Trickster is a “comic holotrope,” a communal instigator that seeks, by his very presence, to disrupt essentialized concepts and allow for deeper critical understandings (Vizenor, 1989, p. 2).

The third understanding is an extension of Trickster Discourse. As articulated by the Choctaw scholar, author, and playwright, LeAnne Howe, the notion of tribalogy

posits the way in which Indigenous knowledge and stories are intentionally moved from the margins to the center in order to reorient the relational dynamics between colonizer and colonized and allows for empowering practices of critical self and collective consciousness to develop from this new positionality (Howe, 1999). I will explain each guiding understanding more fully in the following sections.

What is important to note is this inquiry is developed as a weaving which looks to strike a balance between Western academics and Indigenous methodology. The tension that exists creates a necessary space for creativity and dynamic ideas to emerge, yet can often become pedantic, or worse, simply disregard one system in favor of another without doing the work to create the essential connections which bind the two perspectives together. The majority of my intellectual expression and the lens through which I view the world is derived from Pueblo Indigenous ways of being and knowing. Yet, I cannot dismiss my American and European ancestry, as those are parts that are just as key to my individual development. It is this tension, of balancing my own identity, which is central to the explorations in this inquiry. As such, this work is both a process and an explanation of Indigenous core values, historical memory, struggles with identity, living in balance and harmony, and progressing along the path of sovereign consciousness.

Image of Change/Theory of Knowledge

Many years ago my grandparents took a trip to Hawaii. They told me stories of their adventures and I was always fascinated and dreamt of visiting some day. As a kid growing up in Southern California, there were echoes of the island all over the place. The palm trees, the music. A magical land of ocean breeze and sunshine. Growing up with old Disney cartoons, Hawaii was idealized and only fueled my desire to travel to

that mystical world. Years later I found an old photo of the trip my great-grandmother took with her women's group to the islands. My Grammy, the only Native on the tour (and the shortest) must have found herself in such a strange world, so far away from the Pueblo of Laguna. I have always wondered how she felt about that place, the homeplace of her brothers and sisters in the middle of the ocean. I wondered how they treated her. This woman, brown like them. So different from her traveling companions. I wonder if she heard their stories of creation and migration. If she remembered her own stories, the stories of her people.

When I returned to Laguna in 2003, I was invited to be a part of a group called Kellogg Leadership for Community Change. The members of the group had already met several times and were planning on a trip to Hawaii to visit schools and communities out there as part of the community change work. The trip was all paid for from the grant. I so desperately wanted to be a part of that group. To be able to visit Hawaii and see the island my grandparents had visited years before. They were all gone by that point, so I was only left with echoes and photos, traces of their visits. However, it was not my time. That would come a decade later. On this plane to Hawaii, my wife and son are journeying with me. Three members of the Pueblos of Laguna and Acoma are going as well. Two of them are colleagues and one is a former student. We are headed out to be a part of a different collaborative with roots in the Community Change work. I was adamant about being able to go on this trip, perhaps more that I should have been. But I was not going to miss this opportunity. This is exciting work! And all things cycle back on themselves.



Figure 1.1. The author's great grandmother (fourth from the left) on a trip to Hawaii in 1953.

I feel it is important to discuss this story for it gives a great deal of insight into how my consciousness and the final conceptual framework for this inquiry were developed and continue to be intertwined. In early 2013, I was given the chance to bring a team of Pueblo people to Hawaii to be a part of a Community Learning Exchange focused on children and families. Several other tribal entities were invited and the cultural interaction was expansive and dynamic, especially as we were situated at the School of Hawaiian Knowledge at the University of Hawaii - Manoa. Over the course of three days, my Pueblo companions and I were able to share stories and cultural reflections in a place of ancestral knowledge and power. Part of our work was to create an image of a theory of change process. After several hours of conversation and thought, we arrived at our image.



Figure 1.2. Pueblo Theory of Change and the guiding image for this inquiry.

When we created this illustration, our primary representation was the Pueblo Creation story of Thought Woman and her sisters, which I outlined at the beginning of this document. The Three Sisters are present and connected to each other as they encircle the web of stories and the spiral that radiates from the center, which represents our journey toward the divine. Central to the illustration is the idea of connectedness, which is a core principle for Indigenous ways of being and knowing (Cajete, 2000; Deloria Jr., Deloria, Foehner, & Scinta, 1999; Suina, 2000). The unbroken circle, the spider web, and the spiral each highlight an aspect of this concept. The figures also represent the more traditional association of the Three Sisters of the southwest — corn, beans, and squash. For Pueblo people, the Sisters are a perfect nutrition source and a perfect ecological structure that has provided life for thousands of years. Of note, the Sisters are faced toward the center of the circle, which signifies a focus on internal capacity and community wisdom as the source of knowledge. The spider web speaks to other aspects of Pueblo creation stories, the formation of knowledge, our connection to nature, and the development of stories. The spiral is a significant figure in Indigenous symbology and

most often represents a journey, whether physical or spiritual. By using this illustration as the conceptual framework, I have framed this inquiry from a Pueblo Indigenous perspective. This allows for an authentic approach in guiding the entire research process and creates a path for the ideas to flourish while not being confined by a non-Indigenous methodological approach. The work is able to take shape in a way that brings life and breath to the concepts that were observed and experienced and leaves me with the responsibility of endeavoring to articulate them in a manner that is in alignment with this framework. This conceptual framework is similar to Estrada's (2005) use of the Ceiba, or Tree of Life, as a way of honoring Mayan cosmology as well as providing a visual form to demonstrate the intentionality behind the research process in his work. As such, these illustrations serve as a map for those unfamiliar with Indigenous methodologies.

Further, the illustration is contextual and situational as is often the case with Indigenous ideas and concepts (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008; Warner & Grint, 2006). For the inquiry, it is a map, a clock, a setting, and a story. It occupies multiple times and multiple spaces all at once and in this way can be defined as a chronotope where, "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope" (Bakhtin, 2002, p. 15). As you will encounter throughout this document, the illustration will change and will always be "relational and engaged in a process of endless redescriptions of the world" (Besley & Peters, 2011, p. 95). This illustration could be stated to belong to and define a different sort of time and space, both mythic and

transformational (Vizenor, 1984), a time/space that encompasses everything and nothing; it is a rendering of Indigenous concepts of adaptation and relation, both of which have been critical to survival. Additionally, as it was developed within a Pueblo community process, it therefore maintains a balance and integrity of Pueblo thought and values that could not have been created individually. In other words, the illustration is a collective vision of Pueblo culture and heritage that maintains its authenticity because it was developed in a process that adheres to Pueblo Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

In using this illustration, I am providing an authentically derived framework through which the Pueblo values of the interconnectedness of all things, seen and unseen, the fluidity of space and time, and the nature of knowledge and ways of being are able to be identified and more fully explored. For foundational purposes in guiding this inquiry, the initial meaning for the Sisters represents place, mind, and spirit, each of which are critical components to Indigenous philosophy (Francis III, 2001). The spiral signifies my journey through life as well as this research, as an expansion of my Indigenous consciousness. The intersections of the web indicate stories and significant events of my ontology and the strands of the web are my aspects of sovereign consciousness, which weave and connect all the aspects of the framework. As the illustration changes and adapts throughout this document, I will provide signifiers, which will give the reader a guiding map in order to make sense of the new time/space, which is being referenced.

The Trickster

There was a white man who was such a sharp trader that nobody ever got the better of him. Or so people said, until one day a man told the *wasichu*: "There's somebody who can outcheat you anytime, anywhere."

"That's not possible," said the *wasichu*. "I've had a trading post for many years, and I've cheated all the Indians around here."

"Even so, Coyote can you beat you in any deal?"

"Let's see whether he can. Where is Coyote?"

"Over there, that tricky-looking guy."

"Okay, all right, I'll try him."

The *wasichu* trader went over to Coyote. "Hey let's see you outsmart me."

"I'm sorry," said Coyote, "I'd like to help you out, but I can't do it without my cheating medicine."

"Cheating medicine, hah! Go get it."

"I live miles from here and I'm on foot. But if you'd lend me your fast horse?"

"Well alright, you can borrow it. Go on home and get your cheating medicine!"

"Well, friend, I'm a poor rider. Your horse is afraid of me, and I'm afraid of him. Lend me your clothes; then your horse will think that I am you."

"Well, alright. Here are my clothes; now you can ride him. Go get that medicine. I'm sure I can beat it!"

So Coyote rode off with the *wasichu's* fast horse and his fine clothes, while the

wasichu stood there... (Erdoes and Ortiz, 1984, p. 342)

The trickster figure has long been present in societies throughout history. Both an oral and literary phenomena (Radin, 1956), the trickster has been the subject of long standing intellectual debates over its universality or cultural specificity (Cai, 2008). What is important to understand is that in many cultures, the trickster serves as a way of disrupting traditional narratives and social structures to allow for deeper consciousness and meaning-making in relation to societal standards. As Cai (2008) writes, “trickster figures are change agents whose status as social outsiders and as cultural critics bestows them not only the power to defy oppressive social norms but also the creative power to reimagine new concepts of selfhood, gender and race relationship, and community” (p. 276). The trickster occupies mythic time and transformational space (Vizenor, 1984) discussed earlier and is often hard to categorize or define. In one instance, they are enforcers of societal standards, calling to task those who are not acting in ways that serve the community. In another instance, they are the buffoon, the fool, the clown, whose actions lead to destruction, often of the trickster themselves. This both/and (Francis III, 2001) concept is often difficult for Western scholars to fully assimilate. The trickster as benevolent overseer, as self-centered narcissist, as destructive fool, sometimes within the same story, points towards a deep understanding of the human psyche buried within these ancient characters. As Hynes (1993) notes, these tricksters are naturally predisposed to break rules and escape confines and therefore are not easily definable as they are often “resistant to such capture” (p. 33). For tricksters, “it is by being on the open road that they encounter moments of chance—accidences, coincidences and contingencies that

‘tear little holes in the fabric of life’ to offer human beings hidden intelligence of other realms” (Hyde, 1998, p. 138).

Pueblo Clowns

For Pueblo people, the embodiment of the trickster is the Clown. Called Koshare by Laguna people, these clowns are the physical manifestation of the spiritual realms of the Pueblo belief structure. The Clown Societies are highly regarded and those that assume the role of the Clown are involved in a transcendental experience that serves to unify the physical world with the beyond world (Parsons, 1934). What they bring to the people is that reminder of the balance of all things. They are not acting a story; they are living it. They are a manifestation of the sacred and profane. Their actions are intentional and deliberate. Although they appear most often during ceremonial dances, their roles in the community were on a day-to-day basis. As one Pueblo colleague noted, “Our parents would often invoke the Clowns when we were growing up as a way of maintaining our behavior. Like, ‘if you’re not good, the Clowns will come to get you” (Paisano-Trujillo, 2014, personal conversation). The Clowns serve as the synthesis of all of the cultural, communal, historical, and spiritual norms of the people. They are there to protect the integrity of the community as a whole.

Stories of the Pueblo clowns often involve comical antics, which elicit deeper thought processes regarding the core values of the community and the correct ways in which to act in that community. Their actions are meant to provoke as in the following story,

Evelyn Bentley, who was a missionary living on the Hopi reservation around the turn of the twentieth century, chronicled the following scene: clowns dressed as

women came into the court. Their skirts were very short, not over eleven inches long. The men clowns would go up to them and try to pull the skirts down a little. The clowns who stood behind the women would try to pull the skirts down in the back but while doing so the skirts would slip up in the front. Then the clowns who stood in front would stoop down and look up under the skirt as if looking at a woman's private organs. Then the other clowns would come around and have a look, then all would make believe that they were trying to pull the skirts down, then stoop and look under to see how much they could see. All this brought forth much laughter and many yells from the crowd. (Jacobs, 1996, p. 178)

Because Western outsiders were often unaccustomed to Pueblo ways, they were appalled at what they considered "lewd and disgusting behaviors" (Littlebird, 2008, p. 16). They did not realize that the tricksters were attempting to raise the consciousness of the Western guests who tended to "treat the Pueblo as though it were a museum display and the residents as primitive objects to be studied rather than as fellow human beings" (Littlebird, 2008, p. 17). It was also a way of highlighting the ways in which Pueblo people should be acting; not as curious, invasive onlookers but as members of the community who need to be respectful and authentic in their every day associations with all things. The Clowns are incredibly powerful as holotropes (Vizenor, 1989), those figures who are a complete symbol of the totality of the culture and community - past, present, and future.

Trickster Discourse

The Pueblo Clowns illustrate the important role and philosophical foundations of the trickster in Indigenous societies, namely as an instigator of awareness. As Cai (2008) notes,

For the purpose of intervention and invention, tricksters set events into motion, and, through those events, they reverse identities and roles as they become One and Many; they disrupt hierarchy as they move in and out of it; they confuse oppositions as they collapse polarity and find a third thing; and they subvert cultural conventions as they remake truth on their own terms. (p. 278)

This leads to what I have deemed as the most appropriate theoretical framework for this inquiry, that of the Trickster Discourse.

Because this work occupies a space that is both Indigenous and not-Indigenous, the value of framing the methodology in this manner is illuminated as follows. First, within Trickster Discourse, “trickster is not a reified social urge, fitting neatly into the model of a social scientist” (Veile, 1989, p. 131). As I will discuss further, this framework allows for the unfolding of a third space (Anzaldua, 2007; Bhabha, 1994; Keenan & Meihls, 2007; Soja, 1989; Irving & Young, 2004) dynamic from a uniquely Indigenous space, encompassing multiple perspectives and identities and further developing the concept of mixed-blood. Second, in utilizing this framework, I am able to emphasize and explore Indigenous epistemologies through the trickster as a comic holotrope. As, Veile (1989) notes, “the tribal world is comic and communal; the comic spirit is centered in Trickster, a figure created by the tribe as a whole, not an individual author” (p.131). This means that the inquiry is grounded in community and cannot be

separated but must be taken as a whole. Third, Trickster Discourse focuses on the state of change and transition (VanSlette & Boyd, 2011) that comes from looking to disrupt systems of domination and highlight paths for imaginative discourse to emerge. Fourth, this framework allows for a core of resistance and liberation and exploring the tension that exists between hierarchical structure and community, “In this boundary area, the trickster has freedom to act. With this freedom comes little shame or tact (or even responsibility), and sometimes crude or socially inappropriate actions reflect both the trickster’s subversive savvy and silliness” (VanSlette & Boyd, 2011, pg. 594). Finally, Trickster Discourse allows for a fluid, evolving conversation and process that is not bound by rigid confines, as “trickster is not a reductive symbol as formulated by social scientists. Rather, he is a culturally centered, communally created, highly complex, comic figure who cannot be isolated from or understood outside of the context of his discourse” (Veile, 1989, p. 131).

Already there have been examples of this in the work: the use of images, photos, stories and poems to provide insight, as well as shake the academic narrative. This is in no way to assume that I am the first to try and disrupt the industry standard. I am merely expanding the concept by applying the notion of Trickster Discourse and drawing upon my cultural heritage and personal gifts to inform. Throughout this process, I have made “strategic concessions” in order to create bridges of understanding and make the work accessible to a non-Indigenous audience (Kovach, 2009) and create avenues of invitation for readers, researchers, and participants alike, to assume the role of the trickster within this inquiry.

Tribalography

“As we began to tell more stories relating to the churches and missionaries, the non-Indians became defensive. One woman in the audience asked if we couldn't think of at least one good thing the Catholic church had done for Indians. Others began to tell their stories: the Jewish Holocaust, of the horrors of slavery and what was done to African Americans, the hardships that the Italians and the Irish had faced at Ellis Island. What I believe was happening to the non-Indians was that they were threading their lives and experiences into ours. A shift in paradigm, it's generally believed to be the other way around: Indians assimilating into the mainstream...we kept on talking through dinner, until I thought my head was unraveling...in my story, all this interaction, and yes resolution to change our perspectives, to change ourselves. (Howe, 1999, p.124)

Situated within the Trickster Discourse is the concept of tribalography. I have included this as a sub-framework, or complementary framework, as it illuminates more clearly the philosophical concepts contained in Trickster Discourse. In essence, tribalography theorizes on how Indigenous stories migrate from the margins to the center in a way that disrupts colonial binaries and allows for authentic dialogue. These stories are all encompassing and serve as a holotrope themselves. As Howe notes, “Native stories, no matter what form they take (novel, poem, drama, memoir, film, history), seem to pull all the elements together of the storyteller's tribe, meaning the people, the land, and multiple characters and all their manifestations and revelations, and connect these in past, present, and future milieus (present and future milieus mean non-Indians)” (Howe,

2002, 42). In this way, the trickster is the story and storyteller(s) combined, ontology and epistemology are unified, and the act of telling story moves into that mythic time/space.

Tribalography benefits in this drawing focus on the story of Indigenous experience. When we, as Indigenous people, reclaim and promote our perspectives and our stories as Indigenous people, it has the tendency to make non-Natives uncomfortable because it does not adhere to the colonial narrative. It doesn't simply flip the dynamic; it deconstructs the binary by focusing on the story and the totality of the experience of Indigenous people -- past, present and future. This has an unsettling effect on those who have been forced by history and colonization to take up the role of the colonizer. When the space is disrupted because the focus is on the story, the story is allowed to expand. At the core are Indigenous experiences but now they are woven with others in a way that highlights the fluidity and power of stories made manifest. From this fluidity, tribalography allows the concept of diplomacy to form and develop, "In stark contrast to the binary between the colonizer and the colonized, Howe's retellings of Choctaw history emphasize flexibility and diplomacy as modes of intertribal interaction" (Horan & Kim, 2013, p. 31). This deepens the understanding of the trickster as one that does not simply disrupt the space but operates within that middle area to serve as the diplomat seeking to effect "a symbiosis of Old World and New World" (Howe, 1993, p. 118); a healer, of sorts. And while Trickster Discourse may allude to its healing capacity, "Howe's development of 'tribalography' within living theater responds to colonization's harm by listening to, remembering, and repeating stories on behalf of the collective" (Horan & Kim, 2013, p. 31). This is a necessary and critical element that strengthens the

theoretical framework by reminding us that decolonization is ultimately a process of healing, which ties into the purpose and scope of this inquiry.

Finally, tribalogy outlines the theoretical dynamics by which this inquiry can and should be presented, which is an aspect that is not explored in Trickster Discourse. The technique of “storyweaving” drawn from “communally authored oral tradition, employing a mixture of poetry and dramatic and reflective prose” (Horan & Kim, 2013, p. 47) is something that has already been employed up to this point in this work. Connecting this back to the broader issues of colonization and sovereign consciousness, Simon Ortiz, the Acoma Pueblo poet and philosopher, furthers this idea of creative expression by stating that using “prayer, song, drama-ritual, narrative or story-telling” is a way in which tribes have “creatively responded to forced colonization” and that “such cultural creativity as part of on-going resistance to colonialism” (Ortiz, 1981, p. 9-10). With these frameworks firmly in place, we can now turn our attention to diving deeper into Indigenous understandings, which give additional context to the inquiry and observables.

Statement of Problem

When I was much younger, I spent most of my summers with my Pueblo grandmother, my father’s mother. Pueblo society is matrilineal, which meant my direct connection to my ancestral heritage ran directly through her. After some significant learning event, I would rush into her house and tell her all about what had happened and how I had made stunning revelations for all of my nine years of age. She would smile and offer me a sugar cookie and wait until I was finished then graciously respond: and?

It was her version of “so what?” Not in a cruel or dismissive way but in a way that would force me to assess the underlying question of why was this information, this revelation, important? It was not to dampen my energy and passion, but a way of refocusing my thoughts toward the larger world. She was helping me develop contextual understanding and immediacy. Within an Indigenous framework, knowledge development is not an individual goal, that way is viewed as something selfish (Deloria Jr., 1988). Rather, knowledge is something cultivated for the benefit of the community, of the People (Reagan, 2008). Her “and?” was really the beginning of the sentence, “and what will you do with this new information? How will this benefit the People?” As noted Cherokee philosopher and scholar Jace Weaver (2007) relates, “ultimately, I must ask myself ‘How does our work help or support Native peoples in their struggles? We must constantly interrogate ourselves with such questions, and the day we stop asking them is the day we are lost.’” (p. 243). In other words, my grandmother was aware that the day we stop asking “and?” will signify our disconnection with our community, our ancient stories and the loss of our Indigenous identity.

And?

The source of this disconnection from our culture stems from the lasting effects of colonization and imperialism, which have shaped the modern world (Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1999). It is no secret that colonization and colonialism seeks to disrupt traditional systems in order to replicate itself. (Brayboy, 2006; Smith, 2011; Writer, 2008). Through cultural and physical violence and deep-rooted oppression, the colonizer seeks to disable the subject population through isolation and assimilation. For

Indigenous people, we lose cohesion from ourselves and our own identities when we are separated from our communities.

Of course, these effects of colonization in the United States are evidenced by the high rates of poverty, unemployment, health issues, suicide rates, internal violence, loss of language, issues over identity and political strife that Indigenous communities are faced with today (USDHHS, 1999). At work is the concept of historical or generational trauma that is especially significant for a people who conveyed their knowledge through intimate systems of story, symbol, and spirituality (Armstrong, 2000; Castellano, 2000; Holmes, 2000; Kovach, 2009; Mithlo, 2011). Mithlo (2011) and Holmes (2000) both speak of the concept of blood memory as a common trait by which Indigenous people have been able to maintain the integrity of their cultural values, practices and beliefs. At the same time, it has the negative effect of reinforcing traumatic experience that often goes unrealized and unexamined.

And?

This continuous struggle for survival has created a fractured collective psyche, often in conflict with itself. As Brayboy (2006) notes in his work on Tribal Critical Theory, "colonization is endemic to society" (p. 439) and therefore permeates all aspects of being and knowing for Indigenous people. Because of this, the exploration of the Indigenous consciousness is critical to the process of healing and fully exploring the true nature of sovereignty and self-determination. Though these concepts are complex and are wrought with colonial ideology (Russell, 2010), they have also been subverted by Indigenous people to hold deeper meaning that reflects survival, perseverance, ceremony, tradition, and celebration (Armstrong, 2000; Vizenor, 1994).

Sovereignty and the sovereign intellect (Forbes, 1998) in the face of colonialism is at the core of Indigenous survival through the ways in which we pass on knowledge. For as Osage elder and scholar, Robert Warrior (1992) writes,

If our struggle is anything it is the struggle for sovereignty and if sovereignty is anything it is a way of life. That way of life is not a matter of defining a political ideology...It is a decision, a decision we make in our minds, in our hearts, and in our bodies to be sovereign and to find out what that means in the process. (p.18)

How then do we, as Indigenous people, make sense of our journey toward sovereignty? And how do we work toward decolonizing the mind by understanding the moments in which we became aware of our own indigeneity? The moment when we make sense of the self in context, is a moment of power, a moment when we bring a new world into being (Maturana & Varela, 1987). The moment Freire (1970) points to as conscientization. The exploration of the Indigenous consciousness, then, becomes an act of sovereign expression and a radical confrontation of positivist, colonial frameworks which have ruptured our stories and disabled our ways of knowing. Therefore, as an answer to my grandmother's lingering question, in working to heal the mind and soul, we must begin to know our journey so we are able to provide a map for the future.

III. INDIGENOUS UNDERSTANDINGS (WE'DOWA)

At Laguna Pueblo, for example, many individual words have their own stories. So when one is telling a story, and one is using words to tell the story, each word that one is speaking has a story of its own, too. Often the speakers or tellers will go into these word-stories, creating an elaborate structure of stories within-stories.

This structure, which becomes very apparent in the actual telling of a story, informs contemporary Pueblo writing and storytelling as well as the traditional narratives. This perspective on narrative - of story within story, the idea that one story is only the beginning of many stories, and the sense that stories never truly end represents an important contribution of Native American cultures to the English language. (Silko, 1981, p. 2)

Indigenous understandings are really a set of stories within stories. It should be clarified that these understandings are not the same as an Indigenous epistemology, although the intertwining of the two is inescapable. Rather, the following understandings are certain base assumptions that help create a necessary articulation for the inquiry based on scholarly and creative work by Indigenous scholars. They serve as guideposts in being able to understand the Pueblo Indigenous experience and at the same time provide insight into the nature of Indigenous knowledge and how it is formed through stories and lived experience. This is not simply background research but a way of orienting the consciousness in order to understand Indigenous epistemology, ontology, and axiology. These are the components that build toward that full realization or exploration of the Indigenous spirit, mind and body. The trick is to unpack these understandings beyond the essentialized notions in order to strike at the deeper spaces in which Indigenous

consciousness exists. This notion highlights the fact that the approach to knowledge is as critical as the knowledge itself as “American Indians have never supported the idea that compartmentalization of ideas makes them more clear, or more true, more scientific, or more scholarly” (Doyle, 2012, p. 199). Too often, the exploitative nature of Western research on Indigenous people underscores the need to assert a different strategy in not only conducting the research but in approaching all aspects of the research process, from introduction to conclusion. As Kovach (2009) notes:

While decisions about the appropriate theoretical lens, methodology, and method are made in a strategic manner to best respond to the inquiry question, there can be no denying that method preference is influential in determining the research journey. I knew that I had a preference to hear stories and gain insight from words. My research curiosity allowed me that opportunity. In making that decision - a clear epistemic position - the number of research methods narrowed and the strategy came into focus. After making this decision, I had to consider the implications for story as a method of gathering knowledge in an Indigenous research framework. (Kovach, *Indigenous Research Methods and Interpretation*, para. 5)

Therefore, the acceptance and reliance on stories supports the need for an Indigenous framework and reinforces the conceptual and theoretical frameworks already outlined as well as creates space for those frameworks to flourish within the context of this inquiry. In realizing that “stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being” (Brayboy, 2006, p. 430), these understandings are built around my stories of learning and being and are

subsequently synthesized with public knowledge developed within an academic realm. They become stories within stories and as sources of knowledge, it is my responsibility to demonstrate their effect on my development while simultaneously utilizing the wisdom of those who came before to further the efforts of this inquiry. As a further component in articulating these understandings, I have been intentional in seeking sources of knowledge that rely primarily upon Indigenous scholarship to provide a foundation outside of a Western context. This meant selecting Indigenous scholars who were deliberate in identifying themselves as Indigenous through their writing or by reputation.

This necessity of removing the distance between myself and sources of knowledge, or in this case, past and present research, is a direct response to the hallmarks of Western theories of learning and research, illustrated thus,

One of the concepts through which Western ideas about the individual and community, about time and space, knowledge and research, imperialism and colonialism can be drawn together is the concept of distance. The individual can be distanced, or separated from the physical environment, the community. In research the concept of distance is most important as it implies a neutrality and objectivity on behalf of the researcher. (Smith, 2011, p. 58)

Yet, from the conceptual framework, there is no compartmentalization as everything is connected and related (Cajete, 2000; Fixico, 2003). This means that there is no separation between knowledge and individual, individual and community, community and all of Creation. There is only relationship and subjective understandings. This is key to any type of Indigenous methodology, the preeminence of the relationship over any pretense of objectivity. Relationship, observation, and that which is highly

interpretive (Deloria Jr., Deloria, Foehner, & Scinta, 1999; Kovach, 2009) are all hallmarks of Indigenous research and serve as the fundamental grounding for this type of research. Western scholarship would respond that with objectivity the research is more purely enacted and that relationships can interfere with the integrity of the data. This presumes that there is a “correct” way to conduct research and the nature of relational-based research is inferior to that way. Yet remaining true to the conceptual framework, the Three Sisters and the origin of Laguna people, provide the fundamental framework and for this inquiry and the integrity of the work has only to be measured against this in order to be considered appropriate and scholarly within an Indigenous space of learning and knowing.

In taking this into the theoretical framework, the Trickster Discourse, I seek ways of disrupting the traditional staid and static ways of thinking, doing, and being by engaging in a dialogue which invites readers, partners, participants, elders, and community to explore moments of personal learning and understanding within this academic structure. By locating myself, I play with the standard conventions of Western research and remind readers and community that we are connected to one another and something deeper and wider. Writing one’s self into the text is a way of locating work in context (Absolon & Willett, 2005; Brown & Strega, 2005; Smith, 2011). It harkens back to traditional Indigenous practices of introducing one’s self, family, clan and history when presenting one’s self in a public setting (Faircloth, 2009; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2011).

We do not write simply for ourselves but to bring together our good thoughts and intentions in a way that is an invitation to learning and intellectual development. As my grandmother taught me, we have a responsibility to share our gifts, our knowledge, and

our stories. We are not better than others but equal to and we must hold ourselves accountable only to our community and to our ancestors. This does not mean my community is limited to Pueblo or Indigenous people, but extends to the academic, intellectual, and social communities of which I am a part. From this perspective, these understandings highlight an important facet of this work in creating a body that absorbs and synthesizes personal stories in order to fully explore the conceptual and theoretical framework established for this inquiry. In this way, I am able to serve as a necessary translator, facilitator, and trickster in adding to the development of a critical Indigenous framework.

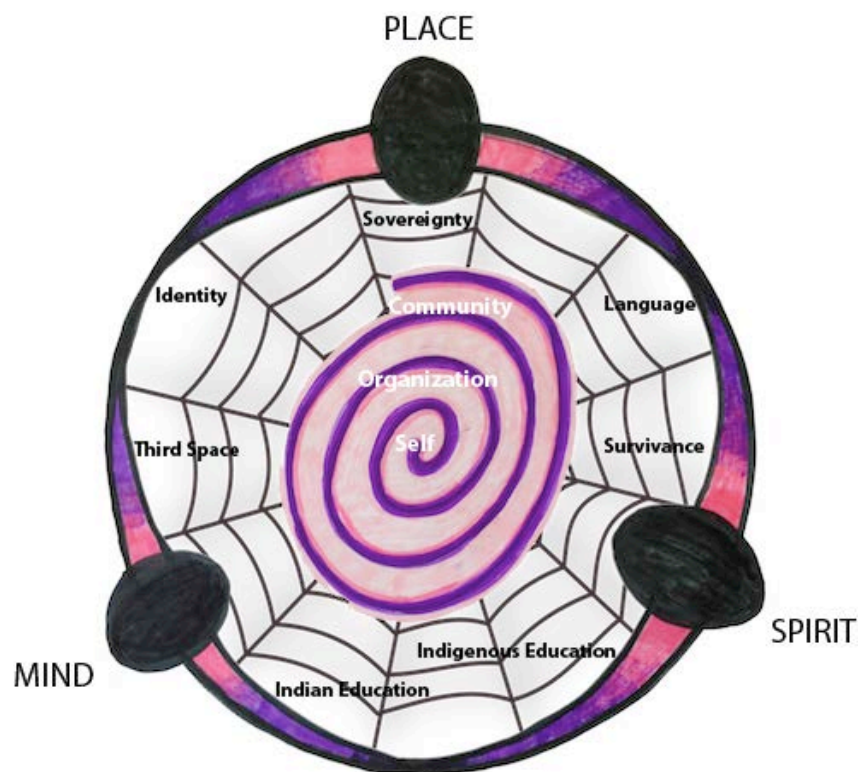


Figure 2.1. Adapted Theoretical Framework illustration including new concepts of organization for the inquiry.

In order to demonstrate this concept further, I return to the conceptual framework illustration (Figure 2.1). In drawing from an ecology of learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1974;

Guajardo & Guajardo, 2012) the research narrative moves from a micro to a macro perspective. This means that the representation of the self is the central point of exploration and expands outward through the organizational frame and finally through the community frame. All of which are bound by place, mind and spirit and the Pueblo cultural groundings inherent in the illustration. The Indigenous understandings I will expand upon in the following section are points of intersection in the web; each strand represents a segment of knowledge and the intersections are the stories and learnings I have selected as important to this inquiry. In this way, I am also able to confuse and disrupt the westernized Indigenous research methodology, which often orients, first from an historical frame, then moves inward toward the self, establishing a hierarchy of knowledge that favors Western understandings over lived experience.

Ultimately, these Indigenous understandings are a way of informing, while simultaneously playing with conventional structures of research such as the literature review or the presentation of data. I have attempted to fully realize an Indigenous methodology, wherein all the components are in rhythm with each other and the supporting structures are not means to an end, but integral to all aspects of the story.

Identity

Traveling between Reardan and Wellpinit [Oregon], between the little white town and the reservation, I always felt like a stranger. I was half Indian in one place and half white in the other. It was like being Indian was my job, but it was only a part-time job. And it didn't pay well. (Alexie, 2007, p. 118)

Indigenous ways of being and knowing are interwoven with the struggle for identity (Owens, 1992). My struggle began when I was five years old. I was unaware it

was a struggle at the time; I was all of five. But the memory and the story I was told about my first activist stance gave me insight into cultural politics and issues of identity, which would be present throughout my life. Long before there was an Indigenous Peoples Day movement, as an effort to rebrand Columbus Day, my parents sent me to school on a bright Monday in October with a black armband as a protest against the symbolism of Columbus Day and the ideology for which the day was celebrated. My teacher and classmates were mostly confused and at five, I was only able to parrot the words my parents had used to explain the significance. But the incident had no context until I began to study the plight of Indigenous people in the United States. A few years later, I remember taking a model Pueblo to third grade social studies class and telling my classmates how this was the style of home that my ancestors occupied. There was fascination but that was all. I was an anomaly; being light skinned and growing up on the East Coast, I retained a certain skin privilege that allowed me to exist in simultaneous spaces: the Pueblo Indigenous, the multicultural, and the Euro-American, without entirely coming to terms with the benefits of my “invisible knapsack,” those privileges I was afforded by the whiteness of my complexion of which white people are often unaware (McIntosh, 1988).

It is important to realize that the struggle for identity is critical to understanding how Indigenous ways of being and knowing are situated across cultures. As the Choctaw/Cherokee author, Louis Owens (1992) writes, “in spite of the fact that Indian authors write from very diverse tribal and cultural backgrounds, there is to a remarkable degree a shared consciousness and identifiable worldview reflected in novels by American Indian authors, a consciousness and worldview defined primarily by a quest for

identity” (p. 20). The persistence of colonialism has placed identity at the center of existence and survival. Owens (1992) continues, “the unending battle to affirm their own identity, to resist the metamorphoses insisted upon by European intruders and to hold to that certainty of self that is passed on through tribal traditions and oral literatures” (p. 21). This creates a particular foundation for the formation of self-awareness. However, for Indigenous people, identity development must also contend with the legacy of colonialism, as Smith (2011) writes, “the legislated identities which regulated who was an Indian and who was not...who had the correct fraction of blood quantum, who lived in the regulated spaces of reserves and communities, were all worked out arbitrarily (but systematically), to serve the interests of the colonizing society” (p. 22).

Identity formation is a complex interchange of conscious and subconscious symbols and social interactions formulated internally and manifest in types, stages, states and concepts of being and belonging (Erickson, 1968; Jossellson, 1987; Kroger, 1993; Lacan, 1998; Marcia, 1967; Mead, 1934). At heart is a paradox that exists between the understanding of self and other, the ongoing conflict between individual agency and social communion, based upon the fundamental need for survival. Though it is not entirely a paradox, rather it is as Damon (1995) writes, a creative tension through which the formation of the self is developed within the context of relations with others. As Kearney and Adachi (2012) note,

The individual is never fully aware of either their own inner workings or the workings of the forces external to them. Chaotically accumulated objective forces become internalised subjective forces, matrixed together in an ornate weave, becoming more complex every instant, constructing distinct individualistic

entities. These identities share many of the same cultural building blocks (language and diet are major shared cultural constructions); however, during the internalisation processes no set of conditions can be exactly the same for two individuals; thus, the matrix of identity is constructed within each distinct individual in a unique formation. (p.70)

In other words, the relational nature of identity formation often plays in the background as we make sense of ourselves in the world.

I remember a conversation I had with my father a few years prior to his passing. This was after he became the director of Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico. I asked him when he became Indian. I was referring to a broad interpretation of Indigenous philosophy. He stared at me a moment and said, “What are you talking about?” “Well,” I said, “all this work you do being director, is it just the job? You know, talking the talk of Native American stuff?” He responded, “I’ve always been doing this work, it’s just not been as out front as this work has been” (L. Francis III, personal communication, August 18, 1999). And it was true. In thinking back, I began to remember all the Native students he had worked with stretching as far back as my toddler days. I remembered all the powwows and feasts and traditional gatherings. They operated in the background. They did not conform to his current role, but his indigeneity was always present. He understood who he was. His identity was not static but evolving. His change in job created a necessity to take on the role of someone with a more forward actualizing of Indigenous culture. Whereas before his directorship, there were fewer ribbon shirts, bolo ties, and moccasins. His change in status led the way to a new

perception of self within his new role, based on external signifiers and social accommodations.

Perez (2005) gives a term for this formation, indigeneity, a term to which I have previously made mention. It refers to “the articulations and rearticulations of indigenous identity in a contemporary context in the political and cultural interests of indigenous minorities; in spite of (and precisely because of) colonialism and acculturation pressures” (p. 573-74). My father took a new job as head of a department in a major state university, so his articulation of his Indigenous self was developed in reference to his contemporary context. Asserting his Indigenous identity within a Western institution became a matter of survival. For peoples whose very identity is constantly under assault, the search for meaning structures and bonding systems (Cote, 1996) is critical to the formation of the self.

Yet, the complexities of Indigenous identity create a dynamic path for learning. The tangling relationships and ethnographic material create a powerful space for meaning making. From Métis scholar Donna Kurtz (2013),

I am Métis. My mother is a mix of French, Cree and Ojibwa from the Manitoba Red River area in western Canada and Mohawk Irish from the northeastern United States, and my father is German. I grew up on the Canadian prairies where both my parents were born. I have blonde hair and blue eyes and grew up “white” not knowing about my Aboriginal heritage. My mother was told by her mother not to talk about it because it was worse to be of mixed blood (half breed) than to be all white or all native. It has only been in the last several years that my maternal family embraced being Métis. (p. 218)

From Kurtz's perspective, if we are able to take the time to adjust the perspective and dispel the Euronormative notions of shame, Indigenous identity becomes a powerful method to explore history and cultural development.

We must also be aware of culture as an additional factor in identity formation as it gives another perspective on indigeneity. Beyond the narrow family and community interactions, we can see the development of a communal cultural identity as necessary for survival. Mead (1934) speaks of the generalized other as a way of making sense of the self. Schall (2010) adds that the necessity of understanding our culture gives us the ability to understand and reflect upon and perceive the cultural identities of those individuals and groups who do not share our cultural attributes. The value and strength of culture is critical to the Indigenous individual's survivance, a concept I will discuss more fully in a later section, in the face of hundreds of years of violence and oppression as "it takes a well-established identity to tolerate radical change, for the well-established identity has arranged itself around basic values which cultures have in common" (Erickson, 1964, p. 95–96).

That being said, these concepts of identity related to self and other are troublesome as they reinforce Western colonial ideology. They essentialize the complex process of identity development and create a duality that counters Indigenous understandings of interconnectedness and relationship (Allen, 2003; Cajete, 1994). This notion is also problematic in determining what constitutes Indigenous ways of being and knowing as it creates an assumption that there are definitive boundaries to the Indigenous self and Indigenous culture. Because of the effects of colonization, the generalized other is not the means for exploring the self, but instead becomes the way to marginalize

identity and reinforce already accepted notions of identity. People, and I use the term to describe both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, seem to be “more interested in Native [representations] that are simulations of ‘authenticity’ than in visionary, creative and innovative narratives...[they seek] cultural information that they are already familiar with, largely through stereotypes of Native tragedy, Native suffering and the complications of the loss of traditions and cultures” (Vizenor, 2010, p. 46). As Said, (1994) notes in his work on Orientalism, this othering “depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships [...] without ever losing him the relative upper hand” (p. 7). In other words, by accepting the premise of duality, the Western construct is always superior and, in the case of Indigenous peoples, the other is a tragic victim of time.

If we, instead dismiss the binary notion of Western identity, we are able to frame identity in a manner where fluidity becomes the key (Deloria Jr., & Wildcat, 2001) and context and situation are stronger determinant factors in its formation. It is in this fluid frame where space-time and place-time are not separate and Western linear narratives begin to break down (Cajete, 2000). Narratives of self and other do not follow a simple linear format but become entangled with each other and each shift in location, age, and situation (Warner & Grint, 2006). Perea (2013) suggests that “an emphasis on allegiances...results in a more nuanced understanding of identity formation, which acknowledges the dialectical relationship between processes of self-identification and social recognition” (p. 10). The way we form allegiances is fluid and shifts in relation to each situation as necessary for survival. This notion strengthens the argument that

culture forms the basis for a dynamic interchange of values and ideas though it may initially seem to be a static construct. As Laguna/Anishinaabe/Scottish/Lebanese American author Paula Gunn Allen (2003), posits, identity “when explored in depth reveal[s] a rich multilayered existence based on relations or alliances within and across human, natural, and spiritual realms” (p. 8).

I am aware that I did not grow up on the reservation and was not afforded various cultural milestones and rites-of-passage, as my father did. My world was suburban, middle-class, and comfortable. These are critical understandings of my own biases in developing this inquiry. Nonetheless, my efforts to further an anti-colonial research agenda (Smith, 2011) are authentically derived from the mixed-blood position I occupy and illustrate my methods for collecting observables in this inquiry. I am reminded of the story when I returned home to the Pueblo of Laguna to begin my career as a teacher. Earlier, I mentioned my skin privilege, which was not a problem when situated among East Coast liberals who revel in their ability to embrace diversity and multiculturalism. In fact, my multiculturalism was a point of pride and allowed me to be an expert on all things Native. I formed my identity in a cushioned environment, safe in middle class suburbia far from the reservation on which my father grew up. Returning home to Laguna, being surrounded by students and families, my identity was called into question. I would spend time in class explaining where my family came from and showing pictures of my grandmother and great grandmother. As I struggled with my own mixed-blood heritage, I developed a stronger identity, one that existed in a new and chaotic third space (Bhaba, 1994; Soja, 1989), a space that resists Western binary notions of identity.

Third Space

Yo soy i'ndia
pero no soy
nació mí abuela
on the reservation, a
Laguna Indian – but her daddy
was a Scotsman,
un gringo, también, un anglo y
yo so anglo
pero no soy
...
Este llanto plays in my head
Weaves in and out
Through the fabric
of my days
yo soy india
pero no soy
yo soy anglo
pero no soy
yo soy árabe
pero no soy
yo soy chicana
pero no soy

(Sanchez, 1977, p. 21-22)

Digging deeper into the notion of Indigenous identity, I will take the time to address the concept of mixed-blood, a term I have already used in this document, for this hybrid identity (Allen, 2003) troubles the colonial narrative of subject and object by blurring the bloodlines of colonizer and colonized. The blond haired, blue eyed full blood Cherokee, the writing of a “white” Métis, the Pueblo-Lebanese poet, all speak to a radical departure from positivistic identities rooted in homogenous populations where the other could be distinguished by their physical attributes. For Allen (2003) the history of the United States is one of mixed-blood intersections, where new identities were formed and reformed within the colonial purview. Following this line, indigeneity is the articulation of a mixed-blood identity from a post-colonial, Indigenous perspective. The manifestation of mixed-blood comes from Indigenous writers and scholars exploring “‘Indian Blood’ as a discourse of conquest with manifold and contradictory effects” (Strong & Van Winkle, 1995, p. 265).

This grey area of contradictions, tensions, and dynamic innovation is what scholars consider the third space (Anzaldúa, 2007; Bhabha, 1994; Irving & Young, 2004; Keenan & Meihls, 2007; Soja, 1989) the theoretical frame that emerges from post-colonial discourse and seeks to form an understanding around identity as rooted in hybridity rather than homogeneity. Bhabha asserts that, “the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). This new area of negotiation is a swirling collection of stories and intersections, which means that the individual must make more effort in understanding and realizing their individual and

communal identity. The borderlands concept so eloquently articulated by Gloria Anzaldua (2007), is another facet to this concept third space and further disrupts the colonial narratives. From this view, the border is not a static line on a map, but a place where people exist, meet, merge, share and confront one another in a messy and creative space. The borderland does not represent two sides, but a multitude of realities, both internal and external, where the border represents the area of negotiation of identity and cultural development. As Keenan and Miehl (2007) write, "third spaces therefore exist between subjectivities or between multiple perspectives (not between subjectivity and objectivity)" (p. 166). Instead of a solid line between Western and Indigenous, there is a shifting area between realities. These realities incorporate pre- and post-colonial history, cultural relations, and core values for each of the individuals who occupy this mixed-blood space.

However, this shifting location and positionally creates considerable tension for those who occupy the mixed-blood identity. As Howe, (1990) writes,

[mixed-bloods] live on the edge of both races. You feel like you're split down the middle. Your right arm wants to unbutton your shirt while your left arm is trying to keep your shirt on. You're torn between wanting to kill everyone in the room, or buying 'em all a round of drinks. (p. 254-255)

The mixed-blood space also creates a dynamic in which both constructed sides must engage in meaning making and reconcile the effects of colonization. In other words, mixed-bloodedness disrupts the colonial narrative for both master and subject. As Jolivet (2007) articulates in regards to Black Indians in Louisiana, they do not fit any notion of Western or Indigenous because they do not identify with their racially accepted

space. From this perspective, the mixed-blood concept is born from colonization and limited to the conflict between Western and Indigenous people (Mihn-Ha, 1995, p. 215). It is a core of Indigenous sprinkled with other ethnicities and races. It is often an acceptance of a constructed identity on the part of mixed-blood persons who are desperate to establish a sense of cultural belonging. As Howe (1990) continues,

Our erratic behavior is often explained away by friends and family as "trying to be." If you're around Indians, you're trying to be white. If you're around white friends, you're trying to be Indian. Sometimes I feel like the blood in my veins is a deadly mixture of Rh positive and Rh negative and every cell in my body is on a slow nuclear melt-down. (p.255)

This "trying to be" leads to a number of internal and external conflicts as cultural politics intercede in these aspects of cultural development. The mixed blood identity is often fraught with accusations of cultural appropriation and ethnic fraud (Mihesuah, 2006; Owens, 1998). Yet, it is these tensions and conflicts that reinforce the dynamic and creative space in which the mixed blood identity can flourish.

Crow Creek Sioux writer and scholar, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (1997) offers a final word of caution in regards to the mixed-blood identity. Her view is that the mixed-blood as evidenced through Indigenous literature has been compromised by colonial ideology because it often seems focused on the individual rather than the community. Her argument is that the mixed-blood author positions themselves as an outsider to the culture much like the anthropologists and Western positivist ideology they supposedly reject. This position calls into question the individual nature of identifying as mixed-blood and the community with which we are trying to associate. This is the contradiction of the

mixed-blood third space, that in creating a new identity, we position ourselves outside the culture we are trying to envelop. Mixed-blood identity falls into the trap of taking the cultural aspects necessary to form the new identity without fully reconciling the multiple realities or situations (Cook-Lynn, 1997).

As I have struggled with my cultural identity of being mixed-blood, I have been afforded the opportunity of a creative outlet through poetry and performance. Throughout this inquiry, my use of poetry and Indigenous literature is a direct expression of the formation of my mixed-blood identity. In working through this inquiry, I utilize poetry as a way of recognizing my multicultural heritage while aligning with my Pueblo background and my cultural understandings, which come from a place of learning and development. The following is a selection from a poem I wrote during my first years as a performance poet, which speaks to my struggles of identity and resolution when I first returned home to teach at the Pueblo of Laguna.

Yes, I am Mixed Blood
I cannot hide it
the WHITE bubbles to my skin
like the froth on the top that betrays
my ECLECTIC
ETHNIC
background
Scots and German
Greek and English
Laguna and Lebanese

I am North and South
East and West
I am one half here to GREET the Pilgrims
the other half getting off the boat
discovering the American Dream
I am Mixed Blood
raised Pueblo by the son of the son of an immigrant
I am pale on the outside
but stained glass
in here
my colors radiate from my fingers so bright
I turn clear
and you see thru me
see see see
not the color of my skin
but the color my blood and bones
red and white
and tones and shades
of brown and blue
and tan and green
like the sky the trees the earth beneath my feet

Language

I. You'll like, the ones you'll want

I'm thinking of you

how can you write

write about Billy

who writes? About the names,

the breaks at dinner, oh

how they'll always be

political, the words, simply

because they spring out of my body

like moths, the dismantling of wings

II. How you play with Language

have the thing mean the thing

mean the thing. But the thing is

our languages are

dead have died

are dying -

and maybe if I were to

III. Write about it. Turn in

a blank page with the title "A Poem Once Spoken

in Shoshone By A Woman Who No Longer Speaks

Her Language"

you'd see. A poem
that shows
how daunting

the white space is

(Winder, 2012)

Any discussion of Indigenous understandings must include the topic of language. For Indigenous people, language is singularly tied to deep cultural and ceremonial aspects that cannot be easily separated from lived experience (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Further, Indigenous languages contain a historiographical and genealogical record of the development of Indigenous philosophy due to the way in which language is context specific, “Language is vital to cultural continuity and community sustainability because it embodies both everyday and sacred knowledge and is essential to ceremonial practices” (McCarty & Lee, 2014, p. 109).

The development of any language is a discourse, which has evolved over numerous generations. “The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another context, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another generation. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of those concrete contexts into which it has entered” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 201). As languages are lost, abandoned, or

overtaken, so too are the contextual nuances which provided life energy to the communities utilizing that heritage language. The connections to land, the community, heritage, and ways of knowing are all relevant and necessary to maintaining the life systems of Indigenous cultures. As outlined in the Coolangatta Statement, developed at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education in 1999,

2.3. Indigenous peoples have strong feelings and thoughts about landforms, the very basis of their cultural identity. Land gives life to language and culture.

2.3.1 Indigenous languages in all forms are legitimate and valid means of communication for Indigenous peoples.

2.3.2 Language is a social construct; it is a blueprint for thought, behavior, social and cultural interaction and self-expression.

2.3.3 Language is the medium for transmitting culture from the past to the present and into the future. Acknowledging that many Indigenous languages have been destroyed, the 1999 WIPCE asserts that Indigenous languages are the best way to teach Indigenous knowledge and values.

2.3.4 Languages are the foundations for the liberation of thoughts that provide direction for social, political and economic change and development.

2.3.5 The survival and revival of Indigenous languages is imperative for the protection, transmission, maintenance and preservation of Indigenous knowledge, cultural values, and wisdom. (World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education, 1999, pp. 61-62)

During a Native American studies class my father was teaching, he sought to explain this understanding of language and Indigenous philosophy. Gu'wah'tze did not

simply mean hello but contained a meaning that was hello to all of Creation, both seen and unseen (Francis III, 2003). As Indigenous languages are space/place oriented, this meaning is lost when a literal translation is applied. Therefore, *mameh schkoo ah ne mah e'kai'eh*, which is a Laguna phrase of introduction that captures the feeling of gratitude for being allowed to exist in the company of others while honoring the space-place which we all occupy together, is essentialized as: happy to be here. Another example of the holistic nature of Indigenous language is conveyed in the Maya concept of *iknal*,

In his studies of deixis or spatial referencing, Hanks (1990) indicates that Maya people of Yucatán have a common sense understanding of corporal space. This is known as their *iknal* (place). This concept is a philosophical principle regarding the constant presence of absence. *Ikmal* has been defined as: “in front of, with, before, presence” (Bricker et al. 1998, emphasis added). The *Diccionario Maya Cordemex* defines *ikmal* as: “*con, en compañía, en poder, en casa, o donde alguno está* [with, in the company of, in control of, in house, or where someone is]” (Juan Castillo Cocom with Saúl Ríos Luviano, 2012, p.234). As Rodríguez (2007:7) notes, “*Ikmal* has another meaning that is not necessarily that of a fixed localization.” It is both a shared and an individuated mobile field of sensory awareness and action (Hanks 2000). Hence the concept of *ikmal* is an understanding of one’s bodily space *and* one’s perception, opinion, and attitude. (Cocom & Luviano, 2012, p.235)

What is notable in these examples is the contrast between Western and Indigenous thought in what Waters (2004) sees as the “dualist binary ontology of the English language compared with the ‘non binary complementary dualist construct’” (pp. 97-98) as

evidenced within Indigenous philosophy as well as language. Francis III (2003) speaks to this philosophical construct in his articulation of the Native American “and/or”, a postmodern assessment of Indigenous thought. Rather than existing in a linear form, Indigenous thought is both cyclical and multidimensional. It is organic and creates a web of connections and intersections among people, place, and thought. Essentially, Indigenous language exists as stories within stories (Silko, 1981), ever unfolding throughout space and time.

It is from this very space that the assault on Indigenous languages becomes so effective in disrupting and devastating Indigenous cultures. If languages are to thrive and persist, they must live and breathe.

Living languages are fluid and dynamic. They change over time. They add vocabulary, accents, and phrases. They create new words to deal with innovations, and with infused or adopted forms of material culture and ideas. A living language is responsive to its environment. Living languages are in constant use and therefore must be adaptable to changing situations and circumstances. (Benally & Viri, p. 91).

Yet, the first acts of a colonizer always include breaking the language cycle. The well-documented attempts of ethnicide and linguicide, as practiced by successive waves of colonial powers against Indigenous peoples (McCarty, 2003; Szasz, 1994), speak to the necessity of eliminating Indigenous languages as a means of genocide and assimilation. Once the language is removed, Indigenous survivors are forced to confront a crisis of identity, as they no longer have the ability to articulate essential philosophical framings as well as relational connections. In hindsight, we are able to see the

multigenerational impacts of “language liquidation” (Thiongo, 2009, p. 17) and how the struggles over identity and historical trauma are echoes of the lasting effects from linguicide.

This brings us to the inherent tension that exists in this inquiry: the limited ability and contradictions of using the colonizers language to explain Indigenous philosophical concepts. As Anishinaabe author Louise Erdrich notes, “Of course, English is a very powerful language, a colonizer's language and a gift to a writer. English has destroyed and sucked up the languages of other cultures - its cruelty is its vitality” (Halliday, 2010) Being aware of this powerful gift, I have endeavored to include the Laguna language as a part of this inquiry, though I am not fluent. This lack of fluency has not been detrimental to the inquiry but rather has been another sort of gift: it has allowed me to engage with my community elders in order to learn concepts only available in Keresan, the language of the people of Laguna. This inquiry has also allowed me to bring those ideas forward as a gift to future generations.

Indian Education

How different would be the sensation of a philosophic mind to reflect that instead of exterminating a part of the human race by our modes of population that we had persevered through all difficulties and at last had imparted our Knowledge of cultivating and the arts, to the Aborigines of the Country by which the source of future life and happiness had been preserved and extended. But it has been conceived to be impracticable to civilize the Indians of North America — This opinion is probably more convenient than just.— *Henry Knox to George*

Washington, 1790's. (Adams, 2013, p. 86)

For a short time in 2002, I worked with the Department of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC. My role was to develop curriculum to help keep Native American youth away from drugs and alcohol. Armed with thick and colorful, three-ring binders, I set out on a tour of Native schools around the United States. Over the course of three months, I visited ten reservation schools in six states. The one that has remained with me was the boarding school of the White Mountain Apache. The Theodore Roosevelt Indian Boarding School, which was originally Fort Apache until 1923, at which time it was converted into a school. As I stood among the old barracks, the quartermaster's house, the main hall, I was reminded that Indian education has always come at the hands of an invader.

Though numerous Indigenous scholars have addressed the tragic history of Native American education in the United States, both Adams (1995) and Szasz (1994, 2005) serve as the best sources in detailing this history. From their work, Native American education goes through five stages in the United States, 1) Religious schools, 2) Day schools, 3) Boarding schools, 4) BIA school, and 5) Tribally-controlled schools. The first schools for Indigenous people in the United States were established by Catholic and Christian missionaries, who felt an obligation to teach the word of God, as well as provide training for European manual and household labor (Adams, 1995). As the Indigenous people of this continent had a strong value for education (Reagan, 2008), they often built in education responsibilities within the treaties they entered into with the colonial powers (Szasz, 1994). The newly formed U.S. government sought to use education as a method for intentionally assimilating Indigenous people in an effort to eliminate Native tribes and cultures. This intention gave rise to both the Day Schools and

parochial schools located on the reservations. However, the federal powers soon discovered that youth were still maintaining their cultural aspects because they were able to return home each night where the culture and language was still strongly present. Their solution was to remove the children from their homes and communities and take them to Boarding Schools hundreds or thousands of miles away where they could effectively remove all aspects of Indigenous culture from the children.

Adams (1995) chronicles the horrifying experiences of Native children at the boarding schools including the burning of clothing and belongings upon arriving at the school, the cutting of the hair, and the banning of the use of tribal language under the threat of severe punishment. In the 1930's, the Bureau of Indian Affairs issued the Meriam Report (Meriam et al., 1928), which chronicled the alarming conditions of Native Boarding schools and began to change the policies of intentional educational assimilation of Native children by affording more local tribal control over curriculum and reintroducing culture and language into the education systems. It was not until the 1960's when full tribal control over local schools began to be commonplace and brings us to our modern education system for Indian children.

Years later, at the Fort, I continue to reflect on how a symbol of violence and oppression was repurposed as a place of developing Indigenous minds. As the initial quote illustrates, "the destruction of tribal nationhood and Native culture was part of the design and purpose of Westernized schooling" (Writer, 2008, p. 72). Day schools, boarding schools, religious schools were all utilized to eradicate the vestiges of culture and replace them with Western ways of being as, "every education system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge

and the powers it carries with it" (Foucault, 1972, p. 226). Is it little wonder, then, that the American Indian boarding school concept was developed by Richard Henry Pratt while overseeing Indian prisoners at Ft. Marion, Florida? As the words of Colonel Pratt suggest, the purpose of Indian Education should be to "kill the Indian, save the man" (Reyhner, 1993). For one hundred years, this was the guiding principle for educating Indigenous children. Today, the echoes of this system are still present for Native children. As Hayes Lewis, a Zuni educator and Superintendent of the Zuni Public School District, gives voice to our current situation,

We do not live in a post-colonial world. In fact, the western societies through the public and nationalized (BIE) educational structures and bureaucracy continue to research, design & engineer new forms, methods and strategies which continue the colonizing process for Indigenous people and tribes. The attempt to establish and maintain assimilationist educational policies, program and practices spans the K-12+ curriculum and the top-down educational mandates are the latest in a series of such challenges. (H. Lewis, 2012, personal correspondence)

This realization of how education systems subvert Indigenous knowledge is not just in those places where there is an overt ideological conflict, such as the reservation, but in those locations where Indigenous students are only a small part of the larger population.

When I graduated high school in 1994, I wore a feather in my graduation cap. A symbol of pride for my heritage; as I stated previously, I went to school in an affluent suburban district, where my indigeneity was viewed with liberal wonder and patronage. There was no issue with the feather and the majority of the staff paid me compliments

throughout the ceremony. Fast forward twenty years to Chelsey Ramer, a high school senior in Alabama and member of the Poarch Creek nation, who was initially fined \$1,000 for wearing an eagle feather on her graduation cap (later overturned). Of course, there is much more at issue here for educators and administrators with which to wrestle; the point is to highlight traditional values associated with rites of passage that are subject to varying colonial responses that are not always aligned with Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

Indigenous Education

Tso-i-ne-i Tsa-la-gi Go-whe-lv-i: A-nv-da-di-s-di/THIRD CHEROKEE LESSON:
MEMORY

Raid archeologists' camps

and steal shovels

to rebury the dead

Gather stories like harvest

and sing honor songs

Save the seeds

to carry you through the winter

Bury them deep in your flesh

Weep into your palms
until stories take root
in your bones
split skin
blossom

There are stories caught
in my mother's hair
I can't bear the weight of

*Could you give me a braid
straight down the middle
of my back just the way I like*
So I part her black-going-silver hair
into three strands
thick as our history
radiant as crow wings

This is what it means to be Indian
Begging for stories in a living room
stacked high with newspapers magazines baby toys
(Driskill, 2005, p. 15-17)

On long car rides across the country, my father would tell me the ancient stories of the people of Laguna. Interwoven with his experiences as a boy on the reservation, his stories were the only source of entertainment across the vast stretches of the United States. The endless hours between here and there would give me time to think and ask questions. Often, he would ask me to repeat back the stories he told me hours and miles before, so I would have them etched in my memory. He would tell me the stories of how he grew up, the things my grandmother and his grandmother taught him. These hours stretch in my memory and provide the only landmarks I know personally regarding Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

Up to this point, I have advanced this inquiry using Indigenous ways of being and knowing and have endeavored to present some landmarks of this theoretical frame. The scholarship that has been done in regards to this work presents a collection of fundamental understandings regarding Indigenous epistemology and ontology (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 2000; Basso, 1996; Cajete, 1994; Deloria Jr., 1988; Deloria Jr. & Wildcat, 2001; Kincheloe, 2011; Smith, 2011). Again, it must be stated that these fundamentals are not an essentialized list of traits that serve to determine who is Indigenous and how they should act. The concept of fluidity (Deloria Jr. & Wildcat, 2001) reaffirms a dynamic framework that is evolving, as Indigenous people around the world are more able to interact, compare and develop in collaboration with one another.

From a mixed-blood perspective, our development is more aligned with a global perspective of indigeneity rather than the localized, tribal specific understandings. Our understandings of Indigenous ways of being and knowing are derived from a much more active place of inquiry (Cranford-Gomez, 2008), as we continue to make meaning about

our identity in relation to our community, tribe, and Indigenous people in the world. I was told Laguna stories at home but they had no context until I returned to Laguna, as I did each summer to spend time with my grandmother and later when I began to teach the history and culture to Laguna children. My interactions with Indigenous people took place at intertribal powwows, so my concept of indigeneity was expanded by my contact with individuals of many different tribes and nations.

As a point of reminder, I reintroduce the concept of connectedness and interrelation (Cajete, 2000; Deloria Jr., Deloria, Foehner, & Scinta, 1999; Suina, 2000), which can be considered one of the core principles of Indigenous ways. Many indigenous scholars maintain that development of knowledge involves a fluid circulation between the body, the mind, the heart, and the spirit — the four aspects of being (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Francis III, 2001). This concept is captured in the words of the Ogalala holy man, Black Elk, who used the circle as the metaphor for connection,

Everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation, and so long as the hoop was unbroken the people flourished. (Black Elk & Neidhardt, 1979, p. 150)

The holistic nature of Indigenous ways holds the subsequent values and understandings together, which include sources of knowledge (Castellano, 2000), core values (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008) and principles of teaching and learning (Cajete, 2000).

Castellano (2000) outlines three sources of Indigenous knowledge: traditional, empirical and revealed. Of course, these categories are not isolated but overlap and interact. Traditional knowledge is that which is passed down from generation to generation; Mithlo (2011) and Holmes (2000) refer to this as blood memory. Stories of creation, migration, genealogy, traditions, values, and beliefs are considered traditional knowledge. As referenced earlier, issues of historical trauma are also part of this blood memory. Empirical knowledge is that which has been developed through careful observation over time. Warner and Grint (2006) relate a story of how a young Native man spent two days watching a road grater at work, at which point he was able to drive and operate the machine perfectly. Revealed knowledge is that which is received through visions, dreams and intuitions, or that which comes from beyond. Holmes (2000) calls this heart memory, the knowledge that comes from a spiritual place that can be sensed and felt. As Lavalley (2009) writes, "Many Indigenous ways of knowing accept both the physical and the nonphysical realms as reality. In accepting the nonphysical, one must accept that reality cannot always be quantified" (p. 21). The holy man, Black Elk, was considered an elder at a very young age because of the wisdom he brought from his dreams, the revealed knowledge (Black Elk & Neidhardt, 1979).

In addressing core values in Indigenous knowledge systems, I must reiterate that these are not steadfast rules but traits derived from various sources of knowledge and articulated by Indigenous individuals in collaboration and in community. First, it is the value of context. Ways of being and knowing reflect the values, history, capacity, and understandings of the community (Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007). Protocols and

belief systems are grounded within the local context (Kovach, 2009), and global concepts of indigeneity must give way to the local systems. The second core value is that existence is place-based. Indigenous people draw their power, knowledge, language, traditions, values, and beliefs from the places they occupy (Basso, 1996; Deloria Jr. & Wildcat, 2001; Hakopa, 2011; Lerma, 2012; Pearce & Louis, 2008; Sheridan, 2006; Weaver, 2007). Place cannot be separated from learning and will provide critical understandings for those willing to listen (Holmes, 2000). The third value highlights the understanding of personal gifts. LaFrance and Nichols (2008) point out that Indigenous ways look to foster self-expression and personal contributions as an asset for the community. The fourth core value speaks to the centrality of community and family (Caldwell, Davis, DuBoise, et al, 2005; Iseke & Moore, 2011; Koster, Baccar & Lemelin, 2012; Tenorio, 2011; Weaver, 1998). The fifth, and final core value is Indigenous sovereignty. Although the concept of sovereignty in the United States is exceptionally complicated due to the legal, political, cultural, and racial dynamics (Russell, 2010) inherent in the concept, it is important to assume that each tribe and nation is a distinct and unique entity with the ability to determine the best outcomes for itself, as a whole, on its own terms (Deloria Jr., 1988; Forbes, 1999).

A final thought about Indigenous ways of knowing and being concerns my conversations with educators, community members, and administrators in the Pueblo of Zuni. These conversations give insight into how Indigenous ways can move to the center rather than the margins in educating Indigenous youth in Western institutions. The Zuni

academic calendar provides a brief glimpse of how Western systems can be adapted in a way that remains authentic to local Indigenous ways.

I leave the final words of this section to my Zuni elder, Hayes Lewis, in his expression of how learning should take place at the Pueblo.

The phrase “hon e:beya tsu:ma, e:yakna tho'o” means to hold strongly to each other so we may grow in our relations and collective strength now and for the future. This hope and instruction is depicted on the walls of the Grand Canyon. As the A:shiwi emerged from the fourth world there is a depiction of two human (A:shiwi) figures. One is on the surface with hand extended grasping the hand of another and pulling him/her to the surface and into the present world. As A:shiwi people, we must learn to practice this in all areas of life and relations. If we embed this into the program, then we can overcome negative relations & imposed challenges to improve teaching and learning for all A:shiwi children and their families. (H. Lewis, 2012, personal correspondence)

Survivance

Columbus landed in the second grade for me, and my teacher made me swallow the names of the boats one by one until in the bathtub of my summer vacation I opened my mouth and they came back out-Nina, Pinta, Santa Maria-and bobbed on the surface of the water like toys. I clapped my hand over my mouth once, Indian style, then looked up, for my mother, so she could pull the plug, stop all this, but when I opened my mouth again it was just blood and blood and blood. (Jones, 2005, viii)

An important concept in Indigenous understandings is the notion of survivance, a term that refers to the survival, endurance, and resistance of Indigenous people in the face of genocide, oppression and tragedy. More, it speaks of the “narrative resistance that creates a sense of presence over absence, nihility and victimry” (Vizenor, 2010, p. 1). Too often, Indigenous peoples are portrayed as tragically and historically oppressed, conquered, and colonized. The images of the broken warrior, the Trail of Tears, the massacre of Sand Creek and Wounded Knee, have been pressed into the collective consciousness through a unidimensional colonial narrative in which the agency of the people involved is removed in favor of tragic victimry (Atalay, 2006). Within this framework, Indigenous people are simply “passive receivers of colonial actions” (Atalay, 2006, p. 601); they are representations in the grand story of colonization. The concept of survivance seeks to unsettle this narrative by highlighting the agency and “imaginative sovereignty” (Justice, 2012, p. 103) of a people who “actively resisted repeated attempts of cultural, spiritual, and physical genocide and simultaneously had profound effects and influence upon colonial settler populations and governments” (Atalay, 2006, 601). Further, it is essential that survivance is expressed through the stories of struggle and determination, in order to appreciate the power and strength of those who continue to survive. As Lockard writes (2008) “a survivance storyteller is one who has faced the wiindigo and lived to tell the tale or, rather who has told the tale and so lived” (p. 211).

Years ago, I was involved in a play by Diné playwright and storyteller, Carmelita Topaha. Recalling the story of the Long Walk of the Diné people, we put into action the essence of survivance. Not simply the act of the people themselves, but the retelling of

the story. The betrayal by Kit Carson. The death and mourning. The return to the homeplace. The story was historically accurate but took on its own life energy in the mouths of the Diné actors selected to perform the roles of Manuelito, the leader of the Diné, and the Diné First Woman, who serves as the main storyteller and spiritual center of the work. At the time, I remember thinking how the dialogue seemed unfinished and the script was a bit too long, the staging was awkward and the whole thing seemed wooden. I should note that I had just graduated with a degree in Theatre, so I was obviously an expert and had plenty of opinions about how the play should look. But I knew it was not my place and so instead, I acted my heart out, determined to drag this little backwoods play forward through sheer willpower.

Yet night after night, as we performed in front of audiences in western New Mexico and eastern Arizona, the response of the Dine people was immediate and overwhelming. It was not my performance, which moved them, nor did they see a half-done production, as I did with all my fancy theatre experience. They saw their story. And I was witness to an act of survivance, of a people who had faced the conqueror and lived to tell the tale. This was a profound moment in my Indigenous understanding, which continues to unfold as I navigate my own issues of resistance, endurance, and survival and live to tell the tale.

Sovereignty

Question: "I'd like to start with a question I ask all of the guests on this program and that is how do you define sovereignty? What does it really mean for Native Nations?"

Mankiller: "I think that the sovereign rights of tribes are inherent. And I think that when thinking about that sovereign it's important to remind everyday Americans that tribal governments existed before there was a United States government and that many tribes, including the Cherokee Nation, had treaties with other governments before they had a treaty with the first U.S. colony. So the definition of sovereignty is to have control over your own lands and resources and assets, and to have control over your own vision for the future, and to be able to have absolute, to absolutely determine your own destiny. (Mankiller, 2008)

Finally, I bring our Indigenous understandings into the intersection of politics and identity. The concept of sovereignty for Indigenous people in the United States is remarkably complex because of the legal, cultural, and racial issues that are entangled with identity, community, and history and how Indigenous people in the United States have existed in a pseudo-recognized state for almost three hundred years. For most Indigenous people, the term sovereignty evokes notions of autonomy, self-governance and self-determination. These words are often used interchangeably, with the same intent: a desire for structural and cultural independence, which was lost to colonization and replaced with the myth of America. In many ways, sovereignty is primarily a stand in for some amorphous understanding of a past time before genocide and assimilation. In drawing from legal decisions and terminology, sovereignty has always been an evolving concept.

The roots of U.S. Indigenous sovereignty emerge from the treaty rights signed by the majority of tribes and nations with the various colonizing bodies throughout the early history of America (Bowers, 2010). These treaties established the original intent of

nation-to-nation relationships, though as America expanded the relationship was exposed as nothing more than a thinly veiled trick of legalities to cover the colonial ideology that would eventually make Indigenous people wards of the state. “Even when Native Americans were given increased self-governance on reserve land through the “Indian Reorganisation Act” of 1934, the legal systems that were proposed by the Act and implemented by the Native American community itself were based upon and created by the U.S. Supreme Court” (D’Errico, 2006, p. 245). The same can be said for the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act, which has “come the closest to acknowledging the cultural difference of Native Americans and the different system of organization that such difference necessitates” (Bowers, p. 460) yet the power still resides within the purview of federal oversight, the colonizer dictating the terms of freedom and sovereignty. This places the concept of sovereignty as something that has emerged as a bit of a hologram: something that has the appearance of being real but is nothing more than a trick of the light. D’Errico (2006) highlights this understanding in referencing *United States v. Blackfoot Tribe*, as the judge’s statement concludes: “The blunt fact, however, is that an Indian tribe is sovereign to the extent that the US permits it to be sovereign” (p. 243). This is the troubling aspect of the nature of sovereignty as it has been transformed and modified in a way that, while seeming to support Indigenous claims, continues to benefit the colonizer.

This can certainly be seen in the effect sovereignty has had on American Indian citizenship as determined by blood quantum. Blood quantum or degree of Indian blood “originally served as a device for documenting ‘Indian’ status for the federal government's

purposes of dividing and subsequently alienating collectively held Indian lands” during the Dawes Act of 1887 (Allen, 1999, p. 96). Blood quantum is an insidious device which exists under the flag of sovereignty and self-determination, yet undermines the entire concept of tribal citizenship by reducing Indigenous individuals to members, as if being Pueblo or Sioux was the same as belonging to an athletic club (Jaimes, 1992), except that the only requirement is based on a genetic equation entrenched in racially divisive and culturally destructive practices. Further, these colonial constructs have the poisonous effect of creating division within tribal communities as “Indians themselves have increasingly begun to enforce the race codes excluding the genetically marginalized from both identification as Indian citizens and consequent entitlements” (Jaimes, 1992, p. 129). Allen (1999) points out the nature of the blood quantum conflict as being personal, political and having less to do with the idealized and pseudo-activist notion of sovereignty — wherein sovereign tribes and nations are entitled to determine who their citizens are (Russell, 2005) — than the colonized construct, the hologram, of sovereignty which serves to further disrupt and fracture Indigenous communities. This is evident in the following from the former Secretary of Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover, who penned his response in reaction to the statements of Delphine Red Shirt over the certification of Federal recognition for a few tribes in Connecticut.

I understand her position, Connecticut Indians are not Indians because they do not look like her, do not act like her, do not speak like her, do not-well, you get the picture. (They also do not have cool names like hers, but she forgot to mention that.) Expect to see Ms. Red Shirt trotted out every time some white

people want to say something ugly about Indian people but dare not do so because they would be labeled as racists.

I think we brown-skinned, black-haired Indians had better be careful about what we say about New England Indians. There are fewer and fewer full-bloods among us. If being Indian means looking a certain way, then most tribes are only two or three generations from extermination.

The New England Indians did what they had to do to survive. They intermarried and accommodated the overwhelming presence of non-Indians. Yet they persevered and maintained themselves, some of them, as distinct social, political and cultural communities. Are they the same as the Indians who greeted the English and Dutch settlers in the 17th century? Of course not. But then few if any tribes closely resemble their pre-Columbian ancestors. (Gover, 2002)

This intercultural warfare is a concrete example of how the colonizer's sovereignty is dictated to Indigenous peoples rather than asserted by Indigenous peoples and that there is a lack of understanding or awareness of the true nature of sovereignty within the context of colonization in the United States.

For me, sovereignty has always been about a spirit of health and wholeness for the community. The interdependence that Mankiller speaks of is central to my understanding of sovereignty and the ways in which we must exert sovereignty as a whole and not as an individual endeavor, strikes at the politics of community and identity bound up in the discourse of sovereignty. The issue of sovereignty and blood quantum is especially personal, as I am not eligible for enrollment at the Pueblo of Laguna. My great-grandfather was Anishinaabe and as such, over the years, my degree of Pueblo

Indian blood has dwindled beyond what is necessary for recognition. Many of my former students face similar dilemmas and in a telling conversation with a fellow Laguna, he described how the grandchildren of a former Governor of the tribe could not be enrolled because of their lack of blood requirements. Yet, these issues are still bound within the colonial framework of ages past. If we, instead, approach sovereignty from an Indigenous framework, then it is not an object to be attained but rather a process by which Indigenous people develop a consciousness regarding oppression, colonization, and liberation. “Rather than attempting to elucidate what sovereignty is” we can be more determined in “exploring how it takes place” (Willow, 2013, p. 872) and how we can utilize sovereignty to revitalize and rehabilitate our communities, our cultures, and ourselves. As Willow (2013) continues,

On a chilly November day in 2004, an Anishinaabe subsistence harvester, anti-clearcutting activist, and business owner from northwestern Ontario told me something I’ve been contemplating ever since. ‘Sovereignty is not something you ask for,’ he declared, ‘it’s something you do.’ In those powerful words, I heard reverberations of a discursive logic that has defined struggles for American Indian rights since the 1960s. (p. 871-72)

IV. METHODS (MAH'MEH SCHTRIAH-MATSENEE)

Baskets tell stories, they hold histories, they are a form of text that incorporates tribalogy, which pulls together all elements of a storyteller's tribe, land, and culture and holds within them materials of the people, of the geographic place and setting of those materials, and of the makers. As kinetic active listeners to the baskets we need to listen to the multiplicities. (Cranford-Gomez, 2008, p. 101)

To explore the facets of Indigenous consciousness, I used an hybrid epistemology and a method grounded in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and specifically grounded in Indigenous qualitative methods (Kovach, 2009; LaFrance & Nichols, 2008; Smith, 2011). It is important to highlight this delineation especially as more recent qualitative methodological strategies have focused on greater reciprocity and cultural awareness (Creswell, 2009), they are still contained within the Western paradigm, which is built upon the necessity of creating distance, or at least enough separation from the subject so as to not lose objectivity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Van Maanen, 1988), in other words, be close enough to be able to get what you need from the subject. As I have previously outlined, Indigenous methods have a deeper ethical component that conform around the local cultural imperatives (Botha, 2011) and are formed from the local ecology based on relationship and subjective understandings. Too often, Indigenous research is situated as a subcategory of Western research (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2001), especially in the qualitative realm. Yet it should not be treated as a subcategory but one that has its own place in terms of approach with a singular focus on story, cultural traditions and core community values. An Indigenous

methodological approach is a hybrid, one that draws from multiple qualitative approaches in order to create a whole. This can be likened to the work of basket making as explained at the beginning of this section. Indigenous research is an act of making, an act of weaving: using the materials and techniques present to create something that is aesthetically invigorating, as well as useful for the purposes of the community. It is a gift to Creation. This belief is grounded in the congruency, cultural competence and awareness that I, as the researcher, bring to the inquiry process. It is a conscious reframing of *conducting on* to *exploring with* or more appropriately: *exploring from/for*. This requires that research begins with an understanding of indigenous epistemology that “acknowledges the interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the earth, the star world, and the universe” (Lavallée, 2009, p. 23) and that the research remains consistent with this understanding throughout: from framework, to methods, to analysis. This research method also requires the researcher to become another instrument of measure in order to bring the necessary awareness and cultural competence in collecting, sharing, organizing and sense-making of the dynamic lives, minds and spirits of his research partners.

Invitation

Years ago, when I first began working at the Pueblo of Laguna, I was invited to a colleague’s home for our St. Joseph’s Feast Day. The Feast Days are the big community ceremony/celebrations where we invite family and friends to see our dances and eat at our homes. Native and non-Native people are welcome and the atmosphere is one of communal spirit and generosity. At my colleague’s house, we had just sat down to eat when two non-Pueblo folks entered the house. They looked out of place and slightly

confused. My colleague asked who they were looking for and they responded that they thought this was part of the cultural festivities. With a sigh, he invited them to sit and eat while telling them that this was someone's home and usually they would be invited.

Later when we had finished eating and were walking toward the plaza to see the dances, he commented that it happened each year; he just wished they would knock first. At Laguna, when we are little we are taught that when we knock, we wait for the response "oo-poo'nah" which is the invitation to come in the house.

In speaking with Indigenous friends and colleagues, these rituals of invitation and greeting are common among Indigenous people and speak to the inherent nature of connectedness and reciprocity that is core to Indigenous ways of being. Kovach (2009) titles this "research preparation", which is fitting terminology as it speaks to the deeper strategy regarding Indigenous methodology. For this inquiry, I invited six Pueblo Indigenous research partners to join me in the process of learning and collaboration. My learning partners were drawn from current relationships using purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2009) as appropriate and congruent with Indigenous methods (Kovach, 2009; LaFrance & Nichols, 2008). Having a pre-existing and ongoing relationship with participants is "an accepted characteristic of research according to tribal paradigms" (Kovach, 2009). Therefore, I chose to limit the background of my partners to Pueblo citizens. This choice of participants grounded the work in essential common cultural understandings, which allowed for deeper conversations that did not require significant background knowledge of the framework of this inquiry. This also placed the responsibility on me to serve as facilitator and translator to a wider audience, but not necessarily with my partners with whom I was able to engage in direct and dynamic

conversations. Additionally, with such a small research team, it was difficult to create a representative sample of all Indigenous people across the United States. As my consciousness has emerged from a Pueblo place of understanding, this inquiry followed that same line.

Initially, my research partners consisted of one Pueblo youth (Violet, 22), who was a former student when I taught on the reservation, two Pueblo mentors (Gloria, 54 and Thomas, 60), and one Pueblo elder (Robert, 70). During the course of my inquiry process and collection of observations, Robert became very ill and was not able to complete the process. I felt it was important to have additional voices and I included two more Pueblo youth (Eric, 19 and Cindy, 19), who were also former students. As stated earlier, I am also a part of the research and I have also included my father in the process. Although he passed away in 2003 at the age of 58, he left a large body of poems, essays and stories which I felt were important to include in this inquiry as they provided my essential understandings and give significant insight into the Pueblo consciousness from the perspective of a poet-scholar. Although we were not able to meet as a whole group, I was able to connect with my research partners in small groups over the course of several months. I also shared conversations and stories within the research group to simulate the story sharing and conversations which were taking place in person and online. This process is variation of deliberative inquiry (Kanuka, 2010) wherein the group makes meaning together based on the observations and evidence we share with one another.

Beyond my direct research partners, I was also conscious of keeping this work connected to community, as central to Indigenous research methodology (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008; Smith, 2011). I had conversations with other Indigenous elders and

community members to provide oversight and wisdom in assessing my process and my critical understandings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). These elders and community members were drawn from my professional, personal, and academic communities and included my committee members, my dissertation chair, members of Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers, and Pueblo colleagues throughout the United States.

Indigenous Method: Social Cartography

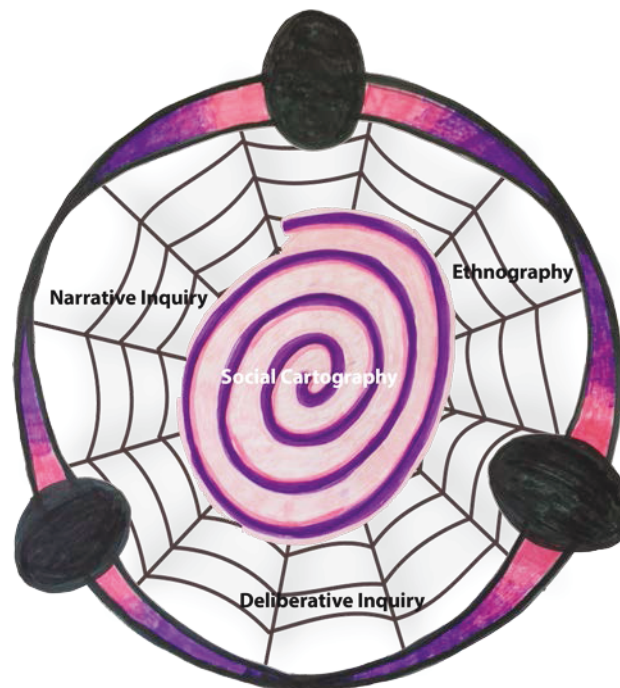


Figure 3.1. Conceptual Framework illustration revised to include visual methods of understanding data collection.

Let us return for a moment to guiding illustration presented in Part One (Figure 3.1). As the researcher/weaver, I can now explore the deeper, situational meanings of the graphic. Here, now, the web represents the methodological approach used to collect observables as part of this inquiry. The spiral is the object that weaves the methods together and represents the primary method for collecting observables. The Three Sisters

continue to represent place, mind and spirit but now take on new meaning when applied to the methods of research.

Focusing on the web, we see the intersecting elements of qualitative research in this inquiry: social cartography (Paulston, 1996), ethnography (Creswell, 2009), narrative inquiry (Clandinnin & Connelly, 2000), deliberative inquiry (Kanuka, 2010). It was important to utilize a method that emphasized place as well as providing an alternative to positivistic systems of analysis, or what Martin and Frost (1996) term “smash and grab” ethnographies. To satisfy this need for an authentic alternative, I chose to approach this inquiry with a social cartography method (Paulston, 1996) as my primary framework for collecting observables. However, I have adapted this method using an Indigenous lens informed by ethnocartography, a method developed to allow Indigenous peoples to create culturally authentic and historically accurate cartographic representations of their community and geographic area based on traditional stories and cultural landmarks (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001).

The reason for this method is to create a clear model for the interconnectedness of self and place. As Lerma (2012) writes, “land gives life to indigenous peoples in a living relationship” (p. 76). To honor that relationship, the nature of place is located as the center of my methods of inquiry. By grounding the method within story and place, I am able to reinforce the importance of place in relation to knowledge formation. Social cartography allows a perspective in which the stories of Indigenous people take on meaning beyond a standard historical narrative and move toward a broad understanding of meaning making and survivance (Vizenor & Lee, 1999). Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg (2000) further this concept when they speak of Indigenous ways of being and knowing as

“a body of knowledge associated with the long-term occupancy of a certain place. This knowledge refers to traditional norms and social values, as well as to mental constructs that guide, organise, and regulate the people’s way of living and making sense of their world” (p. 6). In this way, we acknowledge that memories and learning are connected to place, therefore social cartography goes beyond a standard ethnographic approach by using cartography as the vehicle for articulating stories of self and life history. Further, “landscapes are shaped by human action and in turn landscapes shape human action” (Smith, 1999, p.189); our social identities are formed as we move through landscapes and our sense of identity is developed from our connection with the land and the place we occupy (Kuntz, 2010; O’Toole, 2010; Smith, 1999).

Methods for Collecting Observables

Ethnographic Interviews

I conducted one semi-structured interview (Wolcott, 2008) with each of the member of the research team and one follow up with the remaining members (following the withdrawal of Robert). The process of this inquiry was to have the research team reflect on their learning and their understanding of indigeneity in relation to space and time. To this end, I posed questions such as: what was the first time you realized you were Indigenous? How did your life path evolve as an Indigenous person? What transformational moments of learning were tied to Indigenous ways of understanding? These questions allowed for an evolving process through which memory and reflection were woven together in an interaction of time, place and thought.

Conversations (Shra Tsee Yah)

Based on the concept of *platica* (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2010; Valadez, 2012), which focuses on creating the space in order to be fully present in conversation, Shra Tsee Yah is the Laguna Pueblo translation of this concept literally translated as “people talking.” The deeper understanding of this phrase is people engaged in discussion about topics of importance and grounded within the Pueblo Indigenous epistemology. People talking is a deep concept that requires individuals to be fully present and aware that the conversation is being witnessed by all of Creation (N. Thomas, personal conversation, 2013). When people are talking they are talking for the benefit and on behalf of the community and therefore must be mindful of their words and thoughts (H. Lewis, personal conversation, 2013).

Concrete Observations

Utilizing the five senses and writing down the observations (Creswell, 2009) served as another method in developing evidence during the inquiry. Observation is also a key component of Indigenous research methods (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008) and reinforces Indigenous ways of learning. Within the ethnocartographic framework, the research team was encouraged to note and record physical locations, features, and descriptions as part of the research process.

Artifacts

Creswell (2009) describes artifacts as objects that we make or use. The invitation was for the research team to bring with them or photograph those objects that have significance in understanding Indigenous identity. Research partners were asked to share their reflections on these artifacts and images or physical representations.

Visual media

Pink (2007) describes visual media as visual representations in the form of photography, video and hypermedia. In our digital age, it is important to not dismiss representations of Indigenous people within Western mass media constructs. Indeed, media and images are critical to Indigenous identity formation (Hirschfelder, et al., 2012) and can act as “cultural texts...representations of ethnographic knowledge and as sites of cultural production, social interaction and individual experience that themselves constitute ethnographic fieldwork locales” (Pink, 2007, p.1). In this understanding, visual media is not treated “as ‘data’, but as a collaborative medium for the generation of knowledge and critique” (Gourlay, 2010, p. 82). In accessing visual media, the research team brought a number of photos, which they identified as important in their personal development.

Poetry and poetic reflections

A different approach than observations or reflections, the use of poetry to assist in meaning making, provides a more authentic process in Indigenous reflective practice. Deeper than journaling, poetry allows for abstract concepts to gain traction in understanding the self (Furman, 2011). Research team members had the chance to reflect on the inquiry process through poetry and imagery as the primary reflective practice during the research. They were not required to write their own and were able to bring poems written by others to be a part of the research.

Ethical considerations

Some of the ethical considerations of Indigenous research have already been mentioned. Additional considerations of anonymity for the research team have also be

undertaken. Pseudonyms have been utilized in any representation within the text of the research team, as well as any identifiable information regarding the organizations or institutions of which they are a part. My research team members were a part of the final analysis and were always been invited to provide their wisdom and understandings in looking at improving “accuracy, credibility and validity” (Harper & Cole, 2012). In addition to the “member checking” (Creswell, 2009), I have engaged my dissertation chair and committee throughout the process in critical conversations regarding each stage of the inquiry.

Framework for Analysis of Observables

In analyzing the observables, trickster discourse allowed for the introduction of a disruptive force within colonial structures, which in turn creates a dynamic location for envisioning ways of empowering Indigenous peoples to think beyond the imposed identities of colonizer/colonized and move into the amorphous space of the both/and post-structural trickster figure (Vizenor, 1994).

Analysis of Observables

Because of my connection to this work, the coding is less systematic and more intuitive and emotional. I drew on Yin’s (2011) disassembling method, which focuses on the obvious themes that emerge and allows an organic coding to occur. This type of approach is congruous with the Indigenous methodology guiding this work as it does not subscribe to a rigid, regimented analysis but allows for a certain emotional resonance to inform the way in which themes and ideas emerge. It should be noted that I have grouped various themes in a way that parallels the chapter on Indigenous Understandings. My intent is to maintain a certain cyclical structure in this document that is aligned with

the conceptual framework. I have, however, been deliberate in grouping associative concepts and themes under one heading and have endeavored to unpack major themes, parallel themes, and sub themes within these groupings.

Presentation of Observables

To present my observations and conversations, I chose to use a Readers Theater approach, which I will explain further in the next section.

V. CONVERSATIONS (SHRA-TSE-YA)

Narrator: We've had a change of ethnicity. Our last guest said he wasn't an American Indian. You say you are?

Indian Woman (She has a very matter-of-fact-persona): I'm the Indian.

Narrator: Can you elaborate on that?

Indian Woman: I'm THE Indian.

Narrator: Well, who was he then?

Indian Woman (Emphatic): He never existed. We've been here from the beginning of time. This is Turtle Island after all!

Narrator: Clarify that for me, if you will, and tell our listening audience, if you can, who are "we"?

Indian Woman: Mister, what's wrong with you? We are The People. We have always been here. That white man was some kind of Impostor. He was WHITE after all.

Narrator: How did Indians get here if, as you say, you are The Indian?

Indian Woman: Well, obviously, we've always been here.

Narrator: You don't think you came from Africa?

Indian Woman (Exasperated): Africa? Are you kidding? I guess you believe that Bering Strait Theory, too! (Gordon & Howe, 1999, p.113-114)

Native American and Indigenous people have a long and rich history of utilizing drama and performance as a way of conveying critical historical and cultural information

(Howe, 1989). Earlier in this work, I discussed the Pueblo Clowns and their interactive, holistic performance, which is how the traditions and values of Pueblo people are communicated and reinforced in a public sphere. Boas (1966), in this ethnographic work on the Kwakiutl people of the Northwest coast, chronicled the potlatch social/ceremonial performances and their use of story, mask, and special effects. And the Maori and Indigenous people of the Pacific, have used chant, song, dance, and recitation in public cultural/social/ceremonial performances for thousands of years (Hakopa, 2012). In recent years, modern Indigenous playwrights have been able to use the dramatic form to highlight inequity, injustice, racism, and cultural stereotypes to great effect (Gieigomah & Darby, 2000). As I thought about how to present the observables from this inquiry, I initially became stuck with how I could convey a sense of dialogue and energy that came from the conversations I had with my research partners. I also wanted to continue to utilize poetry and portray the photos and images that were given in a way that created an authentic connection between reader and work. In reviewing the work of Valadez (2012), I realized the potential of presenting my conversations as a dialogue. Her work was clear and direct and maintained the authenticity of the voices of her research team. However, I was interested in expanding further upon this approach and thinking back to my undergraduate days, I remembered the rich body of Native American and Indigenous theatrical forms. I find it fitting, then, to utilize a dramatic structure to present the stories and observations of my research group, as this creates an interesting circularity within my own development as an Indigenous scholar.

There is some excellent research to support presenting data and observables through drama and theatrical structure (Saldaña, 2003). As Saldaña (2003) suggests “if

all playwrights are ethnodramatists,” as they give insight into the lived experience of individuals, “then all ethnographers have the potential to become playwrights” (p. 231).

There are several reasons as to why a performative text is a suitable method for presenting the observations of this inquiry.

First, it reinforces Indigenous methods of oral culture and storytelling in conveying ways of being and knowing. A dramatic text gives life to the stories, which often lose power and energy in the transition from spoken to written form. Simultaneously, the simulation of discourse and interaction allows for the text to break free of the confines of the written word where the power and authority reside in the writer (Kovach, 2009). Within oral culture, it is the responsibility of the listener/audience to take what they need from the story/teachings and therefore the power of meaning-making does not reside in the writer/teller. Although for this inquiry, I will continue to serve as weaver between Western and Indigenous discourse by providing accompanying perspectives and complimentary theoretical frames.

The second supporting reason in selecting reader’s theater as the delivery method for this inquiry, is the way in which it allows for the development of a holistic narrative to emerge. Rather than a compartmentalized articulation of themes, categories, and groupings, which focus the attention on the creative analysis ability of the writer/researcher, drama provides “centrality and multivocality in representing the research data” (Rodriguez & Lahman, 2011, p. 603) by creating a dynamic synthesis and establishing the work as complete thoughts rather than singular bursts of intellect.

Third, the dramatic text method disrupts the traditional presentation of data in a research inquiry of this type. This is not to say my approach is unique by any means.

But it does exist in the space where only a small number have utilized this method as even within qualitative research, “the expectation of the majority of qualitative research methodologies is that the findings will be presented in some categorical way, usually in a written report” (Kovach, 2009, *Meaning Making within Indigenous Inquiry*, para. 6). In accessing a disruptive method of data presentation, I continue to find ways to support the theoretical framework of trickster discourse in finding alternative methods of inquiry, teasing the edges to bring an awareness and draw out the imaginative potential for future research. Finally, and most importantly, this method gives voice and energy to my research partners and captures the spirit of the research team and the inquiry experience. As Rodriguez and Lahman (2011) write, the hope of a dramatic text approach is to “make [the] research read as vibrantly as the participants’ life stories that form the heart of [the] analytical project” (p.603). As I have done throughout this inquiry, I continue to try and make the space for the voices of Indigenous people to be present and central to this work. My voice is present but I am accountable to the community and collective and in this, I do not seek to speak for them but rather provide a critical framework for their voices and the voices of Indigenous people - past, present, and future - to be heard, experienced, and understood. As Kovach (2009) notes “the truths of the stories are held within the life context of the storyteller. While another storyteller may share a similar experience, truth cannot be abstracted from life” (*Meaning Making within Indigenous Inquiry*, para. 6). Ultimately, research as performative texts are in rhythm with Indigenous methodology as both are “messy to create, may be unrecognizable as traditional research, and reside at the borderlands” (Rodriguez & Lahman, 2011, p.603) where art, story, spirit, culture,

creativity, and emotion exist in an intricate dance of multidimensionality, identity, and discourse.

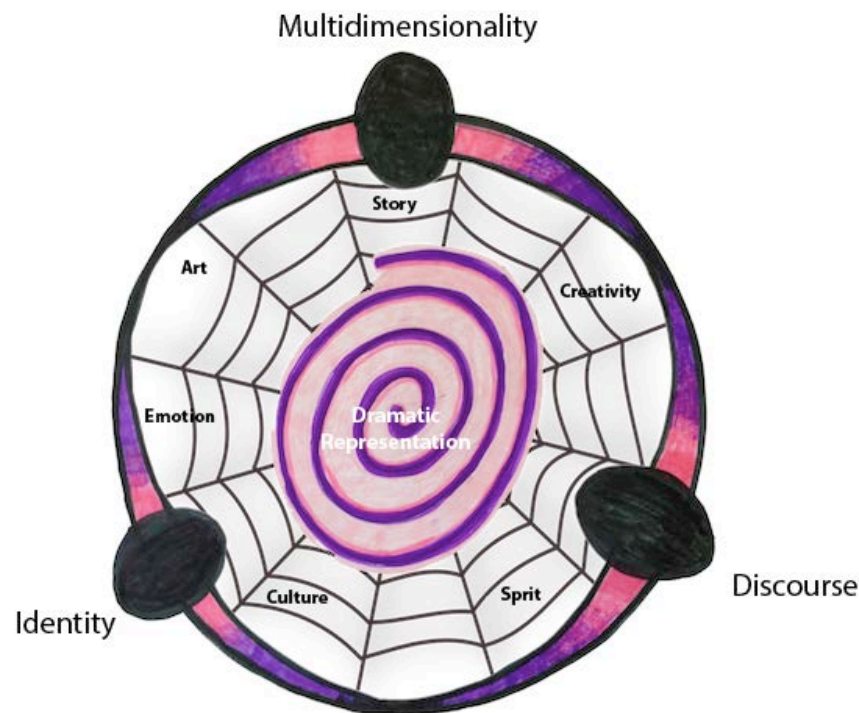


Figure 4.1. Reinterpretation of Conceptual Framework illustration to demonstrate dramatic interpretation of data.

Stage Notes, Characters, and the Alter Ego

In creating the dramatic text, I have tried to create a fully formed theatrical work. Although it is not intended to be performed, I have sought to explore the full potential of the form in order to develop the most dynamic and illustrative vision in the mind of the reader. As such, I have included stage notes, scenic descriptions, and character directions to flesh out the dialogue. In some instances, I have adjusted the reflections of my research partners to fit the flow of the dialogue and the action of the scene, though I have made every effort to remain authentic to the intent of their words. Each partner is a character in the drama and will be introduced in the following section. I am included as a character as my narrative was part of the inquiry discourse in conversations with my

partners. My father is also a character, who will most often speak through his poetic form, as those were the works he left after his passing and which provide the most insight into his lived experience. The use of poetry is both a means to create tone and texture, as well as provide a unique articulation within the narrative discourse.

The final character is the trickster, Old Man Coyote, who serves as a narrator, facilitator, and guide for the reader/audience. Similar to the Joker/Harlequino in the work of Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1979), the Coyote provides an access point for the audience to be more than a passive spectator to the drama but rather an active participant in meaning making and inquiry. Coyote's presence also alerts the audience that there are deeper narrative structures at play just as the presence of the Koshare alert the community of the need to be aware of themselves and their actions in that communal/ceremonial space. In other words, Coyote's presence compels the audience to be mindful of the action unfolding in the drama as well as their own responses.

The Coyote character also serves as my alter ego within the inquiry and allows me to fully actualize the trickster role as it would be problematic to enact a trickster approach throughout the inquiry as that would entail creating an environment of deceit and mistrust within the research team. Through Coyote, I am able to disrupt the conversation and conventions in a way that is not disrespectful of the team or the process. I am also able to disrupt the unidirectional approach in the interview process, for although the process was thoroughly embedded in dialogue and discourse, I still serve as the central catalyst of the work, which has the potential for limiting my own reflections during the inquiry. Therefore utilizing the role of the trickster as my alter ego, I am able to observe and comment on myself in context, a central conceit for developing sovereign

consciousness, and as Berta and Saiz (1999) note, "The altered attitude towards objective and subjective difference has caused and continues to cause a radical transformation of the awareness of personal identity" (p. SIV55). In this way, Coyote the clown, holds my actions and reflections accountable and fosters an awareness of self and context consistent with Indigenous practices.

Ultimately, from a trickster discourse perspective, this confluence of author, narrator, characters, and audience within the dramatic text, completes the dialogic as it enacts the full vision of the discourse: to engage all participants as active disruptors; we all become tricksters.

Scene One: Prologue, (Or Our Very Own Critical Ontology)



Figure 4.2. Illustration of Conceptual Framework.

(At rise is a simple set with a large screen backdrop. At center is a small table with five to six chairs around it. To the right is a field. There are a few trees and stones to mark the space. To the left is what seems to be a classroom with a few desks and a

chalkboard. As the lights come up the white backdrop fades into the Figure 4.2. All the characters are onstage. THOMAS, GLORIA and LEE IV are in the field; planting, weeding, watering, doing various farming. LEE III, ERIC and CINDY are seated at the table shucking corn and taking care of some of the harvest. ROBERT and VIOLET are in the classroom working and chatting about classwork. At the back of the set is a large rock outcropping that serves as a wall to the house.)

VOICE OVER: "A prologue is a function of narrative writing that signifies a prelude. It encompasses essential information for the reader to make sense of the story to follow. While not every written narrative needs a prologue, it can be a useful device. Within Indigenous writing, a prologue structures space for introductions while serving a bridging function for non-Indigenous readers" (Kovach. Twenty-ten. Prologue. Paragraph two).

(A spotlight on Coyote on top of the rock outcropping. COYOTE is our narrator and will speak directly to the audience and the characters. He will weave in and out of the action, taking different roles as necessary.)

COYOTE: And so. You must be wondering what this is all about, eh? So do I. I have no idea why I'm here. One moment, I am sitting, warm, beside the beach in South Florida and in an instant, whoosh! Here I am. But I recognize this place. It is familiar, smells familiar, feels familiar. This is my home. Well not my home exactly. But my someplace. Where I come from. These rocks, these trees, the desert air. This is my beginnings. And these people. I know them too. They are people of this land. I have met them before and will meet them again. They are ancient people. These are the ones I

saved from destruction, time and again. They are the ones who listen to my tales, good and bad...

(LEE IV looking up from the fields notices COYOTE and rushes over).

LEE IV: Hey you! Get down from there! Go on, you scoundrel!

(COYOTE puts his hand out and spreads his fingers wide. Not aggressive but in a way that represents power and LEE IV freezes before him, as if time has stopped).

COYOTE: Hmmm. Yes, I know you too. You are both/and. Neither here nor there. You are the center of the spiral. The storyteller. The poet. You are why we are here. Very good then, I think I know the score. I suppose I should let you [to the audience] know who is here and make some general introductions. First, and most important, I am Coyote! [he gives a little flourish] I am the trickster, the one who takes care of all of them. I have been around since the beginning and I will be here at the end. I have had some harrowing adventures from time to time. Often my stomach gets me in trouble. But I survive and live to tell the tale. And now for the rest.

(COYOTE waves his hand and LEE IV relaxes as a spotlight focuses on him also. He addresses the audience, but it is as if he is speaking with COYOTE. In this scene, they address each other facing out, as will all the other characters).

LEE IV: Hello there! I am Lee Francis the fourth. My full name is Elias Lee Francis, the fourth. My Laguna name is Koothch Winoshka, which means Heart Like a Mountain. I grew up all over the country but would come home to spend the summers with my grandparents in Laguna, Cubero and Albuquerque. I am currently a doctoral student at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. I went there in 2011 to finish my educational track and to have the chance to be away from Laguna for a bit. I was

born in Virginia and I spent the majority of my influential time, you know, the time that you build the most memories, there and in Southern California — Santa Barbara and Seal Beach. My grandmother is from the village of Pagate but I am not enrolled at Laguna. I don't meet the tribal requirements for blood recognition. But Laguna is still my home and I spent eight years working in the education system there before moving to Texas. You know, I always had trouble with being accepted and the whole blood quantum thing always made me question who I was...

COYOTE: Wait, wait, not yet. We have more time for that later. First, you brought all these people here, yes?

LEE IV: Did I? Where is here?

COYOTE: That is an excellent question! Perhaps it is the past, the present, or the future. Maybe the dreamtime. It seems to be a collision of memories, intention, photos, not all entirely yours.

LEE IV: Yes. (Realization spreads across his face). Yes, this is home. I think. My home? A home. Everyone's home. Yes. That's it! We built this together. All of us.

COYOTE: And how do you know everyone?

LEE IV: Friends, family, colleagues, students. They took this journey with me. To build this place, they came with me. We told stories and here we are!

COYOTE: That seems about right! Now, why don't you introduce everyone. That is always the place to start.

LEE IV: (Smiling) Yes, of course. That is the place to start.

(COYOTE and LEE IV put their hands out as COYOTE did earlier, a mirror of each other as the light comes up on THOMAS).

LEE IV: Thomas Rivera is an old friend of mine. My first mentor when I started working at East Tree High School. He was a good friend of my father's and I remember he came to visit him in the hospital when Dad was ill. Before I came back home to New Mexico, they used to meet and discuss how they would fix Laguna and change the world. Thomas was the Executive Director for the school system on the Pueblo and my Dad was the Chair of Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico. Thomas told me later that they would meet at the Village Inn on the west side and they would talk for hours while my Dad smoked and laughed. That was when you could still smoke in restaurants in Albuquerque. After his passing, Thomas found ways to keep me at the Pueblo. Teaching, working with youth. We've been working together for more than ten years now. And now we meet every month or so, no smoking, but still trying to change the world for the better. Is that you Thomas?

(LEE IV moves his hand forward just a bit and THOMAS begins to speak).

THOMAS: Yes, I'm Thomas Rivera and I'm the Executive Director of the Pueblo Community Foundation, a new organization. Professional background was in education for 35 plus years, I had served as a teacher, middle management. Been principal and Superintendent. I've worked in public school system, BIA system, tribal school system and then created, or founded the tribal department of education at the Pueblo. So I did that. Over thirty-five plus years. And then the last seven years, I've worked in the nonprofit philanthropic world as a program officer and now I'm starting up the Pueblo Community Foundation. Working to develop it from the ground up. Let's see, I live in Albuquerque. I'm Pueblo, being a quarter Laguna, half Jemez, a quarter San Felipe. I guess that's pretty much it. I, yeah, I'll just leave it at that.

(THOMAS nods his head).

LEE IV: Thank you.

(LEE IV and COYOTE move their hands slightly to the right and the light shifts from THOMAS to GLORIA).

LEE IV: I met Gloria Silva when I was doing work with youth in an after school leadership program. She worked for several organizations that were all intertwined and connected with positive youth development. After I left the schools at the Pueblo, we fell out of touch for a few years until Thomas brought a group together to help get the Pueblo Community Foundation up and running. Gloria and I had the chance to reconnect. It was good. Then she traveled with me to Hawaii as part of a community learning exchange. She helped create the Pueblo Theory of Change. The illustration, you know. She works at the Pueblo Elder Center at home, now. I went to visit her recently and while I was there, the daughter of the woman that used to keep house for my grandparents was working there. My Dad was incredibly fond of her mom. Both have passed on now. I told Gloria the story of the housekeeper. Gloria told me many stories of her life.

(LEE IV makes the same pushing hand movement as before).

GLORIA: Okay. My name is Gloria Silva. I am from the Pueblo of Laguna. I was born in Gallup New Mexico. My mother's family is from both from Gallup, New Mexico, as well as Seattle Washington. My grandfather went to Gallup to work and my mother met my father there. My grandfather worked for the railroad, so they were one of those colonies that were situated all the way to California. They were in the Gallup colony of Laguna. You know the colonies, right? That's where a number of the Pueblo people would live who worked on the railroad. They lived in groups in boxcars. The

colonies stretched from Texas to California, back in the day. Now there are only a few left. And so my father grew up in a boxcar. And we used to come home to Laguna for sheepcamp. And we would come until I was the age, till I was in second grade. We would come and spend all of our summers here at the Pueblo. Second grade we moved back home to the Pueblo and I attended the Catholic school nearby. So I was primarily raised on the Pueblo. Graduated from East Tree High School in 1974 and went on to UNM and that was on a tribal scholarship. I was very fortunate at the time that tribal scholarships were at the level they were cause most of my college was paid for. For three and a half years anyway, it seemed like I got a full ride. And so I ended up in Albuquerque for most of my adult years and although I would come back to the Pueblo for feast and for different things cause we always had family living here. I haven't lived back in the Pueblo since I graduated from high school. I work in the community but I commute. And even though I worked for Pueblo Industries for a short period of time as a technical writer, I commuted then as well. And married at Cochiti Pueblo. I have one daughter. And my mother is Hispanic. My father's from the Pueblo itself so I'm half.

LEE IV: Thank you.

(LEE IV and COYOTE change hands again as the light shifts from GLORIA to ERIC and CINDY).

LEE IV: Eric and Cindy are former students from when I began teaching in Albuquerque for a short time. We were all at the progressive Native American school that focused on Indigenous identity and supporting Native students in their learning through a Native centered curriculum. It was a charter school, so the staff and students had a lot of freedom to learn and explore. I was in charge of the college prep and

internship class. I only worked there a year, but I have stayed connected to many of the students. My time there was very influential. Eric and Cindy were not together when I left the school but started dating their senior year. Now they live together in Albuquerque. Making a home and family.

(LEE IV pushes his hand).

ERIC: So my name is Eric Garcia. I am 20 years old and I come from northern New Mexico. I currently attend the University of New Mexico. My major is Native American Studies. My minor is undecided at the moment. That's it. (ERIC smiles).

CINDY: My name is Cindy Vigil. I'm Pueblo. I'm 20 years old. I'm going to school, working. And...that's about it. (CINDY smiles).

LEE IV: Thank you.

(LEE IV and COYOTE again change hands as the light shifts to VIOLET).

LEE IV: Violet is also a former student. She was in my after school leadership program and participated in a number of summer programs after she graduated. She excelled in school and received a prestigious scholarship for Native American students. She was always very inquisitive and radical in some instances. She would speak her mind and was a forceful personality, in a good way as only students and youth are able to be. She has a daughter who is about the same age as my son.

(LEE IV pushes the air).

VIOLET: Okay. My name is Violet Pratt. I'm 22 years old. I have a three-year-old daughter. Let's see, I lived at the Pueblo all my life until about four years ago when I moved to Albuquerque to go to college. Ever since then it's been kind of a...me always saying like, "Oh, I need to go home. I can't wait to go home. I can't wait to go home." I

live here, but I don't know if I really like living in Albuquerque. I miss the Pueblo. I am almost done with college and I coach track at a local high school.

LEE IV: Thank you.

(LEE IV and COYOTE change hands again and the light shifts to ROBERT).

LEE IV: Robert and I met years ago when he was working at a college in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Our work aligned and we had good conversations about life-long learning and education for Indigenous people. A few years later, he joined us in Central Texas for a Community Learning Exchange gathering and I had the chance to learn more about his life. We have continued our collaborations and friendship and I have done some teaching at the schools he is in charge of.

(LEE IV pushes again).

ROBERT: My name's Robert Haynes. I'm enrolled member of my Pueblo. Basically there all my life, with the exception of going out for educational purposes and military purposes. I've been pretty much in the village and active, educationally. I started two small schools, tribal schools, and then helped the tribe create a public school district and served as superintendent before, for eleven years and then after the creation. Served with the tribal council under a past Governor's administration, as a special assistant to the tribal council and the tribal administrator and director of planning and development. I am the current superintendent of the pueblo education system.

LEE IV: Thank you.

(LEE IV and COYOTE change hands again for the final time as the light rises on LEE III).

COYOTE: And the last?

LEE IV: The last.

(LEE IV pushes again).

LEE III: Hello my son. So, I am Lee Francis III, Elias Lee Francis III. My Pueblo Indian name is Hapanyi Wastch'. Little Oak. My parents were E. Lee and Ethel Gottlieb Francis. I was born in Albuquerque and grew up in Cubero, New Mexico, a land grant town about 10 miles from Laguna Pueblo. I went to school at New Mexico State until I flunked out. Then ran away to San Francisco with my eldest sister. I was going to be a priest then I met Mary, my wife. We were together for thirty years before I passed away from cancer in 2003. I taught all over the country from California to DC. I started a mentoring and writing organization for Native American writers and storytellers, which continues on today. I was a life-long smoker and many people remember their time with me smoking and talking. In fact, on the day I crossed over, they enacted the smoking ban in Albuquerque. No better time to leave. They tell me on the day I crossed over, it rained in Paguate, my home village. Blessings.

(LEE IV and COYOTE drop their arms, though a dim light remains on LEE III).

COYOTE: Big magic to bring him. Must be important.

LEE IV: Yes.

LEE III: Why is it so important, my son?

LEE IV: Because of you. I mean, these stories go away. And the wisdom of the people needs to be maintained, cultivated, curated, explored, if we are to ensure our survival. Our systems are corrupted by colonization. Big words, I know, but our institutions are not our own. Our children are failing out because these systems are rigged against them. They are losing their language, their culture, their philosophy. They

lose their stories and they forget the ways of being and knowing. They kill themselves with guns or alcohol. Our circle is broken. And we have to find a way to mend it. If we can connect ourselves, our stories, our knowledge to our systems and institutions; if we can weave these teachings throughout our community; if we can push and spread to our boundaries as a nation-state, if we can inspire and unleash the imagination, then we become sovereign. Truly sovereign. The full actualization of the self and community in context. Navigating the political implications with a spirit of survivance and ensuring that our people are healthy and whole. That's the point. That's why we are here. To share our knowledge with one another and those who are willing to listen. That's what this is all about.

LEE III: Very good, my son.

COYOTE: (To LEE IV) Dang, you like to talk a lot. But then again so do I. Except when I don't.

LEE IV: When is that?

COYOTE: When there is work to be done.

(COYOTE raises both hands and the lights change, raising on the field as everyone moves over there grabbing tools and supplies to work the field).

Scene Two: Identity (or The Moments and Stories Which Shape Us)



Figure 4.3. The house where Gloria © spent time learning with her grandparents.

(As the scene shifts, everyone moves to the garden and begins working. ERIC begins to sing something to help with the work. A chant with words in Keres Pueblo. Everyone is digging (except COYOTE who is “supervising”), planting, weeding, and doing other things to maintain the garden. The background images shifts to Figure 4.3. The house and trees from GLORIA’s childhood. As ERIC continues to sing, LEE III begins to speak).

LEE III: For me it was always about the journey. Going away and coming back. That’s what shaped me.

Where the morning sun first touches

The land of the People

I start on a journey

To the place of beginning

On the good red interstate

Made sacred by the People

I travel across ancient land

Carry earth and abalone

Sage and tobacco

Return to the homeplace

On Grandmother Spider's web

Return to the homeplace

To the People of the White Lake

Return to the homeplace

With gifts and stories

Return to the homeplace

(As LEE III ends his poem, he sees COYOTE in the distance and gives a little wave. COYOTE stands apart from everyone and speaks to the audience and the characters).

COYOTE: Here is where we find ourselves. Through hard work and sunlight. Digging in the dirt and remembering the ways. This is the center of the spiral, moving out and away. We came from the earth, from the below at Shi'pop. We come into the

light and we become ourselves. We learn to work together. We dream together. Here is where we start.

(COYOTE takes a few seeds from a medicine pouch at his side. He digs a small hole for a few then covers them up gently. He breathes onto the newly planted seeds, then rises again).

COYOTE: Memory works like this. Like planting and gardening. It pulls from beneath the surface that which is meant to see the light. Suppose you ask a question, there are millions of possible answers someone will give you. Their response will vary with time of day, the weather, their mood, what they had for breakfast. But the stories, the moments that were impressionable, the ones that made a difference are the ones that give us definition. Define our true selves. Those memories are the ones that grow tall

(COYOTE wanders in between everyone, though they do not see him. He asks the following questions as if he is planting something. Each person has a slight, brief reaction to the questions as he passes by, but they are not distracted from the work at hand).

How did you become who you are? How were you shaped by your experiences? Your choices? Your upbringing? What are those small moments where you began to understand about yourself? And your Indigenous self?

(As each person begins to talk and share their experiences, the action continues to flow, everyone continues to plant, or irrigate, or whatever their job is in the field. They are all attentive to the conversation but they do not stop working. There is a noise in the distance that sounds like thunder but nothing to indicate a storm, yet. When he hears the sound, LEE IV stretches his back and begins to speak).

LEE IV: An actor. That's what I wanted to be growing up. I started doing theater when I was five. I loved to perform. Still do. Though things shifted in high school when I began seriously writing poetry. My father sat me down one afternoon and told me I was going to write a poem a day for the next week. And I did. And then I kept going. And twenty years later, I am still writing poetry. And performing too! Performing is still my first love. That was what I went to college for. I applied to several schools on the East coast but ended up at the University of Missouri, where my parents had relocated after my high school. But I really wanted to go to Amherst College. That was my dream school.

VIOLET: I wanted to go to Dartmouth really bad, or Princeton. Those were places I was really pushing hard for. I applied, and UNM was kind of like my safety school or whatever. I didn't get into Dartmouth, so I was so devastated.

LEE IV: I know, right? It's always that thin envelope that arrives and you just know.

VIOLET: Right. And I thought like, "Oh, what's wrong with me?" Then I got into UNM of course. Then later on in the summer as I started thinking about it, I was actually really glad that I didn't get into back east because there's only one place in the whole wide world where Laguna is. There's no place else you can get what you get at Laguna. It's only there. I'm happy that I'm here and I'm there. That's something that I can't—like I said, you can't find anywhere else, so I need to be there.

CINDY: Yeah, me too. Like the way I grew up in Laguna, all quiet and just...I, how would I explain it, I think I'd rather have grown up on the reservation than the city. When I was smaller I was like, I want to live in town or I want to do this and that but

from living on the reservation and going back and forth to ABQ to go to school, I felt like very fortunate, like, I got the best of both worlds but it was just something really cool to experience. How would I explain that? I got, like, hmm...like the comfort of home, I got my tradition but then when I went to school I got to live the life of, I guess, a city girl. And it was really awesome to compare both and ups and downs of both.

VIOLET: But like, sometimes it's hard though, right? I mean, being back and forth and the way you have to live in both worlds? I mean, is it just me?

CINDY: No, I think, I learned...hmm...I got to know more friends in ABQ but when I went back home. It was like, not that I was outcast but...just a downside of going to school in ABQ is people just, labeled you differently. But, inside I knew I was Native, even though they labeled me not, it was okay I guess. I just got used to it.

LEE IV: It was kind of the same for me when I came back home to the Pueblo to teach. I remember being really upset because my students didn't think I was Laguna. So I had to bring in pictures of my grandma and great-grandma to, sort of, prove my Pueblo-ness. Especially because of how I look.

VIOLET: I think it plays out for me the same way. I mean people—I can't—if I even ever slip up and say words the right way, like if I speak English too well, then I'm just white girl. Oh, I'm tall and I'm kind of slender-ish, so I'm white. That's my white. I'm not short and round like a Pueblo person, so I must not be a Pueblo person. I think for the most part, I get the same kind of treatment as anybody else who isn't 100 percent Laguna. That's just that like, "Oh, you're a white girl, you're this, you're that."

CINDY: Yeah, I don't know why, but my sisters and my brothers too, they call me White Girl. I don't know why. Like I don't know if it's because of the way I dress? Like Indians are supposed to dress a particular way or just cause I'm light. I thought it was really interesting cause they call me that but then they don't believe in the Indian traditions. So I don't know why they're calling me. It just, it baffles me.

VIOLET: Even my own—sometimes my own family says that to me, like that, "Oh, you're just a city girl." If I dress up or if I put on makeup, or if I do this or if I do that, that means I'm less rez and more white, or whatever. It just kind of—I don't know, it throws me off, but I just got to shrug it off, I guess. Yeah, I mean I never identified with being white ever. I mean I think I'm reasonably brown.

GLORIA: Growing up I had the opposite. As a matter of fact, I remember from St. Francis all the way through the Pueblo, especially in Gallup cause they knew I was part Native, when I couldn't remember my prayers, the nuns used to call me stupid little Indian. I remember them saying that to me. Now, they didn't say that at San Fidel, but you could still feel the fact they knew we were different. Me and my sister, that we were different. They couldn't figure out who we were or who we came from and so same thing. Seemed like the boys for whatever reason, used to like to pick on me. So I'd spend my recess time in the bathroom in the girls room, cause the nuns wouldn't protect me. They'd call me a baby or whatever, so I'd sit in the girls' bathroom all during recess.

VIOLET: Oh, that's awful.

GLORIA: And the other thing is cause I was smaller than the other kids, I used to get bullied. Not by all kids, but especially the boys. And I don't know why the boys.

We lived in what they call Sky City in Gallup at the time and so I would have to walk through the alleyways. Then they had alleyways with those big metal trash cans. I remember always being so afraid of the alleyways cause I would have to run home. We lived in a trailer behind my aunt. I'd have to run home so that the boys didn't pull my hair or throw me down or take my books or whatever I had.

ERIC: You know I never felt left out or different until I started powwow singing, since it's not part of the Pueblo tradition or way of life. I grew up on the reservation my whole life until my Junior year in high school. I learned my language, mostly, and helped in the community. So I've always felt kind of different when I would sing powwow stuff. I would never actually sing powwow or do anything powwow in high school or anything back at the Pueblo. But when I came to the high school in Albuquerque, I could just be myself. So it was powwow club and I would sing in morning circles and at different events and things.

THOMAS: How did you start powwow singing?

ERIC: Well, the story goes that in 1989, my cousins were in Montana and they met this person who, I guess, gave them the tradition. They brought it back home. Then my dad and my uncles, they all came together and started singing for like fun and stuff since they learned how to do it. Then eventually it turned into this whole big thing. Whole big powwow group. At first the tribe didn't take it very well. They didn't accept it. But they eventually accepted it. And eventually we took home a major award from that. So, my dad just got me singing since I was small and ever since then I've been singing. Not just powwow but pueblo, too. My grandpa always used to sing to me, my dad, too. I compose songs and I guess I'm known as a singer in my Pueblo both powwow

and Pueblo styles of singing. In Jemez, when my dad introduced me to singing, I remember my first powwow, memorial weekend in the Pueblo, they have a huge powwow at the red rocks. That was my first powwow singing with the Blue Sky group. I felt pretty proud.

(ERIC sings a bit of a powwow style song different from the opening song he sang. At this point everyone stops to listen. He sings for about thirty seconds then ends the song. The sound carries away as everyone quietly gives him thanks).

THOMAS: Thank you. That was great. See, we never did any of that when I was growing up. My father was in World War II and when he came home, he and my mother were from different tribes so they split the difference and lived in Albuquerque. They really raised me and my brother with those core values back at that time and coming out of the war, you know: you get a home and you raise a family. Then the whole idea of the male working and the female staying at home to raise the kids, it was that kind of lifestyle that many Americans were enjoying after the war. We did too. So that was how I was raised. We didn't have any of the cultural stuff, so I just went to school and then to college. Then after college, I decided to be a coach and in education. So one of the things I found in coaching was that, you know, I happened to coach at Jemez which was my other tribe and I got the chance to live with my grandmother, live in the village and, you know, I was like somebody from the community that was a teacher, teaching there. One of the things I could really see immediately was the disparities in education with Native people and just not getting their needs met. So all of that combined together actually changed what I wanted to do originally which was be a coach, but now I wanted to do something about that and I ended up starting off being a guidance counselor and got

halfway through it and decided that I wanted to go into administration cause I thought I could make a difference in that aspect. So that was the beginning of that I guess where I've been, where I guess in my career has been trying to do the best and I get with whatever committee I was working with Native people, always about children and families.

VIOLET: Yeah, that's what I figured out my first year at school. Like, I started as a business major, and I think I started out as that just cause maybe that's kind of what a lot of people had wanted—had thought I should do; that I had a good head for business, so I should be in it. Then when I get there—I think the turning point for me, when I realized it wasn't for me, was I had computing for business students, so it's just like really teach you how to use Excel, like put graphs and other graphs, inside of pie charts, inside of graphs. So I was there, and this girl had asked me for help with the homework. I was like, "Yeah, sure, here." She hadn't done it. When she said help, she meant answers. I was like, "Okay." I helped her, gave her my work or whatever. Then the next time I was late with my work, I was like, "Hey, can you help me?" She was just like, "No, do it yourself." I was like—just sat there. I thought, "Really? Really, after all the times I've given you my work, you won't help me? I really just need you to help me." She was just like—she was all, "No," she's like, "do it yourself. I stayed up all night doing this." I was just like, "Okay." Then that's when I was—I looked around and I saw more and more people like really—more and more people like kind of looking out for themselves. Then I realized like wow, that's not what I want to do with my life. I'm definitely not a looking out for number one kind of person.

ROBERT: I mostly grew up at home, just spent a lotta time with uncles and other relatives, doing things that kids usually do. We had a lot more farming at that time, so we spent a lotta time in the fields. We grew beans, corn, and then we had gardens. My mom had squash. Our other relatives had other kinds of gardens. We did a lotta bird hunting for religious purposes, and spent a lotta time hunting and hiking with uncles and siblings and cousins, just getting to know the environment.

It was a good experience. My father was one of the longest serving—well, he was the longest-serving governor of our tribe. He spent over 20 years in office, either appointed or elected. That was a big transitional period. My mother, her background is—her family have always been religious leaders. It was a good education, in terms of what was going on within the societies, particularly from my uncles, since they were religious leaders. They always spent a lotta time with us.

The years off the res were basically going to school. I spent time in the army and 18 months over in Vietnam at one full stretch. For some reason—loyalty or commitment or something—I didn't see the need to come back, at that moment, when my tour was up, so I extended to another term and finished up there. Got out of the army. I didn't wanna come back and serve in stateside, so I just served it over there.

I was involved in two plane crashes—two air crashes. I served in Vietnam around the end of combat operations. So, one was in a chopper, a UH. We got knocked down at about 70 feet up. Full of troops, Vietnamese airborne troops that we were hauling out. Then, the other one was in a bird dog—it was just a two-man reconnaissance plane. Knocked down on the Cambodian border with a airburst. We

were lucky to be able—we were only about 1,000 feet up, which isn't very high. It took out the engine. Shrapnel went through the engine. Then, all of a sudden—then, the windscreen, the canopy got busted, so we were covered with oil.

We were able to bank over toward Vietnam—cause we were on a border patrol, dawn patrol in the morning. We were able to glide about another mile-and-a-half, call mayday, call for pickup. The thing is, we had to hump it out about another click, maybe. We took our radios and our scramblers and we put a couple thermite grenades in there, cause it was all loaded with rockets and everything and grenades. That thing torched.

Then, we took off. Those guys are coming. They couldn't quite reach us with their AKs, but you could hear their shooting. Finally, we got picked up. It was like running through quicksand, but we made it. That was a week before I came home. There's this long scar across here, that cut, piece of metal. Arm was bandaged. Parents were freaking out. I said, "No, it's nothing. It's just a scratch."

I think a lotta those experiences, in terms of organization and management of men, leadership, really have—I've been able to use in my work, motivate people, get people moving in the right direction.

(ERIC begins to sing quietly in the background, just enough for the song to be heard but not be distracting. Another sound of far off thunder in the distance. COYOTE takes a deep breath in).

COYOTE: You can smell it before the rain comes. It carries in the air, moves in the blood. Education, travel, culture, ethnicity, hard times, good times. We've only

scratched the surface here. Perhaps we should dig deeper. Find that deep rich soil to cultivate the self in the ways that do not always conform. Like our garden here.

(The lights shift and the scene moves to mid-day, slightly overcast but brighter.

Everyone moves around to continue working).

Scene Three: Third Space (or Troubling the Spaces)



Figure 4.4. Wood chopping beside house near where Eric © lived.

(The scene continues from before with everyone working in the field, though a few of them shift to begin chopping wood. Some take a moment to break for water. The backdrop also shifts to Illustration 4.4, chopping wood beside the house. COYOTE pulls out a flute and plays a small tune while ROBERT starts speaking. When ROBERT is done the flute goes out of tune and becomes a bit of noise, then a birdcall, then a monotone pitch. Then COYOTE is finished).

ROBERT: We came from the Grand Canyon as a place of emergence. Coming down to this place which is across the border in Arizona. It's called Hardscrabble Wash.

It's a little cut in the earth. As you follow it, it gets deeper and deeper. Pretty soon, we're in this canyon with 20-foot walls. On the walls are inscribed all of the clan symbols. That's the place where the clans were unified, where the kachina societies were and the medicine societies were established.

That's also the site of the breakup of the tribe. Two factions, very strong. They couldn't reconcile their differences. The religious people had a basket of eggs, and they gave one to each of the leaders and said, "You select one. You select a different one. You nurture those eggs until they hatch. Wherever the bird's natural homeland is, that's where you're gonna reside."

One of our ancestors, picked the one where a raven came. This is their natural homeland. The other one was a scarlet macaw parrot. Those people had to go south. That was the beginning of the first long-distance exchange, because they had to go find 'em, wherever they came from. They probably had a pretty good idea. They went down to central Mexico to live there. It was a large contingent of people. They left markers and the people started coming back and forth. I think that was the beginning of the extensive trade.

We do have that connection to the south. That's what we tried to reestablish in the educational process. Even back then, with that school, we joined this group called White Roots of Peace from Akwesasne nation. Every summer, that group, Rarihokwats and all those guys would come from South America. They would come through Mexico, and they would stop in Zuni around May 1st, and they would hold a ceremony to bless the

village, which we got permission from our religious people to do. Then we had a lotta dialogue, exchanges about cultural knowledge. That happened for a number of years.

COYOTE: Here we blur the lines. Here we are not one way or another. Here we are all things. And none. Here we try and reclaim the union. To make things whole and healthy. We are not of two worlds but multiple aspects, dimensions, expressions of self and spirit.

LEE III: Both/and.

LEE IV: Oh, that again. I remember we spent hours discussing this idea.

Both/and, either/or. Your philosophical manifesto.

LEE III: Yes, over and over again. Indigenous thought is based on a both/and construct that is in contrast to the Western either/or. You can see this in our languages, our ways of being, knowing and doing. You can see this in the old stories that do not cast a judgment upon characters or actions, only consequences.

Here

Where past and future argue

Diverse voices utter

Strange incantations

Within the matrix of chaos.

Here

On the plane of infinity

Where snow angels wait

The data stream bubbles

Like sheep camp stew.

Here

In the center of creation

They tell story

And I watch them carefully

As they become human beings

Here

I am witness as they walk

To the beyond place

Eyes fixed on the light

Hold them in my heart.

Here

In the dreamtime

We meet and touch.

COYOTE: Yes. That's about right. In this space and place, we begin to realize ourselves and how we occupy our surroundings. We dig deeper to understand our roots and how they are not one way or another but a collection of tangles, stories, history, genealogy, and experiences in how we grow.

VIOLET: I laugh sometimes because I think of my weird blend of family history. My dad's family came from Ohio I believe. They were businessmen, engineers,

something like that. They came to the Pueblo and liked the pueblo, liked the people, but they kind of had that same—not such a great mentality of wanting to save them almost, by introducing the Western religion to them, like Jesus and everything like that. That was something that he was—that my dad's probably great-great-grandpa was focused on, was trying to help them. Anyways, he married my dad's grandma, and they were actually the first governors of the pueblo, like the very first ones. They kind of introduced a lot of the Western kind of governmental structure to the pueblo, which I guess was good. I mean there was definitely pluses and minuses to it. I come from that part of the Laguna history where they were trying to change Laguna people into that—to leave their kind of old ways behind, like their cultural old ways. I mean not anything else, but just their cultural ways behind, and kind of go more towards God and things like that. That's one half of me. Then the other half of me is my mom's family, who's really traditional. Yeah, my mom's grandpa was a kiva leader, and all of my uncles and my grandpas in our village are all like that, too. That's their life. It's weird to be this—almost like this weird clash of those two perspectives or whatever, or those two kinds of history.

LEE IV: I think it's more than two kinds because it's also about how you are perceived, too, right? And how you present yourself?

VIOLET: Yeah, I just look like a Spanish chick. I think you can see...even my interactions with people outside of the Pueblo, like other native people, like sometimes I almost see—I don't want to call it regressing, but I remember—I guess to explain it, when my mom was growing up, her and her peers did everything they could to try to not sound rez, like my mom would say, "Oh, I don't want to say that. It'll sound too native,

too Indian. It'll sound too rez, when you say—like cut words short or talk with a thick accent." Even now, I still hear them go like, "Your accent's all hard," or whatever, like why do you—you know. That was my mom's generation. They were trying to not sound Indian. Then my generation, it's almost like they're trying too hard to sound Indian. Trying to be rez and sometimes sounding uneducated. It's kinda sad.

CINDY: Yeah, I have that experience too. Like I said, being in Albuquerque meant that I was looked at all different. Like I was Indian but not really. Like I was all white cause I was going to school and wearing clothes from the mall or whatever. Even though I would be more involved in religious doings and cultural stuff than them. That was how I was viewed.

LEE IV: I would see that with students and colleagues, it's the tension of existing in a space based less on place and actions and more on laws and racial constructs, especially those that have been imposed upon us. It makes it easier to segment us, to put us in boxes. And we do it to ourselves, too. I have spent many conferences with Indigenous people where we are trying to prove our "nativeness" to one another.

VIOLET: Well how do we get out of those boxes?

ROBERT: Monks.

LEE IV: (Laughs) Sorry?

ROBERT: There was a Vietnamese monk that became a mentor, of sorts. I was 20 years old, at the time, and got to know Tran out of Pleiku City. Had a chance to go back and visit him a number of times. He knew a lot about Indians, a lot more than I did, generally. My education and awareness was so insular to my Pueblo and then, just the surrounding Pueblos. He had a broader view. He asked me some very deep questions

about who I was, as an Indigenous person, why I was there, why did I support American policy that basically was patterned after the way the Americans treated the Indigenous nations in the U.S. in the 1600s, 1700s. Because the same policies were being carried out there in a contemporary way. The protected or the Fortified Hamlet concept was the same thing as forts. Gather everybody up from the outside, from the surrounding area, putting 'em next to a fort or in a fortified area, so everything becomes fair game out there. The same thing they did to the Sioux and all the other Indians. At that moment, I decided, one night—I had a lot of thoughts about returning, what will I do when I get home, or when I get out? What do I wanna do with my life? The determination was really to go home and try to make a difference. Playing that out, going back home and then, after schooling and things like that, training, but doing it a different way.

LEE IV: When you are questioned or you have to confront opposing views, it opens the possibility of new and exciting perspectives.

THOMAS: That's really true. When I was in grad school one of the requirements was we had to take a semester and work in the area of special education and our professor told us we're all going to be assigned a school and this is one that jumped out at me, just like, he said some of you are going to be in level a, b, c, d, but we only have one placement for level D severe, profound handicap. So one of you will go on in there. As soon as he said that I was like, I can't go in there. There's no way I can go there. I don't want to go there. So, two days later when we were making the assignments and he was calling out the names and I was just sitting there thinking they're gonna call my name for that and if they do, I'm gonna refuse it. I can't go, there's just no way. So sure enough, he calls my name and I'm in level D. And everything I had prepared myself to say to him,

cause I was gonna tell him I can't do it, I, I...for some reason it, I don't think I had the courage to go up there and say anything to him. So we had to go make a visit to the school, first visit. So I went to the school and was really sweating it out, just nervous. I just, it almost felt like I was gonna see these monsters and if they touched me I was going to die. So I knocked on the door and the teacher and her assistant, you know, came to the door and invited me in and then they were talking to these groups of people sitting there and there was all these elementary aged children and there, I think there was eight of them in the room and one of them was on this scooter board and she was just paddling all over the floor and we were trying to talk and she'd come by us. So I guess the teacher sensed I was nervous and the teacher aide came over there and so one of them kept me busy or talking to me and then, and so, I can't remember who it was, the teacher I guess picked up the little girl on the scooter board, her name was Denise and she says Denise, give Thomas a big kiss! And I wasn't expecting that and I was kind of turning to my right and so I, as I turned to the left I just saw this face. Actually, wasn't even a face it was just lips that was just, that just had saliva all over it and eyes that were on the side of the head and hair was just hanging and all I saw was this face coming at me and laid this big kiss right on my mouth and my nose. And I guess they saw the horror on my face that I was gonna die. I was like I'm gonna die now, you know. And I didn't know what to do.

(THOMAS laughs a bit).

And you know what? That was probably the best thing they could have done because I didn't die and I didn't know what to make of the whole thing, but I had to go back the next day and that's how I started. And you know that semester I spent with them

was probably the best education for me because by that time I left, you know, they all, all those kids had, you know, had a personality. They were trapped in those bodies but they were so smart and it changed my whole experience.

GLORIA: That makes me think of my daughter and when she was growing up. I She never wanted anything to do with the culture. You know, although she's a tribal member, her father is Mexican and so she grew up...it's funny how people of color always situate themselves in a hierarchy of who's better than who. His family who's from Mexico, were prejudiced against Native people and so I remember them always calling her Indita. They never called her her name. They called all the other grandchildren by their name. But she was always called Indita, Little Indian. And as a result she grew up with real mixed feelings about who she was. It wasn't until she turned 26, to be honest, that she woke up. And it was like that consciousness I was talking. She woke up and she said, mama I want to take part. I want to learn, I want to know more. And so again it was my husband's family who said, okay we will take you in. We will teach you. It's when they first took her in to the Kivas, when she learned how, she learned the songs and the dances. They took the time cause they knew she was, no matter if she was just a quarter, they knew she was Native.

THOMAS: That was like my brother, when we was in his 30's I guess, he decided he was gonna take upon himself to go back and learn the ways. We were both registered at the Pueblo, but he left that tribe and went and joined my mother's tribe, instead. So he's been doing that now for like over 20 years and he's very committed to the way of life and the culture and although he doesn't speak the language, he participates and everything. He's always doing something culturally, and I guess in that way it pretty

much affected the way we were growing up. So I really didn't have a lot of that understanding about the culture and even the core values other than what our parents taught us.

GLORIA: And that's the growing up piece of it, the self identity of, you know what I'm doing this based on the best intentions and with the greatest amount of integrity and whether accepted or not, I know what I'm doing it and I know why I'm doing it and people can have their judgments and place their judgments where they want and eventually people come to understand what kind of person you are. It took me a long time to figure that out. Cause for many years, I wasn't accepted at home, at the Pueblo. It was my husband's family who accepted me. They took me in. My husband's mother was the one that I learned from and took care of me, taught me and allowed me to begin to explore myself and my culture.

ERIC: Yeah, I guess, I don't know, I guess living in both worlds makes you appreciate more where you come from. I mean, I lived on the reservation until I went to high school in Albuquerque which was in my junior year of high school. So, I lived on the reservation for that long and it was a pretty rough transition but I think it would have been worse if I'd went to like a big old public high school, where there weren't as much natives and stuff. So it makes you remember your home and how important it is when you are not there.

LEE IV: And taking the time to think about the differences creates a new world.

COYOTE: Right!

(There is another rumble of thunder, closer now).

COYOTE: I think I am getting hungry. My stomach is speaking to me.

LEE IV: I think that's a storm on the way.

COYOTE: Ah, the Thunder Beings are announcing themselves. They speak to us, as we speak to each other, to remind us of who we are.

(The scene shifts again as the lights begin to dim with the oncoming rain.

Another bit of thunder and everyone begins to clean up their work as they prepare for the rain).

Scene Four: Language (or How We Learn to Articulate Ourselves)



Figure 4.5. Photo of Cindy's © former house at the Pueblo.

(Everyone is continuing to clean as from before. COYOTE is sitting and looking at the sky. The backdrop has shifted to Figure 4.5).

LEE III: Poem with languages

LEE IV: Gu'wah'tse. Gu'wah'tse. I remember when you told me what that meant. It's like hello but not. It's more. It means hello and how are you and how have you been and hello to all of creation and all that.

LEE III: Yes.

LEE IV: It was a lot to take in. Our words are complex, they have so much meaning. And they get tangled in who we are. The language is like a standard for acceptance. A benchmark of "nativeness." As if you can't be truly Indigenous without it.

LEE III: Sometimes the dynamic is even more complex within Indigenous people themselves.

CINDY: Like my grandparents would speak it but I don't and so, like, sometimes you get some crap for that.

VIOLET: Right? They would teach us in elementary and when I would go home and talk about it, sometimes I would hear my family be like, "Well, that's not how you say that word, or that's not right," or especially when you see the spelling of words, they would kind of be like, "Well, that's not how you spell it or that doesn't even make sense." Sometimes, I don't know; I guess everybody's interpretation of how things sound or how they should be written are different. I think that happens just because they're so split up. I mean every village at the Pueblo has their own way, and their way is *the* way, and if it's not their way, then you're wrong. We all are like that. "Well, that's not how you say that word. Well, of course he would say that word that way. He's from there. Of course they think it's that because they're there." I mean and even though we're all one Pueblo, we're so different.

LEE IV: Then you add in the historical trauma and issues with assimilation.

VIOLET: Exactly! It's just like my mom's generation was almost trying to be like, "No, we're more than just a bunch of natives out here, like we can be smart or we can be this. We can talk like you." I feel like that's how they were trying to prove that they were more than that, and my generation's trying to prove that they're not more than that, like they're really that. I don't know, it's just weird how the identity structure changed. Most of my mom's cousins and stuff, they all can speak the language, but they almost don't. I hear my aunties answer back to my grandmas in English. My grandmas will talk to them, and they'll be like, "Yeah, okay." They'll say something like, "No, I didn't go," or whatever. I always ask my mom, "Why don't you answer back?" She's like, "I don't know. I don't know, I just don't." I'm like, "But you know how to." She's like, "Yeah, I do." She said, "I just don't."

THOMAS: I think the influence of the federal policies was very strong so while my parents are very fluent in their language, and every time we went to the Pueblo, they spoke the language, they didn't teach us. And that pretty much influenced the way we were raised and so we didn't grow up learning the language and we didn't participate in any of the cultural activities. I think they basically accepted the idea that, you know, we want our kids to be successful so they need to speak English and they need to do well in the school and they keep going on to school. And that was something that, I think for a long time I struggled with that, it was like, gosh, I wish we had had that then.

GLORIA: When you talk about federal policies and colonization, you know the colonial, the colonizing of people, I grew up hearing the language, my grandparents only spoke to each other in the language and they spoke not fully in the language to their children though. And part of it is, from what I understand, is they didn't want their

children to be ostracized from the mainstream world. And so that's why. But their thinking was backward to me. It was backward thinking. And so as a result, you know, my father though he would respond to them in the language, he didn't speak it always directly to us either. So it was always, I always felt it was at a distance from me. And when I got to be older and I realized how important it was to understand it and to say it correctly, I was angry with my mother. That's who I was angry with. And I blamed her for years for, to be honest and this is horrible, for not being Pueblo. It's such an odd thing to feel that way because you don't realize until you've matured and for me, I didn't mature until I was in my mid 40's.

LEE IV: It's hard to learn later in life, though. And I understand how without the language, you feel separated. Not in the way I said earlier, like as a benchmark for proving who you are but deeper. Like, you realize something is missing. Like a part of your history is closed off. Can't be accessed because you don't have the keys. It keeps you from being connected to your history.

ERIC: I feel very blessed that I am fluent in my language. Well, almost fluent. It's important to me but I see that it's also slipping away. Not as many are fluent. So that's hard sometimes. But I also know a little bit of Lakota, from school and powwow singing, so that gives me insight into another, other Native people. How they stay, how we are connected.

ROBERT: That was how it was when I came home. Getting out of the service, we were much harder. We used a lot of four letter words. I was talking like that a lot. Then, finally my mom sat me down one time and she said, in Pueblo, "Why are you talking like this? Why do you always—why do you always have to use those four-letter

words?" There's no reason to talk like that. It's like, "Oh, I didn't know I was doing that." Hearing it in Pueblo was very striking and I think it helped get me focused and centered.

(At this point, everyone is done clearing their tools just as the rain begins. Everyone heads into the house at center stage and settles into the kitchen area. LEE IV, LEE III and COYOTE stay outside in the rain.)

LEE III: Blessings.

COYOTE: An offering.

LEE IV: Yes, yes.

The bones of history
rise from sandstone
rise to greet me
the bones of my family rise
to greet me

It is 1982
I used to climb the mesa
in grandma's backyard
vertical shadings of torn stone
rising from the roses
tended by her paper thin hands
looking west - Blue Mountain
looking east - Kawaika, Gweeschi

the ancient home where her bones
were planted
see the family name was Atsye
a remnant of Spanish assimilation
in the 1800's the Scots
moved across the country
strange blood mixed with her old ways
and round down three generations down
at stand at the edge of the table
where the earth shifts a million years apart
leaving five feet of spider-web cracked
empty space for me to jump across
but at five years old I could not use my legs
I could only stare at the great divide
that separated me
from my home
and the bones of my family rise to greet me

Now the old time non-hispanic families
in Laguna
were Marmon, Pratt and Gunn
Great-grandma fell for the tartan
and the name changed:

Gunn to Haynes to Gottlieb to Francis
to now

Staring across the stone void at 29
grandma's roses are gone
the old house turned over
and buried in scorched sandstone
at the base of her breast
the petals fall away
and less and less
remember her mother
her name
her trip to Carlisle Indian School
her piano playing
her chile stew
her house her roses her mesa
and the cracks in the stones
reminds me
of how little I know
and how little remains

and the bones of history rise to greet me

It is 2003
I am coming home
I am Little Oak clan
I am the prodigal son
journeying straight out of
Luke 15
and I am
Mericaana
Mericaana
the white guy
standing before children
who share my blood
giggling laughing leering
as my tongue trips
on East Coast accented
barbed wire
I am 29 years old
and I can't even count to three
1-2-3
isk...
tad-u...
chem, chem...
I am Mericaana

mixed-blood authority figure
coming home to play Indian on the rez
and the whispers behind my back
are in front of me in Keresan
laughing at Indian jokes
I haven't heard in twenty years

my ears have lost the words
and my skin betrays me
leaving me defensive in posture
suspicious in nature
ready to fight my own DNA
my own familial indiscretions

that bore me under
oschrats, da'watch
sun-father, moon-mother
and I point to the past
but youth have short memories
and vague reflections of elders
they never met
and roses that fell from the vines
before Creator endowed them

with the only thing I ever wanted

Beauty

the brown skin

that makes them indigenous

RLI

Real-Live-Indians

not mixed-up

mixed-down

mixed-blood

mericaana

who lost his family

to the cracks of the mountains

and the mesa and the sepia-toned roses

in the hands of the sky

and the bones of my ancestors rise to greet me

It is 2006

I am home

I am Hapanyì Wastchi

1-2-3

ishke

tduwey

chem'yeh

my mouth and tongue begin to remember and

I am still Mericaana

but now with streaks of rose petals in my blood

and I am five years old

learning to walk on the stones again

and when my students say:

Guwadze

I say

Ha'ah

tru-tyi-mu

and now the crack in the mesa

is not so wide

even though I know it will always be there

and for that I say:

da'wa'eh

thank you

grandmother

da'wa'eh

Scene Five: Indian Education (or My Mainstream Education Experience)



Figure 4.6. A Pueblo spirit bowl used for offering food to ancestors and can often be found on most tables in traditional Pueblo homes. © Eric.

(As the rain begins, everyone is doing things to help in the kitchen: preparing food in various ways, cleaning, etc. The backdrop shifts to Figure 4.6, the spirit bowl. COYOTE, LEE III, and LEE IV enter the kitchen and COYOTE adjusts the lights and puts a kettle on to boil. It is a warm and inviting atmosphere as everyone shares the space of home.)

COYOTE: An interesting place we have here. I can feel knowledge woven into the curtains and the floorboards. A kitchen, a schoolhouse, what's the difference?

THOMAS: School wasn't something I really was interested in. But my dad had very strong ideas that we had to be in school, so we went that way but a lot of times I

didn't go to the school. I was leaving school and I had a car and I had been working since I was like 14 so any time I could, you know, with some friends sneak out of school, we'd take off. So it was a great time being a teenager and having a car and friends and kind of, you know, never got into trouble enough so that my parents picked up on that but did just enough to get by in school but not well enough to really go on to college which was something I really didn't want to do. And my parents were really dead set on me going.

LEE IV: I actually enjoyed my time at school, though I never stayed at one for very long since we moved around a lot when I was growing up. But for me, there was always something not in sync, you know? Like, I fit but didn't fit. We had a pretty multicultural environment in high school but there were really no other Native kids there. Just me. So there was a sense of isolation more than anything. A disconnect when I would be going to Pow Wows with my folks on the weekends and none of my friends at school would have any idea what I was talking about. Funny, this hasn't changed that much. As I continued through my education, I was still one of the only Native people in the classes I was taking. Undergrad, grad school, and then the doctoral program. Even during my grad program in New Mexico, there was only one or two Native guys I can remember in my classes. I think that speaks to how few of us there are in higher education but also why there aren't more, since the experience has often been isolated or downright oppressive.

VIOLET: It was kind of the same for me in high school. Like, there were a lot of Natives, Lagunas and Acomas, but there wasn't like a lot of cultural stuff. I mean, so I went to the local elementary school and I completed that, and then I didn't go to the local middle school because I didn't want to go. I don't know. I did a year of high school in

Albuquerque. That was okay. The drive was difficult. I played a sport, so I didn't get home until 8:00. I literally just ate and did my homework and went to bed, and then got back up and did it again. That was hard. High school. There wasn't really a whole lot of cultural stuff. It was mostly just trying to pass tests. They were really stressing that, trying to graduate, I guess, by doing as little work as possible. It's definitely not up there on my list of top educational institutions. It's what you make of it I guess. I think I did all right.

Especially in high school, like wanting to have more academic opportunities, but being told there was no options, or that we would have to find our own way or find our own this, or look for it. There was no—there was no real options. I know a lot of my classmates wanted college classes, and so when we finally complained enough for them to listen to us, they told us that they would give us college classes, but only in trades and culinary arts. They literally told us, "We have positions open at the casino, and we could really use some sous chefs, and we could pay for you to go to school for that. I was just like, "What?" I don't want to be a chef, though. I want a college class I can get college credit for, and I'd like for them to be able to provide the option for us to do that.

The trades are good. There's nothing wrong with a trade at all, but that's not what I want to do. Just hearing that, "Well, we've got jobs for you. We'll pay for it if you want to work for us. If you want to work at the casino, we'll definitely fund you for that." I'm like, "No." The other one was like hotel management or hospitality, something. I was like, "I don't want to do that though." I felt like they could have offered us all English 101, which is something we all needed. Or math, college algebra. We could have all used that. I know every single one of those freshmen at UNM has to take that. Those are

the things that I felt like they could have done. That's when I really started thinking like, "Wow, there's a lot going on here that isn't good." I feel like with all the money that we have, we should certainly be able to get a bunch of—maybe what, the 30 kids that wanted it, they should be able to do whatever they want, or do whatever they want educationally.

(The kettle sounds that it is done and COYOTE heads over and pours a cup of tea then takes a seat near the head of the table.)

GLORIA: In those days, you didn't really have the preschool kind of environment. You went straight into first grade. So I started school almost a year earlier than I should have. I felt behind and a little intimidated by the other kids, so beginning with first grade I began to struggle almost immediately with academics, primarily. And I remember at the time feeling really oppressed by the environment. The fact that there were nuns teaching at the time as well and they were very severe, especially, you know about not being able to remember prayers. Not being able to remember whether it was addition and subtraction, whatever it might be. Simple language usage. I didn't read right away for instance. I ended up just hating school. And it was a horrible time. I just thought it was an oppressive place. And I struggled with my academics all of my school years as a result. Even completing high school at the Pueblo, it didn't prepare me for college. And I don't know what that was about. I was just talking to my husband about that the other day. There was a lot of trades when I was in high school. I took Home Ec. I took business administration. I got to get my drivers license when I was there. So there was a lot of those kinds of trade kind of classes which I took advantage of. And they actually helped me always be in a job. I could type, I could file, all of that kinds of thing. I always had a job from an early age but my academics suffered, even in high school. I

didn't have to take senior English. I never learned grammar properly. I wasn't prepared for college algebra. I did take trig but when I got to college, I had tutors for the first two years cause I wasn't prepared for that space. Never read any of the great books. As a result what ended up happening was this love of books. I couldn't read enough once I got in to college, though I struggled with how fast I could read and to this day I still do. But it's those formative years of honestly teachers not really understanding the different ways in which kids learn. For me it was really about hands on. It always was. And it was that punishment mentality back in the day that really sort of took all the love of learning out of school, for me anyway.

LEE III: They used to tell me I shouldn't worry about going to college, cause I was really only going to be useful as a tradesman. I was good with my hands, they said.

LEE IV: Sadly, that's often the mentality on the rez. They don't put a lot of faith in student outcomes and education. I heard similar things when I was teaching out there. But it changes at college, at least in terms of the opportunities to learn more, explore more.

THOMAS: Yeah, that's...so this one night my Dad came home and he was all excited and he says you need to go to school, to college. The tribe's giving scholarship money and you need to go, he says. You don't have to go in the army. So he couldn't get that through my head and one day, I don't know, one Saturday we were just kind of sitting around and he looked at me and he says, I need to tell you something and you need to listen to me. And all I want you to do is listen. And he says to me, look, you got this scholarship money and you know the war's there, it's always gonna be there, you need to

at least try. I'm asking you to, he says. You need to at least try. So you know, he appealed that way so it made sense. And I said okay, I'll try. If it doesn't work out, then the war's gonna be there. So that's how I ended up going to college and for all the times I wasn't in school for what and why I wasn't doing really well, it really changed when I went to college cause it was interesting and there was things that I hadn't really...high school was just I'd rather be out of school than being in school.

ROBERT: But it's not always change for the better. I had been going home to visit my folks and participate. I'd seen these two guys. I went to see my dad at the tribal building one day. I saw these two guys coming down the hallway. They were wearing dark trousers and white shirts, little string ties, had little badges on. At first, I thought they were Mormons. Two Zuni guys, and they looked familiar. They were coming down the hallway. I looked, and one of them was one of my classmates. The other one was older. He had graduated before we did. They were coming down, and I said—so, they came up, and of course, I was sarcastic. I said, “So, what's with the monkey suits?” They said, “Well, we're college graduates.” I said, “Oh, really? You're working for tribe?” They said, “Yeah, yeah.” They had little badges on. I thought how arrogant, especially coming back to Zuni. They didn't last long. They moved on. I think one stayed in Isleta. I think he's retired over here at Rio Rancho now, one of those guys. Then, the other one is back in Zuni. Tried to run for governor last time, but didn't make it. I think that kind of—and then there was a lot of flashback on these guys that think they can go to college and come back and be a bunch of buttholes toward us. That made a number of us say,

“Okay, that’s not the way to do it.” Just come back to the village. You slide in. You pick up your life in different ways.

I think some of them have taken it on their own to really investigate that, and to get connected. For the most part, they’re not. They’re very insulated to their home. Part of it is the education process. We don’t teach that. We haven’t taught it enough. That’s one of the reasons why we’ve been carrying on, at our leadership level, a lotta discussions about decolonization, colonization, global connections, because that’s part of our experience and our history, as Zuni people, as people from the southwest area, and as the first ones who were contacted from the people from the south, especially. I think we really need to make that connection.

More importantly, I think, in our educational system, we really need to change our curriculum to make it a more global perspective, because the world has shrunk in a lotta ways. We haven’t created the opportunities for our children to really see that. They’re still just seeing Zuni or Acoma or Pueblo. They’re not going beyond that to see what other similarities or differences there are, and what the connections are. What are our common struggles among people?

LEE IV: Those changes back and forth, navigating the home space and the beyond space. But how do we learn what’s important? I mean, is this what there is? Math and reading? How do we find who we are?

COYOTE: Stay tuned for the next installment!

(The lights change, getting a bit brighter as the outside gets a bit darker. And the rain continues, there is still the occasional rumble in the distance but everyone is safe and cozy in the kitchen.)

Scene Six: Indigenous Education (or Ways of Being and Knowing)



Figure 4.7. Traditional horno used for baking bread as described by Thomas © and close to his house.

(The backdrop changes again to FIGURE 4.7, and everyone has begun to gather around the table pouring coffee and tea and taking a moment to have some bread and conversation).

COYOTE: Give me an I!

LEE IV: I.

COYOTE: Give me an N!

LEE IV: N.

COYOTE: Give me a D!

LEE IV: It's Indigenous, isn't it?

COYOTE: (slightly deflated) Maybe.

LEE IV: It's an interesting word. (He hands COYOTE some bread from the table). Both a regular and proper noun. Signifying location and heritage and a group identification.

COYOTE: I am indigenous to North America.

LEE IV: I am indigenous to the United States.

COYOTE: Curious, the words we use. Sometimes confusing but they give insight into the soul.

LEE IV: The self. How we perceive ourselves and the world around us.

COYOTE: And how we come to that understanding. Something to lay upon the table, I think. A question, an understanding, ways of being, ways of knowing.

(COYOTE places a small feather upon the table and the lights change slightly as if everyone is struck with a similar idea.)

VIOLET: Indigenous—when I hear indigenous, I guess I think kind of maybe—I think of land, I guess. I think of land-based kind of—well, I guess everybody's land-based, but do you know what I mean? Land and maybe almost agricultural, spiritual base, I guess that's what I think of when I hear indigenous, like the people who are at the—kind of—let's see, indigenous. I don't know, I always think of earth, land, something like that; people having to do with that, or people that it's important to them,

those kinds of things; maybe just their agricultural lifestyles or how they do the land, in relation with themselves, I guess.

ROBERT: There's a lot of pieces of this word. I think it depends on what your experiences are and where you're grounded at. I used to have a more clearer and probably a more purer and naïve understanding of the term, in a pure sense, what indigenous meant. It really meant a person who was from a given area, not only geographically, but environmental, culturally, and was unified in values and beliefs and relationships. While a lot of that exists, what's changed my opinion of that kind of a more pure concept is the intermarriages that have occurred. Many of our children and our people are not feeling that they're part of that indigenous, although they are. They feel disenfranchised in different ways, as not maybe being full blood or whatever. But, I think, if you believe—if you believe that you are a certain kind of a person, indigenous person, in your soul, in your heart, in your mind, and you espouse to those core values, those relationships, those connections to culture, however fragmented they are, but you believe that you are that person from that place, then you are. Then you are indigenous. It doesn't matter the mixing of the blood or anything like that. I think we have to not use definitions to define our people, but use definitions to include people with all of the richness that they have and all of the resources that they represent, personally as well as familial and culturally, and from their own experience.

THOMAS: I interpret it to be the people from the land. Particularly the Pueblos where our values and the way we were taught says that we emerged from there. We emerged from the land, you know. When you take it from a historical perspective or

archeological, they talk about the evidence that's there, you know, Chaco Canyon and the whole thing. But each of the Pueblos, they have their place that they emerged from and although they refer to Sipapu, its' all interpreted a little bit different, you know? So Indigenous to me is, in the way I was taught, was we've always been here. We came from here. We might have migrated a little bit but we're essentially from here.

GLORIA: So one of the things for me Indigenous means, it really is about people that are connected to the land that they have an association to the land that they were raised on, that their family has come from. Hence, the umbilical cord being buried so that you always know that that's where you belong. That's where you're connected. And so I really think for me indigenous isn't just about, you know, Pueblo people or as we know them American Indian people; Indigenous people are any people that's connected to their land and go back to that space on a consistent basis. That's Indigenous to me. And I would say that, you know, what is also Indigenous are people who practice the traditions that are a part of that people who stay connected to that land. Whether it's through dances or songs or language. Or living more communal existence where you're given to one another. Which so much of the tradition is about.

ERIC: Because Indigenous is like, to me, only Native Americans, but like there's the Mexicans, they're pretty indigenous, just people. Like when I was in Peru, they're considered Indigenous the Peruvian people there, or in Mexico. Even New Zealand, they're considered Indigenous, the Maori. I guess the Maori are a good example of Indigenous cause not only with Native Americans but they also have their culture, their language, their way of life that's prevalent. Especially the singing. Everyone sings there.

Everyone. Wherever we went when we were there, they sang to us. And then we sang back. It's like when we got there, it's like a culture exchange, there's a protocol you have to go through to go into a sacred Maori place, I guess. It's, like for example, like how non-Natives going to a feast day, Pueblos are like welcoming, that's how I felt when we're in New Zealand, they're so welcoming into their homes and stuff. It's kind of like the same culture in a way, but not really.

CINDY: I think of being special. Just like, we're so, I guess in a way, cherished. People are so interested in our culture, they want to know this and that. And preserve every little part of our life. It makes me feel really special.

LEE IV: Indigenous to me is...

COYOTE: Nope. I've already heard from you.

LEE IV: What?

COYOTE: Check back about a hundred pages, I already know what you have to say on the subject. I've been following along the whole time.

LEE IV: I don't understand.

COYOTE: You will someday. Or not.

(LEE IV is left with a puzzled look as COYOTE, hands him a shovel).

COYOTE: Now it's time to dig! Dig deep! Where did all this knowledge come from? Don't we all start out the same?

LEE IV: Well, I guess that I...

COYOTE: No never mind. (COYOTE takes the shovel from LEE IV and hands it to GLORIA, who is closest. To LEE IV). You talk too much. You've had lots of time

now we let others dive beneath the surface, move the loose earth aside and find that rich clay that gives us life.

GLORIA: (Looks at the shovel and begins to speak). Well, I always think about the story of the twins, right? The emergence story and I guess for me, hearing that at a young age and hearing it intermittently as I grew up, it really made me, it confirmed the deep respect Pueblo people have for their women because, you know, I, when you think about our Corn Mother, you think about all those things, it just made me realize that women are revered in our culture and I always saw that. But the stories tell you why and the songs tell you why those roles are important and yet I always just thought, in particular Pueblo women, had a special place. I honestly learned the most spending time with my grandfather. I used to go get pig slop with him. I used to help in the orchard or with the corn in the cornfields. I used to help him butcher the sheep. I used to hold the pan when he slit their throats. He always did it in such a, I always remember thinking he does this in a way that I never felt like the animals suffered. I always used to think how smart he was. He knew so much about planting. He knew so much about keeping track of his books cause he sold pigs and sheep and he sold crops. He also made moccasins. I remember I used to watch him make moccasins when I was a little girl and I just always remember thinking, gosh, he's just such a smart man. A man of few words. He didn't say very much. He mostly showed us. He showed us what to do and we did it.

(GLORIA passes the shovel to her left to THOMAS).

THOMAS: Really simply, I think that I've always embraced the idea of learn by doing. Very simply in that way. Wherever we could. Wherever we could provide the guidance in giving them the support to, you know, attempt what it was and, if you fail,

you need to be responsible in terms of accepting failure cause that's a good way of learning and we were all taught that way. you know I remember my grandmother would say, you know I need some wood, can you go chop some wood. Well, I've never picked up an axe before. So she says, well okay here let me just show you real quick, you know, so she took me out there. This is the way you hit it and this is what you do and gave me, and then said try it. And then, I remember one time, I guess she saw me, she came back one time and she saw me trying to take a shortcut on that and then this one piece of the wood came flying back and she says, well, I told you this is the way you hit it but when you do it that way, you know, you can get hurt so you have to be careful.

(THOMAS passes the shovel to ERIC).

ERIC: So I started my recycling group at my Pueblo and part of that was through summer school how it just clicked how we didn't have a recycling program there. After learning about all the trash in the environment and stuff. And then after I was able to think about that, I had a final way to start up something. After I got the call from the White House to go to the White House to meet the president, everything just clicked, how like, just from having a thought about I guess saving our beautiful environment. The lands and how it just all came together how everything, all the hard work, picking up cans for feast day or putting our bins for feast day or storing our plastic from the cans, all of the hard work finally paid off in how it just clicked. It just, if you work hard and put your mind to something, it will get acknowledged, it will be seen by someone eventually.

(ERIC hands the shovel to CINDY).

CINDY: So we went to New Zealand last year, as a school exchange and we got to visit the New Zealand people, the Maori and like when we went one of the things when

someone passed away, they would, it was like a house, right? Sort of like a trailer and they put the body in there and then all the family, the people would, I guess would spend one last night with the body. Not that we do that in Laguna but it was just a weird, not a weird way but it, the way that they did it reminded me of home cause how they bring the body and the you do the rosary and like just tell stories and that's pretty much what they did, but they just did in a different way in that they'd spend the whole night with the body, I thought that was like very similar to what we did and sort of made me feel at home in a sense, cause they did it in the same way. I thought that was interesting.

(CINDY hands the shovel to ROBERT).

ROBERT: When I was younger, the parents still adhered to the discipline of uncles rather than fathers. If we needed to be disciplined, then our uncles were always called to work with us. It wasn't a heavy-handed kind of a thing. They just said, "Let's go out to the fields, or let's go bird hunting, or let's go do this and that." During that time, it was a good time to talk about behavior expectations and what they thought we should be doing, but in a more gentle way. That always stuck with me. I think it's something that we need to get back to, because we—even in school discipline issues. We don't take advantage of those resources. We've gotten more punitive and more legalistic in approach, and given up the responsibility, as adults, to law enforcement or school resource officers or people like that, when we should be taking the time to create that more human connection, and use that as a different kind of learning experience—for children and for parents, as well.

(ROBERT hands the shovel to LEE IV).

LEE IV: Well, it began with...(looks over to COYOTE and smiles) I believe the storm has died down.

(COYOTE smiles and nods).

(The storm has finally died down and in the distance a school bell rings. The lights shift and rise on the schoolhouse next to the kitchen. Everyone takes their places in the classroom for the next scenes.)

Scene Seven: Survivance (Or The Spirit of Our Elders)



Figure 4.8. Author's great, great grandmother (far right) at Laguna Pueblo around 1944.



Figure 4.9. Author and son at opening of Pueblo history exhibit.



Figure 4.10. Four generations of Pueblo women from Thomas ©.



Figure 4.11. Traditional Pueblo drum used by Eric © in Pueblo dances.



Figure 4.12. Laguna Feast day.



Figure 4.13. Cubero Trading Company and the house where the author's great-grandmother lived for most of her life.

(As the scene shifts, the lights come up on the classroom at Stage Right. It is a typical classroom with standard desks for students. The backdrop has become a large chalkboard with several pictures FIGURES 4.8 - 4.13 posted on it, almost as a highlight wall of student work. Everyone takes their seats and COYOTE heads to the front of the class and puts on a tie: he is now the teacher. There is a stand-alone chalkboard at the front next to the teacher's desk.

COYOTE: Good morning class.

ALL: Good morning Mr. C!

COYOTE: Did everyone have the chance to finish their fieldwork?

(Everyone is silent and looks back and forth for a bit).

COYOTE: Your fieldwork? You know, the work you did in the fields? Just a few moments ago? The digging and the dirt and the back breaking? You all remember?

ALL: Yes.

COYOTE: Very good! I'll be grading you on the sweat on your brow, the depth of your seeds, the strength of your prayers, and the tenderness of your plantings. By what I saw earlier, I think everyone will do just fine. But now we turn our attention to the past, present and future, to the struggle for survival and how we continue to learn, persist, resist, and rise to the challenges laid before us. In other words, it's time for a math problem!

(COYOTE goes to the chalkboard and begins to write SURVIVAL + RESISTANCE = SURVIVANCE. Then he writes: STRUGGLE + TRADITION = X, SOLVE FOR X).

COYOTE: All right. Who wants to take a whack at this?

VIOLET: I think the struggle historically—I think that's one I can answer right away—is like—I mean I think—I mean just within hanging out with my grandma and my mom, like in my grandma's days, of course, she—they told her not to speak the language. I mean but she did anyway. They all were like, "Oh, I'm going to anyway." I think maybe my mom kind of saw that, how my grandma was treated because of that. That's why I think her and her generation are like, "I don't want to sound that way. I want to be able to keep that, not hidden, but be able to change from one to the other. If I have to talk to people on the outside, I want to be able to sound good. When I have to talk at home, I want to still be able to sound good there." It was like it's weird, and then with mine, how—like I said, we're regressing, going back to that kind of stuff. I think that's the struggle within that. It's just like the identity changing.

ROBERT: There's different ways of looking at learning and knowledge. One of them is just having that mentoring process, whether they're uncles or aunties or grandparents. Some way of transferring that information from a variety of sources, and incorporate it into your own being and your own life. It's pretty amazing. I really appreciate every day, cuz having come—the moment you come close to death and you realize that you are—the possibility of you dying is just right there, it just opens up a whole new view of life. That's happened to me several times. But I wasn't afraid. There's always some fear in dying, but it wasn't the same as it used to—before, I was really protected. You're watching out for yourself and you're watching out for others. At that moment, it just all disappeared. It was like, "So what? If it happens, it happens."

You're no longer worried about it. You can get on with life. I think it's like that in other phases of your life. You don't worry about it too much anymore.

COYOTE: So it's about wisdom and knowledge? And where do we get that wisdom? From what we observe, experience and where else? Thomas, is your report ready?

THOMAS: Yes, it is.

COYOTE: Good, then go ahead. Class, I think this will give us some insight on our equation. Thomas will present on the topic of his grandmother and his learnings.

THOMAS: My grandmother was such a neat person. She was well known in the community. My grandfather had the distinction of being Governor, two time Governor, and when electricity was brought to the Pueblo, they brought it to his house first because he was the Governor so that was, they installed the first wires that came through went to their house so they were one of the first houses to have electricity and had the light bulb go on. She was also the head Medicine Woman and the way she tells it is not, she wasn't the actual medicine woman, she was kind of honorary. But what she had was, she had all, she would keep the feathers like the feathers from the eagle and turkey feathers. And so I guess, like, the young men or males or whoever, if they killed a bird like that they would always bring her part of the feathers and so she always had these, three or four shoeboxes of these feathers and they always kept her supplied with that. So when people needed them for various ceremonies or doings, they would come to her and she would take out her box and then she would give them the feathers. They wouldn't talk about paying or anything; there wasn't any bartering for it, that was, that was like her role for the community. The other part that she played and how she made some money, was she

baked bread and her Indian name is bread. She'd bake two kinds of bread: the oven bread that you bake in the horno and then the other was what they call paper bread, or Piki bread, the Hopis call it. Paper bread. So they had this flat rock and she had this little hut across the floor, right between our house, her house and then there was a ditch that went through it and you walked across, it was no more than about a hundred yards away. But she had her little hut and that was the original house that her husband had grown up in but it was really small. It was amazing. And he was a tall man, he was like, for Pueblos, like, I remember one of my relatives saying like he wasn't like six foot, but he was pretty close to it, like 5'11". So he's pretty tall. My grandmother was barely five foot.

But anyway, that's where she had this flat rock and she'd make paper bread and so for weddings or special occasions they would come to her and she would make the bread. but anyway, so one time I was there and I was hanging out, she was making paper bread and I went down and I was just talking with her. And I had seen her do it before and it looked very easy. You just get the blue corn meal, kind of a mush, and she put it on the side of her hand and she just kind of glide, put her hand, glide it over the rock and lay this thin layer of what was much and the thing would just kind of hop up, just like paper bread, you know, and she lifted it, it's very thin. And she'd flip it over and it was kind of moist and she'd fold it just like a newspaper. So I was standing there one day and I was, we were talking and I said, hey grandma can I try that? And she says, I don't know it's kind of hot. I say, well, you know, I just want to try it. She goes, okay, you know? So I sat down where she was and immediately I was sitting right there it was already hot. I could feel the area right around, right in front it was already hot, and I'm thinking it's already hot, you know, I mean, I don't even want to sit here and it's already hot. So then

there's the bowl, so I stuck my hand in there and she goes, okay. Well, then grandma, what do I do? Just wipe it over this. She says, yeah, just start on one end and then take it across the rock and then bring it back and that will give you two swipes and then pick up some more. But you gotta follow it very quickly cause they have to stay connected. And I said, oh, okay. So, I grabbed the piece and I put my hand right on the edge of the rock. I couldn't even lay it down it was so...I put my hand barely touched it and my hand, my hand didn't even touch the rock. I had the cornmeal right on the edge, I just barely laid the corn meal down and I just about started to wipe it and I just jerked my hand back, it was so damn hot. I got up, she was standing there laughing at me. It was so funny. She couldn't stop laughing, man. Aw, god it was crazy. I said, how the hell are you doing this stuff and she was laughing and then she told like my aunt came over, they were just laughing at me. It was just so funny because she did this for years and it was like, it looks so simple I couldn't even put my hand on there it was so hot. That was so funny.

So a lot of those things that she taught me was just well maybe we'd talk a lot and she was real patient. And she was such a neat grandmother because everybody liked her and she joked a lot and people would joke with her. The young people, the teenagers and stuff, they would tease her and she'd tease them back. We'd walk down to the plaza or to the store and that's where everybody, I mean, they'd always had something funny or, say something to her and she'd joke back with them. That was my grandmother, she like got along with everybody.

COYOTE: Very good Thomas! Comments, from the class?

ERIC: My grandparents tell me this time when they were guards at the prison in Santa Fe and they were all like, well they were there during one of the riots. But like

they were always good to the prisoners there. They treated them well and weren't mean or anything. So this one time when there were riots, they were there and the prisoners were taking care of them. They took care of them and made sure they didn't get hurt. They put them behind the barricades and they showed them how to, they wet the cloth and put it over their faces when they brought in the tear gas. And it's cause they were nice to them, they looked at the prisoners as people and they just, you know, were taken care of as well.

GLORIA: Well, I'm not much of a historian I just remember things. During hunting season I spent more time with my grandma because I was the one always designated to help her get the meals ready for the hunters. When they got home, I was the one that helped her and that was the only time I spent with her. But I remember, I remember her telling me that she never wanted to marry my grandfather. She was real, she was a real depressed young girl as a result cause it wasn't her choice. But she stayed married to him until he passed, and that told me a lot about commitment and obligation. You do what's expected of you from the family and the community. She was a hard woman, honestly. She was very, very methodical about the way she did things and very neat. As a result my Dad is that way. When they grew up in the boxcars, my Dad said, we had some of the cleanest boxcar rooms in the boxcar community. Because my grandmother was just how she was and it spilled over onto my father and it spilled over a little bit on the way that we were raised.

My grandfather wasn't like that though at all. He was a man of few words. He spent all of his time outside. My memories of my grandfather are of him carrying a bucket and his overalls. He was a tall man. Over six foot tall I think and he was

bowlegged and he always had overalls on and a bucket in his hand. And I just remember, he would train the sheepdogs. And I always thought how come the dogs are smarter than me. You know why because they could understand Laguna. Because my mother was not Laguna, she didn't speak it to us. But the dog could understand it better than me and I always thought, how come the dog is smarter than me? But it was the way he trained his animals. And so he would tell them in Laguna to get the sheep or he would tell them different things and they would do it, they would follow his commands. And I just thought, you know, what a wonderful person to have animals understand you...not just your grandchildren but the animals too.

LEE IV: My grandma was one of the most awesome people I knew growing up. She was smart and funny. It wasn't until years later when I was going through some of her papers that I realized what an activist she was for Native women. Her writings talk about her deep level of thought on issues of feminism and Native rights. There was a book on Harold Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior during Roosevelt's term, beside her bed for so many years. I never put two and two together and I never read the book. It was only by chance that I learned that Harold Ickes was the man who came up with the Indian New Deal, that spawned the notion of self-determination. These were things she was interested in but I would never have known, since she passed away when I was thirteen. I think what's interesting is how these learning are residual; they echo beyond the point of contact as we have the chance to learn and reflect during our own experiences. Their lives are our traditional stories; tools of learning that carry depth and knowledge well into the past and future.

COYOTE: Very good class. I think you are beginning to understand. Or maybe you already do. Maybe you already have so much understanding it bursts from you any chance you have to speak. It spills from your hearts and souls and gives us insight into the nature of Indigenous learning. Perhaps a poem to close this lesson?

LEE III:

Gran'ma didn't make fry bread
Her Indian hands refused the mold
Instead she chose a different path
Imposed her will in other ways.

White-laced lilac, cedar trees and roses
Surrounded her white plaster house
Never wanted a different life
After traveling around the world.

A romantic who enjoyed poetry
Her favorites were Keats and Donne
The crafted meter and tempo
Reminded her of tribal drums

She always knew she was Indian enough
Took me to see the masked dances
"These are your people," she declared

“Never forget you are Oak clan.”

Gave her aunt Edith “what for” over me

Staying all night at the beach house

Defended my locking the door

As if she was the guilty one.

Worked every day in her private garden

Dragged the hose across all the rocks

Brought precious water to the plants

Until crippled by arthritis

Only a few were permitted to see

Behind her mask of stoic reserve

Or after one margarita

Or when her sister Flissie died.

Then when her youngest died of alcohol

Her rock garden withered

The carefully tended roses

Refused to climb the white trellis.

The final stroke left her frozen in bed

And she knew her time had come
That was the last time I saw her
Surrounded by the Kaht-sin-ah.

“Good-bye please” she’d say
When lessons were done
Her word-filled eyes still haunt my soul
“Good-by please” I softly whispered
And watched her spirit pass over.

Gran’ma never made fry bread
Now she dances among the stars
Her gossamer shawl still glitters
And at night I hear her laughter.

(There is a moment of quiet as everyone lets the poem wash over them.

COYOTE is about to conclude but notices that ROBERT wants to say something).

COYOTE: Robert, you would like to add one last comment?

ROBERT: So there was this time, when we were going to Africa with this group from the college, I experienced a real difference and I had a real flashback on when I came home from the war, as compared to these guys that are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan. They came as a unit, a whole group of 'em. People in the Atlanta airport were cheering and just like, “Wow, welcome home.” There was a young lady in front of me that was one of our workers, Melanie, Melanie Yazzie. Her father was a Vietnam vet.

She turned around and she said, “A real difference, huh?” I said, “Yeah.” She said, “Well, I’m glad they’re home, but I wish they would’ve done that for you guys.” It didn’t happen. That was a different time. The politics were different. I’m glad that they were able to make it back. Ultimately, that’s all it comes down to, is survival of yourself, your group. Making sure that they made it, as much as possible, made it home.

(A bell rings and everyone gets up to stretch their legs and peer around the room. They gather in small groups and chat with one another as the lights shift subtly again to indicate the passage of time).

Scene Eight: Sovereignty (Or The Colonization Dilemma)

(Backdrop is the same as the scene before, and students are still talking in small groups. The bell rings again and everyone takes their seats).

COYOTE: So you all had an assignment due today. Last class I divided you into groups to discuss issues of colonization. Robert, it was you and Lee IV and Violet. Gloria, it was you and Cindy. And Eric, you and Thomas. I’ll give you a few minutes to review your work and then we will present to the class.

(COYOTE sits at the desk as LEE III rises and begins to recite his work.)

LEE III:

First the oppressor says

I love Indians

Then the oppressor says

I want to help you people

Then the oppressor says

You have to do it my way

Then the oppressor says

You are being reprimanded

Then the oppressor says

I want to work with you

Then the oppressors says

These are serious allegations

Then the oppressor says

This is not retaliation

Then the oppressor says

Thank you for your resignation

Then the oppressor says

There is no money

Then the oppressor says

There are no Indians

Then the oppressor says

I love Indians

(LEE III sits back down as the groups finish discussing with one another.)

COYOTE: Thank you. Are the groups ready? Who wants to go first?

(ROBERT stands and addresses the class.)

ROBERT: We will. So our people have really internalized it well. Especially in education, it's a real Westernized approach. It's a standardized approach now, in many, many situations. Weaning them from that, workbooks and things like that, has been a major effort. Then, changing the way that teaching takes place, looking at the whole

child. In my school, it's making a difference with kids now, and they're seeing it. But we think sovereignty would be able to—to be able to make those decisions that are in the best interest of people, given the resources and the challenge at the moment. The possibility of making a difference, making a change, I think, is part and parcel to sovereignty. To be self-determined, to take that responsibility, to act on behalf of people. If you don't do it, then you're not sovereign at all. You can say you are, but unless—you can think about something, but unless you take that action step, you're not making a difference. I think that's where we're—this whole notion of that won't work, that won't work, that won't work comes into play. I think we have to have the courage to make those decisions that will have an impact on children with the best resources of information we have at the time. If we need to make an adjustment, we have to make an adjustment. You can be in control of it, but unless you change the policies, the structures, the practices, you haven't done anything. That's where we need to focus our effort on, making that difference.

COYOTE: Good! Next?

(GLORIA stands and addresses the class.)

GLORIA: So the group said it would be best if I tell my story to illustrate our work. So it's funny, I always, my father my mother have always said I have this quiet understanding, I was never one that spoke much so they never knew what was in my head, they just knew that I had a deeper understanding about things and so ever since I was a child, I've always wondered why, why is my family in this place? How did my father come to marry somebody that wasn't from the community? Those questions have

been with me since I was a child. But I never really spoke them. It wasn't until I would say, you know, I was in a number of not only college kinds of clubs and groups, Native American Studies, seeking out those kinds of conversations in college and then finding friends who were having those conversations. We were talking about organizing and activism, those kinds of individuals wanting to have the conversation about why? How do we end up in this place? And a good many of them were of mixed blood. A good many of them were. And so it wasn't until those conversations and my desire to do a little bit more research, that I started to realize, that first of all I'm not a broken person and I'm no less native than, than my cousins or some of my friends. That's when I started to realized that. And it was also in the process of meeting my own husband who comes from a very traditional family. You know, he had family that are medicine men and clowns, his last living auntie was/is a clown. She's Koshare. So, you know, it was through him and his family excepting me as somebody that wasn't fully indoctrinated into the culture and them taking it upon themselves to do that. And that's the part of being sovereign. But it's a different definition for me and my family, for my husband. It's one of the reasons, I don't always like to have the discussion. One of the reasons my husband refuses to have the discussion. I remember when I first met, I was coming out of lots of conversations with folks, I was part of a campus activist group. I was part of different kinds of, progressive discussions about colonization and the progressive movement and everything is practical from a living wage to how Native women had been abused and girls have been subjected to certain things. I always just remember that when I first met my husband and his brother Smokey, who is a teacher at the Indian school in Santa Fe, I was wanting to have those conversations with them too. I remember his brother saying,

we don't have those discussions here. Because when you have them, he didn't say disempowering, but in essence that's what he was saying, you allow something negative to be attached to who you are. And so, I was real confused by that.

That's the other thing, the last thing I was going to say with regard to the definition of Indigenous and how it always seems to correspond to colonizing forces or exploitation or prejudice, I think when you use those two together, it's almost like blasphemy. Being Indigenous is a sacred thing and then to connect it to, you always see the two connected, right? It's always the Indigenous people are exploited or the Indigenous people have the fewest resources. Although it may be true, when you use those words together, it's almost blasphemous. And yet, the study is always about Indigenous people being exploited and being colonized. And I know that may sound confusing and it is confusing in my head. To always have the two together.

COYOTE: Excellent! And our last group?

(ERIC stands and addresses the class).

ERIC: So ours is short but our group thought about sovereignty and being Indigenous as the idea that we're here first. Like, Native Americans are considered Indigenous meaning we were here first before we were colonized and conquered. For me, I guess the high school did a good job of trying to get Native teachers so we could understand that concept. So when they would try to get Native teachers, the teachers would then give a Native perspective on like what they're teaching and stuff. An Indigenous education, not all colonized and stuff. And it seemed like they could identify with you more how you try to explain stuff so you couldn't tell a white teacher, you have to, like this is what we do at home, they knew what you were talking about, they

understood and that was really good. It was like a family. And the example of sovereignty with our school was that we have our feast days also which show we're Indigenous. And cause we have our sovereignty, we're able to have a feast day when other public schools don't have feast days like NACA does. And that's a cool thing.

COYOTE: A cool thing indeed! Well done everyone. And now pull out a piece of paper and we will begin our quiz.

(The class pulls out paper and COYOTE starts to write a question on the board: WHAT IS AN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? The lights begin to fade as the curtain comes down).

Scene Nine: The Way We Know

(The curtains are down but the house lights have not come on yet. COYOTE peaks his face out from between the curtains.)

COYOTE:

If these shadows have offended

Think but this and all is mended

That you have but slumbered here

Whilst these visions did appear

And this weak and idle theme

No more yielding but a dream...

(LEE IV comes out from the side of the stage.)

LEE IV: You rascal! The play is over! And here you are plagiarizing Shakespeare...

COYOTE: Am not! I wrote that long before he laid quill to paper...

LEE IV: No, no...you big liar. It's over now, though, so go on. You have more stories to tell elsewhere and these folks want to get home before the traffic gets too thick.

COYOTE: Ah, of course, of course! Else the Coyote a liar call and so goodnight unto you all, give me your hands if we be friends...

LEE IV: No more of that!

COYOTE: Fine! I'm leaving.

LEE IV: Good.

COYOTE: But I have one question...

LEE IV: (exasperated) What is it?

COYOTE: What did you learn?

LEE IV: What?

COYOTE: What did you learn?

(This question catches LEE IV off guard and he takes a moment to think about this before responding.)

LEE IV: I'm not sure yet. I learn and learned many things. Every day. Too often I find myself sure of my knowledge but then I take the time to sit and listen to friends, students, elders, colleagues...tricksters and I get new insight into the stories my father told me.

(LEE III appears on the other side of the stage.)

LEE IV (cont): I remember my grandmother and my great-grandmother and all my struggles with identity and history. And I listen to all these folks talking about the same thing and I realized that we are not different but the same. And maybe I have

drawn them together because of that. Maybe I seek out like-minded individuals but I think these lessons go deeper, they are more universal as I find more and more Indigenous people I talk to share similar experiences of home, family, elders, stories. There is some commonality, some shared experience even though we have different traditions, teachings, and beliefs. Maybe there is something we can do to allow these connections to be developed further, to help us all learn more and find deeper connections as Indigenous people throughout the world. Maybe. I need to think and dream for a bit longer. But I know it will come to me.

LEE III: That's all I could ask for my son. Think and dream.

COYOTE: Think and dream.

(The lights fade to black.)

END.

Final Reflections

A final meeting of the research team was held four months after the initial conversations. This final meeting served as a member check on the work in such a way as to continue to align with the Indigenous methodology as established for this inquiry. Team members had the chance to review a draft of the work and the convening provided an opportunity to discuss what they took away from the experience and if they felt the work was representational of their thoughts and understandings. Gathering the research team together for one final reflection also served as a way of connecting the circle by creating a space in which the team could offer thoughts, questions, and guidance on the end stages of the inquiry, while looping back and providing the opportunity to reflect on their own learning during the process. This practice highlights the models of reciprocity

and authenticity as critical tenets of Indigenous ways of being and knowing, as a way of further supporting the learnings within this inquiry. It should be noted that new concepts were not added to the findings but did have an impact on the writing and concluding analysis. As I continue to analyze and explore Indigenous and sovereign consciousness, these are important considerations on how we conduct research and engage Indigenous communities especially in reconciling Western methodology with Indigenous frameworks.

The team reflections centered on the concepts of listening, spirituality, purpose, and learning. The conversation wove in and out of what the team members observed in the work and what they were able to continue to articulate from their own reflections. In analyzing the drama and their own characters, team members enacted a process of individual and community meaning-making. Initially, they all spoke of how interesting it was to read how they sounded. As Violet noted, “it’s weird to see your own words there, like, do I sound like that? You really don’t think about it until it’s there in front of you.”

The awareness of self was significant and the team spoke on how they appreciated how the drama was woven together. Additionally, Thomas highlighted how the conversations and inquiry process allowed for the time to think and discuss moments of impact, “we don’t have the occasion to talk about this stuff. We get busy. So this is a good chance to remember.” Cindy thought it was important how the drama demonstrated how we were able to “just sit and listen.”

A key conversation point that emerged was the spiritual aspect of the work and what came from the understanding of home. Gloria, Violet and Cindy commented on what they saw as the spiritual nature of the drama and how being at home is “spiritually

centering” an echo of the words of Carolee Sanchez. Gloria’s perspective in working with community elders provided her the opportunity to reflect on how the elders “didn’t even know they wanted to tell these stories, just as we didn’t know we wanted to tell our stories.” Eric saw something in the work that emphasized what he believed to be his purpose, “What do I want to be in this world for other people. How can I help?” This idea of giving back surfaced for Thomas and Gloria, as well and what they saw in the drama was the reflection of their lives in service. In the area of learning, Thomas asked the question, “What are our natural inclinations to learn?” This was what he spent the time reflecting on after reading the drama. Violet continued with this theme by stating, “It wasn’t a conscious effort to teach you, you just learned.”

Finally, it was interesting to note that none of the team talked about Coyote.

Although it would be nice to consider this an effect of seamless writing, I believe this is more due to the cultural understanding of the Trickster/Storyteller as an integral part Pueblo stories and functions as a culturally norming agent rather than an anomaly.

Ultimately, Violet summed up the work best in reflecting on interactions with her grandmother around a special type of tea we have at the Pueblo, called Indian tea. As she talked with her grandmother about how things are always changing and how sometimes life was very chaotic, she reflected on how her grandmother always had Indian tea brewing whenever she came over. She said her grandmother responded, “Indian tea is always there for you.”

VI. THE WEAVING (O'DOO'NAHTS)

In completing the drama, we are left with understanding the broad implications that arise from this inquiry especially in terms of how we can approach decolonizing and strengthening our sovereign systems. Two key areas have emerged from the conversations and body of research which could have considerable impact on how we can create more authentic and engaged schools and education systems for Indigenous students and communities. These two areas came up in each conversation with my research team, as well as, much of the Indigenous literature upon which this study has drawn. What emerged was the idea of home and the importance of elder wisdom and historical knowledge. In reviewing the drama, these ideas intertwine throughout the framing and from a Trickster Discourse perspective, disrupt the traditional approaches to Indigenous education systems by focusing on traditional knowledge delivery, rather than simply traditional knowledge. These concepts could form the basis of a new critical dialogue regarding Indigenous education and highlight gaps in Indigenous educational theory, especially in regards to school improvement.

Creation, Migration, and Return

From the top of nine mile hill
golden dots shimmer
marking the place of the
duke's city.

The brand new truck stop

is alive with travelers
eager to leave
to get on the road
east
to get on the road
west.

I remember that eagerness.

The mobile home salesman
on the radio eagerly pitches
his best deal for a mere
fifty-five thousand
and some change.

The sound from the radio
fades into the silence of
the west wind that carries
on its back the voice of
blue mountain calling me
to the homeplace.

I drown in the psychic embrace

as I raise my hand in greeting.

(Francis III, 2002, p. 28)

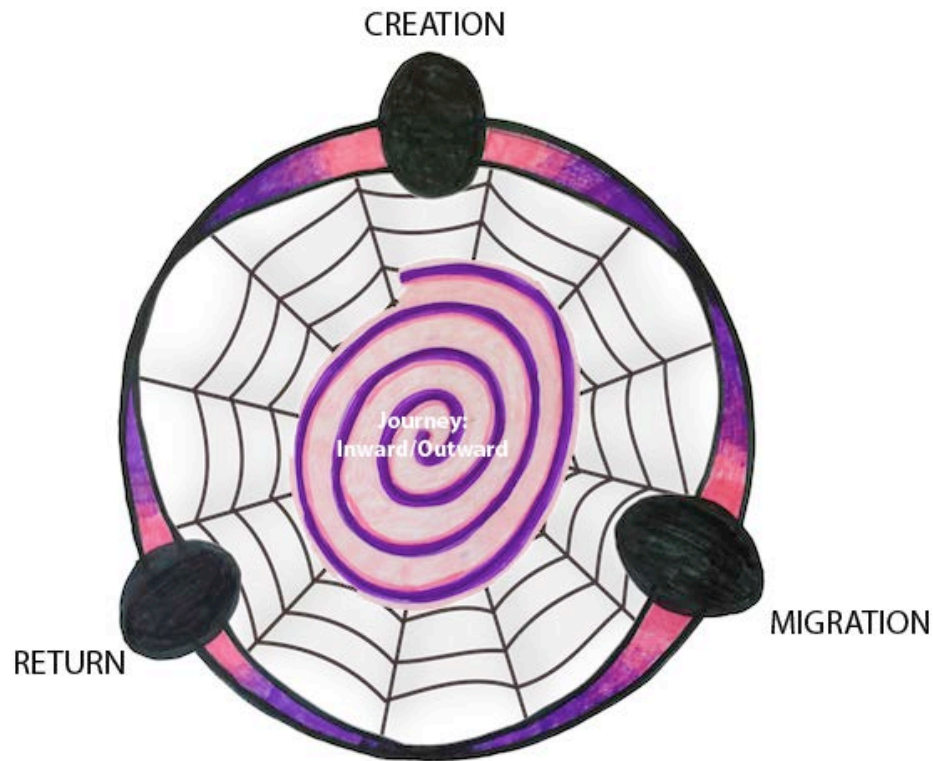


Figure 5.1. Conceptual Framework illustration as representing the findings from the inquiry: creation, migration, and return.

This inquiry has been an exploration in understanding critical ontology (Kinchloe, 2011). Critical ontology allows me to be aware of the differences within the self, the representations of self, the colonial structures which presume various understandings of indigeneity, and the Indigenous ways of being and knowing which are engaged in a dynamic process of evolution brought about by globalization. The purpose is to gain understanding of where I am located in relation to each of these factors. It brings forward the idea of the relational self (Maturana & Varela, 1992) and new concepts of self-understanding. As Kincheloe (2011) writes,

Cartesian notions that cultural conflicts can be solved only by developing monological universal principles of epistemology and universal steps to the process of research. Too often, these scholars/cultural workers understand that these “universal” principles simply reflect colonial Western ways of viewing the world hiding in the disguise of universalism. Rigorous examination of the construction of self and society are closed off in such faux-universalism. Indeed, it undermines the development of a critical self-consciousness. (p. 338)

Therefore, these efforts to articulate the ways in which Pueblo Indigenous people exist, learn, and survive are what allows us to move beyond the individualistic approach of Western positivism and toward a collective understanding of self in context. More importantly, this work has given significant insight into realizing how Indigenous people revitalize and rehabilitate local systems beginning with the journey of the self and expanding outward through the notion of global indigeneity, all with an understanding of home.

In framing this analysis, I return to the Laguna Pueblo origin story, which highlights the aspects of creation, migration, and return. In this sense: creation equals self awareness, migration equals lived experience, and return equal praxis, the combination of reflection and action, all of which are essential to the process of sovereignty. Expanding upon the illustration once again (Figure 5.1), we can see how these steps are framed as part of a continuous cycle of sovereign development. It is this process that can serve as a lived model of rehabilitating the sovereign self. This rehabilitation is a process of healing in an authentic and engaged manner that seeks to find balance and harmony. We add to this the notion of revitalization as a deliberate

process of drawing life energy from colonized bodies, entities, institutions and systems as we seek to decolonize and explore the nature of survivance.

This entire framework is centered on the concept of home. In conversations with the research team, this was one of the strongest fundamental concepts that was expressed. Home is a complex concept for Indigenous people, as the history of forced migration looms large in many notions of identity and sovereignty. In fact, the concept of sovereignty is predicated upon a distinct and immutable concept of home. One of the ultimate assimilationist tendencies is the use of “science” to undermine Indigenous creation stories. The Bearing Strait argument often legitimizes acts of colonization against Indigenous people in North America by insinuating that they are not Indigenous and in fact migratory. Indeed, Indigenous stories of creation and migration create a conflict of origin that has been used as a point of exploitation. As Weaver (2007) notes both can exist and it is Western positivism that polarizes and delegitimizes Indigenous knowledge as a means of oppression and ethnocide. It is then even more critical for Indigenous educators to create points of synthesis and engage Indigenous students in reinforcing Indigenous concepts of both/and and third space, wherein multiple stories can exist without creating a binary, which only serves to reinforce colonial notions of power and hierarchy. Again, the connection to land and place is central to Indigenous identity and both historically and culturally.

In articulating the idea of home, this inquiry illuminated both the importance and the deep structural significance of the concept — one rooted in the cultural values and traditional stories — and the research team was able to provide a road map of lived experience that gives insight into how our critical ontologies are inextricably connected

to our cultural understandings. By framing this significance through the journey — creation, migration, and return — we find a striking similarity to Kierkegaard's spheres of existence,

In the aesthetic sphere, home is constructed as the place of origin and point of departure; in the ethical sphere, the focus is on building a home for oneself in the place of settlement; and in the religious sphere, the emphasis shifts to a sense of home as an inward experience, a commitment to one's life purpose and the further development of the self. (Hayes, 2008, p. 7)

In other words, the development of an Indigenous identity and sovereign consciousness are best understood through the creation-migration-return framework, with the concept of home as the central conceit. All of which drive toward understanding Indigenous existence and the weaving of consciousness, ecology, cultural relations and traditional ways of being and knowing. This journey was conveyed by each member of the research team, regardless of age, profession, or gender.

Home

As numerous scholars have developed and wrestled with the concept of home, Indigenous understandings have always contained a focus on the homeplace, or the land of origin. As previously discussed, the idea of space and location are inherent in the stories and cultural knowledge of most Indigenous people. Even for those who faced removal from their original home places, the idea is no less important and no less powerful in understanding the Indigenous consciousness. It should be noted that for Pueblo people, the separation and removal from their homeland is not as critical an issue as with the majority of tribes and nations throughout the United States and Canada.

Pueblo citizens have had the privilege of continuously inhabiting their home locations for more than a thousand years. Many of the homes in the Pueblos are family homes that go back for centuries. Therefore, in this inquiry, the echoes of time are always present and speak to the nature of home as a summary of past, present, and future space (Fadlalla, 2011). Further, “the definition of the concept of Home cannot be made separate from the historical or cultural context of its existence. Thus, for collective, high context, as well as less urbanized communities, home is a collective model of kinship” (Fadlalla, 2011, p.141). Home is the complete understanding of interrelation and interconnectedness.

In conversations among the research team, the use of the term home was almost universally understood. Home did not refer to a physical dwelling but to the Pueblo itself and to a place of spiritual and cultural resonance. What was interesting was for those who had a split family, i.e. a mother from one tribe and a father from another. As with the case of Thomas’ brother, he considered his mother’s Pueblo home, while Thomas continues to work and align with his Father’s Pueblo. His definition of home revolves around his identity formation as an adult. What this presents is the idea of home as life schema (Fadlalla, 2007). In each of the research team members, this schema was formed as an all-encompassing concept, which aligns with Bakhtin’s (2002) definition of the chronotope. For all of us during this inquiry, home was a constant; a resonant beacon that was built from personal narratives and lived experience. The value of home was critical in understanding personal development and was often an anchor for explaining moments of understanding and personal growth. These moments were very clearly associated with travel away from the homeplace and created space for comparison and

critical consciousness. With home as the starting point, we can then walk through the aspects of sovereign consciousness: creation, migration, and return.

Creation

“Native stories are power. They create people. They author tribes. America is a tribal creation story. Creation stories, as numerous as Indian tribes, gave birth to our people” (Howe, 1999, p. 118). The creation story has multiple levels within Indigenous philosophy that encompass the individual and the collective. We can apply the same spiral that frames this inquiry to creation knowledge as it always radiates outward; situating the ecology of knowledge in a way that features both the relational and interconnected. During the conversations of this inquiry, each member of the research team spoke about their home Pueblo and discussed their origin in relation to that home. In this way, just as I situated this work, Indigenous peoples are conditioned to situate themselves by calling upon their individual and collective creation stories (R. Bobroff, 2014, personal communication). These stories provide a grounding place of identity and knowing and are a synthesis of heritage stories, lived experience, and cultural understandings. The creation story brings to the forefront the transferred knowledge of the elders of the community in a way that is accessible in understanding the foundational knowledge of the tribe or community.

Migration

I argue that for those living in exile or in diaspora, articulations of a national home are often based in collective memory or nostalgia; that in exile, “home” is something people (must) struggle to maintain, and it is often maintain differently

as past place of origin, present place of residence, and future place of return.

(Sabra, 2008, p. 82)

Alienation and estrangement bring identity into focus, which allows for a greater understanding of what is present within the homeplace. Even Eric, Cindy and Violet, all the youngest members of the team, have a sense of estrangement in leaving their homeplace. They reflected on how their home Pueblos were critically important in their lives and what they chose to do with their careers and current and future endeavors, especially once they had been away from the Pueblo for any significant amount of time. For Eric, the longing for home was strong enough to move him from Wisconsin back to Albuquerque, as the journey made him realize what was missing. It is this existential crisis that allows for the greatest understanding about space and place and how creation and home are essential to knowledge formation. It could also be concluded based on the conversations from this inquiry that the migration is necessary for sovereign consciousness because it creates the distance necessary for reflection as, “Experiences of displacement, diaspora and migration evoke fundamental questions of home and identity” (Hayes, 2007, p.3). Each member of the research team spoke of their physical journeys and how they were fundamental to their understanding of themselves and their home place. These journeys were not simply an adjustment in their physical location, but created a shift in schema that required a cognitive readjustment and cultural realignment. This shift in schema was reconciled with a return to the homeplace and the accompanying cultural dynamics.

Return

We (Indians) agreed that 'going home' stabilizes us again, reestablishes our sense of being in balance and connected to everything. We agreed that being *connected* is fundamental to the mental health of Tribal people. This insight led me to the conclusions that...long-term separation weakened our Tribal connection, which in turn made us 'sick,' and 'going home' allowed us to regain our feeling of wholeness. (Francis III, 1992, p. 149)

Part of this inquiry was based on the chance for team members to reflect on their travels and their understandings of their own indigeneity. The articulations of moments of reflection give insight into the process of healing and revitalization alluded to previously. The return home completes the cycle and allows for a new journey to be developed. This ongoing cycle represents a process of healing which was initiated from the first instance of colonialism and which continues today. The return allows for the synthesis of knowledge locally and abroad and the sharing of the stories radiates across the whole community to bring the knowledge of transformation and the process of healing to all the people. As Francis III (2002) notes, "While I have traveled extensively throughout my life, I still return to my home place. Perhaps it's a re-creation of all the journeys my parents and grandparents made in their time. When they returned to the home place they brought gifts and stories about their travels" (p. xiii - xiv). This journey is one that builds capacity and makes Indigenous individuals, and by extension Indigenous communities, stronger in the face of ongoing colonial practices. This journey is also the central point in the development of sovereign consciousness as it allows for all

aspects of indigenous identity to be analyzed, explored, and articulated. Gloria spoke of this strength in our conversation,

There is one of my family members, Mr. Shiose who visits me on occasion to remind me about what my duty is. He tells me to stay strong and not to be, to remind me that I didn't choose, for instance to be here, I was called to be here and so I need to be strong about what my purpose is here. And it's helpful because he does that from time to time. One of the things he said yesterday, though, was that, you know we, when you're able to live in both environments, in the community as well as in an urban setting, it's like you broaden your view and that's a good thing, is what he said, that's a good thing. It's not a bad thing.

The Completed Cycle

In completing the cycle of creation, migration and return, we are engaging in the full process of sovereignty. As we begin at home, we are ground in our cultural learnings. We gain understanding of our space-place through fully realizing the stories that are fused with our cultural identity and indigeneity. From our migration we become alienated from our homeplace and the loss of home creates an existential crisis of being totally disconnected in all aspects: physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. The sorrow of being disconnected allows for the awakening of our imagination by creating moments of creative tension that gives way to a need for reconciliation. The return completes the cycle and reengages the moment of creation within a different context — age, environment, experience — for each individual who completed the cycle. This was the path for each of the research team members, no matter the age. As we view this process as ongoing, we can see how the development of a sovereign consciousness is

dependent upon these various stages embedded in cultural values and historical experiences.

School as Home

One question that emerges from this inquiry is how we can create home within our schools? If we entertain the notion that home is critical to sovereign development and engaging Indigenous youth in culture and ways of being and knowing, then we must be willing to include the concept of home in discussions about Indigenous school improvement. In my experience, we often spend a great deal of time on developing Indigenous curriculum or platforms for historical knowledge rather than creating the conditions by which student learning can flourish. In other words, what good is it to create a curriculum of Indigenous values when the values and framework of the system are not congruous with the learning that needs to take place? If, instead, we seek to create the conditions of home, and develop a path that explores creation, migration, and return, then we might see better results in creating a space where Western and Indigenous knowledge synthesis can take place. As Robert noted, “What we need to do, then, is really infuse all of that history, that ancestral knowledge, into the social studies curriculum, but also as a way of developing a methodology for examining critical issues of the community.”

Elder Wisdom, Chopping Wood, and Planting Seeds

The role and impact of elders and elder wisdom for Indigenous people has been well documented (Caldwell, Davis & Duboise, 2007; Iseke & Moore, 2011; Smith, 2011; Warner & Grint, 2006; Webster & Yanez, 2007). When Indigenous systems are broken, it begins with the language and concludes with elder wisdom. So part of the healing must

be in reconnecting with generational knowledge and creating spaces for that connection to flourish. The conversations with the research team pointed to the importance of elder knowledge and the need for creating space for that knowledge to be accessed and explored. As we look at decolonizing our systems, a necessary approach in revitalization means establishing elder connections to reinforce knowledge and methods of acquiring knowledge. The idea of simply listening to elders can be a foreign concept as Gloria noted that, “the young people don’t visit the elders” and the elders are very distressed by this fact. As individuals, our Indigenous elders are lost and lonely, but the deeper level is the disruption to the knowledge cycle that takes place when we are not connected to our elders and their knowledge. Gloria further recounted how difficult it was to try and get the local school district, which is governed by the Pueblo, to visit their elders. Limiting access to elder knowledge is another means of bureaucratic control by the colonizer. This is a prime example of how our Indigenous systems are co-opted even within the boundaries of the Pueblo itself.

From the conversations with the research team, two lines of elder knowledge emerged: cultural knowledge and lived experience. Each was embedded in the learning which took place while in the care of a grandparent. All of the team had incredibly strong memories and emotional connections to their grandparents and these connections further reinforced the cultural knowledge being transmitted. What was striking was that the strongest moments of learning were usually associated with a type of cultural action. Whether planting, chopping wood, baking, making moccasins, or some other culturally relevant activity, the combination of activity and oral transference created powerful and

authentic experiences for the entire team, and provided significant cultural grounding and cultural resonance. As Overmars (2010) notes,

Children were taught through modeling and storytelling; education was conducted in a way that was integrated with daily life and emphasized relationships.

Oftentimes elders and grandparents were responsible for the education of children while the parents were engaged in subsistence activities. (p. 91)

Additionally, the lived experience of community elders creates a path for understanding how Indigenous ways of being and knowing are enacted in life choices. The story by Eric and Cindy clearly demonstrates how they were affected by the compassionate actions of Eric's grandparents during the prison riot and how they align with cultural core values and Indigenous identity.

Ultimately, the community elders function as the tricksters within the colonial paradigm. Further, they are the embodiment of survivance. They are both keepers of values and cultural norms and disrupt colonized spaces through their existence and ability to transfer necessary cultural and community knowledge. We must be careful, however, not to confuse authentic, community-based elder knowledge with the romanticized Noble Savage version of elder wisdom, wherein everything that comes out of the mouth of an Indigenous elder is some sort of holy proclamation. The Noble Savage is a literary trope that emerged in the late 17th century that creates an image of Indigenous people as good in all things, pure, and connected to nature. This is the most pervasive of stereotypical images connected to Indigenous people in the United States and continues to infiltrate Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, specifically in the understandings of

connections with elders and the process of cultural transference documented in this inquiry (Atalay, 2008; Lee, 2011; Weaver, 1994).

Nevertheless, our connections to elders, as Indigenous people, are critical in maintaining our cultural integrity, specifically in the face of genocide and ethnocide. Our elders are the only link to past stories and ways of being which we have carried through colonization.

VII. IMPLICATIONS OF FURTHER RESEARCH (HANU HEY YA, NAYUUTSI GUNISHE)

As I sat down to complete this work, I realized there was something missing. I felt that although I had done much to illuminate Pueblo and Indigenous concepts, that this work could be better situated if I was able to organize the sections using Keresan, the Laguna language. I also felt it would be important for presenting this work being able to fully introduce myself and offer blessings in Keresan as well. Although I know some Keresan vocabulary, my father never taught me the language, as was noted in the language scene and noted by many in the research team. To remedy this, I called a friend back home in Laguna to ask about certain words and introductory phrases I could use for this work. We had a good conversation about this process and the words that I could use. As the phone call continued, I began to remember prayers I had heard at home growing up and little sentences and phrases of my father and grandmother and even my grandfather, who was fluent in both Laguna and Acoma Keresan. They were words I knew but which had drifted from my consciousness and it struck me that the journey is not unidirectional; that the spiral moves in both directions and the journey is also a path inward; the path home.

This inquiry serves as my return home and a step in the development of my sovereign consciousness. This document, this process, the three years of being away from Laguna and the need to return are all contained in this work. This work is very personal. Many times I found myself submerged in memories I had not visited for almost ten years since my father crossed over. This work has made me deeply, deeply grateful

for the wisdom and love from my family and all that I intend to pass on to my son as well as all the other students who may cross my journey.

This is the crux of the work, to live and be witness to sovereign consciousness, but also to be able to find ways of cultivating and encouraging the same. As Indigenous educators we must be able to assert our sovereign consciousness toward revitalizing and maintaining our own systems of knowledge as an act of survivance. As we weave this concept into the emerging practices of culturally sustaining pedagogy and nation building, we find ourselves once again at the center of the web, where the intersections of politics and practice overlap and present new paths for scholarship and action. The following implications give further insight into the questions and areas of further inquiry that have arisen from this process.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

“Cultural longevity depends on the ability to sustain cultural knowledges”

(Kovach, Introduction, para. 7).

The concept of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) is not new for those of us who have been working in Indigenous education systems. What is compelling is the strong articulation of this pedagogy and how, during this inquiry, the research team was fully engaged in this type of pedagogical work. Culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy focuses on developing systems that rest upon sovereignty and the concept of sovereign education (Forbes, 1999) that covers all ages across the life journey. As Thomas noted this type of pedagogy must focus on, “looking at it as a community-based model...really looking at the whole thing as a system, so connecting the dots, from early childhood to adult education.” What was fascinating was

how the inquiry process was a direct example of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy. This type of pedagogy should be built on more than food, feathers, and fun (Haynes Writer, 2008), as McCarty and Lee (2014) are careful to note. Drawing their argument further, we need to delve into the critical ontologies of family and home that are linked to culture and language in order to fully explore the nature of sovereignty and survivance. The stories of how we persist, how our parents and grandparents persist, are the stories of knowledge and learning that can provide a fundament framework for rebuilding, revitalizing, rehabilitating Indigenous systems through a culturally sustaining pedagogy and form the foundation for this type of pedagogy.

Nation Building

Nation building for Indigenous people is a big concept, whose roots are entangled with sovereignty and cultural revitalization. Encompassing issues of sustainability and citizenship (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008), the conversations around nation building most often revolve around economic development (Cornell & Kalt, 1992). This forces research and scholarship to conform to Western notions of capitalism and entrepreneurship that have often been detrimental to Indigenous people and cultural survival.

However, if we shift the conversation and speak of nation building as a function of creating a “someplace” based around systems designed around transmitting Indigenous ways of being and knowing, then we are able to explore the more holistic concepts illuminated in this inquiry. It is a paradigm shift that intends to focus the emphasis away from Western notions of nationality toward an Indigenous view of home. Additionally, in thinking of nation building we are forced to address the nature of individualism versus

collectivism. This necessitates navigating the delicate balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of the collective. Historically, individualism has been used as a way of breaking apart Indigenous communities in the name of expansion, colonialism, and economic necessity. Therefore, nation building is also a means of rehabilitating the Indigenous collective and reaffirming sovereign development.

Embedding this concept in our education systems parallels the work of this inquiry. The concept of nation building for Indigenous people, then, must necessarily expand beyond economic development, to incorporate cultural and intellectual development as a means of ensuring survival and sustainability. If we can look at strategies of educating Indigenous youth as a means of nation building, then we can capitalize on the shift from individual achievement to collective achievement. Research and practice can look at how we can break away from models of success for individual Indigenous students, those Western models of education which are intensely focused on the individual gain, and which continue to undermine indigenous epistemology, “there are few, if any, attempts to create a sense of community where the needs of the group would supersede the needs of the individual student” (Overmars, 2010, p. 89). Rather, our efforts should focus on how the collective can foster interconnected methods of education, which build upon the success of one another.

A Pueblo Education

Four years ago, I was asked to participate in developing a Pueblo-centric curriculum based upon prior work on Pueblo history and defining core values. During the process, there was an opportunity to conceptualize a new template and framework for the curriculum that would be uniquely Pueblo in its inception and delivery. However, for

purposes of expediency and colonial accommodation, the group ultimately chose to use a template utilized by the state of New Mexico. In many ways, that experience was the beginning of this work: an investigation on how we could develop an Indigenous education system which was not built upon a Western framework and provided insight into the ways in which Indigenous ways of being and knowing could authentically be communicated and transferred within a colonized system.

In trying to understand what a Pueblo education looks like, the team hit upon the single most defining feature: home. The essence of home is the strategy for both creating an authentic Pueblo education and a way of decolonizing our systems from the inside. Rather than trying to redevelop these systems through an intellectual exercise, our efforts must be around creating places that evoke the sense of home. Strengthening these connections for Pueblo students, and any Pueblo learners, allows the wisdom of the local ecology to be in rhythm with the needs of the community, which creates a dynamic synthesis of Indigenous and Western knowledge necessary for the sustainability of Pueblo communities, traditions and cultural practices.

Explorations

At the beginning of this inquiry, the concept of sovereign consciousness was constructed upon an extension of Freire's notion of critical consciousness from an Indigenous perspective. The unique political situation of Indigenous people in the United States calls for a continued exploration of sovereignty not only from a legal and political perspective but a philosophical one that looks at a reimagined concept of the sovereign individual within a collective context. In framing sovereignty as a process rather than an

end goal, we can find additional avenues to explore not only the nature of sovereignty but also the nature of Indigenous imagination, political agency, and cultural sustainability.

Building from a further understanding of sovereign consciousness, there is a need for expanding the scope of tribalogy to encompass the field of education. Although Howe conceived of the concept in relation to theater, there is a natural rhythm in adapting the concept to fit educational research on the experiences of Indigenous students, faculty, and community members. Too often, scholarship surrounding Indigenous education and Indigenous student experience limits its focus to established epistemological frameworks. Even the well-established framework of Indigenous knowledge might be limited in some areas due to the vague and abstract articulations and understandings this inquiry has striven to explore. In using a tribalogy framework, future research would be able to examine issues of marginality from a distinctly Indigenous perspective and utilize a unique and accessible vocabulary in order to explain educational theory in a fresh and dynamic way.

Additionally, further studies on the role of elders are needed. Not simply in a cultural context, although that will most likely be inevitable, but rather the impact of elders on learning and knowledge development for Indigenous people and Indigenous youth. Many of the works referenced the importance of elders but in a circumspect manner and the lack of studies on elder wisdom and intergenerational knowledge formation within a cultural and political context was noticeable. During the inquiry, it was clear how profound the impact grandparents had on the lives of the team members, and more conversations and scholarship could yield stronger results.

Finally, the implications beyond Indigenous communities is something that could be entertained based on this inquiry, especially the concept of home and how educators can work at creating spaces for learning which are representative of the spaces in which students are able to articulate where their best learning takes place.

VIII. OUR NEXT STEPS (HO'BA Y'A NÉE)

And so.

We return to the echoes of my grandmother: *and?*

After conversations and reflections we are faced with the critical question of how we move from theory to practice. How do we work toward decolonizing education systems for Indigenous students? How do we ground our systems in elements of home and elder connections? How do we articulate and develop Indigenous sovereign consciousness based on our own local ecology: place, mind and spirit? How do these understandings inform our work as educators in creating sovereign spaces of learning and exploration? And finally, what does this mean for Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership working within spaces of colonization and historical oppression? So where do these efforts begin?

To begin with, the leadership question is important to consider, as it will be those community, educational, and spiritual leaders whose efforts will be necessary in cultivating sovereign systems. Indeed the work must be done with these individuals in order to effect change as no matter how we seek to create new systems that focus on important structural and cultural refinements, if the leadership is unwilling or unable to support these efforts, through a lack of will, awareness, or capacity, then the work becomes unsustainable and is not in rhythm with the local ecology. The work in developing sovereign leaders must begin in this place of critical consciousness. Focusing on cultivating and actualizing a deep understanding of sovereignty and community/tribal core values is essential. But more important is a sense of context and sovereign intellectual development, which seeks to bridge Western and Indigenous frameworks to

create a consistent and tenable whole. As each of the stories of the research team highlighted, the importance of context and comparative framings was central to the development of their Indigenous and sovereign consciousness. From this understanding, sovereign leaders are distinctly able to synthesize and articulate their place between and within these contrasting frameworks as a matter of daily practice essential to deliberate identity formation.

If we apply the research findings to these efforts of sovereign leadership development, we see a unique pathway, which enables strong Indigenous leaders to emerge as the embodiment of Indigenous ways of being and knowing embedded in the concepts of home and elder wisdom. The concept of home contains aspects of community and tribal core values that must be internalized, reflected upon, and articulated, in order to recognize the essential nature of the local ecology. Elder wisdom provides the mechanism through which essential knowledge is transmitted and replicated. Elder wisdom also serves as the tether to home. As Violet stated previously, "there's always Indian tea." In other words, home and the wisdom of our elders creates a safe space in which imagination, exploration, and learning can take place. The idea that there is always a home is deeply resonant and illuminates a condition of indigeneity that stretches beyond a connection to land but speaks to the heart of space/place orientation as a defining characteristic of Indigenous epistemology. In developing a sense of Indigenous identity, critical to sovereign leadership, home and elder knowledge help to create the space in which transformational learning is formulated and fostered for the benefit of the community.

Creating the Trickster Space

As we move from self to community, we are still faced with the Western colonial paradigm, which pervades Indigenous systems. So deeply is this paradigm embedded in our Indigenous systems and individual identity formulation, that even when confronted with the evidence of the deliberately destructive Western practices, tribal community members are conditioned to defend the colonial methods of indoctrination as if they were traditional community values. Trickster discourse provides a way of disrupting the Western paradigm in such a way as to avoid a direct assault which forces the community into a defensive posture. Rather, the trickster creates a space where imagination is allowed to flourish within the framework of local Indigenous norms and social assumptions and reminds community members of traditional ways of being without drawing attention to the embedded constructs until the appropriate time for engagement. In this way, the sovereign leader serves as the trickster by reminding community members of their history, their values, and their sovereign strength. As with the Pueblo clowns, the sovereign leader assumes the responsibility of enforcer, reminding community members of their obligations and creating an awareness of their actions. The sovereign leader also serves as a guide for the community on the journey of exploration and return, either figuratively or metaphorically. Once the space is created for a new discourse, the sovereign leader then serves as tribalographer in realigning Indigenous history, culture, traditions, language, and representations from the margins to the center.

Cultivating Domains of Learning

Capitalizing on the disruption, the sovereign leadership can entertain new possibilities of indigenized structures, processes, and content. Utilizing Castellano's (2000) domains

of knowledge (traditional, empirical, and revealed) allows sovereign leaders the opportunity to develop a thoroughly indigenized system, which is not predicated upon a Western framework of knowledge formation. Further, these domains provide for natural connections to be made between Western and Indigenous content areas thereby replicating the process of sovereign consciousness outlined previously.

Finally, in (re)building Indigenous education systems, sovereign leadership can build their efforts in three key areas: 1) understanding, articulating, enacting and embodying Indigenous (local) core values, 2) creating a system of reflection on the Indigenous self in context, and 3) cultivating indigenous knowledge development as a means of systemic revitalization/rehabilitation. From this framework, Indigenous leaders and communities can begin to realize a new system of knowledge development and educational structures built from and woven throughout the local ecology. What we create then is a new concept of Indigenous education built upon the strengths, which emerge from a dynamic concept of sovereign consciousness, sustained by community capital and traditional understandings.

From Knowing to Being

There is one missing component in this equation of educating for sovereignty. Returning to Bronfenbrenner's (1974) ecology, we must turn our attention from the self outward toward the organization. As has been noted, the colonized system serves to disrupt the essential connections between individual and community. This was the state purpose of colonial schooling for Indigenous peoples throughout the world. Although no longer a direct effort, the systems of education for Indigenous people remain entrenched in colonial ideology, which seeks to alienate individuals from their community,

disrupting traditional methods of knowledge formation and perpetuating a colonial discourse of oppression and servitude. Within Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the school serves as a mediating force and factor between the self and the community. This is critical to understand, for when the mediating space, i.e. the organization or institution, is colonized, this creates the environment in which maintaining cultural integrity is essentially impossible. Therefore, the Indigenized school has the responsibility of enacting the mediating space in a way that is congruent with the values and realities of the local ecology. In this way, decolonization is not an academic exercise but rather a way of converting a static system into a dynamic and engaged one.

If we reimagine these organizations, these community institutions, in a way in which they can serve as a mediator between two spheres of knowledge, both Western and Indigenous, then the purpose of education for Indigenous students becomes radically altered. Rather than working against cultural knowledge and traditional values, these reimagined organizations will seek to support and enhance sovereign consciousness by allowing for a synthesis of disparate philosophies which functions to enable a dynamic context through which Indigenous identity can be formulated in a more organic and authentic way. The Indigenized organization focuses on supporting Indigenous domains of knowledge, rather than actively seeking to suppress those sources. In this way the Trickster discourse is fully realized, as the trickster serves to both disrupt and reinforce cultural and community norms by raising the awareness of those who are witness to the story or the actions. Sovereign consciousness is the natural extension of trickster discourse, as it follows the line from knowledge to action. When the system begins to shift, we can see how the circle is reformed as the individual is better able to articulate

sovereignty and understand the process of sovereign consciousness. The organization is critical in creating the pathway between the old ways of living and being and the new ways of asserting sovereignty within a colonized and politicized environment.

What does this mean for the sovereign leader? It means that the organization and the school system must be reimagined and revitalized in a way that looks at reestablishing those integral connections between individual and community. Not simply through historical or conceptual undertakings, as is the case with most attempts at Indigenous curriculum representation and alignment, but through the personal, the dynamic, the spiritual, and the present. Sovereign leaders must assume the role of the weaver and work toward establishing and maintaining these living connections and creating educational spaces in which the individual and the community are bound together.

Closing Thoughts (Da'wa'eh)

For the last three hundred years, the education of Indigenous students has been a constant and singular challenge for sovereignty and self-determination. The deliberate undermining of foundational knowledge has most often proven to be catastrophic for Indigenous people who wish to maintain cultural integrity. However, the future offers great promise for developing and reimagining Indigenous education systems that are built upon a foundation of developing the sovereign consciousness and creating spaces of Indigenous creativity, imagination and understanding.

At the center of creation

I stand and bear witness

On this St. Ann's Day.

At the edge of Blue Mountain

I raise my hands in thanks

to the mothers

who have cared

for the people

who have cared

for me

and I sing an honor song

to our mother

and I sing an honor song

to our sisters

and I sing an honor song

and I sing an honor song.

(Francis III, 2003, p. 45)

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Keresan (Laguna) Words/Phrases

Note: these are very loose translations of the Laguna Keresan phrases that appear in the titles of the chapters. As it is often difficult to have a direct translation of Indigenous words to English, I have attempted to create as concise a definition as possible.

Gu'wah'tze se hopa – the traditional Laguna Keresan greeting

Eh'kai'eh – I'm here; being in this place

We'dowa – knowledge or wisdom

Mah'meh schtriyah-matsenee – may the spirits be helpful

Shra-tse-ya – people talking (to one another)

O'doo'nahts - weaving

Hanu hey ya, nayuutsi gunishe – helping people along their life journeys

Ho'ba y'a née – going forward as one

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