

Unsettling Ourselves:

Reflections and Resources for Deconstructing Colonial Mentality



*a
sourcebook
compiled by
Unsettling Minnesota*

**foreword by
Derrick Jensen**
texts and guides from:
Andrea Smith • Waziyatawin
Dee Brown • Ward Churchill
Elizabeth Martinez • Denise Breton
UM collective members • and others

Reflections and Resources
for Deconstructing Colonial Mentality:
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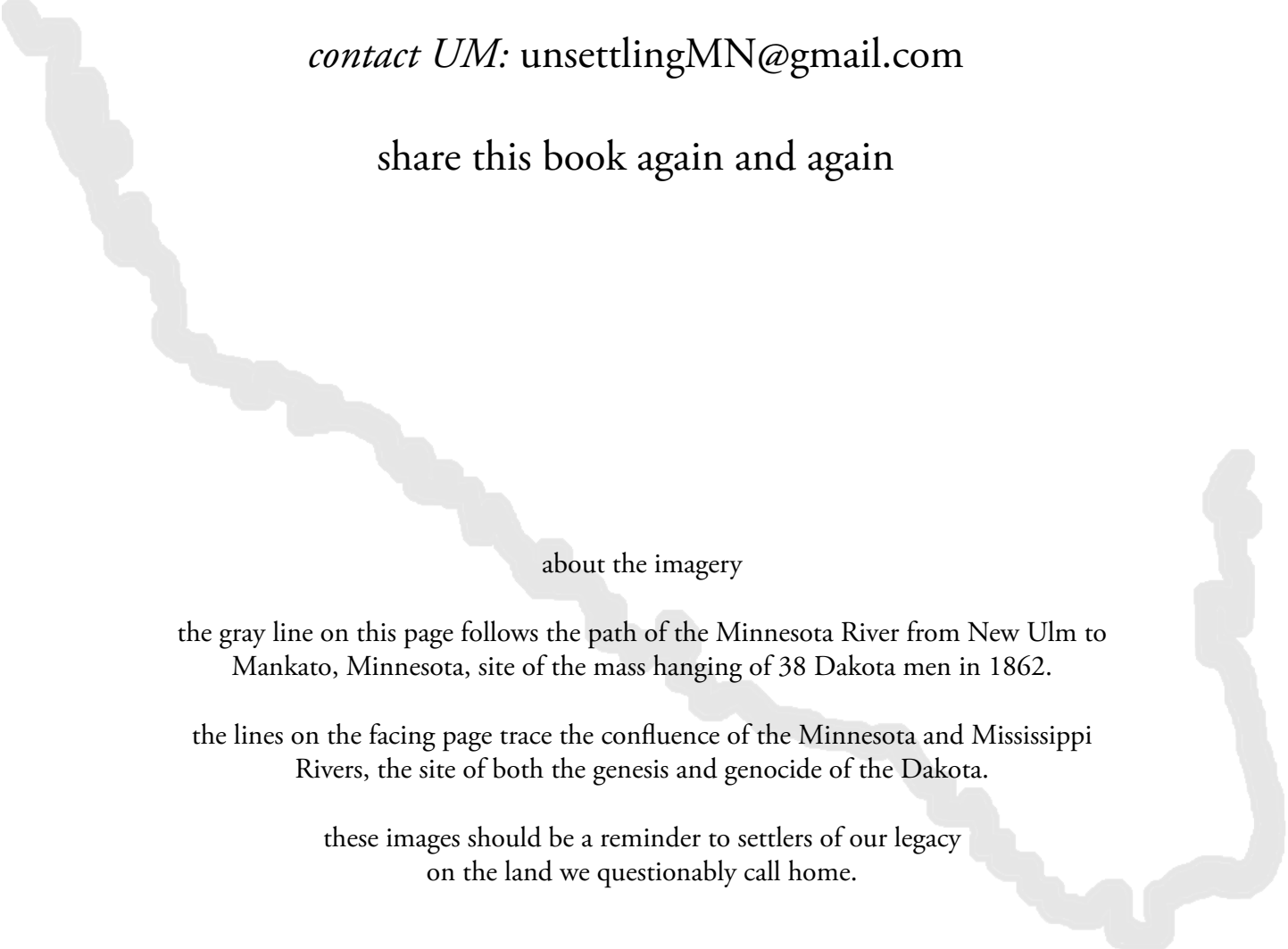
edited by and with contributions from the collective members

September, 2009

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about the imagery

the gray line on this page follows the path of the Minnesota River from New Ulm to Mankato, Minnesota, site of the mass hanging of 38 Dakota men in 1862.

the lines on the facing page trace the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, the site of both the genesis and genocide of the Dakota.

these images should be a reminder to settlers of our legacy
on the land we questionably call home.

SOURCES

Introduction by Unsettling Minnesota	5
Introduction by Wicanhpi Iyotan Win and Scott DeMuth	6
Foreword by Derrick Jensen	8

Part 1 | FOUNDATIONS

Unsettling Minnesota Points of Unity	11
How Minnesotans Wrested the Land From Dakota People from <i>What Does Justice Look Like?</i> by Waziyatawin	12
Working Definitions Unsettling Minnesota	42
“Their Manners Are Decorous and Praiseworthy” from <i>Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee</i> by Dee Brown	47
Desire to Belong: Reflections As a Settler Searching For Sense of Place Claire	54
Little Crow’s War from <i>Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee</i> by Dee Brown	57
What is White Supremacy? Elizabeth Martinez	71
Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide from <i>Conquest</i> by Andrea Smith	75

Part 2 | ALLYSHIP

This Is How It Seems To Me: Flo	90
Mirroring Colonial Power Structures in Radical Organizing: Rape Culture as Colonization and Community Accountability Claire	93
Shut the Fuck Up Dan Spalding	99
Unlearning: Thoughts on Allyship Lindsey	104
From a Male-bodied Settler Moving Towards Allyship... rivers	107
Anti-Classism (Author Unknown)	112
What You Can Do About Classism Class Action	113

Cultural Appropriation: Beginning Reflections from a Settler Standpoint	116
Courtney	
Spiritual Appropriation as Sexual Violence	118
from <i>Conquest</i> by Andrea Smith	
Indians Are Us? Reflections on the “Men’s Movement”	127
from <i>Indians ‘R’ Us: Culture and Genocide</i> by Ward Churchill	
Understanding Colonizer Status	151
Waziyatawin	

Part 3 | ORGANIZING

Un-Settling Settler Desires	156
Scott Morgensen	
Indigenous Feminism Without Apology	158
Andrea Smith	
White Supremacy Culture	161
Tema Okun	
Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing	169
Andrea Smith, from <i>The Color of Violence: the INCITE! Anthology</i>	
Talking to Settlers About Unsettling	173
Rita	
Brainstorm: the Beginnings of Unsettling Minnesota	174
Decolonizing Restorative Justice	176
Denise C. Breton	
Colonialism on the Ground	191
Waziyatawin	

APPENDIX

Additional Resources	200
Dakota Decolonization: Solidarity Education for Allies (syllabus)	202
Letter to the New Ulm Journal: Cherusci, Dakota Both Resisted Colonization Watershed	204
Nick	207
Decolonizing Ourselves: The True Face Behind Minnesota’s History	208
Ly	

Introduction

Unsettling Minnesota

In March 2009, Dakota activists Scott DeMuth and Wicanhpi Iyotan Win, along with activist and ally Paper Buck, offered a ten week course through the Twin Cities Experimental College entitled “Dakota Decolonization: Solidarity Education for Allies.” The class met weekly and from the outset we were challenged to profoundly re-examine our relationship to the land we live upon. The facilitators pushed us to address the genocide, colonial rule, and the settler mentality of illegitimate entitlement that has defined the recent history of Minnesota. As people with an interest in solidarity with the original people of this land, we were asked to explore what it means to hold settler privilege on stolen land. The question posed to us on the first evening of class was “Why is there not a word for white ally in the Dakota language?”

Our course material spanned a variety of topics as our facilitators moved us toward an understanding of allyship and solidarity. We explored spiritual appropriation, colonial history, and cultures of resistance and accountability, among other topics. Members of the class both talked and listened. We heard from each other, non-indigenous to this land, and from those who are indigenous to this land. We tapped into our own roots and histories as well as those of the state and its imposed rule.

Since the class ended, a group of us have come together as a collective which we’ve named Unsettling Minnesota (UM). Our name reflects both our political goals of decolonization as well as the personal processes of unlearning our colonizer mentalities in both heart and mind. We strive to become the allies for whom there is no word in the Dakota language.

Here we offer you, as a seed, a collection of readings about this land and the people who live upon it. We offer you this sourcebook in the hopes that it will serve as a guide in your own process of decolonization. We hope it will motivate and inspire you toward the necessary action for justice.

In remembrance that this land is Dakota land,

Unsettling Minnesota

Introduction

Wicanhpi Iyotan Win and Scott DeMuth

I admit, I was dragged into this project. Not the sourcebook per se, but the instruction of the class that eventually would bring rise to the sourcebook. My entire life, I have only seen a handful of white people actually sort through their colonizer history and settler mentality to become real, genuine allies to Indigenous peoples. The process that these people have undergone was so time consuming, so grueling and often times incredibly painful. It was amazing they hadn't stopped where most other people did, convincing themselves of their own white-savior/pan-Indian-ally mentality, entitled to our meetings, ceremonies and spaces. We do not need any more of those, and their creation was and remains a real danger in beginning to educate anyone on Indigenous issues.

Deconstruction of colonizer mentality inside of one's self is important, but it is not enough. This sourcebook is not the be-all and end-all of colonizer privilege, nor the definitive text on "How to be an Indian Ally." It is, however, a place to start. Yet the knowledge imparted by this class and by this sourcebook requires more than simple acknowledgement. It requires action. Action was the hope behind the conception of the class. Only through action will anyone see justice for wrongs perpetrated.

Like we have said many times, we are not looking for apologies, promises or confessions of guilt. We have gotten all of those and more in the past, and while those people may have been useful and supportive for a time, in the end, they behaved just as their ancestors had in the past, just like every single modern settler on Indigenous land: with sick superiority and entitlement to everything that is not theirs.

I hope for something different. I hope the beginnings of something else will grow and flourish, despite the legacy of genocide and land theft so many have inherited. I hope that gradually, this education and action will spread, and we will no longer have to fight for the basic human right to live as people in our own way and on our own land. I hope that one day, things like this class and this sourcebook will no longer be necessary. I hope that you will take this and use it to fight back against the colonial empires that plague us all. I hope that you will be different.

But I am not going to hold my breath.

-Wicanhpi Iyotan Win

A Challenge: If one word could be used to describe the class, it would be this.

The first challenge was just wrestling with the idea of whether or not settlers, who currently occupy our homeland, can even act as allies in Dakota struggles for liberation. Our experience with "allies" has consisted of liberals driven by guilt and feel-good politics, old white guys with their own agendas, and another class of individuals who can only be described as "New-Age fruitcakes."

The second challenge was the preparatory work between the three facilitators, and creating a bridge not only between Dakota, mixed-blood, and white, but also across genders and class.

It was also a challenge to my own identity as an anarchist. Facilitating the class fundamentally changed my conception of what it means to be an anarchist, not only for myself, but also my expectations of that community, and any community of resistance.

But more than anything else, we as facilitators presented a challenge. In the Dakota language, there is no word for settler-allies. The only word we have for settlers reflects our experience of settlers in both the short and long-term. They are takers.

This class was a challenge to settlers to start becoming real allies, and maybe challenge us to create a word for those people.

This class was a challenge to the descendants of settlers and colonizers to make a different choice than

those of their ancestors.

We challenged the participants to turn their guilt into grief and anger; their privilege into accountability; their half-hearted apologies into action; their complacency into resistance.

A challenge. Nothing else could encapsulate the experience of this class more than this one word. A challenge was presented to us all.

Yours, S.

Foreword

Derrick Jensen

The Osage chief Big Soldier said of the dominant culture, “I see and admire your manner of living. . . . In short you can do almost what you choose. You whites possess the power of subduing almost every animal to your use. You are surrounded by slaves. Every thing about you is in chains and you are slaves yourselves. I fear that if I should exchange my pursuits for yours, I too should become a slave.”

The essence of the dominant culture, of civilization, is slavery. It is based on slavery, and it requires slavery. It attempts to enslave the land, to enslave nonhumans, and to enslave humans. It attempts to get us all to believe that all relationships are based on slavery, based on domination, such that humans dominate the land and everyone who lives on it, men dominate women, whites dominate non-whites, the civilized dominate everyone. And overarching everyone is civilization, is the system itself. We are taught to believe that the system—civilization—is more important than life on earth.

If you don’t believe me, ask yourself, what do all of the mainstream so-called solutions to global warming have in common? The answer is that they’re all trying to save industrial capitalism, not the real world. They all take industrial capitalism as a given, as that which must be saved, as that which must be maintained at all costs (including the murder of the planet, the murder of all that is real), as the independent variable, as primary; and they take the real, physical world—filled with real physical beings who live, die, make the world more diverse—as secondary, as a dependent variable, as something (never someone, of course) which (never who) must conform to industrial capitalism or die. Even someone as smart and dedicated as Peter Montague, who used to run the indispensable Rachel’s Newsletter, can say, about an insane plan to “solve” global warming by burying carbon underground (which of course is where it was before some genius pumped it up and burned it), “What’s at stake: After trillions of tons of carbon dioxide have been buried in the deep earth, if even a tiny proportion of it leaks back out into the atmosphere, the planet could heat rapidly and civilization as we know it could be disrupted.”

No, Peter, it’s not civilization we should worry about. Disrupting civilization is a good thing for the planet, which means it’s a good thing. Far more problematical than the possibility that “civilization as we know it could be disrupted” is the very real possibility that the planet (both as we know it and as we have never bothered to learn about it) could die. Another example: in a speech in which he called for “urgent action to fight global warming,” and in which he called global warming “an emergency,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon gave the reason he wants urgent action to combat this emergency: “We must be actively engaged in confronting the global challenge of climate change, which is a serious threat to development everywhere.” Never mind it being a serious threat to the planet. He’s worried about “development,” which is in this case code language for industrialization.

This is insane. It is out of touch with physical reality. In all physical truth to be civilized is to be insane, to be out of one’s mind, out of one’s body, and out of all realistic touch with the physical world.

Civilization is a disease, a highly contagious disease that kills the land, that kills those who live with or on the land, that attempts to kill all who do not accede to becoming its slaves.

Civilization is an addiction. My dictionary defines the verb addict as “to bind, devote, or attach oneself as a servant, disciple, or adherent.” In Roman Law, an addiction was “A formal giving over or delivery by sentence of court. Hence, A surrender, or dedication, of any one to a master.” It comes from the same root as diction: dicere, meaning to pronounce, as in a judge pronouncing a sentence upon someone. To be addicted is to be a slave. To be a slave is to be addicted. The heroin ceases to serve the addict, and the addict begins to serve the heroin. We can say the same for civilization: it does not serve us, but rather we serve it.

There’s something desperately wrong with that.

We must stop this addiction, this disease, from enslaving us, stop it from killing the planet. And while there are many actions we can and must take to protect the land and the human and non-human people we love from this culture, in many ways the first and most important step we must take is to decolonize our hearts and minds. That process of decolonization will look different for every person. It will look different for men than women. It will look different for those who are indigenous than for those who are not.

But there are some common features. Decolonization is the process of breaking your identity with and loyalty to this culture—industrial capitalism, and more broadly civilization—and remembering your identification with and loyalty to the real physical world, including the land where you live. It means re-examining premises and stories the dominant culture handed down to you. It means seeing the harm the dominant culture does to other cultures, and to the planet. If you are a member of settler society, it means recognizing that you are living on stolen land and it means working to return that land to the humans whose blood has forever mixed with the soil. If you are an indigenous person it means never forgetting that your land was stolen, and it means working to repossess that land, and it means working to be repossessed by that land. It means recognizing that the luxuries of the dominant culture do not come free, but rather are paid for by other humans, by nonhumans, by the whole world. It means recognizing that we do not live in a functioning democracy, but rather in a corporate plutocracy, a government by, for, and of corporations. Decolonization means internalizing the implications of that. It means recognizing that neither technological progress nor increased GNP is good for the planet. It means recognizing that the dominant culture is not good for the planet. Decolonization means internalizing the implications of the fact that the dominant culture is killing the planet. It means determining that we will stop this culture from doing that. It means determining that we will not fail. It means remembering that the real world is more important than this social system: without a real world you don't have a social system, any social system. All of this is the barest beginnings of decolonizing. It is internal work that doesn't accomplish anything in the real world, but makes all further steps more likely, more feasible, and in many ways more strictly technical.

Another way to put this is what my friend the environmentalist and medical doctor John Osborn says: the first step toward cure is proper diagnosis. Decolonization means making that proper diagnosis.

There is an even more basic process common to all decolonization, no matter who you are. It is this. The Russian author Anton Chekhov once assigned a young writer to create a story in which someone squeezed every drop of slave's blood out of his body.

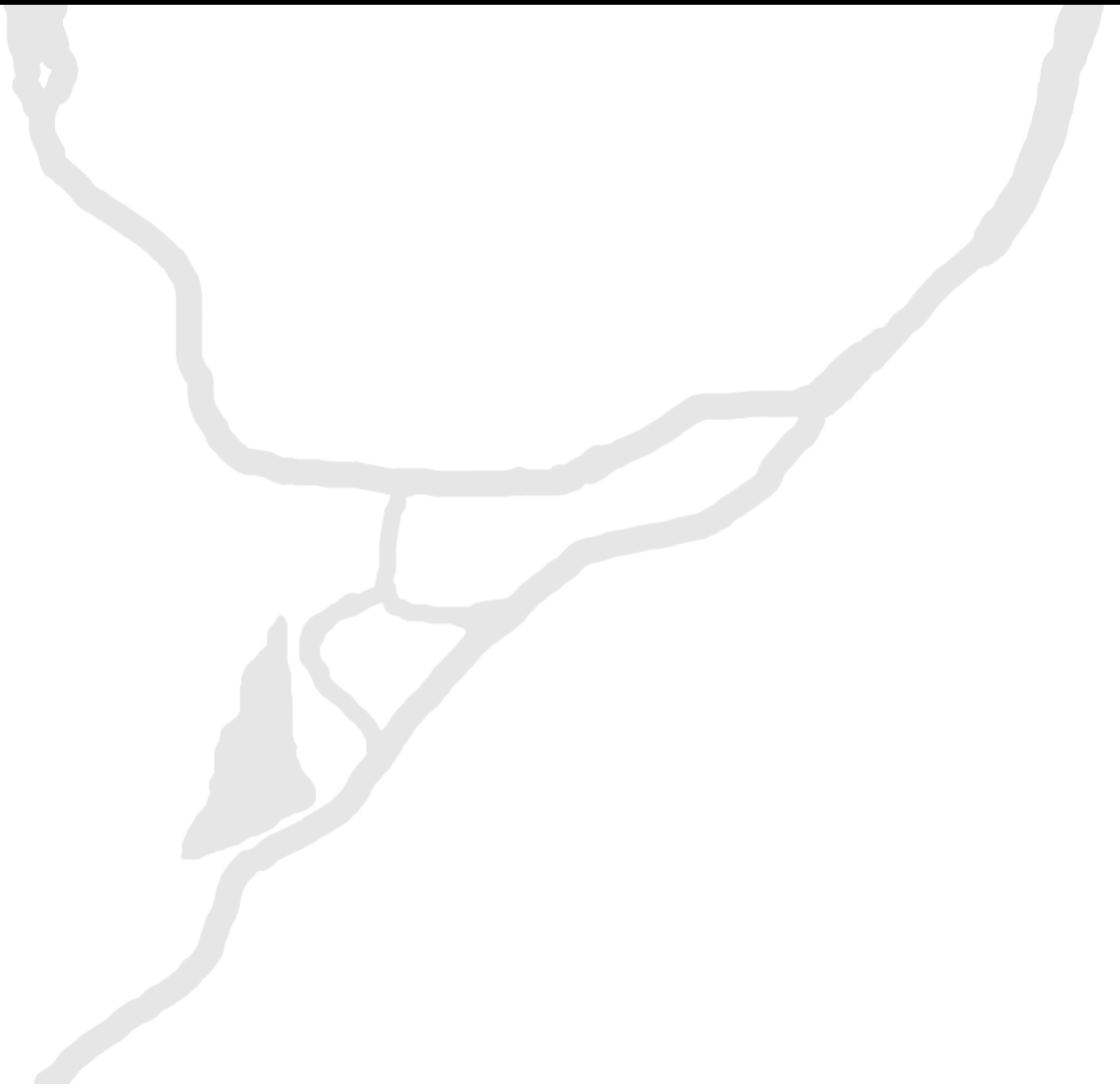
This is what we must do.

Civilization cannot survive free men and women who think and feel and act from their own hearts and minds, free men and women who are willing to act in defense of those they love.

This sourcebook is about squeezing every last drop of slave's blood out of your body. This sourcebook is about breaking your addiction to the dominant culture, and about remembering what it is to be a free woman or man, what it is to live with a land that lives with you, and how to protect and defend that land, and your freedom, as if your life depends on it.

Because in all physical truth it does.

Activist and philosopher Derrick Jensen is the author of Endgame, The Culture of Make Believe, and A Language Older than Words, among many other books; he lives in northern California. Jensen's philosophy and rousing calls to action are debated amongst radicals, environmentalists and solidarity activists worldwide. His writings and other works can be found at www.derrickjensen.org.



Part 1

FOUNDATIONS

Unsettling Minnesota Points of Unity

Unsettling Minnesota is a collective of non-Dakota people working in solidarity towards decolonization in Dakota homelands. We share these points of unity to guide our allyship and activism.

- All people not indigenous to North America who are living on this continent are settlers on stolen land. In particular, the vast land base surrounding the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers is the homeland of the Dakota Oyate--the original people of this land. We acknowledge that the state of Minnesota was founded through genocide and colonization of indigenous peoples-- which continues today and from which settlers directly benefit.
- All settlers do not benefit equally from the settler-colonial state, nor did all settlers emigrate here of their own free will. Specifically, we see slavery, hetero-patriarchy, white supremacy, market imperialism, and capitalist class structures as among the primary tools of colonization. These tools divide communities and determine peoples relative access to power. Therefore, anti-oppression solidarity between settler communities is necessary for decolonization. We work to build anti-colonial movements that actively combat all forms of oppression.
- We acknowledge that settlers are not entitled to live on this land. We accept that decolonization means the revitalization of Dakota sovereignty, and an end to settler domination of life, lands, and peoples in Dakota territories. All decisions regarding human interaction with this land base, including who lives on it, are rightfully those of the Dakota Oyate and the Oceti Sakowin.
- As settlers and non-Dakota people acting in solidarity, it is our responsibility to proactively challenge and dismantle colonialist thought and behavior in the communities we identify ourselves to be part of. As people within communities that maintain and benefit from colonization, we are intimately positioned to do this work.
- We understand that allies cannot be self-defined; they must be claimed by the people they seek to ally with. We organize our solidarity efforts around direct communication, responsiveness, and accountability to Dakota people fighting for decolonization and liberation.
- We are committed to dismantling all systems of oppression, whether they are found in institutional power structures, interpersonal relationships, or within ourselves. Individually and as a collective, we work compassionately to support each other through these processes. Participation in struggle requires each of us to engage in both solidarity and our own liberation: to be accountable for all privileges carried, while also struggling for liberation from internalized and/or experienced oppression. We seek to build a healthy culture of resistance, accountability, and sustenance.

How Minnesotans Wrested the Land from Dakota People

The Sioux Indians must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the State.

— GOVERNOR ALEXANDER RAMSEY, 1862

Banishment from the homeland, the diaspora of a nation, the exile of a people, and ongoing colonization—these are the legacies Minnesotans and Americans have left to Dakota people. What do these legacies mean to the hearts and spirits of Dakota people? Most of us do not care to think too deeply about them, because the difficulties of everyday living as colonized peoples would be infinitely more difficult if we dwelt in a place of inconsolable grief. So, we do not contemplate at length that place of pain and grief and we attempt to avert our eyes when it is brought to our attention. Indeed, even non-colonized people prefer not to dwell in this history because it has the potential to fill them with grief, outrage, guilt, and despair.

Today, I am going to ask you, the reader, to join me on a journey into that dreaded place. I want you to contemplate it with me, experience the sense of moral indignation, and, finally, emerge with a strengthened spirit ready to engage in the Dakota struggle for justice. In the end, it is my hope that we might restore the humanity of everyone.

A Story of Dakota Creation

First, however, I want to share with you a story. This is the creation story of the *Bdewakanunwan* (Dwellers by Mystic Lake)

What Does Justice Look Like?

The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota

and

Waziyatawin, Ph.D.



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recounted from memory as I heard respected storyteller Dale Childs tell it on many occasions. Mr. Childs was from the Prairie Island Reservation located in southeastern Minnesota, and though he passed away a number of years ago, his stories remain with us.¹

A very long time ago, *Wakantanka* (The Great Mystery) created many children. As he did so, he placed a part of himself into each being. For instance, he gave the quality of swiftness to the deer; perseverance to the turtle, strength to the buffalo, and majesty to the eagle. Every bird, plant, animal, and tree was created so that each was unique and had a part of *Wakantanka*.

One day, *Wakantanka* was walking in the *Paha Sapa*, or the Black Hills, and he was looking sad. As he was walking he began to shed tears. They would fall from his eye and would splash and dry into nuggets of gold. *Maka*, the Earth, also known as *Ina*, meaning Mother in our language, wondered why her husband was sad. She asked, "Have I offended you in some way? Have I been unfaithful to you? Have I not given you many children?" When he responded negatively to all those questions, she asked, "Why then are you looking so sad? Why do I see tears fall?"

Wakantanka replied, "I have many children and they are all beautiful, but I have another piece of myself to give. When our children are frightened, they nestle in you for safety. When they are thirsty, they turn to your waters. And, when they need sustenance, they receive food from your meadows. I want children who speak to me and call me by name." *Wakantanka* wanted a creature to look to him for help and to need him.

When *Ina Maka* heard this, she wanted to give a piece of herself to help create a being who would look like her husband. She called on the waters to help her. She instructed them to come at her in great magnitude and carve into her flesh. But, the waters did not want to harm her. She reassured them that they would not harm her; that it was a gift she wished to give. So they came at her and began to carve into *Ina's* body, but the first attempt

was unsuccessful. It didn't work. So she then called on the help of the winds from the four directions. They also refused at first, saying they did not want to harm her. She told them, "You will not harm me. Blow into my body." So the winds agreed. They blew a giant gash into her and exposed the red clay of her body. She called to *Wakantanka*, "My body is open to you. Reach into my body and make a body in the image of yourself."

This was the creation of the first human being. *Ina* told *Wakantanka*, "You will recognize your children. They will be as red as the day. They will call to you, give thanks to you, and share with you your voice." *Wakantanka* put everything into his two-legged children. He gave them love, and the ability to communicate that love. They have a special voice that *Wakantanka* wanted to hear. With that voice we can say, "Thank you for all the blessings," or "On this day I give you thanks." When we are scared, we go to our father and we say, "Look down upon me. Have pity on me. Have pity on my relatives. Help us."

This particular story marks what I believe to be the beginning of interaction between human beings, the river the Dakota refer to as *Hahawakpa* (The River of Falls), and *Minnesota Makocce*. In the story I just told, *Ina Maka*, or Mother Earth, instructed the waters to come at her. That first time they were unable to complete their task without the help of the winds. But, in this first attempt, the waters were coming with such force that they created images in rock that could be found along the Mississippi River. Dakota people call the first of those *Caske Tanka* and he is located just south of Red Wing. He was given this name because *Caske* is the name we give to the first-born child in the Dakota family if the child is male, and because *Tanka* means large and this refers to the larger child. Non-Dakota people call this outcropping Barn's Bluff. Dakota people could observe the profile of a Dakota face there until 1954 when settler society dynamited that portion so that they could construct a bridge across the Mississippi River from Minnesota to Wisconsin. Observers can still find another

rock image, a little further down river from *Caske Tanka* and it is known as *Caske Cistinna*, *cistinna* meaning little or small in the Dakota language.

Bdewakantunwan Dakota elders tell of the actual creation of humans occurring in our homeland of *Minisota Makoce*, but specifically at the place called *Maka Cokaya Kin*, or the Center of the Earth. This place is at *Bdote*, which means the joining or juncture of two bodies of water and in this instance refers to the area where the Minnesota River joins the Mississippi. Minnesotans have retained this word as *Mendota* and it is located in the midst of the Twin Cities, with Fort Snelling overlooking the sacred juncture of *Bdote*.

The Dakota people comprise four fires of the *Oceti Sakowin* (Seven Council Fires) that make up the Oyate. They include the *Bdewakantunwan* (Dwellers by Mystic Lake), the *Wahpekute* (Shooters of the Leaves), *Wahpetunwan* (Dwellers Among the Leaves), and the *Sisitunwan* (Dwellers by the Fish Campground).

The creation account I just shared is for Dakota people. I am not sharing it with the expectation that non-Dakota people will subscribe to it or that they will begin to conceive of *Bdote* as their place of origin. Our origin story does not dictate that because the *Bdewakantunwan* emerged at *Bdote*, that all human populations must have emerged there. That is not our way. Instead, the reason I am sharing this story is to demonstrate the ancient and sacred relations we have with this landscape. This is the same sacred and ancient relationship that Christians, Jews, and Muslims have with Middle Eastern sites such as Jerusalem, Mecca, or Nazareth. I am also sharing this story to demonstrate that we do not believe we emigrated from any other place. Rather, our stories assert that we were created here and that we have always lived here. We recognize that we traveled to and lived in other parts of North America over the centuries. We also recognize that our territorial boundaries have fluctuated during the thousands of years we have inhabited this land.² And, we recognize

that other Indigenous nations shared *Minisota Makoce* with us for periods of time.³ However, our historical record indicates that there is absolutely no ambiguity about *Minisota* as Dakota homeland.

White Accounts Regarding the Dakota Past

Anthropologists, on the other hand, have proposed a variety of scenarios regarding Dakota presence in Minnesota. They have created an elaborate system of classifications, names, and methods for analyzing Indigenous life before Europeans. University of Minnesota anthropologist Guy Gibbon, for example, has developed a model of "Sioux Prehistory." He based his model on archeological evidence, including the despicable study of Indigenous human remains (obtained without Indigenous consent), and linguistic data. While he admits, "At present, the data upon which this reconstruction of the prehistory of the Sioux is based are weak," he nonetheless asserts the claim that the ancestral "Sioux" arrived from the Central Mississippi Valley shortly before AD 800. Further, he states that it was not until about AD 1300 that we became the People of the Seven Council Fires.

Gibbon's assertions are extremely problematic because they run contrary to every shred of Indigenous evidence and some of his assertions are simply fabrications. This occurs any time academics attempt to imagine the past of another group of human beings based on faulty assumptions (in this case that Dakota people must have originated from elsewhere). Gibbon's assertions run contrary to thousands of years of oral tradition that places Dakota people within *Minisota Makoce*. Furthermore, it is problematic, to say the least, to attribute a cultural (or national) identity to people occupying a specific site based on archeological evidence. Even when ancient cultures leave a different archeological record than more recently dated sites, it does not preclude an ancestral connection between the two. Rather, it may simply indicate that the culture has not been static.

Other archeologists, however, do acknowledge the ancient relationship we have with the land. For example, another twentieth-century scholar, Eldon Johnson, states “The ancestors of the native American groups encountered by the French visitors in the seventeenth century are Minnesota’s prehistoric peoples,” and this would certainly include the Dakota people.⁴

Still other ethnologists, especially early ones, claim that all the tribes of the Siouan linguistic stock traveled from the East. Royal Hassrick, for example, claims Dakota people arrived from the Northeast, while Albert Jenks asserts that we arrived from the eastern Piedmont and coastal regions of what are now Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina before traveling westward to this region (apparently after first arriving via the Bering Strait land bridge and traversing the continent to be positioned on the eastern seashores).⁵ Dakota people, however, do not attribute our origins to the eastern seaboard. We also do not attribute our origins to a crossing from Asia via the Bering Strait.

Unfortunately, part of the American imperial enterprise has been to define and rename Indigenous Peoples to diminish our humanity and exploit our resources. In fact, this has been such a dehumanizing practice perpetrated by colonizing powers against Indigenous Peoples that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states “Indigenous Peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names of communities, places and persons.”⁶ The Dakota Oyate has also been a victim of this radical renaming of people and our landscape.

Anthropologists such as Gibbon, for example, have worked very hard to wrest interpretive control away from Dakota people regarding our own history and origins. They can then supplant our interpretations with their own colonialist vision. This is the ultimate imperial enterprise. Consequently, we have a whole slew of unrecognizable names attributed to Dakota people that

include Gibbon’s unruly verbiage of bands known as the “Terminal Woodland Blackduck-Kathio-Clam River Continuum.”⁷ Gibbon is merely carrying on an academic tradition that involves naming the people according to site locations—primarily site locations that colonizing society has already stripped of Indigenous names and supplanted with colonialist names. This only serves to eradicate further Indigenous presence and Indigenous claims. University of Minnesota scholars such as Albert E. Jenks and Lloyd A. Wilford began this practice in Minnesota.⁸

We simply call these populations of people our ancestors. Most people would agree with the notion that Dakota people have the exclusive right to determine who is Dakota today (a right of self-determination that is even held up in U.S. colonial courts), yet most archeologists still unabashedly believe they have a right to define Dakota people of the past regardless of Dakota assertions.

While Dakota oral traditions reach back thousands of years, the first written *Wasicū* (White) records documenting our populations and locations date back to the early French explorers and missionaries of the mid–seventeenth century.⁹ Historian Gary Anderson estimates that the population of Dakota people in the Mississippi watershed in 1650 was approximately 38,000, but that by 1780 the population was reduced to about 25,000 due to economic pressures, warfare, and disease. If his estimates are accurate, this indicates a population loss of 35 percent without factoring in normal rates of population growth, all which occurred before massive waves of White invasion.¹⁰

Anishinabe Invasion

Life began to change radically for Dakota people once French fur traders penetrated Dakota territory and Anishinabe people successfully invaded our northern lands. The Anishinabe were facing European invasion and colonization of their lands in the east, as well as the consequent intertribal warfare characteristic

the Mdewakantunwan Dakota occupied the Mille Lacs region and the upper Rum River, Wahpetunwan Dakota at Sandy Lake north and west of Mille Lacs, the Sisitunwan Dakota north of Cass and Winnibegoshish lakes, the Ihankunwan at Leech Lake, the Red River, and Pipestone, and the Titunwan around Big Stone Lake and Lake Traverse.¹⁴ With the exceptions of the Pipestone, Big Stone Lake, and Lake Traverse village sites, every other site is now associated with the Anishinabe. Winchell also attributed the ancient mounds at Mille Lacs to the ancient "Sioux," citing the then "expert" opinion of Jacob V. Brower who had conducted an early archeological survey of the Mille Lacs site.¹⁵

Writers on the Dakota past have generally attributed the Dakota loss of our northern homeland to the weakening of our population to disease and the widespread acquisition of European arms by Anishinabe people prior to Dakota acquisition of European arms. Nineteenth-century missionary Samuel Pond, for instance, noted "The Ojibways obtained fire-arms sooner than the Dakotas, and therefore were able to drive them out of the wooded country about the sources of the Mississippi and Rum rivers. If they had come into possession of fire-arms as early as their enemies did, it is not probable that they would have lost any of their lands."¹⁶

Scholars frequently indicate the eagerness with which the Dakota embraced the fur trade, but this eagerness was at least, in part, an act necessary for survival.¹⁷ In what would become an arms race among Indigenous populations, each Indigenous nation was drawn into the European market economy. By the late seventeenth century when the French established fur-trade relations, Anishinabe people had already moved into the Lake Superior area. This began an era of violent confrontations. Historian Roy Meyer suggests it was likely that the "Chippewas, moving westward along the south shore of Lake Superior and armed with firearms obtained through trade, developed expansionist ambitions similar to those displayed earlier by the Hurons and Ottawas."¹⁸ However, regardless of whether the Anishinabe

4 ♦ WHAT DOES JUSTICE LOOK LIKE?

of populations struggling for survival in a rapidly changing landscape. Reasons for Anishinabe migration into Dakota lands are diverse, however, and some claim that climate changes compelled Anishinabe relocation before European contact.¹¹

According to their oral tradition (prior to their settlement of the Lake Superior area that included the northern homelands of Dakota people), Anishinabe people resided on the Atlantic Ocean near the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River. There they suffered misery and death and began following the Megis (seashell) westward until they finally arrived, centuries later, on the Island of LaPointe where the people settled.¹² La Pointe Island is located off the shore of northern Wisconsin in Lake Superior. Edward Benton Banai relates the message of their first prophet who said to the people, "In the time of the First Fire, the Anishinabe nation will rise up and follow the sacred shell of the Midewiwin Lodge. The Midewiwin Lodge will serve as a rallying point for the people and its traditional ways will be the source of much strength. The Sacred Megis will lead the way to the chosen ground of the Anishinabe. You are to look for a turtle shaped island that is linked to the purification of the earth. You will find such an island at the beginning and at the end of your journey. There will be seven stopping places along the way. You will know the chosen ground has been reached when you come to a land where food grows on water. If you do not move you will be destroyed."¹³ The rice beds they found belonged to the Dakota Oyate. According to their oral tradition, then, the Anishinabe had a divine sanction to occupy what was Dakota homeland. Centuries of violence and animosity have consequently characterized relations between our two nations.

The areas in Minnesota typically associated with Anishinabe people today are those they took by force from Dakota people. According to early twentieth-century historian Newton Winchell's research, for example, in the time of Father Louis Hennepin's missionary and exploratory work among the Dakota (late seventeenth century), various Dakota bands were located as follows:

were interested in empire or simply acquiring adequate lands to ensure the survival of their people, the Dakota population suffered severe losses. European invasion and colonization of Indigenous lands throughout the continent had set into motion a chain of events that was eventually detrimental to all Indigenous Peoples.

Historians generally consider the well-known Battle of Kathio, estimated to have occurred between 1745 and 1750, to be one of the last major battles between the Anishinabe and the Dakota. It represented the final push of Dakota people out of our northern homeland. Anishinabe historian William Warren characterized the Anishinabe-Dakota relationship as that of “mortal enemies, waging against each other a bloody and exterminating warfare.”¹⁹ Warren, however, also relates examples of peaceful interactions over spans of several years in which Dakota and Anishinabe people visited each other’s villages and married into each other’s families.²⁰ Nonetheless, these periods of peace were short-lived and by the mid-eighteenth century hostilities escalated again culminating in a fierce battle at Mille Lacs.

Warren attributes Anishinabe success at Mille Lacs to “more deadly weaponry” and details an incident in which Ojibway warriors put small bundles of gun powder in the smoke-holes of Dakota homes: “Not having as yet, like the more fortunate Ojibways, been blessed with the presence of White traders, the Dakotas were still ignorant of the gunpowder.” Thus, at the end of the three-day struggle, the Dakota people were “swept away for ever from their favorite village sites.”²¹ Some of the fleeing Dakota settled in a village along the Rum River for a period, but the Anishinabe drove them out, too, after the battle of Crow Wing in 1770. From that point forward, the Dakota people were permanently forced from this northern region.²² According to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Web site, their ancestors arrived in the area about 1700, but no mention is made of battles with the Dakota.²³

While Dakota people had engaged in some form of agriculture for centuries prior to Anishinabe and European invasion,

Dakota people relied heavily on wild rice and maple sugar as important food sources. While these could be obtained on a much smaller scale in southern Minnesota (patches of wild rice existed along small stretches of the Minnesota River, for example), the abundance with which those food sources were found in northern Minnesota could not be replicated. This meant the dramatic loss of subsistence for Dakota people that continues to the present day.

The United States government then codified and legalized the occupation of Dakota lands by Anishinabe people when they entered into treaties with the Anishinabe. Through treaties, the Anishinabe ceded and reserved for themselves parcels of Dakota homeland. The Anishinabe Treaty of 1837, for example, ceded much of the land north of the boundary articulated in an 1825 agreement (an agreement orchestrated by the United States government between the Anishinabe and Dakota). Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan and Governor William Clark of Missouri mediated the 1825 treaty on behalf of the United States. Through this agreement, the United States intended to create a territorial boundary between “Chippewa” and “Sioux” lands so that our two nations would refrain from intertribal warfare. This boundary, however, became the dividing line for future Anishinabe land cessions.

Despite its intent, the 1825 agreement was not successful in ensuring peace between the Dakota and Anishinabe, and violent relations continued. For example, Indian Agent Major Lawrence Taliaferro wrote to the Fort Snelling commander, Major Bliss, in 1835 that “the Chippewa would not observe the landmarks, but on the contrary had been throwing them down and attempting to demolish many of them.” He believed violence would consequently erupt because their country was not sufficient for the population and they would, thus, force themselves onto Dakota hunting grounds.²⁴ Periodic violence persisted between the Anishinabe and the Dakota until 1862–63.

These tensions became secondary to the threat posed by

invading Whites, however, and a ruthlessly expansionist United States government. Land cessions, for both Indigenous nations, were soon wrested away using whatever means were necessary.

Wasicu Invasion

The hunger for Indigenous lands by the swelling American population cannot be overstated. In fact, as Minnesota history will demonstrate, Europeans and Euro-Americans would commit some of the most heinous crimes in human history to obtain Indigenous lands. Unfortunately, Minnesota history is not unique. Europeans and Americans perpetrated similar crimes against humanity from coast to coast upon hundreds of Indigenous nations.

By the mid-nineteenth century when Whites began flooding into what was first claimed by them as Northwest Territory (1797), then Wisconsin Territory (1836), and then Minnesota Territory (1849), they had already established a pattern of aggression and violence. Indian traders were the advance guard for an exploitative process that would not end until settler society had stripped Indigenous Peoples of nearly everything we held dear. Military forts, ultimately designed to protect White economic interests, followed the traders and they, in turn, provided a base of protection for the soldiers, missionaries, and thousands of predominantly White settlers who followed. Whites who came to Minnesota had no intention of living side by side with either Dakota or Anishinabe Peoples; rather they arrived believing that the “Indian problem” would be dispelled in short order. They also believed the risk-taking associated with their early arrival would be rewarded with the best and biggest parcels of land for the smallest cost.

The exceptions to this rule might be the traders whose business required them to often live amongst the “Indians” so they could better exploit them (and their actions were hardly benign), or the missionaries and Indian agents whose professions

required their living in close proximity to the “savages” (about whom they professed to be concerned). However, even the missionaries and agents had no intention of living side by side with “savages” indefinitely. Instead, they intended to engage in a radical campaign to “civilize” and “Christianize” the “heathen red men.” While many Americans tend to look fondly on the work of missionaries and do-gooders claiming to bring lightness to the corners of the world where all the dark-skinned people dwell, this is not how Indigenous Peoples usually perceive their efforts. We identify these practices not only as a form of fanatical religious imperialism, but also as a form of ethnocide.

Thus, we must be clear that there was nothing benign about the actions or the goals of those Americans and Europeans who arrived in Dakota homeland. On the contrary, the first populations to invade these lands did so with complete disregard for the welfare or humanity of the Peoples who already dwelt here. Americans simply wanted the land and they did not care what they would have to do to obtain it.

Legalized Land Theft

Treaties are peculiar documents in United States history. Theoretically, if nations negotiate an agreement and one side violates the terms of the treaty, that unilateral violation would render the treaty null and void, and conditions would return to their pre-treaty status.²⁵ This has not been the case, however, when the United States consistently violated their treaty obligations to Indigenous nations. Vine Deloria Jr. shocked the country when in 1969 he wrote in the midst of the Cold War, “America has yet to keep one Indian treaty or agreement despite the fact that the United States government signed over four hundred such treaties and agreements with Indian tribes. It would take Russia another century to make and break as many treaties as the United States has already violated.”²⁶ Consequently, Indigenous nation after Indigenous nation has ceded lands and resources

for promises the U.S. never fulfilled. Or, such fraudulent tactics were used to obtain Indigenous signatures that the treaties never should have been ratified. By the mid-nineteenth century, most of the treaties had simply become a form of legalized land theft. Nowhere is this more apparent than the treaties negotiated with the Dakota people of Minnesota.

The first Dakota land cession demonstrates the duplicitous nature of U.S. negotiations with our ancestors as well as the legal farce that would typify all subsequent treaties. In 1805, Zebulon Pike was commissioned by the federal government to negotiate a treaty for the purpose of establishing U.S. sovereignty in the region. Through the acquisition of Dakota lands, the Americans could build a military post, thereby challenging British influence and presence. Dakota people were caught in a contest between imperial powers, each intent on acquiring and exploiting Indigenous lands and resources for their own purposes. Pike feebly attempted to secure Dakota signatures to the treaty, but when he could only secure two, it did not stop him from proceeding as though the treaty had a measure of legitimacy (nor did it stop the Senate from later ratifying the treaty). At best, two signatures could represent only two villages and two of the Seven Council Fires of the Dakota Oyate (and it is more likely they were both from the Bdewakantunwan Council Fire). This was grossly inadequate for a treaty that was supposed to represent the will and agreement of the entire "Sioux" nation, which even Pike estimated to be 21,675.²⁷

This treaty demonstrates that the U.S. government was not interested in fair negotiations, just that it could claim to have someone's signature on record agreeing to relinquish land. Moreover, at the end of the council, Pike provided 60 gallons of liquor to the Dakota men in attendance.²⁸ U.S. government negotiators frequently employed this method of enticement to achieve their desired aims in dealings with Indigenous Peoples. It helped them achieve the advantage in treaty negotiations by gaining the acquiescence of individuals they could lure with the

promise of alcohol, or in some cases, by lubricating the deal-making at the start. In 1805, at the time of this treaty negotiation, Dakota people would have likely never experienced alcohol in that quantity before.

In addition, Pike never specified an amount for payment to the Dakota Oyate in the treaty, so when it was finally ratified in 1808, the Senate filled in the blank. They directed the U.S. government to pay only one hundredth of the amount initially estimated by Pike for acceptable payment. While \$200 worth of gifts and alcohol were distributed at the treaty site to the two signatories, in the end, the United States claimed at least 100,000 acres of prime real estate in what is now the Twin Cities metropolitan area for the unconscionable price of \$2,000, a mere two cents an acre. Even then, it was not until 1819 that the U.S. finally offered \$2,000 in goods to the Dakota as belated payment.²⁹ This treaty set the tone for Dakota–U.S. relations and Dakota people have never forgotten the unethical means by which the United States initially took our lands.

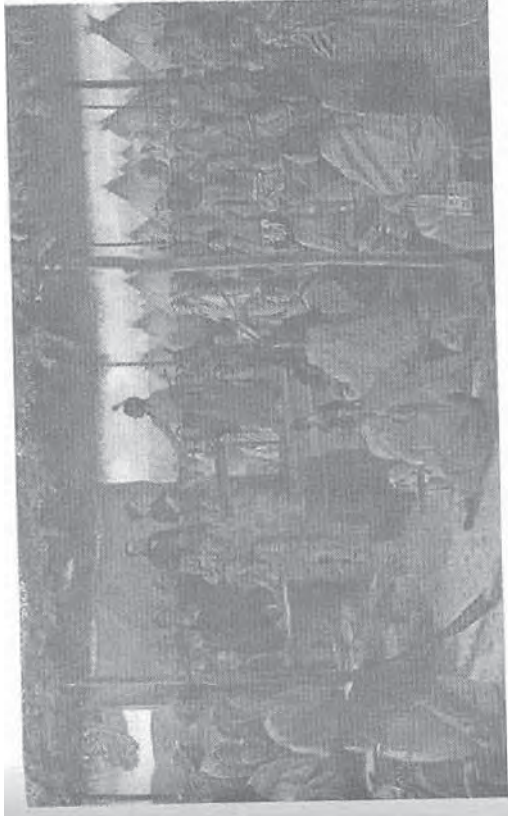
By the nineteenth century, the U.S. government realized that it could not afford costly wars with every Indigenous nation. Yet, at the same time, its expansionist policies required somehow wresting control of Indigenous lands away from Indigenous Peoples. Europeans and Euro-Americans assumed when they invaded Indigenous lands that the United States government would eventually acquire those lands. For example, an 1849 map of southern Minnesota depicting potential railway lines indicates that long before the U.S. would negotiate the 1851 treaties (which eventually ceded those lands and confined Dakota people to reservations along the Minnesota River), it was assumed that Dakota people would be dispossessed from that land base. Americans obtained every square inch of land they now occupy at the expense of Indigenous Peoples. Similarly, Minnesotans obtained every acre of Minnesota at the expense of Indigenous Peoples. Treaties became a means to avoid warfare, temporarily at least, while also gaining access to Dakota lands

and resources.³⁰ The Treaty of 1805 exemplified that point and the United States continued to use rank means to secure Dakota lands. In future years, our people fared no better in succeeding treaty negotiations. The United States further divested us of our homeland in the treaties of 1830, 1837, 1851, and 1858. The most outrageous treaty examples, however, are the Treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota negotiated in 1851.

1851 Treaties

In his chapter detailing these treaty negotiations, entitled "The Monstrous Conspiracy" historian Roy Meyer describes how Dakota leaders were alternately promised and threatened in order to secure signatures on treaties. He argues that these treaties are "equal in infamy to anything else in the long history of injustice perpetrated upon the Indians by the authorized representatives of the United States government in the name of that government."³¹

The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux (negotiated with the Sisseton and Wahpetunwan) and the Treaty of Mendota (negotiated with the Bdewakantunwan and the Wahpekuite) ceded all remaining Dakota land claims, except a twenty-mile-long strip of land bordering the Minnesota River, from Lake Traverse to the Yellow Medicine for the "Upper Sioux," and from Yellow Medicine to the Little Rock stream for the "Lower Sioux."³² Ultimately, to obtain the necessary signatures, U.S. treaty negotiators—including Commissioner of Indian Affairs Luke Lea and Minnesota Territorial Governor Alexander Ramsey—had to repeatedly threaten the Dakota with the withholding of rations (rations theoretically guaranteed from previous treaties) or threaten to take the land by force leaving the Dakota with no compensation. Lea went so far as to suggest that if they did not sign, the Great Father could come with 100,000 men and drive the Dakota to the Rocky Mountains.³³ Thus, fear of starvation and loss of lands by force compelled our Dakota leaders to sign the treaties.



1851 Traverse des Sioux Treaty "negotiations." Painting by Francis Davis Millet. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

To compound the deceit, as leaders signed first the original treaty, then a copy, they were pulled by the blanket to a third table and pressured to sign what became known as the "trader's papers," documents the Dakota leaders could not read. These documents (in violation of the Act of 1847 that required that all moneys due Indians be paid to the heads of families or individuals) signed over moneys directly to traders in payment of alleged debts accrued by the Dakota. At the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, trader Joseph Brown held the pen as the chiefs were encouraged to sign the paper that was never read or explained to them.³⁴ Even missionary Thomas Williamson believed it to be a triplicate copy of the treaty. After they realized what they had signed, Dakota leaders contested their validity, but the United States ultimately upheld them as legitimate.

Through the grossly inflated figures specified in the trader's papers, traders gained substantial wealth at Dakota expense. For example, just through the shenanigans associated with the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, Henry Hastings Sibley was paid

\$66,459 in one lump sum. This was in addition to the 10 percent he deducted from the Wahpekute fund for acting as “attorney” in the Treaty of Mendota. This is how White opportunists gained fortunes in Minnesota, through the exploitation of Dakota people at Dakota expense. In this same treaty, J. B. Faribault was paid \$22,500, Alexander Faribault was paid \$13,500, and twenty other traders, missionaries Williamson and Riggs, and fifty “half-breeds” with their families also received a portion of the trader’s claims.³⁵ Thus, for ceding somewhere between 24,000,000 and 35,000,000 acres of rich agricultural lands, hundreds of thousands of dollars immediately went into the hands of individual Whites.³⁶ Hugh Tyler, responsible for distributing the treaty money, took \$50,000 for his share and rumors abounded regarding Ramsey’s likely cut. What is certain is that White traders and lawyers profited far more than any Dakota people from the 1851 treaties.

As disturbing as these trader’s actions appear, however, they are still no match for the level of duplicity demonstrated by Lea and Ramsey acting as United States government officials. The financial terms of the treaties reveal the fantastic degrees to which the United States would go to avoid providing fair compensation to the Dakota. The details must have been utterly incomprehensible to Dakota people unschooled in Western economic practices and double-dealing.

Both treaties of 1851 outline a plan for payment of annuities that included \$1,665,000 for the “Upper Sioux” and \$1,410,000 to the “Lower Sioux.” The bulk of the money was to remain in trust (\$1,360,000 for the “Upper Sioux” and \$1,160,000 for the “Lower Sioux”), bearing an interest rate of 5 percent for fifty years. The government was supposed to pay the interest on the trust account annually to the Dakota so that Dakota people would receive a constant source of money and supplies during that fifty-year period. At first glance, readers might believe this to be a wise financial strategy that would always ensure an annual payment to the Dakota. However, according to these treaties, the

principal amount would not revert to the Dakota at the end of the fifty-year period.³⁷ Instead, the U.S. government would pay the Dakota off the interest and then keep the principal, never paying even the measly amount of thirteen cents an acre (almost nine cents an acre if the land cession is 35,000,000) offered for the 1851 land cessions. In the end, the government would keep the money and get the land!³⁸ That means the government paid \$690,000 for the land cession and the Dakota actually received not quite three cents an acre for 24,000,000 acres (or about two cents an acre if we use the 35,000,000-acre land cession). However, even that figure is not accurate because White Minnesotans immediately directed \$370,000 to the traders and mixed-bloods rather than to the Dakota people who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of moneys from the land ceded.³⁹ With that figured into the computations, Americans, theoretically, would pay the Dakota about a penny an acre on this major land transaction.

When the treaty arrived in Washington, new debates emerged within the Senate. Consequently, the Senate barely passed it with amendments. The amendments were egregious, however, and entirely detrimental to the Dakota. The Senate struck the provisions guaranteeing the Dakota reservations, essentially leaving the Dakota landless by legal principles and wholly subject to the whim of the president. Instead of a legal title, the Senate authorized the president to select what he deemed a suitable site for a Dakota reservation for as long as he deemed necessary.⁴⁰ While the terms of the original treaty were in no way representative of just dealings with the Dakota, the Senate’s striking of the land provision was more than callous; it was criminal. The appropriation bill for payment to the Dakota contained two provisions, however. The first one required that government officials obtain the assent of the Dakota to the amendments. The second required the money to go directly to the Dakota, “unless the imperious interest of the Indian or Indians, or some treaty stipulation, shall require the payment to be made otherwise, under the direction of the President.”⁴¹

then, the United States government did not keep these deplorable treaty terms. Repeated violations included skipped or delayed treaty payments, unrealized terms directing educational or agricultural funds for the Dakota, and a constant influx of White settlers on Dakota lands, both before and after ratification. The treaties of 1851 were not the last ones the United States negotiated with Dakota people, nor were they the only ones secured by fraudulent means. The United States "negotiated" another set of treaties in 1858 using similarly deceitful methods and faulty premises. They exemplify both the gross power imbalance existing in favor of the United States over Dakota people as well as the total disregard for fair dealings exhibited by the United States.

While the United States negotiation of the treaties and their unfulfilled terms are shameful, they represent only the beginning phases of White crimes against Dakota people that would grow increasingly violent and inhumane. At this point in the historical narrative, it is appropriate to shift to another framework for examining what followed: the United Nations Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

International Standards for Genocide

The UN Convention details agreed upon international standards for determining what constitutes genocide in Article II, which states: "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

36 ❖ WHAT DOES JUSTICE LOOK LIKE?

To obtain Dakota consent, White Minnesotans used various tactics ranging from violence and coercion to extortion and bribery to gain signatures indicating agreement to the Senate-amended treaties and the trader's claims. The Dakota went into the negotiations as cold weather loomed with limited food supplies, so it was no surprise that Ramsey used 1837 treaty annuities as a bargaining chip against the Bdeewakantunwan, withholding the annuities until they concluded "negotiations." Ramsey also used bribery as a means to obtain signatures. For example, he told the Dakota that if they signed the amendments, he would make sure that soldiers would finally release five imprisoned Dakota warriors held at Fort Snelling.

However, historian William Folwell attributes Ramsey's most effective "negotiating" tactic to his divide and conquer strategy. By making separate distributions of gold to individual leaders, Ramsey was able to pit the chiefs against one another and play on their individual fears. By negotiating with them individually, Ramsey could convince them that if they did not sign, they would be left with no money while the other chiefs who did sign would receive their share. Ramsey divided twenty thousand dollars among seven Bdeewakantunwan chiefs, and Wabasha and Wacouta were the first to accept the gold at a late-night private meeting with Ramsey. The other chiefs then followed suit.

Yet, even after the Bdeewakantunwan signed the new papers, the "Upper" Dakota continued to contest the terms. To silence one of the leaders of the opposition and thereby diminish the organized protest, Ramsey incarcerated chief Red Iron until after he obtained the necessary signatures.⁴² Even then, he had to resort to bringing in chiefs singly or in pairs and handing out annuities to them if they would sign privately. He then added the date to the document with their signatures, as if they all signed together in formal council.⁴³

In the end, Whites flooded into Dakota homeland under the banner of treaties that undoubtedly represent some of the most outrageous and fraudulent examples in American history. Even

Alexander Ramsey, architect of Minnesota's policy of Dakota extermination and forced removal. *Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.*



I must emphasize that any one of these criteria met singly constitutes genocide. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, the United States government and its citizens violated all of these criteria in multiple ways. Certainly, Whites in Minnesota perpetrated these crimes. This next section will highlight examples in each of the categories to demonstrate how genocide was committed in Dakota homeland against Dakota people.

- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.⁷⁴

Criterion A

Criterion "(a) Killing members of the group" is most apparent in the actions of White Minnesotans during events surrounding the forced expulsion of Dakota people from our homeland. Many Minnesotans are familiar with the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 (previously referred to as the "Sioux Uprising" or "Dakota Conflict") and understand that the war did not begin because of a single wrong perpetrated by White settlers. Rather most people familiar with the history understand that war was declared by Dakota warriors as a last desperate attempt to save Dakota homeland and way of life from White invasion and conquest, or to die trying in what appeared to many of them as a futile effort. Dakota people initiated the war in response to treaty violations and the accompanying violence originating from White invasion and colonization. Yet, White Minnesotans were able to use the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 as their justification for complete land theft and an extraordinarily successful policy of genocide and ethnic cleansing. White Minnesotans carried out many of the events that followed with the ultimate aim of eliminating Dakota presence from the state of Minnesota, in one way or another.

For example, on September 9, 1862, Governor Alexander

Ramsey declared before the Minnesota state legislature "The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the State."⁴⁵ This was an unambiguous directive in 1862 and it remains a clearly and concisely stated genocidal decree today. Ramsey's statement provides the first element required in defining genocide, and that is the aspect of intent. Boldly stated, there is no question about Ramsey's interest in destroying Dakota people, and the physical acts that followed his directive fulfill the physical element required in determining genocide, particularly under the first criteria. Furthermore, the events that followed in Minnesota make the most sense in the context of Ramsey's declaration. That is, he provided the genocidal ideology that drove White actions in the aftermath of the war.

Upon the defeat suffered by Dakota people militarily, many Dakota people fled westward or northward in hopes of escaping what they suspected would be inhumane treatment by the United States military and citizenry. While Dakota men, in particular, lost their lives during the war, most of the purposeful killing of Dakota people occurred after the war had ended and when Dakota people offered little threat to White settlement. Military conquest of the Dakota was not enough to satisfy the aims of Governor Ramsey, however, who responded with relish to the appeals for mass killings shouted by Minnesota's citizenry.

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Dakota people remained. General Henry Hastings Sibley and his soldiers immediately separated the Dakota men from the women and children. The men allowed for this separation voluntarily after soldiers told them that for payment of their overdue treaty annuities, the men would need to be counted.⁴⁶ Believing the lie espoused by Sibley and his men, Dakota warriors were disarmed, shackled, and subjected to outrageous trials before a military tribunal composed of White Minnesotans.

The five-man tribunal eventually sentenced over three hundred Dakota men to death by hanging and another sixteen to prison terms. This was an attempt to execute immediately over 15 percent of the surrendered Dakota population. Since this group was composed of the able-bodied resisters to American invasion and land theft, if fully carried out, Minnesotans would have largely eliminated the capacity for Dakota reproduction and resistance. A population cannot survive long without its able-bodied male population.

In the end, President Abraham Lincoln ordered the execution of thirty-nine of those men and pardoned one more at the last minute, killing thirty-eight Dakota martyrs in what remains the largest mass execution in United States history. The hanging occurred the day after Christmas, on December 26, 1862. This mass hanging was such a phenomenon that at one time it earned a place in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the largest simultaneous mass hanging from one gallows.⁴⁷

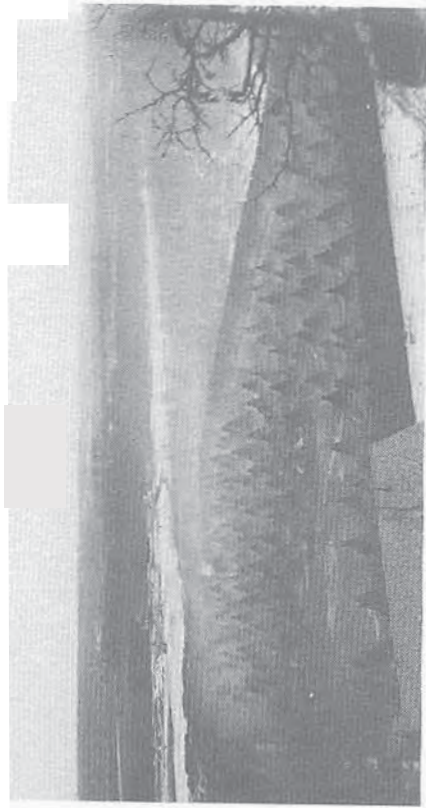
Several years after the 1862 war, when Dakota warriors were still imprisoned and Dakota people had no capacity to threaten White Minnesotans, White soldiers hanged two more Dakota leaders. Leaders Sakpe and Medicine Bottle had fled to Canada for safety at the end of the 1862 war, but it did not stop Whites from pursuing their capture and execution. Because they remained on the other side of the border, however, White soldiers had to use illegal and foul means to secure their arrest. Canadian officials, Captain John H. McKenzie of Fort Garry, Onisime Giguere, and Andrew Bannatync, drugged Sakpe and



Thirty-eight Dakota men lynched at Mankato, December 26, 1862. Painting by W. H. Childs. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Medicine Bottle with wine spiked with laudanum and then tied a chloroform-saturated handkerchief over Sakpe's face. They then bound both Medicine Bottle and Sakpe, tied them to sleds, and delivered them into the hands of American Major Edwin Hatch at Pembina in Dakota Territory. White soldiers next set up a military tribunal similar to the previous one and put Medicine Bottle and Sakpe on trial. The makeshift tribunal issued judgments of execution against the two leaders in late 1864, but it took nearly a year before President Andrew Johnson confirmed the execution order and White Minnesotans could finally implement it. On November 11, 1865, White soldiers executed Sakpe and Medicine Bottle by hanging at Fort Snelling.⁴⁸

These were not the only deaths suffered by Dakota people, however. Settler society perpetrated numerous killings, not only through direct violence, but also through the forced removals and incarceration of Dakota people without providing adequate food, clothing, shelter, and protection. Populations simply cannot survive without adequate provisions. The resulting deaths



Fort Snelling concentration camp, 1862. Photo by Benjamin Franklin Upton
Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

are therefore killings, rather than inevitable or unpreventable consequences. Nowhere is this clearer than in the forced removals and concentration camp imprisonment of Dakota people during the winter of 1862–63.

After the surrender and capture of Dakota people in the fall of 1862, Sibley and his men instituted a severe system of gender segregation. They dealt with the men in one group and the women and children in another. As already mentioned, White soldiers singled out and subjected Dakota men to military tribunals. Then, while the men were awaiting President Lincoln's execution orders, soldiers first kept them at Lower Sioux and then forcibly removed them to a concentration camp in Mankato. On November 8, 1862, Dakota men, shackled two by two, were loaded onto wagons and they began their painful journey to Mankato. White mobs assaulted them, throwing rocks, sticks, and brickbats at them, and wielding bullwhips and pitchforks against them until they were bloody and beaten. One soldier guarding a wagon commented that eight out of the ten Indians he was guarding in his wagon were hurt as they went through New Ulm, some sustaining mortal wounds.⁴⁹ It did not matter

that these men were unarmed. Even White children felt that those Dakota men deserved whatever horrors could be meted out against them because they had dared to attack White settlers. In 1862, White settlers could understand wanting to kill the people attacking them in their homes and towns, but they could not see the similarities with the Dakota defense of our homeland. Indeed, they considered Dakota use of violence in defense of homeland as savage. They felt they had a superior right to Dakota homeland, because they were, well, superior and White.

Minnesotans treated Dakota women and children in a similar fashion. Soldiers paraded them through White towns as well, as they made their way to the concentration camp at Fort Snelling. Most of the Dakota women and children walked, however. Only small numbers rode on carts reserved for the very elderly and the very young. Furthermore, this population was experiencing a widespread epidemic of measles with symptoms such as a rash, fever, cough, red and watery eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, ear infections and pneumonia. This epidemic would likely have affected about 85 percent of the women and children, all while they were force-marched over twenty miles a day.⁵⁰ In addition to accounts of sickness, Dakota families carry oral accounts detailing assaults by both White soldiers and citizens alike. For example, we have Dakota stories about White soldiers stabbing and shooting elderly grandmothers as well as stories of brutal assaults by White townspeople. One of the more horrific details remembered among the descendants of those who survived the death marches involves White townspeople pouring hot, scalding water on the elderly women and children who were riding in carts as they traveled through New Ulm. Torture and killings were the norm along this route rather than the exception. To this day, Dakota people do not know what happened to the bodies of our ancestors murdered by White Minnesotans on this forced death march.

Unfortunately, the deaths continued during the winter of 1862–63 as White Minnesotans intentionally imprisoned Dakota people without adequate food, shelter, clothing, or protection.

On November 27, 1862, a girl from Red Wing, for example, reported about Fort Snelling, “There are a few squaws killed up at the fort every week . . . always cut their throats by running against a knife. The Third [Regiment] buries them in a hole, face downwards.”⁵¹ White soldiers could routinely perpetrate sexual violence against Dakota women and girls and then simply dispose of their bodies. Moreover, they could do so without fear of retributive violence from male Dakota relatives who were helpless to defend their women and children because they were imprisoned elsewhere.⁵²

Other deaths occurred from the epidemics still spreading through the Fort Snelling concentration camp. In reference to Dakota arrival at Fort Snelling, Gabriel Renville commented, “We all moved into this inclosure, but we were so crowded and confined that an epidemic broke out among us and the children were dying day and night.”⁵³ In late January 1863, Stephen Riggs wrote to his brother, “It is a very sad place now. The crying



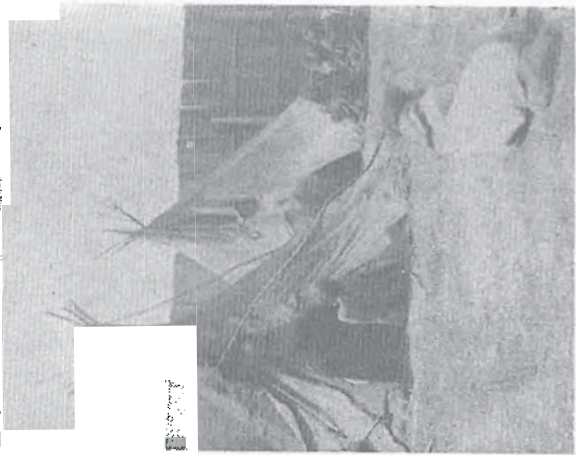
Dakota women imprisoned at Fort Snelling, 1862–63. Photo by Rodolph W. Ransom. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.



Apistoka, Fort Snelling concentration camp, 1862–63. Photo by Benjamin Franklin Upton. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

hardly ever stops. From five to ten die daily.” Good Star Woman related, “Sometime 20 to 50 died in one day and were buried in a long trench, the old, large people underneath and the children on top.”⁵⁴ Others were so sick with grief that they no longer wanted to live. Wabasha’s wife, for example, literally starved herself out of a sense of grief she experienced over the hanging of her brother, White Dog, at Mankato.⁵⁵

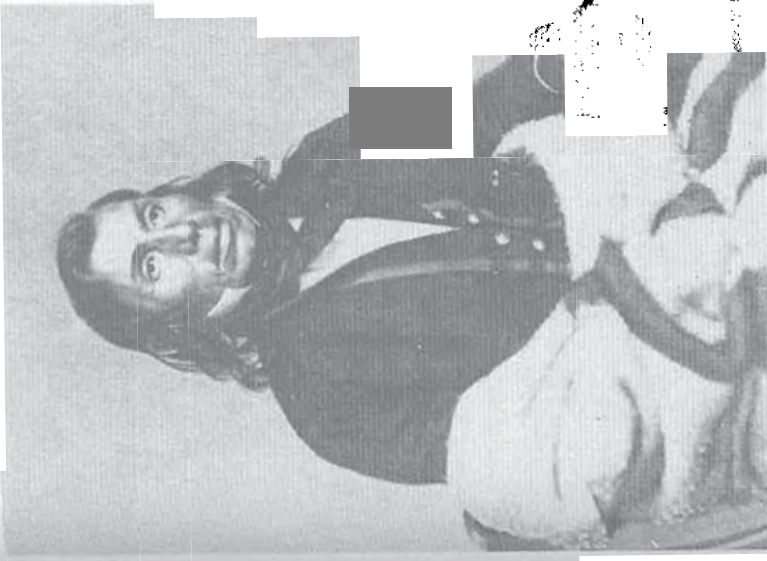
Ironically, in the twenty-first century some writers of history still maintain the perverted colonialist perception of these events. Corinne Monjeau-Marz, for example, rejects the term concentration camp as an accurate identifier. Instead, she considers Fort Snelling a site of Dakota preservation stating, “in post-war Minnesota, this option helped preserve them.” This perspective completely denies and renders benign the violent and brutal processes of invasion, conquest, and ethnic cleansing that accompanied White “settlement.” In reality, Dakota people would have been well preserved without Fort Snelling if White



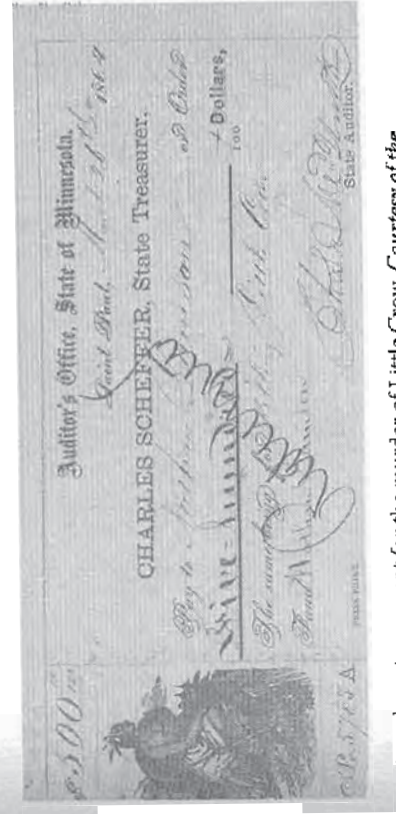
Fort Snelling
Concentration Camp,
1862-63.
Whitney's Gallery.
Courtesy of the *Minnesota
Historical Society.*

people simply stopped making false promises, invading, stealing, and desecrating Dakota lands and resources, and killing Dakota people. To put it clearly, if they left Dakota homeland, White Minnesotans would not have to imprison Dakota people in concentration camps. It is precisely because White Minnesotans wanted to continue their occupation of Dakota homeland that Dakota populations were threatened. Fort Snelling did not protect Dakota people. Rather, it served to concentrate and subjugate our population as Minnesotans prepared to remove us from our homeland.

In spring 1863, the stage was set for White Minnesotans to launch a full-scale campaign of ethnic cleansing, thus helping to fulfill Governor Ramsey's call for extermination or forced removal. Minnesota's soldiers forced the remaining populations on boats that went down the Mississippi River. The condemned men (those the soldiers did not hang in Mankato) were imprisoned in Davenport, Iowa. The military escorted the women and children to a new concentration camp site in Crow Creek,



Little Crow.
Photo by Joel
Emmons Whitney.
Courtesy of
the *Minnesota
Historical Society.*



\$500 bounty payment for the murder of Little Crow. Courtesy of the *Minnesota Historical Society.*

The Daily Republican

WINONA:

Thursday Evening, September 2, 1863.

REPUBLICAN UNION NOMINATIONS.

State Ticket.

For Governor.....SEYMEN MILLER, of Stevens.
 For Lieut. Governor.....CHAS. D. SHAWWOOD, of Fillmore.
 Secretary of State.....AVID BLACKLEY, of Ollisted.
 Auditor of State.....JAS. McILBRATH, of Nicollet.
 State Treasurer.....CHAS. SCRYFFER, of Washington.
 Attorney General.....ANDREW F. COOK, of Rice.
 Clerk Supreme Court.....GEO. F. POTTER, of Houston.

County Ticket.

For State Senator.....THOMAS SIMPSON.
 For Representatives.....JEANLE S. YOUNG.
 THOMAS P. DIXON.
 For Sheriff.....LANCE J. KING.
 For Treasurer.....MATHEW J. NORTON.
 For Surveyor.....N. PAULS HILBERT.
 For Coroner.....EDWARD GALT.

The State reward for dead Indians has been increased to \$200 for every red-skin sent to Purgatory. This sum is more than the dead bodies of all the Indians east of the Red River are worth.

Minnesotans call for Dakota extermination, 1863.
 Image courtesy of Chris Mato Numan.

South Dakota (via the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers). Conditions were no better for the men in Davenport or the women and children at Crow Creek than they were in the previous concentration camps.

But, let us return to the UN Genocide Convention. There are still more examples that meet criterion "(a) Killing members of the group." Once Minnesotans achieved the forced removal of Dakota people out of Minnesota, Ramsey ordered punitive expeditions into Dakota Territory to hunt down Dakota people in flight. While Sibley's enemies saw the 1863 expeditions as ineffectual because the soldiers were unable to kill or capture large numbers of Indians, the expeditions were incredibly harmful to Dakota people. In addition to causing terror, the expeditions destroyed vast quantities of Dakota supplies and equipment. Thus, the victories were one-sided in favor of White interests. The battles primarily consisted of Dakota warriors trying desperately to fend off White soldiers while their women and children fled behind them.⁵⁶ Of course, most of the casualties of these expeditions would occur the following winter when the Dakota populations on the run starved or died of exposure.

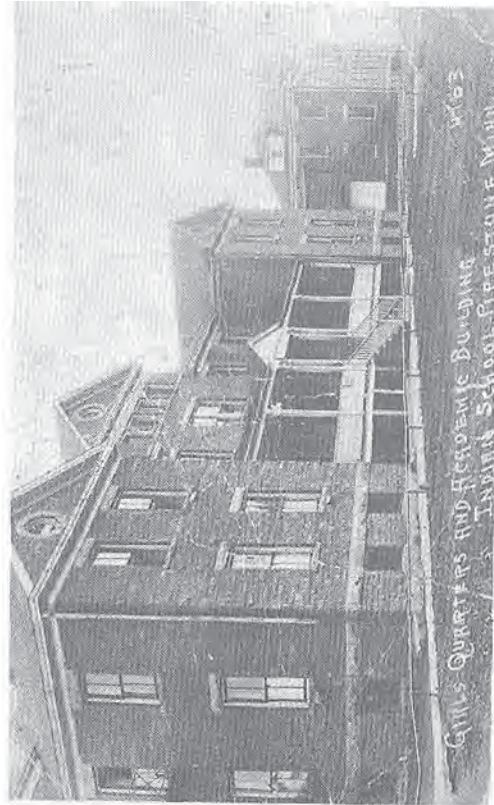
Still, that was not enough to satisfy the quest for total annihilation. Minnesotans placed bounties on the scalps of Dakota people beginning in the summer of 1863. They began at twenty-five dollars and eventually reached two hundred dollars. Though bounties on human beings were illegal at the time, even according to United States laws, it did not prevent White Minnesotans from enacting the bounty system and awarding money to beneficiaries.⁵⁷ For example, Winona's newspaper, *The Daily Republican*, issued the call for bounties on September 23, 1863, stating, "The State reward for dead Indians has been increased to \$200 for every red-skin sent to Purgatory. The sum is more than the dead bodies of all the Indians east of the Red River are worth." White Minnesotans were clamoring for complete extermination or removal, the state government was obliging with public policy, and the media was encouraging indiscriminate Indian

killing. This undoubtedly meets several of the criteria set out in the Genocide Convention.

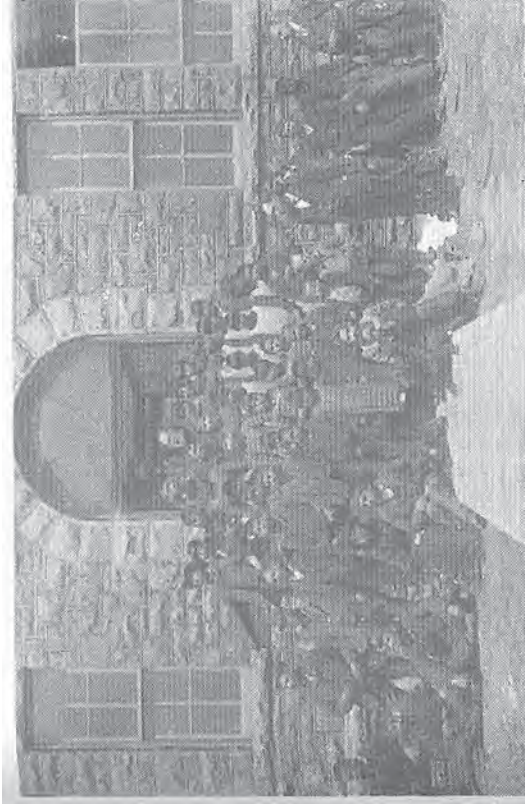
Criterion B

The second criterion is “(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.” Bodily harm in this case may be more easily determined and includes all the examples cited above in which Whites killed Dakota people, as well as all the instances in which Dakota people suffered physical trauma short of death. These would include such examples as those who suffered beatings, whippings, and scalding water on the forced marches; those who suffered sickness and exposure because of inadequate shelter; those who suffered starvation as White soldiers hunted them down; and the women who suffered sexual assault while under government confinement.

Mental harm, however, is not readily apparent to settler society because in many instances settlers still believe in the superiority of their ways of being and living. From that perspective,



Pipestone Indian School, an institution of colonialism.
Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.



Children at Pipestone, 1893. *Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society*

settler society might even view colonization as beneficial to Indigenous Peoples. However, perpetrators in this context are not morally positioned to make the determination of mental harm for Indigenous Peoples. Rather, only the victims can determine if they have suffered mental harm. Obviously mental harm accompanies bodily harm, but there are additional circumstances that also warrant consideration under this criterion. I would argue that the processes of invasion, conquest, and colonization also fit under this criterion because of the severe psychological harms that consequently occurred to the Dakota psyche. What kind of mental harm is perpetrated against a people’s leadership when the more powerful nation is not fulfilling its treaty obligations? What kind of mental harm is perpetrated upon a people overwhelmed by hopelessness and powerlessness because they have no effective way to defend their lands and people from an outside threat? What kind of mental harm is done to a people dispossessed of their homeland?

These harms did not end in the nineteenth century. One of

the federally mandated boarding schools located in Minnesota, for example, was Pipestone Indian School. The purpose of federal boarding schools was to perpetrate ethnocide. While the UN Convention on Genocide does not specify ethnocide as genocide, the effects of ethnocide upon the victims certainly constitute mental harm.⁵⁸ Within the federal boarding schools, the general policy was "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." School officials implemented systematic efforts to strip away all traces of Indigeneity (including language, dress, long hair, spirituality, diet, worldview, economy, political and kinship systems, and of course, attachment to the land), while supplanting those ways with White, Christian values, worldview, and ways of being.

What makes this particular policy of ethnocide so heinous is that the U.S. government perpetrated this crime against the children, the most vulnerable segment of the Indigenous population. The confusion, self-hatred, identity conflicts, and trauma were so detrimental to the children who attended boarding schools that we still experience the disturbing effects in our communities today. Furthermore, the abuses at the boarding schools surpassed mental harms. They also included bodily harm through extreme forms of corporal punishment as well as physical and sexual abuse.⁵⁹ Certainly, the ethnocide that accompanied missionary efforts and boarding schools were violent and harmful enough to constitute genocide according to this particular criterion in the UN Genocide Convention.

In Minnesota, the government usually sent Dakota children to Pipestone Indian School, located in the southwestern portion of the state near the South Dakota border. Pipestone's buildings were erected in 1892 and doors opened to students the following year. The school remained in operation until 1953 when it was finally closed, affecting not just a single generation, but multiple generations of Dakota families. Many children entered the boarding schools when they were very young (five or six years of age). They consequently experienced years of indoctrination

in anti-Indian ideology and frequently experienced a range of abuses perpetrated against them. As historian Andrea Smith points out, "Some colonists supported boarding schools because they thought cultural genocide was more cost-effective than physical genocide."⁶⁰ Though federally mandated boarding schools were characterized as part of U.S. policies of Indian assimilation, that presentation is much too benign. It would be much more accurate to describe the ethnocidal institutions as part of U.S. policies of brutal colonization and genocide.

Criterion C

The third criterion in the UN Genocide Convention, "(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or part," also applies to the Dakota experience in Minnesota. By the 1860s, the U.S. government had already removed hundreds of thousands of Indigenous Peoples from their homelands because citizens and all levels of government were intent upon wresting Indigenous lands away from Indigenous Peoples. Ethnic cleansing became a means to not only dispossess Indigenous Peoples, but also to eliminate the populations that would continue to contest or threaten the new White landlords.

Thomas Jefferson, for example, rigorously advocated for the extermination of Indigenous Peoples, stating, in 1807, "And . . . if we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down till that tribe is exterminated, or is driven beyond the Mississippi . . . in war, they will kill some of us; we shall destroy all of them." Similarly, in 1813 Jefferson wrote, "that the American government has no other choice before it than to pursue [the Indians] to extermination, or drive them to new seats beyond our reach."⁶¹ When Governor Ramsey made his similar declaration in 1862, he was merely following a tradition laid out previously by America's founding fathers. Jefferson was certainly

the most articulate brainchild of the extraordinarily successful policies of forced removal that would become codified and executed under future presidential administrations.

The administration of Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, for example, was responsible for the forced march of the Tsalagi (Cherokee) on their Trail of Tears. This is perhaps the best-known forced march in American history, causing the deaths of approximately 8,000 of 17,000 Tsalagi men, women, and children because of their death march to Indian Territory.⁶²

Sociologist Russell Thornton has documented losses for Indigenous Peoples due to genocide, and he comments that many, if not most, Indigenous Peoples were “removed, relocated, dispersed, concentrated, or forced to migrate at least once.” He further states, “Both the concentration of American Indians in small geographic areas and the dispersal of them from their homelands caused increased mortality in Indian populations, typically because of associated military actions, disease, starvation, extremely harsh conditions during the moves, and the resulting destruction of ways of life.”⁶³ Historian David Stannard agrees with Thornton regarding the widespread implementation of forced removals. He asserts, “The story of the southeastern Indians, like that of the northeastern tribes, was repeated across the entire expanse of the North American continent, as far south as Mexico, as far north as Canada and the Arctic, as far west as the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California.”⁶⁴

The congregating of Dakota people in concentration camps and the ethnic cleansing of Dakota people out of Minnesota, therefore, fit into a long history of American brutality. Consequently, the deaths that occurred because of these policies would have been both foreseen and disregarded. It was certainly no secret to the U.S. government, state governments, or to White citizens that Indigenous people died during such brutal and traumatic experiences. Yet, the U.S. government and American citizens repeatedly and systematically continued to carry out policies of removal. They did not simply consider Dakota people



Attack on unarmed Dakota men, New Ulm, November 1862. *Harper's Weekly*.

expedient and appropriate targets of violent crimes; Dakota deaths provided an added bonus. With Dakota deaths, White citizens could get Indigenous land without fearing Indigenous retribution. Because many Whites would have preferred total extermination, they would have considered deaths from concentration camps or forced removals as beneficial.

In 1863, the legislation for Dakota ethnic cleansing was entitled “An Act for the Removal of the Sisseton, Wahpaton, Medwakanton, and Wahpakoota Bands of Sioux or Dakota Indians, and for the disposition of their Lands in Minnesota and Dakota.” Tellingly, it accompanied another bit of legislation entitled “An Act for the Relief of Persons for Damages sustained by Reason of Depredations and Injuries by certain Bands of Sioux Indians.”⁶⁵ These acts allowed for the unilateral abrogation of Dakota treaties, for the release of Dakota treaty annuities to White settlers in Minnesota, and for the U.S. military to implement a policy of ethnic cleansing. Because Dakota forced removal was legislated, we must consider the resulting deaths associated with the implementation of that legislation as deliberate. Furthermore, we must also consider as deliberate the deaths caused by the horrendous concentration camp conditions at Lower Sioux,

so too did alcohol use as well as “warfare, genocide, removals, relocations, and destructions of ways of life.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, at the same time that many factors were contributing to decreased fertility, mortality rates were also increasing.

Criterion D

In addition to the factors above contributing to a decreasing Dakota population, the United States government, the state of Minnesota, and White citizenry all helped ensure an additional reduction in population through the forced gender segregation occurring at the various concentration camp sites. This practice of separating out the women and children from the able-bodied men meets criterion (d) of the Genocide Convention. “Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.” A population cannot possibly reproduce when the government disallows sexual relations between men and women. That is precisely what happened in the 1860s in conjunction with Minnesota’s ethnic cleansing policies.

In the 1860s, Dakota people were experiencing enforced sub-fecundity (a diminished ability to reproduce) as a direct consequence of gender segregation. Furthermore, this segregation went on for prolonged periods. Considering that Dakota men were initially shackled and separated from their families by fall 1862, over a third of them were killed, and the rest of the imprisoned men were not released until spring 1866, it meant nearly four years of separation. This was devastating to the Dakota population at Crow Creek. Their population continued to decline while the United States government kept the men incarcerated. Furthermore, many of the births that did occur during that time would have been children born of the rape of Dakota women by White soldiers.

Unfortunately, in the twenty-first century, Dakota people continue to suffer disproportionately higher rates of incarceration than Whites. This means that enforced gender segregation is still

Mankato, Fort Snelling, Fort McClellan (Davenport), and Fort Thompson (Crow Creek). Imprisonment was no accident. It was a callous and inhumane government and citizenry that continued to subject Dakota people to long-term confinement while our people were dying. Yet, they continued to deny our Dakota ancestors their freedom.

Because the U.S. government repeated forced removals across the continent, by the 1860s it was clear that when they denied Indigenous Peoples their homelands and their ways of life, Indigenous Peoples tended to die in unusually high numbers. This was certainly true of the Dakota people, who began to die in unprecedented numbers when denied access to our traditional homeland. More than a third of the population, or 120 men, confined at Davenport (Fort McClellan) died during their three-year incarceration. Similarly, at the Crow Creek concentration camp in South Dakota where the women, children, and “friendly” were confined, the death toll was extreme. Children frequently suffered the most as the death toll affected young people more dramatically. The missionary John P. Williamson wrote about the forced exile and the subsequent deaths, capturing the impact on the population:

When 1300 Indians were crowded like slaves on the boiler and hurricane decks of a single boat, and fed on mustyhardtack and briny pork, which they had not half a chance to cook, diseases were bred which made fearful havoc during the hot months, and the 1300 souls that were landed at Crow Creek June 1, 1863, decreased to one thousand. . . . So were the hills soon covered with graves.⁶⁸

Other factors also affected birth and death rates among Dakota people. Thornton states that because of contact with Europeans, Indigenous People generally experienced diminished fecundity (ability to reproduce) and decreased fertility. While the influx of diseases certainly contributed to decreased fertility,

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Unfortunately, in the twenty-first century, Dakota people continue to suffer disproportionately higher rates of incarceration than Whites. This means that enforced gender segregation is still

regarding the full extent of involuntary sterilization practices, because current studies have only begun to skim the surface.

Furthermore, we have yet to learn the role of facilities such as the hospital built at the Pipestone Indian Training School that was completed in 1932. If sterilizations were performed at other government administered and funded institutions, it is not unreasonable to wonder what might have happened to Indigenous children while attending the boarding school at Pipestone with a hospital facility on the campus. What is certain is that the documented practice of involuntary sterilization was widely performed in the United States. According to international standards, this clearly constitutes genocide.

Criterion E

The last criterion (e) delineated in the UN Genocide Convention involves "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." The federally mandated boarding schools qualify under this criterion, as the government took Indigenous children away from their families of birth and delivered them into the hands of predominantly White, government-run institutions. Further, while the staff had the children away from the influence of their families and communities, they worked to destroy Indigenous ways of being. These institutions consequently caused irreparable harm to whole generations of children who grew up without Indigenous parenting skills. To make matters worse, the institutional staff often initiated vulnerable students into cycles of abusive behavior. Upon leaving the schools, students then carried those behaviors with them into their own families and communities.

This is not the only example of genocide that would fall under this criterion, however. Throughout the twentieth century, government officials took Indigenous children from their birth families in other ways as well. They abducted children for placement in White homes with White families. The dominant society frequently believed Indigenous families were inadequate in some

negatively affecting the fecundity rates. We must remember that prior to colonization, Dakota people never experienced incarceration. We had a system of justice that allowed for the healing of harms without prisons. Indigenous people in prisons, therefore, are just another manifestation of colonialism at work in the United States, one with dire consequences for our people.

The United States has a poor track record in terms of violations against Indigenous women and our capacity for reproduction. One of the most flagrant violations of the UN Genocide Convention in this area involves the involuntary sterilization of Indigenous women in the late twentieth century. Various scholars have documented aspects of this 100 percent federally funded program administered to Indigenous Peoples through Indian Health Service (IHS) Hospitals as part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare programs. We have yet to realize, however, the full extent of harm perpetrated under IHS. For example, in 1979 the General Accounting Office released a report based on a study of only four out of twelve IHS service areas (Albuquerque, Phoenix, Aberdeen, Oklahoma City), but that report was damaging enough to indicate a widespread genocidal practice. Within those four service areas, IHS sterilized 3,001 Indigenous women of childbearing age between 1973 and 1976, representing 5 percent of Indigenous women of childbearing age in those areas. Other surveys suggest that the practice of involuntary sterilization was much more widespread, with rates that ranged from 25 percent in the Oklahoma City area to 80 percent on other reservations.⁶⁸

Many of the Dakota people living in exile, including those living on the Crow Creek, Lake Traverse, and Spirit Lake reservations, would have received healthcare within the Aberdeen service area, a known site of Indigenous involuntary sterilization practices. The same would be presumably true of the Indian Health Service facilities serving the Minnesota Dakota (as well as Anishinabe, Ho-Chunk, and other Indigenous populations in the region). We still need to investigate this matter further to disclose the truth

way. Reasons for removing children were sometimes clear in terms of a record of violence or abuse. In other instances, however, the government removed children because their birth family was considered to be too poor, without the appropriate "necessities of civilization" such as indoor plumbing and electricity, or because their home was considered to have too many extended family members inhabiting it. Through foster and adoption care programs, the government placed Indigenous children in White homes, sometimes loving, sometimes not, so that they would theoretically "benefit" from the influences of "civilization." Historian Andrea Smith has written, "In Minnesota, Indian children were 500 percent more likely to be in foster care or adoptive care than non-Indian children" and "in South Dakota, Indian children were 1,600 percent more likely to be in foster or adoptive care."⁶⁹

Loss of Indigenous children occurred unhindered until the passing of the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978, and while that has slowed the flow of adoptions out of Indigenous communities, it has not halted it completely. Through such policies, the government has devastated Dakota children, families, and whole communities. Consequently, some of our people have been permanently lost from us.

This is of such widespread concern to Indigenous Peoples throughout the United States that Indigenous communities are now inventing new ways to attempt to self-heal communities and reconnect with one another. In October 2007, the White Earth Reservation sponsored a homecoming gathering for their Anishinabe people who had been adopted out.⁷⁰ It was, perhaps, the first of its kind in the United States, but it indicates the sense of loss and grief from a tremendous harm that has not yet been satisfactorily resolved.

Consequences of Genocide

This chapter has only briefly touched on a few of the examples of genocide perpetrated against Dakota people by White Ameri-

cans, primarily so they could continue to occupy Dakota land unhindered. If we delve deeper into the historical record, we would find many more examples of other crimes against humanity and human injustices perpetrated for a variety of reasons. Furthermore, the crimes done to Dakota homeland, which I have not yet detailed here, are so extensive as to warrant the term *ecocide*. That is another category of harm that has deep and severe implications for the well-being of the planet and for Dakota people. Minnesotans and Americans need to address those harms as well.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the extent of harm caused by Minnesota's policy of ethnic cleansing is the lack of Dakota presence in Dakota homeland. We can see the evidence both in terms of Dakota land base and Dakota population. Before invasion and ethnic cleansing, Dakota land base would have included approximately 54,017,532 acres. Now Dakota people occupy about .006 percent of our original land base. Similarly, the population of Dakota people in Minnesota remains disproportionately small in the twenty-first century. According to the 2000 Census (including self-identified Dakota people among both reservation and urban populations), about 5,300 people claiming Dakota blood reside in the state. The 2003 Northwest Area Foundation statistics indicate that 2,265 of those individuals are citizens of the four federally recognized Dakota communities in Minnesota.⁷¹ Meanwhile, contemporary data identifying Dakota populations in the United States and Canada is difficult to assess, in part because census materials do not always differentiate between Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota people. Self-identifiers as well as census officials maintain the use of the term "Sioux," making precision impossible. Thus, the "Sioux" population is calculated in the 2000 U.S. Census to be 167,869, with a portion of that being Dakota.⁷² Many thousands more Dakota people still reside in Canada.

Because of the Dakota diaspora, most of our nation is still born into exile hundreds of miles away from our beautiful homeland.

We cannot relegate this reality to the depths of a single historical event or period in history. Instead, every generation of Dakota people has experienced this injustice since 1862. The injustice continues through the present day along with the other devastating consequences of living as colonized peoples. We continue to bear witness to the destruction of our homeland and to advocate for its survival. Settler society continues to deny us access to our sacred sites as well as the protection of our sacred sites. Settler society also continues to deny us access to many of the subsistence practices within the borders of *Minisota*. Our populations continue to face oppression in the existing educational, social welfare, economic, and criminal (in)justice institutions governing these lands. Our people continue to experience disproportionately high rates of early mortality, disease, suicide, depression, incarceration, chemical dependency, and violence. We are still suffering. While we need to do our part to recover healthy and sustainable ways of being, those recovery efforts will be futile if settler society continues to deny the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Notes

1. Because I am recounting this story from memory and Dale Childs is no longer available to verify this version, I apologize to him and to my elders for any errors in the story.
2. Dakota lands at one time would have at least included parts of what are now Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Manitoba, Canada. Other scholars and tribal historians have argued that Dakota territory extended as far as Saskatchewan, Alberta, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Illinois. Leo Omani from the Wahpeton Reserve near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, for example, cites the work of James Morrison and oral tradition of Robert Good Voice. See, Leo Omani, "The Dakota Diaspora from Minnesota into Canada After 1862: Dispelling North American Colonial History in the Movement to Revive the Oral Dakota History, Language, and Culture of the Tiyospayes that Belong to Bdewakahton-

wan, Sistonwan, Wahpetowan, and Wahpekute," a paper delivered at the "Remembering, Retracing & Retelling: The Diaspora of the Dakota People from Minnesota into Canada and the Dakotas after 1862" Conference, Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, Minnesota, April 2003; and, J. Morrison, *Dakota/Lakota Joint Treaty Adhesion Project, Phase Two: Historical Land Use and Occupancy and Dakota/Lakota Crown Relations*, Legal Historical Research, Ancaster, Ontario, 2000.

3. For example, the Iowa, Oto, and Ho-Chunk all made their homes in Minnesota at various points.

4. Eldon Johnson, *The Prehistoric Peoples of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988), 1.

5. For Northeastern origination, see Royal B. Hasrick, *The Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1964), 189. For East Coast origins, see Albert E. Jenks, "The Wild Rice Gatherers of the Upper Lakes: A Study in American Primitive Economics," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1897-98, 19:2, 1043. For his information Jenks cites "Horatio Hale, The Tutelo Tribe and Language, Proc. *Am. Philos. Soc.*, vol. XXI, 1883-84; see also James Mooney, Siouan Tribes of the East, bulletin of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1894, and Horatio Hale, Indian Migrations, *Am. Antiquarian*, January and April, 1883."

6. See Article 13 of the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" which may be found at the Web site <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/index.html> (accessed September 13, 2007).

7. See Guy Gibbon, *The Sioux: The Dakota and Lakota Nations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003). I gave this work special attention because of its recent date of publication, demonstrating that recent decades of Indigenous Peoples challenging the colonialist presumptions and methods of anthropology have had little effect on old-school practitioners of the discipline. Instead, colonialist researchers still conduct research, as well as write and publish research that continues the academic tradition of dehumanizing, objectifying, and delegitimizing Indigenous presence in our lands.

8. See Eidon Johnson, *The Prehistoric Peoples of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988), 28. Johnson merely reported the previous usage of such names as "Laurel," "Blackduck," "Kathio," "Malmo," and "Howard Lake" and would likely disagree with the characterization of this as a colonialist practice.

I should note that Dakota people do not deem all archaeologists in Minnesota disrespectful and colonialist. Janet Spector, for example, conducted and documented her experiences with a nineteenth-century Dakota site, that of Mazomanie's village along the Minnesota River. In addition to being ethically grounded and respectful of Dakota knowledge, many academics consider her research to be better informed, more accurate, and of a higher quality than other archeological works. See Janet D. Spector, *What This Axl Means: Feminist Archeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1993).

9. Roy Meyer discusses these early meetings in the first chapter of his book, *History of the Santee Sioux: United States Indian Policy on Trial* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967, 1993).

10. Gary Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1997), 19.

11. For example, William Folwell cites wars with the Iroquois as the reason for their forced migration as late as the mid-seventeenth century. See William Folwell, *A History of Minnesota. Volume I* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1956), 80. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Web site, for example, states, "Thousands of years ago, the Ojibwe were among several Indian tribes who lived on the Atlantic coast of North America. Then, about 500 years ago, many of these tribes began to migrate west as the eastern seaboard became colonized by the European settlers. Among them were the ancestors of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe," see <http://www.millelacsobjibwe.org/culture.asp> (accessed September 19, 2007).

12. See William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 76-81.

13. Edward Benton Banai, *The Mishoomis Book* (Hayward, WI: Indian Country Press, 1979), 94-102.

14. Father Hennepin lived from 1626 to 1705 and was sent on an exploratory mission by France in 1675. He was taken captive in 1680 by a war party of Dakota on the Mississippi. He spent three months as a Dakota prisoner before Sieur du Luth negotiated his release. For information about the locations of Dakota towns, see Newton H. Winchell, *The Aborigines of Minnesota* (St. Paul: The Pioneer Company, 1911), 73. It should be noted that the location of the Sisitunwans is a guess based

on a reference in Hennepin's report regarding the "Chongaskobe" that Winchell assumed to be them. Local accounts offer similar explanation. See, for example, Arthur P. Rose, *An Illustrated History of Yellow Medicine County* (Marshall, MN: Northern History Publishing Co., 1914), 19.

15. Winchell, *The Aborigines of Minnesota*, 64-65. Other archaeologists today might disagree with this analysis. However, a reading of the anthropological reports produced throughout the twentieth century about Minnesota's Indigenous inhabitants demonstrates the tremendous variety of what I would consider wildly contrasting opinions among "experts" regarding our origins. While feigning to deal in the realm of "truth" and "facts," it is clear that their rules for analysis are quite arbitrary and they would be comical if they did not negatively affect Indigenous Peoples. For example, when discussing evidence that suggests human populations in the Glacial epochs, Winchell notes the dismissal of evidence by some experts: "While probably most American geologists and archaeologists fully accept the foregoing as demonstrating the Glacial age of man in America, a few still remain skeptical, and with superfluous caution, or with carping criticism, call attention to defects in the evidence, and are inclined to explain all these instances by some accidental circumstances that may have caused intrusion of the specimens into the drift since the deposition of the same. Others attribute the reports to faulty observation and mistaken interpretation," 20. Scott Anfinson demonstrates that archaeologists still employ such practices nearly a century later stating, "Many of the dates from the Prairie Lake Region are either inaccurate (six deviate substantially from expectations and four others are less than 200 years old) or they have poor cultural associations." See, Scott E. Anfinson, *Southwestern Minnesota Archaeology: 12,000 Years in the Prairie Lake Region* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1997), 5. It seems to be a regular anthropological practice to simply dismiss whatever evidence (amassed according to their own methods and standards) does not support their reigning theory about the past. It thus makes it impossible to cite any anthropological work with a high degree of confidence.

16. Samuel Pond, *The Dakota or Sioux in Minnesota as They Were in 1834* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), 174. Carl Waldman asserts something similar in *Atlas of the North American Indian* (New York: Facts on File, 1985), 154.

17. See for instance Gary Anderson's *Kinsmen of Another Kind*.
18. Roy Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux: United States Indian Policy on Trial* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967, 1993), 43.
19. William Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 61.
20. See, for example, the account of a descendant of a former chief from Mille Lacs, Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 157–58.
21. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 161.
22. *Ibid.*, 230–34.
23. See <http://www.millelacsobjibwe.org/ojibhistory.asp> (accessed September 19, 2007).
24. William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota, Volume I*, 148n42.
25. Ward Churchill discusses this in the context of international law. See Ward Churchill, *Perversions of Justice: Indigenous Peoples and Anglo-American Law* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2003), 56.
26. Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 28. Originally published: New York: Macmillan, 1969. After 1969, Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle acknowledged that over 600 treaties and agreements were made with Indigenous Peoples in the United States, stating, "Not only were these treaties designed, as was the first treaty, to ensure peaceful relations with the Indians but, even more important, they were also a means of securing an orderly transfer of landownership from the tribes to the United States." See Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 3–4.
27. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 26.
28. See "Endnotes" for the *Treaty with the Sioux Nation of Indians—1805*, compiled by Howard J. Vogel, Professor of Law, Hamline University School of Law. hvogel@hamline.edu.
29. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 25–32.
30. For a discussion regarding the Catholic theological basis for acquiring Indigenous lands, see Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice*, 2–6.
31. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 87.
32. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 281, 284.
33. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 79, 83.
34. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 282.
35. An indication of the arbitrary and fraudulent nature of the

amounts paid to the traders is exemplified in the initial adjustment the traders made to scale down their claims in accordance with the treaties. In the case of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, for example, claims were reduced from \$431,735.78 to \$210,000. Sibley's claim alone was arbitrarily reduced from \$144,984.40 to \$66,459.00. See Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 283n37 through 303. In addition, Gary Anderson reports that Sibley's fur trade company alone took \$105,618.54 that was divided among four White men: Sibley, Dousman, McLeod, and Ramsey Crooks, Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 197.

36. Folwell notes that the area has never been accurately computed, but cites other writers. Thomas Hughes computed "over 19,000,000 acres in Minnesota, nearly 3,000,000 acres in Iowa, and over 1,750,000 acres in South Dakota making in all nearly 24,000,000 acres of the choicest land on the globe," and the celebratory commissioner's report that stated that an area of 35,000,000 acres had been acquired. See Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 287.

37. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 80–84.

38. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 281. Folwell also notes that Ramsey helped negotiate a treaty with the Anishinabe at Pembina for the cession of some five million acres in the Red River Valley under similar terms with 5 percent interest payments for twenty years with the principal amount reverting back to the government at the end of that period. However, that treaty was not ratified by the Senate, 288, 291. Gary Anderson also comments that the money that was supposed to be held in trust was never put in the Treasury and Congress had to appropriate the interest each year, see Gary Clayton Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 186.

39. Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 197.

40. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, "Appendix: Treaty of Traverse des Sioux", 424–27.

41. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 292.

42. *Ibid.*, 297–99.

43. Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 196.

44. See "United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/genocide.htm> (accessed October 10, 2007).

45. Message of Governor Ramsey to the Legislature of Minnesota,

Delivered September 9, 1862 (St. Paul: W.M. R. Marshall, State Printer, 1862), 12.

46. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 126.

47. *The Guinness Book of Records* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993). Michael Yellow Bird cited this source in his article "Cowboys and Indians: Toys of Genocide, Icons of American Colonialism," *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 37. In addition, the History Channel recently debuted a program entitled "Wild West Tech: The Biggest Machines in the West" that detailed and celebrated the technological accomplishment embodied in the Mankato hangings. See <http://store.aetv.com/html/product/index.jhtml?id=74170> (accessed October 11, 2007).

48. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota, Volume II*, 447–50.

49. See "Decolonizing the 1862 Death Marches," in Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, ed., *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors: The Dakota Commemorative Marches of the 21st Century* (St. Paul: Living Justice Press, 2006).

50. Corinne L. Monjeau-Marz, *The Dakota Indian Internment at Fort Snelling, 1862-1864*. (St. Paul: Prairie Smoke Press, 2005), 54.

51. *Ibid.*, 39.

52. Monjeau-Marz documents several of these examples in addition to the young women with their slit throats, such as the "squaw" reported killed during soldier's target shooting, later explained to be subjected to "infamous outrage." For further examples, see chapter 3, *The Dakota Indian Internment at Fort Snelling*.

53. Monjeau-Marz, *The Dakota Indian Internment at Fort Snelling*, 59.

54. *Ibid.*, 60.

55. *Ibid.*, 72.

56. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 134.

57. *Ibid.*, 135n3.

58. Raphael Lemkin who coined the term *genocide*, however, firmly believed that ethnocide was a form of genocide. "His definition included attacks on political and social institutions, culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of the group." See, David Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York: Oxford, 1992), quoting Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, 279.

59. Instances of boarding school abuses are being disclosed and documented every day. While corporal punishments included such acts as washing out children's mouths with lye for speaking Indigenous languages, forcing children to kneel for hours, whippings, beatings, strappings, other instances of abuse include rape and terrorism. These are documented in works such as Howard Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997), Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004), and Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and the American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005).

60. Smith, *Conquest*, 37.

61. David Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York: Oxford, 1992), 120.

62. *Ibid.*, 124.

63. Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 50.

64. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 125.

65. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 140.

66. This is quoted in Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 146, though the quote is originally cited in Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux* (Boston: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1880), 224.

67. Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival*, 53–54. In this section Thornton also cites the work of scholar Sherburne Cook, "Demographic Consequences of European Contact with Primitive Peoples," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 237, 1945: 107–11.

68. Andrea Smith provides an excellent discussion of sterilization in the larger context of attacks on Indigenous women's reproduction in her chapter "Better Dead than Pregnant," *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, 80–88. See also Bruce Johansen, "Reprise/Forced Sterilizations: Native Americans and the Last Gasp of Eugenics," *Native Americas* 15 (Winter 1998): 44–47. Russell Means uses the overall sterilization rate of 42 percent for all women of childbearing

age. See Marvin J. Wolf, *Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 375.

69. Smith, *Conquest*, 41.

70. See Curt Brown, "After Many Years, We Are Home," *Star Tribune*, Sunday, October 14, 2007, A1.

71. See Census 2000 PHC - 18. "American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes in Minnesota: 2000. Table 38—American Indians and Alaska Natives Alone and Alone or in Combination Population by Tribe for Minnesota: 2000." This information includes the 1,801 individuals self-identified as "Sioux" who might be Lakota or Nakota rather than Dakota. If those individuals are not factored in, the population of Dakota people would be 3,506. See also Northwest Area Foundation's "Indicators" Web site: <http://www.indicators.nwaf.org/> (accessed December 19, 2007).

72. See Census 2000, "Table 1: American Indian and Alaska Native Population by Selected Tribal Grouping 2000" at www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/cenr-28.pdf (accessed December 19, 2007).

Working Definitions

Unsettling Minnesota

The following definitions have been put forward by members of UM as useful tools in our process. Unlike the Points of Unity, these definitions have not been subject to a collective editing process and are a work in progress.

Accountability: The acknowledgment of privilege(s) and the responsibility for one's actions and inactions in one's relationships. For example, a white male acknowledging white male privilege in a white-supremacist and hetero-patriarchal society and taking actions to dismantle those privileges. To help foster a community or culture of accountability one might hold another that occupies a similar position of privilege accountable to that privilege, such as male-bodied people "calling out" other male-bodied people on patriarchy, rather than putting that responsibility on female-bodied people who are often negatively impacted by this power dynamic.

Ally: A person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in their (personal and professional) life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population. Being an ally entails an intimate understanding of one's own identity and privilege, especially in relation to the group one is acting as an ally towards. Allies actively seek to interrupt and dismantle oppression in all its forms, even when doing so could jeopardize one's own position of relative comfort and security. Allies cannot self-define as such, but must be claimed by the group one strives to be an ally to.

Anarchism: A political philosophy encompassing theories and attitudes which consider the state, as compulsory government, to be unnecessary, harmful, and undesirable, and promote the elimination of the state. Specific anarchists may have additional criteria for what constitutes anarchism, and they often disagree with each other on what these criteria are. There is no single defining position that all anarchists hold, and those considered anarchists at best share a certain family resemblance.

Anti-Capitalism: Opposition to the system that colonizes people and nature as resources of power. Marxism, democratic socialism, anarchism, and Indigenism are all anticapitalist methods of societal organization. Of the above-mentioned movements only Indigenism and anarchism address the hierarchical nature of government as well as capitalism.

Assimilation: Ihdutákudaáßni -to make yourself into nothing. The process of indigenous people being incorporated into colonial society. As a part of colonization, indigenous society and culture must be dismantled and erased. This is institutionalized within the Colonial society with boarding schools.

Capitalism: The socio-economic system where social relations are based on private ownership and commodity exchange. This system defines the natural world, including humans, simply as a body of resources to be exploited and reshaped to serve the purposes and interests of power. As such, it entails colonization and exploitation of all life forms, land, and the natural environment. Capitalism results in competition for resources, accumulation by dispossession, class structures, involuntary relations, and a coercive hierarchy. Adherents of capitalism trust a god-like "invisible hand of the market" over human guidance of economies.

Colonialist Mentalities: Frameworks of social, political, and cultural thinking that normalize colonization and eliminate anti-colonial visions from the picture of potential and desirable social transformation. Ideals that do not explicitly ally themselves to decolonization.

Colonization: The practice of invading other lands and territories for the purpose of settlement and/or resource exploitation. Colonization exists in four stages: reconnaissance, invasion, occupation, and assimilation. It is comprised of two primary aspects – physical and mental. Colonization also includes the physical occupation of land and the domination of indigenous peoples through military conflicts, genocide, and relocation. Religious, cultural, social, and economic assimilation follows.

Colonizer: A person who is not indigenous to the land, that benefits from their occupation of the land, and displacement of the indigenous Peoples. All colonizers, by continuing their occupation of another People's homeland, remain colonizers, no matter their intent.

Colonizer Privilege: The institutionalized rights and power afforded to settlers by a colonial power structure. Modern day colonizer privilege often comes in the form of something the colonizer does not have to deal with, such as not being expected to think or do anything about the fact that they are living on stolen land at the expense of indigenous people.

Dakota Oyate: the Dakota people or nation.

Decolonization: Ki wašicu etaáhaá ihdu@dayapi - to tear yourself away from the wašicu way. The ending of colonialism and the liberation of the colonized. In order to be liberated from the oppressive state, the process of colonization must be reversed - beginning with the mental aspects and moving towards the physical. While decolonization can be an act of cultural revitalization, it also requires the dismantling of the colonial government and the entire social system upon which control and exploitation are based. This is a struggle that has historically involved peaceful negotiations and/or violent revolt and armed struggle by the native population. The United Nations has stated that these are legally justified actions, and that in the process of decolonization, there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination.

Economies: Should foster community, not the other way around.

Exploitation Colonialism: A policy of conquering distant lands not with the intention to supplant its population, but rather to exploit its natural and human resources.

Fourth World: In the succession of worlds, including the First World (Capitalist States, i.e. United States, United Kingdom, etc), the Second World (Communist States, i.e. China, Soviet Union, etc), and the Third World (Impoverished States), the Fourth World is the Host World to the Parasitic Worlds of the colonizer. It is the nations of indigenous peoples who today are completely or partly deprived of their own territory and its resources. This includes the Native Nations of North and South America, the Sámi people of Northern Scandinavia, the Catalonians in Spain, the Australian aborigines, the Maori of New Zealand, as well as the various indigenous populations of Africa, Asia and Oceania. This also included segments of the European population, evidenced in the struggles of the Irish, Welsh, Basques, and others to free themselves from settler-state oppression. The goal of struggle in the Fourth World is often not the creation of a State, but the expulsion of alien rule, the ending of colonization, and the reconstruction of indigenous societies.

Genocide: Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly

transferring children of the group to another group.

Hetero-patriarchy: The dominant colonial systems of hetero-normativity and patriarchy which are inextricably linked in their function as tools used to establish and maintain a colonial state. This term draws attention to the ways in which hetero-normativity and patriarchy intersect one another, reinforce each other, and function together. Heteropatriarchy is a tool of colonialist and capitalist societies that enforces hierarchical gender oppression (patriarchy) by enforcing a binary gender system in which one is assigned either male or female identity at birth. Hetero-normativity eliminates the space between male and female and criminalizes disassociation or non-conformity to these gender identities and associated expectations of each gender role. Hetero-patriarchal societies work to give and ensure power and privilege to males and positions females as subordinate to males.

Homeland: In Dakota: Ina Makoce - Mother Earth. The land that claims you, that speaks your language. The land base with which a culture/people has a deep history and a sustainable relationship. Note: United States citizens generally do not refer to their country as their homeland.

Indigenism: The political belief that places the rights and struggles of indigenous people as the highest priority in political life. It is an ideology which draws upon the traditions—the bodies of knowledge and corresponding codes of value—of native peoples to both make critiques of and conceptualize alternatives to the present social, political, and economic status quo. Indigenism offers a vision of how things might be, that is based in how things have been since time immemorial, and how things must be once again if the human species, and perhaps the planet itself, is to survive much longer.

Internalized Oppression: The manner in which an oppressed group comes to use against itself the methods and mentalities of the oppressor. Members of a marginalized group can hold an oppressive view toward their own group, or believe in negative stereotypes of themselves. Historically, colonization has sown seeds of self hatred manifesting itself in generational trauma affecting the physical, psychological and spiritual well being of individuals and communities.

Land reclamation: Restoring an area to a more natural state. This includes a dismantling of the systems that hold and exploit the land bases of indigenous peoples, as well as the physical reoccupation of indigenous homeland(s).

Liberation: To live one's own way of life. To gain autonomy. The act of freeing from control or domination by a foreign power. Having the ability to make decisions as a sovereign entity and having the power to act upon them.

Male Privilege: Colonialist societies were constructed on and around the values of hetero-patriarchy, thus colonialist societies function to ensure and maintain the dominance and power of males. Colonial institutional power and society functions to ultimately benefit males yet hetero-patriarchy works together to ensure other forms of hierarchical oppressions so that some males may benefit more than others and other males are oppressed in other ways. In colonial society, males and females are socialized differently to either exert power and dominance or to be silenced and submissive. Male privilege means that within hetero-patriarchal societies men have more voice, control, power.

Market Imperialism: The process which undermines the autonomy of communities, coercing them into serving

the interests of multinational corporations, and the global capitalist system. This includes the commodification and extraction of resources, the exploitation of the workforce and the subservience of local economies to the global system. In this system, structural adjustments and privatization ultimately destroy social, cultural, and economic infrastructures and replace them with a homogeneous system which benefits the global capitalist establishment. What many might call “globalization” or “neoliberalism”.

Mutual Liberation: The understanding that our liberation is bound up with that of all peoples of this world, that all oppression is interconnected, and that without everyone’s liberation we cannot be free.

Nation: A body of people who share a common history, culture, language or ethnic origin, who inhabit a particular country or territory, or claim a common homeland. Nations traditionally include mutually recognized structures of social and political self-determination amongst the people of the nation.

Nation State: see State.

Neo-colonialism or “New Colonialism”: the use of Natives to control their own people for the benefit a colonizing state or for market imperialism. Unpopular and undemocratic, neo-colonialism means giving some of the benefits of the dominant society to a small, privileged minority, in return for their help in making sure the majority do not cause trouble for the Colonial government. Neo-colonialism often involves the establishment of puppet governments (e.g., BIA regimes such as Dickie Wilson at Pine Ridge) and/or the state-funding of Native governments, businesses, and organizations to indirectly control indigenous peoples. By manipulating grants and funds, the Colonial government can determine the activities and strategies of governments and organizations. It is no coincidence that when organizations were independent of government money (and funded by grassroots communities) in the mid-sixties, they followed a militant strategy which confronted the government. Now, after twenty years of grants, they are following a strategy that requires subservience to the state.

Oceti Sakowin: [pronounced Očhėti Šakówǰ] “Seven Council Fires”. Each fire is symbolic of an oyate. The seven nations that comprise the Dakota Oyate are: Mdewakantunwan, Wahpetunwan (Wahpeton), Wahpekute, Sisitunwan (Sisseton), the Ihanktunwan (Yankton), Ihanktunwanna (Yanktonai), and the Teton (Lakota).

Rape Culture: A society in which rape is encouraged, condoned and perpetuated by its own institutions, social and cultural values. A rape culture means that sexual violence is used systematically to maintain and perpetuate hierarchical oppressions. It is used as a tool of hetero-patriarchal societies to ensure and maintain hierarchical gender oppression while intersecting with and reinforcing other forms of hierarchical oppression. It is used as a tool of colonialist and capitalist societies to dominate, conquer and maintain its power through systematic sexual violence targeted at women, particularly native women and women of color.

Settler: All people not indigenous to North America who are living on this continent are settlers on stolen land. We also acknowledge that the state was founded through genocide and colonization– which continues today and from which settlers directly benefit. However, all settlers do not benefit equally from the colonial state. Not all those residing on this land immigrated here of free will, and while a pronouncedly racist power structure determines who gains the most from Dakota genocide, it is all of our responsibilities as settlers, especially those of us who descended from European colonizers, to challenge the systems of domination from which we benefit. A way to describe colonizers that highlights their desires to be emplaced on Indigenous land.

Settler Colonialism: The policy of conquering a land to send settlers in order to shape its demographic contours

and geography. This practice contrasts, but usually coincides, with exploitation colonialism.

Settler State: A settler state is a state with origins in settler colonialism and is built on settlement. Examples include the United States, Canada, Israel, Australia, South Africa and many other states.

Sexual Violence: Any act that forces, pressures, or coerces someone into a sexual act without their consent. It is the act of taking or disempowering someone's ownership over their own body or physical identity. It is subjecting someone physically or mentally to objectification or unwanted sexualization.

Solidarity: Bonds of support arising from common goals and the understanding of shared struggle. To be in solidarity means getting each other's back . "I stand with you, against another" (Chandra Mohanty).

Sovereignty: Sovereignty is a political term indicating the internationally recognized independence of a nation. A sovereign nation determines its own laws and form of government, its own economy, culture, policies and programs, defense and international relationships. Indigenous nations assert their right to be treated by their colonial governments as sovereign nations.

Spiritual/ Cultural Appropriation: The act of colonizers taking the spiritual and cultural practices of the indigenous peoples whose lands they occupy and claiming it as their own property.

State or Nation State: An organization that successfully claims a monopoly on the legitimate use of force and political power in a given territory, which may include the armed forces, civil service or state bureaucracy, courts, and police. Borders are defined by states. States and nations are distinct: there are many stateless nations globally, which are typically indigenous and colonized. For example, the United States (territories) currently occupies hundreds of indigenous nations. For peoples subject to their authority or within their borders, states institutionalize hierarchies and privileges. States usually claim exclusive sovereignty within their territories and therefore do not generally recognize the sovereignty or political structures of occupied nations or nations that are not states.

Sustainability: The ability to live with the land and environment instead of exploiting the land and environment. Evidence of sustainability includes: more buffalo, cleaner water, more rainforests, fewer coal factories, less carbon emissions, less pavement and fewer dams than the year before.

Wabicu: Literally, "One Who Takes the Fat." See also: Capitalism, Colonization, Neocolonialism.

White Supremacy: A historically based institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white people (and nations of the European continent) for the purpose of maintaining and defending systems of wealth, power, and privilege.

ONE

“Their Manners Are Decorous and Praiseworthy”

Where today are the Pequot? Where are the Narragansett, the Mohican, the Pokanoket, and many other once powerful tribes of our people? They have vanished before the avarice and the oppression of the White Man, as snow before a summer sun.

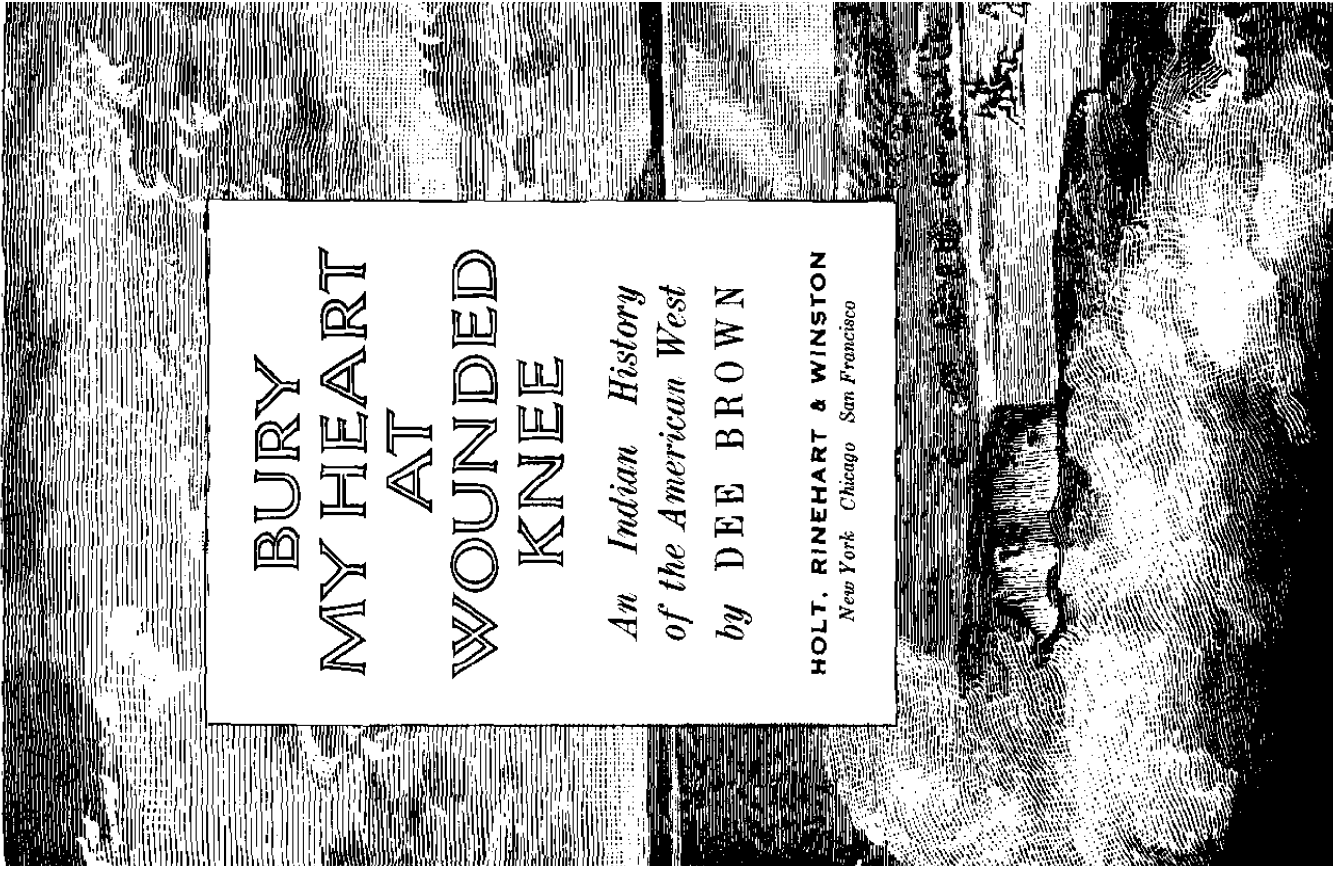
Will we let ourselves be destroyed in our turn without a struggle, give up our homes, our country bequeathed to us by the Great Spirit, the graves of our dead and everything that is dear and sacred to us? I know you will cry with me, “Never! Never!”

—TFCUMSEH OF THE SHAWNEES

IT BEGAN with Christopher Columbus, who gave the people the name *Indios*. Those Europeans, the white men, spoke in different dialects, and some pronounced the word *Indien*, or *Indianer*, or Indian. *Peaux-rouges*, or redskins, came later. As was the custom of the people when receiving strangers, the Tainos on the island of San Salvador generously presented Columbus and his men with gifts and treated them with honor.

“So tractable, so peaceable, are these people,” Columbus wrote to the King and Queen of Spain, “that I swear to your Majesties there is not in the world a better nation. They love their neighbors as themselves, and their discourse is ever sweet and gentle, and accompanied with a smile; and though it is true that they are naked, yet their manners are decorous and praiseworthy.”

All this, of course, was taken as a sign of weakness, if not heathenism, and Columbus being a righteous European was convinced the people should be “made to work, sow and do all that is necessary and to *adopt our ways*.” Over the next four



centuries (1492-1890) several million Europeans and their descendants undertook to enforce their ways upon the people of the New World.

Columbus kidnapped ten of his friendly Taino hosts and carried them off to Spain, where they could be introduced to the white man's ways. One of them died soon after arriving there, but not before he was baptized a Christian. The Spaniards were so pleased that they had made it possible for the first Indian to enter heaven that they hastened to spread the good news throughout the West Indies.

The Tainos and other Arawak people did not resist conversion to the Europeans' religion, but they did resist strongly when hordes of these bearded strangers began scouring their islands in search of gold and precious stones. The Spaniards looted and burned villages; they kidnapped hundreds of men, women, and children and shipped them to Europe to be sold as slaves. Arawak resistance brought on the use of guns and sabers, and whole tribes were destroyed, hundreds of thousands of people in less than a decade after Columbus set foot on the beach of San Salvador, October 12, 1492.

Communications between the tribes of the New World were slow, and news of the Europeans' barbarities rarely overtook the rapid spread of new conquests and settlements. Long before the English-speaking white men arrived in Virginia in 1607, however, the Powhatans had heard rumors about the civilizing techniques of the Spaniards. The Englishmen used subtler methods. To ensure peace long enough to establish a settlement at Jamestown, they put a golden crown upon the head of Wahunsonacook, dubbed him King Powhatan, and convinced him that he should put his people to work supplying the white settlers with food. Wahunsonacook vacillated between loyalty to his rebellious subjects and to the English, but after John Rolfe married his daughter, Pocahontas, he apparently decided that he was more English than Indian. After Wahunsonacook died, the Powhatans rose up in revenge to drive the Englishmen back into the sea from which they had come, but the Indians underestimated the power of English weapons. In a short time the eight thousand Powhatans were reduced to less than a thousand.

In Massachusetts the story began somewhat differently but

ended virtually the same as in Virginia. After the Englishmen landed at Plymouth in 1620, most of them probably would have starved to death but for aid received from friendly natives of the New World. A Pemaquid named Samoset and three Wampanoags named Massasoit, Squanto, and Hobomah became self-appointed missionaries to the Pilgrims. All spoke some English, learned from explorers who had touched ashore in previous years. Squanto had been kidnapped by an English seaman who sold him into slavery in Spain, but he escaped through the aid of another Englishman and finally managed to return home. He and the other Indians regarded the Plymouth colonists as helpless children; they shared corn with them from the tribal stores, showed them where and how to catch fish, and got them through the first winter. When spring came they gave the white men some seed corn and showed them how to plant and cultivate it.

For several years these Englishmen and their Indian neighbors lived in peace, but many more shiploads of white people continued coming ashore. The ring of axes and the crash of falling trees echoed up and down the coasts of the land which the white men now called New England. Settlements began crowding in upon each other. In 1625 some of the colonists asked Samoset to give them 12,000 additional acres of Pemaquid land. Samoset knew that land came from the Great Spirit, was as endless as the sky, and belonged to no man. To humor these strangers in their strange ways, however, he went through a ceremony of transferring the land and made his mark on a paper for them. It was the first deed of Indian land to English colonists.

Most of the other settlers, coming in by thousands now, did not bother to go through such a ceremony. By the time Massasoit, great chief of the Wampanoags, died in 1662 his people were being pushed back into the wilderness. His son Metacomb foresaw doom for all Indians unless they united to resist the invaders. Although the New Englanders flattered Metacomb by crowning him King Philip of Pokanoket, he devoted most of his time to forming alliances with the Narragansetts and other tribes in the region.

In 1675, after a series of arrogant actions by the colonists, King Philip led his Indian confederacy into a war meant to save

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee

the tribes from extinction. The Indians attacked fifty-two settlements, completely destroying twelve of them, but after months of fighting, the firepower of the colonists virtually exterminated the Wampanoags and Narragansetts. King Philip was killed and his head publicly exhibited at Plymouth for twenty years. Along with other captured Indian women and children, his wife and young son were sold into slavery in the West Indies.

When the Dutch came to Manhattan Island, Peter Minuit purchased it for sixty guilders in fishhooks and glass beads, but encouraged the Indians to remain and continue exchanging their valuable peltries for such trinkets. In 1641, Willem Kieft levied tribute upon the Mahicans and sent soldiers to Staten Island to punish the Raritans for offenses which had been committed not by them but by white settlers. The Raritans resisted and the soldiers killed four of them. When the Indians retaliated by killing four Dutchmen, Kieft ordered the massacre of two entire villages while the inhabitants slept. The Dutch soldiers ran their bayonets through men, women, and children, hacked their bodies to pieces, and then leveled the villages with fire.

For two more centuries these events were repeated again and again as the European colonists moved inland through the passes of the Alleghenies and down the westward-flowing rivers to the Great Waters (the Mississippi) and then up the Great Muddy (the Missouri).

The Five Nations of the Iroquois, mightiest and most advanced of all the eastern tribes, strove in vain for peace. After years of bloodshed to save their political independence, they finally went down to defeat. Some escaped to Canada, some fled westward, some lived out their lives in reservation confinement.

During the 1760's Pontiac of the Ottawas united tribes in the Great Lakes country in hopes of driving the British back across the Alleghenies, but he failed. His major error was an alliance with French-speaking white men who withdrew aid from the Shawnees during the crucial siege of Detroit.

A generation later, Tecumseh of the Shawnees formed a great confederacy of midwestern and southern tribes to protect their

"Their Manners Are Decorous and Praiseworthy"

lands from invasion. The dream ended with Tecumseh's death in battle during the War of 1812.

Between 1795 and 1840 the Miamis fought battle after battle, and signed treaty after treaty, ceding their rich Ohio Valley lands until there was none left to cede.

When white settlers began streaming into the Illinois country after the War of 1812, the Sauks and Foxes fled across the Mississippi. A subordinate chief, Black Hawk, refused to retreat. He created an alliance with the Winnebagoes, Pottawotamies, and Kickapoos, and declared war against the new settlements. A band of Winnebagoes, who accepted a white soldier chief's bribe of twenty horses and a hundred dollars, betrayed Black Hawk, and he was captured in 1832. He was taken East for imprisonment and display to the curious. After he died in 1838, the governor of the recently created Iowa Territory obtained Black Hawk's skeleton and kept it on view in his office.

In 1829, Andrew Jackson, who was called Sharp Knife by the Indians, took office as President of the United States. During his frontier career, Sharp Knife and his soldiers had slain thousands of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, but these southern Indians were still numerous and clung stubbornly to their tribal lands, which had been assigned them forever by white men's treaties. In Sharp Knife's first message to his Congress, he recommended that all these Indians be removed westward beyond the Mississippi. "I suggest the propriety of setting apart an ample district west of the Mississippi . . . to be guaranteed to the Indian tribes, as long as they shall occupy it."

Although enactment of such a law would only add to the long list of broken promises made to the eastern Indians, Sharp Knife was convinced that Indians and whites could not live together in peace and that his plan would make possible a final promise which never would be broken again. On May 28, 1830, Sharp Knife's recommendations became law.

Two years later he appointed a commissioner of Indian affairs to serve in the War Department and see that the new laws affecting Indians were properly carried out. And then on June 30, 1834, Congress passed *An Act to Regulate Trade and Inter-*

course with the Indian Tribes and to Preserve Peace on the Frontiers. All that part of the United States west of the Mississippi "and not within the States of Missouri and Louisiana or the Territory of Arkansas" would be Indian country. No white persons would be permitted to trade in the Indian country without a license. No white traders of bad character would be permitted to reside in Indian country. No white persons would be permitted to settle in the Indian country. The military force of the United States would be employed in the apprehension of any white person who was found in violation of provisions of the act.

Before these laws could be put into effect, a new wave of white settlers swept westward and formed the territories of Wisconsin and Iowa. This made it necessary for the policy makers in Washington to shift the "permanent Indian frontier" from the Mississippi River to the 95th meridian. (This line ran from Lake of the Woods on what is now the Minnesota-Canada border, slicing southward through what are now the states of Minnesota and Iowa, and then along the western borders of Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana, to Galveston Bay, Texas.) To keep the Indians beyond the 95th meridian and to prevent unauthorized white men from crossing it, soldiers were garrisoned in a series of military posts that ran southward from Fort Snelling on the Mississippi River to forts Atkinson and Leavenworth on the Missouri, forts Gibson and Smith on the Arkansas, Fort Towsen on the Red, and Fort Jesup in Louisiana.

More than three centuries had now passed since Christopher Columbus landed on San Salvador, more than two centuries since the English colonists came to Virginia and New England. In that time the friendly Tainos who welcomed Columbus ashore had been utterly obliterated. Long before the last of the Tainos died, their simple agricultural and handicraft culture was destroyed and replaced by cotton plantations worked by slaves. The white colonists chopped down the tropical forests to enlarge their fields; the cotton plants exhausted the soil; the fields unbroken by a forest shield covered the fields with sand. Columbus first saw the island he described it as "very fertile and the trees very green . . . the whole of the island a pleasure to gaze upon." The Europeans

who followed him there destroyed its vegetation and its inhabitants—human, animal, bird, and fish—and after turning it into a wasteland, they abandoned it.

On the mainland of America, the Wampanoags of Massachusetts and King Philip had vanished, along with the Chesapeake, the Chickahominy, and the Potomacs of the great Powhatan confederacy. (Only Pocahontas was remembered.) Scattered or reduced to remnants were the Pequots, Montauks, Nanticokes, Machapungas, Catawbas, Cheraws, Miamis, Hurons, Eries, Mohawks, Senecas, and Mohegans. (Only Uncas was remembered.) Their musical names remained forever fixed on the American land, but their bones were forgotten in a thousand burned villages or lost in forests fast disappearing before the axes of twenty million invaders. Already the once sweet-watered streams, most of which bore Indian names, were clouded with silt and the wastes of man; the very earth was being ravaged and squandered. To the Indians it seemed that these Europeans hated everything in nature—the living forests and their birds and beasts, the grassy glades, the water, the soil, and the air itself.

The decade following establishment of the "permanent Indian frontier" was a bad time for the eastern tribes. The great Cherokee nation had survived more than a hundred years of the white man's wars, diseases, and whiskey, but now it was to be blotted out. Because the Cherokees numbered several thousands, their removal to the West was planned to be in gradual stages, but discovery of Appalachian gold within their territory brought on a clamor for their immediate wholesale exodus. During the autumn of 1838, General Winfield Scott's soldiers rounded them up and concentrated them into camps. (A few hundred escaped to the Smoky Mountains and many years later were given a small reservation in North Carolina.) From the prison camps they were started westward to Indian Territory. On the long winter trek, one of every four Cherokees died from cold, hunger, or disease. They called the march their "trail of tears." The Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles also gave up their homelands in the South. In the North, surviving remnants of the Shawnees, Miamis, Ottawas, Hurons, Delawares, and many other once mighty tribes walked or traveled by horseback and

wagon beyond the Mississippi, carrying their shabby goods, their rusty farming tools, and bags of seed corn. All of them arrived as refugees, poor relations, in the country of the proud and free Plains Indians.

Scarcely were the refugees settled behind the security of the "permanent Indian frontier" when soldiers began marching westward through the Indian country. The white men of the United States—who talked so much of peace but rarely seemed to practice it—were marching to war with the white men who had conquered the Indians of Mexico. When the war with Mexico ended in 1847, the United States took possession of a vast expanse of territory reaching from Texas to California. All of it was west of the "permanent Indian frontier."

In 1848 gold was discovered in California. Within a few months, fortune-seeking easterners by the thousands were crossing the Indian Territory. Indians who lived or hunted along the Santa Fe and Oregon trails had grown accustomed to seeing an occasional wagon train licensed for traders, trappers, or missionaries. Now suddenly the trails were filled with wagons, and the wagons were filled with white people. Most of them were bound for California gold, but some turned southwest for New Mexico or northwest for the Oregon country.

To justify these breaches of the "permanent Indian frontier," the policy makers in Washington invented Manifest Destiny, a term which lifted land hunger to a lofty plane. The Europeans and their descendants were ordained by destiny to rule all of America. They were the dominant race and therefore responsible for the Indians—along with their lands, their forests, and their mineral wealth. Only the New Englanders, who had destroyed or driven out all their Indians, spoke against Manifest Destiny.

In 1850, although none of the Modocs, Mohaves, Paiutes, Shastas, Yumas, or a hundred other lesser-known tribes along the Pacific Coast were consulted on the matter, California became the thirty-first state of the Union. In the mountains of Colorado gold was discovered, and new hordes of prospectors swarmed across the Plains. Two vast new territories were organized, Kansas and Nebraska, encompassing virtually all the country of the Plains tribes. In 1858 Minnesota became a state,

its boundaries being extended a hundred miles beyond the 95th meridian, the "permanent Indian frontier."

And so only a quarter of a century after enactment of Sharp Knife Andrew Jackson's Indian Trade and Intercourse Act, white settlers had driven in both the north and south flanks of the 95th meridian line, and advance elements of white miners and traders had penetrated the center.

It was then, at the beginning of the 1860's, that the white men of the United States went to war with one another—the Bluecoats against the Graycoats, the great Civil War. In 1860 there were probably 300,000 Indians in the United States and Territories, most of them living west of the Mississippi. According to varying estimates, their numbers had been reduced by one-half to two-thirds since the arrival of the first settlers in Virginia and New England. The survivors were now pressed between expanding white populations on the East and along the Pacific coasts—more than thirty million Europeans and their descendants. If the remaining free tribes believed that the white man's Civil War would bring any respite from his pressures for territory, they were soon disillusioned.

The most numerous and powerful western tribe was the Sioux, or Dakota, which was separated into several subdivisions. The Santee Sioux lived in the woodlands of Minnesota, and for some years had been retreating before the advance of settlements. Little Crow of the Mdewkanton Santee, after being taken on a tour of eastern cities, was convinced that the power of the United States could not be resisted. He was reluctantly attempting to lead his tribe down the white man's road. Wabasha, another Santee leader, also had accepted the inevitable, but both he and Little Crow were determined to oppose any further surrender of their lands.

Farther west on the Great Plains were the Teton Sioux, horse-Indians all, and completely free. They were somewhat contemptuous of their woodland Santee cousins who had capitulated to the settlers. Most numerous and most confident of their ability to defend their territory were the Oglala Teton. At the beginning of the white man's Civil War, their outstanding leader

the tribe had been pushed southward before the combined power of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho. By 1860 the Kiowas had made their peace with the northern plains tribes and had become allies of the Comanches, whose southern plains they had entered. The Kiowas had several great leaders—an aging chief, Satank; two vigorous fighting men in their thirties, Satanta and Lone Wolf; and an intelligent statesman, Kicking Bird.

The Comanches, constantly on the move and divided into many small bands, lacked the leadership of their allies. Ten Bears, very old, was more a poet than a warrior chief. In 1860, half-breed Quannah Parker, who would lead the Comanches in a last great struggle to save their buffalo range, was not yet twenty years old.

In the arid Southwest were the Apaches, veterans of 250 years of guerrilla warfare with the Spaniards, who taught them the finer arts of torture and mutilation but never subdued them. Although few in number—probably not more than six thousand divided into several bands—their reputation as tenacious defenders of their harsh and pitiless land was already well established. Mangas Colorado, in his late sixties, had signed a treaty of friendship with the United States, but was already disillusioned by the influx of miners and soldiers into his territory. Cochise, his son-in-law, still believed he could get along with the white Americans. Victorio and Delshey distrusted the white intruders and gave them a wide berth. Nana, in his fifties but tough as rawhide, considered the English-speaking white men no different from the Spanish-speaking Mexicans he had been fighting all his life. Geronimo, in his twenties, had not yet proved himself.

The Navahos were related to the Apaches, but most Navahos had taken the Spanish white man's road and were raising sheep and goats, cultivating grain and fruit. As stockmen and weavers, some bands of the tribe had grown wealthy. Other Navahos continued as nomads, raiding their old enemies the Pueblos, the white settlers, or prosperous members of their own tribe. Manuelito, a stalwart mustachioed stock raiser, was head chief—chosen by an election of the Navahos held in 1855. In 1859, when a few wild Navahos raided United States citizens in their territory, the U.S. Army retaliated not by hunting down the culprits but by destroying the hogans and shooting all the livestock belong-

was Red Cloud, thirty-eight years old, a shrewd warrior chief. Still too young to be a warrior was Crazy Horse, an intelligent and fearless teen-aged Oglala.

Among the Hunkpapas, a smaller division of the Teton Sioux, a young man in his mid-twenties had already won a reputation as a hunter and warrior. In tribal councils he advocated unyielding opposition to any intrusion by white men. He was Tatanka Yotanka, the Sitting Bull. He was mentor to an orphaned boy named Gall. Together with Crazy Horse of the Oglalas, they would make history sixteen years later in 1876.

Although he was not yet forty, Spotted Tail was already the chief spokesman for the Brulé Teton, who lived on the far western plains. Spotted Tail was a handsome, smiling Indian who loved fine feasts and compliant women. He enjoyed his way of life and the land he lived upon, but was willing to compromise to avoid war.

Closely associated with the Teton Sioux were the Cheyennes. In the old days the Cheyennes had lived in the Minnesota country of the Santee Sioux, but gradually moved westward and acquired horses. Now the Northern Cheyennes shared the Powder River and the Bighorn country with the Sioux, frequently camping near them. Dull Knife, in his forties, was an outstanding leader of the Northern branch of the tribe. (To his own people Dull Knife was known as Morning Star, but the Sioux called him Dull Knife, and most contemporary accounts use that name.)

The Southern Cheyennes had drifted below the Platte River, establishing villages on the Colorado and Kansas plains. Black Kettle of the Southern branch had been a great warrior in his youth. In his late middle age, he was the acknowledged chief, but the younger men and the Hotamitanos (Dog Soldiers) of the Southern Cheyennes were more inclined to follow leaders such as Tall Bull and Roman Nose, who were in their prime.

The Arapahos were old associates of the Cheyennes and lived in the same areas. Some remained with the Northern Cheyennes, others followed the Southern branch. Little Raven, in his forties, was at this time the best-known chief.

South of the Kansas-Nebraska buffalo ranges were the Kiowas. Some of the older Kiowas could remember the Black Hills, but

ing to Manuelito and members of his band. By 1860, Manuelito and some Navaho followers were engaged in an undeclared war with the United States in northern New Mexico and Arizona.

In the Rockies north of the Apache and Navaho country were the Utes, an aggressive mountain tribe inclined to raid their more peaceful neighbors to the south. Ouray, their best-known leader, favored peace with white men even to the point of soldiering with them as mercenaries against other Indian tribes.

In the far West most of the tribes were too small, too divided, or too weak to offer much resistance. The Modocs of northern California and southern Oregon, numbering less than a thousand, fought guerrilla-fashion for their lands. Kintpuash, called Captain Jack by the California settlers, was only a young man in 1860; his ordeal as a leader would come a dozen years later.

Northwest of the Modocs, the Nez Percés had been living in peace with white men since Lewis and Clark passed through their territory in 1805. In 1855, one branch of the tribe ceded Nez Percé lands to the United States for settlement, and agreed to live within the confines of a large reservation. Other bands of the tribe continued to roam between the Blue Mountains of Oregon and the Bitterroots of Idaho. Because of the vastness of the Northwest country, the Nez Percés believed there would always be land enough for both white men and Indians to use as each saw fit. Heinmot Tooyalaket, later known as Chief Joseph, would have to make a fateful decision in 1877 between peace and war. In 1860 he was twenty years old, the son of a chief.

In the Nevada country of the Paiutes a future Messiah named Wovoka, who later would have a brief but powerful influence upon the Indians of the West, was only four years old in 1860.

During the following thirty years these leaders and many more would enter into history and legend. Their names would become as well known as those of the men who tried to destroy them. Most of them, young and old, would be driven into the ground long before the symbolic end of Indian freedom came at Wounded Knee in December, 1890. Now, a century later, in an age without heroes, they are perhaps the most heroic of all Americans.

Desire to Belong: reflections as a settler searching for sense of place

Claire

For many years now I have struggled with the question of belonging. I felt a lack of significant connection to a place called home. I grew up dreaming of travel and faraway places- confident that I belonged somewhere and that this fantasy land waited for me to find it. I've spent the last five years between Minneapolis and wandering across oceans, borders, highways and train tracks, hoping that somewhere would make sense.

Eventually, I always ended up back in Minneapolis- seeking what I understood to be home, for the familiarity of the snow and pine. Yet, after a few months, I would again grow frustrated with what was around me. I began to feel panicked and stagnant. I did not feel the connection I desired, so I left again.

As I continued to put new cities and places behind me, I began to understand that a sense of place and belonging were not waiting for me somewhere else. The problem would not be solved simply by running away when a place failed to meet my desires and longing.

I realized that my sense of place in Minneapolis was founded in the concrete and brick structures of a colonized place. I would miss the familiarity of its sidewalks and faces. I would miss the ability to expertly navigate myself through the constructed city I knew not just by sight, but by sound and smell. I return to Minneapolis for these things, the only things that I know well. Yet there is a superficiality that permeates this notion of home. I grow frustrated and disappointed by the community I know here and imagine that surely I would find a better fit elsewhere. The concrete is suffocating, it is inanimate; I feel nothing to ground or connect myself to. I have no connection to the actual land of Minnesota; I only desire it. Through my wandering I have learned that I am not just seeking to learn and see, but also what I identify as seeking to claim for my own. I seek and desire to claim a connection to land. What does it mean when I, as a settler on occupied land, desire to belong to this land?

A couple of years ago, I remember wanting to learn the Dakota language in order to 'understand the land' better. I identified Minnesota as my home and sense of place, but there was a large void- I did not feel the connection and belonging one would associate with home. I thought that if I learned Dakota and spent more time away from the cities, I would learn to 'understand' Minnesota better and would feel like I knew that place well. I wanted to connect myself to Minnesota and the way I saw to do this was to take from Dakota culture. At the time, I understood this to be a positive thing; I thought it was important for Minnesotans to learn Dakota as a way to depart from colonialism in order to develop a healthier, significant, positive relationship with the land.

It never occurred to me that perhaps I should not have access to the Dakota language; I simply assumed I was entitled to it. I never thought to question why a white settler like myself can so easily have access to Dakota language. I thought that by "learning" Dakota culture, I could move away from settler society. I failed to understand that I was re-enacting colonization and that my desires were intrinsic to settler society. What I desire and seek to claim on this land are acts of colonization as long as I remain unaccountable to my settler identity. I want to claim that connection, belonging and identity for myself because I do not have it and I imagine myself entitled to it. I seek to belong because I do not belong. I never considered that I did not belong because of a history of conquest, genocide, and displacement. Nor did it occur to me that I didn't belong because the land remains occupied by colonialist power that I benefit from, or because of the fact that my ability to call this land home is dependent on the continued displacement and repression of Dakota people. The colonizer in me did not see these things as the issue, but rather assumed that I belong here. I thought: "of course this is home and I am entitled to it". The answer to my alienation was to take more from the people who have had everything taken from them in order for me to be here.

I imagine that most settlers, like myself, share this sense of disconnection. In our quest for belonging,

perhaps many of us have resorted to long stretches of aimless wandering. Many of us have also turned to cultural and spiritual appropriation of indigenous cultures. Taking from indigenous cultures as a settler is not cultural exchange; because it takes place within the violent constructs of colonization and colonial power, it is cultural appropriation.

When I sought to connect and belong to Minnesota, I was acting from the colonial values of claim through dominance and assertion. I took without asking because colonial society taught me that I have a claim and a right to what I desire. I did not have to ask because it is already mine. I never thought that I should have asked to learn Dakota language or culture, because colonial society has claimed it as its own property.

Andrea Smith, in her essay *Spiritual Appropriation as Sexual Violence* taught me how this desire of settlers to belong and find connection through spiritual and cultural appropriation becomes an act so violent it is like rape. A large part of living in colonial society means living in a rape culture where men are taught they have right and claim to women's bodies and sexuality. Women are taught that their bodies are property to those in hierarchical power above them- primarily men. This comes from and reinforces colonial values of power through property, entitlement and claim. As a colonizer I learn to extend these values of property, claim and power to my own desire, mirroring the values present in a colonial rape culture. A rape culture tells men that they can take without asking because what they seek already belongs to them. As a colonizer, I've learned to see this land as something I have right and claim to. That extends to the cultural heritage connected to this land. I identified myself as belonging (or desiring to belong) to this land and to see this land as home. I learned to see Dakota culture and language as something I can claim and take through this claim. I did not think to ask for it, as through this history of conquest, the connection to the land has been claimed as something that should be ours. When a settler enacts cultural and spiritual appropriation, they are taking something that is part of a people without asking. They are taking it forcefully, just as colonization stole through force and continues to allow settlers to do so.

Spiritual and cultural traditions are a physical, mental and spiritual part of individuals and peoples. When people are stripped of their land, home, language and identity- when a people has been subjugated to genocide, rape and incarceration for the benefit of my sense of place- and I then decide that I have a right to that people's language, culture, spirituality- that is an acute act of violence. When I as a colonizer decide that a person's spiritual and cultural identity is something they do not have claim or ownership over and that I can take it without asking, I am exploiting not only that culture but the people it belongs too. I am disempowering people, silencing voices, and diminishing identities. I am violating people in a way that goes beyond a simple aggression; I am perpetrating deep mental and physical violence. For a settler to take that identity for themselves is violence so personal, mental, physical and spiritual that it becomes a form of sexual violence, of rape.

I cannot seek a sense of home and belonging on this land without being accountable to my settler identity and actively working towards decolonization. The colonizer in me sought to claim, romanticize and pervert indigenous cultures into my own making as a way of legitimizing my place on this land. I do not know how to belong absent of colonial desires because it is colonization that allows me to be here. I have learned now that my sense of belonging lies in my commitment to dismantling my own colonial mentalities and dismantling colonial power. Because colonization so heavily marks my identity, I cannot seek any sort of connection or home without confronting this identity. As long as colonial power and society is in place, I cannot seek home without dismantling my colonial mentality.

In one of UM's classes, Scott Morgenson led a discussion on settler identity- he spoke about how seeking to connect as a settler to occupied land is an act of colonization because it seeks to legitimize and justify our place here. I think this is true when we are not engaged in decolonization work and are not accountable to settler identities. When we are not thinking about how we came to be here, what had to happen in order for us to be here, and who does and does not have access to land and resources- we are perpetuating colonization. In terms of access to land, if I can have access to land that indigenous people do not have access too, then I need to work in solidarity to change that. Because of the privileges I carry, its very easy for me to turn away from and ignore

things that are unpleasant and problematic. This also reinforces colonial power because it is colonial power that creates this violence and oppression, and it is colonial power that gives me the privilege and ability to ignore it.

I come back to Minneapolis because of the sense of community I have there. Yet, when I find it too frustrating and disappointing I leave. I think this frustration and disappointment is partially founded in the privilege I have to be accountable to. My community is made up of mostly white settlers and my frustration comes out of the fact that we are often able to look away when we want too. I have been very disappointed with my community when I've seen many people resistant or indifferent to responding to the sexual violence present in our scene. This is because many people have the privilege to remain indifferent to sexual violence as it does not affect them in the violent, life-threatening ways it affects others. Rather than creating a community of support, many find it too unpleasant so they turn away, because they can. Scott Morgensen spoke to our class about how the colonized mind protects itself from responsibility, realization, reflection and action. When I feel too disappointed by my community's lack of accountability and support, I leave hoping to find something elsewhere. Yet I question my own accountability in leading this semi-transient life. If I continue to leave communities when they disappoint me, I am not being accountable. I have the privilege to pick up and leave when something doesn't work out, but any serious effort to decolonize and change requires that I remain committed and accountable to a place and a community. However, I must acknowledge that a community's lack of accountability to things such as rape culture and sexual violence inherent in a white supremacist, heteropatriarchal society creates a space where many are forced to leave because the community is unsafe and violent. Some people do not have the option of staying in one place because of the trauma and violence they have experienced there.

Settler society leaves a large void because there is no significant connection or belonging to the places we occupy. We further perpetrate violence and oppression by failing to identify that this is a result of how we came to be on this land, and the colonial systems we participate in and benefit from. My sense of place lies in the dismantlement of my own colonial mentalities. This includes understanding my own cultural identity, by learning that I do come from somewhere and connecting to that. By being honest about where I come from and how I came to be here, I do not seek to appropriate other cultures for my own as a way to feel connection. By being accountable within my community, and my community being accountable to me, we create the sustainability to actually be in solidarity with other communities and affect actual deconstruction of colonial power.

for this, but the Dakotas [Sioux] did not believe there were better men in the world than they. Then some of the white men abused the Indian women in a certain way and disgraced them, and surely there was no excuse for that. All these things made many Indians dislike the whites."¹

In the summer of 1862 everything seemed to go badly between the Santees and the white men. Most of the wild game was gone from the reservation land, and when the Indians crossed into their old hunting grounds now claimed by white settlers, there was often trouble. For the second year running, the Indians' crop yields were poor, and many of them had to go to the agency traders to obtain food on credit. The Santees had learned to hate the credit system because they had no control over the accounts. When their annuities came from Washington, the traders held first claim on the money, and whatever amount the traders claimed in their accounts, government agents would pay them. Some of the Santees had learned to keep accounts, and although their records might be less by many dollars than the traders' accounts, the government agents would not accept them.

Ta-oy-a-te-duta (Little Crow) became very angry with the traders during the summer of 1862. Little Crow was a chief of the Mdewkantons, as had been his father and grandfather before him. He was sixty years old and always wore long-sleeved garments to cover his lower arms and wrists, which were withered as the result of badly healed wounds received in battle during his youth. Little Crow had signed both the treaties that tricked his people out of their land and the money promised for the land. He had been to Washington to see the Great Father, President Buchanan; he had exchanged his breechcloths and blankets for trousers and brass-buttoned jackets; he had joined the Episcopal Church, built a house, and started a farm. But during the summer of 1862 Little Crow's disillusionment was turning to anger.

In July several thousand Santees assembled at the Upper Agency on Yellow Medicine River to collect their annuities, which were pledged by the treaties, so that they might exchange them for food. The money did not arrive, and there were rumors that the Great Council (Congress) in Washington had expended all their gold fighting the great Civil War and could not send

The whites were always trying to make the Indians give up their life and live like white men—go to farming, work hard and do as they did—and the Indians did not know how to do that, and did not want to anyway. . . . If the Indians had tried to make the whites live like them, the whites would have resisted, and it was the same way with many Indians.

—WAMDJEANKA (BIG EAGLE) OF THE SANTEE SIOUX



Almost a thousand miles north of the Navaho country and at this same time of the white men's great Civil War, the Santee Sioux were losing their homeland forever. The Santees were of four divisions—the Mdewkantons, Wahpetons, Wahpekutes, and Sissetons. They were woodland Sioux but kept close ties and shared a strong tribal pride with their blood brothers of the prairies, the Yanktons and the Teton. The Santees were the "people of the farther end," the frontier guardians of the Sioux domain.

During the ten years preceding the Civil War, more than 150,000 white settlers pushed into Santee country, thus collapsing the left flank of the once "permanent Indian frontier." As the result of two deceptive treaties, the woodland Sioux surrendered nine-tenths of their land and were crowded into a narrow strip of territory along the Minnesota River. From the beginning, agents and traders had hovered around them like buzzards around the carcasses of slaughtered buffalo, systematically cheating them out of the greater part of the promised annuities for which they had been persuaded to give up their lands.

"Many of the white men often abused the Indians and treated them unkindly," Big Eagle said. "Perhaps they had excuse, but the Indians did not think so. Many of the whites always seemed to say by their manner when they saw an Indian, 'I am better than you,' and the Indians did not like this. There was excuse

any money to the Indians. Because their people were starving, Little Crow and some of the other chiefs went to their agent, Thomas Galbraith, and asked why they could not be issued food from the agency warehouse, which was filled with provisions. Galbraith replied that he could not do this until the money arrived, and he brought up a hundred soldiers to guard the warehouse. On August 4 five hundred Santees surrounded the soldiers while others broke into the warehouse and began carrying out sacks of flour. The white soldier chief, Timothy Sheehan, sympathized with the Santees. Instead of firing upon them he persuaded agent Galbraith to issue pork and flour to the Indians and await payment until the money arrived. After Galbraith did this, the Santees went away peacefully. Little Crow did not leave, however, until the agent promised to issue similar amounts of food to the Santees at the Lower Agency, thirty miles downriver at Redwood.

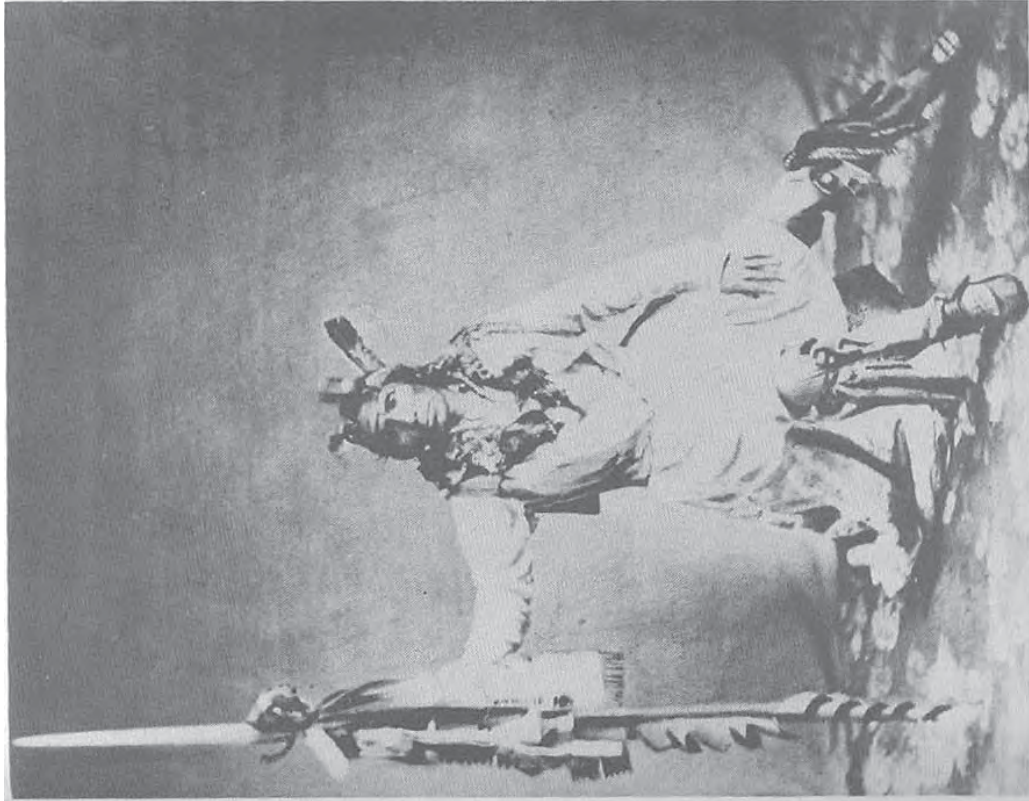
Although Little Crow's village was near the Lower Agency, Galbraith kept him waiting several days before arranging a council at Redwood for August 15. Early that morning Little Crow and several hundred hungry Mdewkantonians assembled, but it was obvious from the beginning that Galbraith and the four traders at the Lower Agency had no intention of issuing food from their stores before arrival of the annuity funds.

Angered by yet another broken promise, Little Crow arose, faced Galbraith, and spoke for his people: "We have waited a long time. The money is ours, but we cannot get it. We have no food, but here are these stores, filled with food. We ask that you, the agent, make some arrangement by which we can get food from the stores, or else we may take our own way to keep ourselves from starving. When men are hungry they help themselves."²

Instead of replying, Galbraith turned to the traders and asked them what they would do. Trader Andrew Myrick declared contemptuously: "So far as I am concerned, if they are hungry let them eat grass or their own dung."³

For a moment the circle of Indians was silent. Then came an outburst of angry shouts, and as one man the Santees arose and left the council.

The words of Andrew Myrick angered all the Santees, but to



4 Little Crow, or Tishe-ton Wa-ka-wa Ma-ni, the Hawk That Hunts Walking. From a photograph taken in 1858 by A. Zeno Shindler, courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

Little Crow they were like hot blasts upon his already seared emotions. For years he had tried to keep the treaties, to follow the advice of the white men and lead his people on their road. It seemed now that he had lost everything. His own people were losing faith in him, blaming him for their misfortunes, and now the agents and traders had turned against him. Earlier that summer the Lower Agency Mdewkantonians had accused Little Crow of betraying them when he signed away their lands by treaties. They had elected Traveling Hail to be their speaker in place of Little Crow. If Little Crow could have persuaded agent Galbraith and the traders to give his people food, they would have respected him again, but he had failed.

In the old days he could have regained leadership by going to war, but the treaties pledged him not to engage in hostilities with either the white men or other tribes. Why was it, he wondered, that the Americans talked so much of peace between themselves and the Indians, and between Indians and Indians, and yet they themselves waged such a savage war with the Graycoats that they had no money left to pay their small debts to the Santees? He knew that some of the young men in his band were talking openly of war with the white men, a war to drive them out of the Minnesota Valley. It was a good time to fight the whites, they said, because so many Bluecoat soldiers were away fighting the Graycoats. Little Crow considered such talk foolish; he had been to the East and seen the power of the Americans. They were everywhere like locusts and destroyed their enemies with great thundering cannon. War upon the white men was unthinkable.

On Sunday, August 17, Little Crow attended the Episcopal Church at the Lower Agency and listened to a sermon delivered by the Reverend Samuel Hinman. At the conclusion of services, he shook hands with the other worshipers and returned to his house, which was two miles upriver from the agency.

Late that night Little Crow was awakened by the sound of many voices and the noisy entry of several Santees into his sleeping room. He recognized the voice of Shakopee. Something very important, something very bad, had happened. Shakopee, Man-kato, Medicine Bottle, and Big Eagle all had come, and they said Wabasha would soon arrive for a council.

Four young men of Shakopee's band who were hungry for food had crossed the river that sunny afternoon to hunt in the Big Woods, and something very bad had happened there. Big Eagle told about it: "They came to a settler's fence, and here they found a hen's nest with some eggs in it. One of them took the eggs, when another said: 'Don't take them, for they belong to a white man and we may get into trouble.' The other was angry, for he was very hungry and wanted to eat the eggs, and he dashed them to the ground and replied: 'You are a coward. You are afraid of the white man. You are afraid to take even an egg from him, though you are half-starved. Yes, you are a coward, and I will tell everybody so.' The other replied: 'I am not a coward. I am not afraid of the white man, and to show you that I am not I will go to the house and shoot him. Are you brave enough to go with me?' The one who had called him coward said: 'Yes, I will go with you, and we will see who is the braver of us two.' Their two companions then said: 'We will go with you, and we will be brave, too.' They all went to the house of the white man, but he got alarmed and went to another house where there were some other white men and women. The four Indians followed them and killed three men and two women. Then they hitched up a team belonging to another settler and drove to Shakopee's camp . . . and told what they had done."⁴

On hearing of the murders of the white people, Little Crow rebuked the four young men, and then sarcastically asked Shakopee and the others why they had come to him for advice when they had chosen Traveling Hail to be their spokesman. The leaders assured Little Crow that he was still their war chief. No Santee's life would be safe now after these killings, they said. It was the white man's way to punish all Indians for the crimes of one or a few; the Santees might as well strike first instead of waiting for the soldiers to come and kill them. It would be better to fight the white men now while they were fighting among themselves far to the south.

Little Crow rejected their arguments. The white men were too powerful, he said. Yet he admitted the settlers would exact bitter vengeance because women had been killed. Little Crow's son, who was present, said later that his father's face grew haggard and great beads of sweat stood out on his forehead.

fools. You will die like the rabbits when the hungry wolves hunt them in the Hard Moon of January.

"Ta-oya-te-duta is not a coward; he will die with you."⁵

Big Eagle then spoke for peace, but he was shouted down. Ten years of abuse by white men—the broken treaties, the lost hunting grounds, the unkept promises, the undelivered annuities, their hunger for food while the agency warehouses overflowed with it, the insulting words of Andrew Myrick—all rose up to put the murders of the white settlers into the background.

Little Crow sent messengers upstream to summon the Wahpetons and Sissetons to join in the war. The women were awakened and began to run bullets while the warriors cleaned their guns.

"Little Crow gave orders to attack the agency early next morning and to kill all the traders," Big Eagle said afterward. "The next morning, when the force started to attack the agency, I went along. I did not lead my band, and I took no part in the killing. I went to save the lives of two particular friends if I could. I think others went for the same reason, for nearly every Indian had a friend he did not want killed; of course he did not care about anybody's else friend. The killing was nearly all done when I got there. Little Crow was on the ground directing operations. . . . Mr. Andrew Myrick, a trader, with an Indian wife, had refused some hungry Indians credit a short time before when they asked him for some provisions. He said to them: 'Go and eat grass.' Now he was lying on the ground dead, with his mouth stuffed full of grass, and the Indians were saying tauntingly: 'Myrick is eating grass himself.'"⁶

The Santees killed twenty men, captured ten women and children, emptied the warehouses of provisions, and set the other buildings afire. The remaining forty-seven inhabitants (some of whom were aided in their escapes by friendly Santees) fled across the river to Fort Ridgely, thirteen miles downstream.

On the way to Fort Ridgely the survivors met a company of forty-five soldiers marching to the aid of the agency. The Reverend Hinman, who the previous day had preached the last sermon ever heard by Little Crow, warned the soldiers to turn back. The soldier chief, John Marsh, refused to heed the warning and marched into a Santee ambush. Only twenty-four of his men escaped alive to make their way back to the fort.

At last one of the young braves cried out: "Ta-oya-te-duta [Little Crow] is a coward!"

"Coward" was the word that had started the killings, the challenge to the young boy who was afraid to take the white man's eggs even when he was starving. "Coward" was not a word that a Sioux chief could take lightly, even though he was halfway on the white man's road.

Little Crow's reply (as remembered by his young son): "Ta-oya-te-duta is not a coward, and he is not a fool! When did he run away from his enemies? When did he leave his braves behind him on the warpath and turn back to his tepee? When he ran away from your enemies, he walked behind on your trail with his face to the Ojibways and covered your backs as a she-bear covers her cubs! Is Ta-oya-te-duta without scalps? Look at his war feathers! Behold the scalp locks of your enemies hanging there on his lodgepoles! Do you call him a coward? Ta-oya-te-duta is not a coward, and he is not a fool. Braves, you are like little children; you know not what you are doing.

"You are full of the white man's devil water. You are like dogs in the Hot Moon when they run mad and snap at their own shadows. We are only little herds of buffalo left scattered; the great herds that once covered the prairies are no more. See!—the white men are like the locusts when they fly so thick that the whole sky is a snowstorm. You may kill one—two—ten; yes, as many as the leaves in the forest yonder, and their brothers will not miss them. Kill one—two—ten, and ten times ten will come to kill you. Count your fingers all day long and white men with guns in their hands will come faster than you can count.

"Yes; they fight among themselves—away off. Do you hear the thunder of their big guns? No; it would take you two moons to run down to where they are fighting, and all the way your path would be among white soldiers as thick as tamaracks in the swamps of the Ojibways. Yes; they fight among themselves, but if you strike at them they will all turn on you and devour you and your women and little children just as the locusts in their time fall on the trees and devour all the leaves in one day.

"You are fools. You cannot see the face of your chief; your eyes are full of smoke. You cannot hear his voice; your ears are full of roaring waters. Braves, you are little children—you are

Enco raged by his first success , Little Crow decided to attack the Soldiers' House itself, Fort Ridgely. Wabasha and his band had arrived, Mankato's force had been increased by more warriors, fresh allies were reported on their way from the Upper Agency, and Big Eagle could no longer remain neutral while his people were at war.

During the night these chiefs and their several hundred warriors moved down the Minnesota Valley and early on the morning of August 19 began assembling on the prairie west of the fort. "The young men were all anxious to go," said Lightning Blanket, one of the participants, "and we dressed as warriors in war paint, breechclouts and leggings, with a large sash around us to keep our food and ammunition in."⁷

When some of the unfried young men saw the sturdy stone buildings of the Soldiers' House and the armed Bluecoats waiting there, they had second thoughts about attacking the place. On the way down from the Lower Agency they had talked of how easy it would be to raid the village on the Cottonwood, New Ulm. The town across the river was filled with stores to be looted, and no soldiers were there. Why could they not do their fighting at New Ulm? Little Crow told them the Santees were at war, and to be victorious they must defeat the Bluecoat soldiers. If they could drive the soldiers from the valley, then all the white settlers would go away. The Santees could gain nothing by killing a few white people at New Ulm.

But in spite of Little Crow's scoldings and entreaties, the young men began to drift away toward the river. Little Crow consulted with the other chiefs, and they decided to delay the assault on Fort Ridgely until the next day.

That evening the young men returned from New Ulm. They had frightened the people there, they said, but the town was too strongly defended, and besides, a bad lightning storm came out of the sky in the afternoon. Big Eagle called them "marauding Indians" without a chief to lead them, and that night they all agreed to stay together and attack Fort Ridgely the following morning.

"We started at sunrise," Lightning Blanket said, "and crossed the river at the agency on the ferry, following the road to the top of the hill below Faribault's Creek, where we stopped for a

short rest. There the plans for attacking the fort were given out by Little Crow. . . .

"After reaching the fort, the signal, three volleys, was to be given by Medicine Bottle's men to draw the attention and fire of the soldiers, so the men on the east (Big Eagle's) and those on the west and south (Little Crow's and Shakopee's) could rush in and take the fort.

"We reached the Three Mile Creek before noon and cooked something to eat. After eating we separated, I going with the footmen to the north, and after leaving Little Crow we paid no attention to the chiefs; everyone did as he pleased. Both parties reached the fort about the same time, as we could see them passing to the west, Little Crow on a black pony. The signal, three shots, was given by our side, Medicine Bottle's men. After the signal the men on the east, south, and west were slow in coming up. While shooting we ran up to the building near the big stone one. As we were running in we saw the man with the big guns, whom we all knew, and as we were the only ones in sight he shot into us, as he had gotten ready after hearing the shooting in our direction. Had Little Crow's men fired after we fired the signal, the soldiers who shot at us would have been killed. Two of our men were killed and three hurt, two dying afterward. We ran back into the creek and did not know whether the other men would come up close or not, but they did and the big guns drove them back from that direction. If we had known that they would come up close, we could have shot at the same time and killed all, as the soldiers were out in the big opening between the buildings. We did not fight like white men with one officer; we all shot as we pleased. The plan of rushing into the buildings was given up, and we shot at the windows, mostly at the big stone building, as we thought many of the whites were in there.

"We could not see them, so were not sure we were killing any. During the shooting we tried to set fire to the buildings with fire arrows, but the buildings would not burn, so we had to get more powder and bullets. The sun was about two hours high when we went around to the west of the fort, and decided to go back to Little Crow's village and come and keep up the fighting next day. . . .

"There were about four hundred Indians in this attack; no

women were along. They all stayed at Little Crow's village. The cooking was done by boys ten to fifteen years of age, too young to fight."⁸

That evening in the village, both Little Crow and Big Eagle were low in spirits because they had not been able to take the Soldiers' House. Big Eagle opposed another attack. The Santees did not have enough warriors to storm the soldiers' big guns, he said. They would lose too many men if they made another attack. Little Crow said he would decide later what to do. Meanwhile everyone should go to work making as many bullets as possible; there was plenty of gunpowder left from the agency storehouse.

Later in the evening the situation changed. Four hundred Wahpeton and Sisseton warriors came in from the Upper Agency and offered to join the Mdewkantonians in their war against the white men. Little Crow was elated. The Santee Sioux were united again, eight hundred strong, surely enough warriors to take Fort Ridgely. He called a war council and issued strict orders for the next day's fighting. This time they must not fail.

"Early on August 22 we started," Lightning Blanket said, "but the grass was wet with dew, more than on the day of the first attack, so the sun was quite high before we traveled very far and it was just before the middle of the day when we reached the fort. . . . We did not stop to eat this time, but each carried something to eat in his legging sash and ate it in the middle of the day, while fighting."⁹

Big Eagle said the second fight at Fort Ridgely was a grand affair. "We went down determined to take the fort, for we knew it was of the greatest importance to us to have it. If we could take it we would soon have the whole Minnesota Valley."

This time, instead of approaching the fort boldly, the Santee warriors fastened prairie grass and flowers to their headbands as a means of concealment and then crept up the gullies and crawled through the brush until they were close enough to fire upon the defenders. A shower of blazing arrows set roofs afire; then the Santees rushed the stables. "In this fight," said Wakondayamane, "I came up on the south side to the stables and tried to get a horse. As I was leading it out a shell burst in the stable near me and the horse sprang over me and got away, knocking



5. Big Eagle. Photo by Simons and Shepherd at Camp McClellan in Davenport, Iowa. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.

me down. When I got up I saw a mule running and I was so mad I shot it."¹⁰ For a few minutes there was hand-to-hand fighting around the stables, but again the Santees had to give way before fierce blasts of the soldiers' artillery.

Little Crow was wounded, not seriously, but the loss of blood weakened him. When he withdrew from the field to regain his strength, Mankato led another assault. Double-charges of canister shot cut down the rushing warriors, and the attack failed.

"But for the cannon I think we would have taken the fort," Big Eagle said. "The soldiers fought us so bravely we thought there were more of them than there were." (About 150 soldiers and twenty-five armed civilians defended Fort Ridgely on August 22.) Big Eagle lost the most men in the fighting that day.

Late in the afternoon the Santee leaders called off the attack. "The sun was now setting low," Lightning Blanket said, "and after we saw the men on the south and west driven back by the big guns, and could see Little Crow and his men going to the northwest, we decided to join them and see what to do. . . . After joining them we supposed we were going back to Little Crow's village for more warriors. . . . Little Crow told us there were no more warriors, and a discussion followed. Some wanted to renew the attack on the fort the next morning and then go to New Ulm; others wanted to attack New Ulm early the next morning and then come back and take the fort. We were afraid the soldiers would get to New Ulm first."¹¹

The soldiers that Lightning Blanket referred to were 1,400 men of the Sixth Minnesota Regiment approaching from St. Paul. They were led by a soldier chief quite well known to the Santee Sioux. He was the Long Trader, Colonel Henry H. Sibley. Of the \$475,000 promised the Santees in their first treaty, Long Trader Sibley had claimed \$145,000 for his American Fur Company as money due for overpayments to the Santees. The Santees believed the fur company had underpaid them, but their agent Alexander Ramsey had accepted Sibley's claim, as well as the claims of other traders, so that the Santees received practically nothing for their lands. (Ramsey was now the governor of Minnesota, and he had appointed the Long Trader to be the Eagle Chief of the Minnesota regiment.)

At midmorning of August 23, the Santees attacked New Ulm. They streamed out of the woods in bright sunlight, formed an arc across the prairie, and swept toward the town. The citizens of New Ulm were ready for them. After the abortive attack by the young braves on August 19, the townspeople had built barricades, brought in more weapons, and secured the help of militia from towns down the valley. When the Santees came within a mile and a half of the forward line of white defenders, the mass of warriors began spreading like a fan. At the same time, they increased their speed and began yelling war cries to frighten the white men. Mankato was the war leader on this day (Little Crow lay wounded in his village), and his plan of attack was to envelop the town.

The firing on both sides was sharp and rapid, but the onrush of Indians was slowed by the citizens, who used loopholed buildings for defensive positions. Early in the afternoon the Santees set fire to several structures on the windward side of New Ulm in expectation of advancing under a smoke screen. Sixty warriors, mounted and on foot, charged a barricade, but were driven back by heavy volleys. It was a long and bitter battle, fought in the streets, dwellings, outhouses, and store buildings. When darkness fell, the Santees departed without a victory, but they left behind them the smoldering ruins of 190 buildings and more than a hundred casualties among the stubborn defenders of New Ulm.

Three days later the advance column of Long Trader Sibley's regiment reached Fort Ridgely, and the Santees began withdrawing up the Minnesota Valley. They had with them more than two hundred prisoners, mostly white women and children, and a considerable number of half-breeds known to be sympathetic toward the whites. After establishing a temporary village about forty miles above the Upper Agency, Little Crow began negotiating with other Sioux leaders in the area, hoping to gain their support. He had little success. One reason for their lack of enthusiasm was Little Crow's failure to drive the soldiers from Fort Ridgely. Another reason was the indiscriminate killing of white settlers on the north side of the Minnesota River, a bloody slaughter carried out by marauding bands of undisciplined young men while Little Crow was besieging Fort Ridgely. Several hundred settlers had

been trapped in their cabins without warning. Many had been brutally slain. Others had fled to safety, some to the villages of the Sioux bands that Little Crow hoped would join his cause.

Although Little Crow was contemptuous of those who made war on defenseless settlers, he knew that his decision to begin the war had unleashed the raiders. But it was too late to turn back. The war against the soldiers would go on as long as he had warriors to fight them.

On September 1 he decided to make a scout downriver to test the strength of Long Trader Sibley's army. The Santees divided into two forces, Little Crow leading 110 warriors along the north side of the Minnesota, while Big Eagle and Mankato scouted the south bank with a larger force.

Little Crow's plan was to avoid a frontal meeting with the soldiers, and instead slip around to the rear of Sibley's lines and try to capture the army's supply train. To do this he made a wide swing to the north, bringing his warriors close to several settlements which had withstood attacks from marauders during the previous two weeks. The temptation to raid some of the smaller settlements brought on dissension among Little Crow's followers. **On the second day of the reconnaissance**, one of the subchiefs called a war council and proposed that they attack the settlements for plunder. Little Crow was opposed. Their enemies were the soldiers, he insisted; they must fight the soldiers. At the end of the council, seventy-five warriors joined the subchief for plundering. Only thirty-five loyal followers remained with Little Crow.

On the following morning Little Crow's small party unexpectedly met a company of seventy-five soldiers. During the running battle which followed, the sound of musketry brought the defeating Santees of the previous day rushing back to Little Crow's rescue. In bloody close-in fighting, the soldiers used their bayonets, but the Santees killed six and wounded fifteen of their enemy before the latter escaped in a hasty retreat to Hutchinson.

For the next two days the Santees reconnoitered around Hutchinson and Forest City, but the soldiers remained within stockades. On September 5 runners brought news of a battle a few miles to the southwest. Big Eagle and Mankato had trapped the Long Trader's soldiers at Birch Coulee.

During the night before the battle at Birch Coulee, Big Eagle and Mankato had quietly surrounded the soldiers' camp so they could not escape. "Just at dawn the fight began," Big Eagle said. "It continued all day and the following night until late the next morning. Both sides fought well. Owing to the white men's way of fighting they lost many men. Owing to the Indians' way of fighting they lost but few. . . . About the middle of the afternoon our men became much dissatisfied at the slowness of the fight, and the stubbornness of the whites, and the word was passed around the lines to get ready to charge the camp. The brave Mankato wanted to charge after the first hour. . . .

"Just as we were about to charge, word came that a large number of mounted soldiers were coming up from the east toward Fort Ridgely. This stopped the charge and created some excitement. Mankato at once took some men from the coulee and went out to meet them. . . . Mankato flourished his men around so, and all the Indians in the coulee kept up a noise, and at last the whites began to fall back, and they retreated about two miles and began to dig breastworks. Mankato followed them and left about thirty men to watch them, and returned to the fight at the coulee with the rest. The Indians were laughing when they came back at the way they had deceived the white men, and we were all glad that the whites had not pushed forward and driven us away. . . .

"The next morning General Sibley came with a very large force and drove us away from the field. We took our time getting away. Some of our men said they remained till Sibley got up and that they fired at some of his men as they were shaking hands with some of the men of the camp. Those of us who were on the prairie went back to the westward and on down the valley. . . . There was no pursuit. The whites fired their cannons at us as we were leaving the field, but they might as well have beaten a big drum for all the harm they did. They only made a noise. We went back across the river to our camps in the old village, and then on up the river to the Yellow Medicine and the mouth of the Chippewa, where Little Crow joined us. . . . At last the word came that Sibley with his army was again on the move against us. . . . He had left a letter for Little Crow in a split stick on the battlefield of Birch Coulee, and some of our men found it and brought it in. . . ."²²

the councils of the various bands, however, there was much disagreement over what course the Santees should take before Sibley's army reached the Yellow Medicine. Paul Mazakootemane of the Upper Agency Sissetons condemned Little Crow for starting the war. "Give me all these white captives," he demanded. "I will deliver them up to their friends. . . . Stop fighting. No one who fights with the white people ever becomes rich, or remains two days in one place, but is always fleeing and starving."¹⁶

Wabasha, who had been in the battles at Fort Ridgely and New Ulm, was also in favor of opening a road to peace by freeing the prisoners, but his son-in-law Rda-in-yan-ka spoke for Little Crow and the majority of the warriors: "I am for continuing the war, and am opposed to the delivery of the prisoners. I have no confidence that the whites will stand by any agreement they make if we give them up. Ever since we treated with them, their agents and traders have robbed and cheated us. Some of our people have been shot, some hung; others placed upon floating ice and drowned; and many have been starved in their prisons. It was not the intention of the nation to kill any of the whites until after the four men returned from Acton and told what they had done. When they did this, all the young men became excited, and commenced the massacre. The older ones would have prevented it if they could, but since the treaties they have lost all their influence. We may regret what has happened, but the matter has gone too far to be remedied. We have got to die. Let us, then, kill as many of the whites as possible, and let the prisoners die with us."¹⁷

On September 12 Little Crow gave the Long Trader one last chance to end the war without further bloodshed. In his message he assured Sibley that the prisoners were being treated kindly. "I want to know from you as a friend," he added, "what way that I can make peace for my people."

Unknown to Little Crow, on that same day Wabasha sent Sibley a secret message, blaming Little Crow for starting the war and claiming that he (Wabasha) was a friend of the "good white people." He did not mention that he had fought them a few weeks earlier at Fort Ridgely and New Ulm. "I have been kept back by threats that I should be killed if I did anything to help the whites," he declared, "but if you will now appoint some place for me to meet you, myself and the few friends that I have will get

The message left by the Long Trader was brief and noncommittal:

If Little Crow has any proposition to make, let him send a half-breed to me, and he shall be protected in and out of camp.

H. H. Sibley, Col. Com'd Mil. Ex'n.¹⁸

Little Crow of course did not trust this man who was sharp enough to get away with so much of the Santees' treaty money. But he decided to send a reply. He thought that perhaps the Long Trader, who had been up at the White Rock (St. Paul), did not know why the Santees had gone to war. Little Crow also wanted Governor Ramsey to know the reasons for the war. Many of the neutrals among the Santees were frightened at what Ramsey had told the white Minnesotans: "The Sioux Indians must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the state."¹⁴

Little Crow's message of September 7 to General Sibley:

For what reason we have commenced this war I will tell you. It is on account of Major Galbraith. We made a treaty with the government, and beg for what we do get, and can't get that till our children are dying with hunger. It is the traders who commenced it. Mr. A. J. Myrick told the Indians that they would eat grass or dirt. Then Mr. Forbes told the Lower Sioux that they were not men. Then Roberts was working with his friends to defraud us out of our moneys.* If the young braves have pushed the white men, I have done this myself. So I want you to let Governor Ramsey know this. I have a great many prisoners, women and children. . . . I want you to give me an answer to the bearer.

General Sibley's reply:

LITTLE CROW—You have murdered many of our people without any sufficient cause. Return me the prisoners under a flag of truce, and I will talk with you then like a man.¹⁵

Little Crow had no intention of returning the prisoners before the Long Trader gave some indication of whether he meant to carry out Governor Ramsey's dictum of extermination or exile for the Santees. He wanted to use the prisoners for bargaining. In

* Thomas J. Galbraith was the reservation agent. A. J. Myrick, William Forbes, and Louis Roberts were post traders at the Lower Agency.

all the prisoners we can, and with our family go to whatever place you will appoint for us to meet.”

Sibley answered both messages immediately. He scolded Little Crow for not giving up the prisoners, telling him that was not the way to make peace, but he did not answer the war leader’s plea for a way to end the fighting. Instead Sibley wrote a long letter to Little Crow’s betrayer, Wabasha, giving him explicit instructions for using a truce flag for delivery of the prisoners. “I shall be glad to receive all true friends of the whites,” Sibley promised, “with as many prisoners as they can bring, and I am powerful enough to crush all who attempt to oppose my march, and to punish those who have washed their hands in innocent blood.”¹⁸

After Little Crow received the Long Trader’s cold reply to his entreaty, he knew there was no hope for peace except abject surrender. If the soldiers could not be beaten, then it was either death or exile for the Santee Sioux.

On September 22 scouts reported that Sibley’s soldiers had gone into camp at Wood Lake. Little Crow decided to give them battle before they reached the Yellow Medicine.

“All our fighting chiefs were present and all our best fighting Indians,” Big Eagle said. “We felt that this would be the deciding fight of the war.” Again as they had done at Birch Coulee, the Santees silently prepared an ambush for the soldiers. “We could hear them laughing and singing. When all our preparations were made Little Crow and I and some other chiefs went to the mound or hill to the west so as to watch the fight better when it should commence. . . .

“The morning came and an accident spoiled our plans. For some reason Sibley did not move early as we expected he would. Our men were lying hidden, waiting patiently. Some were very near the camp lines in the ravine, but the whites did not see a man of all our men. I do not think they would have discovered our ambushade. It seemed a considerable time after sun-up when some four or five wagons with a number of soldiers started out from the camp in the direction of the old Yellow Medicine agency. We learned afterwards that they were going without orders to dig potatoes over at the agency, five miles away. They came on over the prairie, right where part of our line was. Some of the wagons were not in the road, and if they had kept straight on would

have driven right over our men as they lay in the grass. At last they came so close that our men had to rise up and fire. This brought on the fight, of course, but not according to the way we had planned it. Little Crow saw it and felt very badly. . . .

“The Indians that were in the fight did well, but hundreds of our men did not get into it and did not fire a shot. They were out too far. The men in the ravine and the line connecting them with those on the road did most of the fighting. Those of us on the hill did our best, but we were soon driven off. Mankato was killed here, and we lost a very good and very brave war chief. He was killed by a cannon ball that was so nearly spent that he was not afraid of it, and it struck him in the back, as he lay on the ground, and killed him. The whites drove our men out of the ravine by a charge and that ended the battle. We retreated in some disorder, though the whites did not offer to pursue us. We crossed a wide prairie, but their horsemen did not follow us. We lost fourteen or fifteen men killed and quite a number wounded. Some of the wounded died afterwards, but I do not know how many. We carried off no dead bodies, but took away all our wounded. The whites scalped all our dead men—so I have heard.” (After the soldiers mutilated the dead Santees, Sibley issued an order forbidding such action: “The bodies of the dead, even of a savage enemy shall not be subjected to indignities by civilized and Christian men.”)¹⁹

That evening in the Santees’ camp twelve miles above the Yellow Medicine, the chiefs held a last council. Most of them were now convinced that the Long Trader was too strong for them. The woodland Sioux must surrender or flee to join their cousins, the prairie Sioux of the Dakota country. Those who had taken no part in the fighting decided to stay and surrender, certain that the delivery of the white prisoners would win them the friendship of Long Trader Sibley forever. They were joined by Wabasha, who persuaded his son-in-law Rda-in-yan-ka to stay. At the last minute, Big Eagle also decided to stay. Some of the half-breeds assured him that if he surrendered he would only be held as a prisoner of war a short time. He would live to regret his decision.

Next morning, bitter with defeat and feeling the weight of his sixty years, Little Crow made a last speech to his followers. “I

am ashamed to call myself a Sioux," he said. "Seven hundred of our best warriors were whipped yesterday by the whites. Now we had better all run away and scatter out over the plains like buffalo and wolves. To be sure, the whites had wagon-guns and better arms than we, and there were many more of them. But that is no reason why we should not have whipped them, for we are brave Sioux and whites are cowardly women. I cannot account for the disgraceful defeat. It must be the work of traitors in our midst."²⁰ He and Shakopee and Medicine Bottle then ordered their people to dismantle their tepees. In a few wagons taken from the agency, they loaded their goods and provisions, their women and children, and started westward. The Moon of the Wild Rice (September) was coming to an end, and the cold moons were near at hand.

On September 26, with the assistance of Wabasha and Paul Mazakootemane, who displayed truce flags, Sibley marched into the Santee camp and demanded immediate delivery of the captives; 107 whites and 162 half-breeds were released to the soldiers. In a council which followed, Sibley announced that the Santees should consider themselves prisoners of war until he could discover and hang the guilty ones among them. The peace leaders protested with obsequious avowals of friendship, such as Paul Mazakootemane's: "I have grown up like a child of yours. With what is yours, you have caused me to grow, and now I take your hand as a child takes the hand of his father. . . . I have regarded all white people as my friends, and from them I understand this blessing has come."²¹

Sibley replied by putting a cordon of artillery around the camp. He then sent out half-breed messengers to warn all Santees in the Minnesota Valley to come in to Camp Release (as he had named the place). Those who refused to come in voluntarily would be hunted down and captured or killed. While the Santees were being rounded up and disarmed, the soldiers cut down trees and constructed a huge log building. Its purpose was soon made clear, when most of the male Santees—about 600 of the camp's 2,000 Indians—were chained together in pairs and imprisoned there.

Meanwhile Sibley had chosen five of his officers to form a military court to try all Santees suspected of engaging in the uprising. As the Indians had no legal rights, he saw no reason to appoint a defense counsel for them.

The first suspect brought before the court was a mulatto named Godfrey who was married to a woman of Wabasha's band and had been living at the Lower Agency for four years. Witnesses were three white women who had been among the captives. None accused him of rape, none had seen him commit a murder, but they said they had heard Godfrey boast of killing seven white people at New Ulm. On this evidence the military court found Godfrey guilty of murder and sentenced him to be hanged.

When Godfrey learned later that the court would be willing to commute his death sentence if he would identify Santees guilty of participating in the attacks, he became a willing informant, and the trials proceeded smoothly, as many as forty Indians a day being sentenced to imprisonment or death. On November 5 the trials ended; 303 Santees had been sentenced to death, sixteen to long prison terms.

The responsibility for extinguishing so many human lives, even if they were "devils in human shape," was more than Long Trader Sibley wanted to bear alone. He shifted the burden to the commander of the Military Department of the Northwest, General John Pope. General Pope in turn passed the final decision to the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. "The Sioux prisoners will be executed unless the President forbids it," General Pope informed Governor Ramsey, "which I am sure he will not do."

Being a man of conscience, however, Abraham Lincoln asked for "the full and complete record of the convictions; if the record does not fully indicate the more guilty and influential of the culprits, please have a careful statement made on these points and forward to me." On receipt of the trial records, the President assigned two lawyers to examine them so as to differentiate between murderers and those who had engaged only in battle.

Lincoln's refusal to authorize immediate hanging of the 303 condemned Santees angered General Pope and Governor Ramsey. Pope protested that "the criminals condemned ought in every view to be at once executed without exception. . . . Humanity requires an immediate disposition of the case." Ramsey demanded authority from the President to order speedy executions of the 303 condemned men, and warned that the people of Min-

nesota would take "private revenge" on the prisoners if Lincoln did not act quickly.²²

While President Lincoln was reviewing the trial records, Sibley moved the condemned Indians to a prison camp at South Bend on the Minnesota River. While they were being escorted past New Ulm, a mob of citizens that included many women attempted "private revenge" on the prisoners with pitchforks, scalding water, and hurled stones. Fifteen prisoners were injured, one with a broken jaw, before the soldiers could march them beyond the town. Again on the night of December 4 a mob of citizens stormed the prison camp intent upon lynching the Indians. The soldiers kept the mob at bay, and next day transferred the Indians to a stronger stockade near the town of Mankato.

In the meantime Sibley decided to keep the remaining 1,700 Santees—mostly women and children—as prisoners, although they were accused of no crime other than having been born Indians. He ordered them transferred overland to Fort Snelling, and along the way they too were assaulted by angry white citizens. Many were stoned and clubbed; a child was snatched from its mother's arms and beaten to death. At Fort Snelling the four-mile-long procession was shunted into a fenced enclosure on damp bottomland. There, under soldier guard, housed in dilapidated shelters and fed on scanty rations, the remnants of the once proud woodland Sioux awaited their fate.

On December 6 President Lincoln notified Sibley that he should "cause to be executed" thirty-nine of the 303 convicted Santees. "The other condemned prisoners you will hold subject to further orders, taking care that they neither escape nor are subjected to any unlawful violence."²³

Execution date was the twenty-sixth day of December in the Moon When the Deer Shed Their Horns. That morning the town of Mankato was filled with vindictive and morbidly curious citizens. A regiment of soldiers marched in to keep order. At the last minute, one Indian was given a reprieve. About ten o'clock, the thirty-eight condemned men were marched from the prison to the scaffold. They sang the Sioux death song until soldiers pulled white caps over their heads and placed nooses around their necks. At a signal from an army officer, the control rope was cut and thirty-eight Santee Sioux dangled lifeless in the air. But for the

intercession of Abraham Lincoln there would have been three hundred; even so, a spectator boasted that it was "America's greatest mass execution."

A few hours later, officials discovered that two of the men hanged were not on Lincoln's list, but nothing was said of this publicly until nine years afterward. "It was a matter of regret that any mistakes were made," declared one of those responsible. "I feel sure they were not made intentionally." One of the innocent men hanged had saved a white woman's life during the raiding.²⁴

Several others who were executed that day maintained their innocence until the end. One of them was Rda-in-yan-ka, who had tried to stop the war from starting, but later joined with Little Crow. When Little Crow and his followers left for Dakota, Wabasha had persuaded Rda-in-yan-ka not to go.

Shortly before his execution, Rda-in-yan-ka dictated a farewell letter to his chief:

Wabasha—You have deceived me. You told me that if we followed the advice of General Sibley, and gave ourselves up to the whites, all would be well; no innocent man would be injured. I have not killed, wounded, or injured a white man, or any white persons. I have not participated in the plunder of any property; and yet today I am set apart for execution, and must die in a few days, while men who are guilty will remain in prison. My wife is your daughter, my children are your grandchildren. I leave them all in your care and under your protection. Do not let them suffer; and when my children are grown up, let them know that their father died because he followed the advice of his chief, and without having the blood of a white man to answer for to the Great Spirit.

My wife and children are dear to me. Let them not grieve for me. Let them remember that the brave should be prepared to meet death; and I will do as becomes a Dakota.

Your son-in-law,

Rda-in-yan-ka²⁵

Those who escaped execution were sentenced to prison. One of them was Big Eagle, who readily admitted participating in the battles. "If I had known that I would be sent to the penitentiary," he said, "I would not have surrendered, but when I had been in

the penitentiary three years and they were about to turn me out, I told them they might keep me another year if they wished, and I meant what I said. I did not like the way I had been treated. I surrendered in good faith, knowing that many of the whites were acquainted with me and that I had not been a murderer, or present when a murder had been committed, and if I had killed or wounded a man it had been in fair open fight.”²⁶ Many of the others regretted that they had not fled from Minnesota with the warriors.

By the time of the executions, Little Crow and his followers were camped on Devil's Lake, a wintering place for several Sioux tribes. During the winter he tried to unite the chiefs in a military alliance, warning them that unless they were prepared to fight they would all go down before the invading whites. He won their sympathy, but few of the Plains Indians believed they were in any danger. If the white men moved into the Dakota country, the Indians would simply move farther west. The land was big enough for everybody.

In the spring Little Crow, Shakopee, and Medicine Bottle took their bands north into Canada. At Fort Garry (Winnipeg) Little Crow attempted to persuade the British authorities to aid the Santees. For his first meeting with them he dressed in his best clothing—a black coat with a velvet collar, a blue cloth breech-clout, and deerskin leggings. He reminded the British that his grandfather had been their ally in previous wars with the Americans, and that in the War of 1812 the Santees had captured a cannon from the Americans and presented it to the British. On that occasion, Little Crow said, the British had promised the Santees that if they were ever in trouble and wanted help, the British would bring the cannon back to them with men to work it. The Santees were now in trouble and wanted the cannon brought back.

An issue of foodstuffs, however, was all that Little Crow could obtain from the British Canadians. They had no cannon to give the Santees, not even ammunition for the weapons they had.

In the Strawberry Moon, June, 1863, Little Crow decided what he must do. If he and his family were forced to become Plains Indians, they must have horses. The white men who had driven him from his land had horses; he would take their horses in ex-

change for the land. He decided to return to Minnesota with a small party to capture horses.

His sixteen-year-old son, Woinapa, later told about it: “Father said he could not fight the white men, but would go below and steal horses from them and give them to his children, so that they could be comfortable, and then he would go away off.”

“Father also told me that he was getting old, and wanted me to go with him to carry his bundles. He left his wives and other children behind. There were sixteen men and one squaw in the party that went below with us. We had no horses, but walked all the way down to the settlements.”²⁷

In the Moon of the Red Blooming Lilies they reached the Big Woods, which only a few years before had been Santee country but now was filling up with farms and settlements. On the afternoon of July 3, Little Crow and Woinapa left their hidden camping place and went to pick raspberries near the settlement of Hutchinson. About sundown they were sighted by two settlers returning home from a deer hunt. As the state of Minnesota had recently begun paying twenty-five-dollars bounty for Sioux scalps, the settlers immediately opened fire.

Little Crow was hit in the side, just above the hip. “His gun and mine were lying on the ground,” Woinapa said. “He took up my gun and fired it first, and then fired his own gun. The ball struck the stock of his gun, and then hit him in the side, near the shoulder. This was the shot that killed him. He told me that he was killed and asked me for water, which I gave him. He died immediately after. When I heard the first shot fired, I lay down, and the men did not see me before father was killed.”

Woinapa hurriedly dressed his dead father in new moccasins for the journey to the Land of Ghosts. He covered the body with a coat and fled to the camp. After warning the other members of the party to scatter, he started back to Devil's Lake. “I traveled only at night, and as I had no ammunition to kill anything to eat, I had not strength enough to travel fast.” In an abandoned village near Big Stone Lake he found a single cartridge and managed to shoot a wolf. “I ate some of it, which gave me strength to travel, and I went on up the lake until the day I was captured.”²⁸

Woinapa was captured by some of Long Trader Sibley's sol-

diers who had marched into the Dakota country that summer to kill Sioux. The soldiers returned the sixteen-year-old boy to Minnesota, where he was given a military trial and sentenced to be hanged. He learned then that his father's scalp and skull had been preserved and placed on exhibition in St. Paul. The state of Minnesota presented the settlers who had killed Little Crow with the regular scalp bounty and a bonus of five hundred dollars.

When Wovinapa's trial record was sent to Washington, military authorities disapproved of the proceedings and commuted the boy's sentence to imprisonment. (Some years later, after his release from prison, Wovinapa changed his name to Thomas Wakeman, became a church deacon, and founded the first Young Men's Christian Association among the Sioux.)

Meanwhile Shakoep and Medicine Bottle remained in Canada, believing themselves beyond reach of the vengeful Minnesotans. In December, 1863, however, one of the Long Trader's little chiefs, Major Edwin Hatch, marched a battalion of Minnesota cavalry to Pembina, just below the Canadian frontier.

From there Hatch sent a lieutenant across the line to Fort Garry to meet secretly with an American citizen, John McKenzie. With the aid of McKenzie and two Canadians, the lieutenant arranged the capture of Shakoep and Medicine Bottle. During a friendly meeting with the two Santee war chiefs, the conspirators gave them wine mixed with laudanum, chloroformed them while they slept, bound their hands and feet, and strapped them to a dog sled. In complete disregard of international law, the lieutenant hauled his captives across the border and delivered them to Major Hatch at Pembina. A few months later Sibley staged another spectacular trial, and Shakoep and Medicine Bottle were sentenced to be hanged. Of the verdict the St. Paul *Pioneer* commented: "We do not believe that serious injustice will be done by the executions tomorrow, but it would have been more creditable if some tangible evidence of their guilt had been obtained . . . no white man, tried before a jury of his peers, would be executed upon the testimony thus produced." After the hangings, the Minnesota legislature gratefully appropriated a thousand dollars as payment to John McKenzie for his services in Canada.⁶⁰

The day of the Santee Sioux in Minnesota now came to an end. Although most of the war chiefs and warriors were dead, in

prison, or far beyond the borders of the state, the uprising had given the white citizens an opportunity to seize the Santees' remaining lands without even a pretense of payment. Previous treaties were abrogated, and the surviving Indians were informed that they would be removed to a reservation in Dakota Territory. Even those leaders who had collaborated with the white men had to go. "Exterminate or banish," was the cry of the land-hungry settlers. The first shipment of 770 Santees left St. Paul by steamboat on May 4, 1863. White Minnesotans lined the river landing to see them off with shouts of derision and showers of hurled stones.

Crow Creek on the Missouri River was the site chosen for the Santee reservation. The soil was barren, rainfall scanty, wild game scarce, and the alkaline water unfit for drinking. Soon the surrounding hills were covered with graves; of the 1,300 Santees brought there in 1863, less than a thousand survived their first winter.

Among the visitors to Crow Creek that year was a young Teton Sioux. He looked with pity upon his Santee cousins and listened to their stories of the Americans who had taken their land and driven them away. Truly, he thought, that nation of white men is like a spring freshet that overruns its banks and destroys all who are in its path. Soon they would take the buffalo country unless the hearts of the Indians were strong enough to hold it. He resolved that he would fight to hold it. His name was Tatanka Yotanka, the Sitting Bull.

What is White Supremacy?

Elizabeth Martinez

White Supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

(Definition from the Challenging White Supremacy Workshops conference, San Francisco, 1998)

I. What does it mean to say it is a system?

The most common mistake people make when they talk about racism is to think it is a collection of prejudices and individual acts of discrimination. They do not see that it is a system, a web of interlocking, reinforcing institutions: economic, military, legal, educational, religious, and cultural. As a system, racism affects every aspect of life in a country.

By not seeing that racism is systemic (part of a system), people often personalize or individualize racist acts. For example, they will reduce racist police behavior to “a few bad apples” who need to be removed, rather than seeing it exists in police departments all over the country and is basic to the society. This mistake has real consequences: refusing to see police brutality as part of a system, and that the system needs to be changed, means that the brutality will continue. The need to recognize racism as being systemic is one reason the term White Supremacy has been more useful than the term racism. They refer to the same problem but:

- A. The purpose of racism is much clearer when we call it “white supremacy.” Some people think of racism as just a matter of prejudice. “Supremacy” defines a power relationship.
- B. Race is an unscientific term. Although racism is a social reality, it is based on a term which has no biological or other scientific reality.
- C. The term racism often leads to dead-end debates about whether a particular remark or action by an individual white person was really racist or not. We will achieve a clearer understanding of racism if we analyze how a certain action relates to the system of White Supremacy.
- D. The term White Supremacy gives white people a clear choice of supporting or opposing a system, rather than getting bogged down in claims to be anti-racist (or not) in their personal behavior.

II. What does it mean to say White Supremacy is historically based?

Every nation has a creation myth, or origin myth, which is the story people are taught of how the nation came into being. Ours says the United States began with Columbus’s so-called “discovery” of America, continued with settlement by brave Pilgrims, won its independence from England with the American Revolution, and then expanded westward until it became the enormous, rich country you see today. That is the origin myth. It omits three key facts about the birth and growth of the United States as a nation. Those facts demonstrate that White Supremacy is fundamental to the existence of this country.

- A. The United States is a nation state created by military conquest in several stages. The first stage was the European seizure of the lands inhabited by indigenous peoples. Before the European invasion, there were between nine and eighteen million indigenous people in North America. By the end of the Indian Wars, there were about 250,000 in what is now called the United States, and about 123,000 in what is now Canada (source of these population figures from

the book: *The State of Native America*, ed. by M. Annette Jaimes, South End Press, 1992). That process must be called genocide, and it created the land base of this country. The elimination of indigenous peoples and seizure of their land was the first condition for its existence.

B. The United States could not have developed economically as a nation without enslaved African labor. When agriculture and industry began to grow in the colonial period, a tremendous labor shortage existed. Not enough white workers came from Europe and the European invaders could not put indigenous peoples to work in sufficient numbers. It was enslaved Africans who provided the labor force that made the growth of the United States possible. That growth peaked from about 1800 to 1860, the period called the Market Revolution. During this period, the United States changed from being an agricultural/commercial economy to an industrial corporate economy. The development of banks, expansion of the credit system, protective tariffs, and new transportation systems all helped make this possible. But the key to the Market Revolution was the export of cotton, and this was made possible by slave labor.

C. The third major piece in the true story of the formation of the United States as a nation was the take-over of half of Mexico by war -- today's Southwest. This enabled the U.S. to expand to the Pacific, and thus open up huge trade with Asia -- markets for export, goods to import and sell in the U.S. It also opened to the U.S. vast mineral wealth in Arizona, agricultural wealth in California, and vast new sources of cheap labor to build railroads and develop the economy. The United States had already taken over the part of Mexico we call Texas in 1836, then made it a state in 1845. The following year, it invaded Mexico and seized its territory under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. A few years later, in 1853, the U.S. acquired a final chunk of Arizona from Mexico by threatening to renew the war. This completed the territorial boundaries of what is now the United States. Those were the three foundation stones of the United States as a nation. One more key step was taken in 1898, with the takeover of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam and Cuba by means of the Spanish-American War. Since then, all but Cuba have remained U.S. colonies or neo-colonies, providing new sources of wealth and military power for the United States. The 1898 take-over completed the phase of direct conquest and colonization, which had begun with the murderous theft of Native American lands five centuries before. Many people in the United States hate to recognize these truths. They prefer the established origin myth. They could be called the Premise Keepers.

III. What does it mean to say that White Supremacy is a system of exploitation?

The roots of U.S. racism or White Supremacy lie in establishing economic exploitation by the theft of resources and human labor, then justifying that exploitation by institutionalizing the inferiority of its victims. The first application of White Supremacy or racism by the Euro-Americans who control U.S. society was against indigenous peoples. Then came Blacks, originally as slaves and later as exploited waged labor. They were followed by Mexicans, who lost their means of survival when they lost their land holdings, and also became wage-slaves.

Mexican labor built the Southwest, along with Chinese, Filipino, Japanese and other workers. In short, White Supremacy and economic power were born together. The United States is the first nation in the world to be born racist (South Africa came later) and also the first to be born capitalist. That is not a coincidence. In this country, as history shows, capitalism and racism go hand in hand.

IV. Origins of Whiteness and White Supremacy as Concepts

The first European settlers called themselves English, Irish, German, French, Dutch, etc. -- not white. Over half of those who came in the early colonial period were servants. By 1760 the population reached about two million, of whom 400,000 were enslaved Africans. An elite of planters developed in the southern colonies. In Virginia, for example, 50 rich white families held the reins of power but were vastly outnumbered by non-whites. In the Carolinas, 25,000 whites faced 40,000 Black slaves and 60,000 indigenous peoples in the area. Class lines hardened as the distinction between rich and poor became sharper. The problem of control loomed large and fear of revolt from below grew. There had been slave revolts from the beginning but elite whites feared even more that discontented whites -- servants, tenant farmers, the urban poor, the property-less, soldiers and sailors -- would join Black slaves to overthrow the existing order. As early as 1663, indentured white servants and Black slaves in Virginia had formed a conspiracy to rebel and gain their freedom. In 1676 came Bacon's Rebellion by white frontiersmen and servants alongside Black slaves. The rebellion shook up Virginia's planter elite. Many other rebellions followed, from South Carolina to New York. The main fear of elite whites everywhere was a class fear.

Their solution: divide and control. Certain privileges were given to white indentured servants. They were allowed to join militias, carry guns, acquire land, and have other legal rights not allowed to slaves. With these privileges they were legally declared white on the basis of skin color and continental origin. That made them "superior" to Blacks (and Indians). Thus whiteness was born as a racist concept to prevent lower-class whites from joining people of color, especially Blacks, against their class enemies. The concept of whiteness became a source of unity and strength for the vastly outnumbered Euroamericans -- as in South Africa, another settler nation. Today, unity across color lines remains the biggest threat in the eyes of a white ruling class.

White Supremacy. In the mid-1800s, new historical developments served to strengthen the concept of whiteness and insitutionalize White Supremacy. The doctrine of Manifest Destiny, born at a time of aggressive western expansion, said that the United States was destined by God to take over other peoples and lands. The term was first used in 1845 by the editor of a popular journal, who affirmed "the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole continent which providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government."

Since the time of Jefferson, the United States had had its eye on expanding to the Pacific Ocean and establishing trade with Asia. Others in the ruling class came to want more slave states, for reasons of political power, and this also required westward expansion. Both goals pointed to taking over part of Mexico. The first step was Texas, which was acquired for the United States by filling the territory with Anglos who then declared a revolution from Mexico in 1836. After failing to purchase more Mexican territory, President James Polk created a pretext for starting a war with the declared goal of expansion. The notoriously brutal, two-year war was justified in the name of Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny is a profoundly racist concept. For example, a major force of opposition to gobbling up Mexico at the time came from politicians saying "the degraded Mexican-Spanish" were unfit to become part of the United States; they were "a wretched people...mongrels." In a similar way, some influential whites who opposed slavery in those years said Blacks should be removed from U.S. soil, to avoid "contamination" by an inferior people (source of all this information is the book *Manifest Destiny* by Anders Stephanson, Hill & Wang, 1995). Earlier, Native Americans had been the target of white supremacist beliefs which not only said they were dirty, heathen "savages," but fundamentally inferior in their values. For example, they did not see land as profitable real estate but as Our Mother.

The doctrine of Manifest Destiny facilitated the geographic extension and economic development of the United States while confirming racist policies and practices. It established White Supremacy more firmly than ever as central to the U.S. definition of itself. The arrogance of asserting that God gave white people (primarily men) the right to dominate everything around them still haunts our society and sustains its racist oppression.

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500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures/500 Anos del Pueblo Chicano
Elizabeth Martinez.

Viva La Causa! 500 Years of Chicano History. A two-part educational documentary video based on Elizabeth Martinez's book *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*.

Chapter 1

Sexual Violence as a
Tool of Genocide

[Rape] is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.

Rape as “nothing more or less” than a tool of patriarchal control undergirds the philosophy of the white-dominated women’s antiviolence movement. This philosophy has been critiqued by many women of color, including critical race theorist Kimberle Crenshaw, for its lack of attention to racism and other forms of oppression. Crenshaw analyzes how male-dominated conceptions of race and white-dominated conceptions of gender stand in the way of a clear understanding of violence against women of color. It is inadequate, she argues, to investigate the oppression of women of color by examining race and gender oppressions separately and then putting the two analyses together, because the overlap between racism and sexism transforms the dynamics. Instead, Crenshaw advocates replacing the “additive” approach with an “intersectional” approach.

The problem is not simply that both discourses fail women of color by not acknowledging the “additional” issue of race or of patriarchy

but, rather, that the discourses are often inadequate even to the discrete tasks of articulating the full dimensions of racism and sexism.²

Despite her intersectional approach, Crenshaw falls short of describing how a politics of intersectionality might fundamentally shift how we analyze sexual/domestic violence. If sexual violence is not simply a tool of patriarchy but also a tool of colonialism and racism, then entire communities of color are the victims of sexual violence. As Neferti Tadiar argues, *colonial relationships are themselves gendered and sexualized*.

The economies and political relations of nations are libidinally configured, that is, they are grasped and effected in terms of sexuality. This global and regional fantasy is not, however, only metaphorical, but real insofar as it grasps a system of political and economic practices already at work among these nations.³

Within this context, according to Tadiar, "the question to be asked...is, Who is getting off on this? Who is getting screwed and by whom?"⁴ Thus, while both Native men and women have been subjected to a reign of sexualized terror, sexual violence does not affect Indian men and women in the same way. When a Native woman suffers abuse, this abuse is an attack on her identity as a woman and an attack on her identity as Native. The issues of colonial, race, and gender oppression cannot be separated. This fact explains why in my experience as a rape crisis counselor, every Native survivor I ever counseled said to me at one point, "I wish I was no longer Indian." As I will discuss in this chapter, women of color do not just face quantitatively more issues when they suffer violence (e.g., less media attention, language barriers, lack of support in the judicial system) but their experience is qualitatively different from that of white women.

Ann Stoler's analysis of racism sheds light on this relationship between sexual violence and colonialism. She argues that racism, far from being a reaction to crisis in which racial others are scapegoated for social ills, is a permanent part of the social fabric. "Racism is not an effect but a tactic in the internal fission of society into binary opposition, a means of creating 'biologized' internal enemies, against whom society must defend itself."⁵ She notes that in the modern state, it is the constant purification and elimination

of racialized enemies within the state that ensures the growth of the national body. "Racism does not merely arise in moments of crisis, in sporadic cleansings. It is internal to the biopolitical state, woven into the web of the social body, threaded through its fabric."⁶

Similarly, Kate Shanley notes that Native peoples are a permanent "present absence" in the U.S. colonial imagination, an "absence" that reinforces at every turn the conviction that Native peoples are indeed vanishing and that the conquest of Native lands is justified. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam describe this absence as,

an ambivalently repressive mechanism [which] dispels the anxiety in the face of the Indian, whose very presence is a reminder of the initially precarious grounding of the American nation-state itself...in a temporal paradox, living Indians were induced to 'play dead,' as it were, in order to perform a narrative of manifest destiny in which their role, ultimately, was to disappear.⁷

This "absence" is effected through the metaphorical transformation of Native bodies into a pollution of which the colonial body must constantly purify itself. For instance, as white Californians described them in the 1860s, Native people were "the dirtiest lot of human beings on earth."⁸ They wear "filthy rags, with their persons unwashed, hair uncombed and swarming with vermin."⁹ The following 1885 Procter & Gamble ad for Ivory Soap also illustrates this equation between Indian bodies and dirt.

We were once factious, fierce and wild,
In peaceful arts unreconciled
Our blankets smeared with grease and stains
From buffalo meat and settlers' vetins.
Through summer's dust and heat content
From moon to moon unwashed we went,
But IVORY SOAP came like a ray
Of light across our darkened way
And now we're civil, kind and good
And keep the laws as people should,
We wear our linen, lawn and lace
As well as folks with paler face
And now I take, where'er we go

*This cake of IVORY SOAP to show
What civilized my squaw and me
And made us clean and fair to see.*¹⁰

In the colonial imagination, Native bodies are also immanently polluted with sexual sin. Theorists Albert Cave, Robert Warrior, H. C. Porter, and others have demonstrated that Christian colonizers often likened Native peoples to the biblical Canaanites, both worthy of mass destruction.¹¹ What makes Canaanites supposedly worthy of destruction in the biblical narrative and Indian peoples supposedly worthy of destruction in the eyes of their colonizers is that they both personify sexual sin. In the Bible, Canaanites commit acts of sexual perversion in Sodom (Gen. 19:1–29), are the descendants of the unsavory relations between Lot and his daughters (Gen. 19:30–38), are the descendants of the sexually perverse Ham (Gen. 9:22–27), and prostitute themselves in service of their gods (Gen. 28:21–22, Deut. 28:18, 1 Kings 14:24, 2 Kings 23:7, Hosea 4:13, Amos 2:7).

Similarly, Native peoples, in the eyes of the colonizers, are marked by their sexual perversity. Alexander Whitaker, a minister in Virginia, wrote in 1613: “They live naked in bodie, as if their shame of their sinne deserved no covering: Their names are as naked as their bodie: They esteem it a virtue to lie, deceive and steale as their master the divell teacheth them.”¹² Furthermore, according to Bernardino de Minaya, a Dominican cleric, “Their marriages are not a sacrament but a sacrilege. They are idolatrous, libidinous, and commit sodomy. Their chief desire is to eat, drink, worship heathen idols, and commit bestial obscenities.”¹³

Because Indian bodies are “dirty,” they are considered sexually violable and “rapable,” and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count. For instance, prostitutes are almost never believed when they say they have been raped because the dominant society considers the bodies of sex workers undeserving of integrity and violable at all times. Similarly, the history of mutilation of Indian bodies, both living and dead, makes it clear that Indian people are not entitled to bodily integrity.

I saw the body of White Antelope with the privates cut off, and I heard a soldier say he was going to make a tobacco-pouch out of them.¹⁴

At night Dr. Rufus Choate [and] Lieutenant Wentz C. Miller... went up the ravine, decapitated the dead Qua-ha-das, and placing the heads in some gunny sacks, brought them back to be boiled out for future scientific knowledge.¹⁵

Each of the braves was shot down and scalped by the wild volunteers, who out with their knives and cutting two parallel gashes down their backs, would strip the skin from the quivering flesh to make razor straps of.¹⁶

Dr. Tuner, of Lexington, Iowa, visited this solitary grave [of Black Hawk] and robbed it of its tenant...and sent the body to Alton, Ill., where the skeleton was wired together. [It was later returned] but here it remained but a short time ere vandal hands again carried it away and placed it in the Burlington, Iowa Geographical and Historical Society, where it was consumed by fire in 1855.¹⁷

One more dexterous than the rest, proceeded to flay the chief's [Tecumseh's] body; then, cutting the skin in narrow strips...at once, a supply of razor-straps for the more “ferocious” of his brethren.¹⁸

Andrew Jackson...supervised the mutilation of 800 or so Creek Indian corpses—the bodies of men, women and children that he and his men massaged—cutting off their noses to count and preserve a record of the dead, slicing long strips of flesh from their bodies to tan and turn into bridle reins.¹⁹

A few nights after this, some soldiers dug Mangus' body out again and took his head and boiled it during the night, and prepared the skull to send to the museum in New York.²⁰

In 1990, Illinois governor Jim Thompson echoed these sentiments when he refused to close down an open Indian burial mound in the town of Dixon. The State of Illinois had built a museum around this mound to publicly display Indian remains. Thompson argued that he was as much Indian as current Indians, and consequently, he had as much right as they to determine the fate of Indian remains.²¹ The remains were “his.” The Chicago press similarly attempted to challenge the identity of Indian people protesting his decision by asserting that they were either only “part” Indian, or merely claiming to be Indian.²² In effect, the

Illinois state government conveyed the message to Indians that being on constant display for white consumers, in life and in death, is acceptable. Furthermore, Indian identity itself is under the control of the colonizer, and subject to challenge or eradication at any time.

In 1992, Ontario finance minister Jim Flaherty argued that the Canadian government could boost health-care funding for “real people in real towns” by cutting the bureaucracy that serves *only* Native peoples.²³ The extent to which Native peoples are not seen as “real” people in the larger colonial discourse indicates the success of sexual violence, among other racist and colonialist forces, in destroying the perceived humanity of Native peoples. As Aime Cesaire puts it, colonization = thingification.²⁴ As Stoler explains this process of racialized colonization:

The more “degenerates” and “abnormals” [in this case Native peoples] are eliminated, the lives of those who speak will be stronger, more vigorous, and improved. The enemies are not political adversaries, but those identified as external and internal threats to the population. Racism is the condition that makes it acceptable to put [certain people] to death in a society of normalization.²⁵

The project of colonial sexual violence establishes the ideology that Native bodies are inherently violable—and by extension, that Native lands are also inherently violable.

As a consequence of this colonization and abuse of their bodies, Indian people learn to internalize self-hatred, because body image is integrally related to self-esteem. When one’s body is not respected, one begins to hate oneself.²⁶ Anne, a Native boarding school student, reflects on this process:

You better not touch yourself... If I looked at somebody... lust, sex, and I got scared of those sexual feelings. And I did not know how to handle them... What really confused me was if intercourse was sin, why are people born?... It took me a really long time to get over the fact that... I’ve sinned: I had a child.²⁷

As her words indicate, when the bodies of Indian people are designated as inherently sinful and dirty, it becomes a sin just to be Indian. Native peoples internalize the genocidal project through self-destruction. As a rape crisis counselor, it was not a surprise to

me that Indians who have survived sexual abuse would often say that they no longer wish to be Indian. Native peoples’ individual experiences of sexual violation echo 500 years of sexual colonization in which Native peoples’ bodies have been deemed inherently impure. The Menominee poet Chrystos writes in such a voice in her poem “Old Indian Granny.”

*You told me about all the Indian women you counsel
who say they don’t want to be Indian anymore
because a white man or an Indian one raped them
or killed their brother
or somebody tried to run them over in the street
or insulted them or all of it
our daily bread of hate*
Sometimes I don’t want to be an Indian either
but I’ve never said so out loud before...

*Far more than being hungry
having no place to live or dance
no decent job no home to offer a Granny
It’s knowing with each invisible breath
that if you don’t make something pretty
they can hang on their walls or wear around their necks
you might as well be dead.*²⁸

Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project in Duluth, Minnesota, reports that a primary barrier antiviolen advocates face in addressing violence in Indian country is that community members will argue that sexual violence is “traditional.” This phenomenon indicates the extent to which our communities have internalized self-hatred. Frantz Fanon argues, “In the colonial context, as we have already pointed out, the natives fight among themselves. They tend to use each other as a screen, and each hides from his neighbor the national enemy.”²⁹ Then, as Michael Taussig notes, Native peoples are portrayed by the dominant culture as inherently violent, self-destructive, and dysfunctional.³⁰ For example, townspeople Mike Whelan made the following statement at a 1990 zoning hearing, calling for the denial of a permit for an Indian battered women’s shelter in Lake Andes, South Dakota.

Indian Culture as I view it, is presently so mongrelized as to be a mix of dependency on the Federal Government and a primitive society wholly on the outside of the mainstream of western civilization and thought. The Native American Culture as we know it now, not as it formerly existed, is a culture of hopelessness, godlessness, of joblessness, and lawlessness....Alcoholism, social disease, child abuse and poverty are the hallmarks of this so called culture that you seek to promote, and I would suggest to you that the brave men of the ghost dance would hang their heads in shame at what you now pass off as that culture....I think that the Indian way of life as you call it, to me means cigarette burns in arms of children, double checking the locks on my cars, keeping a loaded shotgun by my door, and car bodies and beer cans on the front lawn....This is not a matter of race, it is a matter of keeping our community and neighborhood away from that evil that you and your ideas promote.³¹

Similarly, in a recent case among the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, a judge ruled that a 50-year-old Aboriginal man's rape of a 15-year-old girl was not a serious crime, but an example of traditional culture. He ruled that the girl "knew what was expected of her" and "didn't need protection" when raped by a man who had been previously convicted of murdering his former wife. An "expert" anthropologist in the case testified that the rape was "traditional" and "morally correct."³² According to Judy Atkinson, an Aboriginal professor, survivors have reported numerous incidents of law enforcement officials dismissing reports of violence because they consider such violence to be "cultural behavior." "We are living in a war zone in Aboriginal communities," states Atkinson. "Different behaviors come out of that," she says. "Yet the courts of law validate that behavior."³³

Taussig comments on the irony of this logic: "Men are conquered not by invasion, but by themselves. It is a strange sentiment, is it not, when faced with so much brutal evidence of invasion."³⁴ But as Fanon notes, this destructive behavior is not "the consequence of the organization of his nervous system or of characterial originality, but the direct product of the colonial system."³⁵

Tadiar's description of colonial relationships as an enactment of the "prevailing mode of heterosexual relations" is useful

because it underscores the extent to which U.S. colonizers view the subjugation of women of the Native nations as critical to the success of the economic, cultural, and political colonization.³⁶ Stoler notes that the imperial discourses on sexuality "cast white women as the bearers of more racist imperial order."³⁷ By extension, Native women are bearers of a counter-imperial order and pose a supreme threat to the dominant culture. Symbolic and literal control over their bodies is important in the war against Native people, as these testimonies illustrate:

When I was in the boat I captured a beautiful Carib woman....I conceived desire to take pleasure....I took a rope and thrashed her well, for which she raised such unheard screams that you would not have believed your ears. Finally we came to an agreement in such a manner that I can tell you that she seemed to have been brought up in a school of harlots.³⁸

Two of the best looking of the squaws were lying in such a position, and from the appearance of the genital organs and of their wounds, there can be no doubt that they were first ravished and then shot dead. Nearly all of the dead were mutilated.³⁹

One woman, big with child, rushed into the church, clasping the altar and crying for mercy for herself and unborn babe. She was followed, and fell pierced with a dozen lances...The child was torn alive from the yet palpitating body of its mother, first plunged into the holy water to be baptized, and immediately its brains were dashed out against a wall.⁴⁰

The Christians attacked them with buffets and beatings...Then they behaved with such temerity and shamelessness that the most powerful ruler of the island had to see his own wife raped by a Christian officer.⁴¹

I heard one man say that he had cut a woman's private parts out and had them for exhibition on a stick. I heard another man say that he had cut the fingers off of an Indian, to get the rings off his hand. I also heard of numerous instances in which men had cut out the private parts of females, and stretched them over their saddle-bows and some of them over their hats.⁴²

The history of sexual violence among Native women illustrates how gender violence functions as a tool for racism and colonialism among women of color in general. For

example, African American women were also viewed as inherently rapable. Yet where colonizers used sexual violence to eliminate Native populations, slave owners used rape to reproduce an exploitable labor force. (The children of Black slave women inherited their slave status.) And because Black women were seen as the property of their slave owners, their rape at the hands of these men did not "count." As one southern politician declared in the early twentieth century, there was no such thing as a "virtuous colored girl" over the age of 14.⁴³ The testimonies from slave narratives and other sources reveal the systematic abuse of slave women by white slave owners.

For a period of four months, including the latter stages of pregnancy, delivery, and recent recovery therefrom...he beat her with clubs, iron chains and other deadly weapons time after time; burnt her; inflicted stripes over and over with scourges, which literally excoriated her whole body; forced her to work in inclement seasons, without being duly clad; provided for her insufficient food, exacted labor beyond her strength, and wantonly beat her because she could not comply with his requisitions. These enormities, besides others, too disgusting, particularly designated, the prisoner, without his heart once relenting, practiced...even up to the last hours of the victim's existence.

[A report of a North Carolina slaveowner's abuse and eventual murder of a slave woman.]⁴⁴

[My master] was a good man but he was pretty bad among the women. Married or not married, made no difference to him. Whoever he wanted among the slaves, he went and got her or had her meet him somewhere out in the bushes. I have known him to go to the shack and make the woman's husband sit outside while he went into his wife... He wasn't no worse than none of the rest. They all used their women like they wanted to, and there wasn't nobody to say anything about it. Neither the woman nor the men could help themselves. They submitted to it but kept praying to God.

[Slave testimony from South Carolina.]⁴⁵

"Some of the troops," a white complained to their commander Rufus Saxton, "have forcibly entered the negro houses and after driving out the men (in one instance at the point of a bayonet) have attempted to ravish women." When the men protested and sought to protect "their wives and sisters," they "were cruelly beaten and

threatened with instant death." "The morals of the old plantation" Saxton feared, "seem revived in the army of occupation."
[A report of the activities of Union soldiers during the Civil War.]⁴⁶

Immigrant women as well have endured a long history of sexual exploitation in the U.S. For instance, racially discriminatory employment laws forced thousands of Chinese immigrant women into prostitution. To supplement their meager incomes, impoverished Chinese families often sold their daughters into prostitution. Other women were lured to the U.S. with the promise of a stable marriage or job, only to find themselves trapped in the sex trade. By 1860, almost a quarter of the Chinese in San Francisco (all female) were employed in prostitution.⁴⁷

Karen Warren argues that patriarchal society is a dysfunctional system that mirrors the dysfunctional nuclear family. That is, severe abuse in the family continues because the family members learn to regard it as "normal." A victim of abuse may come to see that her abuse is not "normal" when she has contact with less abusive families. Similarly, Warren argues, patriarchal society is a dysfunctional system based on domination and violence. "Dysfunctional systems are often maintained through systematic denial, a failure or inability to see the reality of a situation. This denial need not be conscious, intentional, or malicious; it only needs to be pervasive to be effective."⁴⁸

At the time of Columbus's exploits, European society was a dysfunctional system, racked by mass poverty, disease, religious oppression, war, and institutionalized violence. For example, in the Inquisition, hundreds of thousands of Jewish people were slaughtered and their confiscated property was used to fund Columbus's voyages. David Stannard writes,

Violence, of course, was everywhere...In Milan in 1476 a man was torn to pieces by an enraged mob and his dismembered limbs were eaten by his tormentors. In Paris and Lyon, Huguenots were killed and butchered, and their various body parts were sold openly in the streets. Other eruptions of bizarre torture, murder, and ritual cannibalism were not uncommon.⁴⁹

Furthermore, European societies were thoroughly misogynistic. The Christian patriarchy which structured European

society was inherently violent, as has been thoroughly documented.⁵⁰ For example, because English women were not allowed to express political opinions, a woman who spoke out against taxation in 1664 was condemned to having her tongue nailed to a tree near a highway, with a paper fastened to her back detailing her offense.⁵¹ Hatred for women was most fully manifested in the witch hunts. In some English towns, as many as a third of the population were accused of witchcraft.⁵² The women targeted for destruction were those most independent from patriarchal authority: single women, widows, and healers.⁵³

The more peaceful and egalitarian nature of Native societies did not escape the notice of the colonizers. In the "colonial" period, it was a scandal in the colonies that a number of white people chose to live among Indian people while virtually no Indians voluntarily chose to live among the colonists. According to J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, the eighteenth-century author of *Letters from an American Farmer*, "Thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no example of even one of these Aborigines having from choice become Europeans!"⁵⁴ Colonists also noted that Native peoples rarely committed sexual violence against white prisoners, unlike the colonists. Brigadier General James Clinton of the Continental Army said to his soldiers as they were sent off to destroy the Iroquois nation in 1779: "Bad as the savages are, they never violate the chastity of any women, their prisoners."⁵⁵ William Apess, a nineteenth century Pequot, asked, "Where, in the records of Indian barbarity, can we point to a violated female?"⁵⁶ Shohat and Stam argue, the real purpose behind colonial terror "was not to force the indigenes to become Europeans, but to keep Europeans from becoming indigenes."⁵⁷

In contrast to the deeply patriarchal nature of European societies, prior to colonization, Indian societies for the most part were not male dominated. Women served as spiritual, political, and military leaders, and many societies were matrilineal. Although there existed a division of labor between women and men, women's labor and men's labor were accorded similar status.⁵⁸ As women and men lived in balance, Native societies were consequently much less authoritarian than their European counterparts. Paul LeJeune, a Jesuit priest, remarked in the seventeenth century:

[Native peoples] imagine that they ought by right of birth, to enjoy the liberty of wild ass colts, rendering no homage to anyone whomsoever, except when they like... All the authority of their chief is in his tongue's end, for he is powerful insofar as he is eloquent; and even if he kills himself talking and haranguing, he will not be obeyed unless he pleases the savages.⁵⁹

Furthermore, 70 percent of tribes did not practice war at all.⁶⁰ For those that did engage in war, the intent was generally not to annihilate the enemy, but to accrue honor through bravery. One accrued more honor by getting close enough to an enemy to touch him and leaving him alive than by killing him. Tom Holm writes:

Traditional Indian warfare had much more in common with Euroamerican contact sports, like football, boxing, and hockey, than with wars fought in the European manner. This, of course, is not to say that nobody was ever killed... They were—just as they are in modern contact sports—but the point of the exercise was not as a rule purposefully lethal.⁶¹

Of course, in discussing these trends, it is important not to overgeneralize or give the impression that Native communities were utopian prior to colonization. Certainly gender violence occurred prior to colonization. Nevertheless, both oral and written records often note its relative rarity as well as the severity of the punishment for perpetrators of violence. This record of punishment for sexual assault among the Kiowa serves as an illustration:

The Kiowa inflicted such embarrassment and ridicule on a criminal that he reportedly soon died. The man was a chronic rapist who was finally taught the error of his ways by the women; they laid an ambush and baited the trap with a beautiful young girl. When he took the bait, they suddenly appeared and overpowered him. As others held him helpless on the ground, each woman in turn raised her skirts and sat on his face. The experience was not in itself fatal, but the loss of status stemming from the denision it inspired was. The possibility of such drastic punishment was perhaps more chastening in its effect than the threat of the electric chair in more sophisticated societies.⁶²

Similar practices existed among the Anishinabe:

Wife battering, as we have seen, was neither accepted nor tolerated among the Anishinabe people until after the freedom to live

Ojibwe was subdued. Wife battering emerged simultaneously with the disintegration of Ojibwe ways of life and the beginning use of alcohol. The behavior of the Ojibwe people under the influence of alcohol is often totally contrary to Anishinabe values. It is especially contrary to the self-discipline previously necessary to the development of Ojibwe character.

There is no single philosophy among the people in today's society regarding the social illness of wife battering. Many have forgotten or did not receive the teachings of the social laws surrounding it. In the old Ojibwe society, society itself was responsible for what took place within it; today that is not so. What is the evidence of that statement? The harmful, destructive, traumatic cycle of domestic violence that is befalling the Anishinabe Children of the Nation.

Today we have lost a lot of the traditions, values, ways of life, laws, language, teachings of the Elders, respect, humility as Anishinabe people because of the European mentality we have accepted. For the Anishinabe people to survive as a Nation, together we must turn back the pages of time. We must face reality, do an evaluation of ourselves as a people—why we were created to live in harmony with one another as Anishinabe people and to live in harmony with the Creator's creation.⁶³

European women were often surprised to find that, even in war, they went unmolested by their Indian captors. Mary Rowlandson said of her experience: "I have been in the midst of roaring Lions, and Savage Bears, that feared neither God, nor Man, nor the Devil...and yet not one of them ever offered the least abuse of unchastity to me in word or action."⁶⁴ Between 1675 and 1763, almost 40 percent of women who were taken captive by Native people in New England chose to remain with their captors.⁶⁵ In 1899, an editorial signed by Mrs. Teall appeared in the *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, discussing the status of women in Iroquois society.

They had one custom the white men are not ready, even yet, to accept. The women of the Iroquois had a public and influential position. They had a council of their own... which had the initiative in the discussion; subjects presented by them being settled in the councils of the chiefs and elders; in this latter council the women had an orator of their own (often of their own sex) to present and speak for them. There are sometimes female chiefs... The wife

owned all the property... The family was hers; descent was counted through the mother.⁶⁶

In response to her editorial, a man who signed himself as "Student" replied:

Women among the Iroquois, Mrs. Teall says... had a council of their own, and orators and chiefs. Why does she not add what follows in explanation of why such deference was paid to women, that "in the torture of prisoners women were thought more skillful and subtle than the men" and the men of the inquisition were outdone in the refinement of cruelty practiced upon their victims by these savages. It is true also that succession was through women, not the men, in Iroquois tribes, but the explanation is that it was generally a difficult guess to tell the fatherhood of children... The Indian maiden never learned to blush. The Indians, about whom so much rhetoric has been wasted, were a savage, merciless lot who would never have developed themselves nearer to civilization than they were found by missionaries and traders... Their love was to butcher and burn, to roast their victims and eat them, to lie and rob, to live in filth, men, women, children, dogs and fleas crowded together.⁶⁷

Thus, the demonization of Native women can be seen as a strategy of white men to maintain control over white women. This demonization was exemplified by the captivity narratives which became a popular genre in the U.S.⁶⁸ These narratives were supposedly first-person narratives of white women who were abducted by "savages" and forced to undergo untold savagery. Their tales, however, were usually written by white men who had their own agenda. For instance, in 1823 James Seaver of New York interviewed Mary Jemison, who was taken as captive by the Seneca. Jemison chose to remain among them when she was offered her freedom, but Seaver is convinced that she is protecting the Indian people by not describing their full savagery. "The vices of the Indians, she appeared disposed not to aggravate, and seemed to take pride in extolling their virtues. A kind of family pride induced her to withhold whatever would blot the character of her descendants, and perhaps induced her to keep back many things that would have been interesting."⁶⁹ Consequently, he supplements her narrative with material "from authentic sources"

and Jemison's cousin, George.⁷⁰ Seaver, nevertheless, attributes these supplements to her voice in this supposed first-person narrative.

In these narratives, we can find what Carol Adams terms an "absent referent." Adams provides an example by noting how the term "battered woman" makes women the inherent victims of battering. The batterer is rendered invisible and is thus the absent referent.⁷¹ Another example of an absent referent can be found in the Christian symbol of the crucifixion, in which Jesus is represented as one whose inherent nature and purpose is to be crucified. The individuals who put him on the cross, never depicted in representations of the cross, are erased as the perpetrators and they become the absent referent.

Andrea Dworkin argues that in a patriarchal system, "men are distinguished from women by their commitment to do violence rather than to be victimized by it. In adorning violence — from the crucifixion of Christ to the cinematic portrayal of General Patton — men seek to adore themselves."⁷² June Namias argues that the point of these depictions is to instill the belief in white women that they need white men to protect them from savages.⁷³ Jane Caputi also suggests that in depictions of killings of women, the killer plays the alter ego to the male reader or viewer of the killing. "This convention allows the identifying viewer to gratifyingly fantasize himself in the two mutually reinforcing male roles at once. He is both...the protector and the menace."⁷⁴ According to Jane McCrea, the white man both symbolically kills the white woman through the Indians, which mirror his desires, and rushes to her rescue. The white male is absent when the violence occurs. Yet, he is the one who has created the image in which the white man is the absent referent. He glorifies his ability to brutalize white women through the Indian savage while denying his culpability.

Meanwhile, Native women are completely absent from this picture, and consequently, their actual sexual brutalization at the hands of white men escapes notice. The white man *literally* brutalizes her, while *symbolically* brutalizing the white woman through this representational practice. Native men are scapegoated for his

actions so white women will see them as the enemy, while white men remain unaccountable.

Paula Gunn Allen argues that colonizers realized that in order to subjugate indigenous nations they would have to subjugate women within these nations. Native peoples needed to learn the value of hierarchy, the role of physical abuse in maintaining that hierarchy, and the importance of women remaining submissive to their men. They had to convince "both men and women that a woman's proper place was under the authority of her husband and that a man's proper place was under the authority of the priests."⁷⁵ She further argues:

It was to the advantage of white men to mislead white women, and themselves, into believing that their treatment of women was superior to the treatment by the men of the group which they considered savage. Had white women discovered that all women were not mistreated, they might have been intolerant of their men's abusiveness.⁷⁶

Thus in order to colonize a people whose society was not hierarchical, colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy. Patriarchal gender violence is the process by which colonizers inscribe hierarchy and domination on the bodies of the colonized. Ironically, while enslaving women's bodies, colonizers argued that they were actually somehow freeing Native women from the "oppression" they supposedly faced in Native nations. Thomas Jefferson argued that Native women "are submitted to unjust drudgery. This I believe is the case with every barbarous people. It is civilization alone which releases women in the enjoyment of their equality."⁷⁷ The *Mariposa Gazette* similarly noted that when Indian women were safely under the control of white men, they are "neat, and tidy, and industrious, and soon learn to discharge domestic duties properly and creditably." In 1862, a Native man in Conrow Valley was killed and scalped with his head twisted off, his killers saying, "You will not kill any more women and children."⁷⁸ Apparently, Native women can only be free while under the dominion of white men, and both Native and white women have to be protected from Indian men, rather than from white men.

A 1985 Virginia Slims ad reflected a similar notion that white patriarchy saves Native women from oppression. On the left side of the ad was a totem pole of cartoonish figures of Indian women. Their names: Princess Wash and Scrub, Little Running Water Fetcher, Keeper of the Teepee, Princess Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Preparer, Woman Who Gathers Firewood, Princess Buffalo Robe Sewer, Little Woman Who Weaves All Day, and Woman Who Plucks Feathers for Chief's Headdress. The caption on top of the totem pole reads: "Virginia Slims remembers one of many societies where the women stood head and shoulders above the men." On the right side of the ad is a model adorned with makeup and dressed in a tight skirt, nylons, and high heels, with the familiar caption: "You've come a long way, baby." The message is that Native women, oppressed in their tribal societies, need to be liberated into a patriarchal standard of beauty, where their true freedom lies. The historical record suggests, as Paula Gunn Allen argues, that the real roots of feminism should be found in Native societies. But in this Virginia Slims ad, feminism is tied to colonial conquest — (white) women's liberation is founded upon the destruction of supposedly patriarchal Native societies.

Today we see this discourse utilized in the "war on terror." To justify the bombing of Afghanistan, Laura Bush declared, "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women."⁷⁹ These sentiments were shared by mainstream feminists. Eleanor Smeal, former president of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and founder and president of the Fund for a Feminist Majority said, "Without 9/11, we could not get the Afghanistan tragedy in focus enough for the world powers to stop the Taliban's atrocities or to remove the Taliban." Tragically, it took a disaster for them to act definitively enough.⁸⁰

It seems the best way to liberate women is to bomb them. Meanwhile, the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), whose members were the very women who were to be liberated by this war, denounced it as an imperial venture.

RAWA has in the past repeatedly warned that the U.S. government is no friend of the people of Afghanistan, primarily because during the past two decades she did not spare any effort or expense in training and arming the most sordid, the most treacher-

ous, the most misogynic and anti-democratic indigenous Islamic fundamentalist gangs and innumerable crazed Arab fanatics in Afghanistan and in unleashing them upon our people. After the retreat of the Russian aggressors and the collapse of Najib's puppet regime in Afghanistan these fundamentalist entities became all the more wildly unbridled. They officially and wholeheartedly accepted the yoke of servitude to the interests of foreign governments, in which capacity they have perpetrated such crimes and atrocities against the people of Afghanistan that no parallel can be found in the history of any land on earth.

RAWA roundly condemns the U.S. air strikes against Afghanistan because the impoverished masses of Afghanistan — already trapped in the dog-fighting between the US's Taliban and Jihadi flunkies — are the ones who are most hurt in the attacks, and also because the US, like the arrogant superpower she is, has violated the sovereignty of the Afghan people and the territorial integrity of the Afghan homeland.

The US is against fundamentalist terrorism to the extent and until such time as her proper interests are jeopardised; otherwise she is all too happy to be a friend and sponsor of any fundamentalist-terrorist criminal entity. If the US does not want her ridiculous bigotry to show and really wants to eliminate fundamentalist terrorism, she should draw lessons from her own past myopic policies and realise that the sources of fundamentalist terrorism are America's support to the most reactionary regimes in Arab and non-Arab countries and her military and financial largesse to Afghan fundamentalist criminals. Terrorism will be uprooted only when these two sources are dried up.⁸¹

So why does a group like the Fund for a Feminist Majority ignore the voice of RAWA? Again, even within feminist circles, the colonial logic prevails that women of color, indigenous women, and women from Global South countries are only victims of oppression rather than organizers in their own right.

The "assimilation" into white society, however, only increased Native women's vulnerability to violence. For instance, when the Cherokee nation was forcibly relocated to Oklahoma during the Trail of Tears in the nineteenth century, soldiers targeted for sexual violence Cherokee women who spoke English and had attended mission schools instead of those who had not taken part in these assimilation efforts. They were routinely

gang-raped, causing one missionary to the Cherokee, Daniel Butrick, to regret that any Cherokee had ever been taught English.⁸² Homi Bhabha and Edward Said argue that part of the colonization process involves partially assimilating the colonized in order to establish colonial rule.⁸³ That is, if the colonized group seems completely different from the colonists, they implicitly challenge the supremacy of colonial rule because they are refusing to adapt the ways of the colonizers. Hence, the colonized must seem to partially resemble the colonists in order to reinforce the dominant ideology, and establish that the way colonizers live is the only good way to live. However, the colonized group can never be completely assimilated — otherwise, they would be equal to the colonists, and there would be no reason to colonize them. If we use Bhabha's and Said's analysis, we can see that while Cherokee women were promised that assimilation would provide them with the benefits of the dominant society, in fact assimilation efforts made them more easily subjugated by colonial rule.

Historically, white colonizers who raped Indian women claimed that the real rapists were Indian men.⁸⁴ Today, white men who rape and murder Indian women often make this same claim. In the late 1980s, a white man, Jesse Coulter, raped, murdered, and mutilated several Indian women in Minneapolis. He claimed to be Indian, adopting the name Jesse Sittingcrow, and emblazoning an AIM tattoo on his arm.⁸⁵

Roy Martin, a full-blooded Native man, was charged with sexual assault in Bemidji, Minnesota. The survivor identified the rapist as white, about 25 years old, with a shag haircut. Martin was 35 with hair past his shoulders.⁸⁶ In a search of major newspaper coverage of sexual assaults in Native communities from 1998 to 2004, I found coverage almost entirely limited to cases where Native man (or a white man who purports to be Native) was the suspected perpetrator and the victim was a white woman; there was virtually no coverage of Native women as victims of sexual assault. This absence is even more startling when one considers that Native women are more likely than other groups of women in the U.S. to be sexual assault victims.⁸⁷

Similarly, after the Civil War, Black men in the U.S. were targeted for lynching for their supposed mass rapes of white women.

The racist belief was that white women needed to be protected from predatory Black men, when in fact, Black women needed protection from white men. In her investigations of lynchings that occurred between 1865 and 1895, anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells calculated that more than 10,000 Black people had been lynched. During that same period, not one white person was lynched for raping or killing a Black person.⁸⁸ In addition, while the ostensible reason for these lynchings was to protect white women from Black rapists, Wells discovered that only a third of those lynched had even been accused of rape. And most of the Black men accused of rape had been involved in obviously consensual sexual relationships with white women.⁸⁹

Of course, Indian men do commit acts of sexual violence. After years of colonialism and boarding school experience, violence has been internalized within Indian communities. However, this view of the Indian man as the "true" rapist serves to obscure who has real power in this racist and patriarchal society. Thus, the colonization of Native women (as well as other women of color) is part of the project of strengthening white male ownership of white women.

And while the era of Indian massacres in their more explicit form has ended in North America, the wholesale rape and mutilation of indigenous women's bodies continues. During the 1982 massacre of Mayan people in the Aldea Rio Negro (Guatemala), 177 women and children were killed. The young women were raped in front of their mothers, and the mothers were killed in front of their children. The younger children were then tied at the ankles and dashed against the rocks until their skulls were broken. This massacre, committed by the Guatemalan army, was funded by the U.S. government.⁹⁰

In a 1997 massacre in Chiapas, Mexico, indigenous women were targeted by paramilitary forces for sexual mutilation, gang rape, and torture. Amnesty International reports that torture against indigenous peoples in Latin America is routine, including electric shocks, semi-asphyxiation with plastic bags or by submersion under water, death threats, mock executions, beatings using sharp objects, sticks, or rifle butts, rape, and sexual abuse.⁹¹

One wonders why the mass rapes in Guatemala, Chiapas, or elsewhere against indigenous people in Latin America does not spark the same outrage as the rapes in Bosnia in the 1990s. In fact, feminist legal scholar Catherine MacKinnon argues that in Bosnia, "The world has *never* seen sex used this consciously, this cynically, this elaborately, this openly, this systematically... as a means of destroying a whole people [emphasis mine]."⁹² Here, MacKinnon seems to have forgotten that she lives on this land because millions of Native peoples were raped, sexually mutilated, and murdered. Is mass rape against European women genocide, while mass rape against indigenous women is business as usual?

The historical context of rape, racism, and colonialism continues to impact women in North America as well. This legacy is most evident in the rate of violence in American Indian communities — American Indian women are twice as likely to be victimized by violent crime as women or men of any other ethnic group. In addition, 60 percent of the perpetrators of violence against American Indian women are white.⁹³

In times of crisis, sexual violence against Native women escalates. When I served as a nonviolent witness for the Chippewa spearfishers who were being harassed by white racist mobs in the 1980s, one white harasser carried a sign that read, "Save a fish; spear a pregnant squaw." During the 1990 Mohawk crisis in Quebec, Canada, a white mob surrounded an ambulance carrying a Native woman who was attempting to leave the Mohawk reservation because she was hemorrhaging after giving birth. She was forced to "spread her legs" to prove she had delivered a baby. The police at the scene refused to intervene. An Indian man was arrested for "wearing a disguise" (he was wearing jeans), and was brutally beaten at the scene, with his testicles crushed. Two women from Chicago Women of All Red Nations (WARN) went to Oka to videotape the crisis. They were arrested and held in custody for 11 hours without being charged, and were told that they could not go to the bathroom unless the male police officers could watch. The place they were held was covered with pornographic magazines.

This colonial desire to subjugate Indian women's bodies was quite apparent when, in 1982, Stuart Kasten marketed "Custer's

Revenge," a videogame in which players got points each time they, in the form of Custer, raped an Indian woman. The slogan of the game is "When you score, you score." He describes the game as "a fun sequence where the woman is enjoying a sexual act willingly." According to the promotional material:

You are General Custer. Your dander's up, your pistol's wavin'.

You've hog-tied a ravishing Indian maiden and have a chance to rewrite history and even up an old score. Now, the Indian maiden's hands may be tied, but she's not about to take it lying down, by George! Help is on the way. If you're to get revenge you'll have to rise to the challenge, dodge a tribe of flying arrows and protect your flanks against some downright mean and prickly cactus. But if you can stand pat and last past the strings and arrows—you can stand last. Remember? Revenge is sweet.⁹⁴

Sexual violence as a tool of racism also continues against other women of color. Trafficking in women from Asian and other Global South countries continues unabated in the U.S. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, 45,000 to 50,000 women are trafficked in the U.S. each year.⁹⁵ In addition, there are over 50,000 Filipina mail-order brides in the U.S. alone.⁹⁶ White men, desiring women they presume to be submissive, procure mail-order brides who, because of their precarious legal status, are vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence. As the promotional material for mail order brides describes them, Filipinas have "exceptionally smooth skin and tight vaginas... [they are] low maintenance wives. [They] can always be returned and replaced by a younger model."⁹⁷

Women of color are also targeted for sexual violence crossing the U.S. border. Blacks and Latinos comprise 43 percent of those searched through customs even though they comprise 24 percent of the population. The American Friends Service Committee documented over 346 reports of gender violence on the U.S.-Mexico border from 1993–1995 (and this is just the report of one agency, which does not account for the women who either do not report or report to another agency). This one case is emblematic of the kinds of abuse women face at the border: A Border Patrol agent, Larry Selders, raped several women over a period of time. Finally one of the rape victims in Nogales, Arizona had to sue the United States government for not taking action to investigate her rape. Selders

demanded sex from the woman in return for her release. When she refused, Selders drove her out of town to an isolated area, raped her and threatened her not to say anything to anyone. Her defense describes in great detail the horrible trauma that she continued to suffer after the incident. Although the rape took place in 1993, it was only in October 1999 that the court finally arrived at a decision in favor of the victims. "The government guarded information about Selders' prior acts. It took more than three years of legal battles to uncover that at least three other victims were known to the government," declared the victim's attorney, Jesus Romo.⁸⁸

Sexual Violence and Impunity

The ideology of Native women's bodies as rapable is evident in the hundreds of missing indigenous women in Mexico and Canada. Since 1993, over 500 women have been murdered in Juarez, Mexico. The majority have been sexually mutilated, raped, and tortured, including having had their nipples cut off. Poor and indigenous women have been particularly targeted. Not only have the local police made no effort to solve the cases, they appear to be complicit in the murders. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations and activists have noted their failure to seriously investigate the cases—the police have made several arrests and tortured those arrested to extract confessions, but the murders have continued unabated. Furthermore, the general response of the police to these murders is to blame the victims by arguing that they are sex workers or lesbians, and hence, inherently rapable.⁸⁹ For instance, one former state public prosecutor commented in 1999, "It's hard to go out on the street when it's raining and not get wet."⁹⁰

Similarly, in Canada, over 500 First Nations women have gone missing or have been murdered in the past 15 years, with little police investigation. Again, it seems that their cases have been neglected because many of the women were homeless or sex workers. Ada Elaine Brown, the sister of Terri Brown, president of

the Native Women's Association of Canada, was found dead in her bed in 2002. She was so badly beaten her family did not recognize her. According to Terri Brown: "The autopsy report said it was a brain aneurysm. Yeah, because she was beaten to a pulp."⁹¹

Within the United States, because of complex jurisdictional issues, perpetrators of sexual violence can usually commit crimes against Native women with impunity. A review of U.S. criminal justice policy in Indian country helps to clarify the current situation. In *Ex Parte Crow Dog* (1883), the Supreme Court recognized the authority of Indian tribes over criminal jurisdiction on Indian lands. In response, the U.S. passed the Major Crimes Act (1885), which mandated that certain "major crimes" committed in Indian country must be adjudicated through the federal justice system. In 1883, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) created the Court of Indian Offenses, which appointed tribal officials to impose penalties based on Anglo-American standards of law. These courts were charged with enforcing the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), the compilation of regulations issued by federal administrative agencies, which generally stressed laws intended to assimilate Native peoples, such as laws which prohibited the practice of Indian religions.

The 1950's ushered in what is called the "termination period" in U.S. Indian policy. The government began a policy of terminating tribal status for many Indian tribes and funded relocation programs to encourage Indian peoples to relocate to urban areas and assimilate into the dominant society. During this period, the U.S. government sharply defunded the justice systems in Indian country, leaving many tribes, who did not have their traditional systems intact, with no law enforcement at all.

After obliterating tribal justice systems, the U.S. government passed Public Law 280 (PL 280) in 1953, granting states criminal and limited civil jurisdiction over tribes covered in the Major Crimes Act, without tribal consent. PL 280 is a major infringement on Native sovereignty, since tribes have generally not come under state jurisdiction. That is, while the U.S. government policy has deemed tribes under the guardianship of the federal government, tribes are supposed to be recognized as sovereign to some degree and not under state government jurisdiction.

In 1968, the U.S. made provisions for tribes to retrocede from PL 280—however, retrocession can only be undertaken with the permission of the state. However, later court decisions have found that PL 280 provides for concurrent state jurisdiction rather than state jurisdiction which supersedes tribal jurisdiction altogether. That is, while the state has the right to prosecute cases in PL 280 tribes, those tribes can prosecute the cases at the same time through tribal courts, if they have them.

However, with the advent of what is known as the period of “self-determination” in U.S. Indian policy beginning in 1968, many tribes, particularly non-PL 280 tribes, began to develop their own tribal governance. As a result, more than 140 tribes have their own court systems today. Of these, about 25 have retained CFR systems with BIA-appointed judges and others have their own tribal courts. Some tribes, operating under the radar of U.S. government surveillance, have never lost their traditional forms of governance and continue to practice them today.

But because rape falls under the Major Crimes Act, tribes are generally reliant upon the federal governments to prosecute sexual assault cases. Department of Justice representatives have informally reported that U.S. attorneys decline to prosecute about 75 percent of all cases involving any crime in Indian country. U.S. attorneys are particularly reluctant to prosecute rape cases; indeed, the Department of Justice reported in 1997 that only two U.S. attorneys regularly prosecute rape cases in Indian country.¹⁰²

Because sexual assault is covered under the Major Crimes Act, many tribes have not developed codes to address the problem in those rape cases the federal government declines to prosecute. Those with codes are often hindered in their ability to investigate by a wait that may last more than a year before federal investigators formally turn over cases. In addition, the Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA) of 1968 limits the punishment tribal justice systems can enforce on perpetrators.¹⁰³ For instance, the maximum time someone may be sentenced to prison through tribal courts is one year.¹⁰⁴ Also, Native activist Sarah Deer (Muscogee) notes that the U.S. can prohibit remedies that do not follow the same penalties of the dominant system. Thus, sentencing someone to banishment or to another traditional form of punishment can be deemed a

violation of ICRA.¹⁰⁵ In addition, U.S. courts have conflicting rulings on whether the Major Crimes Act even allows tribes to maintain concurrent jurisdiction over certain crimes, including sexual assault.¹⁰⁶

To further complicate matters, tribes covered under PL 280, which gives states criminal jurisdiction, must work with state and county law enforcement officials who may have hostile relationships with the tribe. And because tribes are often geographically isolated—reservations are sometimes over 100 miles from the closest law enforcement agency, with many homes having no phone—local officials are unable to respond to an emergency situation. Racism on the part of local police officers in surrounding border towns also contributes to a lack of responsiveness in addressing rape cases. And since the federal government does not compensate state governments for law enforcement on reservations, and tribes generally do not pay local or federal taxes, states have little vested interest in providing “protection” for Indian tribes.

Finally, American Indian tribes do not have the right to prosecute non-Indians for crimes that occur on reservations. In *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* (1978), the Supreme Court held that Native American tribes do not have criminal jurisdiction over non-Native peoples on reservation lands. This precedent is particularly problematic for non-PL 280 tribes, because tribal police cannot arrest non-Indians who commit offenses. Furthermore, state law enforcement does not have jurisdiction on reservation lands. So, unless state law enforcement is cross-deputized with tribal law enforcement, no one can arrest non-Native perpetrators of crimes on Native land.¹⁰⁷

In response to these deplorable conditions, many Native peoples are calling for increased funding for criminal justice enforcement in tribal communities. (See Chapter 7 for a critique of this strategy.) It is undeniable that U.S. policy has codified the “rapability” of Native women. Indeed, the U.S. and other colonizing countries are engaged in a “permanent social war” against the bodies of women of color and indigenous women, which threaten their legitimacy.¹⁰⁸ Colonizers evidently recognize the wisdom of the Cheyenne saying “A nation is not conquered until the hearts of the women are on the ground.”

Part 2

ALLYSHIP



This is how it seems to me:

Flo

I am 3rd generation born in the US, white-skinned Jew of Russian Empire immigrants. My parents, 2nd generation born in the US, white-skinned Jews of Russian Empire immigrants were the first to move out of the Jewish, Russian Empire immigrant ethnic neighborhoods of Chicago in which they were raised. My early years were spent half between a mostly white-Euro Christian town with a large population of migrants from the Americas, 45 miles outside of Chicago and half with my extended family in the Jewish, Russian Empire immigrant ethnic neighborhood in Chicago. In that ethnic neighborhood, Yiddish was spoken, Shabbes was observed and the synagogue was segregated by gender. In the town outside of Chicago where my parents, sister and I lived, there were not many Jews and we did not belong to a religious institution. My parents also raised us getting a Christmas tree and hunting for Easter candy, for the fun of it.

When I was in the third grade I returned home one day and informed my mother that I was Jewish and needed to belong to a synagogue. We joined the only option available in the area, which happened to be a conservative shul, serving as the sole choice for any Jew for miles around. There were not many Jews in the area, so the culture of our Jewish identity was not concentrated like in the ethnic neighborhoods of my parents in Chicago, but became the dilution of being few and other and “Americanized”. The Jewishness in which I was steeped is Jewish identity as an American.

After pushing my folks to join the Shul while I was in the third grade, I become deeply invested in that part of my identity, studying for my Bas Mitzvah, attending both Hebrew and Sunday schools, wholeheartedly supporting Zionist initiatives like Plant a Tree in Israel, and being a very active participant in my Zionist youth organization, serving as president for a stint. I held a deep and personal relationship with Israel, a land on the other side of the world I had never glimpsed but was told was my homeland and strived to get there. It was not until years later that I realized the ramifications of the Zionist projects in which I participated. I was a young Jew in the US taking guidance from my shul and wanting to be the best I could.

At the same time as this, I was spending much energy learning about the anti-war movement of the 1960s. From a very young age, it seemed apparent that I was contrary and unwilling to accept things without question. In this vein, I longed to be a part of something bigger that was fighting for social change. In my mind though, this struggle had ended in the 60s and I had missed the opportunity. And so I would just read about it and watch films and fantasize about what it would have been like to be there.

Fast forward to age 17, and I am sitting on a couch in the upper Midwest just before the Jewish High Holidays. I am on the phone with my father who asks me what I am doing for the Holidays and suddenly I wonder why I have so embraced this identity without question. It is a shock to my system, an epiphany that rocks me to the core. My eyes become open to different things and I start to question what the Chassen leading services at my family Shul is talking about when he says I should take care of my Jewish brothers and sisters. I ask him, why do you speak only of our Jewish brothers and sisters? Why not take care of everyone? He tells me, of course you care about everyone, but FIRST, you take care of your Jewish brothers and sisters. I suddenly feel in a box with certain people chosen to be in and others left out. It is a realization that makes me extremely uncomfortable. I begin a deep critical analysis that led me to stop identifying as Jewish, thinking it is possible to pick and choose which parts of my identity I can embrace and which I can ignore when it. This is a personal identification that lasted until years of solidarity work would prove otherwise. That realization comes later though. For now, I am 17 and trying to walk away from the cultural upbringing that has shaped my lens of the world and how I fit into it.

At the same time, I am slowly coming to realize that struggles for liberation and social justice did not die in the 60s and that there were indeed ways to live out my ideas of being a part of a movement for these things.

This process of politicization first leads me to environmental struggles in the US Pacific Northwest in which mostly young white-skinned Earth First!ers are present. The struggles I become involved in at this time are mainly environmentally focused, lacking a narrative or analysis of our whiteness, how it fit into the movement we wanted to create, how it affected partnerships we should have been working to build and any type of indigenous solidarity. It was a struggle for the Earth and people were seen as the oppressors no matter what the identity, history or amount of power they held.

Over time, I came to hear of struggles such as the one at Big Mountain/Black Mesa, an indigenous Dineh struggle to maintain land and livelihood. When I heard about this, it was in the context of Dineh Grandmothers resisting relocation asking for outside supporters to come, stand with them, bear witness and herd sheep. It was immediately something I wanted to support but it would take another year before I ended up at Big Mountain/Black Mesa as a white-skinned supporter.

I was taken into the struggle at Big Mountain/Black Mesa by the white support group that functioned out of Flagstaff, Arizona. This group worked with the Grandmothers and other Dineh resisters, helping to facilitate white supports getting to the land and ensuring some level of cultural sensitivity training. I ended up spending 4 consecutive winters living with a Grandmother, herding sheep and acting as one of the white supporters coordinating the white support group. This was my first experience in solidarity with such an intensely identity-based and indigenous struggle. At the same time, I was still not identifying as a white-skinned Jew born and raised in the US. Again, I had not learned yet that one cannot walk away from their identity and how it shapes our perception of the world and the world's perception of us and so I was trying to do just that—rebel from an identity I found oppressive as opposed to understanding I needed to embrace that identity and use it to dismantle this system of identity-based privilege we live in. For now though, I was still trying to ignore those privileges and not identify with my cultural upbringing while at the same time being heavily involved in an extremely identity-based struggle. This of course brought me into a lot of internal conflict. I felt rootless, cultural-less, lost and adrift in a world of those embracing their identity as a form of resistance. It was maddening. I stayed quiet a lot. Listened. Moved through life, observing while intensely participating.

Some years later, as I discussed my own identity with a co-worker, I was challenged as a Jew to take a stand on Palestine. My first reaction was, what the fuck is this person talking about? Having until then, as a politicized person and a Jew by birth, recalled never even hearing the word Palestine. The way this person challenged me though made me realize it was certainly something I needed to know about and have a stance on. The challenge caused me to start rethinking parts of my life, language I had been raised with concerning Arabs and their inherent hatred of me simply because I was a Jew. I remember being told as a teenager not to let my grandmother know the last name of my sister's boyfriend, which was Abdullah.

This challenge also started me on a path of learning about myself, US foreign policy, military occupation and my part in all of it. I started reading about checkpoints, roadblocks and curfew and I understood none of it. I consider myself dumb by book, understanding knowledge and things of the world only when I can grasp them in my hand and so partly out of naiveté and partly out of desire to understand, I decided to go to Palestine and see for myself what was happening and where I stood in all of it.

I did end up in Palestine, working with a Palestinian-led initiative that organizes outside supporters coming to Palestine and standing alongside Palestinians in non-violent forms of resistance against Israel's occupation. As I write this, I have spent over 2.5 years living and working in Palestine, building relationships with, organizing alongside and learning from Palestinians as someone in solidarity. Looking back, it amazes me the million things I did not know or understand when I first chose to use my privilege to travel to Palestine. Living and working in Palestine though was the impetus to reconnect with my Jewish identity, realizing that if I did not embrace and understand that part of myself, I would be of no use to the people I was trying to support.

I only say all of the above because without that as a basis for the work I need to be a part of in the world, how do I even know what the work is I need to do? Without understanding who I am and where I came from, I

don't believe there is a way for me to be of use to anyone. I now am deeply invested in learning how to utilize my whiteness and all the privilege it brings in order to dismantle the white supremacist world we live in. I believe that in order to dismantle this system based on privilege, I must be willing and able to utilize my own personal privilege against itself. To this end, I have been beaten by police in the US, I have been shot at and beaten by Jewish Israeli soldiers and I have been imprisoned in both US and Israeli institutions. I have dedicated my life to using my body and voice to call out injustices, racism and oppressions. At the same time, I realize this is a lifelong process and at no time do I get to be an "expert", at no time do I get to be above being challenged and at no time do I get to think my work is done (unless of course the racist, classist system in which we live falls).

I believe in order to be a true ally and in solidarity, it is imperative that I understand my identity and have a deep connection with it. At the same time, I think it is important to understand that everyone's histories and personal identity are different and have different places in the world. My personal identity creates an interesting and at times painful intersection of other and white. As a Jew, I am other, with a personal family history of severe oppression (including horrendous acts of murder against it) and a culture different than the majority of those in this Christian country around me, yet I have white skin in a world that privileges that skin color. This causes me to need to learn about my whiteness in a different way than white, Euro-centric people whose power and place in the system is historically and culturally quite different than mine. This does not mean that I don't need to do the work to understand my white privilege and how to work toward dismantling it.

In this day and age whiteness is different than it was 60 years ago and presumably it will continue to change. My family went from being on the bottom of the latter and considered not white (even though their skin color was as white as mine), to being a part of a community that holds severe world power. True, there is still anti-Jewish sentiment in the world, but it exists in a much different way than previous to 60 years ago. My family also went from being people escaping extreme and violent hatred and oppression to being colonizers the minute they stepped foot on the land now widely called the United States. These are not parts of my personal story that will change but at the same time I need to make sure, as a person who now holds enormous amounts of privilege, that I take responsibility for my current place in the world. I can hold onto the stories of my people as being a part of what has shaped my place in the world, but I must at the same time understand that my place in the world is much different than the place my great-grandmother held when she escaped the Russian empire for what she believed to be a safe-haven open to settlement.

I do not have control over the body, identity, or class I was born into, but I certainly have control (and responsibility) over what I do with those things. How can I not be willing to challenge this system that privileges me over others? How can I not be willing to directly challenge the comfort I have been given on someone else's land? These are hard questions and hard challenges and ones that I think will not end in my life, but the other option of not taking responsibility for my place in the world seems much more painful.

Mirroring Colonial Power Structures in Radical Organizing: Rape Culture as Colonization and Community Accountability

Claire

Throughout my involvement with anarchist and anti-rape culture organizing I have come to see the fundamental necessity of personal accountability to social privilege and power as essential to any attempt at relationship building. So frequently do alliances and collective efforts divide, exclude and silence because of inability to actively recognize and challenge how we engage in cycles of violence. Because of our inability to understand personal roles of power and privilege within US colonial society and how deeply they affect us- when our visions, desires and voices go unchecked, we often silence the voices and visions of others. Without working to understand the ways in which we have been colonized and how colonial power structures have influenced our own thinking, we often replicate the same oppressive power dynamics in our personal relations and organizational methods. Personal accountability does not ever end and should be a fundamental tool in any collaborative, collective, and individual effort.

My understanding of accountability comes out of my self-education around sexual violence and rape culture. Being a part of US colonial society means living within a rape culture; this means that our society encourages, condones, promotes and normalizes sexual violence (both mental and physical) as a tool of patriarchal gender oppression. Rape culture and sexual violence are also successful tools in reinforcing other forms of hierarchical oppressions, such as racism and white supremacy, classism and hetero-normativity. This makes it an essential tool in maintaining the power structures of US society that are capitalist and colonialist through its historical foundations, continuing infrastructural make-up, and through its manifested goals and intentions.

My understanding of personal accountability and decolonizing education developed from the realization that my mind, and the minds of everyone around me, have been heavily shaped by the realities and values of rape culture. I began to see the influence of rape culture in every interaction. In any sort of relationship building, it is pertinent to understand that rape culture and sexual violence are pervasive everywhere and affect all of us. If we hope to build meaningful alliances and partnerships, we have to understand our own roles within rape culture and colonial society, our abilities to perpetuate violence and the ways in which violence has been woven into our thinking. If we truly wish to deconstruct oppressive colonialist power structures, then we have to honestly expose to ourselves how we have been mapped within these constructs.

How Rape Culture is a tool of Colonialist and Capitalist Systems

Capitalist and colonialist powers are dependent upon oppressive systems of hierarchical value. They work to ensure the power and privilege of some at the expense of the rest. Capitalism could not exist without colonialist systems and structures that rank and oppress human life in terms of value, rendering most as crucially exploitable and expendable in order to privilege the desires and power of few over the needs of many. As Andrea Smith discusses in *Conquest*, our societal and governmental infrastructures were built on the principle that indigenous peoples and their lands are violable (12). White settlers asserted that indigenous peoples were savage, primitive, less than human, and thus claimed for themselves a righteous legitimacy to the conquest and colonization of indigenous peoples and lands. These principles and beliefs remain firmly rooted in the makeup of our colonialist society and government of today. The US as an imperial and colonial power

is dependent on the continued understanding that the land we occupy today (speaking as a settler) remains rightfully and justifiably ours. The genocide and ongoing displacement and oppression of indigenous peoples are understood as legitimate and necessary in order to maintain our settler claim to this land.

Smith writes that the continued claim of the United States to land and power necessitates that indigenous people must always be in a state of disappearance, or a “permanent ‘present absence’ in the US colonial imagination” in order for US colonial ownership to feign legitimacy (Conquest, 9). In order to maintain this constant eradication of indigenous peoples, indigenous identity was, and continues to be, criminalized. This has historically been practiced through methods such as the genocide and forced removal of indigenous peoples from their homelands, placing bounties to encourage and condone mass murder of indigenous peoples, forced assimilation and ethnic cleansing through boarding schools, and the forced sterilization of indigenous women. Currently, the continued displacement and forced removal of indigenous peoples from their homelands, the continued occupation of these homelands, the criminalization of indigenous cultural practices, targeted harassment and violence by law enforcement, mass imprisonment of native peoples, and systematic sexual assault of indigenous women are just some of the many ways that native identity continues to be criminalized and eradicated today.

White supremacy, as another infrastructural anchor of colonialist and capitalist power, allows for hierarchical rankings of human value so that certain lives become socially significant and meaningful, while others are considered expendable and exploitable. US society ultimately serves to ensure the safety and protection of white settlers. US society could not have been built without white supremacy in that it allowed for the justification of the genocide of indigenous peoples as well as the continued denial of genocide having ever occurred, and that it voraciously relied on the kidnapping and enslavement of people of color for the purpose of building the US colonial empire. Colonial and capitalist powers remain dependent on white supremacist hierarchies of human value in order to ensure an exploitable labor force. Furthermore, white supremacy creates the understanding that non-white people and land are ultimately white settler property, or, that US society functions and exists for the benefit of white settlers (not ignoring the role of hetero-normative, patriarchal and class privilege as determining factors of beneficence). This includes the continued exploitation of people of color through the prison-industrial-complex, the militarization of borders and criminalization of certain ethnic groups. Colonialist and capitalist powers work together to create the over-representation of people of color in prisons as colonialist power renders people of color as expendable property, thus creating a cheap and exploitable labor force for the benefit of capitalism through the prison system. The prison-industrial-complex also works to thwart the strength of organizing in communities of color as this ultimately threatens colonialist infrastructure.

Sexual violence and rape culture are indispensable to the strength and function of US colonialist and capitalist power in that they work to ensure all structural systems of oppression. Rape culture means that US society is a culture in which sexual violence is encouraged, condoned and perpetuated as a tool of gender oppression. Hetero-normativity means US society forces compliance within binary concepts of gender (either male or female) and seeks to normalize patriarchal gender oppression. US colonialist rationality naturalizes binary concepts of gender and patriarchal gender oppression. Smith shows us how colonizers used the oppression of women and patriarchy as a tool in subjugating indigenous nations, “Native peoples needed to learn the value of hierarchy, the role of physical abuse in maintaining that hierarchy, and the importance of women remaining submissive to men... Thus in order to colonize a people whose society was not hierarchical, colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy” (Conquest, 23). Through imposing the values of hetero-normativity and hierarchical gender oppression, patriarchy is presented as natural and was a successful tool in colonizing and instituting other hierarchical oppressions.

The way that patriarchy is enforced and maintained is through systematic gender oppression in the mode of sexual abuse both physical and mental. Rape culture means the normalization and naturalization of

systematic sexual violence and sexual abuse against women in society. Patriarchal rape culture means that women's bodies and sexuality socially belong as objects and property to male desire. In rape culture, it is socially perceived that women's bodies and sexuality are something men have a right and claim to, this opens the space for systematic sexual violence physically, emotionally and psychologically. In patriarchal US society, men are empowered to make the decisions and laws that effect and control women's bodies and lives while women's voices are devalued and silenced. When women occupy positions of power within US colonial society, the power structures and dynamics they are enacting are still within the constructs of patriarchal values, thus they are continuing to engage in gender oppression. Rape culture means that women experience mental and physical forms of sexual violence on a consistent, everyday basis and internalize these assaults, resulting in self-hatred and low self-esteem, insecurities, lack of confidence, and thus further silencing. Rape culture means that women are frequently pressured, coerced and forced into sexual acts as women's sexuality is seen as property and conquest. Rape culture means that victims and survivors of sexual violence are often considered responsible and at fault for their own assaults and rapes. Rape culture is how it becomes socially accepted that women are ultimately to blame for their own rapes and assaults because of their own behavior (they dressed a certain way, they're promiscuous, they were drunk, they didn't fight back, they didn't say no). Rape culture pressures the silence of female victims and survivors because we are taught that women's bodies are meant to be violated and therefore at fault. Rape culture also means that perpetrators of sexual violence are rarely held responsible for their actions as the most common forms of sexual violence are normalized, such as date rape and domestic violence.

Sexual violence cannot be understood only as a tool of patriarchy but also as a tool of white supremacy and colonization. In mainstream US society, the rapes of some women matter while the rapes of others do not. White supremacy and rape culture means that some perpetrators will be prosecuted and others will not. It means that whom is raped by whom matters in deciding whether or not the act holds significance. Sexual violence is a tool of colonial white supremacy in that it renders certain women as violable and certain men as those capable of violating. Colonial society and rape culture make it so that women believe themselves to be in need of protection from sexual violence and that protection is found through the institutions and authorities that make up white supremacist, patriarchal, colonial power structures. Examples of this are the mass lynchings of black men by white men for in some way interacting with white women.

Since the endurance of US colonial society is dependent upon the repression, criminalization and eradication of indigenous cultures, sexual violence is an important tool in maintaining the 'permanent present absence' of native peoples and thus the continued legitimacy US settlers and colonial society claim to indigenous land. Again referencing Smith, as US colonial society renders indigenous bodies and land as settler property and as rightfully violable, indigenous peoples become constructed as naturally violable within US colonial society (Conquest, 12). Due to this, indigenous women are much more likely to be targeted for sexual violence than white women. The rapes and assaults of indigenous women are mostly ignored or condoned by law enforcement and authorities. The perpetrators of these sexual assaults and rapes most likely face no consequences. Indigenous women are subject to other systematic forms of sexual violence such as enforced, mass sterilization by the state. Smith calls this systematic sexual violence against indigenous peoples a project of colonial sexual violence which results in what she refers to as an "internalized genocidal project through self-destruction" (Conquest, 12). The colonial tools of sexual violence and rape culture are used against indigenous communities to inflict massive psychological damage and self-hatred, repressing indigenous sovereignty and identity.

Gender Dynamics as Sexual Violence

When one experiences sexual violence, a culture of rape can become much more amplified and

seemingly small interactions can become extended acts of sexual violence. When women experience sexual violence and the society around them tells them that their bodies and sexuality are property, deserving of rape, when society condones their sexual assaults, when they find themselves silenced and devalued- the ways in which we have been colonized according to gender privilege and oppression become greater acts of violence than they might seem. When someone experiences so much violent gender oppression, every-day patriarchal gender dynamics become an extension of sexual violence. It is important to be accountable to the ways in which one has been colonized according to gender privilege or gender oppression. Gender privilege means that socialized males expect and take power in social situations. For example, it is commonplace that men interrupt or ignore women when they speak. When we live in a society of rape culture and patriarchal gender oppression, this seemingly small act becomes amplified and especially for women that have experienced systematic sexual violence by men, this feels like a violent reminder that they are socially considered as devalued sexual property to men.

Women as Perpetrators? - Replicating Oppressive Structures of Colonial Power

In this essay I have been referring to sexual violence and rape culture as patriarchal tools of gender oppression and speaking as though sexual violence is only perpetrated by men against women. While statistically, almost all perpetrators of sexual violence are men and most women have experienced some form of sexual violence, women certainly can be and are perpetrators of sexual violence and large numbers of men are survivors of sexual violence. Nor do I seek to imply that sexual violence is a hetero-normative act occurring between only men and women (I do however want to stress, that due to patriarchal gender oppression and rape culture, the ways that sexual violence affect men and women are very different). If women are perpetrators of sexual violence, or if men rape other men, does that mean sexual violence is not a systematic tool of patriarchal gender oppression?

Sexual violence is an enactment and reinforcement of colonial power, regardless of what form it takes. Colonialism values conquest, domination, power, greed and taking by whatever force necessary. Colonialist society is built on institutionalized hierarchies. Rape culture and sexual violence (as I hope I've explained well by now) are strong tools used in the maintenance of hierarchical oppression and privilege. By living within colonialist society, our minds become colonized in the sense that we are raised to think and understand in terms of colonial power structures and hierarchy. We are shaped by the privilege, or lack of privilege, we receive in colonial society and learn to behave in accordance with these privileges or oppressions. We learn to expect, demand and control, or we learn to be controlled. We learn that we matter or that we do not matter. Colonization means that these understandings become so fundamental in the development of our minds that they become natural to us. We learn to think in terms of hierarchy, power, domination and control. We learn to value power as control, dominance and violence. We learn to desire power as something belonging to the individual and to assert power over others in order to obtain more power.

Throughout the anti-rape organizing and educating I have been involved in, I have heard arguments that sexual violence cannot be gendered and is not an issue relating to gender. Sexual violence, as I hope I've explained well, is actually heavily gendered and one cannot separate sexual violence from gender, just as one cannot separate sexual violence from any colonial oppression. I want to focus on our abilities to perpetuate cycles of violence and how we have been colonized to understand and mimic colonial structures of violence.

Sexual violence, no matter what form it takes, is a tool of colonial, patriarchal gender oppression and is a manifestation of those structures of power seeking to validate themselves. This is why we can't hope for change within the US system because US society has been built from and out of violent colonialist power structures; its survival is dependent on the reinforcement and maintenance of these colonial power structures. US society and government have to be completely dismantled in order to abolish colonial rule. No matter who is the

perpetrator of sexual violence, it is a violent act that seeks to claim dominance, to conquer, to control and to assert power. Power through conquest, claim and dominance are what embody, drive, and maintain colonization and colonial rule. Even if the roles of oppressor and oppressed are reversed we are still enacting colonial systems of power and thus reinforcing and validating them.

Importance of Personal and Community Accountability to Rape Culture and Sexual Violence

Law enforcement and legal support surrounding sexual violence is often additionally traumatizing for victims and survivors of sexual violence as it can be dehumanizing and distrusting of a survivor's experience. It is also very often dangerous particularly for women of color and transgendered people. Turning to the police and state for undocumented women means they and their families face deportation. For many women of color they can experience further physical and sexual violence by police and persons in positions of authority or even imprisonment.

Legal and state responses to sexual violence offer no real solutions to rape culture because they are also structures of colonial power and society; they do not provide any real methods of perpetrator accountability or adequate survivor support, thus making no efforts to actually fight rape culture and end cycles of violence. They fail to address how colonial systems of oppression intersect to feed and perpetuate rape culture or how rape culture works to feed and perpetuate colonial systems of oppression. Yet state funded programs and law enforcement are often the only place a survivor has to turn to in order to seek support and response. This reinforces the strength of colonialist society and power because we are forced to depend on it yet at the same time remaining stuck within its cycles of violent oppression.

Sexual violence is so commonplace within anarchist and 'radical' communities that I have learned to expect it. I've learned to draw boundaries and know when to step back so that it doesn't continuously obsess, crush and devastate me. What continues to astound me however, is the dominant apathetic attitude, inability and even resistance to addressing rape culture seriously within the communities and scenes I know well. When I do see response to sexual violence and rape culture, even when it is done with the best of intentions, it very often ends up encouraging more violence, causing more trauma for survivors and perpetuating patriarchal oppression in that the focus, positive or negative, is almost always on the perpetrator and silencing of the survivor. Of course organizing around response to sexual violence will be fraught with mistakes, it is a continuous process of learning and I am grateful to everyone who has made a sincere effort.

However, I want to point out that efforts to organize community response to sexual violence and rape culture usually end up burning out or falling apart. This is because it is too much work for a small group of people to take on by themselves. In order to really transform colonial systems of rape culture and sexual violence there must be commitment to personal accountability by entire communities. While supporting survivors and working with perpetrators is not something everyone is capable of doing and not something everyone should be responsible for, I think these efforts fall apart because they can only sustain themselves if the majority of a community is committed to fighting rape culture and healing sexual violence.

Within the communities I participate in, I am often told by friends and acquaintances that they prefer to ignore sexual violence and rape culture because it involves too much difficult emotion and drama. The ability to ignore sexual violence and rape culture is a privilege many do not share and one that is ultimately oppressive to those whose daily worlds are violent realities of sexual violence and gender oppression. Ignoring sexual violence and rape culture are oppressive in that this denies one's personal power roles within rape culture and silences survivors of sexual violence by creating an atmosphere in which there will be no offered support or response. It is important to validate and trust a survivor's experience as rape culture means a survivor is distrusted and blamed for their experience. Facts are not important and seeking them out means further

traumatization as a survivor is already under attack from society for daring to open their mouth. Distrusting a survivor's experience even through passive avoidance means perpetuating rape culture and strengthening oppressive systems of hetero-patriarchy.

Ignoring sexual violence and offering no structures of survivor support or perpetrator accountability means that a survivor is forced to turn to law enforcement and legal systems which again, is particularly dangerous for transgendered folks and women of color. This reinforces the strength of, and our dependence on, colonial hetero-patriarchal systems because of our inability to take this issue seriously and work towards real autonomous solutions. Ignoring sexual violence also condones rape and sexual assault because it sends perpetrators the message that there will be no repercussions and that it is not to be taken seriously. There is no pressure to take personal responsibility and hold oneself accountable so that cycles of violence are halted. We need to recognize the way that our minds are constructed in terms of colonial mentality. Ignoring or denying the existence and importance of rape culture only perpetuates, legitimates, and strengthens colonial power.

Taking personal accountability to rape culture and sexual violence means making the serious effort to educate oneself on their own roles of privilege and power (or lack thereof) within colonial, hetero-patriarchal rape culture. By being personally accountable through education and action we create spaces that are safe for survivors of sexual violence in that we have taken the efforts to dismantle within ourselves and each other the violent colonial mentalities and power dynamics that perpetuate rape culture and hetero-patriarchy. By taking the steps to personally educate oneself and be accountable to one's privilege within US colonial society, we break from our own abilities to perpetuate violent oppression and are able to be supportive and in solidarity with the voices we have once silenced. This means understanding how rape culture exists, enacts and perpetuates itself through our own attitudes, ideas and privileges or oppressions. This means identifying how spaces are or become unsafe to survivors through our own mentalities that condone rape culture and working to change that.

Without serious commitment to personal accountability, we will continue to participate in and perpetuate the oppressions we claim to be fighting against. Unless our communities take fighting rape culture and sexual violence seriously and as impertinent in any attempt to organize, we will continue to see our efforts divide and fail through silencing and alienation.

In past collective efforts, I have been told that issues of gender and sexism can be addressed 'after the revolution', or that there are more immediate and pressing issues at hand. Then whose issues are these? Who is revolution for? Who gets to participate and who is excluded? If anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-rape work comes later- then what are we trying to change? While we have formed ourselves around goals and desires for liberation, we mostly fail to understand the ways in which we have been shaped by privilege, how our goals and desires are still very reflective of colonial society and how our inability to see the ways in which we access privilege means inability to see how we engage in violent and oppressive power relations. Until we seriously and honestly seek to understand how we engage with privilege and power, we will remain blind to the ways in which violence occurs around us, within us and by us. Until we seriously address and take accountability to rape culture and decolonization education, then we are only engaging in and perpetuating the same colonial power structures we claim to fight and resist.

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Shut the Fuck Up (or, How to act better in meetings)

Dan Spalding

“Even with my mask I often spoke the tyranny of power. My first duty was to cultivate a revolutionary silence.”
-Subcomandante Marcos

An open letter to other men in the movement

Introduction

Being an activist these days means fighting for a thousand different things - indigenous rights, rainforests, corporate accountability, etc. Despite this diversity of campaigns, there seems to be some agreement on the kind of society we want to create. It's a society that isn't based on white supremacy, class exploitation, or patriarchy.

This essay is about how men act in meetings. Mostly it's about how we act badly, but it includes suggestions on how we can do better. Men in the movement reproduce patriarchy within the movement and benefit from it. By patriarchy I mean a system of values, behaviors, and relationships that keeps men in power. It relies on domination, claiming authority, and belligerence. By the movement I mean the anti-corporate globalization movement in the US I am a part of.

I think people organizing for affordable housing, against police brutality, for the rights of immigrants (for example) are also fighting the same system that's wringing the blood out of the bottom 99 percent of the world's population and the environment they live in. However, I don't know from my experience if the men who organize around those issues act the way the men in the movement do.

Just to be clear, those men are almost always white and from middle-class or wealthier backgrounds. In my experience, as someone who identifies as a man of color, men of color dominate meetings in basically the exact same way. But I find that men who do not speak English fluently tend not to do so as much. I wish I could think of more exceptions.

Who cares about meetings?

Good question. Most meetings of large-ish organizations (of more than 30 people or so) I've been to don't amount to too much. The real work - doing research, getting people involved, organizing protests and actions, fundraising, media stuff - gets done by working groups or individuals. Meetings are just about a lot of talking, right?

Well, yes and no. At worst meetings force a lot of people to get together and generally discuss everything that's been done, everything that's going on, and everything that needs to be done. These meetings tend to wander a lot. Responsibility is not clearly delegated, decisions aren't made overtly, and the organization isn't more focused afterwards than before. At the same time, there's heated arguments over seemingly trivial things, or hurtful criticism of individuals. But those arguments and criticisms don't amount to too much in the end.

But a good meeting is a different animal altogether. With good self-facilitation and a good facilitator (or two, or three...), everyone contributes to the meeting, without anyone taking control over it. People make constructive criticism, and try to incorporate concerns raised into their proposals. And since everyone gets to contribute their ideas into the decision-making process, the decisions are not only the best possible ones - but also the ones people are most invested in. Since everyone feels ownership over the decisions, people are more

likely to take on responsibility for projects.

If you're serious about using consensus, you have to care about meetings. That's the only place a group can democratically decide what to do and how to do it. The alternative is an informal group of the most influential and forceful members (who dominate discussion) making the big decisions.

It's not just how often you talk, but how and when

Consensus decision making is a model of the society we want to live in, and a tool we use to get there. Men often dominate consensus at the expense of everyone else. Think about the man who...

- * Speaks for a long time, loud, first and often
- * Offers his opinion immediately whenever someone makes a proposal, asks a question, or if there's a lull in discussion
- * Speaks with too much authority: "Actually, it's like this..."
- * Can't amend a proposal or idea he disagrees with, but trashes it instead
- * Makes faces every time someone says something he disagrees with
- * Rephrases everything a woman says, as in, "I think what Mary was trying to say is..."
- * Makes a proposal, then responds to each and every question and criticism of it - thus speaking as often as everyone else put together (Note: This man often ends up being the facilitator)

And don't get me started about the bad male facilitator who...:

- * Always puts himself first on stack, because he can
- * Somehow never sees the women with their hands up, and never encourages people who haven't spoken

It's rarely just one man who exhibits every problem trait. Instead it's two or three competing to do all the above. But the result is the same: everyone who can't (or won't) compete on these terms - talking long, loud, first and often - gets drowned out.

This is a result of society's programming. Almost no men can actually live up to our culture's fucked up standards of masculinity. And our society has standards for women that are equally ridiculous. In one way, we both suffer equally. That's why we all yearn and strive for a world where these standards - which serve to divide us and reduce us and prop up those in control - are destroyed.

In another way these standards serve those who come closest to living up to them. Sure, we all lose when a few men dominate a meeting. But it's those men who get to make decisions, take credit for the work everyone does, and come out feeling more inspired and confident.

But I can't be sexist - I'm a hippie

Oh, but you can. The irony is that you can basically do all the things listed above, even if you don't fit the stereotype of the big strapping man. I've seen hippies, men who would be described as feminine, queer men, and others who in many ways go against the grain not go against the grain at all when it comes to dominating discussion. A hippie might speak slowly and use hippie slang, but still speak as the voice of authority, and cut off the woman who was speaking before him. A man who some might call feminine can still make a face like he smelled something when someone he doesn't respect says something he disagrees with, thus telling her to shut up; he may also politely but consistently put himself on stack every time someone criticizes his proposal.

So shut the fuck up already

What's to be done? I've come up with a little idea I like to call, "Shut the fuck up." It goes as follows: Every time someone...

- * Says something you think is irrelevant,
- * Asks a (seemingly) obvious question,
- * Criticizes your proposal or makes a contradictory observation,
- * Makes a proposal
- * Asks a question, or
- * Asks for more input because there's a brief lull in the discussion. . .

Shut the fuck up. It's a radical process, but I think you'll like it.

Since my childhood, I was raised by my parents and by every teacher I ever had in school to demand as much attention as possible. In class I spoke more often than almost anyone else I knew. Surprisingly enough, some of my teachers were annoyed with me. But while they may have counseled me to raise my hand first, they never asked me to speak less or listen more. As a result I probably got twice as much attention from my teachers, measured in time spent with me, than most of the other kids I went to school with.

But a mere 15 years after I started learning to exhibit almost all the dominating male behavior I list above, something happened. I was in a class with a friend of mine. Let's call her Anne, because that's her name. Anne and I were in the same study group, and the night before she had gone over the exact question the professor was now asking. However, Anne wasn't answering, even though the rest of the class was silent.

I don't know what struck me to actually stop and think instead of answering the question myself, as I was wont to do. That incident got me thinking about who spoke most often in class, why, and what I could do. The answers to the first two questions I've basically given already. The third is a little trickier.

What else can we do?

Lucky for us, being a man gives us a lot of authority. I mean that in a good way, too. Much like people of color are always assumed to be selfish or paranoid when they speak out against racial profiling, women are often assumed to be bitchy when they call out patriarchal behavior.

What does that mean for us? First, we shut the fuck up. This was easy for me in school - I just made a rule that I never spoke more than twice in a 50 minute class. Surprise! Almost every time I would have spoken, someone else eventually said the exact same thing, or something smarter. It was frustrating when it was another obnoxious man doing the answering, but a lot of times it wasn't one of the two guys in class who spoke most often.

The problem is that the classroom is designed to have one person in charge, and it ain't the student. While you could point out problem behavior in class, there's not a lot of 'space' for it - it's not expected or encouraged, and would probably be dismissed by the professor.

The beauty of consensus is the facilitation. Not only can we facilitate ourselves - and we should - but we can facilitate each other. This is mainly the job of the person chosen to be the facilitator. But when the facilitator is ignoring problem behavior - or exhibiting it - it's easy for other people in the group to guerrilla facilitate.'

Sometimes it's as easy as pointing out the people who have their hands up, but are somehow missed by the facilitator, or by suggesting straw polls or go 'rounds or other tools that get everyone involved. But it's usually not that easy. The worse the pattern of behavior in the group, the more natural the fucked-upedness will seem. And you'll often be given the evil eye by the people you're calling out, if not a verbal backlash. And

finally, it's obviously not the job of the people most trampled on by patriarchal behavior to always be calling it out. That's where we come in. We are, at least at first, given the most respect when we call out bad behavior.

The problem is doing the calling out in a constructive way. It's all too easy to call people out in a hurtful and authoritarian fashion - thus entertaining everyone with your unintended irony, but also acting the exact way you don't want others to. When you call people out in a way that's hurtful instead of constructive, it still tends to keep the quietest people at a meeting from participating.

The solution

So call people out, but try not to be too personal about it. Unless it's outrageous, wait until the person is finished, and then make your process point about how people should stick to stack, or consider not talking if they've just spoken, or whatever. And if it seems someone's pissed off at your calling them out (and white men make it real easy for you to tell if they're pissed off), make the effort to talk to him after the meeting is over. It usually doesn't take much to smooth ruffled feathers.

Unfortunately, it also doesn't take much for those same people to do the exact same thing the next meeting. So while part of the answer is self-facilitation and facilitating others, another part is also giving everyone the skills and confidence they need to assert their place in the meeting. This means having regular workshops, for new and experienced activists, on how consensus is supposed to work. It also means going through the formal process of consensus and explaining it during meetings. You can do it quickly, especially after the first few times. But when people assume that everyone is familiar with the process, those who are least confident (but still have good ideas) will be the first to drop out of discussions. Meanwhile, other people who think they know the process but don't tend to hold things up. I'll let you guess what I think the gender breakdown of those groups is.

Another key ingredient is talking to individuals outside of meetings. Talking honestly - "I know you care about the group, but in meetings it seems like you talk down to anyone who disagrees with you, and you cut people off a lot, and that makes it really hard for other people to participate" - is a big part of it. And as with any interaction, you have to keep an open mind to hear their perspective. Ideally, you could resolve things at this level and not have to bring things up before the group.

But it's still a good idea to come up with a structure to address the way people act badly in meetings, for people to regularly "check in" with how they feel the process is going. It also makes it easier for people who wouldn't normally criticize others to do so constructively. The structure could mean that once every two months the group has a "process" meeting, where the focus is on how people act in meetings, working groups, etc. It's often easier and 'safer' for people to call out problem behavior, and easier and 'safer' for the culprits to own up to it and ask for constructive criticism.

Finally, it means constantly thinking about how we, as men, tend to dominate and control the world around us. To me this is most apparent (at least in other people) in meetings. To me, that's also where it's easiest to address. This is a continuous process. We have to always read about this, talk about it, inquire into how others address it, come up with creative and successful solutions, and apply them. But no matter where we take it, I think this struggle always starts with shutting the fuck up.

As men, we're encouraged to dominate conversation without even thinking about it. It's too easy for us to do really good work - fighting genetic engineering, tearing down the prison industrial complex, freeing Mumia - and still act exactly like the frat boy next door. We have to confront each other and ourselves so that domination stops seeming natural, and so we can start doing something about it. So the next time you don't think about how you're talking, please think about how you're talking.

Epilogue

This essay came out of my frustration with the male domination in meetings in this movement and the absence of men's efforts to change it. It also came out of my need for self-reflection. This will ideally lead not just to all men acting exactly like I think they should, but also a lasting dialog on how we behave in meetings and what we can do about it. If you have any thoughts on what I've written, please contact me and tell me what you think: dan@midnightspecial.net. This isn't a declaration of war; it's just a starting point.

Time for me to shut the fuck up.

Dan Spalding
Oakland, May 2001

(Thanks to everyone who helped with this piece)

Unlearning: Thoughts on Allyship

Lindsey

One night UM had a movie screening at my house. The film was about the 1990 Kanasatake/Oka crisis in Quebec, and afterwards we attempted to have a discussion about the failings of the so-called white allies in the film. We had been talking about heteropatriarchy and group dynamics for a few weeks at that point. I cannot remember everything that was said during the discussion, but I remember the bodily sensations of anger that I felt that night. My heart was racing and my legs were completely numb. I felt a throbbing in my chest that I knew wouldn't go away until I spoke up. The men in the room were cutting each other off, dominating the discussion, and raising their voices to emphasize whatever point. I'm sure it was only a few individuals, but I experienced it as a whole group of privileged people who were taking up all the space in the room: my living room, in my feminist queer house that had been hijacked by domineering straight men.

When I snapped and called them out on being sexist, I wasn't looking for a response or an apology. I especially wasn't looking for the defensiveness and denial that were offered up by men in the group. The conversation went nowhere for me, and when it finally ended, I went to my backyard with some of the other female-bodied people in the group to scream out my frustration and chain-smoke Bali Shag.

The night should have mercifully ended then, but it didn't. When I came back inside, a few men were lingering and wanted to talk with me about what had happened. One man congratulated me on my courage for speaking up. Another wanted to bare his soul to me about his process of unlearning sexism. Someone else wanted me to make a coffee date with him to talk it over later. I was exhausted, disappointed, and completely pissed off, and all I wanted was for everyone to get the fuck out of my house. Not only did I have to call out patriarchy in my own home, I then had to listen to men process their feelings about it. All during a conversation about radical allyship. Where were my allies that night?

That was months ago, and things are much better now. The men in UM have been working on accountability and patriarchy, and we've come a long way from that evening in my living room. I'm not sharing this story to call them out again in a more public setting, but because I learned a lot that evening about how (not) to be an ally. Whether we seek to be anti-racist white people, feminist men, anti-colonial settlers or any other privileged person standing in solidarity, I think there are many ways that our good intentions often end up recreating the same systems of dominance that we seek to challenge. I don't know what it means to be an ally. In my own process I am just beginning to see all the ways that I don't live up to my intentions. As we have said time and again in UM, allies cannot be self-defined, they have to be claimed by the people they seek to ally with. There are many men in UM whom I now consider my allies around issues of heteropatriarchy, because they have done the work to challenge themselves and their social conditioning. I am trying to do the same in my life, and this essay is an attempt to put forward some of the concepts I've been working through.

The most basic thing that I know about allyship is that it is hard work. I need to uproot, examine, and transform all the shit that has been forced into me by this society... and I do so reluctantly. I was raised as a white supremacist and taught by my family to look down on poor people. By second grade I knew that indigenous people were "backwards" and thus deserving of genocide. In a million other ways I have been taught to disregard the voices of people who are socially positioned as less privileged than I. This includes most people in the world. Though I try to question and challenge my oppressive social education, I have a long way to go before anyone claims me as an ally. Sometimes it feels overwhelming to confront a lifetime of indoctrination and a couple hundred years of Euroamerican colonial history; but I've always liked a challenge. And I don't see another option. I do not seek to be an ally because of my deep commitment to human equality. I seek to be an ally because I am trying to save my life.

Claiming my entirely selfish motivations for solidarity politics has been an important part of my process. I'm not sure, but I don't think that anyone can make a lifetime commitment based on altruism alone.

And a lifetime commitment is what is required. I do the personal work of challenging my racism and privilege because I am determined to see the destruction of white supremacy in my lifetime. This system has twisted my psychology and damaged my soul. For myself as a white person, I seek decolonization.

When I learned about racism as a kid, I was taught that there were bad white people called “Racists”, who did mean and nasty things to black people (and only black people). Most of these bad people had died 200 years ago, but a few of them were still around and they all lived in the southern United States. If I wanted to be a good person, then I should travel to Georgia and save a black person from an evil Racist. Then everyone around me would congratulate me for my brave and noble deeds. Not surprisingly, I’ve come to realize that this isn’t the most helpful way to think about racism or solidarity.

Last winter I attended a workshop for white people called Whites Confronting Racism. In the workshop, I learned that this myth I was taught as a child is called the “victim-perpetrator-rescuer” framework. This framework serves to reinforce the disempowerment of the “victim” of oppression while simultaneously empowering and glorifying the “rescuer”. The “rescuer” and “perpetrator” are the only two people with agency, which effectively recreates the systems of power that we seek to dismantle. It is more helpful for me to think of the “target-agent-ally” frame, wherein it is recognized that oppression exists everywhere all the time in our world, sort of like pollution, and in any given situation it is channeled through a particular agent towards a particular target. This agent can be either an institution or an individual. The target is not a helpless victim, rather they possess the power to respond to the agent, or not, and to form horizontal relationships with an ally who can stand with them. The ally can use their privilege as a member of a dominant social group to support the target, in whichever ways the target sees fit. Rather than an agent of oppression, an ally works to be an agent of social change. It’s more complicated than what I was taught as a child, but it makes a lot more sense to me than nightmares of cartoonishly evil southern Racists.

In UM we have talked a lot about cultural and spiritual appropriation as a form of racism. Growing up as a white kid too close to Berkeley, California, I embarrassingly admit that I once considered attending a sweat lodge and growing dreadlocks. Allies should not romanticize marginalized identities, nor seek to “join the ranks” of the oppressed. Although I’m trying to stay away from “should” statements, I like that one a lot. It’s a good reminder for myself, since it is something that I often find myself doing. I daydream about being a Zapatista, or going to Lower Sioux to show off as an anti-colonial white person who “gets it”. My romantic ideas of people who struggle limit my ability to form relationships with real people who are not simply one-dimensional embodiments of the revolution. Instead of fantasizing about how cool I’d be if I just wasn’t white, I am trying to develop a healthy relationship with my settler identity. In the same workshop where I learned about the “target-agent-ally” frame, I also was introduced to “cultural sharing”. It sounds like a pre-school activity, but in fact it is a really effective tool to step away from appropriation and guilt. Basically, each time we met someone shared the story of their racial/ethnic family identity. We’ve expanded on this more in UM to try to uncover positive settler identities in which we can ground our politics. Ward Churchill has great things to say about the importance of understanding where you come from, and I think it is especially important for anti-racist white people to do this work so that we are not tempted to identify with the “more authentic” cultural other.

Living in the Twin Cities during the Republican National Convention has taught me more than I wish to know about surveillance, infiltration, and informants. I think another essential, and essentially selfish, aspect of allyship is that it keeps us safer. Dealing with internal oppression is a vulnerable and intensely personal process. When we engage this process with people in our lives, and in particular people with whom we do our political work, we cultivate trust and accountable relationships. The strength of our relationships is what protects us from state repression and allows us to build dynamic and powerful movements of resistance.

Looking back at that evening in my living room, I realize that the reason I got so angry was because I expected something better. I expected a male-bodied person in the room to call out the dynamics so that I

wouldn't have to. I expected that I wouldn't be asked to counsel or support people after I put myself out there by speaking up. I expected my emotional boundaries and space to be respected. If the situation were different, and I was in a place of relative privilege in a group where oppression was being enacted, I don't know if I could have done any better than the men of UM that night. I wish I could say with certainty that I would have done things differently, but I would be lying. I fuck up all the time and regularly disappoint myself and the people I seek to ally with. I want to hold myself and the people I work with to a higher standard of accountability. I believe that if we cannot change ourselves and our relationships, there is no hope of us ever recreating the world. And since nothing short of complete social transformation is my goal, I must start with myself.

To close, I'd like to share a quote. There is a poster on my wall that reads: "We have internalized modes of domination, which we unwittingly use in our daily interactions with each other, from being raised in a racist, capitalist, sexist, heterosexist, ableist society that teaches us how to exercise power over each other in order to get what we want. UNLEARNING." I spent twenty years unquestioningly accepting the modes of domination that were taught to me. I suppose it will take me the rest of my life to unlearn them.

From a Male-bodied Settler Moving Towards Allyship With Dakota Decolonization and Female and Male-Bodied Settlers

rivers

NOTE: We recognize that the use of the term “male-bodied” to refer to people assigned male sex at birth and/or socialized as males, in this article, is a problematic use of the term, and carries transphobic implications. Though “male-bodied” is an appropriate term to refer to transgender and non-transgender people who self-identify as having male bodies, here it is used in a way that implies that a male assigned person will necessarily have a male body. This is not so.

Some examples: It has been pointed out by transgender people in and out of UM that “female-bodied” is not an appropriate way to refer to people who were female-assigned at birth- they may be men and call their bodies male. Male-assigned people may identify as women, men, 2spirit, genderqueer or any other creative term they’ve concocted to name their reality! For example “male-bodied” is not appropriate language for a transgender woman unless this is her claimed identity. So, transgender people, regardless of their genitalia or anything else, determine for themselves, how their body is to be sexed, gendered, and referred to. This is the practice of gender self-determination.

Though we hoped to change the language of this piece to make these distinctions, using and defining terms such as: “female-identified,” “male-assigned,” “female-socialized,” the author of this article is currently in jail, and we found the changes to be too nuanced and complicated to edit without their input. From trans and non-trans members of UM, or sincere apologies. Feedback Welcome!

AN OVERLY WORDY NOTE ON THE LIMITATIONS OF WORDS

This is not an attempt to create a new language to be espoused by the same dead politics we have heard hovering like flies over our awakening selves since we first rose from this nightmare. There have been no continued successes and perhaps there never shall be, but that only serves to define our challenge: to consistently check ourselves and each other. The tendency towards failure lingers about us like a metallic fog. We choke on expectation, dreaming not, but seeing yet to be apparitions walking in place of living creatures. If we cannot imagine full-hearted people living free in their traditional homeland, we sure as hell will never see it happen. While we engage in this medium of meter and measure, let us fill up our lives with color and clamor. This essay is my mirror upon which I reflect my actions, a tool. These withersome words only go as far as I stand up to fucked up oppressive behavior, my on-going history of oppressive privilege, and stand with people as they fight for their lives. It is not what we say but how we live that will break this spell of complacency and oppression. Let our way of life sing songs around any attempt to name ideas. Do not linger here too long, there are places you must go, and many who would see you there now. This is to say, be patient and slow, these systems of domination have generations of our ancestors under their feet. Tomorrow waits forever.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ALLY AS A MALE-BODIED PERSON?

I ask myself this question as I sit and talk about solidarity and decolonization with a diverse group of settlers. A female-bodied person voices an issue of hers with the way folks have handled a situation. I hear a male-bodied friend respond in a way that is attempting to clarify where he was coming from. It clicks for me

in this moment. Allyship can be a process of one person or group explicitly working to understand another group or person's struggle towards liberation, and, aiding in that process in whatever ways the oppressed see fit. In general it may be positive to explain where we were coming from when our actions or words put another off, but from what my friend said, it really didn't feel like that was what she was looking for. In this situation, though my male-bodied friend may have done something that frustrated or offended her, an explanation is not what is needed. Perhaps she just wanted to be heard, or maybe she wanted to identify something that needs to be worked on but does not want to be a part of that process. I share my thoughts with the group, acknowledging his intention to help and trying not to speak for my female-bodied friend. I attempt to speak for myself. In this way I am trying to be an ally to both of my friends; I am helping one identify something he needs to work on and supporting the other by naming patriarchal behavior when I see it. Being an ally as a male-bodied person means fighting patriarchy and hetero-sexism in ourselves and as we find it in our lives. It means stepping back in our relationship to others, learning about their oppression and listening to how they choose to approach confronting it. We cannot assume that folks want to work on our shit with us, this assumption is yet another manifestation of patriarchy in that it is spreading our responsibilities onto others. Male-bodied people have the most responsibility when it comes to privilege work. To be a compassionately supportive friend, to be an ally, we must first accept this responsibility. We must take the lead in instigating work against our privileges, deconstructing our oppressive behaviors, and take direction from others in how to aid in their liberation, especially in relation to their experience of our privilege.

PASSING PRIVILEGE

In dealing with privilege it is important to discuss how we are perceived, how we perceive ourselves, and how our expression of our identity matches how we are identified. Passing privilege can be the ability to pass as an identity that carries more privileges than another identity you carry. Passing privilege also involves the overlapping of your identity with how you are perceived. It is a privilege to be identified as how you identify yourself. Many people struggle daily with being identified as someone they are not. An example would be a fair skinned indigenous person being identified as a settler. The issue of passing applies to many sets of privileges including settler, gender, class, race and ethnicity. In this essay I have used the physical terms 'male and female-bodied' instead of gendered ones because I have been approaching these issues of privilege from a perspective that is male-bodied yet not male identified. Often our perceived bodied types are associated with assumptions about genders and their subsequent privileges. This is problematic. I also want to acknowledge that this binary of male and female does not encompass all body types and that we should not confine each other to this 'either, or' way of thinking. It is my hope that in our interactions we learn from each other how we identify and from there work to understand how our identities relate. Around group work and confronting privilege we must be accountable to our experienced and perceived identities. Though I do not identify as male I must be accountable to my male privilege because I have been raised as such, as well as because most of society would name me as male whether I choose it or not. I operate from a place that acknowledges the privilege any person sees me as carrying as what I must confront in my relationship to that person, and that while I may not choose an identity, I may carry its privileges and the responsibilities that follow.

WHY IS ALL OF THIS IMPORTANT? WHY SHOULD WE BE WORKING TOWARDS ALLYSHIP?

This is basically asking why is it important to help each other, and my answer is pretty simple: because the dominant way of life is so incredibly unhealthy, because mutual aid is essential to creating better life for all living beings on this planet. But that may be over simplifying it. As Andrea Smith has said, "the issues of colonial, race and gender oppression cannot be separated." As male-bodied people we must strive to break

cycles of objectification, confront the history of oppressive masculinity, and identify the ties between our privilege and colonialism. Abusive gender dynamics are a tool of colonialism and their perpetuation is a manifestation of colonization. Through building communicative, accountable relationships focused on liberation we can redefine ourselves outside of our histories and turn our privileges into weapons wielded by those previously oppressed by them. If those we seek to support do not feel respected or heard by us, then how are we aiding in their struggle towards liberation? Allyship asks if what we are doing for others is actually helping them. It demands accountability and puts the steering of support in the hands of those receiving. The fact that one cannot claim allyship until they are claimed by those with whom they seek to be in solidarity makes the relationship based on mutual recognition. Allyship is the approach those of us working on solidarity with Dakota decolonization choose in our path towards liberation. As it has been said, if we do not learn how to and begin standing up for each other there will be no one to stand up for us. Oppression is not hierarchical and will not diminish on its own. Our health and lives depend on our breaking these cycles of colonialism.

GENDER OPPRESSION IS COLONIALISM

Gender oppression has been identified by female-bodied indigenous people as a large aspect of how colonialism manifests in their lives. To work towards solidarity with decolonization we must understand this statement. The sexualization of indigenous peoples, the sexual nature of violence towards them, and the disproportionately high percentage of violence towards female-bodied indigenous people are all examples of this. Our work is to acknowledge our role in colonialism and to take responsibility for that role. As hetero-patriarchy is a tool of colonialism an essential aspect of this is confronting our histories of gender and sexual violence. If we do not fight gendered violence we perpetuate the idea that gender and colonial oppression are separable and not intricately interwoven. From the moment white colonizers set foot on this continent they have objectified and subjugated female-bodied and indigenous people, fracturing the communities and beliefs that are the strengths of a healthy culture.

ON BEING AN ALLY TO FEMALE-BODIED FOLK AS WELL AS OTHER DUDES

As I have come to understand the tools of colonization, I have realized the specific position a white, male-bodied settler is in. We must learn to take on gender oppression as actively as colonial oppression, and with a similar orientation. Male-bodied folks must deconstruct the masculine socialized embodiment of gender oppression while taking direction from female-bodied people to assist in their own liberation. To confront our colonialist mentalities we must unwind our gender socialization and racist heritage, and in doing so be in active pursuit of allyship with both male and female-bodied settlers. It is necessary for male-bodied people to work to understand how our perceived identities are affecting others, how our privileges are inhibiting those with different sets of privileges. No matter how much we may have worked on our shit, how far we feel we have come, we can not suppose that our practice of confronting our privilege is complete, nor can we make an assumption that those non-male-bodied people we are around feel they can trust us. This applies to white and settler privilege as well. To be able to work towards a common goal with anyone but other like-privileged people, we have to actively work to understand how our privilege is present in our work and interactions. In this sense, being an ally means actively pursuing trust through vulnerability, honesty and a willingness to validate and learn from others, specifically with different, less privileged identities. The emphasis on this being active is intentional and important. To truly be an ally means that we are working on our shit and we exhibit it, not waiting until we are called out or until we are presented with an 'opportunity' to deal with shit. It is not the job of those whom are affected by our privilege to instigate our growth. It is our responsibility to confront our inherited fucked up behavior, or privilege, with others sharing our privilege. It is a perpetuation of unhealthy

power dynamics and simply not okay to expect abuse to be called out only by one experiencing the abuse. It is the individual, or group whose behavior is abusive or damaging who is responsible, not just for changing their behavior but for recognizing how the autonomy, health and safety of others is being negated by their actions. As we work towards becoming allies to indigenous struggles for decolonization we identify accountability as integral to liberation. When we are accountable to each other we step out of the systems of oppression, creating the space to build healthy liberated lives. This accountability must be pervasive in our lives. For accountability and confronting our privilege to become a permeating aspect of our lives, we must work with and support each other. This is where being an ally to other like-privileged people comes in.

MALE-BODIED SUPPORT OF MALE-BODIED FOLKS

It is interesting to note that a basic aspect of male-bodied accountability, connection to and support from other male-bodied people, something that seems so simple, is largely absent in dominant western culture. We are not taught to be open with other male-bodied people, let alone vulnerable. Compassionately calling each other out for exhibiting or perpetuating oppressive mentalities is perhaps the most important thing we can do to break out of our histories. We have a lot to learn together as there are generations of abuse to unwind, and few healthy models to learn from. To be an ally to other like-privileged people involves both challenging each other as well as listening to and supporting one another as we deal with our failures. Together we can create a momentum and a healthy expectation towards being accountable. And with accountability comes trust, and with trust we can confront the larger impersonal manifestations of colonialism. In our organizing around Dakota solidarity we have formed a 'men's' group specifically situated within an anti-colonial framework. All the male-bodied people in the larger group Unsettling Minnesota (UM) meet separately to discuss our male privilege. We talk about how it plays out in UM and elsewhere in our lives, and support each other as we acknowledge our patriarchal behavior. Sometimes we challenge each other questioning our approach, words and actions, and sometimes we get called out by female-bodied members of UM and bring it back to the men's group to process. It has been really helpful in crafting appropriate responses to awkward interactions to hear other male-bodied perspectives. Coming together to understand specific interactions has been really helpful and enabled us to address them in constructive ways, avoiding reactionary responses or patriarchal positioning. We have also shared our histories: stories about our acculturation, parents and sexuality. We try to balance being a support group for each other and an accountability sub-group of UM. Over the months I have grown close to some men that I originally felt very critical of, replacing ingrained distrust with appreciation through direct communication. It has been difficult to maintain focus and momentum and at times we have failed our purpose of creating active confrontation with patriarchy within ourselves and our communities.

It is not always easy to challenge ourselves or our friends, but more often than not it results in growth. Having rooted aspects of our identity questioned in a passionate way can cut really deep. It is a product of our privilege to not feel uncomfortable. The more privilege we carry the less likely we are to have experienced feeling personally attacked. It is important to acknowledge those feelings when they come up, to let them in. The uncomfortable feelings, and the little bit of hurt accompanying them, are smaller and softer versions of the everyday pain and violence so many others experience. It is our privilege that allows this uncomfortable pain to be so hard for us. We are not forced to deal with everyday verbal abuse or the threat of physical violence non-white, settler or male-bodied people face. We can learn to be allies in solidarity struggle only by sincere personal reflection and speaking up when we see unhealthy interactions and behaviors. Our voices will grow when used, and if we are to be allies in any struggle, if we hope to exhibit true solidarity we must speak up and act. Interrupting sexism is our responsibility, it should be expected of us. Often we shy away from expectations, afraid of being boxed or of feeling pressured to do something we do not want to do, but I believe we can choose what expectations we want to carry and shape them to fit our desired growth. It is important to say here that while we should be expected to speak up and name patriarchy and hetero-sexism, we may not know what to

actually say and that is okay. A huge first step is simply naming uncomfortable dynamics, what exactly they are and how to deal with them will come as we unlearn.

ACTION AND SOLIDARITY

Solidarity is one of the foundations of most radical ideologies and liberation struggles. It has become clear that revolutionary solidarity can look many ways. In the practice of solidarity with a revolutionary indigenous struggle, action must be determined through communication between settler and indigenous groups. We must take direction from our indigenous friends because it is not our place to say what they need from us, let alone for themselves. It only serves to reproduce our histories as colonial patriarchy to act on behalf of anyone or without their consent. Settlers cannot tell indigenous people how to live, heal or fight; this simply positions them back on top as the ones with the power. Essentially, this is the same as killing someone's family, looting and burning their house and neighborhood, putting them in prison for years and then upon their release telling them how to get their life back. This is only to say we must work with an anti-colonial framework, consciously aware of our settler and gender privilege as we act in solidarity. This type of action is not the glorified Action of a battlefield, but a persistent, determined kind that can reach the foundation of oppression. It is important for all radicals, especially white, male-bodied folks, to take a critical look at what we mean by 'action.' What are the histories surrounding our approach and how are we perpetuating them? It is truly possible for us to create a life where to be male-bodied would mean being accountable, compassionate and trustworthy. It is for us to create through our actions, through the way we live. If we desire the end of colonization we must energetically engage in a personal struggle of accountability, otherwise we are vessels of oppression wrapped in liberatory rhetoric. To seek to directly understand how our actions help and support those we attempt to express solidarity for means acknowledging that getting out in the streets and marching with signs might not feel as meaningful to them as confronting manifestations of oppression in everyday interactions. It means that we must be able to hear and to communicate effectively to female-bodied, non-white, and/or indigenous people. It also means that if we are asked to take risks we understand why we are asked to do so and maintain an anti-colonial perspective in our approach. The tools of colonization must not be our tools of liberation.

Representation and appropriation are two such tools of oppression and are often found within even the most healthy radical circles. Saying we support decolonization struggles, and are in solidarity with indigenous peoples without restructuring our lives around an anti-colonial framework is a perpetuation of colonialist mentalities. If we let words represent our beliefs instead of exhibiting our beliefs in our way of life we are representing ourselves, and replacing life with the expression of life. We must not become billboards of our beliefs, but them embodied. If we focus on solidarity and an anti-colonialist perspective, instead of focusing on redefining our way of life around these concepts, we are appropriating them. It has been said that solidarity is a weapon, that solidarity means attack. For solidarity to be a weapon we must express it conflictually, manifesting in it a challenge to this destructive culture. If solidarity means attack, we must define what we are attacking. Let our solidarity be aimed at all manifestations of oppression, from the military and the economic arms of the state, to the colonialist framework that dominates our way of life.

WHAT WE MUST DO

The process of becoming an ally to indigenous people fighting for decolonization differs according to one's identity, and perceived identity. What it takes for a perceived white male to be trusted and accepted as an ally is different than a female or non-white male. Western civilization's manifestation of colonization is uniquely tied to the privilege carried by white males. The history of complacency, cowardice, betrayal, dishonesty, aggression, rape, murder and genocide is one that every male-bodied person must accept and actively confront if they hope to create an alternate world. For the land we continue to pillage and scar, for indigenous whose way of life we continue to deny, for our female-bodied friends fighting for a life free of

sexual and gender violence, for a life without degradation or objectification, and for ourselves, male-bodied creatures who desire a more healthy way of living, we must act. We must act with respect, communication, and a creative drive that comes from within. If we do not define and design this action ourselves, if we relegate responsibility of instigation to those who are affected by our privilege, we are simply adding to the burden of those who deal with this shit every day. It is my hope to be a part of a male-bodied momentum actively confronting male-bodied privilege, sexism, colonialism and hetero-patriarchy with each other. A momentum amongst men in which we talk and share and call each other out and are so much more the better for it.

This is one aspect of my process of unlearning. As I come to understand my settler privilege and history of benefiting from colonization, I also come face to face with my racism tendencies and am forced to see my hetero-patriarchal upbringing. While this may not be a direct dialogue with you, this is an expression of vulnerability and I expect what I have written to be challenged. Writing an essay does not make me any closer to being an ally to those I care about, but how I go about sharing my ideas can be one step towards mutual liberation. I will move forward with the uncomfortable and towards my fear, listening to others and reaching out to those I share privilege with. I do not know if I will live up to my beliefs, I do not know how to live up to the responsibility that comes with such a history of genocide and oppression, but I will live trying. As a second growth redwood once said to me as I sat high in its arms refusing to let it be cut, "Cut me down if you dare, I do not live like you and until you take my life I will be here. Living."

Anti – Classism

1. Don't assume that it is a working class/working poor/poor person's job to educate you about class issues. Read up on class struggles.
2. Understand that knowledge from books is never as valid as knowledge based on personal life experiences.
3. Understand that a middle class/upper-middle class/rich position is privileged and not normative or average.
4. Don't assume that it is a working class/working poor/poor person's responsibility to tell you their life story. Never force discourse.
5. Never use a working class/working poor/poor person's experience to further your political agenda, especially if your political platform is not designed to specifically address class issues.
6. Understand how the amount of money you have affects every aspect of your life. With organizations, don't assume that everyone can contribute the same amount of money.
7. Understand how language can be exclusive. Understand that education and high brow language are often inaccessible to working class/working poor/poor people, but realize that class is not a defining marker of intelligence and never talk down to the working class/working poor/poor.
8. Understand anger and allow space for discourse about your specific privilege and/or moneyed privilege in general.
9. Design your specific political arguments with a class analysis. Ask yourself, how would this work for non-rich people?
10. Understand that you are part of the class structure (that you have a class position), but that your position is privileged.
11. Never whine about being middle class.
12. Recognize how classism interacts with and is complicated by other systems of oppression-racism, ableism, oppression of parents, etc.
13. Recognize that the decision by many people in (usually white) subcultures to "choose" being poor or working class is a lifestyle choice, and is very different from actually being poor or working class. Your privileged background affects your present status (what's in your head, how safe or comfortable you feel at any given time/situation, skills and behaviors privileged folks hold, etc.).
14. Engage in anti-classist struggles (and don't just focus on queer poor or working class people). Seek to build cross-class alliances.
15. Share money if you can.
16. Do not appropriate class struggles for your own uses.
17. Investigate how your organizations are classist, how you are classist.
18. Make meetings and events accessible (consider where you have them, when you have them, child care, etc.)
19. Understand that the right to have/adopt and parent/care for children should not be dependent upon class position or income, that society and communities have an obligation to provide for families.
20. Recognize that class does not equal income. Education, geography, job, and many other factors influence class status.

From <http://www.geocities.com/gainesvilleavengers/anticlassism.htm>

What You Can Do About Classism

Class Action

From inside a house of privilege, it is easy to believe, just by looking around you, that pretty much everyone has the same privileges you do. It is also easy to shut out those noises from the street that speak about others and their different experiences. Three presumptions about the dominant culture—innocence, worthiness and competence – perpetuate privileges for this cultural group, which often go unnoticed by members of the culture.

The First Presumption: Innocence

The Second Presumption: Worthiness

The Third Presumption: Competence

What Dominant Groups Can Do About Classism

A major feature of the “classist” mindset is the stereotype that suggests that poor and working class people are unintelligent, inarticulate, and “overly emotional.” A good ally (a dominant group member willing to partner to eliminate classism) will contradict these messages by soliciting the knowledge and histories of impoverished and working class people (members of the subordinated groups).

Dominant group allies can also engage subordinated group members by being a thoughtful, considerate listener. When subordinated group members talk about their experiences, it is most helpful for an ally to resist becoming defensive and expressing their own guilt. It is also extremely helpful for dominant group members to refrain from criticizing how the message is being presented. Some ways of becoming an ally include:

- Claim your identity. Learn all you can about your history as a dominant group member.
- Learn the history and experience of all working and impoverished people (particularly people living in your neighborhood or community).
 - Raise your children to be anti-classist rather than merely being non-classist in their own behavior. This means becoming active allies with subordinated group members to improve the quality of life for all.
 - Give yourself and your children exposure and experience of the language and culture of working peoples.
 - Listen with compassion when a member of a subordinated group relays experiences and feelings. Ask for clarification when needed and respond.

What Subordinated Group Members Can Do About Classism

For some subordinated group members, distrust, despair, and anger are common responses to the oppression they experience. (It is the test of a true ally to remain undeterred when these flare up and to refrain from withdrawing support at such points). When subordinated group members begin to believe the stereotypical views and bias of the dominant group about themselves, it “internalizes” the oppression. To begin to undo the damage caused by classism, it is useful for subordinated group members to:

- Examine their feelings about money in terms savings, earning, and credit.
- Examine their feelings about the ways you relate to material gain and consumerism.
- Examine their feelings about education, its role in developing identity, self-efficacy, and the capacity to partner across the various dimensions of difference.
- Examine your feelings and ideas about culturally-installed privilege, power, and influence of various groups and the struggle for significance.
 - Claim their identity. Learn all they can about their history and the history and experience of all working and poor peoples. Raise their children to be anti-classist rather than merely being non-classist in their own behavior.
 - Work on issues that will benefit their communities. Consider remaining in or returning to their communities. (If you live and work in dominant group environments, look for working-class allies to help you survive with your humor and wits intact.)

The recognition of classism by the dominant and subordinated groups is the first step for creating change. Working together, all people can help to make progress towards a class-free society.

Acting as Allies vs. Holding on to Privilege: Characteristics of Allies and Ways to Take Responsibility

- Assume classism is everywhere.
- Notice who is at the center of attention and who has power.
- Listen openly with respect.
- Actively pursue a process of self-education. Learn about the history and culture of poor and working-class people.
- Acknowledge and take responsibility for your own socialization, prejudices, and privileges.
- Be willing to examine and relinquish your own benefits and privileges.
- Identify your own self-interest in acting as an ally around issues of class.
- Make friends with people who are different class-wise.
- Know resources about and for target groups.
- Educate others.
- Take a public stand against classism, discrimination and prejudice.
- Interrupt prejudice and take action against classism even when poor and working class people are not present.
- Risk discomfort.
- Do not be self-righteous with others (especially other professional middle class or owning class people).
- Challenge the internalized oppression of people of poor and working class people.
- Have a vision of a healthy multicultural less classist society.
- Support the leadership of poor and working-class people.

Ways to Maintain Benefits/Privileges and Avoid Responsibility

Denial *“I didn’t do”*

Minimization *“It was only a little...”*

Blame *“If , than I wouldn’t have...”*

Redefinition *“It was really mutual “*

Unintentionally *“Things got out of hand, I didn’t mean to...”*

It's Over Now "*Let's forget about the past, I'll never do it again...*"

It's Only a Few "*Most, would never...*"

Counterattacking "*But really controls everything...*"

Competing Victimization "*You think you have it bad, well...*"

**What Class-Privileged People Can Do
to Become Better at Cross-Class Collaboration**

WHAT CLASS-PRIVILEGED PEOPLE CAN DO TO BECOME BETTER AT CROSS-
CLASS COLLABORATION

- Put relationships first
- Have a little humility
- Talk less, listen more
- Use your privilege Don't let guilt make you foolish
- Let go of control
- Hang in
- Recognize working-class people's constraints
- Support working-class issues
- Share resources and control
- Watch your language

Class Action www.classism.org

PO Box 350 Hadley, MA 01035

The last part taken from *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle Class Activists*, by Betsy Leondar-Wright.

Cultural Appropriation: Beginning Reflections from a Settler Standpoint

Courtney

When I was in high school I wore my hair in dreadlocks. I made hemp jewelry, smoked marijuana and listened to reggae. Around me my peers used phrases like “yah mon!” and proclaimed their love for Bob Marley and the rasta life. We thought our flagging of the red, yellow, and green was advocating a culture of love, perhaps exposing a lifestyle different from the stoic and unexpressive “up north” mentality that seems to pervade northern and rural Minnesota. We were truly appreciating the culture of love and warmth that had come from Jamaica; we were honoring its traditions.

Right?

Mmmmm.. let’s just explore that.

We were descendents of settlers, most of us. European, Scandinavian, “white.” Our romanticized version of rasta life was rooted in a longing for more holistic living, for more authentic life. There is nothing “wrong” with that desire and there is nothing wrong with appreciating another culture’s music, you might be thinking, and you would be right. Cross-cultural sharing happens, especially in this globalized world today. However, what we were (ignorantly) doing - and what so many of in modern western culture continue to do - is take (and benefit) of another’s culture (in the form of practices, customs or traditions, even dress) whilst the people from whom we take continue to suffer from dominant systems of oppression and injustice. It is this unequal balance of power and privilege that greys the areas between what is organic cross-cultural sharing and what is a perpetuation of cultural genocide, appropriation, and extension of rape culture.

Andrea Smith, in her book *Conquest*, writes about relationship. As a persyn who carries privilege in the dominant systems of white supremacy and colonizer society I have a lot of interest in making sure that I am accountable to that privilege. I want to see justice and I want to be proactive in creating it; in order to do so I look at relationships. Smith outlines viewing relationships in the context of who is getting fucked over by who. In another essay, one by Denise Breton on restorative justice, we learn to look at relationships not as just persyn to persyn but as one people to another. Both these concepts make a lot of sense and inform the way I need to view cultural appropriation. When thinking of cultural appropriation in the context of relationships we can see that the taking of customs and traditions of non-dominant peoples by people of the dominant culture is one more way in which harm is inflicted in a relationship that is already out of balance. Perpetuation of violence, theft, and exploitation are all at work when we take from cultures that are not ours. It is even more detrimental when there is unequal power balance to begin with.

I think of this perpetuation of harmful and out of balance power relations in the way that I relate to the landbase I reside on. For instance, I like foraging and I love herbalism. I like to go to the woods, identify what plants I can, and work with them. Sometimes I harvest them, a pretty natural thing to do. After delving more deeply into the history (and therefore present-day effects) of colonization, however, I can no longer do this without keeping in mind the people who were displaced from this landbase that I now live on. Because of a system from which I benefit, these people are displaced. My logic then draws me to the obvious conclusion that it is not right, just or fair for me to be take what is theirs. I have to consider their well-being. I consider this when I think of how many whites I know that go wild ricing each year. I wonder, how many indigenous people have the same access or capacity to go ricing as whites and I think that we with our privilege ought to be working to make sure the indigenous have that access. How can we justify taking their food supply, then?

This is especially true since the coming of Europeans was not by invite – far from it; it was based on conquest, violence, and domination. I am made up largely of European descent and so I do not view my presence here on this land in Minnesota as a right or legitimate. Though I persynally have committed no crime I

am here because of conquest. In that truth, I recognize a responsibility to actively work for justice for the people who's land I am inhabiting because my presence here is due to the displacement of the people who were here before me.

Since the coming of whites, with our histories and legacies of imperialism, harm has been inflicted almost beyond belief to the land and to the people who were part of the intact ecosystem (ecoculture?) before we came. In order to perceive justice the history of this must, at the very least, be recognized as it carries tremendous weight in present reality today. So if you are thinking, yes okay, harms committed, years ago, what does that have to do with me?, I ask the consideration of what I have said here.

This taking, at the expense of some and the benefit of others, happens all over the board. For example, we see it with blues music – what came from the blood, sweat and tears of the experience of blacks on this part of the continent turned into profit and fame for those already privileged, upholding a system of white supremacy. Blacks in this country continue to suffer from disproportionate poverty and systematic and institutionalized criminalization while whites gain the pleasure of blues music and the profits from it. This is one example and certainly there are many ways of viewing Elvis or the Rolling Stones. My intention in stating this example is to illustrate a pattern and to emphasize how continuation of this pattern supports a grand system of violence and exploitation.

Now, circling back to the beginning. In the first paragraph, I describe my friends' and mine appropriation of Rasta culture. We were explorative and curious and we were also inspired by a lack of depth or authenticity in the culture from which we'd sprung. We sought something that western imperialist culture can not offer. The thirst for something more meaningful is a natural response to a world that cultivates deception, destruction, and spiritual debt. It is beneficial to the health of our selves, our communities, our planet, and beyond to recognize where there is deficiency. The next good step, then, is to act consciously and conscientiously. More authentic life does not come from stealing traditions from another's culture; this only perpetuates harm. If we want tradition we need to trace our own roots, back to our own indigenous ancestry, a long (but rewarding) process, for sure. Authenticity comes from acknowledging where harm has occurred and seeking to restore balance. We are, as the Unsettling Minnesota points of unity say, intimately positioned to do this work. If I want to forage food and herb from this land, then I must work for justice for the people who were not separate from it until genocide occurred. The people who were here before the settlers and colonizers came can not be left exempt from the broader picture of caring for the earth and should be included in every vision we have regarding our lifestyles, where we plant our feet, and what ways we choose to express our spirituality.

I want to see us claim responsibility for whatever acts of cultural appropriation we partake in and to be honest with ourselves about what we do that is appropriation and therefore inappropriate. I want us to be able to see with clarity how acts of appropriation are personal investments in the continuation of a system I (and you?) seek to dismantle. From here we can work to create a world based on justice, to restore balance and to live a good life.

Chapter 6

Spiritual Appropriation as
Sexual Violence

In analyzing spiritual appropriation as a form of sexual violence, I start with what may seem a strange source: the Bible. The Hebrew word *YDH*, which translates as “to know a person, carnally, of sexual intercourse,” is used frequently in the Hebrew scriptures to connote sexual relations. For instance, Genesis 4:1 states: “now the man *knew* his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain saying, ‘I have produced’ a man with the help of the Lord” (NRSV). *YDH* colloquially refers to engagement in sexual relations. Inherent in this definition of “to know” is the sense that sexual intimacy conveys a profound knowledge of a person, but also that knowing a person intimately conveys a sense of sexual relatedness.

Consensual sexual relationships require the loosening of the boundaries of one’s physical and psychic space — they involve not only allowing another person to become close to you physically, but allowing her or him to know more about you. Sexual violence then suggests that the violation of these boundaries operates not only on the physical but on spiritual and psychic levels as well. In addition, sexual violence is ultimately structured around power

relations — it entails establishing the power to control someone's life. Similarly, "knowledge about someone also gives one power over that person. Withholding knowledge, then, is an act of resistance against those who desire to know you in order to better control you.

It is with this understanding of sexual violence that I wish to explore how the "New Age" movement and other forms of indigenous spiritual/cultural appropriation constitute a form of sexual violence. While there have been endless critiques of spiritual/cultural appropriation, I want to focus particularly on how it can be analytically understood as a form of sexual violence. I also wish to extend my discussion beyond the most obvious forms of appropriation as found in the New Age movement to explore its problematics in seemingly more innocuous forms, such as that found in academic religion classes.

Using this analytical framework, I would suggest that much of the energy directed toward "knowing" more about Native peoples can also be understood as concerns about what Mary Douglas terms, "matter out of place."¹ That is, Native peoples as well as other people of color who continue to survive centuries of genocide are a constant threat to the dominant culture's confidence that it will remain triumphant. Native peoples who continue to exist pollute the colonial body from the colonizer's perspective — they are matter out of place. To fully understand, to "know" Native peoples is the manner in which the dominant society gains a sense of mastery and control over them.

Consequently, Indian communities are flooded with people who want to know more about them — New Agers looking for quick spiritual enlightenment, anthropologists eager to capture an authentic culture thought to be rapidly and inevitably disappearing,² and Christians eager to engage in interreligious dialogue. How one evaluates these attempts to understand and "know" Indians revolves in large part around how one analyzes the primary causes of the oppression of Native peoples. Many people believe that the primary problem Native peoples face is ignorance. That is, non-Indians oppress Indians because they are ignorant about the value of Native cultures. Under this paradigm, if only non-Indians knew more about Indians, they would be nicer

to them. This approach is typical of many books on Native religions. For instance, Dennis and Barbara Tedlock note in their *Teachings From the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy* that "the American Indian has already taught us a great deal... [but now we must learn] his more difficult lessons about the mind and spirit... We have to recognize that some of what he has to teach transcends cultural and historical boundaries."³ Thus, even if one's attempts to "know" more about Indians are problematic, we can assume that at least these attempts are a step in the right direction.

Without wanting to fashion too simplistic a dualism, I would suggest that the primary reason for the continuing genocide of Native peoples has less to do with ignorance and more to do with material conditions. Non-Indians continue to oppress Indians because Indians occupy land resources that the dominant society wants. The majority of energy resources in this country are on Indian land.⁴ The U.S. could not stop oppressing Indian people without fundamentally challenging its hegemonic position or multinational capitalist operations. If we frame Native genocide from a materialist perspective, then we have to rethink our analysis of ignorance about Native cultures on the part of non-Natives. This ignorance becomes a willful ignorance. The larger society will never become educated about non-Indians because it is not in their economic interest to do so. Thus, these efforts to "know" Indians seem less benevolent in their intent and in their effects.

Native spiritualities are land based — they are tied to the landbase from which they originate.⁵ When Native peoples fight for cultural/spiritual preservation, they are ultimately fighting for the landbase which grounds their spirituality and culture. For this reason, Native religions are generally not proselytizing. They are typically seen by Native peoples as relevant only to the particular landbase from which they originate; they are not necessarily applicable to peoples coming from different landbases. In addition, as many scholars have noted, Native religions are practice centered rather than belief centered. That is, Christianity is defined by belief in a certain set of doctrinal principles about Jesus, the Bible, etc. Evangelical Christianity holds that one is "saved" when one professes belief in Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Savior. But what

is of primary importance in Native religions is not being able to articulate belief in a certain set of doctrines, but being able to take part in the spiritual practice of one's community. In fact, it may be more important that a ceremony be done correctly than it is for everyone in that ceremony to know exactly *why* everything must be done in a certain way. As Vine Deloria (Dakota) notes, from a Native context, religion is "a way of life" rather than "a matter of the proper exposition of doctrines."⁶ Even if Christians do not have access to church, they continue to be Christians as long as they believe in Jesus. Native spiritualities, by contrast, may die if the people do not practice the ceremonies, even if the people continue to believe in their power.

Native communities argue that Native peoples cannot be alienated from their land without committing cultural genocide. This argument underpins many sacred sites cases, although usually to no avail, before the courts. Most of the court rulings on sacred sites do not recognize this difference between belief-centered and practice-centered traditions or the significance of land-based spiritualities. For instance, in *Fool's Crow v. Gullet* (1983), the Supreme Court ruled against the Lakota who were trying to halt the development of additional tourist facilities in the Black Hills. The Court ruled that this tourism was not an infringement on Indian religious freedom because, although it would hinder the ability of the Lakota to practice their beliefs, it did not force them to relinquish their beliefs. For the Lakota, however, stopping the practice of traditional beliefs destroys the belief systems themselves. Consequently, for the Lakota and Native nations in general, cultural genocide is the result when Native landbases are not protected.⁷

When the dominant society disconnects Native spiritual practices from their landbases, it undermines Native peoples' claim that the protection of the landbase is integral to the survival of Native peoples and hence undermines their claims to sovereignty. Such appropriation is prevalent in a wide variety of cultural and spiritual practices – from New Agers claiming to be Indians in former lives to Christians adopting Native spiritual forms to further their missionizing efforts. The message is that anyone can practice Indian spirituality anywhere, so there is no need to

protect the specific Native communities and their lands that are the basis of these spiritual practices.

The assumption that Native knowledge is for the taking is also evident in multinational corporations' continued assault on indigenous knowledge. Current intellectual property rights law only respects individual ownership and not community ownership over intellectual or cultural property. Nonindigenous entrepreneurs have been able to gather knowledge about indigenous plants, medicines, music, or other cultural knowledge and take it because it is understood as "public" property. By obtaining an individual patent or copyright for it, they effectively seize control over this knowledge and can profit from it. As Laurie Whitt describes in the case of indigenous music,

While others are free to copy the original indigenous song with impunity, were someone to attempt to copy the "original" copy (now transformed into the legally protected individual property of a composer who has "borrowed" it from the indigenous "public domain"), he or she would be subject to prosecution for copyright infringement. This includes any members of the indigenous community of the song's origin who cannot meet the requirement of "fair use."⁸

Thus, in this society, white people have clear legal boundaries over their knowledge, while indigenous communities have none. Native communities and their practices can be known to all; their boundaries are inherently violable.

As Rayna Green suggests, spiritual appropriation is a practice that is based on genocide. Non-Natives feel justified in appropriating Native spirituality and Native identity because they do not believe existing Native communities are capable of independently preserving Native cultural practices. Rather, the common belief is that Native peoples are vanishing, and white people must preserve indigenous cultural practices since Native peoples are unable to do so. Through cultural appropriation, white people establish themselves as the true inheritors of Indianness. As a result, they can lay legitimate claim to Indian lands. Green argues,

For I would insist now, the living performance of "playing Indian" by non-Indian peoples depends on the physical and psychological removal, even the death, of real Indians. In that sense, the

performance, purportedly often done out of a stated and implicit love for Indians, is really the obverse of another well-known cultural phenomenon, "Indian hating," as most often expressed in another deadly performance genre called "genocide."⁹

Exemplifying this ideology is the Improved Order of the Red Men, a white fraternal organization that has been in existence since 1765 in which participants, supposedly patterning themselves on the Iroquois Confederacy, wear "Native" regalia and take part in other "Indian" cultural practices. According to the group's Web site, www.redmen.org:

The Improved Order of Red Men is a national fraternal organization that believes in

- Love of and Respect for the American Flag.
- Preserving our Nation by defending and upholding the principle of free Government.
- America and the democratic way of life.
- Preserving the traditions and history of this great Country.
- Creating and inspiring a greater love for the United States of America.
- Helping our fellow men through organized charitable programs.
- Linking our members together in a common bond of Brotherhood and Friendship.
- Perpetuating the beautiful legends and traditions of a once-vanishing race and the keeping alive of its customs, ceremonies, and philosophies.

These people see themselves as preserving the "traditions of a once-vanishing race" for the purpose of preserving "America," which is built on the genocide of Native peoples.

Furthermore, the colonial relations that mark the relationship between indigenous communities and the dominant society that wants to "know" more about them are themselves structured by sexual violence. Haunani-Kay Trask, Native Hawaiian activist, argues that colonizers destroy the cultural base from which indigenous people resist colonization by commodifying it to meet Western consumerist needs. She terms the phenomenon "cultural prostitution."

"Prostitution" in this context refers to the entire institution which defines a woman (and by extension the "female") as an object degraded and victimized sexual value for use and exchange through the medium of money... My purpose is not to exactly detail or fashion a model but to convey the utter degradation of our culture and our people under corporate tourism by employing "prostitution" as an analytical category... The point, of course, is that everything in Hawaii can be yours, that is, you the tourist, the non-native, the visitor. The place, the people, the culture, even our identity as a "Native" people is for sale. Thus, Hawaii, like a lovely woman, is there for the taking.¹⁰

In Trask's model, the exchange between Native and non-Native cultures is governed by the interests of non-Natives; that is, Natives exist to meet the needs of non-Native peoples, regardless of the impact on indigenous communities. Trask's exploitation model can also be applied to the first Re-Imagining Conference, held by the National Council of Churches in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1993. The conference was explicitly called so women could reimagine a non-patriarchal Christianity, yet Native women and Native practices were marginalized and disrespected. A group of women was invited to dance in traditional costumes, but Native women were not invited to speak on any struggles at any time during the conference. Native women had offered medicine bundles, which are to be treated with great respect, but the primarily white audience unceremoniously threw them on the floor. The women were to be voiceless objects of consumption, "there for the taking." They were, as Trask writes, "transformed to [be] complicitous in their own commodification."¹¹

It is particularly troubling when this colonial practice — which is structured by sexual violence — is adopted by white feminists in their efforts to heal from patriarchal violence. For this kind of appropriation hinders Native women in their healing and recovery, not only from personal abuse, but from the patterned history of abuse against their families, their nation, and the environment.¹² When white women appropriate Indian spirituality for their own benefit, they are participating in this pattern of abuse against Indian peoples' cultures.

Still, many non-Native peoples argue that they have a "right" to access Native spiritual knowledge. I taught a class where we discussed the issue of spiritual appropriation. The white students told me about how beneficial Native spirituality was to them, and that they felt they had to take part in certain New Age practices because there were no other suitable substitutes. So I asked, "Even if the New Age movement is as beneficial to you as you say, do you have any responsibility to Native communities when you take part in these practices?" What struck me was that none of the students had even considered this issue before. This practice of taking without asking, and the assumption that the needs of the taker are paramount and the needs of others are irrelevant, mirrors the rape culture of the dominant society.

Healing spiritual practices have not only been appropriated by the dominant society, but they have been sexually colonized as well. As Will Roscoe notes, colonizers have a long history of "documenting" what they see as sexual perversity in Native ceremonies in order to suppress them. Roscoe, a radical historian, points to the efforts to undermine John Collier, a white man who helped to establish the All-Pueblo Council in 1922 and served as executive secretary of the American Indian Defense Association in 1923. (Collier was later appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs by President Franklin Roosevelt.)

Collier attempted to protect Native religious freedom in the southwest despite widespread rumors that "Zuni men and women imitated sodomy in a dance, that boys and girls were put together 'for unrestricted sexual intercourse,' that the Taos Indians sacrificed two boys per year."¹³ According to Roscoe, William Johnson, a one-time special officer of the Indian Office, desired to spread this "knowledge" about Indians to as widely as possible and wrote a 1924 letter to the *New York Times* that attacked Collier and charged that:

[B]oys and girls returned from Government schools are stripped naked and herded together entirely nude and encouraged to do that very worst that vileness can suggest; that Zuni little girls were debauched in these dances; that Indian mothers, wives and daughters [are] ravished before hundreds of yelling, naked savages; and that little girls, too young and tender to be ravished,

have been whipped naked until their little bodies were bruised and covered with purple welts...and Indian boys were being withdrawn from government schools for a two years' course in sodomy under pagan instructors.¹⁴

This historical correlation between Native spirituality and sexual exploitation can be found in contemporary attitudes about Native people. For example, journalist Andy Rooney depicts Native spiritual traditions as involving "ritualistic dances with strong sexual overtones [which are] demeaning to Indian women and degrading to Indian children."¹⁵ Along similar lines, Mark and Dan Jury produced a film, *Dances: Sacred and Profane* (1994), and advertised it as "climax[ing] with the first-ever filming of the Indian Sundance ceremony." This so-called ceremony consisted of a white man, hanging from meat hooks from a tree, praying to the "Great White Spirit." Then C.C. Sadist, a group that performs sadomasochistic acts for entertainment, appears in the film.¹⁶

Self-described Cherokee porn star Hyapatia Lee directed a pornographic film framed as a documentary titled *Native Tongue* (1999). The film begins with the statement, "Each of the girls is of Cherokee ancestry with teachings offered to all people." Each scene depicts one of these "Cherokee" girls copulating with a white man. Hyapatia prefaces these scenes with, "I'm mostly Cherokee Indian. I was taught to worship nature and honor my traditional religion. They knew [past tense] how connected everything is." As Rayna Green argues in "The Tribe Called Wannabee," playing Indian is part of an ongoing genocidal project where white people become the inheritors of all that Indians "knew." In this case, this inherited knowledge is limited to how Indians supposedly engaged in various sexual acts.¹⁷

The film then attempts to turn Native cultural/spiritual traditions into pornography. For instance, one scene begins with "Because we don't see ourselves as superior to animals, we can learn from them," which is followed by a couple having sex 'doggy-style.' Other scenes depict couples smudging each other or smoking a pipe before engaging in sex. Finally, one scene begins, "The Indian culture teaches us the medicine path." Viewers are then called to "honor the four directions, more commonly known as sixty-nine."

Further trivializing women's status in Native communities, one scene begins with a talk about how Native communities respected women and men equally. "Father Sky wraps around Mother Earth." Christians, Lee continues, don't understand women's power. She proceeds to perform oral sex on a white man. Thus, symbolically the equality of men and women in Native societies is subordinated to the dominance of white men.

Finally, after repeated scenes of various pornographic acts, the "documentary" ends with "We hope this will be helpful for all our Anglo brothers. The teachings are meant for all. They are meant to keep us on the sacred path." In this conclusion, we can see how "knowledge" about Native communities is explicitly tied to sexual exploitation. Native communities have no boundaries, psychic or physical, that the dominant society is bound to respect. What Native peoples have and know are not under their control; it must be shared with all, particularly our "Anglo brothers."

Another "self-described Cherokee," Harley Swiftdeer, markets sex orgies as Cherokee ceremonies. He promotes "fire breath orgasms," which he contends are a regular part of Cherokee ceremonies and have been passed down through the "Twisted Hairs Metis Medicine Society Council of Elders." According to the promotional material:

Originally established in 1250 B.C. as the Rattlesnake School of Turtle Island, the Twisted Hairs Metis Medicine Society Council of Elders is a body of shamans, medicine men and women, sorcerers and magicians from many tribes throughout North, Central and South America, who have traveled and studied beyond their traditional tribal boundaries and evolved to levels of great learning, wisdom, power and knowledge. Turtle Island is called the Southwest Power, one of the Eight Great Powers of knowledge and wisdom on the planet. At times throughout history the magical mystery schools were forced to take their teachings and knowledge "underground" for safekeeping because they were being misused by others for personal power and domination or perverted by religious hierarchies. This happened here on Turtle Island following the Spanish conquest by Cortes, Pizarro, and others, as well as the invasion of Europeans onto the North American continent.

In 1975, hearing the call of Grandmother Earth and seeing both the need and the readiness within the collective, the Elders of the Council decided to again release the first of many Wheels and Keys of this Sweet Medicine SunDance Path so that these teachings would be available to anyone seeking personal growth and spiritual awakening. The Council designated SwiftDeer as one of the Carriers of the Shields of Knowledge of this Path....

In July of 1992, SwiftDeer was seated and sealed as a Twisted Hairs elder on the Council.¹⁸

Swiftdeer's "Cherokee" sex teachings have been integrated into a variety of seminars including the "Spiritual Sexuality" workshops conducted by the GoldenWind Dreamers Lodge based in Phoenix, Arizona.¹⁹ This sexual colonization of Native spirituality cloaks itself in the rhetoric of resistance to colonization.

In these sites of sexual exploitation, Native peoples are constantly equated with nature, which is in turn equated with unbridled sexuality. The various instructive scenes in *Native Tongue* are all interspersed with nature scenes. As Lee states, it was because her people "worshiped" nature that they learned to engage in wild sex. Similarly, the handbook *Indian Love Signs* (1999) purports to show how "Native American astrology can help you find someone to love."²⁰ This pan-Indian astrological system appears to be based on Sun Bear's medicine wheel. It is virtually indistinguishable from the traditional zodiac except that it is "directly related to nature," and is concerned only with giving the reader information on her/his love life.

Similarly, Jack Glover's *Sex Life of the American Indian* (1975) purports to describe the mating patterns of Native peoples, presuming the Native world is homogenous in its practices. "The material I obtained I kept factual for the historian, I kept spicy for the casual reader and above all, the material in this volume is for the reader interested in the Sex Life of the American Indian." What distinguishes the sex life of the American Indian is that "the Indian had an animal-like nature because a lot of them patterned themselves after the wildlife in the forest." He then describes how Indians like to show off because they hung around wolves. According to Glover, when Native peoples intermarry with Black people, who are perhaps even more "animal-like," this "mixture

of Negro and Indian blood produced some of the worst outlaws the Indian nation ever knew."²¹

The Mending the Sacred Hoop Stop Violence Against Indian Women Technical Assistance Project in Duluth, Minnesota notes that one difficulty in organizing against sexual violence in Native communities is that many community members believe that it is "traditional," despite the historical evidence which suggests sexual violence was rare in Native communities prior to colonization. One can see how these books and videos promote the internalization of violence in Native communities. For instance, Glover's account of Native communities suggests that Native women were nothing more than commodities. Rape was unheard of in many tribes, he argues, not because Native women were respected, but because it was just commonly understood that Indian women had to be sexually available whenever men wanted them to be. Fathers are described as having sex with their daughters. "The daughters didn't mind as they seemed happy and satisfied." If a man rapes a woman besides his wife, his wife "might welcome it, to keep him off her for awhile." Men had complete license to kill their wives: "The Indian man had the final say about anything that went on in camp and elsewhere. When he wanted he could kill his wife."²²

Native communities, where violence against women was relatively rare, are depicted as hotbeds of abuse and violence. This reversal becomes internalized within Native communities themselves, evident in the proliferation of "plastic medicine men" who are often notorious for sexually abusing their clients in fake Indian ceremonies. After Jeffrey Wall was sentenced for sexually abusing three girls, he claimed the abuse was part of American Indian spiritual rituals he conducted as an Indian medicine man.²³ David "Two Wolves" Smith and Alan Campney "Spotted Wolfe" were also charged for sexually abusing girls during supposed "cleansing" ceremonies.²⁴ In 1998 an Omaha priest, Daniel Herek, was convicted for using Catholic and "Native American ceremonies" as a pretext for sexually abusing a boy for five years. Herek and this boy formed their own "tribe" called the "Pondering People." The boy called himself "Pondering Raven" and the priest called himself "Wolf Hawk." Herek then repeatedly asked him to take

part in "Native American" rituals involving the boy removing his clothing so Herek could fondle him.²⁵ Michael Rea in Larimer County, Colorado, posed as a Lakota Medicine Man and offered to teach the children in his apartment Native spiritual practices. He was later charged with sexually abusing children in these sessions.²⁶

Bonnie Clairmont, a Ho-Chunk based in St. Paul, Minnesota, is doing groundbreaking work by exposing sexual exploiters who claim to be spiritual leaders. Unfortunately, not all these spiritual leaders are obvious "wannabes". Some are Native men who are respected in their community. Because she has not been afraid to address this abuse, Clairmont has been widely criticized. But she continues to hold conferences and speak out on these kinds of abuses. At one of Clairmont's conferences, one elder suggested that the New Age movement has helped to create conditions ripe for sexual exploitation within "traditional" spiritual ceremonies. That is, New Age spirituality promises quick-fix solutions by "powerful" shamans who know all. As a result, people seeking guidance learn to surrender their authority to so-called leaders and disregard warning signs when their boundaries are violated. This leader concluded, "I am no one special. When you come to see me, do not leave behind your common sense."

Spiritual Appropriation Is Hazardous to Your Health

Because Native spiritual traditions are practice centered, it is critical that ceremonies be performed correctly in order for the well-being of their participants to be ensured. Otherwise, the effects can be detrimental. I have heard many elders express concern about the non-Native practitioners who dabble in Native spiritual practices, because they do not fully comprehend the possible consequences of their actions, and it is likely that something bad will happen if ceremonies are not performed correctly.



The dangers of appropriation are evident in several recent incidences involving non-Indian practitioners. As one example, Kirsten Dana Babcock, 34, of Redding, California, and David Thomas Hawker, 36, of Union City, California, were participating in a ritual resembling a sweat lodge when they died of asphyxiation in 2002. They completely sealed the "sweat lodge" in plastic for a four-hour cleansing ritual, chanting amid the vapors of herbs and water poured over the hot rocks. The sweat lodge was made of a wooden frame shaped in a near-circle, about 10 feet in diameter, and covered with plastic sheeting. The sheeting was buried in the ground around the lower edge to make it airtight, and the plastic was covered with sleeping bags and blankets to keep in the heat. The surviving participants told officers that they were seeking spiritual enlightenment by sitting in the steam in the sealed environment.⁷

As Tony Incashola, director of the Flathead Reservation cultural committee, states in the Native Voices Public Television film, *White Shaman, Plastic Medicine Men* (1995):

In my culture, it has always been taught that when you don't respect, you don't show respect, you don't treat things properly, in the end it comes back on you. In the end, it will hurt and destroy you in some way. And I believe the punishment, whether it be today, tomorrow, or somewhere down the line will come back on you.

New Age and the Academic Study of Religion

In academic circles, I have noticed that academicians often criticize New Agers and others who exploit Native spirituality and culture. However, in this analysis, I also want to point to how the academic study of Native religious traditions can unwittingly support this paradigm of sexual violence that undergirds the manner in which non-Indians attempt to "know" Indians. Just as those who sexually dominate others often contend that if they enjoyed the act, then "she must have wanted it," some academics assume that if they want to study Native communities, the com-

munities must want that as well. A link between the ethnographic imperative that guides the study of Native peoples and sexual violence can be seen in the Greek translation of the Hebrew words (YDH) which can be found in the Septuagint. It translates into "to know by seeing through the mind's eye," and is the perfect form of the word which means "to see." The forceful act of gazing at the other, gaining knowledge and control over her by seeing her, is likened to sexual intimacy. Thus, the ethnographic gaze can be understood as the act of sexually possessing a people.

The assumption that this pursuit is inherently positive undergirds academic treatments of Native religious tradition. As Cree historian Winona (Stevenson) Wheeler notes, Western-based academics place a high value on procuring "knowledge" or the "truth" as a goal in and of itself. By contrast, knowledge does not confer the right to communicate that knowledge to outsiders in Native communities.

One of the major tenets of Western erudition is the belief that all knowledge is knowable. In the Cree world all knowledge is not knowable because knowledge is property in the sense that it is owned and can only be transmitted by the legitimate owner. . . . You can't just go and take it, or even go and ask for it. Access to knowledge requires long-term commitment, apprenticeship and payment. As a student of oral history, in the traditional sense, there is so much I have heard and learned yet so little I can speak or write about, because I have not earned the right to do so. I cannot tell anyone or write about most things because it has not been given to me. If I did it would be theft. So I'll probably be an Old Lady before I am allowed to pass it on. By then, I'll have learned all those rules of transmission and will probably feel impelled to keep it in the oral tradition and not write it down.⁸

Often, researchers have not asked "Do Native people want others to know about them?" or "Do Native communities find this research helpful to them?" As a result, tribal communities are being gunned to place restrictions on what kinds of information should be provided to outsiders; many are developing additional protocols or taking other proactive steps regarding research that is done in their communities. For example, at a 1998 conference on biopiracy held at the Salish/Kootenai College in Montana,

representatives from a tribal community reported that a researcher visited their reservation reporting that he had been given a grant to study them, even though he had not shared his research proposal with the community before he received funding. The tribal council contacted the agency that funded the researcher and convinced the organization to retract the funding and redirect it to the tribe to conduct its own research.

I would suggest that most people studying Native religions do so to support Native communities. However, we have inherited a colonial model of teaching, researching, and learning that undermines this approach. Not surprisingly, there is often a very sharp disjuncture between how Native people learn spiritual knowledge in their communities and the learning models we use in teaching college classes. Within the community, I always hear elders say, if you want to learn, be quiet and pay attention. Only through being part of the community over a period of time and developing trust does the knowledge come to you — very slowly. Meanwhile, in the classroom setting, we are encouraged to present the information very quickly and completely so that students can learn it for the final. Consequently, we promote the misperception that Native traditions are easily learned, can be learned quickly, and can be learned outside of a community context. I have lost count of the number of students who have informed me that they know all about Indians because they took one class on Indian religions in college. They also seem to learn from classes that they are entitled to learn whatever they want from Native communities; again, that Native communities have no boundaries that non-Natives need to respect. It is interesting to think about alternative models that might resemble indigenous methodologies of learning. A story set in an Ojibwe community that my sister shared with me hints at such an alternative approach:

In this community, there was a respected elder who knew all about cliff drawings and rock paintings as well as where they were located on the reservation. A young man who was interested in learning about traditional ways went to the elder and asked if the elder would teach him. So the elder agreed to teach him. He would take this young man on long walks to where the rock paintings

were and take great care in uncovering them. He would then tell him a little about the paintings. Then, he would take great care to cover them up again before they took a long walk home. This went on for some time before the young man said, "We could save a lot of time if we just stayed here and you told me what the paintings all mean." To this, the elder replied that walking to the paintings and taking care of them was as important to understanding the traditions as was hearing about what they meant. Simply knowing facts was not enough. Native traditions are a way of life, and you have to know everything about the way of life. It wasn't just about information, it was about a way of being. Whatever comes easy, you do not value. He concluded: "It is not enough for you to understand the traditions, you must learn how to respect them."

Indians Are Us?

Reflections on the “Men’s Movement”

We are living at an important and fruitful moment, now, for it is clear to men that the images of adult manhood given by the popular culture are worn out; a man can no longer depend on them. By the time a man is thirty-five he knows that the images of the right man, the tough man, the true man he received in high school do not work in life. Such a man is open to new visions of what a man is supposed to be.

—Robert Bly, 1990

We have met the enemy and he is us.

—Pogo

There are few things in this world I can conceive as being more instantly ludicrous than a prosperously middle-aged lump of pudgy Euroamerican verse-monger, an apparition looking uncannily like some weird cross between the Mall-O-Milk Marshmallow Man and Pillsbury’s Doughboy, suited up in a grotesque mismatch combining pleated Scottish tweeds with a stripped Brooks Brothers shirt and Southwest Indian print vest, peering myopically along his nose through coke-bottle steel-rim specs while holding forth in stilted and somewhat nasal tonalities on the essential virtues of viril-

INDIANS ARE US?

ity, of masculinity, of being or becoming a "warrior." The intrinsic absurdity of such a scene is, moreover, compounded by a factor of five when it is witnessed by an audience—all male, virtually all white, and on the whole obviously well accustomed to enjoying a certain pleasant standard of material comfort—which sits as if spellbound, rapt in its attention to every nuance of the speaker, altogether fawning in its collective nods and murmurs of devout agreement with each detail of his discourse.

At first glance, the image might seem to be the most vicious sort of parody, a satire offered in the worst of taste, perhaps a hallucinatory fragment of a cartoon or skit offered by the likes of *National Lampoon* or *Saturday Night Live*. Certainly, in a reasonable universe we would be entitled (perhaps required) to assume that no group of allegedly functional adults would take such a farce seriously, never mind line up to pay money for the privilege of participating in it. Yet, as we know, or should by now, the universe we are forced to inhabit has been transformed long since—notably by the very group so prominent in its representation among those constituting our warrior/mystic/wordsmith's assemblage—into something in which reasonable behavior and comportment play only the smallest of parts. And so the whole travesty is advanced with the utmost seriousness, at least by its proponents and a growing body of adherents who subsidize and otherwise support them.

The founder and reigning Grand Pooh-Bah of that variant of the "New Age" usually referred to as the "Men's Movement" is Robert Bly, a rather owlish butterball of a minor poet who seems to have set

Indians Are Us?

out at fifty-something to finally garner unto himself some smidgin of the macho self-esteem his physique and life-of-letters had conspired to deny him up to that point.¹ Writely even in this pursuit, however, Bly has contented himself mainly with devising a vague theory of "masculinism" designed or at least intended to counter prevailing feminist dogma concerning "The Patriarchy," rising interest in "multicultural" interpretations of how things work, and an accompanying sense among middle-to-upper-middle-class males that they are "losing influence" in contemporary society.²

A strange brew consisting of roughly equal parts Arthurian, Norse, and Celtic legend, occasional adaptations of fairy tales by the brothers Grimm, a scattering of his own and assorted dead white males' verse and prose, a dash of environmentalism, and, for spice, bits and pieces of Judaic, Islamic, East Asian, and American Indian spiritualism, Bly's message of "male liberation" has been delivered via an unending series of increasingly well-paid podium performances beginning in the mid-80s. Presented in a manner falling somewhere between mystic parable and pop psychology, Bly's lectures are frequently tedious, often pedantic, pathetically pretentious in both content and elocution. Still, they find a powerful emotional resonance among those attracted to the central themes announced in his interviews and advertising circulars, especially when his verbiage focuses upon the ideas of "reclaiming the primitive within us...attaining freedom through use of appropriate ritual...[and] the rights of all men to transcend cultural boundaries in redeeming their warrior souls."³

INDIANS ARE US?

By 1990, the master had perfected his pitch to the point of committing it to print in a turgid but rapidly-selling tome entitled *Iron John*.⁴ He had also established something like a franchise system, training cadres in various localities to provide "male empowerment rituals" for a fee (a "Wild Man Weekend" goes at \$250 a pop; individual ceremonies are usually pro-rated). Meanwhile, the rising popularity and consequent profit potential of Bly's endeavor had spawned a number of imitators—Patrick M. Arnold, Asa Baber, Tom Daly, Robert Moore, Douglas Gillette, R.J. Stewart, Kenneth Wetcher, Art Barker, F.W. McCaughy, John Matthews, and Christopher Harding among them—literary and otherwise.⁵ Three years later, the Men's Movement has become pervasive enough to be viewed as a tangible and growing social force rather than merely as a peculiar fringe group; active chapters are listed in 43 of the 50 major U.S. cities (plus four in Canada) in the movement's "selected" address list; 25 periodicals are listed in the same directory.⁶

An Interlude with Columbus in Colorado

The ability of a male to shout and be fierce does not imply domination, treating people as if they were objects, demanding land or empire, holding on to the Cold War—the whole model of machismo....The Wild Man here amounts to an invisible presence, the companionship of the ancestors and the great artists among the dead....The native Americans believe in that healthful male power.

—Robert Bly
1990

Indians Are Us?

At first glance, none of this may seem particularly threatening. Indeed, the sheer silliness inherent to Bly's routine at many levels is painfully obvious, a matter driven home to me one morning last spring when, out looking for some early sage, I came upon a group of young Euroamerican males covetting about stark naked in a meadow near Lyons, Colorado. Several had wildflowers braided into their hair. Some were attempting a chant I failed to recognize. I noticed an early growth of pot-son oak near where I was standing, but determined it was probably best not to disrupt whatever rite was being conducted with anything so mundane as a warning about the presence of discomforting types of plant life. As discreetly as possible, I turned around and headed the other way, both puzzled and somewhat amused by what I'd witnessed.

A few days later, I encountered one of the participants, whom I knew slightly, and who kept scratching at his left thigh. Seizing the opportunity, I inquired as to what it was they'd been doing. He responded that since he and the others had attended a workshop conducted by Robert Bly earlier in the year, they'd become active in the Men's Movement and "made a commitment to recover the Druidic rituals which are part of our heritage" (the man, who is an anthropology student at the University of Colorado, is of Slavic descent, making Druidism about as distant from his own cultural tradition as Sufism or Zen Buddhism). Interest piqued, I asked where they'd learned the ritual form involved and its meaning. He replied that, while they'd attempted to research the matter, "it turns out there's not really a lot known about exactly how

INDIANS ARE US?

the Druids conducted their rituals."

"It's mostly guesswork," he went on. "We're just kind of making it up as we go along." When I asked why, if that were the case, they described their ritual as being Druidic, he shrugged. "It just sort of feels good, I guess," he said. "We're trying to get in touch with something primal in ourselves."

Harmless? Maybe. But then again, maybe not. The Druids, after all, have reputedly been dead and gone for millennia. They are thus immune to whatever culturally destructive effects might attend such blatant appropriation, trivialization, and deformation of their sacred rites by non-Druidic feel-gooders. Before departing the meadow, however, I had noticed a couple of the men gamboling about in the grass were adorned with facepaint and feathers. So I queried my respondent as to whether in the view of his group such things comprised a part of Druid ritual life.

"Well, no," he confessed. "A couple of the guys are really into American Indian stuff. Actually, we all are. Wallace Black Elk is our teacher.⁷ We run sweats on the weekends, and most of us have been on the hill [insider slang for the undertaking of a Vision Quest]. I myself carry a Sacred Pipe and am studying herbal healing, Lakota Way. Three of us went to the Sun Dance at Crow Dog's place last summer. We've made vows, and are planning to dance when we're ready."⁸ Intermingled with these remarks, he extended glowing bits of commentary on his and the others' abiding interest in a diversity of cultural/spiritual elements ranging from Balinese mask-making to Andean flute music, from Japanese scent/time orientation to the deities of the

Indians Are Us?

Assyrians, Polynesian water gods, and the clitoral circumcision of Somali women.

I thought about protesting that spiritual traditions cannot be used as some sort of Whitman's Sampler of ceremonial form, mixed and matched—here a little Druid, there a touch of Nordic mythology followed by a regimen of Hindu vegetarianism, a mishmash of American Indian rituals somewhere else—at the whim of people who are part of none of them. I knew I should say that to play at ritual potluck is to debase all spiritual traditions, voiding their internal coherence and leaving nothing usably sacrosanct as a cultural anchor for the peoples who conceived and developed them, and who have consequently organized their societies around them. But, then, in consideration of who it was I was talking to, I abruptly ended the conversation instead. I doubted he would have understood what I was trying to explain to him. More importantly, I had the distinct impression he wouldn't have cared, even if he had. Such observations on my part would most likely have only set loose "the warrior in him," a flow of verbal diarrhea in which he asserted his and his peers' "inalienable right" to take anything they found of value in the intellectual property of others, converting it to whatever use suited their purposes at the moment. I was a bit tired, having just come from a meeting with a white environmental group where I'd attempted unsuccessfully to explain how their support of native land rights might bear some positive relationship to their announced ecological concerns, and felt it just wasn't my night to deal with the ghost of Christopher Columbus for a second time, head on.

INDIANS ARE US?

That's an excuse, to be sure. Probably, I failed in my duty. Perhaps, regardless of the odds against success, I should have tried reasoning with him. More likely, I should've done what my ancestors should have done to Columbus himself when the "Great Discoverer" first brought his embryo of the Men's Movement to this hemisphere. But the amount of prison time assigned these days to that sort of appropriate response to aggression is daunting, to say the least. And I really do lack the wall-space to properly display his tanned hide after skinning him alive. So I did nothing more than walk out of the coffee shop in which we'd been seated, leaving him to wonder what it was that had gotten me upset. Not that he's likely to have gotten the message. The result of my inaction is that, so far as I know, the man is still out there cruising the cerebral seas in search of "spiritual landscapes" to explore and pillage. Worse, he's still sending his booty back to his buddies in hopes of their casting some "new synthesis of paganism"—read, "advancement of civilization as we know it"—in which they will be able to continue their occupancy of a presumed position at the center of the universe.

Indians Are Us?

We must get out of ourselves, or, more accurately, the selves we have been conned into believing are "us." We must break out of the cage of artificial "self" in which we have been entrapped as "men" by today's society. We must get in touch with our true selves, recapturing the Wild Man, the animal, the primitive warrior being which exists in the core of every man. We

Indians Are Us?

must rediscover the meaning of maleness, the art of being male, the way of the warrior priest. In doing so, we free ourselves from the alienating tyranny of being what it is we're told we are, or what it is we should be. We free ourselves to redefine the meaning of "man," to be who and what we can be, and what it is we ultimately must be. I speak here, of course, of genuine liberation from society's false expectations and thus from the false selves these expectations have instilled in each and every one of us here in this room. Let the Wild Man loose. I say! Free our warrior spirit!

—Robert Bly
1991

In retrospect, it seems entirely predictable that, amidst Robert Bly's welter of babble concerning the value of assorted strains of imagined primitivism and warrior spirit, a substantial segment of his following—and he himself in the workshops he offers on "practical ritual"—would end up gravitating most heavily toward things Indian. After all, Native Americans and our ceremonial life constitute living, ongoing entities. We are therefore far more accessible in terms of both time and space than the Druids or the old Norse Odinists. Further, our traditions offer the distinct advantage of seeming satisfyingly exotic to the average Euroamerican yuppie male, even while not forcing them to clank about in the suits of chain mail and heavy steel armor which would be required if they were to opt to act out their leader's hyperliterate Arthurian fantasies. I mean, really....Jousting, anyone? A warrior-type fella could get seriously hurt that way.⁹

A main sticking point, of course, rests precisely

INDIANS ARE US?

in the fact that the cultures indigenous to America are living, ongoing entities. Unlike the Druids or the ancient Greek man-cults who thronged around Hector and Achilles, Native American societies *can* and *do* suffer the socioculturally debilitating effects of spiritual trivialization and appropriation at the hands of the massively larger Euro-immigrant population which has come to dominate literally every other aspect of our existence. As Margo Thunderbird, an activist of the Shinnecock Nation, has put it: "They came for our land, for what grew or could be grown on it, for the resources in it, and for our clean air and pure water. They stole these things from us, and in the taking they also stole our free ways and the best of our leaders, killed in battle or assassinated. And now, after all that, they've come for the very last of our possessions; now they want our pride, our history, our spiritual traditions. They want to rewrite and remake these things, to claim them for themselves. The lies and thefts just never end."¹⁰ Or, as the Oneida scholar Pam Colorado frames the matter:

The process is ultimately intended to supplant Indians, even in areas of their own culture and spirituality. In the end, non-Indians will have complete power to define what is and what is not Indian, even for Indians. We are talking here about a complete ideological/conceptual subordination of Indian people in addition to the total physical subordination they already experience. When this happens, the last vestiges of real Indian society and Indian rights will disappear. Non-Indians will then claim to "own" our heritage and ideas as thoroughly as they now claim to own our land and resources.¹¹

Indians Are Us?

From this perspective, the American Indian Movement passed a resolution at its 1984 Southwest Leadership Conference condemning the *laissez-faire* use of native ceremonies and/or ceremonial objects by anyone not sanctioned by traditional indigenous spiritual leaders.¹² The AIM position also echoed an earlier resolution taken by the Traditional Elders Circle in 1980, condemning even Indians who engage in "use of [our] spiritual ceremonies with non-Indian people for profit."¹³ Another such condemnation had been issued during the First American Indian Tribunal at D-G University in 1982.¹⁴ As of this writing—June 1993—the Lakota Nation as a whole is preparing to enact a similar resolution denouncing non-Lakotas who presume to "adopt" their rituals, and censoring those Lakotas who have chosen to facilitate such cultural appropriation (see "Declaration of War Against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality," following this essay). Several other indigenous nations and national organizations have already taken comparable positions, or are preparing to (see "Alert Concerning the Abuse and Exploitation of American Indian Sacred Traditions").

This may seem an exaggerated and overly harsh response to what the Spokane/Coeur d'Alene writer Sherman Alexie has laughingly dismissed as being little more than a "Society for Confused White Men."¹⁵ But the hard edges of Euroamerican hubris and assertion of proprietary interest in native assets which has always marked Indian/white relations are abundantly manifested in the **organizational literature** of the Men's Movement itself. Of even greater concern is the fact that the sort of appropriation evidenced in these periodicals is no longer

INDIANS ARE US?

restricted simply to claiming "ownership" of Indian ceremonies and spiritual objects, as in a passage in a recent issue of the *Men's Council Journal* explaining that "sweats, drumming, dancing, [and] four direction-calling [are] once-indigenous now-ours rituals."¹⁶ Rather, participants have increasingly assumed a stance of expropriating native identity altogether, as when, in the same journal, it is repeatedly asserted that "we...are all Lakota" and that members of the Men's Movement are now displacing actual Lakotas from their "previous" role as "warrior protectors" (of what is left unclear).¹⁷

The indigenous response to such presumption was perhaps best expressed by AIM leader Russell Means, himself an Oglala Lakota, when he recently stated that "This is the ultimate degradation of our people, even worse than what's been done to us by Hollywood and the publishing industry, or the sports teams who portray us as mascots and pets. What these people are doing is like Adolf Eichmann claiming during his trial that, at heart, he was really a Zionist, or members of the Aryan Nations in Idaho claiming to be 'True Jews'."¹⁸ Elsewhere, Means has observed that:

What's at issue here is the same old question that Europeans have always posed with regard to American Indians, whether what's ours isn't somehow theirs. And, of course, they've always answered the question in the affirmative....We are resisting this because spirituality is the basis of our culture. If our culture is dissolved [via the expedients of spiritual appropriation/expropriation], Indian people as such will cease to exist. By definition, the causing of any culture to cease to exist is an act of genocide.¹⁹

218

Indians Are Us?

Noted Hunkpapa Lakota author Vine Deloria, Jr., agrees in principle, finding that as a result of the presumption of groups like the Men's Movement, as well as academic anthropology, "the realities of Indian belief and existence have become so misunderstood and distorted at this point that when a real Indian stands up and speaks the truth at any given moment, he or she is not only unlikely to be believed, but will probably be publicly contradicted and 'corrected' by the citation of some non-Indian and totally inaccurate 'expert'."²⁰

Moreover, young Indians in [cities and] universities are now being trained to view themselves and their cultures in the terms prescribed by such experts rather than in the traditional terms of the tribal elders. The process automatically sets the members of Indian communities at odds with one another, while outsiders run around picking up the pieces for themselves. In this way [groups like the Men's Movement] are perfecting a system of self-validation in which all semblance of honesty and accuracy are lost. This is...absolutely devastating to Indian societies.²¹

Even Sherman Alexie, while choosing to treat the Men's Movement phenomenon with scorn and ridicule rather than open hostility, is compelled to acknowledge that there is a serious problem with the direction taken by Bly's disciples. "Peyote is not just an excuse to get high," Alexie points out. "A Vision Quest cannot be completed in a convention room rented for that purpose....[T]he sweat lodge is a church, not a free clinic or something....A warrior does not have to scream to release the animal that

219

Indians Are Us?

View from a Foreign Shore

Western man's connection to the Wild Man has been disturbed for centuries now, and a lot of fear has been built up [but] Wild Man is part of a company or a community in a man's psyche. The Wild Man lives in complicated interchanges with other interior beings. A whole community of beings is what is called a grown man....Moreover, when we develop the inner Wild Man, he keeps track of the wild animals inside us, and warns when they are liable to become extinct. The Wild One in you is the one which is willing to leave the busy life, and able to be called away.

—Robert Bly, 1990

In many ways, the salient questions which present themselves with regard to the Men's Movement center on motivation. Why, in this day and age, would any group of well-educated and self-proclaimedly sensitive men, the vast majority of whom may be expected to exhibit genuine outrage at my earlier comparison of them to Columbus, elect to engage in activities which can be plausibly categorized as culturally genocidal? Assuming initial ignorance in this regard, why do they choose to persist in these activities, often escalating their behavior after its implications have been explained by its victims repeatedly and in no uncertain terms? And, perhaps most of all, why would such extraordinarily privileged individuals as those who've flocked to Robert Bly—a group marked by nothing so much as the kind of ego-driven self-absorption required to insist upon its "right" to impose itself on a tiny minority even to the point of culturally exterminat-

INDIANS ARE US?

is supposed to reside inside every man. A warrior does not necessarily have an animal inside him at all. If there happens to be an animal, it can be a parakeet or a mouse just as easily as it can be a bear or a wolf. When a white man adopts an animal, he [seems inevitably to choose] the largest animal possible. Whether this is because of possible phallic connotations or a kind of spiritual steroid abuse is debatable, [but] I can imagine a friend of mine, John, who is white, telling me that his spirit animal is the Tyrannosaurus Rex."²²

The men's movement seems designed to appropriate and mutate so many aspects of native traditions. I worry about the possibilities: men's movement chain stores specializing in portable sweat lodges; the "Indians 'R' Us" commodification of ritual and artifact; white men who continue to show up at powwows in full regalia and dance.²³

Plainly, despite sharp differences in their respective temperaments and resultant stylistic approaches to dealing with problems, Alexie and many other Indians share Russell Means's overall conclusion that the "culture vultures" of the Men's Movement are "not innocent or innocuous....cute, groovy, hip, enlightened, or any of the rest of the things they want to project themselves as being. No, what they're about is cultural genocide. And genocide is genocide, no matter how you want to 'qualify' it. So some of us are starting to react to these folks accordingly."²⁴

INDIANS ARE US?

ing it—opt to do so in a manner which makes them appear not only repugnant, but utterly ridiculous to anyone outside their ranks?

Sometimes it is necessary to step away from a given setting in order to better understand it. For me, the answers to these seemingly inexplicable questions were to a large extent clarified during a recent (unpaid) political speaking tour of Germany, during which I was repeatedly confronted by the spectacle of Indian “hobbyists,” all of them men resplendently attired in quillwork and bangles, beaded moccasins, chokers, amulets, medicine bags, and so on.²⁵ Some of them sported feathers and buckskin shirts or jackets; a few wore their blond hair braided with rawhide in what they imagined to be high plains style (in reality, they looked much more like Vikings than Cheyennes or Shoshones). When queried, many professed to have handcrafted much of their own regalia.²⁶ A number also made mention of having fashioned their own pipestone pipes, or to have been presented with one, usually after making a hefty monetary contribution, by one of a gaggle of Indian or pretended-Indian hucksters.²⁷

Among those falling into this classification, belonging to what Christian Feest has branded the “Faculty of Medicine” currently plying a lucrative “Greater Europa Medicine Man Circuit,”²⁸ are Wallace Black Elk, “Brooke Medicine Eagle” (a bogus Cherokee; real name unknown), “John Redtail Freesoul” (a purported Cheyenne-Arapaho; real name unknown), Archie Fire Lamedeer (Northern Cheyenne), “Dhyani Ywahoo” (supposedly a 27th-generation member of the non-existent

Indians Are Us?

“Etowah” band of the Eastern Cherokees; real name unknown), “Eagle Walking Turfle” (Gary McClain, an alleged Choctaw), “Eagle Man” (Ed McGaa, Oglala Lakota), “Beautiful Painted Arrow” (a supposed Shoshone; real name unknown).²⁹ Although the success of such people “is completely independent of traditional knowledge, just so long as they can impress a public impressed by the books of Carlos Castaneda,”³⁰ most of the hobbyists I talked to noted they’d “received instruction” from one or more of these “Indian spiritual teachers” and had now adopted various deformed fragments of Native American ritual life as being both authentic and their own.

Everyone felt they been “trained” to run sweats. Most had been provided similar tutelage in conducting Medicine Wheel Ceremonies and Vision Quests. Several were pursuing what they thought were Navajo crystal-healing techniques, and/or herbal healing (where they figured to gather herbs not native to their habitat was left unaddressed). Two mentioned they’d participated in a “sun dance” conducted several years ago in the Black Forest by an unspecified “Lakota medicine man” (they displayed chest scars verifying that they had indeed done something of the sort), and said they were now considering launching their own version on an annual basis. Half-a-dozen more inquired as to whether I could provide them entrée to the Sun Dances conducted each summer on stateside reservations (of special interest are those of the “Sloux”).³¹ One poor soul, a Swiss national as it turned out, proudly observed that he’d somehow managed to survive living in an Alpine tipi for the past several years.³² All of

INDIANS ARE US?

them maintained that at this point they actually consider themselves to be Indians, at least "in spirit."³³

These "Indians of Europe," as Feest has termed them, were uniformly quite candid as to why they felt this way.³⁴ Bluntly put—and the majority were precisely this harsh in their own articulations—they absolutely *hate* the idea of being Europeans, especially Germans. Abundant mention was made of their collective revulsion to the European heritage of colonization and genocide, particularly the ravages of nazism. Some went deeper, addressing what they felt to be the intrinsically unacceptable character of European civilization's relationship to the natural order in its entirety. Their response, as a group, was to try and disassociate themselves from what it was/is they object to by announcing their personal identities in terms as diametrically opposed to it as they could conceive. "Becoming" American Indians in their own minds apparently fulfilled this deep-seated need in the most gratifying fashion.³⁵

Yet, when I delved deeper, virtually all of them ultimately admitted they were little more than weekend warriors, or "cultural transvestites," to borrow another of Feest's descriptors.³⁶ They typically engage in their Indianist preoccupations only during their off hours while maintaining regular jobs—mainly quite responsible and well-paying positions, at that—squarely within the very system of Germanic business-as-usual they claimed so heatedly to have disavowed, root and branch. The most candid respondents were even willing to admit, when pushed, that were it not for the income accruing from their daily roles as "Good Germans," they'd

Indians Are Us?

not be able to afford their hobby of imagining themselves as being something else...or to pay the fees charged by imported Native American "spirit leaders" to validate this impression. Further, without exception, when I inquired as to what they might be doing to challenge and transform the fundamental nature of the German culture, society, and state they profess to detest so deeply, they observed that they had become "spiritual people" and are therefore "apolitical." Queries concerning whether they might be willing to engage in activities to physically defend the rights and territories of indigenous peoples in North America drew much the same reply.

The upshot of German hobbyism, then, is that, far from constituting the sort of radical divorce from Germanic context its adherents assert, part-time impersonation of American Indians represents a means through which they can psychologically reconcile themselves to it. By pretending to be what they are not—and in fact can never be, because the objects of their fantasies have never existed in real life—the hobbyists are freed to be what they are (but deny), and to "feel good about themselves" in the process.³⁷ And, since this sophistry allows them to contend in all apparent seriousness that they are somehow entirely separate from the oppressive status quo upon which they depend, and which their "real world" occupations do so much to make possible, they thereby absolve themselves of any obligation whatsoever to materially confront it (and thence themselves). Voilal "Wildmen" and "primitives" carrying out the most refined functions of the German corporate state; "warriors" relieved of the necessity of doing battle other than in the most metaphorical

INDIANS ARE US?

of senses, and then always (and only) in service to the very structures and traditions they claim—and may even have convinced themselves to *believe* at some level or another—their perverse posturing negates.³⁸

The Dynamics of Denial

Contemporary business life allows competitive relationships only, in which the major emotions are anxiety, tension, loneliness, rivalry and fear....Zeus energy has been steadily disintegrating decade after decade in the United States. Popular culture has been determined to destroy respect for it, beginning with the "Maggie and Jiggs" and "Dagwood and Blondie" comics of the 1920s and 1930s, in which the man is always weak and foolish...The recovery of some form of [powerful rituals of male] initiation is essential to the culture. The United States has undergone an unmistakable decline since 1950, and I believe if we do not find [these kinds of male ritual] the decline will continue.

—Robert Bly
1990

Obviously, the liberatory potential of all this for actual American Indians is considerably less than zero. Instead, hobbyism is a decidedly parasitical enterprise, devoted exclusively to the emotional edification of individuals integrally and instrumentally involved in perpetuating and perfecting the system of global domination from which the genocidal colonization of Native America stemmed and by which it is continued. Equally obviously, there is a strikingly close, if somewhat antecedent, correspondence

Indians Are Us?

between German hobbyism on the one hand, and the North American Men's Movement on the other. The class and ethnic compositions are virtually identical, as are the resulting social functions, internal dynamics, and external impacts.³⁹ So close is the match, not only demographically, but motivationally and behaviorally, that Robert Bly himself has scheduled a tour of Germany during the summer of 1993 to bring the Old World's Teutonic sector into his burgeoning fold.⁴⁰

Perhaps the only significant difference between the Men's Movement at home and hobbyism abroad is just that: the hobbyists at least are "over there," but the Men's Movement is right here, where we live. Hobbyism in Germany may contribute to what both Adolf Hitler and George Bush called the "New World Order," and thus yield a negative but somewhat indirect effect upon native people in North America, but the Men's Movement is quite *directly* connected to the ever more efficient imposition of that order upon Indian lands and lives in the U.S. and Canada. The mining engineer who joins the Men's Movement and thereafter spends his week-ends "communing with nature in the manner of an Indian" does so—in precisely the same fashion as his German colleagues—in order to exempt himself from either literal or emotional responsibility for the fact that, to be who he is and live at the standard he does, he will spend the rest of his week making wholesale destruction of the environment an operant reality. Not infrequently, the land being stripped under his supervision belongs to the very Indians whose spiritual traditions he appropriates and reifies in the process of "finding inner peace"

INDIANS ARE US?

(i.e., empowering himself to do what he does).⁴¹

By the same token, the corporate lawyer, the Wall Street broker, and the commercial banker who accompany the engineer into a sweat lodge do so because, intellectually, they understand quite well that, without them, his vocation would be impossible. The same can be said for the government bureaucrat, the corporate executive, and the marketing consultant who keep Sacred Pipes on the walls of their respective offices. All of them are engaged, to a greater or lesser degree—although, if asked, most will adamantly reject the slightest hint that they are involved at all—in the systematic destruction of the residue of territory upon which prospects of native life itself are balanced. The charade by which they cloak themselves in the identity of their victims is their best and ultimately most compulsive hedge against the psychic consequences of acknowledging who and what they really are.⁴²

Self-evidently, then, New Age-style rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, this pattern of emotional/psychological avoidance imbedded in the ritual role-playing of Indians by a relatively privileged stratum of Euroamerican men represents no alternative to the status quo. To the contrary, it has become a steadily more crucial ingredient in an emergent complex of psychosocial mechanisms allowing North American business-as-usual to sustain, stabilize, and reenergize itself. Put another way, had the Men's Movement not come into being, compliments of Robert Bly and his clones, it would have been necessary—just as the nazis found it useful to do in their day—for North America's governmental-corporate elite to have created it on their

Indians Are Us?

own.⁴³ On second thought, it's not altogether clear they didn't.⁴⁴

Alternatives

The ancient societies believed that a boy becomes a man only through ritual and effort—only through the "active intervention of the older men." It's becoming clear to us that manhood doesn't happen by itself; it doesn't just happen because we eat Wheaties. The active intervention of the older men means the older men welcome the younger man into the ancient, mythologized, instinctive male world.

—Robert Bly, 1990

With all this said, it still must be admitted that there is a scent of undeniably real human desperation—an all but obsessive desire to find some avenue of alternative cultural expression different from that sketched above—clinging to the Men's Movement and its New Age and hobbyist equivalents. The palpable anguish this entails allows for, or requires, a somewhat more sympathetic construction of the motives prodding a segment of the movement's membership, and an illative obligation on the part of anyone not themselves experiencing it to respond in a firm, but helpful rather than antagonistic, manner.

Perhaps more accurately, it should be said that the sense of despair at issue evidences itself not so much in the ranks of the Men's Movement and related phenomena themselves, but within the milieu from which these manifestations have arisen: white, mostly urban, affluent or affluently reared,

INDIANS ARE US?

well-schooled, young (or youngish) people of both genders who, in one or another dimension, are thoroughly dis-eased by the socioeconomic order into which they were born and their seemingly predestined roles within it.⁴⁵ Many of them openly seek, some through serious attempts at political resistance, a viable option with which they may not only alter their own individual fates, but transform the overall systemic realities they correctly perceive as having generated these fates in the first place.⁴⁶ Yet, as a whole, they seem sincerely baffled by the prospect of having to define for themselves the central aspect of this alternative.

They cannot put a name to it, and so they perpetually spin their wheels, waging continuous theoretical and sometimes practical battles against each "hierarchical" and "patriarchal" fragment of the whole they oppose: capitalism and fascism, colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism, racism and sexism, agism, consumerism, the entire vast plethora of "isms" and "ologies" making up the "modern" (or "post-modern") society they inhabit.⁴⁷ Frustrated and stymied in their efforts to come up with a new or different conceptualization by which to guide their oppositional project, many of the most alienated—and therefore most committed to achieving fundamental social change—eventually opt for the intellectual/emotional reassurance of prepackaged "radical solutions." Typically, these assume the form of yet another battery of "isms" based in all the same core assumptions as the system being opposed. This is especially true of that galaxy of doctrinal tendencies falling within the general rubric of "marxism"—berNSTEINIAN revisionism, council

Indians Are Us?

communism, marxism-leninism, stalinism, maoism, etc.—but it is also an actuality pervading most variants of feminism, environmentalism, and anarchism/anti-authoritarianism as well.⁴⁸

Others, burned out by an endless diet of increasingly sterile polemical chatter and symbolic political action, defect from the resistance altogether, deforming what German New Left theorist Rudi Dutschke⁴⁹ once advocated as "a long march through the institutions" into an outright embrace of the false and reactionary "security" found in statism and bureaucratic corporatism (this is a tendency exemplified in the U.S. by such 1960s radical figures as Tom Hayden, Jerry Rubin, Eldridge Cleaver, David Horowitz, and Rennie Davis).⁵⁰ A mainstay occupation of this coterie has been academia, wherein they typically maintain an increasingly irrelevant and detached "critical" discourse, calculated mainly to negate whatever transformative value or utility might be lodged in the concrete oppositional political engagement they formerly pursued.⁵¹

Some members of each group—formula radicals and sell-outs—end up glossing over the psychic void left by their default in arriving at a genuinely alternative vision, immersing themselves either in some formalized religion (Catholicism, for example, or, somewhat less frequently, denominations of Islam or Buddhism), or the polyglot "spiritualism" offered by the New Age/Men's Movement/Hobbyism syndrome.⁵² This futile cycle is now in its third successive generation of repetition among European and Euroamerican activists since the so-called "new student movement" was born only thirty years ago. At

INDIANS ARE US?

one level or another, almost all of those currently involved, and quite a large proportion of those who once were, are figuratively screaming for a workable means of breaking the cycle, some way of founding themselves for a sustained and successful effort to effect societal change rather than the series of dead-ends they've encountered up till now. Yet a functional alternative exists, and has always existed.

The German Tour Revisited

This was brought home to me most dramatically during my earlier-mentioned speaking tour of Germany, a trip geared to include not only my own presentations, but those of M. Annette Jaimes, Bob Robideau, and Paulette D'Auteuil as well.⁵³ The question most frequently asked by those who turned out to hear us speak on the struggle for liberation in Native North America was "What can we do to help?" Quite uniformly, the answer provided by all four of us to this query was that, strategically, the most important assistance the people in the audience could render American Indians would be to win their own struggle for liberation in Germany. In effect, we reiterated time after time, this would eliminate the German corporate state as a linchpin of the global politico-economic order in which the United States (along with its Canadian satellite) serves as the hub.

"You must understand," we stated each time the question arose, "that we really mean it when we say we are all related. Consequently, we see the mechanisms of our oppression as being equally interrelated. Given this perspective, we cannot help but see a

232

Indians Are Us?

victory for you as being simultaneously a victory for us, and vice versa; that a weakening of your enemy here in Germany necessarily weakens ours there, in North America; that your liberation is inseparably linked to our own, and that you should see ours as advancing yours. Perhaps, then, the question should be reversed: what is it that we can best do to help *you* succeed?"

As an expression of solidarity, these sentiments were on every occasion roundly applauded. Invariably, however, they also produced a set of rejoinders intended to qualify the implications of what we'd said to the point of negation. The usual drift of these responses was that the German and American Indian situations and resulting struggles are entirely different, and thus not to be compared in the manner we'd attempted. This is true, those making this point argued, because Indians are colonized peoples while the Germans were colonizers. We Indians, they went on, must therefore fight to free our occupied and underdeveloped landbase(s) while the German opposition, effectively landless, struggles to rearrange social and economic relations within an advanced industrial society. Most importantly, they concluded, native people in America hold the advantage of possessing cultures separate and distinct from that which we oppose, while the German opposition, by contrast, must contend with the circumstance of being essentially "cultureless" and disoriented.⁵⁴

After every presentation, we were forced to take strong exception to such notions. "As long-term participants in the national liberation struggle of American Indians," we said, "we have been forced

233

Indians Are Us?

tory and traditions, you leave yourselves with neither an established point-of-departure from which to launch your own struggle for liberation, nor any set of goals and objectives to guide that struggle other than abstractions. You are thereby left effectively anchorless and rudderless, adrift on a stormy sea. You have lost your maps and compass, so you have no idea where you are or where to turn for help. Worst of all, you sense that the ship on which you find yourselves trapped is rapidly sinking. We can imagine no more terrifying situation to be in, and, as relatives, we would like to throw you a life preserver.

"So here it is," we went on. "It takes the form of an insight offered by our elders: 'To understand where you are, you must know where you've been, and you must know where you are to understand where you are going.'⁵⁷ For us, you see, the past, present, and future are all equally important parts of the same indivisible whole. And we believe this is as true for you as it is for us. In other words, you must set yourselves to reclaiming your own indigenous past. You must come to know it in its own terms—the terms of its internal values and understandings, and the way these were applied to living in this world—not the terms imposed upon it by the order which set out to destroy it. You must learn to put your knowledge of this heritage to use as a lens through which you can clarify your present circumstance, to "know where you are," so to speak. And, from this, you can begin to chart the course of your struggle into the future. Put still another way, you, no less than us, must forge the conceptual tools that will allow you to carefully and consciously ori-

235

INDIANS ARE US?

into knowing the nature of colonialism very well. Along with you, we understand that the colonization we experience finds its origin in the matrix of European culture. But, apparently unlike you, we also understand that in order for Europe to do what it has done to us—in fact, for Europe to become 'Europe' at all—it first had to do the same thing to all of you. In other words, to become a colonizing culture, Europe had first to colonize *itself*.⁵⁵ To the extent that this is true, we find it fair to say that if our struggle must be explicitly anticolonial in its form, content, and aspirations, yours must be even more so. You have, after all, been colonized far longer than we, and therefore much more completely. In fact, your colonization has by now been consolidated to such an extent that—with certain notable exceptions, like the Irish and Euskadi (Basque) nationalists—you no longer even see yourselves as having been colonized.⁵⁶ The result is that you've become self-colonizing, conditioned to be so self-identified with your own oppression that you've lost your ability to see it for what it is, much less to resist it in any coherent way.

"You seem to feel that you are either completely disconnected from your own heritage of having been conquered and colonized, or that you can and should disconnect yourselves from it as a means of destroying that which oppresses you. We believe, on the other hand, that your internalization of this self-hating outlook is exactly what your oppressors want most to see you do. Such a posture on your part simply perfects and completes the structure of your domination. It is inherently self-defeating because in denying yourselves the meaning of your own his-

234

Indians Are Us?

that these women were the leaders of your own indigenous cultures.⁵⁸ The span of time separating you from a still-flourishing practice of your native ways is thus not so great as you would have us—and yourselves—believe. It's been 200 years, no more. And we also know that there are still those among your people who retain the knowledge of your past, knowledge handed down from one generation to the next, century after century. We can give you directions to some of them if you like, but we think you know they are there.⁵⁹ You can begin to draw appropriate lessons and instruction from these faith-keepers, if you want to.

"We have said that 'for the world to live, Europe must die.'⁶⁰ We meant it when we said it, and we still do. But do not be confused. The statement was never intended to exclude you or consign you, as people, to oblivion. We believe the idea underlying that statement holds just as true for you as it does for anyone else. You *do* have a choice, because you are not who you've been convinced to believe you are. Or, at least not necessarily. You are not necessarily a part of the colonizing, predatory reality of 'Europe.' You are not even necessarily 'Germans,' with all that that implies. You are, or can be, who your ancestors were and who the faith-keepers of your cultures remain: Angles, Saxons, Huns, Goths, Visigoths. The choice is yours, but in order for it to have meaning you must meet the responsibilities which come with it."

Objections and Responses

Such reasoning provoked considerable consternation among listeners. "But," more than one

237

INDIANS ARE US?

ent your struggle to regaining what it is that has been taken from you rather than presuming a unique ability to invent it all anew. You must begin with the decolonization of your own minds, with a restoration of your understanding of who you are, where you come from, what it is that has been done to you to take you to the place in which you now find yourselves. Then, and *only* then, it seems to us, will you be able to free yourselves from your present dilemma.

"Look at us, and really *hear* what we're saying," we demanded. "We are not unique in being indigenous people. *Everyone* is indigenous somewhere. You are indigenous here. You, no more than we, are landless; your land is occupied by an alien force, just like ours. You, just like us, have an overriding obligation to liberate your homeland. You, no less than we, have models in your own traditions upon which to base your alternatives to the social, political, and economic structures now imposed upon you. It is your responsibility to put yourselves in direct communication with these traditions, just as it is our responsibility to remain in contact with ours. We cannot fulfill this responsibility for you any more than you can fulfill ours for us.

"You say that the knowledge we speak of was taken from you too long ago, at the time of Charlemagne, more than a thousand years ago. Because of this, you say, the gulf of time separating then from now is too great, that what was taken then is now lost and gone. We know better. We know, and so do you, that right up into the 1700s your 'European' colonizers were still busily burning 'witches' at the stake. We know, and you know too,

236

Indians Are Us?

mensional, possessed of positive as well as negative polarities. It should be obvious that the nazis didn't represent or crystallize your indigenous traditions. Instead, they perverted your heritage for their own purposes, using your ancestral traditions against themselves in a fashion meant to supplant and destroy them. The European predator has always done this, whenever it was not simply trying to suppress the indigenous host upon which it feeds. Perhaps the nazis were the most overt, and in some ways the most successful, in doing this in recent times. And for that reason some of us view them as being a sort of culmination of all that is European. But, the point is, they very deliberately tapped the negative rather than the positive potential of what we are discussing.

"Now, polarities aside," we continued, "the magnitude of favorable response accorded by the mass of Germans to the themes taken up by the nazis during the 1930s illustrates perfectly the importance of the question we are raising.⁶¹ There is unquestionably a tremendous yearning among all peoples, including your own—and you yourselves, for that matter—for a sense of connectedness to their roots. This yearning, although often sublimated, translates quite readily into transformative power whenever (and however) it is effectively addressed.⁶² Hence, part of what we are arguing is that you must consciously establish the positive polarity of your heritage as a counter to the negative impulse created by the nazis. If you don't, it's likely we're going to witness German officials walking around in black death's head uniforms all over again. The signs are there, you must admit.⁶³ And

239

INDIANS ARE US?

exclaimed with unpretended horror, "think of who you're speaking to! These are very dangerous ideas you are advocating. You are in Germany, among people raised to see themselves as Germans, and yet, at least in part, you are telling us we should do exactly what the nazis did! We Germans, at least those of us who are consciously anti-fascist and anti-racist, renounce such excavations of our heritage precisely because of our country's own recent experiences with them. We know where Hitler's politics of 'blood and soil' led not just us but the world. We know the outcome of Himmler's reassertion of 'Germanic paganism.' Right now, we are being forced to confront a resurgence of nazism in this country. Surely you can't be arguing that we should join in the resurrection of all that."

"Of course not!" we retorted. "We, as American Indians, have at least as much reason to hate nazism as any people on earth. Not much of anything done by the nazis to people here had not already been done to us, for centuries, and some of the things the nazis did during their twelve years in power are *still* being done to us today. Much of what has been done to us in North America was done, and continues to be done, on the basis of philosophical rationalizations indistinguishable from those used by the nazis to justify their policies. If you want to look at it that way, you could say that anti-nazism is part of the absolute bedrock upon which our struggle is based. So, don't even *hint* that any part of our perspective is somehow 'pro-nazi.'

"We are aware that this is a highly emotional issue for you. But try and bear in mind that the world isn't one-dimensional. Everything is multidimensional.

238

INDIANS ARE US?

you must also admit there's a certain logic involved, since you yourselves seem bent upon abandoning the power of your indigenous traditions to nazism. Suffice it to say we'd not give *our* traditions over to the uncontested use of nazis. Maybe you shouldn't either."

Such remarks usually engendered commentary about how the audience had "never viewed the matter in this light," followed by questions as to how a positive expression of German indigenism might be fostered. "Actually," we said, "it seems to us you're already doing this. It's all in how you look at things and how you go about explaining them to others. Try this: You have currently, as a collective response to perceived problems of centralization within the German left, atomized into what you call *Autonomen*. These we understand to be a panorama of autonomous affinity groups bound together in certain lines of thought and action by a definable range of issues and aspirations.⁶⁴ Correct? So, instead of trying to explain this development to yourselves and everyone else as some "new and revolutionary tendency"—which it certainly is not—how about conceiving of it as an effort to recreate the kinds of social organization and political consensus marking your ancient 'tribal' cultures (adapted of course to the contemporary context)?

"Making such an effort to connect what you are doing to what was done quite successfully by your ancestors, and using that connection as a mode through which to prefigure what you wish to accomplish in the future, would serve to (re)contextualize your efforts in a way you've never before attempted. It would allow you to obtain a sense of your own

Indians Are Us?

cultural continuity which, at present, appears to be conspicuously absent in your struggle. It would allow you to experience the sense of empowerment which comes with reaching into your own history at the deepest level and altering outcomes you've quite correctly decided are unacceptable. This is as opposed to your trying to invent some entirely different history for yourselves. We predict a project of this sort, if approached carefully and with considerable flexibility from the outset, would revitalize your struggle in ways which will astound you.

"Here's another possibility: You are at the moment seriously engaged in efforts to redefine power relations between men and women, and in finding ways to actualize these redefined relationships. Instead of trying to reinvent the wheel in this respect, why not see it as an attempt to recon-stitute in the modern setting the kind of gender balance that prevailed among your ancestors? Surely this makes as much sense as attempting to fabricate a whole new set of relations. And, quite possibly, it would enable you to explain your intentions in this regard to a whole range of people who are frankly skeptical right now, in a manner which would attract them rather than repelling them.

"Again: You are primarily an urban-based movement in which 'squatting' plays a very prominent role.⁶⁵ Why not frame this in terms of liberating your space in very much the same way we approach the liberation of our land? The particulars are very different, but the principle involved would seem to us to be quite similar. And it looks likely to us that thinking of squatting in this way would tend to lead you right back toward your traditional relationship

INDIANS ARE US?

to land/space. This seems even more probable when squatting is considered in combination with the experiments in collectivism and communalism which are its integral aspects. A lot of translation is required to make these connections, but that too is exactly the point. Translation between the concrete and the theoretical is *always* necessary in the formation of praxis. What we're recommending is no different from any other approach in this respect. The question is whether these translations will serve to link political activity to reassertion of indigenous traditions, or to force an even further disjuncture in that regard. That's true in any setting, whether it's yours or ours. As we said, there are choices to be made.

"These are merely a few preliminary possibilities we've been able to observe during the short time we've been here," we concluded. "We're sure there are many others. What's important, however, is that we can and must all begin wherever we find ourselves. Start with what already exists in terms of resistance, link this resistance directly to your own native traditions, and build from there. The sequence is a bit different, but that's basically what we in the American Indian Movement have had to do. And we can testify that the process works. You end up with a truly organic and internally sustainable framework within which to engage in liberatory struggle. Plainly, this is something very different from Adolf Hitler's conducting of 'blood rituals' on the playing fields of Nuremberg,⁶⁶ or Heinrich Himmler's convening of some kind of 'Mystic Order of the SS' in a castle at Wewelsburg,⁶⁷ just as it's something very different from tripped-out hippies

242

Indians Are Us?

prancing about in the grass every spring pretending they're 'rediscovering' the literal ceremonial forms of the ancient Celts, or a bunch of yuppies spending their off-hours playing at being American Indians. All of these are facets of the negative polarity you so rightly reject. We are arguing, not that you should drop your rejection of the negative, but that you should its positive alternative. Let's not confuse the two. And let's not throw the baby out with the bath water. Okay?"

Applications to North America

It is not necessary for crows to become eagles.

—Sitting Bull
1888

Much of what has been said with regard to Germany can be transposed for application in North America, albeit there can be no suggestion that Euroamericans are in any way indigenous to this land (cutesy bumper stickers reading "Colorado Native" and displayed by blond suburbanites do nothing to change this). What is meant is that the imperative of reconnecting themselves to their own traditional roots pertains as much, and in some ways more, to this dislocated segment of the European population as it does to their cousins who have remained in the Old World. By extension, the same point can be made with regard to the descendants of those groups of European invaders who washed up on the beach in other quarters of the planet these past five hundred years: in various locales of South and Central America, for instance, and in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and

243

INDIANS ARE US?

much of Polynesia and Micronesia. In effect, the rule would apply wherever settler state colonialism has come into existence.⁶⁸

Likely, it will be far more difficult for those caught up in Europe's far-flung diaspora to accomplish this than it may be for those still within the confines of their native geography. The latter plainly enjoy a much greater proximity to the sources of their indigenous traditions, while the former have undergone several generations of continuous indoctrination to see themselves as "new peoples" forging entirely new cultures.⁶⁹ The sheer impossibility of this last has inflicted upon those among the Euro-diaspora with an additional dimension of identity confusion largely absent among even the most conspicuously deculturated elements of the subcontinent itself. Rather than serving as a deterrent, however, this circumstance should be understood as heightening the urgency assigned the reconstructive task facing Euroamericans and others, elsewhere, who find themselves in similar situations.

By and large, the Germans have at least come to understand, and to accept, what nazism was and is. This has allowed the best among them to seek to distance themselves from it by undertaking whatever political action is required to destroy it once and for all.⁷⁰ Their posture in this respect provides them a necessary foundation for resumption of cultural/spiritual traditions among themselves which constitute a direct and fully-internalized antidote to the nazi impulse. In effecting this reconnection to their own indigenous heritage, the German dissidents will at last be able to see nazism—that

Indians Are Us?

logical culmination of so much of the predatory synthesis which is "Europe"—as being, not something born of their own traditions, but as something as alien and antithetical to those traditions as it was/is to the traditions of any other people in the world. In this way, by reintegrating themselves with their indigenous selves, they simultaneously reintegrate themselves with the rest of humanity itself.

In North America, by contrast, no such cognition can be said to have taken hold, even among the most politically-developed sectors of the Euroamerican population. Instead, denial remains the norm. Otherwise progressive whites still seek at all costs to evade even the most obvious correlations between their own history in the New World and that of the nazis in the Old. A favorite intellectual parlor game remains the debate over whether genocide is "really" an "appropriate" term to describe the physical eradication of some 98 percent of the continent's native population between 1500 and 1900.⁷¹ "Concern" is usually expressed that comparisons between the U.S. government's assertion of its "Manifest Destiny" to expropriate through armed force about 97.5 percent of all native land, and the nazis' subsequent effort to implement what they called "*Lebensraumpolitik*"—the expropriation through conquest of territory belonging to the Poles, Slavs, and other "inferior" peoples only a generation later—might be "misleading" or "oversimplified."⁷²

The logical contortions through which Euroamericans persist in putting themselves in this process of avoiding reality are sometimes truly amazing. A salient example is that of James Axtell, a white "revisionist" historian quite prone to

INDIANS ARE US?

announcing his "sympathies" with Indians, has repeatedly gone on record arguing in the most vociferous fashion that it is both "unfair" and "contrary to sound historiography" to compare European invaders and settlers in the Americas to nazis. His reasoning? Because, he says, the former were, "after all, human beings. They were husbands, fathers, brothers, uncles, sons and lovers. And we must try to reach back in time to understand them as such."⁷³ Exactly what he thinks the nazis were, if not human beings fulfilling identical roles in their society, is left unstated. For that matter, Axtell fails to address how he ever arrived at the novel conclusion that either the nazis or European invaders and Euroamerican settlers in the New World consisted only of men.

A more sophisticated ploy consists of a ready concession on the part of white activists/theorists that what was done to America's indigenous peoples was "tragic," even while raising carefully loaded questions suggesting that things are working out "for the best" in any event.⁷⁴ "Didn't Indians fight wars with one another?" the question goes, implying that the native practice of engaging in rough inter-group skirmishing—a matter more akin to full-contact sports like football, hockey, and rugby than anything else—somehow equates to Europe's wars of conquest and annihilation, and that traditional indigenous societies therefore stand to gain as much from Euroamerican conceptions of pacifism as anyone else.⁷⁵ (You bet, boss. Left to our own devices, we'd undoubtedly have exterminated ourselves. Praise the lord that y'all came along to save us from ourselves.)

246

Indians Are Us?

Marxian organizations like the Revolutionary Communist Party USA express deep concern that native people's economies might have been so unrestrained that we were commonly forced to eat our own excrement to survive, a premise clearly implying that Euroamerica's industrial devastation of our homelands has ultimately worked to our advantage, ensuring our "material security" whether we're grateful enough to admit it or not.⁷⁶ (Thanks, boss. We were tired of eating shit anyway. Glad you came and taught us to farm.)⁷⁷ The "cutting edge" ecologists of Earth First! have conjured up queries as to whether Indians weren't "the continent's first environmental pillagers"—they claim we beat all the woolly mammoths to death with sticks, among other things—meaning we were always sorely in need of Euroamerica's much more advanced views on preserving the natural order.⁷⁸

White male anarchists fret over possible "authoritarian" aspects of our societies—"You had leaders, didn't you? That's hierarchy!"⁷⁹ — while their feminist sisters worry that our societies may have been "sexist" in their functioning.⁸⁰ (Oh no, boss. We too managed to think our way through to a position in which women did the heavy lifting and men bore the children. Besides, hadn't you heard? We were all "queer," in the old days, so your concerns about our being patriarchal have always been unwarranted.)⁸¹ Even the animal rights movement chimes in from time to time, discomfited that we were traditionally so unkind to "non-human members of our sacred natural order" as to eat their flesh.⁸² (Hey, no sweat, boss. We'll jump right on your no-meat bandwagon. But don't forget the

247

INDIANS ARE US?

sacred Cherokee Clan of the Carrot. You'll have to reciprocate our gesture of solidarity by not eating any more fruits and vegetables either. Or had you forgotten that plants are non-human members of the natural order as well? Have a nice fast, buckaroo.)

Not until such apologist and ultimately white supremacist attitudes begin to be dispelled within at least that sector of Euroamerican society which claims to represent an alternative to U.S./Canadian business-as-usual can there be hope of *any* genuinely positive social transformation in North America. And only in acknowledging the real rather than invented nature of their history, as the German opposition has done long since, can they begin to come to grips with such things.⁸³ From there, they too will be able to position themselves—psychologically, intellectually, and eventually in practical terms—to step outside that history, not in a manner which continues it by presuming to appropriate the histories and cultural identities of its victims, but in ways allowing them to recapture its antecedent meanings and values. Restated, Euroamericans, like their European counterparts, will then be able to start reconnecting themselves to their indigenous traditions and identities in ways which instill pride rather than guilt, empowering themselves to join in the negation of the construct of “Europe” which has temporarily suppressed their cultures as well as ours.

At base, the same principle applies here that pertains “over there.” As our delegation put it repeatedly to the Germans in our closing remarks, “The indigenous peoples of the Americas can, have,

248

Indians Are Us?

and will continue to join hands with the indigenous peoples of this land, just as we do with those of any other. We are reaching out to you by our very act of being here, and of saying what we are saying to you. We have faith in you, a faith that you will be able to rejoin the family of humanity as peoples interacting respectfully and harmoniously—on the basis of your own ancestral ways—with the traditions of all other peoples. We are at this time expressing a faith in you that you perhaps lack in yourselves. But, and make no mistake about this, we *cannot* and *will not* join hands with those who default on this responsibility, who instead insist upon wielding an imagined right to stand as part of Europe's synthetic and predatory tradition, the tradition of colonization, genocide, racism, and ecocide. The choice, as we've said over and over again, is yours to make. It cannot be made for you. You alone must make your choice and act on it, just as we have had to make and act upon ours.”

In North America, it will be evident that affirmative choices along these lines have begun to emerge among self-proclaimed progressives, not when figures like Robert Bly are simply dismissed as being ridiculous kooks, or condoned as harmless irrelevancies,⁸⁴ but when they come to be treated by “their own” as signifying the kind of menace they actually entail. Only when white males themselves start to display the sort of profound outrage at the activities of groups like the Men's Movement as is manifested by its victims—when they rather than we begin to shut down the movement's meetings, burn its sweat lodges, impound and return the sacred objects it desecrates, and otherwise make its

249

Indians Are Us?

points out that, by this, they appear to mean that they've been rendered marginally less empowered to dominate everyone else than they were three decades ago. Their response is increasingly to overcome this perceived victimization by finding ways and means, often through cooptation of the liberatory methods developed by those they're accustomed to dominating, of reestablishing their "proper authority."

Statements by Robert Bly during workshop session at the University of Colorado/Boulder, 1992.

Robert Bly, *Iron John: A Book About Men* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1990). The title is taken from the fairy tale "The Story of Iron John" by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, of which Bly provides his own translation from the German.

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- 4.
5. As examples, see Patrick M. Arnold, *Wildmen, Warriors and Kings: Masculine Spirituality and the Bible* (New York: Crossroad Publishers, 1991); Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of Masculine Nature* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990); R.J. Stewart, *Celebrating the Male Mysteries* (Bath, UK: Arcania Publications, 1991); and Kenneth Weicher, Art Barker, and F.W. McCaughy, *Save the Males: Why Men Are Mistreated, Misdiagnosed, and Misunderstood* (Washington, D.C.: Pia Press, 1991). Anthologies include John Matthews's *Choirs of the God: Revisiting Masculinity* (London: Harper Mandala Books, 1991); and Christopher Harding's *Wingspan: Inside the Men's Movement* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992). Or, in another medium, try Robert Moore, *Rediscovering Men's Potentials* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron, 1988; set of four cassette tapes).
- 6.

Consider, for example, *Shaman's Drum* (produced in Willis, CA), described as a "glossy quarterly journal of experiential shamanism," native medicineways,

INDIANS ARE US?

functioning impossible—will we be able to say with confidence that Euroamerica has finally accepted that Indians are Indians, not toys to be played with by whoever can afford the price of the game. Only then will we be able to say that the "Indians 'R' Us" brand of cultural appropriation and genocide has passed, or at least is passing, and that Euroamericans are finally coming to terms with who they've been and, much more importantly, who and what it is they can become. Then, finally, these immigrants can at last be accepted among us upon our shores, fulfilling the speculation of the Dwamish leader Seattle in 1854: "We may be brothers after all." As he said then, "We shall see."³⁵

Notes

1. Bly's political dimension began to take form with publication of his interview "What Men Really Want" in *New Age*, May 1982. For an overview of his verse, see Robert Bly, *Selected Poems* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986). Earlier collections include *Silence in the Snowy Fields* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1962), *This Body Is Made from Camphor and Gopherwood* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), *This Tree Will Be Here for a Thousand Years* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), *News of the Universe* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1981), *The Man in the Black Coat Turns* (New York: Doubleday Publishers, 1981), and *Loving a Woman in Two Worlds* (New York: Doubleday Publishers, 1985).
2. See Susieday, "Male Liberation," *Z Magazine*, June 1993, pp. 10-12. The author cites a recent *Newsweek* poll indicating that some 48 percent of Euroamerican males believe they are being "victimized" by a "loss of influence" in U.S. society. She

Indians Are Us?

- voyage. In any event the conquest and colonization of the disparate populations of the subcontinent must be viewed as an integral and requisite dimension of Europe's coming into being.
56. For interesting insights on the 800-year—and counting—Irish national liberation struggle against English colonization, see Ciarán de Baróid, *Ballymurphy and the Irish War* (London: Pluto Press, 1990). On the Euskadi, see Pedro Ibarra Guéll, *La evolución estratégica de ETA* (Donstia, 1987).
57. Although I doubt this is a "definitive" attribution, I first heard the matter put this way by the late Creek spiritual leader Phillip Deer in 1982.
58. As Carolyn Merchant observes in her book, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980, pp. 134, 140): "Based on a fully articulated doctrine emerging at the end of the fifteenth century in the antifeminist tract *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), or "Hammer of the Witches," by the German Dominicans Heinrich Institor and Jacob Sprenger, and in a series of art works by Hans Baldung Grien and Albert Dürer, witch trials for the next two hundred years threatened the lives of women all over Europe, especially in the lands of the Holy Roman Empire....The view of nature associated with witchcraft was personal animism. The world of the witches was antihierarchical and everywhere infused with spirits. Every natural object, every animal, every tree contained a spirit...." Sound familiar? These women who were being burned alive, were thus murdered precisely because they served as primary repositories of the European subcontinent's indigenous codes of knowledge and corresponding "pagan" ritual.
59. The Cherokee artist Jimmie Durham tells a story of related interest. In 1986, after delivering an invited lecture at Oxford, he was asked whether he'd like to

INDIANS ARE US?

51. For a partial analysis of this phenomenon in the U.S., see Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).
52. Eldridge Cleaver, for instance, first became a "born again" Christian, and then converted to Mormonism. In 1971, Rennie Davis became a groupie of the then-adolescent guru Maharaj Ji.
53. M. Annette Jaimes (Juanéño/Yaquí) is editor of *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance* (Boston: South End Press, 1992). Bob Robideau, long-time AIM activist, was a codefendant of Leonard Peltier and former National Director of the Peltier Defense Committee. Paulette D'Auteuil is a Euroamerican anti-imperialist activist and former member of the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee.
54. The same recording is played in a seemingly endless loop in the United States. If I had a dollar for every white student or activist who has approached me over the past decade bemoaning the fact that he or she has "no culture," I'd need no other income next year. If American Indians as a whole received such payment, we could probably buy back North America and be done with it (just kidding, folks).
55. I personally date the advent of Europe from the coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor in A.D. 800, and the subsequent systematic subordination of indigenous Teutonic peoples to central authority. In his book, *The Birth of Europe* (Philadelphia/New York: Evans-Lippencott Publishers, 1966), Robert Lopez treats this as a "prelude," and dates the advent about two centuries later. In some ways, an even better case can be made that "Europe" in any true sense did not emerge until the mid-to-late fifteenth century, with the final Ottoman conquest of Byzantium (Constantinople), defeat of the Moors in Iberia, and the first Columbian

Understanding Colonizer Status

Waziyatawin

“Colonial relations do not stem from individual good will or actions; they exist before his arrival or his birth, and whether he accepts or rejects them matters little.”

-Albert Memmi

Colonization v. Oppression

Many oppressed people around the world identify with the oppression experienced by colonized people. Often, if they live in a colonized society, the poor, oppressed, disenfranchised, and marginalized individuals or classes have difficulty identifying with the colonizers and thus seek to identify with the colonized. Because they live in a society in which colonization is ongoing, they begin to see themselves as colonized.

This discussion is designed to help differentiate between oppression and colonization, and to clearly demarcate colonization as a distinct historical, political, social, and economic relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In our volume *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research Press, 2005), Michael Yellow Bird and I offered this definition:

Colonization refers to both the formal and informal methods (behaviors, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economies) that maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, lands and resources.

In the context of the United States, everyone is part of this colonial society. By definition, however, Indigenous Peoples are the only people identifiable as colonized. Because every bit of land and every natural resource claimed by the United States was taken at Indigenous expense, anyone who occupies that land and benefits from our resources is experiencing colonial privilege. Every non-Indigenous person in the country continues to benefit from Indigenous loss. In Minnesota, for example, all Minnesotans continue to benefit from the genocide perpetrated against Dakota people and the ethnic cleansing of our people. Occupation of Dakota homeland, especially while the vast majority of Dakota people still live in exile, places all occupants in the colonizer class. No matter the extent of oppression faced by various settler groups, being a settler means belonging to the class of colonizers.

It may be helpful to develop your own definition of oppression and clearly distinguish how that definition differs from your understanding of colonization.

Read: Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*

Albert Memmi offers one of the clearest explanations of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in his classic work that is still relevant in the 21st century colonial context. Understanding the desire of many colonizers to distinguish themselves from the brutality of colonization, Memmi imagines an intermediary category in the African colonial context that he calls the “colonial.” “A colonial,” he states, “is a European living in a colony but having no privileges, whose living conditions are not higher than those of a colonized person of equivalent economic and social status.” (10) Many oppressed or marginalized people would choose to embrace this identity because they envision the distinction between themselves and the colonial elites as both fundamental and immense. While the chasm between powerful and wealthy colonizers (such as corporate heads and politicians) and the poor, working-classes, for example, is certainly great, this

still does not alter the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Thus, Memmi explains, “The colonial does not exist, because it is not up to the European in the colonies to remain a colonial, even if he had so intended. Whether he expressly wishes it or not, he is received as a privileged person by the institutions, customs and people.” (17) All colonizers, by continuing their occupation of another People’s homeland, remain colonizers, no matter their intent.

Memmi describes two kinds of colonizers: self-rejecting and self-accepting (read pages 19-76). Self-rejecting colonizers live in moral torment as they recognize the injustice of colonialism and do not want to participate in the subjugation of other human beings. They can return to their country of origin and relieve themselves of their guilt, or they can stay in the colony and continue to live a life fraught with contradictions. This is a difficult path. Memmi would even say this path is impossible to sustain. Drawing on his experience with leftist, self-rejecting colonizers, Memmi describes the point of divergence between colonizers and the colonized, “But now he [the leftist] discovers that there is no connection between the liberation of the colonized and the application of a left-wing program. And that, in fact, he is perhaps aiding the birth of a social order in which there is no room for a leftist as such, at least in the near future.” (34)

Memmi refers to the self-accepting colonizer as a colonialist. A colonialist is a “colonizer who agrees to be a colonizer.” About the colonialist Memmi tells us, “By making his position explicit, he seeks to legitimize colonization. This is a more logical attitude, materially more coherent than the tormented dance of the colonizer who refuses and continues to live in the colony.” (45) In the United States, nearly everyone has agreed to be a colonizer. Every day they engage in activities that continue to justify the theft of Indigenous lands, the killing and subjugation of Indigenous Peoples, and the ruthless exploitation of Indigenous resources. From birth, they begin teaching their children myths regarding the righteousness of the existing social order. That message is reinforced throughout their lives. It is hard work maintaining such lies, so whenever the colonized threaten to disrupt their myth-making, they are quickly silenced, suppressed, and further subjugated. The actions of the colonialist are predictable and consistent.

Non-Dakota allies are essentially choosing the path of a self-rejecting colonizer. If you support Dakota liberation, what are the implications of Dakota liberation for you? What is your vision of the future? If you are an anarchist, for example, what is your anarchist vision of the future? How might this differ from our vision of Dakota liberation? If we realize Dakota liberation, what will your role be? Many self-rejecting colonizers maintain fantasies, at least for a while, about their incorporation into Indigenous societies post-liberation. These fantasies need to be shed quickly. Most colonizers will not be incorporated into our cultures post-liberation. Can you accept this?

Disagreements with Memmi

While I agree with Memmi’s articulation of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, I also believe there is an important role that the self-rejecting colonizer can play in our struggle. Indeed, I think ally support of Dakota liberation will help facilitate the liberation of everyone from a perverse society. Not only do I believe that we need non-Dakota allies in our struggle, I also believe it is possible to have colonizer allies, including those who are willing to kill or die for our struggle.

Because of our numerical minority status, if we sought armed revolution by ourselves (without white allies), we would likely face complete extermination. We need dedicated allies who will stand on the front lines with us, or who are on the frontlines of solidarity actions to support us. Memmi would say these white allies do not exist. What do you think? What is your level of commitment?

Memmi argues that for decolonization to occur, the colonizers must leave. In most decolonization struggles, the colonized push the colonizers to go home. This is not the position I advocate, but certainly some Dakota people will express such sentiments. How will you respond to this?

More Questions for Consideration

- If you are a colonizer rejecting colonizer status, are you were willing to do whatever was necessary to assist in our liberation struggle, including killing, dying, or life-imprisonment
- Are you willing to work to challenge the status quo rather than maintain it?
- Are you willing to take on a lifetime of ambiguity, uncertainty, moral torment that is the life of a colonizer who rejects colonizer status?
- Are you willing to constantly engage in critical self-reflection and routinely have your white colonizer programming challenged?

About Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation is an issue that we must engage with all potential non-Indigenous allies. When colonizers appropriate aspects of our culture, this is just another part of a long colonial history. Colonizing society has worked systematically, over the centuries, to strip our cultures from us. Most Dakota people today are prevented, still, from living as Dakota people within our homeland. All aspects of our lives are subject to colonial regulation. That is, we are not in control of caring for our land base, establishing our own economy, educating our children, governing our people, or practicing our own spirituality (we are still denied access to sacred sites, lands, and waters, that are central to our spiritual traditions). Consequently, we grieve the losses we have suffered and continue to suffer. Loss of culture is tied to feelings of shame and guilt (for not practicing our culture), as well as pain. Most of us do not have the privilege of learning or practicing Dakota ways of being because we are so busy trying to survive any way we can. Many of us have low expectations for our lives and for our future. Most of our communities were also heavily Christianized. Missionaries and government workers were so successful at eradicating our spirituality that throughout much of the 20th century, most of our ceremonies ceased to be practiced in Minnesota. At Upper Sioux, where I come from, we have had no traditional spiritual leadership since 1862. Even today, we do not have a spiritual leader in our community. We do not have a sundance. Our spirituality remains inaccessible to most of our community members because our people do not know where or how to begin practicing the traditions that were stripped from us. Further, many of our people feel unworthy to practice them. We are working hard to revive the spirituality, but we still have a long way to go.

What does it mean, then, to see white people practicing aspects of our culture? What does it mean when white colonizers practice aspects of our culture while that privilege is still denied to us, or remains inaccessible for a variety of reasons? It is deeply offensive to most of us. White people coming to our ceremonies do not carry the traumatic history that we do. Instead, they come with a sense of entitlement. They consider themselves cultural ambassadors and under the guise of creating peace between all peoples, they believe it is righteous to exploit our most sacred teachings. When Indigenous people object to their theft of our traditions, they dismiss those objections as hateful, angry, and un-spiritual. Yet, those individuals have appropriated our inheritance. They are practicing what has been denied our ancestors and what our children have yet to recover. It is just another assault on our spirit. This kind of violence through appropriation can extend to other cultural practices as well. For example, if colonizers are practicing sugar-bushing or wild-ricing within Dakota homeland while most of our people live in exile, they become just the latest wave of colonizers exploiting Indigenous resources at Indigenous expense. Dakota people will respond to such appropriation with anger, resentment, and hurt. This is not a good way to build solidarity with the Indigenous struggle.

Does this mean that others should never engage Indigenous ways of being? Not necessarily. If we are struggling for Indigenous liberation on Indigenous lands, all people are going to have to practice Indigenous ways of being in some form. We will all need to engage in sustainable living practices and Indigenous cultures,

including Dakota culture, offer excellent models for all people. That does not mean former-colonizers can appropriate our spirituality and ceremonial life, but it will mean they need to embrace Indigenous values such as balance and reciprocity.

In the meantime, it is far more appropriate for colonizers to work to ensure that Dakota people are able to practice Dakota ways of being. If you believe sugar-bushing and wild-ricing are important, then help Dakota people recover lands so that we can engage that practice. Perhaps, we can eventually engage such activities together.

Points to Remember for Indigenous Solidarity Activists

- The movement for Indigenous liberation is a radical political struggle
- Being an ally does not mean signing up for Indigenous spirituality
- We need strong, solid individuals who are not floundering with their own spiritual struggles
- This is not a struggle for those people who believe it's trendy to support Indigenous causes—we are in it for the long haul
- You can find Indigenous individuals who will support any position you want them to support—that is a direct result of the colonial experience
- Those indigenous individuals who encourage non-Indigenous participation in ceremonies are often (not always) those who are attempting to curry favor with white women, or white people for their own purposes
- Because this is a political struggle, it is essential to work in solidarity with critically minded and politically engaged Indigenous individuals
- Remember that decolonization is a process for both the colonizer and the colonized.

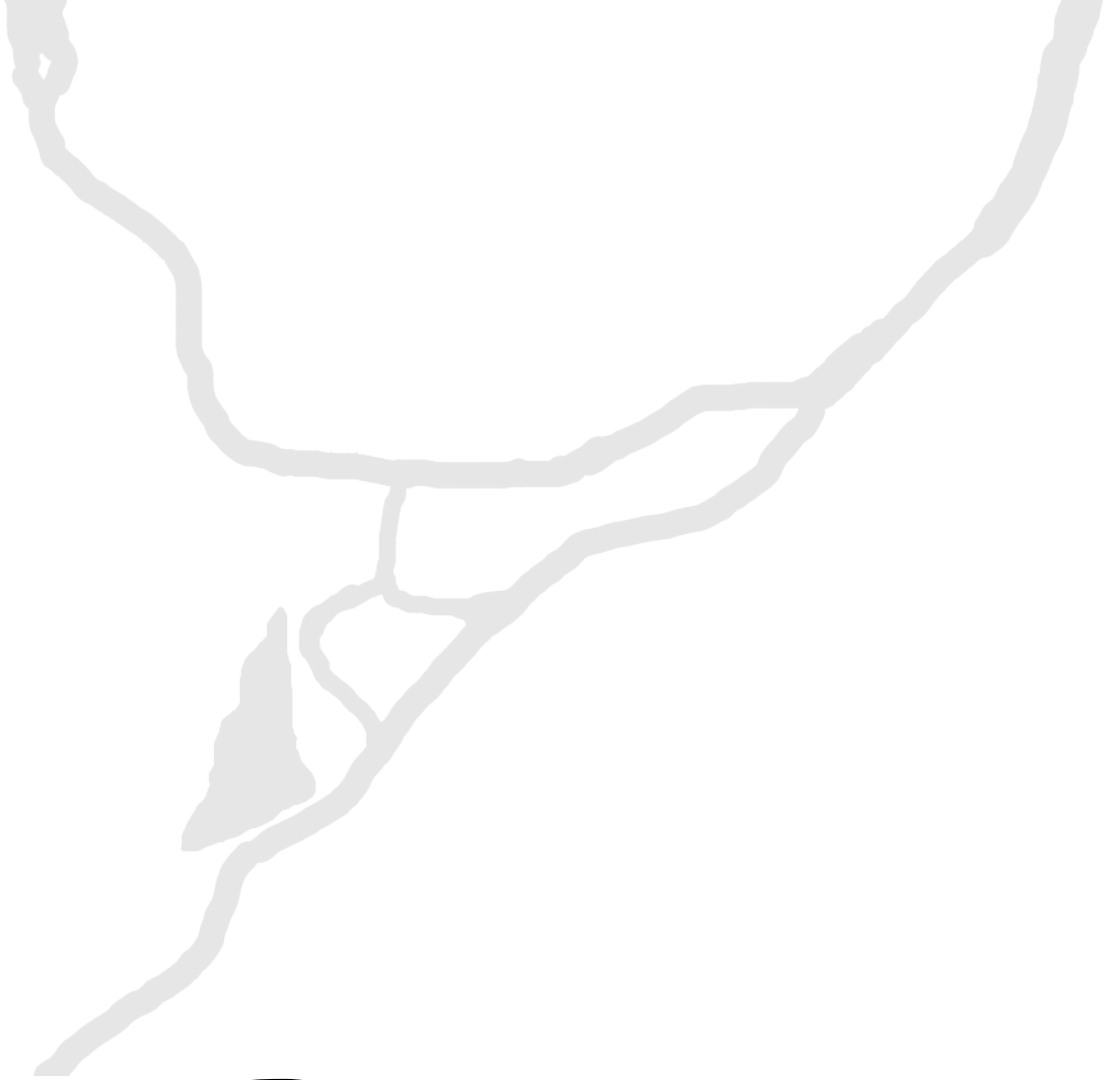
The Big Picture

In the end, we must all recognize that we are full of contradictions, colonizer and colonized alike. Even those of us who have a greater critical consciousness are tormented by the contradictions and compromises with which we must live. In the end, we all have considerable work to do.

Derrick Jensen and Aric McBay, in their latest collaboration, *What We Leave Behind*, ask us a fundamental question regarding our role in the well-being of the planet. They ask, “Will your legacy be a world who is healthier, stronger, more resilient, more diverse, than had you never lived? If not, then the world would have been better off without you. If not, then the world would have been better off had you never been born.” (191)

If we wrestle with this question, we quickly come to the conclusion that the vast majority of us would not leave a positive legacy if we left the world today, whether we are colonizers or colonized. That means that we all have significant work to do to defend the planet from further destruction.

As Indigenous Peoples, for thousands of years we have been the first defenders of our homelands. We must resume that role. Those who presume to be our allies, must join us.



Part 3

ORGANIZING

Un-Settling Settler Desires

Scott Morgensen

My presentation to the Dakota Decolonization class echoed my broader teaching and writing by centering the principles of Indigenous feminist thought and its ties to women of color and Third World feminism. Andrea Smith in her book *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (2005) writes that colonization and heteropatriarchy inherently interlink, so that opposition to one requires opposition to the other. Her Indigenous feminist argument links to the principle of intersectionality in women of color and Third World feminisms, which appears in the Combahee River Collective's "A Black Feminist Statement" (1977) in the claim that "all the major systems of oppression are interlocking."

I learned to commit to these principles by investigating and challenging the power and privilege that structure my life as a white, educationally-privileged, US American male, non-transgender and (temporarily) able-bodied. My lifelong experience as a queer person who has suffered from heteropatriarchy did teach me about oppression and resistance, as did my family's struggles with work and income. But given my social locations, those experiences were not sufficient to teach me that colonization is the condition of heteropatriarchy and capitalism in the U.S., or that all the major systems of oppression intersect. Learning this required being challenged by Indigenous and women of color and Third World feminists to study how colonization, whiteness and racism, capitalism, ableism, and heteropatriarchy interlink in the world and in my life. Such an understanding contextualizes all my words about settlers and settlement.

My writing critically investigates the desires of settlers to feel connected to Indigenous land and culture. In her contribution to this sourcebook, Waziyatawin discusses Albert Memmi's distinction of the colonizer and the colonized. I intend my use of the term "settler" to be compatible with Memmi's term "colonizer" and with its discussion by Waziyatawin. "Settler" is a way to describe colonizers that highlights their desires to be emplaced on Indigenous land. The settler desires I study are not tied to any particular politics. Among settlers, "conservatives," "liberals," and "radicals" (to name only a few) share similar desires that simply express in varied ways. For instance, settler radicals, including anarchists, have proven capable of forming movements that profess to be anticolonial even as they claim Indigenous land and culture as their own. I recognize among settler radicals a difference between those who pursue a politics that tries to sustain their ties to Indigenous land and culture, and those who question any desire to possess them. I promote the latter in this essay as a way to radicalize settlers to challenge settler colonialism and support Indigenous decolonization.

I argue that critical reflection on settler desires for Indigenous land and culture will be crucial to any effort by settlers to ally with Indigenous decolonization struggles. I invite settlers to ask: How do their desires for Indigenous land and culture express colonization and contradict efforts to support Indigenous decolonization? How can settlers question their desires for Indigenous land and culture as a basis of committing to decolonization? Settlers can study every attachment they have felt to Indigenous land and ask how those relate to colonization. Historically, a desire to live on Indigenous land and to feel connected to it--bodily, emotionally, spiritually--has been the normative formation of settlers. Settler radicals who commit to Indigenous decolonization must act differently. Is it possible, at once, for settlers to wish to live on or feel linked to Indigenous land, and to act in support of decolonization? Should settler radicals first commit to be willing to no longer live on Indigenous land or have any connection to it, as part of fully committing to work for decolonization? Note that my questions do not dictate answers to how settlers' lives will appear after pursuing such work. I merely insist that asking such questions define how settlers begin such work, so that they inform what comes after. How can settler radicals commit to be ready to no longer live on Indigenous land, or to have any connection to it as part of joining work for decolonization? How would settler radicalism appear differently if this question were central to it?

If settler radicals challenge their desires to live on Indigenous land, they also will challenge their desires

to study, practice, or feel in any way linked to Indigenous culture. I am thinking here of Andrea Smith's critique in *Conquest* of spiritual appropriation as a form of colonial and sexual violence. I also think of Waziyatawin's statement to the Dakota Decolonization class of the relationship between Indigenous land and spirituality, which makes decolonization of land necessary to the practice of Indigenous spirituality. With these claims in mind, settler radicals must ask how their feelings of attachment to Indigenous land and culture enact appropriation and violence. Settlers are supposed to be people who connect to Indigenous land--the land where they were raised, or that they inherit after settling it--by studying Indigenous history and culture and linking it to their lives. Historically, non-Natives became settlers by adapting Indigenous dwelling sites, travel routes, place names, modes of gathering or cultivating food, and spiritual knowledges and practices.¹ These acts are part of the normative function of conquest and settlement. Thus, decolonization does not follow if settlers simply study and emulate the lives of Indigenous people on Indigenous land.

Settler radicals desperately need to investigate this truth. It is relevant in particular to those for whom anarchism links them to communalism and counterculturism, such as in rural communes, permaculture, squatting, hoboing, foraging, and neo-pagan, earth-based, and New Age spirituality. These "alternative" settler cultures formed by occupying and traversing stolen Indigenous land and often by practicing cultural and spiritual appropriation. Their participants have imagined that they act anti-colonially by "appreciating" Indigenous culture or pursuing what they imagine to be Indigenous ways of life. But using these methods to try to be intimate with Indigenous land and culture expresses settler desires without necessarily contradicting them. Critiquing and separating from these practices may be necessary for settlers to commit to work for Indigenous decolonization.

This is a hard lesson for settler radicals to learn if they felt led to support Indigenous people by participating in "alternative" settler cultures. They must ask, then, if their interest to support Indigenous people arose not from an investment in decolonization, but in recolonization. Did they emulate, or impersonate Indigenous culture in order to gain the trust or affection of Indigenous people; in hopes, then, that they would gain access to the Indigenous culture or land that they, as settlers, actually desire? It's twisted, but true: settler radicals may seek "solidarity" with Indigenous people by pursuing settler desires to possess Indigenous land and culture for themselves. If this is so, their supposedly "alternative" cultures present no alternative to the settler cultures that Indigenous decolonization will disrupt. All must be questioned if settlers are to commit to the work of Indigenous decolonization.

I write these brief thoughts in order to introduce and invite broader conversations whose complexity my words here have not begun to fulfill. My statements and questions mean not to limit conversation but to open it. I have asked settler radicals to continually pursue critical reflection that will un-settle their senses of self and relationship to place. I am playing here on multiple meanings in the word "unsettle," notably its correlation with the word "displace." Certainly, in this context, "unsettling" suggests the work of displacing settlers from their possession of Indigenous land. The word reminds settler radicals to divest of their desires to occupy Indigenous land in order to work for decolonization. But "unsettling" also can invoke the qualities that settlers try to avoid feeling, such as uncertainty, discomfort, and--in an emotive sense--displacement. Colonization is an ongoing process making settlers desire the certainty and comfort of emplacement. Such feelings are incompatible with the commitment to work for Indigenous decolonization. Embracing uncertainty and discomfort--getting used to these feelings, and learning to live well amidst them--will be the productive and enlivening result of settlers displacing their centrality on stolen land and committing to work for Indigenous decolonization.

¹ Among the wide array of writing on these histories by scholars in Native Studies, my words here refer in particular to Vince Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969) and to Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (1998).

Indigenous feminism without apology

Andrea Smith

We often hear the mantra in indigenous communities that Native women aren't feminists. Supposedly, feminism is not needed because Native women were treated with respect prior to colonization. Thus, any Native woman who calls herself a feminist is often condemned as being "white."

However, when I started interviewing Native women organizers as part of a research project, I was surprised by how many community-based activists were describing themselves as "feminists without apology." They were arguing that feminism is actually an indigenous concept that has been co-opted by white women.

The fact that Native societies were egalitarian 500 years ago is not stopping women from being hit or abused now. For instance, in my years of anti-violence organizing, I would hear, "We can't worry about domestic violence; we must worry about survival issues first." But since Native women are the women most likely to be killed by domestic violence, they are clearly not surviving. So when we talk about survival of our nations, who are we including?

These Native feminists are challenging not only patriarchy within Native communities, but also white supremacy and colonialism within mainstream white feminism. That is, they're challenging why it is that white women get to define what feminism is.

DECENTERING WHITE FEMINISM

The feminist movement is generally periodized into the so-called first, second and third waves of feminism. In the United States, the first wave is characterized by the suffragette movement; the second wave is characterized by the formation of the National Organization for Women, abortion rights politics, and the fight for the Equal Rights Amendments. Suddenly, during the third wave of feminism, women of colour make an appearance to transform feminism into a multicultural movement.

This periodization situates white middle-class women as the central historical agents to which women of colour attach themselves. However, if we were to recognize the agency of indigenous women in an account of feminist history, we might begin with 1492 when Native women collectively resisted colonization. This would allow us to see that there are multiple feminist histories emerging from multiple communities of colour which intersect at points and diverge in others. This would not negate the contributions made by white feminists, but would de-center them from our historicizing and analysis.

Indigenous feminism thus centers anti-colonial practice within its organizing. This is critical today when you have mainstream feminist groups supporting, for example, the US bombing of Afghanistan with the claim that this bombing will free women from the Taliban (apparently bombing women somehow liberates them).

CHALLENGING THE STATE

Indigenous feminists are also challenging how we conceptualize indigenous sovereignty — it is not an add-on to the heteronormative and patriarchal nationstate. Rather it challenges the nationstate system itself. Charles Colson, prominent Christian Right activist and founder of Prison Fellowship, explains quite clearly the relationship between heteronormativity and the nation-state. In his view, same-sex marriage leads directly to terrorism; the attack on the "natural moral order" of the heterosexual family "is like handing moral weapons of mass destruction to those who use America's decadence to recruit more snipers and hijackers and suicide bombers."

Similarly, the Christian Right World magazine opined that feminism contributed to the Abu Ghraib

scandal by promoting women in the military. When women do not know their assigned role in the gender hierarchy, they become disoriented and abuse prisoners.

Implicit in this analysis is the understanding that heteropatriarchy is essential for the building of US empire. Patriarchy is the logic that naturalizes social hierarchy. Just as men are supposed to naturally dominate women on the basis of biology, so too should the social elites of a society naturally rule everyone else through a nation-state form of governance that is constructed through domination, violence, and control.

As Ann Burlein argues in *Lift High the Cross*, it may be a mistake to argue that the goal of Christian Right politics is to create a theocracy in the US. Rather, Christian Right politics work through the private family (which is coded as white, patriarchal, and middle-class) to create a “Christian America.” She notes that the investment in the private family makes it difficult for people to invest in more public forms of social connection.

For example, more investment in the suburban private family means less funding for urban areas and Native reservations. The resulting social decay is then construed to be caused by deviance from the Christian family ideal rather than political and economic forces. As former head of the Christian Coalition Ralph Reed states: “The only true solution to crime is to restore the family,” and “Family break-up causes poverty.”

Unfortunately, as Navajo feminist scholar Jennifer Denetdale points out, the Native response to a heteronormative white, Christian America has often been an equally heteronormative Native nationalism. In her critique of the Navajo tribal council’s passage of a ban on same-sex marriage, Denetdale argues that Native nations are furthering a Christian Right agenda in the name of “Indian tradition.”

This trend is equally apparent within racial justice struggles in other communities of colour. As Cathy Cohen contends, heteronormative sovereignty or racial justice struggles will effectively maintain rather than challenge colonialism and white supremacy because they are premised on a politics of secondary marginalization. The most elite class will further their aspirations on the backs of those most marginalized within the community.

Through this process of secondary marginalization, the national or racial justice struggle either implicitly or explicitly takes on a nation-state model as the end point of its struggle – a model in which the elites govern the rest through violence and domination, and exclude those who are not members of “the nation.”

NATIONAL LIBERATION

Grassroots Native women, along with Native scholars such as Taiaiake Alfred and Craig Womack, are developing other models of nationhood. These articulations counter the frequent accusations that nation-building projects necessarily lead to a narrow identity politics based on ethnic cleansing and intolerance. This requires that a clear distinction be drawn between the project of national liberation, and that of nation-state building.

Progressive activists and scholars, while prepared to make critiques of the US and Canadian governments, are often not prepared to question their legitimacy. A case in point is the strategy of many racial justice organizations in the US or Canada, who have rallied against the increase in hate crimes since 9/11 under the banner, “We’re American [or Canadian] too.”

This allegiance to “America” or “Canada” legitimizes the genocide and colonization of Native peoples upon which these nation-states are founded. By making anti-colonial struggle central to feminist politics, Native women place in question the appropriate form of governance for the world in general. In questioning the nation-state, we can begin to imagine a world that we would actually want to live in. Such a political project is particularly important for colonized peoples seeking national liberation outside the nation-state.

Whereas nation-states are governed through domination and coercion, indigenous sovereignty and nationhood is predicated on interrelatedness and responsibility.

As Sharon Venne explains, “Our spirituality and our responsibilities define our duties. We understand the concept of sovereignty as woven through a fabric that encompasses our spirituality and responsibility. This is a cyclical view of sovereignty, incorporating it into our traditional philosophy and view of our responsibilities. It differs greatly from the concept of Western sovereignty which is based upon absolute power. For us absolute power is in the Creator and the natural order of all living things; not only in human beings... Our sovereignty is related to our connections to the earth and is inherent.”

REVOLUTION

A Native feminist politics seeks to do more than simply elevate Native women’s status — it seeks to transform the world through indigenous forms of governance that can be beneficial to everyone.

At the 2005 World Liberation Theology Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, indigenous peoples from Bolivia stated that they know another world is possible because they see that world whenever they do their ceremonies. Native ceremonies can be a place where the present, past and future become copresent. This is what Native Hawaiian scholar Manu Meyer calls a racial remembering of the future.

Prior to colonization, Native communities were not structured on the basis of hierarchy, oppression or patriarchy. We will not recreate these communities as they existed prior to colonization. Our understanding that a society without structures of oppression was possible in the past tells us that our current political and economic system is anything but natural and inevitable. If we lived differently before, we can live differently in the future.

Native feminism is not simply an insular or exclusivist “identity politics” as it is often accused of being. Rather, it is framework that understands indigenous women’s struggles part of a global movement for liberation. As one activist stated: “You can’t win a revolution on your own. And we are about nothing short of a revolution. Anything else is simply not worth our time.”

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white supremacy culture

by Tema Okun . **DRWORKS** . www.dismantlingracism.org

■ I dedicate this piece to my long-time colleague Kenneth Jones, who helped me become wise about many things and kept me honest about everything else. I love you and miss you beyond words.

■ This piece on white supremacy culture builds on the work of many people, including (but not limited to) Andrea Ayvazian, Bree Carlson, Beverly Daniel Tatum, M.E. Dueker, Nancy Emond, Kenneth Jones, Jonn Lunsford, Sharon Martinas, Joan Olsson, David Rogers, James Williams, Sally Yee, as well as the work of Grassroots Leadership, Equity Institute Inc, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Challenging White Supremacy workshop, the Lillie Allen Institute, the Western States Center, and the contributions of hundreds of participants in the DR process.

* These sections are based on the work of Daniel Buford with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, who has done extensive research on white supremacy culture.

This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics listed below are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the group. They are damaging because they promote white supremacy thinking. Because we all live in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in the attitudes and behaviors of all of us – people of color and white people. Therefore, these attitudes and behaviors can show up in any group or organization, whether it is white-led or predominantly white or people of color-led or predominantly people of color.

perfectionism*

- little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
- more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
- or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are – mistakes
- making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong
- little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes
- tendency to identify what's wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what's right

- often internally felt, in other words the perfectionist fails to appreciate her own good work, more often pointing out his faults or 'failures,' focusing on inadequacies and mistakes rather than learning from them; the person works with a harsh and constant inner critic

antidotes: develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated; develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning; create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results; separate the person from the mistake; when offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism; ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism; realize that being your own worst critic does not actually improve the work, often contributes to low morale among the group, and does not help you or the group to realize the benefit of learning from mistakes

sense of urgency

- continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
- frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
- reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little

antidotes: realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time; learn from past experience how long things take; write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames; be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency; realize that rushing decisions takes more time in the long run because inevitably people who didn't get a chance to voice their thoughts and feelings will at best resent and at worst undermine the decision because they were left unheard

defensiveness

- the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)
- people respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's

- feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
 - white people spend energy defending against charges of racism instead of examining how racism might actually be happening
 - the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture
- antidotes:** understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one; give people credit for being able to handle more than you think; discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission

quantity over quality*

- all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals
- things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict
- little or no value attached to process; if it can't be measured, it has no value
- discomfort with emotion and feelings
- no understanding that when there is a conflict between content (the agenda of the meeting) and process (people's need to be heard or engaged), process will prevail (for example, you may get through the agenda, but if you haven't paid attention to people's need to be heard, the decisions made at the meeting are undermined and/or disregarded)

antidotes: include process or quality goals in your planning; make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work; make sure this is a living document and that people are using it in their day to day work; look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal); learn to recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address people's underlying concerns

worship of the written word

- if it's not in a memo, it doesn't exist
- the organization does not take into account or value other ways in which information gets shared
- those with strong documentation and writing skills are more highly valued, even in organizations where ability to relate to others is key to the mission

antidotes: take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information; figure out which things need to be written down and come up with alternative ways to document what is happening; work to recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization (for example, the ability to build relationships with

those who are important to the organization's mission); make sure anything written can be clearly understood (avoid academic language, 'buzz' words, etc.)

only one right way

- the belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it
- when they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who 'know' the right way)
- similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good

antidotes: accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal; once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen; work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach; look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it; when working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organization's, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing; never assume that you or your organization know what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community

paternalism

- decision-making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it
- those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power
- those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions
- those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does
- those without power do not really know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions, and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on them

antidotes: make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization; make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization; include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making

either/or thinking*

- things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us
- closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict
- no sense that things can be both/and

- results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education
- creates conflict and increases sense of urgency, as people feel they have to make decisions to do either this or that, with no time or encouragement to consider alternatives, particularly those which may require more time or resources
- often used by those with a clear agenda or goal to push those who are still thinking or reflecting to make a choice between 'a' or 'b' without acknowledging a need for time and creativity to come up with more options

antidotes: notice when people use 'either/or' language and push to come up with more than two alternatives; notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made; slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis; when people are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively; avoid making decisions under extreme pressure

power hoarding

- little, if any, value around sharing power
- power seen as limited, only so much to go around
- those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, feel suggestions for change are a reflection on their leadership
- those with power don't see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened
- those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced

antidotes: include power sharing in your organization's values statement; discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others; understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive; make sure the organization is focused on the mission

fear of open conflict

- people in power are scared of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it
- when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem
- emphasis on being polite
- equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line

antidotes: role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens; distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues; don't require those

who raise hard issues to raise them in 'acceptable' ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as an excuse not to address those issues; once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently

individualism*

- little experience or comfort working as part of a team
- people in organization believe they are responsible for solving problems alone
- accountability, if any, goes up and down, not sideways to peers or to those the organization is set up to serve
- desire for individual recognition and credit
- leads to isolation
- competition more highly valued than cooperation and where cooperation is valued, little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate
- creates a lack of accountability, as the organization values those who can get things done on their own without needing supervision or guidance

antidotes: include teamwork as an important value in your values statement; make sure the organization is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance; evaluate people's ability to work in a team as well as their ability to get the job done; make sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person; make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals; create a culture where people bring problems to the group; use staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities

i'm the only one

- connected to individualism, the belief that if something is going to get done right, 'I' have to do it
- little or no ability to delegate work to others

antidotes: evaluate people based on their ability to delegate to others; evaluate people based on their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goals

progress is bigger, more*

- observed in how we define success (success is always bigger, more)
- progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- gives no value, not even negative value, to its cost, for example, increased accountability to funders as the budget grows, ways in which those we serve may be exploited, excluded, or underserved as we focus on how many we are

serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways in which we serve

antidotes: create Seventh Generation thinking by asking how the actions of the group now will affect people seven generations from now; make sure that any cost/benefit analysis includes all the costs, not just the financial ones, for example the cost in morale, the cost in credibility, the cost in the use of resources; include process goals in your planning, for example make sure that your goals speak to how you want to do your work, not just what you want to do; ask those you work with and for to evaluate your performance

objectivity*

- the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or 'neutral'
- the belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process
- invalidating people who show emotion
- requiring people to think in a linear (logical) fashion and ignoring or invalidating those who think in other ways
- impatience with any thinking that does not appear 'logical'

antidotes: realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody's world view affects the way they understand things; realize this means you too; push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you; assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is

right to comfort

- the belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing 'logic' over emotion)
- scapegoating those who cause discomfort
- equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism which daily targets people of color

antidotes: understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning; welcome it as much as you can; deepen your political analysis of racism and oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience and feelings fit into a larger picture; don't take everything personally

One of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to point out how organizations which unconsciously use these characteristics as their norms and standards make it difficult, if not impossible, to open the door to other cultural norms and standards. As a result, many of our organizations, while saying we want to be multi-cultural, really only allow other people and cultures to come in if they adapt or conform to already existing cultural norms. Being able to identify and name the cultural norms and standards you want is a first step to making room for a truly multi-cultural organization.

dRWORKS . www.dismantlingracism.org . page 8

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dRWORKS is a group of trainers, educators and organizers working to build strong progressive anti-racist organizations and institutions. **dRWORKS** can be reached at www.dismantlingracism.org.

This framework has proven to be limited for women of color and people of color organizing. First, it tends to presume that our communities have been impacted by white supremacy in the same way. Consequently, we often assume that all of our communities will share similar strategies for liberation. In fact, however, our strategies often run into conflict. For example, one strategy that many people in US-born communities of color adopt, in order to advance economically out of impoverished communities, is to join the military. We then become complicit in oppressing and colonizing communities from other countries. Meanwhile, people from other countries often adopt the strategy of moving to the United States to advance economically, without considering their complicity in settling on the lands of indigenous peoples that are being colonized by the United States.

Consequently, it may be more helpful to adopt an alternative framework for women of color and people of color organizing. I call one such framework the “Three Pillars of White Supremacy.” This framework does not assume that racism and white supremacy is enacted in a singular fashion; rather, white supremacy is constituted by separate and distinct, but still interrelated, logics. Envision three pillars, one labeled Slavery/Capitalism, another labeled Genocide/Capitalism, and the last one labeled Orientalism/War, as well as arrows connecting each of the pillars together.

Slavery/Capitalism

One pillar of white supremacy is the logic of slavery. As Sora Han, Jared Sexton, and Angela P. Harris note, this logic renders Black people as inherently slaveable—as nothing more than property.¹ That is, in this logic of white supremacy, Blackness becomes equated with slaveability. The forms of slavery may change—whether it is through the formal system of slavery, sharecropping, or through the current prison-industrial complex—but the logic itself has remained consistent.

This logic is the anchor of capitalism. That is, the capitalist system ultimately commodifies all workers—one’s own person becomes a commodity that one must sell in the labor market while the profits of one’s work are taken by someone else. To keep this capitalist system in place—which ultimately commodifies most people—the logic of slavery applies a racial hierarchy to this system. This racial hierarchy tells people that as long as you are not Black, you have the opportunity to escape the commodification of capitalism. This helps people who are not Black to accept their lot in life, because they can feel that at least they are not at the very bottom of the racial hierarchy—at least they are not property; at least they are not slaveable.

The logic of slavery can be seen clearly in the current prison industrial complex (PIC). While the PIC generally incarcerates communities of color, it seems to be structured primarily on an anti-Black racism. That is, prior to the Civil War, most people in prison were white. However, after the thirteenth amendment was passed—which banned slavery, except for those in prison—Black people previously enslaved through the slavery system were reenslaved through the prison system. Black people who had been the property of slave owners became state property, through the conflict leasing system. Thus, we can actually look at the criminalization of Blackness as a logical extension of Blackness as property.

Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy

Rethinking Women of Color Organizing

Andrea Smith

Scenario #1

A group of women of color come together to organize. An argument ensues about whether or not Arab women should be included. Some argue that Arab women are “white” since they have been classified as such in the US census. Another argument erupts over whether or not Latinas qualify as “women of color,” since some may be classified as “white” in their Latin American countries of origin and/or “pass” as white in the United States.

Scenario #2

In a discussion on racism, some people argue that Native peoples suffer from less racism than other people of color because they generally do not reside in segregated neighborhoods within the United States. In addition, some argue that since tribes now have gaming, Native peoples are no longer “oppressed.”

Scenario #3

A multiracial campaign develops involving diverse communities of color in which some participants charge that we must stop the black/white binary, and end Black hegemony over people of color politics to develop a more “multicultural” framework. However, this campaign continues to rely on strategies and cultural motifs developed by the Black Civil Rights struggle in the United States.

These incidents, which happen quite frequently in “women of color” or “people of color” political organizing struggles, are often explained as a consequence of “oppression olympics.” That is to say, one problem we have is that we are too busy fighting over who is more oppressed. In this essay, I want to argue that these incidents are not so much the result of “oppression olympics” but are more about how we have inadequately framed “women of color” or “people of color” politics. That is, the premise behind much “women of color” organizing is that women from communities victimized by white supremacy should unite together around their shared oppression. This framework might be represented by a diagram of five overlapping circles, each marked Native women, Black women, Arab/Muslim women, Latinas, and Asian American women, overlapping like a Venn diagram.

For example, the United States feels entitled to use Orientalist logic to justify racial profiling of Arab Americans so that it can be strong enough to fight the “war on terror.” Orientalism also allows the United States to defend the logics of slavery and genocide, as these practices enable the United States to stay “strong enough” to fight these constant wars. What becomes clear then is what Sora Han states—the United States is not at war; the United States *is* war.⁴ For the system of white supremacy to stay in place, the United States must always be at war.

Because we are situated within different logics of white supremacy, we may misunderstand a racial dynamic if we simplistically try to explain one logic of white supremacy with another logic. For instance, think about the first scenario that opens this essay: if we simply dismiss Latino/as or Arab peoples as “white,” we fail to understand how a racial logic of Orientalism is in operation. That is, Latino/as and Arabs are often situated in a racial hierarchy that privileges them over Black people. However, while Orientalist logic may bestow them some racial privilege, they are still cast as inferior yet threatening “civilizations” in the United States. Their privilege is not a signal that they will be assimilated, but that they will be marked as perpetual foreign threats to the US world order.

Organizing Implications

Under the old but still potent and dominant model, people of color organizing was based on the notion of organizing around shared victimhood. In this model, however, we see that we are victims of white supremacy, but complicit in it as well. Our survival strategies and resistance to white supremacy are set by the system of white supremacy itself. What keeps us trapped within our particular pillars of white supremacy is that we are seduced with the prospect of being able to participate in the other pillars. For example, all non-Native peoples are promised the ability to join in the colonial project of settling indigenous lands. All non-Black peoples are promised that if they comply, they will not be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. And Black, Native, Latino, and Asian peoples are promised that they will economically and politically advance if they join US wars to spread “democracy.” Thus, people of color organizing must be premised on making strategic alliances with each other, based on where we are situated within the larger political economy. Thus, for example, Native peoples who are organizing against the colonial and genocidal practices committed by the US government will be more effective in their struggle if they also organize against US militarism, particularly the military recruitment of indigenous peoples to support US imperial wars. If we try to end US colonial practices at home, but support US empire by joining the military, we are strengthening the state’s ability to carry out genocidal policies against people of color here and all over the world.

This way, our alliances would not be solely based on shared victimization, but where we are complicit in the victimization of others. These approaches might help us to develop resistance strategies that do not inadvertently keep the system in place for all of us, and keep all of us accountable. In all of these cases, we would check our aspirations against the aspirations of other communities to ensure that our model of liberation does not become the model of oppression for others.

These practices require us to be more vigilant in how we may have internal-

Genocide/Colonialism

A second pillar of white supremacy is the logic of genocide. This logic holds that indigenous peoples must disappear. In fact, they must *always* be disappearing, in order to allow non-indigenous peoples rightful claim over this land. Through this logic of genocide, non-Native peoples then become the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous—land, resources, indigenous spirituality, or culture. As Kate Shanley notes, Native peoples are a permanent “present absence” in the US colonial imagination, an “absence” that reinforces, at every turn, the conviction that Native peoples are indeed vanishing and that the conquest of Native lands is justified. Ella Shoat and Robert Stam describe this absence as “an ambivalently repressive mechanism [which] dispels the anxiety in the face of the Indian, whose very presence is a reminder of the initially precarious grounding of the American nation-state itself.... In a temporal paradox, living Indians were induced to ‘play dead,’ as it were, in order to perform a narrative of manifest destiny in which their role, ultimately, was to disappear.”²

Rayna Green further elaborates that the current Indian “wannabe” phenomenon is based on a logic of genocide: non-Native peoples imagine themselves as the rightful inheritors of all that previously belonged to “vanished” Indians, thus entitling them to ownership of this land. “The living performance of ‘playing Indian’ by non-Indian peoples depends upon the physical and psychological removal, even the death, of real Indians. In that sense, the performance, purportedly often done out of a stated and implicit love for Indians, is really the obverse of another well-known cultural phenomenon, ‘Indian hating,’ as most often expressed in another, deadly performance genre called ‘genocide.’”³ After all, why would non-Native peoples need to play Indian—which often includes acts of spiritual appropriation and land theft—if they thought Indians were still alive and perfectly capable of being Indian themselves? The pillar of genocide serves as the anchor for colonialism—it is what allows non-Native peoples to feel they can rightfully own indigenous peoples’ land. It is okay to take land from indigenous peoples, because indigenous peoples have disappeared.

Orientalism/War

A third pillar of white supremacy is the logic of Orientalism. Orientalism was defined by Edward Said as the process of the West defining itself as a superior civilization by constructing itself in opposition to an “exotic” but inferior “Orient.” (Here I am using the term “Orientalism” more broadly than to solely signify what has been historically named as the Orient or Asia.) The logic of Orientalism marks certain peoples or nations as inferior and as posing a constant threat to the well-being of empire. These peoples are still seen as “civilizations”—they are not property or “disappeared”—however, they will always be imaged as permanent foreign threats to empire. This logic is evident in the anti-immigration movements within the United States that target immigrants of color. It does not matter how long immigrants of color reside in the United States, they generally become targeted as foreign threats, particularly during war time. Consequently, orientalism serves as the anchor for war, because it allows the United States to justify being in a constant state of war to protect itself from its enemies.

ized some of these logics in our own organizing practice. For instance, much racial justice organizing within the United States has rested on a civil rights framework that fights for equality under the law. An assumption behind this organizing is that the United States is a democracy with some flaws, but is otherwise admirable. Despite the fact that it rendered slaves three-fifths of a person, the US Constitution is presented as the model document from which to build a flourishing democracy. However, as Luana Ross notes, it has never been against US law to commit genocide against indigenous peoples—in fact, genocide *is* the law of the country. The United States could not exist without it. In the United States, democracy is actually the alibi for genocide—it is the practice that covers up United States colonial control over indigenous lands.

Our organizing can also reflect anti-Black racism. Recently, with the outgrowth of “multiculturalism” there have been calls to “go beyond the black/white binary” and include other communities of color in our analysis, as presented in the third scenario. There are a number of flaws with this analysis. First, it replaces an analysis of white supremacy with a politics of multicultural representation; if we just *include* more people, then our practice will be less racist. Not true. This model does not address the nuanced structure of white supremacy, such as through these distinct logics of slavery, genocide, and Orientalism. Second, it obscures the centrality of the slavery logic in the system of white supremacy, which is *based on a black/white binary*. The black/white binary is not the *only* binary which characterizes white supremacy, but it is still a central one that we cannot “go beyond” in our racial justice organizing efforts.

If we do not look at how the logic of slaveability inflects our society and our thinking, it will be evident in our work as well. For example, other communities of color often appropriate the cultural work and organizing strategies of African American civil rights or Black Power movements without corresponding assumptions that we should also be in solidarity with Black communities. We assume that this work is the common “property” of all oppressed groups, and we can appropriate it without being accountable.

Angela P. Harris and Juan Perea debate the usefulness of the black/white binary in the book, *Critical Race Theory*. Perea complains that the black/white binary fails to *include* the experiences of other people of color. However, he fails to identify alternative racializing logics to the black/white paradigm.⁵ Meanwhile, Angela P. Harris argues that “the story of ‘race’ itself is that of the construction of Blackness and whiteness. In this story, Indians, Asian Americans, and Latinos/as do exist. But their roles are subsidiary to the fundamental binary national drama. As a political claim, Black exceptionalism exposes the deep mistrust and tensions among American ethnic groups racialized as nonwhite.”⁶

Let’s examine these statements in conversation with each other. Simply saying we need to move beyond the black/white binary (or perhaps, the “black/non-black” binary) in US racism obfuscates the racializing logic of slavery, and prevents us from seeing that this binary constitutes Blackness as the bottom of a color hierarchy. However, this is not the *only* binary that fundamentally constitutes white supremacy. There is also an indigenous/settler binary, where Native genocide is central to the logic of white supremacy and other non-indigenous people of color also

form “a subsidiary” role. We also face another Orientalist logic that fundamentally constitutes Asians, Arabs, and Latino/as as foreign threats, requiring the United States to be at permanent war with these peoples. In this construction, Black and Native peoples play subsidiary roles.

Clearly the black/white binary is central to racial and political thought and practice in the United States, and any understanding of white supremacy must take it into consideration. However, if we look at only this binary, we may misread the dynamics of white supremacy in different contexts. For example, critical race theorist Cheryl Harris’s analysis of whiteness as property reveals this weakness. In *Critical Race Theory*, Harris contends that whites have a property interest in the preservation of whiteness, and seek to deprive those who are “tainted” by Black or Indian blood from these same white property interests. Harris simply assumes that the positions of African Americans and American Indians are the same, failing to consider US policies of forced assimilation and forced whiteness on American Indians. These policies have become so entrenched that when Native peoples make political claims, they have been accused of being white. When Andrew Jackson removed the Cherokee along the Trail of Tears, he argued that those who did not want removal were really white.⁷ In contemporary times, when I was a non-violent witness for the Chippewa spearfishers in the late 1980s, one of the more frequent slurs whites hurled when the Chippewa attempted to exercise their treaty-protected right to fish was that they had white parents, or they were really white.

Status differences between Blacks and Natives are informed by the different economic positions African Americans and American Indians have in US society. African Americans have been traditionally valued for their labor, hence it is in the interest of the dominant society to have as many people marked “Black,” as possible, thereby maintaining a cheap labor pool; by contrast, American Indians have been valued for the land base they occupy, so it is in the interest of dominant society to have as few people marked “Indian” as possible, facilitating access to Native lands. “Whiteness” operates differently under a logic of genocide than it does from a logic of slavery.

Another failure of US-based people of color in organizing is that we often fall back on a “US-centricism,” believing that what is happening “over there” is less important than what is happening here. We fail to see how the United States maintains the system of oppression here precisely by tying our allegiances to the interests of US empire “over there.”

Heteropatriarchy and White Supremacy

Heteropatriarchy is the building block of US empire. In fact, it is the building block of the nation-state form of governance. Christian Right authors make these links in their analysis of imperialism and empire. For example, Christian Right activist and founder of Prison Fellowship Charles Colson makes the connection between homosexuality and the nation-state in his analysis of the war on terror, explaining that one of the causes of terrorism is same-sex marriage:

Marriage is the traditional building block of human society, intended both to unite couples and bring children into the world ... There

is a natural moral order for the family ... the family, led by a married mother and father, is the best available structure for both child-rearing and cultural health. Marriage is not a private institution designed solely for the individual gratification of its participants. If we fail to enact a Federal Marriage Amendment, we can expect not just more family breakdown, but also more criminals behind bars and more chaos in our streets.⁸

Colson is linking the well-being of US empire to the well-being of the heteropatriarchal family. He continues:

When radical Islamists see American women abusing Muslim men, as they did in the Abu Ghraib prison, and when they see news coverage of same-sex couples being "married" in US towns, we make this kind of freedom abhorrent—the kind they see as a blot on Allah's creation. We must preserve traditional marriage in order to protect the United States from those who would use our depravity to destroy us.⁹

As Ann Burlein argues in *Lift High the Cross*, it may be a mistake to argue that the goal of Christian Right politics is to create a theocracy in the United States. Rather, Christian Right politics work through the private family (which is coded as white, patriarchal, and middle class) to create a "Christian America." She notes that the investment in the private family makes it difficult for people to invest in more public forms of social connection. In addition, investment in the suburban private family serves to mask the public disinvestment in urban areas that makes the suburban lifestyle possible. The social decay in urban areas that results from this disinvestment is then construed as the result of deviance from the Christian family ideal rather than as the result of political and economic forces. As former head of the Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed, states: "The only true solution to crime is to restore the family,"¹⁰ and "Family break-up causes poverty."¹¹ Concludes Burlein, "'The family' is no mere metaphor but a crucial technology by which modern power is produced and exercised."¹²

As I have argued elsewhere, in order to colonize peoples whose societies are not based on social hierarchy, colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy.¹³ In turn, patriarchy rests on a gender binary system in which only two genders exist, one dominating the other. Consequently, Charles Colson is correct when he says that the colonial world order depends on heteronormativity. Just as the patriarchs rule the family, the elites of the nation-state rule their citizens. Any liberation struggle that does not challenge heteronormativity cannot substantially challenge colonialism or white supremacy. Rather, as Cathy Cohen contends, such struggles will maintain colonialism based on a politics of secondary marginalization where the most elite class of these groups will further their aspirations on the backs of those most marginalized within the community.¹⁴

Through this process of secondary marginalization, the national or racial justice struggle takes on either implicitly or explicitly a nation-state model as the end

point of its struggle—a model of governance in which the elites govern the rest through violence and domination, as well as exclude those who are not members of "the nation." Thus, national liberation politics become less vulnerable to being coopted by the Right when we base them on a model of liberation that fundamentally challenges right-wing conceptions of the nation. We need a model based on community relationships and on mutual respect.

Conclusion

Women of color-centered organizing points to the centrality of gender politics within antiracist, anticolonial struggles. Unfortunately, in our efforts to organize against white, Christian America, racial justice struggles often articulate an equally heteropatriarchal racial nationalism. This model of organizing either hopes to assimilate into white America, or to replicate it within an equally hierarchical and oppressive racial nationalism in which the elites of the community rule everyone else. Such struggles often call on the importance of preserving the "Black family" or the "Native family" as the bulwark of this nationalist project, the family being conceived of in capitalist and heteropatriarchal terms. The response is often increased homophobia, with lesbian and gay community members construed as "threats" to the family. But, perhaps we should challenge the "concept" of the family itself. Perhaps, instead, we can reconstitute alternative ways of living together in which "families" are not seen as islands on their own. Certainly, indigenous communities were not ordered on the basis of a nuclear family structure—is the result of colonialism, not the antidote to it.

In proposing this model, I am speaking from my particular position in indigenous struggles. Other peoples might flesh out these logics more fully from different vantage points. Others might also argue that there are other logics of white supremacy are missing. Still others might complicate how they relate to each other. But I see this as a starting point for women of color organizers that will allow us to reenvision a politics of solidarity that goes beyond multiculturalism, and develop more complicated strategies that can really transform the political and economic status quo.

Talking to Settlers About Unsettling

Rita

- People listen to people they trust. Start with people who trust you. Build relationships with those you want to influence.
- Come up with a short, concise position statement, slogan and/or story that communicates the essence of this issue for you. Practice it on friends, until you can communicate clearly and in a good tone.
- Challenge yourself to push your own boundaries by engaging unsettling conversation in spaces you maybe haven't in the past. Try experimenting with your language and approach to learn how to reach people from different positions.
- Share your own histories and stories, and work on how you can push yourself to claim your privileges consciously, intentionally, and in way that's encourages others to see how much empowerment there is to be found in challenging oppression in ourselves. Vulnerability and accountability tend to be socially contagious.
- We can rarely talk people into changing their minds; but we can LISTEN to them while they think through things. A non-judgmental listener can help a person think out loud about - and reexamine their views. This leads to fresh thinking.

Example: Person A brought up the issue of gay marriage to person B sitting next to her on a plane. He voiced **STRONG** anti-gay marriage views. She then asked him an illuminating question: "Have you ever been in a relationship that someone close to you was strongly opposed to?" The (white) man then told the story about dating a Black woman in high school. His parents were deathly against this relationship, and forbade him to continue it. He talked about how hard that was on him. Then he said, "No wonder gay marriage bothers me! It does not make sense to dictate who someone can have a relationship with. I'm changing my mind. I support gay marriage!"

Brainstorm: the Beginnings of Unsettling Minnesota

5.5.09

An Offering: Working Proposal for Building Non-Native Solidarity with Dakota Decolonization Struggles through:

- 1) Education and outreach for non-native/settler/white people
 - local communities first, starting with our own friends and communities
 - create public points of unity on what an ally is, how you become an ally
 - make this class ongoing
 - film screenings
 - create lit, zines, class debrief, solidarity manual
 - create workshops on decolonization
 - truth telling and anti-colonial campaigns, actions

- 2) Building an infrastructure for incorporating new non-native activists into ally work both consistently and around specific struggles
 - we could help build and solidify a curriculum for future classes, help facilitate those classes, both in class and structurally.
 - we could create infrastructure in the form of: phone, email, literature, class schedule, and points of unity.
 - the phone number would be one folks could call to interact with someone directly, to get plugged in to what other potential allies are doing, to get help around solidarity work etc.
 - the email would function similarly as a connection to interested new non-native activists.
 - literature would be available both on-going and for specific events, perhaps detailing what our vision of solidarity work is, how folks can get involved, basic internal questions.
 - a class/event schedule could be made and kept accessible for plugging in to.
 - points of unity could be created to be presented to new non-native activists interested in ally work, both as we meet them everyday and at specific events.

- 3) Providing a coordinator(s) bridge to facilitate communication between Dakota and non-native support
 - we would ask scott and autumn and their dakota friends to choose/acknowledge a point person(s) to be direct communication links in coordinating solidarity work. this is with the acknowledgment that the best individual(s) would be those scott/autumn/friends feel most comfortable with, as the best support we can be involves their being able to communicate.
 - we would deal with whatever potential problems arose around the designated point people as our shit to work on.

- 4) Working to move resources to Dakota decolonization struggles, and to offer material support

- 5) Engaging in ongoing internal/self-education around decolonization and solidarity
 - create separate spaces out of meetings for ongoing internal education

- guest speakers
- homework
- book club
- every meeting starts with "Occupation Report"
- workshops within the group on whiteness, non-native ethnic and cultural reclamation, "finding our roots" sort of thing
- create a group intake learning process

6) Preparing ourselves for action & being available on call whether or not Dakota people choose to use us as a resource.

7) Continuing internal work to understand and challenge gender oppression and all forms of social hierarchy as a necessary part of any and all efforts for decolonization

- We will have oppression vibe checks as a place to bring up in group/world oppression issues
- There will be/is a men's group

8) Meeting every Tuesday at 7pm

- Possible locations: sisters camelot, common roots, teacher's collective, walker church, powderhorn community center
- We need to discuss meeting structure
- Have working groups with (bi) monthly large group meetings but have one month of weekly meetings while we figure all this out
- Have separate spaces to discuss internal/external decolonization struggles

Scott and Autumn's Immediate Suggestions:

- figure out who you are: cluster of groups, network, collective?
- create a map
- create a resource manual or zine

Decolonizing Restorative Justice

Denise C. Breton

When I first heard about restorative justice, I remember feeling liberated and inspired by a movement that advocates responses to harm other than inflicting more harm. What a concept! It gave me hope that the untold harms in this world could be addressed in healing ways—ways that addressed why harms were happening in the first place. We could put our energies and resources into repairing whatever needed mending and changing whatever was generating hurt.

If, for example, a square peg was not fitting into a round hole, hitting it harder, denigrating square-ness, or locking the peg in a drawer for a few years was not going to solve the problem. According to restorative justice, harms alert us that we need to look deeper into our relationships and how we are going about life. If we respond to harms in a good and open way, they can help us live better with a greater understanding of those around us and the nature of our worlds. Because there is no part of our lives where conflicts, hurts, and harms do not arise, restorative justice can be revolutionary to virtually everything we do. The concept seemed so simple yet so profound.

Restorative justice still gives me hope, but I have had more time to think about it, and I have since been on the 2004 Dakota Commemorative March. I still think restorative justice holds huge promise for helping us learn how to coexist as people, but I think the very essence of restorative justice as a philosophy and way of life calls us to expand our focus to include more than person-to-person harms. What about our history—how we got to where we are as Peoples? How did we end up with this “round pegs only” pegboard, and at what cost?

These are the more fundamental questions—those that make us look at the roots of harms. As we do, we are challenged to apply what restorative justice practitioners have learned about healing harms between people to healing harms between Peoples. This is the direction restorative must go, I believe, or it will fall short of fulfilling its promise. Indeed, it will risk joining the other side and becoming part of the institutions that not only deny the greatest causes of suffering but also actively perpetuate harm.

For those new to the concept, restorative justice is about intervening on painful plotlines and exploring how to shift those plots, so that people’s lives can move in more healing directions. It is about responding to harms not with knee-jerk forced removals to detentions, suspensions, jails, or prisons but with concerted efforts to work things out and make things right. At its core, restorative justice is about coexistence: How can we make coexistence work—not when things are easy but when they are hard? Precisely when hurts occur and where harms exist, restorative justice poses the questions:

- What happened?
- Who was hurt?
- Who caused the hurt?
- What amends could and should be made now?
- And what might it take for those harmed to feel whole?

When all those affected, including communities, come together to address these questions in open, honest, and heartfelt ways, healing generally follows. With time, effort, and resolve, people change, relationships blossom, and communities grow. Possibilities open for addressing harms that before seemed impossible.

Central to the restorative justice process is listening. It begins with listening to others and hearing stories different from our own. Before long, we start listening to ourselves in different ways as well. By creating spaces for people to share their stories, restorative justice processes bring to light how the individual and the collective

overlap. Interconnected as we are, we each face realities not of our making but which affect us nonetheless. As we reflect on the larger contexts of harms, we inevitably ask: How did we arrive at a point where harms like this happened—and will happen again if we do not change?

Initiated in the 1970s with victim-offender mediation programs, restorative justice is basically new to the dominant society's criminal justice system, yet its core concepts are ancient. Many Indigenous Peoples' teachings and traditions distill generations of experiences about coexistence as a way of life and therefore about how to mend relations when they break down. For people living in closely knit communities, reacting to the surface event of harm without addressing the dynamics that led to it is neither logical nor practical. The realities of connectedness suggest that hurt is not an isolated event; it comes from somewhere, and because of connectedness, it affects many if not all people in the community.

In fact, those most affected serve to protect the wellbeing of the community, much as the canaries who died in the mines warned the miners of bad air: one person's harmful act or another person's suffering signals something out of balance that could be harming everyone. If a member of a community is behaving hurtfully to others, the rest of the community needs to ask why. Where is the urge to harm coming from? To effectively heal a hurt, those involved need to consider how it arose, and to do that, the whole community needs to participate in some way. The goal is not retribution but to repair broken relationships for the good of all. When harms occur, the most practical question is: What does it take for the community to come together and feel whole, so that the community and everyone in it are stronger, healthier, and less susceptible to similar harms in the future?

There are no set ways to do this; those affected must simply come together and decide how they want to work things out. Some Indigenous traditions do not rule out taking a life in extreme cases, such as murder, though banishment is more common. If killing the perpetrator of harm is chosen, though, it is generally not done to punish or deter. Other reasons are given, such as to appease the aggrieved so that retributive violence does not escalate, or to make it possible for the soul of the murdered to work things out with the soul of the murderer by sending the latter to the life beyond. The aim is healing, repair, restitution, and making whole, so that the community heals.

The Dakota linguist and scholar Ella C. Deloria provided an example of this determinedly reparative approach from her People, the Yankton Dakota. In her article "Some Notes on the Yankton," published in *Museum News of the Dakota Museum*, University of South Dakota (Vermillion, South Dakota), March-April, 1967, Ms. Deloria shares her notes from a 1936 interview with Simon Antelope (the full text is reproduced on the Web site of Living Justice Press). Mr. Antelope was well into his seventies at the time and considered a man of standing in the Yankton Band of the Dakota. Mr. Antelope explained four methods that a Dakota community might use to respond to murder, and any of these methods was considered effective for community healing.

The first option was for a relative of the murdered person to kill the murderer: a life for a life. This option ended the matter.

The second option was to convene a council, and the most peaceful men would approach the murderer and the one who had been appointed to avenge the death to see if peace could be made. The whole community would contribute fine gifts for this process, because it was in everyone's best interests that peace be restored. When the two antagonists accepted peace, the gifts were divided equally between them.

The third option was considered the most powerful and by far the most exemplary response, though it was the most difficult to do. It was for the family of the murdered person to adopt the murderer as a relative to take the place of the one killed. If this path was chosen, the murderer was not treated as a despised slave to the family but was given the finest gifts and treated with all the kindness and respect that the dead relative would have received. By so doing, both the family of the murdered person and the murderer would spend the rest of their lives committed to healing a harm that might otherwise have divided the community. "Such a man usually made a far better relative than many a natural relative," Mr. Antelope observed, "because he was bought at a

high price.”

Putting the murderer through ordeals of physical endurance was a fourth possibility. If the person failed the test, he was killed instantly by the arrows of onlookers related to the person who was murdered. If he passed, he was either taken in as a relative by the kin of the murdered or allowed to go free, exonerated.

The challenge for restorative justice today, I believe, is to apply this determinedly reparative, healing approach to addressing harms between Peoples—harms that go back generations. Yet the choice to engage in this process remains a hard sell, and many objections are raised to dismiss it:

All this awful stuff happened in the past. I didn't personally do it. Why should I pay for what my great, great, great, great uncle did or didn't do—or for people I'm not related to at all? People are just using the past to avoid taking responsibility for their lives now. My grandfather came here with two pennies in his pocket and built a good life; why can't others do the same? We should put the past behind us and start fresh—let's make it a clean slate. We're all equal now. In fact, people of color get favored over the rest of us. Does the past really affect us all that much? Even if we wanted to, fixing the past is impossible, so why waste our time trying? Our ancestors won, and yours lost. That's just the way it is. Get over it! Move on! Stop whining and blaming others for your problems! Pull yourself up by your bootstraps! Blend in! Get with the program! In any case, how do we know you're not exaggerating? Our historians don't tell us about these terrible events. Stories of atrocities aren't in our written records. When Columbus landed, there probably weren't more than one or two million Indians here anyway. I can't help it if their immune systems couldn't handle European diseases. Whatever happened, it's no one's fault; it's just progress. If it hadn't been us, it would have been someone else. Let's focus on today's harms; we'd be lucky to put those right. You can't go forward by looking back. Face it: you're better off now than your ancestors were before we came. You've got TVs, computers, cars, music, refrigerators, cell phones—tons of stuff you didn't have. And look at TV sitcoms and all the news anchor people of color: there's no racism anymore. We like everyone. I do anyway. Some of my best friends . . .

These reactions defend the status quo, and they keep how we got to where we are off the collective radar. Our time frame extends no more than a few decades into the past and into the future. If it were comparable to how we live personally, it would be like refusing to think one minute ahead or behind “now.” How could we sustain relationships or any serious endeavor? How could we learn to act responsibly? To offset this collective Attention Deficit Disorder, I imagine how I would feel if I were watching a movie about our history on this land:

The scene opens on a People who are human in every way—families, desires, differences, good years and hard years, close relations with some neighbors, more difficult relations with others. Over countless generations, they have worked out respectful relationships with all the beings who people the land. Indeed, as a People, their traditions teach them from their earliest moments of life how to be a good relative to each other and that all beings are their relatives. Respect and being generous out of gratitude for the generosity that sustains them are values that pervade their way of life. They are raised to be mindful of how we are all related, not because they have always done this perfectly, but precisely because they remember times in their history when they have forgotten to do this and have lived in unbalanced, disrespectful, or ungenerous ways. The costs, first paid by others, came back on them and proved too great. Having learned through hard experiences how to be a good relative, they have lived as a People on the land since time immemorial, and their ancestors are buried there.

Then the scene shifts. One day, a different sort of People arrives. At first, they seem friendly, but

it quickly becomes clear that the Newcomers are there because they want what the Original People seem to have, namely, not only the land but also control of everything within the land. It is also clear that the Newcomers do not place much value on “being a good relative.” Seeing the Newcomers hit and yell at their children, saying “spare the rod, spoil the child,” the Original People wonder why the Newcomers don’t like their own offspring. It worries them, because if people treat their own so harshly, why would they treat others better? When these children grow up, where in their lives would they have learned how to treat others with respect, integrity, and kindness?

As the film moves on, the Original People’s worst fears come true. The Newcomers, now Settlers, become insatiable about claiming land without regard for those who live there and taking resources without noticing how it upsets the Natural World. They seem to stop at nothing to gain control of the place where the Original People have lived for generations. Inequitable agreements wildly favoring the Settlers are made under fraudulent and deceitful circumstances, and even then, the Settlers ignore the meager terms afforded the Original People. The Settlers give the Original People gifts of blankets infected with smallpox, so that huge numbers of them get sick and die. Dispossessed of their lands and livelihood, betrayed by governments that ignore their commitments, homeless and starving—we know what happens next.

But the conflict between the two Peoples simply provides a pretext for the Settler’s original agenda to go into full swing: to exterminate the Original People, either by killing them outright, causing their death through starvation, disease, exposure, or torture, or forcibly removing them beyond their borders. The genocide that follows, openly mandated by the Settler’s governor and executed by every crime against humanity, is perpetrated not by a few in government divorced from the will of the citizens but as a direct response to the will of the Settlers, so that the Settlers and their descendants can live where the Original People have lived. In fact, the Settler population actively carries out genocide against the Original People, murdering men, women, and children, even babies to collect a bounty, which for a single murder amounts to a year’s income.

As I watch this movie, I wonder how on earth it is going to work out. It’s as if I am watching *The Godfather*, only it’s much worse—more like *Schindler’s List* without a Schindler. Depressing as it is, I decide to fast forward.

A century and a half later, the Settlers have now become firmly entrenched as the Colonizers, the ones who hold the power, call the shots, arrange things for their own benefit, and don’t consider the cost to others. At any point, they could have changed their relationship with the Original People, but they haven’t and have no thought of doing so. In fact, having done everything they could to kill the Original People or to drive them away, the Colonizers have achieved their goal of never having to think about the Original People. Colonizer life goes on as if the Original People never existed on the land.

True, the land retains many of the place names used by the Original People, but many counties, roads, and public facilities are now named after the most virulent Settler leaders of genocide. Colonizer children born only decades after the holocaust have been taught nothing about what happened or how they came to live on the land. They encounter very few if any of the land’s Original People as they go about their daily lives. The region becomes known as the “whitest state in the Union,” yet no one asks how this came to be so. Instead of explaining the infamous history, schools, museums, clergy, books, magazines, and newspapers promote a story that celebrates the Settlers’ occupation, while dismissing the Original People—their language, traditions, knowledge, relationship with the land, even their competence as humans—as minor footnotes buried in the past.

Not surprisingly, the Colonizers live well: they are mostly landowners, they have nice homes by

and large, most of them do not worry about food, they have good jobs, their children enjoy promising futures, and they have full representation in their colonial governments. They are told and believe that they live in a just, fair, and equitable society. They assume that when conflicts occur, everyone involved will receive “due process.” “The law of the land” is assumed to be basically good, and the system is trustworthy and reliable. Though injustices occur, the Colonizers are raised to believe that these are the exception rather than the rule.

True, there are problems, yet the problems these descendants face as a People are those they themselves have created, and in large part because they have not questioned the means that were used to get them where they are. “Might makes right” has continued as an unfortunate but inevitable way to conduct business and government. The Colonizers spend most of their waking hours in institutions that are authoritarian, hierarchical, competitive, and driven by money. “Being a good relative” is not a value in this environment; instead, doing what it takes to succeed and maximize profits are the priorities. Not only does the Natural World suffer as a result, but also the ruthlessness once reserved for the Original People overshadows the Colonizers’ working relations. Though the Colonizers have been raised to accept this way of life, many are unhappy. Heart attacks most commonly occur on Monday mornings. Addictions are epidemic, as is the use of antidepressant drugs. Many of their children are unhappy as well. Staggering numbers of them must be medicated in order to attend school, and some become vandalistic, violent, or suicidal.

Nonetheless, the Colonizers view themselves as good people, and they consider their society the pinnacle of human evolution. They view themselves as superior humans living in a superior culture. Their ethic is to get an education, work hard, go to church, and be conscientious in childrearing, even questioning their ancestors’ harsh treatment of children. Some volunteer to help the needy through their religious institutions, while others are active in civic and political life. Precisely because their schools and institutions still promote win-lose ethics and competition as the way to find one’s place in the world, the Colonizers feel they have earned whatever they have and that they deserve a good life. Their self-image is that of a wholesome, dedicated, God-fearing, and generally righteous People. They have no sense that the good life they enjoy came through the suffering and genocide of their neighbors—indeed, of those whose ancestral lands they inhabit. Neither do they realize how profoundly their genocidal history shapes their society as well as their character as a People.

As I sit and watch this familiar self-characterization, it is hard to view the movie’s Colonizers as they obviously view themselves, and it is clear how much the Colonizers’ self-image and way of life depend on keeping their history of genocide off screen. In fact, when a few of the Colonizer characters learn a little of the history, they go through a predictable sequence of mental and emotional turmoil. The ones who persevere through the stages of denial, defensiveness, self-justification, and anger find themselves plunging into identity crises: self-doubt, shame, guilt, grief, loss of the otherwise solid sense of themselves as good people, depression, and despair about what to do.

As a movie-goer, I think about what I would want the “good citizens” to do. What would feel satisfying to me as their response to this history? What would I like to see happen? And how would I feel if the movie ended here?

When the scene shifts to the descendants of the Original People, I see how differently they live:

Two hundred years after the Newcomers arrived, many Original People do their best to maintain their traditions, for it is through them that they have maintained the will and the means to survive. “Being a good relative” has not been forgotten, and its attending values of respect, honor, and generosity continue to be taught to their children through practice more than words. A sense of community and identity as

Original People remains.

Yet despite the positive force of their traditions and values, these descendants struggle under the realities of multigenerational trauma created by the core conflicts between the Original People and Colonizer society, which remain unresolved centuries later. The crimes of genocide and massive land theft have been made invisible. In fact, they continue, but under bureaucratic, corporate, economic, social, political, legal, or institutional guises. For the Colonizers, it is as if the deeds of genocide never happened; for the Original People, they never stopped happening.

As a result, the Original People do not share the Colonizers' belief that the prevailing colonial order is just, good, or reliable. "Due process" is not something they experience, either as victims or offenders or as a People. Quite the opposite. Against their will, they have been forced to live under the constant threat of annihilation, since the Colonizers have never questioned their state's official policy of genocide. It is as if post-WWII Jews had to live in a place called "Hitler County," and when they went to some of the finest restaurants where the monied and powerful go, they saw pictures of Hitler hanging on the walls; how safe would the Jews feel? Would they feel that the society was committed to their safety and wellbeing or to reversing the genocidal policies of the past?

So, too, the Original People find no grounds for regarding any aspect of Colonizer society as trustworthy. For example, when a group of them broke into a Colonizer headquarters a few decades ago, they discovered that the "health care" provided by the Colonizers had been routinely sterilizing their women without their knowledge or consent. Billions of dollars that treaties guaranteed them in payment for access to resources on their lands have somehow mysteriously disappeared. Through centuries of such experiences, the Original People have come to realize that no aspect of Colonizer society can be trusted to defend or promote their best interests. Instead, every aspect encroaches, invades, threatens, undermines, and altogether works to destroy the Original People—both as people and as a People.

Those who venture into Colonizer society to make a living find that what it takes to become a "successful" person in Colonizer society—willingness to win at all costs, willingness to embrace Colonizer language and self-promotional ways, willingness to swallow racist treatment, willingness to disregard community good or respect for the Natural World in order to achieve material gain—goes against Original People teachings. Original People face a dilemma: to survive "well" in Colonizer society, they are pressured to go against who they are as Original People, yet to do so intensifies their genocide.

As if this dilemma were not challenge enough, the racism that was used to justify the extermination of Original People persists, so that Original People descendants are largely excluded from getting good jobs, obtaining loans or mortgages, or gaining opportunities for their children. They remain the "degraded Other," "those People." This makes it exceedingly difficult for them to break the cycles of poverty that began when the Settlers invaded and destroyed their means of livelihood. Denied their traditional ways and unable to afford good Colonizer food or medical care, their health deteriorates.

Retraumatized daily by having to cope with a society whose values are so antithetical to those of their ancestors, many seek to anesthetize their trauma of dislocation through addictions. Suicide rates are high, especially among young people. Confronted daily with messages that denigrate, marginalize, and dehumanize who they are as a People, the descendants of the Original People manifest a range of behaviors. Some are unhealthy and damaging—violence under intoxication, property violations, or domestic abuse—though nothing of the order of the organized crimes against humanity that the Settlers and now Colonizers have perpetrated.

Other behaviors are clear assertions of identity and sovereignty as Original People but which Colonizer authorities (teachers, bosses, police, administrators, and government officials) find

threatening. A young boy, for example, writes “Original People Pride” on his notebook, whereupon a Colonizer teacher thinks he must belong to a gang and interprets the student’s subsequent conduct through this filter. Teens weaned on Settler-Colonizer racism pick fights with the boy for being proud of his People, yet he is the one labeled a troublemaker by the school authorities. He no longer enjoys school, and so truancy goes on his record. Before long, his parents are charged with neglect, and the authorities use their institutional might to forcibly remove the son from his parents’ home. He grows into adulthood in a Colonizer boarding school, juvenile facility, or foster home far away from his family and community. He is told that his forced removal is for his own good. Given such “opportunities,” Colonizers expect him to “make good,” and so when grief overcomes him to a paralyzing degree, some of the Colonizers conclude that he is from an ungrateful, lazy, no-good People.

As an adult, it does not take much for this man to find himself in court. Continuing the original policy of forcibly removing those who do not conform to Settler society, the Colonizers systematically remove large numbers of Original People, especially men, to prisons. Some go for life because they cannot afford adequate legal representation. This “solution” of forced removal fits with the Colonizers’ historical response to conflicts with the Original People. The Colonizers’ “law enforcement” system uses force, intimidation, punishment, and imprisonment to maintain control. Instead of facing the history, the Settler descendants continue to define “the problem” in ways that blame the Original People. “Those people’ have a problem; we have nothing to do with it.” The ones in prison are just “bad apples” who “need” to be locked up. After all, look at the “successful” Original People! Hard feelings are planted to divide Original People against each other, while the Colonizers’ role remains unnamed.

All this is supported by the Colonizer’s origin story—the story told to new generations about how the Settlers came to this land. The story describes the Settler population and culture as superior and the Original People as quaint, savage, and destined to go extinct. “Why be concerned with the plight of those who can’t ‘make it’? The best we can do is put them in prison where they’re fed and have a place to sleep—but can’t reproduce.”

Watching this movie is incredibly painful—certainly for the descendants of original peoples but for many colonizers like myself as well. Even for colonizers who have known only the colonizer narrative, witnessing this origin story told to include the experiences of the Original People can be “unsettling.”

Of course, I know this is one of many movies I could watch. I could, for example, watch a movie about a time and place several millennia earlier where my ancestors were the original people and faced a similar invasion and colonization. In that story, the physical differences between the settlers and the original people were not so marked, and so assimilation and hence loss of culture occurred more completely as the centuries passed. Even so, millennia later, vestiges of my original-people ancestors’ teachings and traditions remain.

I could also watch a movie about the traumas my ancestors suffered in Europe as a result of their colonization—the social, economic, and political traumas that drove them to find new homes, to treat their children as they did, and presumably to behave so savagely to the original peoples when they came here. By the time they arrived, my settler ancestors were apparently unable to conceive of coexistence as an option. Whereas Native Peoples largely operate from a “me and my relatives” paradigm—and “relatives” includes all of creation—my ancestors largely operated from a “me and not-me” or “us and not-us” paradigm. Everything that was “not me” or “not us” was viewed as a threat. Given this outlook, they evidently had no knowledge or experience of what it means to work out relationships with those who seem different but whose needs are much the same. They assumed coexistence was impossible: one people or the other could survive but not both. “Not me” and “not us” had to go.

Participating in the Dakota Commemorative March was like seeing the Original People–Colonizer

movie for a week, only I was in the movie and living it, and I still am. It's a painful movie to live in, to be sure, but it keeps me focused on harms that, from a restorative justice perspective, I and my fellow colonizers need to address if we care about our dignity and self-respect. Whether I personally committed these crimes or not, I benefit from them. They were planned and executed precisely so that I could live here now in the whitest state in the country, Minnesota. And I perpetuate these crimes by continuing in the colonizer habits that have been my way of life since birth.

Colonizer habits include ignoring the history, acting like it never happened, not holding myself and my People accountable for immense harms done, and escaping to a comfortable, consensual, racial amnesia. These habits reinforce the biggest colonizer habit, which is to regard the land I live on as legally, legitimately mine. After all, everything that happened was done for land. The Dakota had it, and the Settlers wanted it. Once they exterminated the Dakota to get it, the Minnesota colonizers finished the job by passing laws that made the whole land-grab through genocide seem legitimate, lawful. The land is now “legally” ours: this is the epitome of colonizer thinking.

Participating in the March is about breaking these habits. If I am here, how I came to be here matters. The history directly affects me, and on more levels than I ever realized. Most fundamentally, I live on this land—land gained through mass murder. Yet not only do I benefit materially from being a descendant of the People who did these things, but also I am shaped by my People's collective character, which has been formed through this history.

My Euroamerican history tells me, for example, that if my position affords me the power to harm another for my own benefit and to get away with it, then I should do this, and I should never question whether I did something wrong, much less worry about making it right. If this were not so, Congress and corporations would not behave as they do. Corporate ravaging and “preemptive” wars to conquer other Peoples and to control their lands and resources are not an aberration in American history; they are how Native Peoples have experienced us from the start. These classic colonizer habits are programmed into me, and even if I work every day to question and challenge this internal programming, its ways of hooking me are continually reinforced by the colonizer society, which is everywhere now.

Yet once I have seen the movie and lived in it, I can no longer escape asking myself if this is the kind of person I want to be. Is this a kind of People in whom I can take pride? The movie is still playing, and, although I am not its director, I have some say in how it goes. Keeping the painful movie in view helps me to remember the programming, to name it for what it is, and to attend to its dismantling. I no longer see myself or my fellow colonizers only as we see ourselves but also in the light that our People-to-People history sheds. I need the pain to help me do my work and not get lost in the mesmeric forgetting, which every nuance of my programming would have me do.

To be clear, it is not that I enjoy the pain of putting my hand on a hot burner; it is rather that the pain reminds me to pull my hand away. The burner in this analogy is not the Dakota People or even the history; it is the settler-colonizer programming that set horrific cycles of pain in motion and then tried to build a “good” society on this foundation.

The pain is also useful, insofar as it marks the first movements toward learning what it means to be a good relative. I can't imagine healing a relationship that's been so broken by so many for so long without experiencing pain in the process. If I believe in the restorative justice process—if we as a people want to find our way to being a good relative to those whose ancestral homeland we inhabit—we have to be willing to feel the pain of what's been done and our ongoing roles in it.

As useful as the pain can be, though, it is also good to be living in a movie whose plot we can alter. Obviously, there are some things about this movie that we cannot change. We cannot change that genocide happened, for example, but we can change denial of this fact. We can begin to acknowledge the magnitude of harm and its ongoing effects. We can acknowledge who did what to whom, and then we can work to heal these

harms in whatever ways are possible—and much is possible. We can begin to intentionally imagine coexistence in ways our colonizer programming has kept off-screen.

Minnesota's colonizer society has responded to this history and its effects mainly through social service programs or, if those don't work, through the criminal justice system, i.e., imprisoning Native people. Yet neither of these responses addresses the roots of harm. Quite the opposite, they keep the movie's plot going in its original genocidal direction, because the aim of both institutions—social services and criminal justice—is forced assimilation into colonizer society. They are not designed to honor the Dakota People or to rectify longstanding harms against them.

Restorative justice could offer a more appropriate response, because it would require acknowledging that at the root of these harms lies a criminal act—indeed, immense crimes against humanity. The issue between Minnesota's colonizer population and the Dakota People is a criminal issue first. All the social, economic, and political issues that Native people face today follow from this central truth: crimes have occurred that have never been rectified or brought to justice.

As with any victim–offender situation, restorative justice processes begin when the perpetrators of harm acknowledge guilt and take responsibility. Acknowledging the crime and rectifying its effects are central to helping both the victim and the offender recover and be able to live good lives. Only when the crime is addressed to the victim's satisfaction can the victim and the offender begin to explore whether or not they are able to be in a good relationship with each other.

If, however, the crime is not even acknowledged much less repaired, victims are continually re-victimized. In fact, they are often blamed for the harm, as if they deserved to suffer or as if it were their fault; they are blamed for failing to “bounce back”; or they are blamed for the dismal condition that the crime left them in. The assumption is always that something is wrong with the victim. In the meantime, the offenders not only go scot-free with the booty but also continue to harm their victims by not holding themselves accountable for the ongoing suffering they are causing.

If the restorative justice movement fails to address the People-to-People issues and the crimes embedded in our history, it will risk losing credibility in this country, as it seems to have already done in Canada. Many First Nations now reject restorative justice, and precisely on these grounds. The core vision of going to the roots of harm and doing what it takes to make things right is experienced as empty rhetoric, invoked only when colonial power structures deem it advantageous to do so. Instead of working toward wholeness for Peoples, restorative justice functions as another tool of colonizer institutions, whose goal is not healing but for one People to conquer and dominate another. Restorative justice is simply used to make the violence of the criminal justice system—the colonizers' control-by-fear device—seem more humane. Instead of addressing the wider contexts that generate harms, the focus stays on trying to fix person-to-person conflicts. Individuals, families, or communities are viewed as “the problem,” while the larger reasons that individuals, families, or communities have problems remain invisible.

This does not mean that we as individuals—colonizers or original people—should not be held accountable for the harms we do. Yet here in Minnesota, we colonizers have not been held accountable at all for state-sanctioned, citizen-supported crimes against humanity—and yet we describe ourselves as international leaders in restorative justice. How could Dakota people—or anyone else who knows the history—take restorative justice seriously if we diligently hold this or that offender accountable for drug possession or stealing a car while we fail to hold ourselves accountable for genocide that we committed so we could steal an entire state's worth of land? If we were to apply our own laws about murder and stolen property to this case, we would have to rule that every time we sell a house in Minnesota, we commit a felony, and every Minnesota realtor should be imprisoned for dealing in stolen property gained through murder.

Restorative justice does not have to be hijacked into being an accomplice to colonization, for its roots

are not there. If restorative justice embarks on People-to-People healing, the systemic issues causing suffering to Native Peoples will begin to be addressed and rectified. Together as Peoples, we can acknowledge the massive harms done, name racism as it operates to hurt Native Peoples, arrange land return, honor the inherent sovereignty and self-determination of Native Peoples, make restitution and reparations, find and return the billions of dollars in missing trust funds, respectfully cease behaviors that denigrate Native Peoples (such as using them as sports mascots), and teach everyone the full history of this land.

Such efforts would help heal our People-to-People relationships by grounding them in economic, social, political, and basic human justice. It may take decades or even centuries to rectify harms of this magnitude. But with this work, it is reasonable to postulate that many if not most person-to-person harms done by Native people—committed largely against themselves or each other, not against colonizers—would likely disappear. It is also reasonable to postulate that both Peoples would benefit by taking the journey to coexistence.

Indeed, this is another reason why I hope that restorative justice will embark on People-to-People healing. A core tenet of restorative justice—something practitioners have come to believe because of extensive experience in this work—is that holding the perpetrators of harm accountable is essential not only for fairness but also for their healing and transformation. When offenders experience accountability, they are transformed.

In restorative justice, being held accountable is not about punishment or revenge. It is about connecting and becoming more real—connecting with more of reality than the narrow sphere in which inflicting harm made sense. To start, it means becoming acquainted with the effects of their harms, which usually involves listening to victims. Offenders meet the human faces of their harms. They hear the pain in the voices of their victims as they tell their stories. Harm is not abstract or “over there”; the person who has suffered is sitting in the same room and telling the offender face to face how life has changed as a result of the crime.

Being held accountable leads to honest soul-searching: Why did I do this? What was I thinking or feeling, and where did these thoughts and feelings come from? Restorative accountability does not lead to self-rejection but to self-compassion and ultimately to self-acceptance. If anything, running away from harms we have committed or denying that we did them constitutes self-rejection, because it rejects our reality and prevents us from confronting who we are, as if we could not handle facing ourselves.

Being held accountable also means finding out from those harmed what restitution they need and working to provide it. Offenders step up to the plate of doing whatever they can to put things right, no matter how long it takes. Making restitution affirms the offenders’ competence and establishes their dignity and self-respect. It feels good to own up to a harm and to work to make it right, just as it feels demeaning not to do so.

Another reason that holding perpetrators accountable transforms them is that, through the process, people who obviously felt isolated now learn to build connections. The process forms relationships, and offenders experience something of what it means to be related. Even though the process is filled with pain and remorse, it is still transforming, suggesting that even the slightest experience of being related can bring profound change.

Transformation is certainly what we colonizers need as a People, and we would be among the first to be blessed by the process of making things right. Holding ourselves accountable for the massive crimes embedded in our history and recurring in our present would help us become the kind of People we aspire to be but are not. By making ourselves come to terms with other Peoples’ realities, we could discover coexistence—a way of being that depends not on conquest and oppression but on respect, honesty, integrity, and mutual good. Embracing our accountability could also effect a healing in our collective psyche of traumas going back millennia—traumas that conditioned us to think in “me vs. not-me” terms. Instead of engaging in Darwinian, colonizer struggles for survival, we could learn how to “be a good relative,” and we could discover that it is a better, happier, and more sustainable way to live.

Can restorative justice play a significant role in effecting this level of transformation? Yes, but only if we are serious about decolonizing. What does this mean? This is a huge question, and I can only begin to respond by trying to set the restorative justice compass in a decolonizing direction. To start, restorative justice must set its sights on undoing colonization, since this is the core injustice, the root crime that must be addressed. To address the crime of colonization, decolonizing restorative justice means raising the questions that restorative justice typically poses but raising them on the level of Peoples—the level on which the crime of colonization has occurred:

- What happened in our history on this land?
- Who as a People was hurt and continues to be hurt?
- Who as a People caused the hurt and continues to benefit from it?
- What People-to-People amends could and should be made now?
- And what might it take for the Dakota People to be made whole?

Those of us who are the perpetrators and beneficiaries of colonization in Minnesota must be involved in addressing these questions, but we are not the ones to determine the answers. We must listen to what the Dakota People have to say. In the process, we have to give up the power advantages as well as the presumptions of superiority that we have taken on ourselves as colonizers and instead humbly and sincerely work to make things right as equals with those of the Dakota Nation.

Certainly, decolonizing restorative justice means not using restorative justice to reinforce colonization. For example, restorative justice must not be used as a better way to enforce assimilation or to perpetuate the criminal justice system. White supremacy and colonizer hegemony must be challenged. Our premise must be that the State of Minnesota is not the government of the Dakota People; it is their oppressor—the “might makes right” regime of the occupiers. Therefore, the restorative justice agenda here is not to make Dakota people more comfortable in the State of Minnesota or more willing to live under its rule; it is to establish a healthy nation-to-nation, People-to-People relationship that enables us to coexist respectfully as equals, as we do with Canada or France.

To get there, some serious amends must be made, and the process of making these amends is how respect is built on both sides. Indeed, everything we have learned about restorative justice says that we simply have to do the work that the healing process requires—and we discover what is required as we engage in it. If we commit to engaging in this process not as colonizers but as decolonizers, the restorative justice work is not something we do “to” Dakota people; it is something we do “with” the Dakota People.

In 2004, I was invited to participate in the Dakota Commemorative March. Whether I will do so again in 2006, 2008, 2010, or 2012 will depend on the Dakota: What contribution, if any, can colonizers make by being present? In restorative justice, the victims of harm get to say what feels healing and what doesn't. Certainly the perpetrators and beneficiaries of harm are in no position to decide on these matters.

During the March, I saw the look on the faces of the Dakota, especially the Elders, when they saw me—blonde as can be, clearly not raised among them. I saw the effects of lifetimes of suffering at the hands of my fellow colonizers—nearly boiling water poured on children's hands in boarding schools as punishment for speaking their language, beatings and sexual abuse in schools, rapes and murders never even investigated much less brought to justice, children stolen from their parents, continually dehumanizing stereotypes and messages about them in colonizer society, exclusion from economic opportunities, yet complete denial that injustices had ever been done. Though not ungracious, the Dakota Elders did not come up to me, shake my hand, and say how glad they were to see me there. How could they?

Restorative justice does involve bringing together victims and offenders, but only after considerable

preparation has been done on both sides. Forcing those harmed to come together with those who have benefited from those harms prematurely could do greater damage, especially during times when the victims of harms want nothing more than to be left alone to grieve their loss. As for us colonizers, we are far from doing our preparation for such a meeting. Most of us have not seen the movie—we live oblivious to the immensity of harms done—so we are not even considering what preparation on our part would be necessary.

Whatever my personal participation in future Marches might be, I am profoundly grateful that I could be there in 2004. The experience is one I will never forget, and it has changed me far beyond what I could ever imagine that sitting in a car for seven days could do. Participating in the March has been a life-altering experience.

During the March, I felt that this was the most important place for me to be, and the rest of the world with all its busy-ness did not matter as much. The March seemed to occur outside of time. I suppose I felt this way because the March lifted me out of my everyday routine and gave me at weeklong look at how we got to where we are. Holding a space for considering our course as Peoples is bound to be intense, and even when the conversations were light and joking, the deeper issues were always there.

My participation turned out to be a balance between being present and not being present, not at least in the sense of actually walking. I drove a support car and, as the week went along, I was able to play Lakota music for the marchers through a speaker horn propped outside my car's sunroof. Marchers threw their coats and bottles of water in the car as the days warmed, and sometimes those whose feet hurt too much or who had developed an injury would ride a few miles. I was grateful that it worked out this way. I could bear witness to the history and support the marchers without intruding on their experience. It is ironic that, as much as I love to walk and walk an hour everyday when I'm at home, I went on a 150-mile march and ended up walking no more than two or three miles.

Though I live within driving distance of the March route, staying overnight in the church basements, gymnasiums, and community centers was a very important part of the process. Sometimes the organizers arranged evening sessions when people were invited to share their thoughts and reflections about the day. Other times, we just had dinner and hung out. Different families and communities prepared feasts for us. The evenings gave us a chance to get to know each other and to reflect on the March. These times moved us to deeper places, so that by the next morning, something had shifted. The comments people made the night before stayed with me the next day, and I could tell from others' comments that they were experiencing the same.

Because I was driving behind the marchers and listening to Lakota music (on top volume, so the marchers could hear it), I had plenty of time to think about the people in front of me—to wonder what they were feeling as we went along and what their ancestors felt 150 years earlier as they walked this route. I came to know everyone's walk, their hats and coats, and their back views very well. I could see relationships forming and friendships growing. I noticed which Marchers enjoyed visiting with others and which preferred to walk in silence. Though I had to keep my concentration sharp because so many children were around, my experience was nonetheless very meditative. I was largely alone with my thoughts from sun up to sun down for the week. I have so many memories. For example, I remember all of us waiting along the shoulder of a busy highway for the police to come and help us cross the road. We were stopped a long time. The Lakota music was going, and traffic was speeding by on my left, so fast that my car shook. When I looked out into the trees in a marshy area to my right, though, it was as if I went back in time and could feel those who walked there before us—starving, sick, cold, wet, afraid, exhausted, grieving, yet persevering to save their children. I felt as if we were in two worlds at once, and somehow the world on our right seemed more real, more compelling. I didn't want to look to the left, and it felt jarring to do so.

I also remember a night in a parking lot. We were carrying our things into a church basement for the night. My friend, Lakota, stopped and began singing "Kola Weksuye," "I remember my friend." It was a clear, cold November night. He couldn't finish the song.

This parking lot was in New Ulm—perhaps the most terrible town for the original Marchers to pass through. Settlers had been killed by the Dakota warriors whose families were starving, and the surviving townspeople were full of revenge. It was here that white women grabbed Dakota babies and killed them before their mothers' eyes. It was also here that settlers poured boiling water on the Dakota women and children, until their skin peeled off.

During our evening meeting, Dr. Chris Mato Nunpa, his daughter Dr. Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, her daughter, Autumn Wilson, Leo Omani, and Dr. Edward C. Valandra spoke about the history and what had happened in New Ulm. Some townspeople had been invited to this meeting. After the speakers, Dr. Mato Nunpa opened the microphone, and a white townswoman came forward. She invited the marchers to engage in reconciliation by agreeing to listen to some of the colonizers' stories and their accounts of settler losses during that time.

I did not sleep well that night. What the woman said made me angry, and I was mad at myself as well for not speaking up. It sounded as if she said, "We suffered too, you know, so that makes it all equal." Yes, the loss of loved ones is always profound, but there is nothing remotely equal about what the Dakota experienced and what white settlers experienced, evidenced by the enormous differences in the lives of the two Peoples today. Whereas the settlers invaded someone else's territory and knew full well the risks of living here, the Dakota suffered invasion and occupation, theft of their homelands, fraud of every ilk, violations of treaties, betrayals, sadistic and genocidal cruelty from soldiers and civilians alike, Governor Alexander Ramsey's statewide official policy of extermination, a harsh Minnesota winter in a concentration camp, and forced removal from their ancestral home. Yet this white-privileged colonizer had the gall to say what she did to the Dakota Marchers in the church basement.

I don't know the woman or her character, but her words provided a clear case of colonizer thinking, cloaked in the rhetoric of "reconciliation." Not once did she speak to the injustices that the Dakota speakers had raised. Not once did she acknowledge the crimes that enabled her to stand there on Dakota homeland. She came across to me—and, I later learned, to other Marchers as well—as condescending, self-justifying, self-righteous, self-servingly selective in the telling of history, unremorseful of the harms that her forebears had committed, and entirely unwilling to acknowledge the settlers' dishonest and downright inhuman conduct, which is what caused the 1862 War in the first place. If anyone, her own forebears are to blame for the settlers' deaths in New Ulm and Henderson, yet she failed to connect these dots. In her view, reconciliation evidently meant exchanging isolated stories of personal pain without regard to the actual context of historical events, not to mention their multigenerational consequences. I felt ashamed, and as I said, ashamed of myself for not speaking up.

As in this case, being with the Dakota during the week inevitably made me see white colonizers differently, including myself. I was aware of my legacy as a colonizer, and I could observe in myself how this has shaped me much more starkly than when I am among other whites. Being in situations that make my programming more visible to me helps me, because I know that racist, colonizer programming is lethal stuff, and that I have been conditioned by it since birth. Among other things, the March was a weeklong meditation on this programming: what it has done, what it continues to do, and how I personally figure in all of this.

Stopping every mile to put stakes in the ground to honor those who died during the 1862 Death March was inevitably powerful. When a marcher realized that a stake being put into the ground bore the name of an ancestor, history ceased to be abstract or remote. I will always remember the moment when Waziyatawin Angela Wilson realized that her ancestor's name was written on a stake—her great, great, great grandmother who had been killed by a soldier. She could not speak for her tears, so her father stepped in to continue telling their ancestor's story for her. I remember every detail of that stop—her face, her voice, her father's face and words, her children coming to comfort her, the place where we were, the time of day, where people were standing, and the deep silence that followed her father's words, because so many people were weeping. I also remember how hard it was to leave that place, how slowly we moved away.

Spending much of the week on dirt roads and along rivers gave me a different sense of the land as well. I gradually stopped seeing the land the way it is now with houses, telephone poles, roads, and SUVs scattered all over it, and I began to reflect on how it was before the white settlers came.

I also began to sense something about the relationship that the Dakota People have with their homeland and realized that their relationship is not diminished by white occupancy, which felt increasingly transient and ephemeral to me. The reason, as far as I could tell, is that the Dakota continue to have an intimate relationship with their homeland. In spite of dislocation and genocide, this has not changed.

Observing the depth and quality of this relationship, I also realized how profoundly we colonizers lack anything comparable with the land on which we live. Pondering this during the week, it seemed to me that, because we have not sought to “be good relatives” to either the Dakota People or the land, we continue here as intruders, false notes, no matter how long we’ve been here. It is not that we could not be here in a good way in principle. Rather, what makes our presence false is how we came here—that it was and remains so wrong. Those in restorative justice often repeat a saying that they have heard from Native practitioners: “You cannot get to a good place in a bad way.” Given our history in Minnesota, how can we be here in a good way now? How could such profound violations of both the Dakota People and the land give us a sense of place or belonging? I imagined another movie:

A large and closely-knit family lives in a beautiful home that has been in the family for generations, in fact, as long as anyone can remember. The home is well loved, tended, and cared for, and the people are happy. They also take care of the land around the home and have worked out respectful relations with plants and animals. Then one day, some gangsters arrive and gun everyone down. After the gangsters throw the dead bodies of the family members into a ditch, they move in, as they continue their violent way of life. They cut down all the trees around and kill the animals, and when they still need wood for fire, they pull off a piece of floor or the mantle. They don’t honor the land or take care of the house; they just use things, consuming them as they go.

As colonizers, we would naturally say this movie image is overdrawn, since we don’t like seeing ourselves as rapacious gangsters, but I doubt the Dakota would agree. Aside from the question of whose home it is in this scenario, who has a relationship to the place? Could the gangsters claim to have the same relationship to the home that the family had? If the gangsters wanted to have that same kind of relationship, what would they have to do to get it? What process would they have to go through in order to change their way of being there?

As I pondered such things on the March, I realized that being deeply connected to a place develops over generations. Moreover, it develops as people live in a place “in a good way,” that is, with integrity and respect in every direction of their lives. “Being a good relative” to all beings is evidently how we come to belong in a place. We belong because we honor our relationships to all the beings there—we respect “all our relations.” If we fail to do this, we will always be occupiers—people who do not belong.

I saw this depth of relatedness communicated by the Marchers not only in words but also in movements, gestures, tones of voice, and ways of interacting. Being respectful of place, land, and “all our relations” seemed a natural way to be. Indeed, the March itself is an example of this. The March has to do with healing a terrible trauma that affected both the land and those who lived there. Planning the event and taking the time to do it respect the land by maintaining a relationship of integrity. If a people and their homeland share a deep wound, it is respectful to acknowledge that wound and work to heal it, just as it would be disrespectful to ignore that wound, causing it to continue unhealed. Among the Indigenous Peoples of the world, the Dakota would not be alone in saying that the land remembers. My Celtic ancestors said the same, as do many other Indigenous Peoples of Europe.

For those of us who are colonizers now, though, such values have not guided our relationship with this land or how we came here. We do not think in terms of having a relationship with the land that needs time

and tending, neither would it occur to us to respect the land as we would our own mothers. We do not think that committing crimes on the land will damage our relationship to the place. For us, land is a commodity, an object of ownership, an inert thing that we possess, dominate, and exploit for profit. Indeed, our Bible tells us to “subdue” the earth and to “have dominion...over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28). Clearly, land falls in the “not me,” “not us (not human)” category, so it would never occur to us to regard the land as our relative. To use theological terms, we would not consider having an “I–Thou” relationship with the land of Minnesota.

The Dakota, by contrast, refer to their homeland as *Kunsi Maka*, Grandmother Earth, one who has personality and who gives life. The desire to be in good relationship with her is as natural and important as being in a good way with our own mothers, and acting badly in her presence is like acting shamefully in front of our mothers. To be driven from their homeland is to be forcibly separated from family—from their most beloved relative who gives them life as a People—and to return to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors on the body of *Kunsi Maka* is a profoundly spiritual and emotional experience. To begin to appreciate the power and depth of this relationship in even the smallest way and then to juxtapose this awareness with a knowledge of the history—that all the horrific things done to the Dakota were done precisely to separate them from their beloved relative, their homeland—this is what I as a colonizer experienced on the March.

Obviously, writing this article brings the March experience back to me in spades, yet I have to say that not all of it is profound or wrenching. I also remember the foot rubs, the joking around, the morning meetings in the ladies room, the speculations about various sounds in the night, the eternal quest for coffee, the moments of rest before and after meals, the stories about blisters and aching feet and muscles, the evening rituals of setting up camp and the morning rituals dismantling it—rituals such as hauling mattresses, sleeping bags, and luggage—and the feeling of being so tired at the end of the day in a way that felt so good.

I am grateful beyond words that the March is now a part of my life. Through that experience, I have become grateful to know who I am as a colonizer, because only then can I begin my life as a decolonizer. From a sense of despair, I once said to my friend, “This being white will be the death of me.” Without missing a beat, he replied, “No, it will be your renewal.”

Colonialism on the Ground

Waziyatawin

At one time our ancestors would have had difficulty imagining living in a state of unfreedom. Now we have difficulty imagining living in a state of freedom. This is perhaps the most profound impact of colonialism in our lives. It reveals a limitation in thinking so severe that it prevents us from reclaiming our inherent rights as Indigenous Peoples of this land, even in our dreams.

Colonialism is the massive fog that has clouded our imaginations regarding who we could be, excised our memories of who we once were, and numbed our understanding of our current existence. Colonialism is the force that disallows us from recognizing its confines while at the same time limiting our vision of possibilities. Colonialism is the farce that compels us to feel gratitude for small concessions while our fundamental freedoms are denied. Colonialism has set the parameters of our imaginations to constrain our vision of what is possible.

To be sure, the brand of colonialism in the United States today differs from the brands of earlier times when imperial forces from Europe established colonies in the “New World” as a means of expanding the wealth and power of their nations while also battling with competing imperial nations over pieces of the global pie. Thus, in the United States American schools teach our children that the “colonial era” ended when the United States gained its freedom from Great Britain. However, this denial of itself is simply one of colonialism’s myths. This denial is so extreme that even today the United States government insists on the language of “possessions” rather than “colonies” to identify its holdings outside the contiguous land base it claims in North America, despite the fact that many of them fit classic definitions of colonies precisely because they have not been absorbed into the state. But, the interest in domination and control over territories was established even before the entity of the United States was born. As American colonies gained their independence from their Mother Country, they sought to further expand their wealth and influence through the continuing invasion and acquisition of other Peoples’ lands and resources and the subjugation of the Original Peoples. The shedding of the constraints of their Mother Country simply facilitated and hastened that project. The United States soundly expanded its empire and is now so deeply entrenched in its colonial acquisitions that to anyone but the most conscientious observer, those roots have been lost in obscurity.

The hope, perhaps, is that Indigenous Peoples will eventually be incorporated into the lowest rungs of society enough to forget our colonized status. When we have forgotten, the United States and its citizens are ameliorated of wrongdoing and there will be no need for restitution for the crime against humanity that is colonialism. Indigenous Peoples, therefore, must be conscientious observers because the colonizing society will exercise all means to compel our historical amnesia.

For Indigenous Peoples U.S. colonialism meant the invasion and subsequent large-scale theft of our lands and continuing domination over the meager lands we retained. It meant the systematic interference in Indigenous ways of being and assaults on all aspects of Indigenous life including our physical bodies, our means of sustenance, our spirituality, our languages, our gender relations, and our kinship, economic, and educational systems as well as both natural and human laws.

In America, the process of destroying indigeneity was dramatically accelerated by the monumental loss of life that occurred as a consequence of exposure to new diseases. While colonizer scholars and popular culture suggest that loss of life due to disease was either inevitable or unavoidable, this too is a colonial myth. The reality is that Europeans and later European Americans understood that their presence in the Americas triggered pandemics that were devastating Indigenous populations. Yet, they chose to keep coming because they held no regard for the lives of Indigenous Peoples and massive die-offs of the populations clearly served their colonial interests. Not only were they unrepentant about their participation in our microbial slaughter, they were often celebratory. Thus when our populations were already severely weakened, the process of colonization was implemented much more effectively.

To understand the process phase of colonialism, that is colonization, it might be useful to articulate the general chain of events in the American context. Many of the colonial tactics were borrowed from previous colonial powers, or have since been replicated by global colonial powers, precisely because they work so effectively. Explorers and traders were typically the forerunners of American empire, seeking opportunities for exploitation and gauging the extent of Indigenous resistance. Soldiers and military forts came next with the purpose of establishing American supremacy in a region, not just to subdue Indigenous populations but also to contest other colonial interests. This was important for initially securing economic preeminence, often manifested in the form of the fur trade. White invaders intent on “settling” Indigenous lands soon followed the forts and soldiery and they paved the way for missionaries to implement their own imperialist agenda. Under the guise of saving souls and “civilizing” Indigenous people, missionaries implemented what we would characterize today as policies of ethnocide. Settlers then clamored for title to Indigenous lands, pressuring an eager and supportive U.S. government to formalize and legalize their usurpation of Indigenous lands and the subjugation of Indigenous Peoples. Missionaries, Indian agents, traders, settlers, and the U.S. government then all worked together to launch systematic and profound attacks on Indigenous bodies and ways of being, dividing us and crushing us into submission. All segments of our populations were subject to colonial violence and brutality, including the children who bore the brunt of colonizer indoctrination and manipulation in the genocidal boarding schools.

Divide and conquer techniques are the hallmark of colonial manipulation. Those indigenous individuals considered the friendliest to colonizer interests (that is, who offered the least amount of resistance) were singled out for special favors and rewards until they were firmly co-opted to do the colonizer’s bidding. Those who resisted colonizer interests most vehemently were targeted for particularly oppressive punishments. The collaborators are often distinguished in written records as the “friendly” or “good” Indians, while those who continued to resist co-optation were quickly identified as the “savage” or “hostile” Indians. The leaders, thinkers, peacemakers, warriors, spiritual leaders, healers and teachers who did not fall in line with the emerging order were isolated, dehumanized and diminished. Thus, colonizers ably and superbly fostered resentments between the two groups, pitting them against one another and always calling on the favorite “friendly” to monitor their colonized cohort and enforce the colonial system. These divisions severely eroded the unity in Indigenous societies that were often simultaneously devastated from disease, warfare, forced removals, loss of homelands, mass killings, and policies of ethnic cleansing. The tremendous harm caused by generations of factionalism as a direct consequence of colonialism cannot be overstated as it has greatly affected the capacity of Indigenous Peoples to mobilize broadly for significant change.

Even today, those who attempt to restore Indigenous ways of being in the modern world are dismissed by colonizers and their colonized puppets as angry, unrealistic, naïve, less sophisticated, or even less intelligent than those mimicking the values and ideals of the dominant society. The “friendly” Indians invested in whatever small perks they gain from the colonial system are deeply devoted to maintaining the existing system and they defend its justness at every turn. Or, they have individually reaped substantial prestige and power from toting the colonizer’s party line and as a consequence turn their back on the suffering of their Indigenous communities while at the same time applauding the amazing resiliency of the People. They see no need to seriously challenge the existing system because having bought into the American dream they are well on their way to achieving it. They actively participate in the blind march toward “progress,” regardless of how that march continues to devastate the People, their homelands, or their relationship with the rest of the universe. Some of them talk about tweaking the existing system, maybe passing better legislation on this issue over here, or developing a more strategic economic plan over there, and they have abandoned the struggle for liberation. They, in fact, do not want liberation because it might affect their comfortable status. And, because these “friendly” offer no threat to the existing power structure, they become the favored pets, routinely lauded by the colonizers for their superior intelligence, insight, and commitment to the well-being of their People. They are

paraded in front of colonizer audiences as Indian models of success.

Still others live in daily fear. They, too, have abandoned the struggle for liberation because they see no way out of this overwhelming oppression. Having grown accustomed to living as subjugated people, they might reap only mild benefits from the colonial system while injustices occur all around them, yet they are afraid of what might happen if they were to engage in resistance. For them, liberation is simply not conceivable, and they believe that if the colonized can never win freedom, then we must simply try to negotiate the best scraps we can while we numb ourselves with chemicals, feed our addictions, and entertain ourselves with material goods and Hollywood entertainment. For if we challenge colonialism, even those small privileges might be taken away from us and we might face increased harassment and assaults, we might be the ones carted off to colonial prisons, and we might be the ones who have our children taken away. These fears are not unjustified. They can keep us immobilized from enacting transformative change. Rather than challenge the colonial system, we live according to its values. We become low-level enforcers of its rules, replicating colonial injustice in our own communities, afraid to even imagine a different reality.

Our current reality as colonized Peoples echoes the reality of colonized Peoples around the world. However, in the United States, with the advent of casino gaming and other forms of economic development among some Indigenous populations, it is easy to be seduced into believing that things really are better. For example, many contemporary historians and scholars of Indigenous Peoples highlight Indigenous agency and resiliency in their analysis of our reality. They describe the historical experiences of Indigenous Peoples as processes of cultural transformation or of evolutionary and dynamic change. They celebrate Indigenous projects and plans. All of this, on the surface, seems to make sense. But, the question is, “better” relative to what?

For example, if visitors came to my home community, they would be inundated with positive messages about all the good projects happening on our reservation. They would receive a tour of our casino, of the recent housing development and the plans for the new community center. They would be shown our water tower and the water treatment system as well as our tribal courthouse. These visitors might be invited to our annual wacipi (powwow) held in August of every year. And, they would be told about our strong youth program, the language and culture classes offered, our community garden, the tribal police patrolling our reservation lands, and the chemical dependency support system we have in place. Indeed, these projects and activities inspire a sense of accomplishment and progress in all of our community members.

Yet, these projects, however worthy of celebration, do not tell the full story. If a broader view of history is employed to examine our current status, a different picture emerges with a more painful significance and legacy. If we delve more deeply, we learn that the reason we need a casino is because in the nineteenth century the invaders stripped our People of our homeland and with it our entire means of subsistence. Settler society systematically destroyed the life of abundance and sustainability that we knew for thousands of years so that they could exploit and destroy the resources in our lands while denying most of us even the right of occupancy. Since we were dispossessed from our original land base and colonizer society killed many Indigenous animals and plants to near extinction and devastated our homeland environments, our People have experienced lives of exceptional poverty.

For example, at one time our People maintained a highly evolved and spiritually fulfilling relationship with the buffalo and we depended on them as a major source of our basic needs including food, clothing, and shelter. But today, even after obtaining a new means of economic subsistence (at least partial subsistence) that helps put food on the table, our casino remains a poor substitute for the buffalo while also fostering a new set of addictions and a compromising of Dakota values (anti-materialism, reciprocity, respectful kinship relations). It in no way can satisfactorily replace our former relationship with the buffalo or the kind of engagement we previously had with our homeland. In pre-colonized time we sustained ourselves in accordance with natural laws, each generation possessing extraordinary capacities for economic self-sufficiency and self-determination, while now we have a gaming operation that helps sustain the community, but at a heavy social and spiritual

cost that does not induce the same sense of individual or collective self-sufficiency and self-determination. Furthermore, we also know that relying on gaming for our well-being places us in a precarious position because colonizing society could strip it from us at any time. A larger scope of comparison from the self-determination that existed in pre-colonial days to the costly compromise with oppressive external authorities for limited economic gain that occurs today in the context of gaming, indicates that progress has not been achieved, at least if progress is intended to indicate some kind of improvement. Instead, we cannot help but look at this loss of complete economic self-determination as simply another manifestation of colonialism. Are our lives “better” as a consequence of gaming? The significant question is, better than what?

Similarly, our water tower is necessary today because it provides the community with clean water that is distributed to all the reservation households. That is extremely important. In light of the desecration to the river that runs through our reservation where our ancestors drew their water, however, it seems a small consolation. Our river is now so toxic that we cannot even swim in its waters because the poisons, stemming largely from corporate run-off and farm pesticides and fertilizers, will leach through our skin. The fish and other beings who inhabit the river are currently threatened and they too have become toxic. They, in turn, threaten all the wildlife in the region who rely on them for subsistence, including us as Indigenous People. While we, at least, have the capacity to severely limit our fish consumption, other beings who rely on fish cannot do the same and they too become poisoned as a consequence. Now our man-made water tower sits atop a bluff beside a river from which we can no longer drink or eat. Is this “better”?

As for some of the other institutions we have in place modeled on the U.S. (in)justice system, we are merely replicating internally colonizer ways that have harmed generations of our People. We have become invested in punishment as a response to crimes, rather than community healing. At the same time the support systems we had in place prior to colonization to sanction appropriate behavior are either severely damaged or non-existent.

The processes of invasion, conquest, land theft and colonization do not just contribute to harmful behaviors within our communities—they cause them. When settler society denies our people our lands and ways of life that sustained us and nourished us physically, emotionally and spiritually, the population suffers. When people are routinely dehumanized, we forget how to interact humanely.

The attacks on Indigeneity in the U.S. have not only been systematic, the government has also doggedly sustained them in various forms over centuries, many of them until the present day. Hence, it was not only one generation of Indigenous Peoples that suffered from boarding school abuses and the ethnocide perpetrated in those schools, it was multiple generations. It was not only one generation of Indigenous Peoples that was subjected to relentless religious imperialism, it was multiple generations. It was not only one generation that suffered from various crimes against humanity, it was multiple generations. For instance, Indigenous Peoples generally acknowledge the harms resulting from the federally-mandated and government and church run boarding schools (such as the practices of severe corporal punishment as well as physical and sexual abuse), but we have not learned how to effectively heal from those generational traumas that are now perpetuated in our families and communities, nor have we been able to stop the cycles of abuse and chemical dependency from afflicting our populations. Even today, there is a palpable sense of desperation in most of our communities. We have accepted trauma as a way of life and we continue to harm ourselves and others. All of this occurs in the context of a brutal and ongoing colonization. Yet, settler society has never rectified most of the crimes against humanity they perpetrated against our ancestors and ourselves and most of the losses we have sustained acutely affect our populations today. Rather than addressing the monumental crimes against humanity inflicted on Indigenous Peoples throughout the country, the U.S. criminal (in)justice system chooses instead to incarcerate our people in response to relatively milder crimes, in punishment for the consequences of their colonization of our Peoples.

The U.S. (in)justice system is now the predominant channel through which we help to funnel the dejected from

our communities and it is the system that relentlessly continues to wrest our people away. The vast majority of our Indigenous brothers and sisters who end up doing time in the criminal (in)justice system are also victims of horrendous abuses which are colonialism's legacy, including structural racism and a constant degradation of personhood. In addition, most never had adequate legal representation, they typically have harsher sentences than their non-Indigenous peers, and they are subject to brutal and inhumane prison conditions in which indigeneity is constantly attacked and dehumanization is routine.

Yet, there is little resistance to colonialism in many of our communities and we continue to exhibit harmful behaviors to others and ourselves. Many of those harmful behaviors begin early and colonizer society criminalizes them. Our severe social problems are a reflection of our state of colonization. What Indigenous family is not affected by chemical dependency? By some form of violence? What community is not plagued by high rates of addictions, depression, suicide, incarceration, and early mortality? Our communities have normalized pain and suffering to such an extent that many of our people do not know or can even envision a life different from the one we have experienced and seen modeled for us. Many of our people contemplate suicide as children and then slowly enact lifestyles that facilitate an early death, either through violence, accidents, or compromised health. How many of our people have been killed or injured in car accidents or ended up incarcerated because of violent crimes perpetrated under the influence of drugs or alcohol? The latest harmful drug to sweep through our community is crystal meth and it is devastating the lives of our young people. The reality is that well people do not use crystal meth. Well people do not feed their addictions. Well people do not commit suicide. Still, these behaviors are not the consequences of weak or inferior individuals. These behaviors are a direct outcome of a colonization process that sinks people into a state of despair and does not offer any recognizable alternatives.

Against this overwhelming backdrop, if we attempt to identify "progress" in the community, what could possibly qualify? Suddenly the chemical dependency or addiction treatment programs we now offer can offer only a small bit of hope in the face of a devastating social reality.

This is in severe conflict with Indigenous ways of being prior to colonization. From the time children were born, they were embraced by a whole nurturing community deeply invested in producing individuals who would be healthy, contributing members of society. Amidst constant love and compassion, our ancestors raised children with strict teachings about how to be a good relative, and what was acceptable behavior according to the communal ethic. Our communities praised the positive behaviors and publicly celebrated individuals during rites of passage as well as for actions that benefited the community. If, after years of this upbringing, individuals still perpetrated a terrible crime, their behavior would be considered so aberrant, they would likely face harsh consequences such as death or banishment as a way to restore balance and peace to the community. Today, we employ similarly harsh consequences, not as a way to restore balance and peace, but as a means of punishment, without providing the years of communal support, teaching, and nurturing. Consequently, after incarceration, many of our people return home only to repeat offenses. This does nothing to help heal our communities. Meanwhile, settler society locks away our relatives in white colonial institutions—individuals with tremendous gifts and strengths to potentially offer our communities—often for years at a time.

Similarly, the corresponding cultural programs in my community, while worthwhile and important, are also responses to tremendous devastation wrought from colonialism. We now have an annual wacipi (powwow) when dancing and singing at one time accompanied part of our daily existence. When our dances were outlawed and Indian agents jailed practitioners of "heathen" rituals, we eliminated our practice of them, practiced them in secrecy, or learned to adjust our traditions to colonial regulations. We learned how to cloak our traditions in monikers of settler society. We now have a grand entry in which we carry the American flag, the ultimate icon of our own subjugation, out of apparent respect for our veterans who fought to enforce American interests throughout the world, thereby expanding the American empire. And, because we could not have our traditional dances frequently under colonial rule, we learned to concentrate them into one weekend a year. Thus, even this "celebration of culture" is marred with colonial compromises.

One of the starkest examples of the misplaced argument for Indigenous resiliency occurs in the area of language. Our high school age youth are offered the opportunity to take our language in the local high school and there is an occasional class offered to other interested community members. These classes are absolutely essential today and they are worthy of celebration. However, before any of us can get carried away with a celebration based on some notion of progress, we have to remember that the urgency regarding intensive language programming today exists because most of our languages are hanging on the edge of extinction. If we do not take drastic and immediate steps to revive our languages, we will lose them. This, too, is not a coincidence, but is a direct consequence of the U.S. government's policy of cultural genocide perpetrated against Indigenous children through brutal boarding schools and reservation day schools. Thus, to anyone committed to Indigenous languages, there is a mixture of excitement about the growing language movements in our communities coupled with a sense of sheer panic about the losses our cultures have sustained. At the end of 2007 we buried three fluent speaking Dakota elders in Minnesota and we can count on two hands all the fluent Dakota speakers remaining on our Minnesota reservations. What does this say about our "agency"? About our "resiliency"? For those Indigenous Peoples who already lost their languages, do they maintain a sense of "resiliency" and "agency"? Or, are they mourning their tremendous loss and grieving as a people? If the latter is true, it suggests a rejection of the notion of mere cultural change (as opposed to cultural loss) and challenges the notion of vibrancy and agency. It suggests instead that the forces of colonialism were historically so brutal and effective that some of our people and traditions have not been able to survive them. Not because we are weak, not because we are inferior, but because the power of colonialism has been, in some instances, too devastating to overcome.

Thus, Indigenous projects and activities that have come to symbolize "progress" in some academic circles may only be seen as such by examining ourselves through an elitist and very narrow scope of history. If we take a broad view of history, the argument of any notion of progress, agency or resiliency becomes impossible because we ultimately have to account for the loss of Indigenous self-determination and the violent, unremitting assaults on our bodies, lands, and spirits. It is not acceptable for colonialism's apologists, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to high-jack the framing of our experiences.

Ah, but some might argue that Indigenous Peoples in the United States are sovereign nations and are already self-determined. By what standards? Every system and institution that we bump up against on a daily basis is not of our making, but has been imposed under colonial rule. The economic system, land tenure system, educational system, social welfare system, governmental structure, religious institutions are all colonial institutions that continue to oppress Indigenous Peoples and deny Indigenous liberation. Even freedoms that theoretically apply to all American citizens, such as religious freedom, are routinely denied to Indigenous Peoples. We do not even have control over the protection of our ancestors' remains. Certainly, the fundamental freedoms that are necessary for Indigenous ways of being, such as access to homeland, clean air and water, are not part of our reality. What, in our lives, do we have complete control over? While we, along with other anti-statist communities, occasionally experience what Hakim Bey identifies as Temporary Autonomous Zones (created as an alternative to the existing hegemonic order), we have yet to produce lasting Indigenous communities in the U.S. that operate fully outside of a colonial existence. Instead, we create spaces where our ways of being are practiced and nurtured, where we attempt to liberate ourselves from the oppression that surrounds our daily existence, where it is good to be Indigenous. We make them last as long as we can, but because they, as of yet, cannot be sustained, we are forced to return to the "real world" that smothers with an oppressive weight not all of us can bear to carry. Self-determination is an impossibility under colonial rule.

Meaningful change will require dramatic action on our part that can move us beyond colonial interference. If we as Indigenous Peoples in the United States ever want a liberated future for our future generations or ourselves, we have to work toward decolonization. Decolonization is "the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our

minds, bodies, and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation.”¹ A growing awareness of colonialism inexorably leads to a simultaneous dissatisfaction with the situation and a growing unrest. This, in turn, has the potential to lead to revolutionary praxis. Thus, recognition of this colonial reality is the first step toward our liberation. We cannot resist what we cannot identify and name. Then we need to begin to imagine an alternative reality. Our colonizers have told us that we must accept the way things are because we cannot change them. That is, we must accept our own subjugation and their domination as a natural and inevitable state. Decolonization is a rejection of that logic. It therefore requires opening up the mind to new visions of what is possible. If we were not subject to the authority or presence of the United States government and its citizens what would we want our lives to look like? The struggle for decolonization requires us to identify clearly our objectives as Indigenous Peoples and to critically question whether those objectives are constrained by the parameters of thought set by colonialism, or whether they traverse those parameters and reflect our desires as free, Indigenous Peoples of the land. If this critical interrogation of our own vision does not occur, even upon overturning colonialism we would run the risk of replicating colonial institutions and systems among our own populations.

Lest critics insist that a recognition of colonialism means condemning Indigenous Peoples to a perpetual state of victimage, let me state now that this position does not deny Indigenous capacity for action and resistance, but only that our actions are often violently limited within a colonial structure. One of the criticisms frequently hurled at decolonization theorists is that decolonization research, analysis, and activism and its accompanying focus on colonization, means an acceptance and advocacy of victimage, that when we attribute our social problems to external colonial forces we are denying Indigenous agency. I think just the opposite is true. While employing colonialism as an intellectual framework acknowledges the horrendous injustices perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples and the limited choices our peoples faced as a consequence, this is not inappropriate, nor is it overstated. When the loss of Indigenous life in the Americas weighs in minimally at 95% and the ensuing land theft, loss of resources, means of subsistence and attempts at cultural eradication are considered, to focus solely on the agency of the less than 5% who survived and are facing severe social problems seems disingenuous at best. An analysis of colonialism allows us to make sense of our current condition, strategically develop more effective means of resistance, recover the pre-colonial traditions that strengthen us as Indigenous Peoples, and connect with the struggles of colonized peoples throughout the world to transform the world. When colonialism is removed from the analysis, we have little alternative other than to simply blame ourselves for the current social ills. This blaming the victim strategy only increases violence against our own people.

Predictably, those who most fiercely deny the effects of colonialism are often the ones who advocate the most strongly for working within the existing system. They reject dreams of liberation and defeatist rhetoric characterizes their position. It includes such sentiments as “The world is not going to change,” or “We have to accept the way things are and do what we can within the existing system.” Ironically, this position denies the profound nature and propensity of human agency and relegates the results of human activity to negligible proportions. This is what decolonization advocates cannot accept. Instead, we put our faith and actions toward making revolutionary change, looking to the highest potential of human agency.

There was a time when my ancestors did not need to have strategies to resist forces of colonialism. When they did, the processes of invasion, military conquest and subjugation were unleashed so abruptly, impromptu strategies were courageously, but unsuccessfully attempted. None of them prevented the total onslaught of colonial violence that ensued. Through time and processes of complete and humiliating subjugation that affected every aspect of the lives of subsequent generations, resistance weakened into complacency. Of course, not all Indigenous people chose this path and instead stayed the course of spirited resistance, but today they represent the exceptions rather than the rule. The vast majority found it easier to

¹ Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird, eds., *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005), 2.

attempt to negotiate petty benefits from the colonial system while maintaining low visibility and small dreams.

Today, however, we have reached an era in which the existing system is on the verge of collapse, with colonizer and colonized alike resting near a precipitous edge. We can either succumb to the ongoing discourse of complacency propagated by the colonizing government, or we can mobilize for revolutionary change.

APPENDIX



Additional Resources

Here's a not-exhaustive list of other resources--more beginnings.

PDF Versions of all content in this sourcebook can be found at:
<http://sites.google.com/site/unsettlingminnesota/home>

A few Allies:

- Black Mesa Indigenous Support (BMIS): <http://blackmesais.org/> (blackmesais@gmail.com)
- Snag Magazine: A Bay Area Indigenous Youth Magazine. <http://www.myspace.com/snagmagazine>
- Indigenous Environmental Network: <http://www.ienearth.org/>
- International Indian Treaty Council (IITC): <http://www.treatycouncil.org/>
- The Catalyst Project: <http://collectiveliberation.org/>
- Six Nations Solidarity: <http://sisis.nativeweb.org/actionalert/>
- Quiver Distro: <http://www.anti-politics.net/>
- Library Thing Online Zine Bank: <http://www.librarything.com/>
- Redwire Magazine: <http://www.redwiremag.com/>
- Anpao Duta Journal: <https://www.anpaoduta.net/>

Decolonization News Sources:

- <http://intercontinentalcry.org>
- <http://upside-down-world.org/main/>
- <http://indianz.com>
- <http://no2010.com>
- <http://indigenouaction.org/>
- <http://www.turtleisland.org/news/news-sixnations.htm>

Histories of Colonization:

- "The Grid of History: Cowboys and Indians," Roxanne Dunbar - Ortiz. <<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0703dunbarortiz.htm>>
- Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat by J. Sakai
- American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World by David E. Stannard
- Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Colonization by Ward Churchill
- A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present by Ward Churchill
- Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools by Ward Churchill
- From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii by Haunani-Kay Trask
- 500 years of Indigenous Resistance by Oh-Toh-Kin. <<http://www.dickshovel.com/500.html>>
- One Dead Indian; the Premier, the Police, and the Ipperwash Crisis by Peter Edwards

Decolonization & Anti/Colonial Mentalities

- The Colonizer and the Colonized by Albert Memmi
- Decolonization and the Decolonized by Albert Memmi
- For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson; Michael Yellow Bird
- From a Native Son: Selected Essays on Indigenism, 1985-1995 by Ward Churchill and Howard Zinn
- Gustafsen Lake: Under Siege by Janice Switlo
- People of the Pines; The Warriors & the Legacy of Oka By Geoffrey York & Loreen Pindera
- Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom by Taiaiake Alfred

Dakota Histories

- In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors: The Dakota Commemorative Marches of the 21st Century by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Waziyatawin Angela Wilson
- Remember This!: Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Wahpetunwin Carolyn Schommer

Indigenous & Women of Color & Third World Feminisms:

- The Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence
- Welcome Home: Settler Sexuality and the Politics of Indigeneity by Scott Morgensen
- Femme Sharks Communique #2: Against Intra-Uterine Cannibalism!!! by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasihha <<http://www.librarything.com/work/8541957>>

DVD/Videos:

- Broken Rainbow, a Black Mesa Documentary.
- Frozen River, 2008. Directed By Courtney Hunt.
- Haunani-Kay Trask: We Are Not Happy Natives, 2002. Edited by Jon Kikuo Shishido.
- Where the Spirit Lives, 1989. Directed by Bruce Pittman.
- Incident at Oglala: The Leonard Peltier Story. Directed by Michael Apted.
- Above the Law: deception at Gustafsen Lake
- Kanesatake: 270 Years of Resistance. Directed by Alanis Obamsawin

Course Schedule & Reading Syllabus

Dakota Decolonization: Solidarity Education for Allies

Preface: You can teach a version of this class, too! Use this syllabus from our original class, taught through the Experimental College (<http://excotc.org>) as a guide. For more info, email us at unsettlingMN@gmail.com

March 3 –May 5, 2009

Course description: This course is designed to create community, education, and organized networks for non-Dakota allies to act in solidarity with upcoming Dakota decolonization struggles. We will listen to the desires, demands, knowledge and goals of Dakota community members struggling for liberation and decolonization. We will educate ourselves about Dakota history, perspectives on decolonization, white privilege, and racism, through carefully chosen texts and in-class education with Dakota and non-Dakota people. Together, we will build a communal knowledge base that centers decolonization within our ideas of anti-oppression. Dakota Traditional knowledge and spirituality will not be shared and this is not a space for non-Dakota people to seek appropriation of Dakota culture or an “in” to spiritual practices. For white people, acknowledging and owning white privilege, as well as working to transform feelings of white guilt into action towards decolonization will be crucial personal work required during the course. The end goal is to create active ally solidarity networks that can be mobilized when need be--in answer to Dakota calls for solidarity from non-Dakota folks, based on communication with and knowledge of Dakota needs. Class members will be asked to act not as individuals, but as members of their own communities—to act within their networks to further spread knowledge and mobilize solidarity.

SECTION ONE: DAKOTA HISTORIES OF “MINNESOTA”

1: Intros

-Brown, Dee. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. Chapters 1 & 3.

2: Dakota Colonization, Genocide & War of 1862 narratives

-Waziyatawin. What does Justice Look Like?: The struggle for liberation in Dakota Homeland. Chapter 1.

3: Colonialism: From Rome to Dakota Genocide today

-Waziyatawin. “Colonialism on the Ground.”

-Waziyatawin. What does Justice Look Like?: The struggle for liberation in Dakota Homeland. Chapter 2 & 3.

4: *Chris Mato Nunpa*: Colonizer Privilege & Resistance Histories

-Waziyatawin. What does Justice Look Like?: The struggle for liberation in Dakota Homeland. Chapter 4 & 5.

SECTION TWO: PRIVILEGE & MENTALITY: COLONIZER / SETTLER / WHITE

5: *Flo Razowsky*: Colonizers in anti-colonial solidarity: Allyship & Solidarity.

From New Socialist Magazine special issue #58-Sept 06-Indigenous Radicalism Today:

-Coulthard, Glen. “Indigenous Peoples and the politics of recognition.”

-Day, Richard & Haberle, Sean. “Anarchist –Indigenous Solidarity at Six Nations.”

-Gernstenberger, Rolf. “Labor –Indigenous Solidarity a Six Nations.”

6: Waziyatawin: Dakota Liberation Struggle & Dakota Solidarity Struggle.

-Finish: Waziyatawin. **What does Justice Look Like?: The struggle for liberation in Dakota Homeland.**

-Revisit: Waziyatawin. “Colonialism on the Ground.”

7: Scott Morgensen: Heteropatriarchy, cultural appropriation, and the politics of belonging in settler states.

-Smith, Andrea. **Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide. Chapter 1 & 6.**

-Smith, Andrea. “Indigenous Feminism Without Apology.” *New Socialist Issue #58*

SECTION THREE: CULTURES OF RESISTANCE & LIBERATION: SOLIDARITY, ALLYSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY

8: Film Screening: Kaneshatake: 270 Years of Resistance

-online link to film: <http://www.archive.org/details/kaneshatake>

9: Building Settler Anti-Colonial Solidarity Brainstorm

-Communities on call brainstorm, writing

10: Offerings of Solidarity to Dakota Decolonization Organizers

-Small group solidarity offering creation

Letter to the New Ulm Journal: Cherusci, Dakota Both Resisted Colonization

Anpao Duta

This letter was written to the editor of the New Ulm town newspaper on the occasion of the Hermann Monument Society's Celebration of the 2,000 year anniversary of the Battle of Teutoburg Forest.

September 15, 2009

To the editor:

“We must tell our children and our children’s children the story of the heroes of every land and every time who have given their lives that liberty and fraternity and equality might survive among men.”

- Governor David Marston Clough, Dedication of Hermann Monument, New Ulm, Minnesota

This is a letter to those who remember that before they were Americans, before they were Germans, they were Chatti, Cherusi, Harii, Marsi and Suebia.

This is a letter to those who remember their own homeland and the ways of their ancestors; to those who remain Tru.

This is a letter to those who remember that they too were once resisters of colonization.

This is a letter to those who remember Hermann Der Cherusker.

Two thousand years ago on this date, a handful of tribes were united for a brief glimpse in history. Deep in the forests of Teutoburg, these few thousand warriors stood against three legions of the greatest empire of their time. For three days, they fought for their existence as a People, driving the Romans out of their homelands, and holding them at bay for 400 years until the Empire’s collapse.

Rome was the greatest colonizing force of its time, with armies that rode out and conquered much of the known world. It brought thousands of Europe’s indigenous peoples under colonial rule through superior weapons, tactics and numbers. Yet, as written in the words of the Romans themselves, Hermann der Cherusker “challenged the Roman people not in its beginnings like other kings and leaders, but in the peak of its empire.”

Approximately 1400 years later, in a land called Mnisota Makoce, indigenous peoples would stand again to combat the New Rome. Just as the Chatti, the Cherusi, and the Marsi tribes fought against an invading imperial army, our People, the Dakota Oyate, fought against our own invading empire and defended our own way of life.

And once again, members of the Chatti, the Chersci, and the Marsi would be present for this battle, but only after their own assimilation. The descendants of those who had once defended their lands against a colonial power so many centuries before would decide to dishonor their ancestors, betray their heritage, and ally themselves with the New Rome.

The citizens of New Ulm, descendants of Hermann der Cherusker, Uniter of Tribes, Defier of Rome, Resistor of Empires, would become perpetrators of colonialism against those who should have been their relations in a common struggle.

And so, the Dakota resistance came with much pain. Our women and children were force-marched to concentration camps before exile from our homelands. It was through the town of New Ulm that German-Americans threw rocks and harassed these captives. Boiling water was poured from windows onto passing elders and children. One young man was even pulled from the procession and severely beaten by the mob. His older brother was killed in the process of saving him.

Tribute is rightfully paid to Hermann, and two statues commemorate his resistance. One on a hill near the site of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. Another, 4,000 miles away in the town of New Ulm, in the heart of Dakota Territory.

While it is an honor that a tribute to a hero of liberation stands amongst us, it is both sad and ironic that the fields next to him stand empty, where a monument to the successful defenders of Dakota homeland should have stood had another people remembered their own tribal past. That emptiness is now only filled with the painful memories of the loss of our homeland, the genocide of our people, and the betrayal of descendants of a far-away tribe.

Tonight, we put out tobacco for all the descendants of Hermann der Cherusker, for the descendants of all who stood with him, and for our own ancestors who continued their fight. We do this in hopes that these descendants might remember the commonalities between our two peoples and our two struggles.

It is up to you to also honor those ancestors and to continue their fight. Stand with us, as you stand with them, and forever resist the New Rome.

In the Spirit of Hermann der Cherusker,

In the Spirit of Taoyateduta,

Unki tamakoce k'a oni unkitawapi!

Anpao Duta dena unkiyepi

Granite Falls

Watershed

Nick

Twisted faces, crying out for lost history
Buried under years of thick white lies and textbook parchment
Parching the land, evaporating the tears and blood that saturate this soil
Eyes like deep wells now dried denied the right to cry
Lest mothers grieve for their children in this ongoing state of genocide
Lest children grieve for their mother
I wonder if our mouths can open wide enough to name what's been taken
Layers of ash and bone hold up pillars of conquest under concrete
Shuffling feet
Plugged into ipods don't touch the truth between slabs
Walkin' tall so as not to step on cracks
Or feel dirt between toes
Cover the truth in a slick status quo
A layer of thick white construction between what was and what is
Still a thin layer that crumbles without constant maintenance
Twisted roots crying for air
Parched land sighing for water
Generations of tears not yet shed
Centuries of repression built up like a dam wall between power and its captives
Between colonized mind and liberated self
A thin shelf
Concrete erected vertical
Waiting to release the waters of grief, truth, and justice
Tears of dignified rage held up like a guillotine
Quivering with the anticipation of five hundred years



Decolonizing Ourselves: The True Face Behind Minnesota's History

Ly

One of Minnesota's more overtly colonialist institutions, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) does not allow the public access to the true history of how our fair cities came to be. In late July, several white people committed to exposing the lies of Minnesota's official history attended a Civil War/ War of 1862 tour at the MNHS' flagship attraction – Fort Snelling. The mere act of understanding the real history that we are all very much a part of is an integral part of fostering change within our movements. If what we truly want to accomplish is revolutionary social change, we must begin with these simple actions that foster a true story to be told. But what story was told at Fort Snelling on that day?

The lead tour guide, Fort Snelling Program Manager Kevin Maijala, began the white settler narrative by talking about the Dred Scott decision of 1857. Scott fought in the courts for his freedom from slavery under the premise that he had lived at Fort Snelling from 1836-1840. During this time, the stolen land that would later become Minnesota had not yet been incorporated as part of the U.S. Nowhere in the tour guide's presentation on the case did he condemn slavery, racism or white supremacy inherent in the founding of the state. He referred to Minnesota as the "frontier" and "basically in the middle of nowhere." Did he forget that this was the homeland of the Dakota people, or did he choose to ignore their history on purpose?

After discussing the Dred Scott decision and, briefly, slavery at the fort (many people at the fort paid to have "servants," whom he admitted were black people shipped in by the U.S. government) the predominately white tourist group visited the oldest standing structure at the fort, the round tower. Here Maijala told the tale of the brave "Minnesota men" who fought and died for the glory of our country during the Civil War -- at Bull Run, Northern Virginia and Gettysburg. "Think of all the families in, say, Hastings, that would be forced to deal with that even today," he says. Nowhere during the tour does he make an even vaguely similar statement about the families of Dakota people killed by the U.S. troops during the same time period, many within the walls of Fort Snelling.

Leaving the fort proper, the tour wound down the hill into Fort Snelling State Park, towards a memorial of the "Sioux Uprising" – Sioux being a colonial term given to the Dakota during the beginning of their colonization. Maijala stops halfway to discuss the genocide or as he tended to call it, the "U.S. – Dakota conflict". The war is a "really complex, painful topic" which is "never easy to talk about," he says. He calls it the most significant event in Minnesota history and says it seriously affects the Dakota people even today. This is the closest he comes to speaking the truth about the Dakota genocide. Still, he fails to mention yet again the fact that the Dakota were systematically slaughtered in order to fulfill the standards of the state.

Maijala talks in general terms about the first treaties between the U.S. and the Dakota, saying they are "as binding as treaties today with other nations," and states that the native tribes held the same status as sovereign nations today. The white truth-tellers in the group pointed out the fact that the treaties have never been upheld. Maijala becomes defensive. "They should have had legal standing," he says, but adds, "I'm talking about how they were established and their purpose." He admits the U.S. did not live up to its treaty obligations. One of the truth-tellers mentions to the amnesia-stricken Maijala that the purpose of the treaties, which were not actually ratified by a significant representation of the Dakota people, was to control land. The tour guide deflects the statement, and says that the

Dakota used the treaties to “reserve for themselves reservations.”

Those reservations, however, comprise less than one tenth of one percent of the total land base of Minnesota. Dismissing the group’s concerns, Maijala grudgingly states, “You come in with some prejudices that aren’t necessarily true. I don’t think you understand what the purpose of the program is.”

(Apparently the purpose of the Fort Snelling tour program is to maintain the lie that the Dakota made the choice to remove themselves from their ways of life. Up until last year it was illegal for Dakota to live in their homeland. Their place of genesis is at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. The fort and many other monstrosities were tactically placed there to trample out this powerful symbolism for the Dakota. They are still standing to this day. Currently the Dakota people, despite the fact that they “reserve[d] reservations” for themselves under these treaties with the U.S. do not have sufficient access to land and/or resources to maintain their livelihoods or traditional ways of life. The fort is a constant reminder of the stronghold that exists against the Dakota people and is a symbol of the colonization and ultimately the genocide of their nation).

Speaking of U.S.-Dakota relations, Maijala continue by stating that the “assimilation [of the Dakota] is not talked about enough.” The U.S. worked to divide the Dakota into factions. After the treaty of 1858, the Dakota “gave up” most of their northern lands, he says. Soon there was a drought and the Dakota were not receiving enough food. The money that was supposed to go to them for food instead illegally went to traders. “How that happened is long and complicated,” he said, glossing over the crimes of white settlers with those short, simple words. In 1862 many Dakota were starving and angry, and in August, their payments were late. “It seems logical that they would choose this time to fight back and gain back their land,” he says. But then, he skips over what actually happened during the war to silence the Dakota dissent – the forced marches, the slaughter of women and children, the tortures by military men and common settlers alike --, saying that “the conduct of war is less important” than the end result. He says several hundred military men were killed in addition to, an unknown number of Dakota. Thirty-eight of those “unknown” Dakota were hanged in the largest mass hanging in U.S. history in Mankato, Minnesota – although hundreds more set for death were saved by the benevolent President Lincoln’s decree – as if the murder of thirty-eight is itself pardonable simply because of the pardon of others.

The tour guide then states that while the men were sent to Davenport, Iowa, the women were held at Fort Snelling. They were continuously “attacked” by whites, Maijala states. After being challenged that what actually occurred was rape, he argues that the word rape is too strong to use in the presence of the children on the tour. Later, when asked about the charges against the thirty-eight Dakota hanged in Mankato, he says they were tried for, among other things, “raping children”. This failure to acknowledge the sexual violence committed by white men against Dakota women at the fort furthers the colonial control between white and American Indian men. The mere fact that the Dakota were tried and murdered under these pretenses but never in one case was a white man found guilty of such a crime reiterates the cultural genocide that occurred during that winter of 1862. This connection was not made by this self-proclaimed “neutral” tour guide.

The tour group then descended down the hill to the memorial for those who had died within the fort’s walls. Currently, the commemoration of the Dakota genocide is centered alongside a parking lot just north of the Mendota Bridge. The Minnesota Historical Society believes the actual location of the camp is underneath the asphalt of the parking lot -- yet another symbolic blow against allowing the Dakota to heal from their traumatic history as a people. The effects of genocide are still prominent amongst the Dakota people in Minnesota. To this day, a large percentage of Dakota remain incarcerated, live below the poverty line, and/or suffer from substance abuse. Compared to any other ethnic group in this state, Dakota people experience shorter life spans. Much like in the late

1800s, Dakota women today live in a world where their experiences with sexual and physical violence are not legitimized; rather, they are used as a tool to further colonialist control over their identities.

The Dakota language has no word for a white ally. The one word the Dakota have for a white person is Wasicu (taker of the fat). As white people living on Dakota land, we must begin to own this name and recognize that our aim must be to enable the Dakota to find another word that can name us as allies. I am Wasicu and a 4th generation Swede. I am a perpetrator of denial, apathy and guilt in regards to my own history of this land. I should be held as accountable as the MNHS, the U.S. government and the state of Minnesota in mine and my ancestors' role in the Dakota genocide. Despite our intentionality as white people in Minnesota, whether we are radicals, activists, or simply just "Minnesotans", I see myself and other white settlers as part of a larger culture of lies that helps to further feed the thriving bones of this colonialist body.

The genocide that occurred in the 1860's has expanded well beyond the violent physical realm – it has been integrated into our modern cultural and historical perceptions as well. To this day, there is a war being waged on the Dakota with the appropriation of their culture, language, spirituality and the root that started it all – their land. If we as white settlers wish to foster social change in our home of Minnesota, we must understand that the root of the problem began with the colonization of this land. We have dug up, cultivated, raped and pillaged holy Indian land all around us and it will take more than an afternoon of truth-telling to make reparations for the damage our ancestors and ourselves have caused. We must begin to hold ourselves accountable to those that we have taken so much from. To open lines of communication, to ask what we can do for them. To redress the crimes of genocide on the Dakota, land reparations (of state, federal public and private land) must be made to the Dakota people. If we do not understand this simple concept, giving back what has been stolen, we will never learn to go much farther beyond the actions of those that pulled the lever on the largest mass hanging in U.S. history.

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