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Wówayupike: Relational Practices Between Art, Land, and Culture

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Culture and Performance

by

Clementine Minnie Cat Bordeaux

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Wówayupike: Relational Practices between Art, land, and Culture

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Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

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Professor David Delgado Shorter, Chair

This doctoral dissertation traces the relational intersections of art, land, and culture to demonstrate a continuum of Lakota intellectual traditions. Methodologically and theoretically, Indigenous articulations of relationality are the primary tool I use to communicate Lakota kinship values' interrelatedness. I illustrate a Lakota relationality through Lakota cultural connections to other-than-human beings and the use of creative practices as established through storytelling, poetry, and material culture that is represented within an accessible articulation of *Očéti Šakówiŋ* (Northern Plains tribal) communities. My analysis applies Lakota concepts of *ikčé,* the everyday, and *wówayupike*, ingenuity, to reify a continuum of Očéti Šakówiŋ artistic engagements. I concentrate on Lakota culture, which I know intimately, and employ self-reflexivity to articulate a Lakota relationality in present-day terms. My research engages Indigenous feminist praxis, autoethnographic and ethnographic methods with family members, regional Lakota artists, local Lakota culture bearers, and Lakota community organizers working

and creating in the Northern Plains region. I analyze everyday examples of creative Lakota culture not confined by formal institutions like popular art galleries or non-native museums. *Wówayupike: Relational Practices Between Art, Land, and Culture* contributes to ongoing conversations about how Indigenous communities continue to adapt, evolve, and find joy—as they have always done—in the face of settler colonialism, structural racism, and the long historical trajectory of oppression in what is now the United States.

This dissertation of Clementine Minnie Cat Bordeaux is approved.

Keith BraveHeart

Nancy Marie Mithlo

Mishuana R. Goeman

David Delgado Shorter, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

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DEDICATION

To all the Rez raised kids seeking kinship.

To my Grandma Eva, this is for our home, such as it is.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Before starting my doctoral studies, I was a staff member in the American Indian Studies Interdepartmental program at UCLA for six years. Thank you to the faculty, students, staff, and alums for establishing a welcoming environment that has challenged me to grow as a relative, scholar, and advocate. Thank you to Alfred Herrera, Asena Fakaanauakihevahanoa Taione-Filihia, and the Center for Community College Partnerships. Thank you to the administrative staff that supported my journey from academic coordinator to graduate student, including the members of UC AICRA, Denise Pacheco, Patricia Nguyễn, and Rebecca Rosser. The project coordinators and students of the American Indian Recruitment, the Retention of American Indians Now!, and the American Indian Alumni Association. Graduate students have been a part of my journey from staff to student, especially Shalene Joseph, Denise

Morales, Laura Terrance, Ellen Harju, Lafaitele Faitalia Ioane, and Temryss Lane. I have learned so much from the legacy of the American Indian Student Association (AISA) at UCLA; thank you for your continued activism on campus and the incredible work I have witnessed from AISA alum. Thank you to the Ethnic Studies centers and departments, including African American Studies, Chicano/Chicana Studies, and Asian American Studies. A special thanks to the staff of the American Indian Studies Center (Jaimie Chan, Pamela Grieman, Ken Wade, Joy Holland, Pamela Peters, Judy DeTar, and all the student workers since 2011) and the American Indian Studies Interdepartmental Program (Stephen Pilcher). To the Gender Studies Department (Van Do-Nguyen, Samantha Hogan, Jenna Miller-Von Ah, and Richard Medrano), thank you for treating me like one of your own when I became a student. Thank you to American Indian Studies Faculty Randall Akee, Paul Kroskirty, Angela Riley, Teresa McCarty, Jessica Cattelino, Keith Camacho, Desi Small-Rodriguez, Hanay Geiogamah, Stella Nair, Duane Champagne, Carole Goldberg, Nancy Reifel, and visiting faculty and scholars Auntie Stephanie Gilbert, and the many Native Bruin faculty and scholars.

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As a Lakota raised on the prairie, I have appreciated the opportunities to be a guest on Tongva and Tataviam lands. Thank you to the local tribal and Los Angeles basin urban communities for challenging me to do better as a relative. Thank you to the Native American and Indian Commission of Los Angeles, United American Indian Involvement, the American Indian Community Council, the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, the Chia Cafe Collective, the Kuruvungna Springs

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2019 - 2020	The Institute on Inequality & Democracy Workgroup Grant
2019 - 2020	UCLA Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship
2017	UCLA Eugene Cota Robles Doctoral Fellowship

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Bordeaux, Clementine. "Mentorship and Relationality." *Communication, Culture and Critique*, no. tcab056 (September 20, 2021). https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcab056.

Bordeaux, Clementine. "Unsettled Debts: 1968 and the Problem of Historical Memory| The American Indian Movement and the Politics of Nostalgia: Indigenous Representation From Wounded Knee to Standing Rock." *International Journal of Communication* 16 (2022): 23.

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Aang to Zuko, edited by Johan De Smedt and Helen De Cruz. The Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture Series 24. Wiley-Blackwell, 2022.

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RESEARCH EXPERIENCE | INTERNSHIPS

2021- 2022	Graduate Research Assistant Dept: American Indian Studies | University of California, Los Angeles	Faculty: Mishuana Goeman
2020 - 2021	Research Assistant National Opinion Research Center | University of Chicago	Gwendolyn Rugg | Principal Analyst
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SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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2022	"On Indigenous Peoples' Terms: Unsettling Landscapes Through Remapping Practices" Panel presentation at the American Anthropological Association, Seattle, WA, Nov 12
2021	"A Silent Pow Wow for MMIW: Indigenous Imagination" Paper at the Nation Women's Studies Association Annual Conference (online), Sep 17
2019	"Unsettling Man: Relational Intimacies, Incommensurablities, and Literary/Artistic Practices/Poetics" Panel at the National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA, Nov 14
2019	"Responsibilities and Obligations: Understanding Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ" (Workshop), Storytelling & the Body Interdisciplinary Project hosted by Progressive Connexions in Verona, Italy, Jul 15
2019	"Book Review Panel: Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Traditions of Indigenous Resistance" at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Annual Conference, University of Waikato, Hamilton, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Jun 26
2018	"Standing Rock is a Nation, Not an Adjective" Roundtable at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Los Angeles, CA, May 17
2017	"MITÁKUYE OYÁS'IŊ: Tackling Issues of Language, Culture and the Complexities of Perspective" Panel at the American Indian Workshop, London, England, July 4

INTRODUCTION

My maternal grandmother, aunt (my mother's sister), and mother made most of my powwow regalia when I was a child. They used their skills as seamstresses and would sew simple patterns together to make my leggings, moccasins, capes, dresses, and shawls.[1] I used to call their creations my "dance outfits" and proudly wear them. One of my favorite outfits they put together was a reversal one: I could flip the cape around, and it would be a whole new design with the same color scheme, providing versatility in my regalia choices.[2] Many of my friends had similar experiences of relatives making different pieces of their powwow regalia, fully beaded leggings, and moccasins or flashy shawls to adorn them.[3] These examples of creative and familial relational practices are numerous and essential to Lakota life. Historically our regalia would be made from other-than-human beings like deer, elk, or buffalo hide. In the present day, our dance regalia is still made with other-than-human beings. Lakota people also utilize newer materials like cotton, satin, silk, polyester, glass beads, and sequins. Historically, the designs were created from paint using plant pigments or techniques of weaving and sewing with porcupine quills. I would also receive hand-me-down regalia pieces from other relatives. Still, I cherished the sewn pieces and artistic moments that should have highlighted interconnectedness instead of presented performances of culture. The relational practices of crafting became incredibly important to my view of the world as a Lakota relative.

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[1] I would also receive hand-me-down regalia pieces from other relatives, but it was the sewn pieces that I cherished as a child. As I got older, I realized how special the hand-me-down pieces were, as they were loved by relatives before me.

[2] I was able to use different dresses, skirts, and shawls with the reversible cape.

[3] My childhood best friend's mother made matching regalia for my friend and her sister.

In my research, I trace the intersection of art, kinship, and culture as part of a Lakota intellectual tradition within an accessible articulation of Northern Plains cultures. In my earlier research as a graduate student, I attempted to convey the confluence of art, kinship, and culture through critiques of the misappropriation of Indigenous culture, but the positioning was reactionary instead of productive. In my project *Wówayupike: Relational Practices between Art, Land, and Culture*, relationality became the vessel for expressing my findings. Relationality was and is the tool methodologically and theoretically that I continue to utilize to communicate the interrelatedness of Lakota kinship values, creative practice (however one might categorize or encompasses art making in varied contexts), and cultural connection to other-than-human beings. When misrepresentation and misappropriation fail to capture the intersectional nuances of place-based intellect and creative practice, I find my way to the people and places I know intimately.[4] By analyzing everyday examples of creative Lakota culture, such as jewelry making and storytelling, I can articulate Lakota relationality in present-day terms.[5] My articulation of current art practices is defined by autoethnographic and ethnographic research with family members, regional Lakota artists, local Lakota culture bearers, and Lakota community organizers working and creating in the Northern Plains region.[6]

To articulate the "everyday," I utilize *ikčé* or *ikčé wičáša* to signal the ordinary or common person or individual.[7] A common or ordinary person signals humility, an integral value

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[4] An example of the failure of misrepresentation or appropriation include the many #NoDAPL films about Standing Rock made by non-native filmmakers.

[5] As I will describe later in the literature review, I utilize concepts of relationality within the umbrella of Indigenous studies.

[6] The Northern Plains region I define is not confined by reservation borders and the artists I feature traverse across the region, off-reservation, out-of-state, and across international borders, which will be discussed more thoroughly in the dissertation.

[7] In Lakota language and culture ikčé wičáša is often used to humble oneself in public and ceremonial settings.

in *Očéti Šakówiŋ* culture. Ikčé provides relief from being seen as an expert on the knowledge systems that my collaborators share. I can acknowledge the differences of opinion and expertise without reacting if someone approaches my idea differently. Being a common person is an "acknowledgment of the acquisition of wisdom from others."[8] From an ikčé standpoint, I can share analyses of Lakota creative practices and engage in a broad Očéti Šakówiŋ ideology while still leaving room to be challenged by an evolving and growing culture.

Situating Očéti Šakówiŋ Language, Histories, and Background

I was raised in a rural Lakota community context, but I lean on broad Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures to ensure that I engage with my collaborators and contributors' vast experiences.[9] I reference Lakota, Očéti Šakówiŋ, and Títuŋwaŋ interchangeably, but I generally indicate the Northern Plains region that these communities historically and currently reside. I draw out the cultural distinctions in my introduction because my positionality as a Lakota relative within the Očéti Šakówiŋ and Títuŋwaŋ context is vital to my analysis. Although the subtle differences between Očéti Šakówiŋ communities and their subgroups can be identified by the Očéti Šakówiŋ and Títuŋwaŋ relatives, the general cultural references I engage with encompass the diverse communities of the Northern Plains region through ceremonial practices and relationships with regional other-than-human beings. Some differences are embedded in the language structure,

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[8] Cheryl A. Long Feather, "A Lakota/Nakota/Dakota Model Of Oratory" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Grand Forks, ND, University of North Dakota, 2007).

[9] As a student, scholar, and queer Indigenous relative, I have crossed vast geographies from the Great Lakes, the Southwest, the Pacific Coast, and global territories in Sápmi, Aotearoa, and Australia while interacting with numerous Indigenous, Black, and People of color.

while other variations include the stories connected to specific cultural knowledge based on the location or the type of oral histories tied to a particular familial experience.[10]

Títuŋwaŋ languages are in danger. The politics of teaching, writing, and learning languages are impacted by the preservation, revitalization, and legacy of colonial linguistics, which are challenging subjects.[11] I present an overview of the Očéti Šakówiŋ and the following language groups, which include the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota dialects. I acknowledge the ongoing struggle for language preservation, revitalization, and investment of our languages impacted by settler colonialism. I maintain an ongoing self-reflexive positionality in my use of títuŋwaŋ languages.[12] From the advice of relatives and community members, I utilize a mixture of orthographies throughout my dissertation. My kindergarten through high school language courses used two non-native edited texts: the Buechal Dictionary and the Everyday Lakota Dictionary.[13] I rely on other orthographies based on an assortment of written sources by Native and non-native speakers, and because of the variety of sources, I shape how I think my audience of Native and non-native speakers might receive the language.[14] Lakota language is seen as the youngest language group within the Očéti Šakówiŋ and is the most significant percentage of

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[10] For example, a community near a river or on the prairie experiences the biodiversity of the Dakotas that is vast.

[11] I utilize Lakota words throughout my dissertation as an eager attempt to use language and my hope is that in the future more and more of my research will be presented using the Lakota language more frequently.

[12] Tasha R. Hauff, "Beyond Numbers, Colors, and Animals: Strengthening Lakota/Dakota Teaching on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation," *Journal of American Indian Education* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 5–25.

[13] Karol Joseph S., ed., *Everyday Lakota: An English-Sioux Dictionary for Beginners* (Rosebud, SD: Rosebud Educational Society, 1997); Eugene Buechel, S.J., "Lakota-English Dictionary," in *Lakota-English Dictionary*, ed. Paul Manhart, S.J. (Pine Ridge, SD: Red Cloud Indian School, 1970).

[14] Albert White Hat and Jael Kampfe, *Reading and Writing the Lakota Language =: Lak̇o͞ta Iyapi U͟n Wowapi Naha͟n Yawapi* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999); Jan F. Ullrich, *New Lakota Dictionary: Lak̇hótiyapi-English/English-Lak̇hótiyapi & Incorporating the Dakota Dialects of Yankton-Yanktonai & Santee-Sisseton*, 2nd edition (Bloomington, IN: Lakota Language Consortium, 2011).

current L/N/Dakota speakers in the region.[15] Nakota language speakers in the United States are almost non-existent; however, historically, Nakota-speaking communities went as far as (what is now) Wyoming and Montana and into Canada. Most Dakota speakers are further east from the Black Hills Region, and those communities are closest to the larger rivers in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.[16] I utilize Lakota in my dissertation because I am Lakota, and the language is foundational to my analysis.

When I refer to the broader Títuŋwaŋ Očéti Šakówiŋ or Očéti Šakówiŋ histories, I reference the specific bands under specific umbrellas of Northern Plains tribal nations. The "Očéti Šakówiŋ" umbrella encompasses Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota language-speaking communities, and within each language classification of the Očéti Šakówiŋ are smaller, more distinct bands under each Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota umbrellas.[17] I employ the Lakota-speaking Očéti Šakówiŋ group under the títuŋwaŋ umbrella, which in English is translated as the people of prairie (títuŋwaŋ) within seven council fires (Očéti Šakówiŋ). The communities under this umbrella include the *Hunkpapa, Sicangu, Itazipo, Sihasapa, Oglala, MniConjou,* and *Oohenunpa*. The Hunkpapa, or Camps at the Horn, reside on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota and Wood Mountain in Canada. The Sicangu or Brule, known as the Burnt Thigh, lives on the Rosebud and Lower Brule Reservations in South Dakota. The Oglala, or Scatters Their Own, resides on Pine Ridge in South Dakota. The Itazipo or Sans Arc, also known as the

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[15] Linguists categorize L/N/Dakota under the Siouan or Siouan–Catawban language structure.

[16] This also does not include the L/N/Dakota language speakers and communities in what is now considered Canada.

[17] The seven bands of L/N/Dakota speaking communities include the *Mdewakanton* (Dwellers by the Sacred Lake), *Wahpekute* (Shooters Among the Leaves), *Sisitonwan* (People of the Marsh), *Wahpetonwan* (Dwellers Among the Leaves), *Ihanktown* (People of the End), *Ihanktowana* (People of the Little End) and the *Tetonwan* (People on the Plains).

Without Bows, the Oohenumpa or Two Kettles, and the MniConjou or Planters by the River, reside on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. The Sihasapa or Blackfeet live on the Cheyenne River and Standing Rock Reservations in South Dakota and North Dakota, respectively. These locations demonstrate the variety of tribal communities my work captures while noting how my analyses can be challenging because of the varying ways of understanding and articulating Lakota culture from location to location.

I engage with historians, literature scholars, activists, and community culture bearers for knowledge of Títuŋwaŋ Očéti Šakówiŋ or Očéti Šakówiŋ histories. I build upon L/N/Dakota world views, gender narratives from my family, and autoethnographic and ethnographic approaches to my understanding of Lakota culture. I am fortunate that I am participating in a legacy of Očéti Šakówiŋ scholars that have advanced Indigenous studies in the Western academy through their contributions; these scholars include but are not limited to Zitkala-ša, Ella C. Deloria, Bea Medicine, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Vine Deloria, Jr, Phill Deloria, Delphine Red Shirt, Christopher Pexa, Nick Estes, Charlotte Black Elk, Jace DeCory, Kim TallBear, Sarah Hernandez, and many more.[18] I include the family members that have taught me my entire life, which include my parents, Christopher and Deborah Bordeaux, my uncle Jhon Duane Goes In Center, my aunties Angie Stover and Geraldine Goes in Center, my grandmother Eva Witt, my mother's first cousin Wanda Standing Bear, and my siblings as we learned together.[19]

I articulate a broad Očéti Šakówiŋ definition of Lakota Relationality based on culture, language, and ways of knowing. My analysis is based on the relational care I have received

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[18] Numerous culture bearers and tribal college educators are included throughout my Lakota and Dakota life discussions that are too numerous to name here.

[19] I include my family in the acknowledgment and the introduction since they continue to be integral and foundational to all my research. Jhon spells his name like this.

throughout my life, bolstered by gift-giving and adornments, like the numerous dance regalia pieces I have received throughout my childhood and adolescence. The Indigenous relationality I build upon, the focus of this dissertation, is centered around the Očéti Šakówiŋ idea of "being a good relation" and the interconnectedness demonstrated by creative practices.[20] Kim TallBear describes Indigenous relationality or good caretaking, as "a relational web" and I echo a similar sentiment of how good relations operate within my community.[21] TallBear sees being in good relations as a "spatial metaphor [that] requires us to pay attention to our relations and obligations here and now."[22] I have witnessed relational obligation not as a laborious undertaking but as functioning from a deep sense of care and kinship. Being a good relative is embedded in the cultural practices that I analyze, including jewelry making and storytelling.

Overview: Defining Lakota relationality through *Wówayupike* (Art)

I employ *wówayupike* in the title of my dissertation, which loosely translates to "art" within a dominant Western context but is not as all-encompassing as the English word suggests. Wówayupike often signals ingenuity or cleverness rather than a Western concept of "high art." I rely on the framing of wówayupike to transform the intimate and everyday—the ikčé—into an avenue to analyze personal adornments and understand stories through Lakota's relationship to the land and other-than-human beings. Items like the belt pictured below (see Figure 1 below), designed by Jhon Duane Goes in Center, are prime examples of the type of art and craftwork I imagine when I utilize wówayupike as a creative and ingenious endeavor.

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[20] I demonstrate this idea more in the first chapter but wanted to highlight and reiterate the importance of Lakota relationality broadly here in the introduction.

[21] Kim TallBear, "Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming," *Kalfou* 6, no. 1 (2019): 24–41.

[22] TallBear, "Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming." 25.

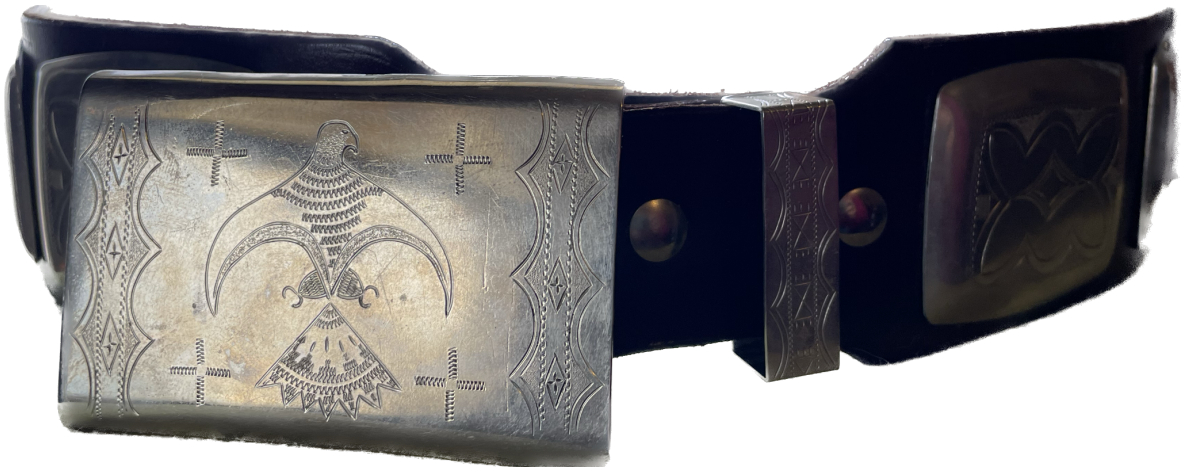

Figure 1: Jhon Duane Goes in Center, *untitled belt*, 2007—German Silver, leather; photo provided by the author.

Phrases and concepts like art or creative practice or wówayupike become interchangeable in my articulation of relational practices when I gesture to the craftwork employed by Očéti Šakówiŋ artists and culture bearers. The belt (see Figure 1 above) symbolizes the ingenuity of Lakota creatives and exemplifies the significance of gifting and kinship-making that I articulate throughout my dissertation. The belt was given to me by Jhon Duane Goes in Center. I am his niece, and the piece represents kinship bonds while establishing art through practical everyday use. The belt embodies wówayupike and my articulation of "art" as a placeholder for my representations of creativity in Lakota culture. Wówayupike focuses on art-making, not a singular experience of beauty or aesthetically pleasing adornment, but crafting as relational practice in the smaller intimate moments. Literature studies scholar Caroline Wigginton utilizes the craftwork of Native North American art-making to demonstrate "how feeling connects and

evolves across objects and practices, places and times."[23] Wigginton employs ingenuity to analyze gender narratives and the mapping of craftwork across the East, Northeast, and Southeast tribal communities. In the book, Wigginton hones in the practical nature of literary practices and craftwork to embrace feeling as a connection between object and place-based knowledges.[24] As I demonstrate throughout the dissertation, feeling or affect is paramount to Indigenous creative practices like craftwork. In a similar expression of ingenuity, *Wówayupike*, as a dissertation, proposes a simple and affective analysis of adornment and storytelling practices.

I use art to liberate me from centering my analysis on the critique of settler law and nation-state policies impacting the daily lives of Očéti Šakówiŋ communities. Art also relieves me from addressing law and policy rhetoric and the confinement of oppressive entities like state or federal governments.[25] Art reflects a continuum of creative practices like ledger drawings, quilting, performance art, and quill or beadwork used in politicalized contexts.[26] I examine art practices to ground and place knowledge rather than relying solely on historical documents to demonstrate a Lakota legal relationship to place. The importance of law and policy analysis is

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[23] Caroline Wigginton, *Indigenuity: Native Craftwork and the Art of American Literatures* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press), 22.

[24] Wigginton, *Indigenuity,* 24.

[25] Many scholars have provided the needed intervention of critiquing the nation-state and addressing white supremacy within law and policy rhetoric. See Joanne Barker, ed., *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017); Vine Deloria and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); Nick Estes, *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (London: Verso, 2020); Mario Gonzalez and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *The Politics of Hallowed Ground: Wounded Knee and the Struggle for Indian Sovereignty* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822376781.

[26] Contemporary Indigenous artists like Kite, Wendy Red Star, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Maria Watt, Nicholas Galanin, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Jeffery Gibson, Cara Romero, and many more have continued to utilize their practices to interrogate settler-colonial logics.

paramount to the discussion of tribal sovereignty. I contribute by focusing my research on creative practices rather than legal or policy rhetoric.[27] Instead of looking at the long histories of treaty formations, I analyze the continuum of creative practice that occurs outside the law to demonstrate an ongoing relationship to place.

My use of wówayupike looks toward the future of art within Očéti Šakówiŋ communities while honoring how we historically described our creative practices. Many Očéti Šakówiŋ community members state that "there is no word for art" in the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota languages. Keith Braveheart reiterates, "There is No Lakota Word for Art" in his artist statement and shares that he is "only doing what I was born to do."[28] Other artists and culture bearers I work with have similar sentiments about their creative practices. My uncle Jhon Duane, whose work I analyze in my third chapter, often shares that his creative work is an attempt to be legible to our ancestors in present-day and future-facing articulations. Nancy Mithlo demonstrates how the rhetoric of "no word for art" permeated contemporary Indigenous art spaces from the 1970s through today.[29] In the same article, Mithlo concludes that "rejection of the term 'art' is then a rejection of Western culture as capitalist, patriarchal, and, ultimately, shallow, one that does not value the central

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[27] T For how concept of sovereignty has been interrogated by scholars, see (among others): Gerald R. Alfred, "Sovereignty—An Inappropriate Concept," in *Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives*, ed. Roger Maaka and Chris Andersen (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2006), 322–36; Audra Simpson, "Under the Sign of Sovereignty: Certainty, Ambivalence, and Law in Native North America and Indigenous Australia," *Wicazo Sa Review* 25, no. 2 (2010): 107–24, https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.2010.0000; Mark Rifkin, *The Erotics of Sovereignty: Queer Native Writing in the Era of Self-Determination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Michelle H. Raheja, "Visual Sovereignty," in *Native Studies Keywords*, ed. Stephanie N. Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle H. Raheja (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 25–34; David K. Wilkins and Tsianina Lomawaima. *Uneven Ground: American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

[28] Keith Braveheart, "Critical Issues in Contemporary Art Practice," lecture, Henry Art Gallery, February 14, 2019.

[29] Mithlo writes, "Native artists and curators expressed this perspective most commonly in the multicultural era of the 'new museology,' dating roughly from the late 1970s to the early 1990s." Nancy Marie Mithlo, "No Word for Art in Our Language? Old Questions, New Paradigms," *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012): 112, https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0111.

principles of Indigenous identities, such as land, language, family, and spirituality."[30] I have attempted to articulate art in a variety of ways in this research to demonstrate the rejection of "art" within some Indigenous circles. I utilize terms like creative practice, culture bearer, or personal adornment.[31] I turn to wówayupike as a placeholder because of the everyday articulation of creative approaches I use in my research.

The artists and cultural bearers I engage as everyday relatives create art on a continuum of ingenuity that rejects a stagnant historical position of their craftwork. Creative practices and creative practitioners often see their craft as a part of their everyday life, incorporating cultural values, like storytelling, into their craft, and articulating an ongoing progression of cultural knowledge that is not historicized and continually evolving. I often hear the phrase "culture bearer" from regional arts organizations like First Peoples Fund.[32] In a recent study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) collecting qualitative data on the experience of Indigenous performers in the United States, the use of story and storytelling as a signifier for what defines practice was very apparent. The study dismissed the dichotomy between contemporary and traditional frameworks for understanding creative practice and expression.[33] The temporal continuance of craftwork engagement does not uphold a dialectical opposition of then and now. The culture bearers and community members that participated in the interviews

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[30] Nancy Marie Mithlo, "No Word for Art in Our Language?," 113.

[31] The phrase "personal adornment" with regard to jewelry is one I hear used often by one of my collaborators, Jhon Duane Goes in Center.

[32] "First Peoples Fund (website)," 2023, https://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/.

[33] Gwendolyn Rugg et al., "Brightening the Spotlight: The Practices and Needs of Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Creators in the Performing Arts" (NORC at the University of Chicago; First Peoples Fund; Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, 2022).

focused on the tribal continuums of their art practices that contributed to an ongoing engagement of Indigenous lifeways.

Community artists utilize the term *Wolakota*, which encompasses Lakota values and demonstrates the continuum of creative cultural practices. In my research, I engage with specific cultural, ceremonial, and public-facing values in my community culture that signal wolakota as a guiding structure.[34] Wolakota is generally defined as peace or working toward peace. My use of wolakota within the context of making or creating art is to demonstrate the effort to create something that brings balance to yourself and the community. Lakota culture bearer Jesse Taken Alive describes Wolakota as centering Lakota values by establishing a "pro-Lakota" sentiment that centers Lakota values within one's action.[35] Taken Alive reminds us that "What we see, what we hear, what we feel is what we become, and that is Lakota thinking."[36] Wolakota is embedded in many ceremonial nuances that I prefer not to make intelligible for an academic audience, so I put forth wówayupike as a guiding concept.

As a Lakota woman, scholar, artist, and language learner, I continue to grow in understanding how language impacts ways of knowing. My approach as an ethnographer of my histories and the history of Lakota art provides a new connection to language and data. I do not intend to address museums' art spaces or decolonial practices but focus on finding a Lakota

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[34] Victor Douville, "Our Four Values," *WoLakota Project*, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vo87MSHQpNQ&feature=emb_logo.

[35] The "pro-Lakota" Taken Alive articulates is not about dismissing Western aesthetics or settler logic but rather a demonstration of Lakota values within your actions; see Jesse Taken Alive, "WoLakota," *WoLakota Project*, 2015, https://youtu.be/FFo9CsZxf1w.

[36] *WoLakota*, (Wo Lakota, 2015), https://youtu.be/FFo9CsZxf1w.

articulation of everyday art making.[37] I undertake this project from a place of care by offering references to Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures without revealing too much. Again, I turn to wówayuphike to signal the artistry of Lakota people to create for and with the community outside institutional spaces. I use the word to guide my analysis of Lakota people's ingenuity in ensuring relief from the everyday violence in our homelands (which I expand upon in the next section).

Originality and Importance

Municipal advocacy, activist-led actions, and organized community forums continue to address racism in the Northern Plains, but white supremacy prevails. On October 16, 2020, Camp Mní LúzahAŋ was erected by local organizers on Rapid City public land in South Dakota to address the need for shelter for unhoused relatives in the coming winter weather.[38] Within hours, militarized police arrived to demand the four tipis be taken down and anyone affiliated with the camp leave. Houselessness and access to safer shelters have been an issue since the Očéti Šakówiŋ people were moved onto reservations in 1889. The attempted removal of Camp Mní LúzahAŋ in 2020 was a catalyst for providing resources for the following winter in October

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[37] Scholars that have discussed the impact of decolonizing and indigenizing museums include, but are not limited to: George H.J. Abrams, "Tribal Museums in America," American Association for State and Local History, The Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2002, https://www.atalm.org/sites/default/files/tribal_museums_in_america.pdf; JoAllyn Archambault, "Native Communities, Museums, and Collaboration," *Practicing Anthropology* 33, no. 2 (2011): 16–20; Robert E. Bieder, "A Brief Historical Survey of the Expropriation of American Indian Remains," Native American Rights Fund, 1990, https://www.narf.org/nill/documents/NARF_bieder_remains.pdf; Amanda J. Cobb, "The National Museum of the American Indian as Cultural Sovereignty," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2005): 485–506; Elizabeth Harney and Ruth B. Phillips, *Mapping modernisms: art, indigeneity, colonialism* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2018); Richard Hill, "Indians and Museums: A Plea for Cooperation," *History News* 34, no. 7 (1979): 181–84; Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Nancy Marie Mithlo, *Knowing Native Arts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020); Jennifer Shannon, *Our Lives: Collaboration, Native Voice, and the Making of the National Museum of the American Indian*, School for Advanced Research Resident Scholar (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2014).

[38] Staff, "Camp Mniluzahan Continues to Provide Invaluable Resources and Aid to Homeless Population," *NewsCenter1*, March 13, 2021, https://www.newscenter1.tv/archives/camp-mniluzahan-continues-to-provide-invaluable-resources-and-aid-to-homeless-population/article_044151d5-605f-52d9-b78f-fc6d32fc55bd.html.

2020 through spring 2021. On March 19, 2022, a firearm shooting occurred between two young Lakota relatives at the Grand Gateway Hotel (also located in Rapid City, South Dakota). Shortly after the shooting, the hotel owner posted on social media that "Native Americans were no longer allowed on the property because the hotel staff could not distinguish a 'good Indian' from a 'bad Indian.'"

I follow the lead of the community activists and artists that believe that the houseless relatives camping along the creek are not homeless and are not a threat to the Rapid City municipal space; instead, our relatives are entitled to live in their historic homeland, to exist in their ancestral place. They are from the land and have an ancestral right to be here and a legal right. Although Mní LúzahAŋ Otúŋwahe (Rapid City) exists within the historical territory of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 (which is between the United States and the Oglala, Miniconjou, and Brulé bands of Lakota people, Yanktonai Dakota, and Arapaho Nations), it has become a landscape controlled and influenced by settler-colonial logics demanding Lakota erasure and removal.[39] In the 1990s, houseless Lakota relatives died in alarming numbers along Rapid Creek in Rapid City; municipal entities did not address their lives and deaths. In the present day, the displacement and violence occurring against Lakota and Northern Plains tribal people in Rapid City are still rampant.

The continued rhetoric of "good Indian" and "bad Indian" is a false claim within the confines of settler nonsense. Lakota people with an intergenerational relationship with Mní LúzahAŋ land and place continue experiencing these high rates of violence with minimal relief from the settler landscape. The framing of a "bad Indian" is a result of a long history of the social

[39] Tribal communities were moved onto reservations in 1889 shortly after Gold was discovered in the Black Hills.

constructs of settler colonial ideologies.[40] In the present day, within Očéti Šakówiŋ territory, laws continue to displace and dispossess Lakota communities while continuing to produce a carceral cityscape. The rewriting of law and policy by educators, senators, and community organizers often utilize settler logic to make systemic institutional changes that do not deter city, state, or federal government officials from treating Lakota people as threats to the settler landscape.[41] Activists, artists, and culture bearers continue to create new work and engage in their creative practices regardless of the false claims of the dichotomous settler notions of "good Indian" and "bad Indian."

The push to reform policies and change laws fails to impact elected settler leaders within the nation-state.[42] On October 1, 2020, Mayor Steve Allender gave a press conference stating that "homeless" individuals in Rapid City are only addicts but inferred that the local (tribal) reservations should bring a bus to the city to take the unsheltered home. In that statement, Mayor Allender acknowledged that the systemic oppression of the nation-state resulted in the majority of the houseless population in the city coming from tribal communities. Mayor Allender is among many municipal entities that view Lakota people as threatening settler society. The creative practices originating from Mní LúzahAŋ demonstrate a cultural continuum of land and place.

I address everyday art practices to exemplify a continued relationship with the land and culture rather than focus my analysis on challenging settler law and policy failures. *Wówayupike*

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[40] Luana Ross, *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality,* 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

[41] When I state law or policy, I mean the multiple reforms that occur on local off-reservation school boards, on the state legislative floor, or the policy changes on Capitol Hill.

[42] Numerous community-based organization and individual continue to advocate for political reform and introduce new laws in an attempt to protect Indigenous relatives, but sometimes the laws and policies fail.

provides a durable Lakota lifeways structure that operates beyond Western law and policy. The Black Hills hold numerous ceremonial and geographical sites of relational significance. The disappointment of Rapid City and the societal settler structure—especially at the foot of the *Ȟesápa* (Black Hills)—is in acknowledging the long relationship the Očéti Šakówiŋ people have within the area. The failure of the municipality to see the longstanding relationship the Očéti Šakówiŋ people have with the region is a heavy lift by local organizations to demonstrate the vital contributions of Indigenous communities. I turn to the land and physical locations to articulate the relationships of art, kinship, and place, but other tribal entities often turn to law or policy.

Literature Review

My dissertation is firmly grounded in American Indian, Native American, and Indigenous studies. I employ Indigenous theories of kinship, gift-giving, and relational connection to the land, which have been examined through literature, cultural protocol, and ceremony.[43] I include an analysis of creative practice that builds upon Očéti Šakówiŋ literary tradition to create additional material, from an adornment perspective, to understand Lakota relationality. Within the promiscuous offerings of Indigenous studies, I depend on literature analyses, Indigenous Feminisms, visual studies, and ontological and epistemological theories to analyze and articulate

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[43] [43] I explain throughout my dissertation that ceremonial practices are not the focus of my analysis. However, the inclusion of the protocols that frame Indigenous cultural life are important to articulations of our longevity and have been presented in works such as: J.R. Walker, Raymond J. DeMallie, and Elaine Jahner, *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (Lincoln and Denver: University of Nebraska Press; Published in cooperation with the Colorado Historical Society, 1991); Cutcha Risling Baldy and Melanie K. Yazzie, eds. "Introduction: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 7, no. 1 (2018): 1–18; Vine Deloria, Jr., *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2006); and Angela Cavender Waziyatawin Wilson, *What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland* (St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press, 2008).

relationality in my close readings.[44] As an interdisciplinary scholar, I navigate between these varying theories to utilize storytelling, poetry, and personal adornment to demonstrate how Lakota people use artmaking to express our longstanding connection to place.

I am building upon an intellectual tradition of literary and textual analysis by Lakota/Dakota creators and makers. The works of Ella Clara Deloria (Dakota), Zitkala-ša (Dakota), Beatrice Medicine (Lakota), and of course, Vine Deloria, Jr. (Dakota) are paramount to the foundation of the analysis I provide in my dissertation. These scholars are my literary and intellectual ancestors because their work laid the foundation for an Očéti Šakówiŋ-specific analysis in the present day. In their work, articulations of reciprocity demonstrate how kinship can best be exemplified within creative practice. Lakota communal protocols of responsibility and reciprocity are apparent when thinking about the ethnographic writings of Ella Deloria and strengthened by the work of activist, artist, and literary Dakota scholar Zitkala-ša. Zitkala-ša writes in her poem "The Indians Awakening" that a "harmonious kinship made all things fair."[45] I understand her poetry to be a reminder of harmonious kinship before European settlement. Lakota/Dakota world formation depends on a specified kinship or connection between humans and nonhumans. In their intellectual oeuvres, Zitkala-ša and Deloria demonstrate how

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[44] I avoid conversations of settler law and policy, as many of these conversations have been researched by other Indigenous studies scholars. Scholars that include but are not limited to Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, 2nd ed. (1999; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978); Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Vine Deloria, *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf* (New York: Dell, 1974); A. Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*; Shannon Speed, "Structures of Settler Capitalism in Abya Yala," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2017): 783–90, https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0064; Haunani-Kay Trask. *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*, Rev. ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999); Robert Allan Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

[45] Zitkala-Ša, Cathy N. Davidson, and Ada Norris, *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings,* Penguin Classics (New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 2003). 184.

responsible and reciprocal relationships shape interaction in Dakota/Lakota society. In my work, I extend the tradition of self-reflexive writing and documentation of Očéti Šakówiŋ lifeways.

The scope of Očéti Šakówiŋ literary studies provides a foundation to engage beyond ceremonial material and dive deeper into more nuanced literary and textual analyses. Dakota scholar Christopher Pexa focuses on and highlights the work of Ella Deloria, Charles Eastman, and Nicholas Black Elk, demonstrating a long-standing history of Dakota literary archival work and providing a culturally specific theoretical framing of ethics which I employ in chapter two.[46] I am inspired by the continued tradition of understanding creative practices outside formal institutions by scholars like Philip Deloria, who asserts a culturally specific aesthetic analytic that frames domestic art production as operating on a continuum.[47] Sarah Hernandez brings new light to Dakota articulations of ceremonial storytelling. She provides a comparative reading of colonial and decolonial literary methods that are essential to my analysis in chapter one.[48] My research also acknowledges the wide breadth of research by a variety of scholars focusing on historical studies of Lakota/Dakota culture.[49] The research undertaken by Očéti Šakówiŋ scholars demonstrates that our creative practices operate on a continuum of everyday engagement because

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[46] Christopher Pexa. *Translated Nation: Rewriting the Dakhóta Oyáte* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

[47] Philip Joseph Deloria, *Becoming Mary Sully: Toward an American Indian Abstract* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019).

[48] Sarah Hernandez, *We Are the Stars: Colonizing and Decolonizing the Oceti Sakowin Literary Tradition*. Critical Issues in Indigenous Studies (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2023).

[49] Scholarship contributions include: Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine, eds., *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women* (Washington, D.C: University Press of America, 1983); Thomas Biolsi, *Power and Progress on the Prairie: Governing People on Rosebud Reservation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); Ella Cara Deloria, *Waterlily* (1988; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press – Bison Books, 2013); ; V. Deloria, *The World We Used to Live In*; Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon, eds., *Standing With Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019); William K. Powers, *Oglala Religion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press – Bison Books, 1982); and Josephine Waggoner and Emily Levine, *Witness: A Hunkpapa Historian's Strong-Heart Song of the Lakotas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).

we have been and persist in producing literary, textual, and material culture regardless of the confinement of settler colonial logics.

An Indigenous feminist analytical method offers the intervention of storytelling as a vital framework for articulating Indigenous lifeways. The theorizing of Indigenous feminism occurs through synthesizing the literature, demonstrating a shift in critical analysis within broad feminist studies. Literature scholar Mishuana Goeman, in *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (2013), provides Indigenous feminist theories of space and place to demonstrate how territory claims are beyond ideas of property and colonial ownership.[50] Goeman uses stories as a "map" to understand discursive, experiential, geographical, and political space and seeks to "challenge hegemonic conceptions of race, gender, and nation too often mapped onto Native people ideologically and physically."[51] Goeman demonstrates how Native women continue to navigate a changing landscape and provides an analytic narrative we can use in the academy and beyond.

Storytelling shapes how we share our creative practices, especially in gifting and giving. In chapter one, I establish my preface to scholarly storytelling through the work of Ella C. Deloria. Through my self-reflexive interventions, I engage an Očéti Šakówiŋ feminist articulation of storytelling as creative practice. I rely on cultural concepts of gift-giving, kinship, and our relationship with other-than-human persons. The stories I know and share are because of the Očéti Šakówiŋ framework of gifting that I discuss throughout chapters one and three. The

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[50] Mishuana Goeman, "Indigenous Interventions and Feminst Methods," in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, ed. Chris Andersen and Jean M. O'Brien (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 185–94.

[51] Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*, First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). 23.

stories of gifts I utilize—as thoroughly explored in fields of anthropology, articulations of intricate social relations, and formal and informal frameworks—simultaneously create and sustain relational exchanges. Marcel Mauss' (1925) ethnographic analysis of "pre-capitalist" Indigenous societies posited that "the idea of a pure gift is a contradiction—the major transfer of goods has been by cycles of obligatory returns of gifts," which was influenced by the salvage anthropological era.[52] Studies since Mauss' influential examination have demonstrated that Indigenous gifting operates beyond obligatory returns and can be understood through a lens of reciprocity that may or may not be returned or may hold other types of intentions that are not individualistic.[53] Gifting from an Očéti Šakówiŋ perspective embodies a sense of humility because no one can be too proud not to give a gift or too proud not to receive a gift. As I demonstrate in chapters one and three, gifting is integral to Očéti Šakówiŋ creative practice, and the stories we share of our received gifts are crucial to the longevity of the material culture.

My research considers language, animacy, and subjecthood for *Wówayupike: Relational Practices Between Art, Land, and Culture*, including using Lakota words, Lakota art, and other-than-human persons in Lakota artwork rely on the use of Lakota/Dakota ontologies. The ontologies I reference throughout my dissertation have been interrogated and demonstrated by various Lakota/Dakota scholars. Ontology concerning language, animacy, and subjecthood

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[52] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, Routledge Classics (1925; repr., London: Routledge, 2004), viii.

[53] Some examples of current research include Thorsten Botz-Bornstein and Jürgen Hengelbrock, *Re-Ethnicizing the Minds?: Cultural Revival in Contemporary Thought* (BRILL, 2006), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004501447; Laurie Gagnon-Bouchard and Camille Ranger, "Reclaiming Relationality through the Logic of the Gift and Vulnerability," *Hypatia* 35, no. 1 (2020): 41–57, https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2019.20; Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, First paperback edition (Minneapolis, Minn: Milkweed Editions, 2013); Rauna Johanna Kuokkanen, *Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and the Logic of the Gift* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Soren Larsen, "Gift of Art/Gift of Place: Boundary Work for Indigenous Coexistence," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 39, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 117–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2021.1989251.

proved that new approaches needed a more in-depth theoretical and methodological investigation of culture. However, the language I utilize in my dissertation is different from a formation of a linguistic analysis that is often the basis for ontological or epistemological work. I am considering what Delphine Red Shirt demonstrates as a literary analysis of written narratives.[54] Red Shirt focuses her examination on the Lakota oral and literary traditions process. She concludes that regardless of whether the individual is writing down or re-telling a narrative aloud —in this case, she's analyzing the written work of George Sword, who was also a known oral storyteller—that the process of crafting the narrative is influenced by Lakota culture and the process is similar. Red Shirt's work determines through a close reading of written records, indicates a Lakota worldview that continues to impact how Lakota people share our stories. A Lakota ontology is embedded in our literary traditions and linguistic structuring, vital to our story sharing.

I engage in ontological and epistemological analysis to demonstrate that Očéti Šakówiŋ relationality relies on ceremonial practices and is expressed in the everyday. In the 2018 text *All My Relations* by anthropologist David C. Posthumus, he presents primary cultural signifiers, mainly ceremonial practices, to demonstrate a straightforward look at Lakota ontology.[55] Posthumus' book is one of the first texts written explicitly about Lakota culture in almost a generation. Still, his work skims over craft production—making items for ceremonial rituals—but not art in the sense of gift-giving or relational exchange in common practice (2018). As I

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54 **54** Delphine Red Shirt, *George Sword's Warrior Narratives: Compositional Processes in Lakota Oral Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

55 David C. Posthumus, *All My Relatives: Exploring Lakota Ontology, Belief, and Ritual* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press; The American Philosophical Society, 2018).

discuss in chapter three, craft has become a gendered and undervalued production within Indigenous communities. Still, the work of scholars like Beatrice Medicine, Jenny Tone-Pah-Hote, Caroline Wiggins, and Sherry Farrell Racette has sustained conversations about how craftwork is vital to Indigenous worldviews. Posthumus focuses on phenomena such as the personhood of rocks, meteorological phenomena, ghosts, or how, he describes, Lakota people refer to spirits or ghosts of deceased humans and animals that are seen as spirit helpers. Finally, Posthumus analyzes cultural items called medicine bundles, primarily used in ceremonial practice. My knowledge as a Lakota relative enables me to use ceremonial activities while understanding the boundaries around revealing ceremonial protocol in my project, so I focus on everyday craftwork and storytelling. Ontology and epistemology focus on ceremony and protocol but often neglect analyses of current art practices.

My analysis focuses on public-facing rituals accessible to Lakota community members and non-native people. I only analyze private ceremonies that might have been exposed with adequate permission in past scholarship. I enact "small refusal," as best articulated by Audra Simpson, in which we, as Indigenous scholars, refuse to engage or share research and information that is not meant for outsiders or non-native peoples.[56] The refusal I employ runs throughout all three chapters, especially in chapter two, as I demonstrate how artists engage their refusals. Through my dissertation, I signal to certain rituals but will only discuss intimate ceremonies in detail if expressed by the artists in a public context. Other academic writings by activists, scholars, and novelists from the past hundred years are readily available to audiences

[56] A. Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*; and Audra Simpson, "Consent's Revenge," *Cultural Anthropology* 31, no. 3 (August 9, 2016): 326–33, https://doi.org/10.14506/ca31.3.02.

that might want to understand a discussion of the "sacred" with a Western framework analyzing Lakota culture.[57] The material I have accessed is readily and publicly available.

I focus on Lakota communities, not just because I am Lakota but because I strive to have a culturally competent analysis of my community in academic and popular spaces. My research stems from a long trajectory of narratives and histories created about Northern Plains tribal peoples that painted Indigenous people as a dying "race" or romanticized and villainized the "West" as something to be conquered. For example, archival research has been conducted on the performance of Lakota individuals in international Wild West shows and world fairs in the late 1800s and early 1900s.[58] As Očéti Šakówiŋ and other northern plains tribes were forced onto reservations, the silent era of moving pictures and film presented performances of Očéti Šakówiŋ peoples as exotic. Furthermore, many authors were fascinated by the "Vanishing Indian," as popularized by the 1920s novel and movie by the same name.[59] As salvage anthropology became more dominant during the 1920s and tribal rituals were banished from the public eye, the fascination with Northern plains tribal communities increased. Northern Plains tribal cultures captured imaginations and continue through present-day.

I discuss more prominent themes and connections to place and kinship within Lakota culture and focus on everyday creative practices that shape our interrelationships. Doing so shifts

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[57] I do not provide direct citation to materials that reveal private ceremonial information, but a quick search through digital platforms can direct a curious individual to the references I signal to. The list is extensive, as are the digital materials available through a quick internet search on social media outlets or online platforms.

[58] Prior to Michelle Raheja's *Reservation Reelism*, the research surrounding the Wild West Shows was often a critique of the process and did not focus on the agency of the Indigenous performers involved in the shows. See Michelle Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1dfnrq6.

[59] Zane Grey's book *The Vanishing American* was the basis for the 1925 silent film produced by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

the focus from historicizing Northern Plains tribal cultures centering the ongoing continuum of cultural traditions. Unlike the previous work by authors and academics like John G. Neihardt (who first presented the words of Oglala Lakota philosopher Black Elk in 1932), D.M. Dooling and J.R. Walker, William Powers, Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine Jahner, Joseph Epes Brown in collaboration with Nicholas Black Elk, and, more recently, David Posthumus my research offers a relief from the gendered confinements of the last thirty years of publications on Lakota ceremonies.[60] Everyday art practices like jewelry-making define a simple and affective engagement with Lakota culture.

Everyday art and cultural practices provide a way to understand the social phenomenon of the settlerscape within Lakota homelands.[61] Art can be a resource for understanding relationships with the land, which is why I am looking at the artistic items of everyday life as integral to our livelihood as Lakota people.[62] Art, as demonstrated by ingenuity and an everyday engagement in life, signals the items we wear everyday, like jewelry. The everyday moves

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[60] See Black Elk and John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*: The Complete Edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014); D.M. Dooling and J. R. Walker, eds., *The Sons of the Wind: The Sacred Stories of the Lakota*. (1984; repr., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000); Powers, *Oglala Religion*; Raymond J. DeMallie, Elaine Jahner, and J.R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (Lincoln and Denver: University of Nebraska Press; Published in cooperation with the Colorado Historical Society, 1991); Joseph Epes Brown and Nicholas Black Elk, *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); Posthumus, *All My Relatives*.

[61] When I reference "settlerscapes" I'm referring to the settling of land and place by non-native settlers that often engage in innocence or reimaging of the landscape to suit their needs, referencing D. Ezra Miller, "'But It Is Nothing Except Woods':Anabaptists, Ambitions, and a Northern Indiana Settlerscape, 1830–1841" in *Rooted and Grounded: Essays on Land and Christian Discipleship*, ed. Ryan D. Harker and Janeen Bertsche Johnson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016); and Mishuana R. Goeman, "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822376613.

[62] The extensive contributions of previous Indigenous studies scholars to the field of museum studies and art history is insurmountable, including but not limited to: Nicole Blalock, Jameson D. Lopez, and Elyssa Figari, "Acts of Visual Sovereignty: Photographic Representations of Cultural Objects," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 39, no. 3 (January 1, 2015): 83–98, https://doi.org/10.17953/aicrj.39.3.blalock;
; P.J. Deloria, *Becoming Mary Sully*; Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby, *American Indian Performing Arts: Critical Directions* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2010); Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*; Mithlo, *Knowing Native Arts*; Jolene Rickard, "Visualizing Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 465–86, https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-1162543.

between the cityscape and the reservation. The "everyday" shifts between formal and informal. I propose that some Lakota artists create an uncomplicated demonstration of Lakota self-determination in an everyday context, best articulated through Očéti Šakówiŋ concepts of being *ikčé*, an ordinary, simple portrayal of Lakota life. I define ikčé in different ways throughout the dissertation. As I employ ikčé, I understand the ordinary also to mean an accessible engagement with our homelands. Our livelihood relies on our everyday connection to the land, so I focus on Lakota homelands. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes that the land is "both context and process."[63] The art created from the land supports our navigation of time and space as everyday people and demonstrations the continuum of culture that is often sought out in decolonial studies.

My research benefits from the work of "decolonizing," the action, and "decolonization" as a noun, which picked up momentum in the late 1990s when Linda Tuhiwai Smith published her foundational text *Decolonizing Methodologies.*[64] Over the past twenty years since Smith's foundational text, numerous Indigenous studies scholars and practitioners have strived to explain and analyze what decolonizing academic theories and institutions might look like. Decoloniality, as a more prominent theory, focuses on the process in which the production of knowledge attempts to untangle from a foundational Western-enlightenment ideology. Decoloniality is a concept that has evolved over the past ten years, especially within the U.S. museum field contexts, and continues to have significant shifts in response to the different iterations of theoretical and methodological changes like decolonization. The term and idea have been taken

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[63] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 3 (November 21, 2014): 2.

[64] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London; New York: Dunedin, N.Z.: St. Martin's Press; Zed Books; University of Otago Press, 1999).

up in various ways, both as a critique and as guiding theoretical and methodological practice. Indigenous studies scholars like Smith, Amy Lonetree, and Susan Miller enhance my discussion of art-related concepts through my dissertation.[65]

A Seasonal Approach to Methodologies

The changing seasons in the Northern Plains territory have guided my dissertation research, with each phase representing a different aspect of research and a type of data gathering. A rural Lakota upbringing guides my methodologies in the Northern Plains, influencing its conceptualization. I primarily shape data collection through my personal and cultural connection to land and place. My seasonal framework is not necessarily ceremonial, but a Lakota articulation of the weather as an animate other-than-human person is vital when creating a timeline to gather data. I came to this articulation because I needed a way to understand my research practices that reflected my tribal upbringing. Embedded in these ways of navigating research are a non-linear, cyclical timeline and an acknowledgment of the relationships I have with my field sites and community to move forward ethically. My methodological approach also exemplifies the everyday of doing research and an ethical need to ground it in place.

Historically, Lakota women would carry on their belts a *míla* (knife), a *čazaŋkóžuha* (strike-a-light pouch), and a *tahíŋšpa* (awl). The three items are tools to be used at any moment or occasion. I imagine my research tools—the theories, praxis, and methodologies—to be on my tool belt. These tools are continuously being honed with each new research project and experience. I have been considering and honing my articulation of a seasonal methodological approach to research since I entered my dissertation fieldwork in 2020. I moved back to the

[65] I do not directly focus on decolonial rhetoric but still demonstrate decoloniality.

Northern plains during the first year of the pandemic. Doing fieldwork in the Northern Plains over the past two years has challenged me to re-imagine research timelines and engagement outside formal institutions like universities. Analytical and methodological formations for gathering information and understanding the world are embedded in the seasons.

The seasonal changes in the Northern plains can be drastic and provide a structure for data gathering because of the events that occur with the changing landscape. I begin with *Wétu* (spring)—the New Year begins in spring for Očéti Šakówiŋ communities—followed by *Blokétu* (summer), *Ptaŋyétu* (fall), and *Waníyetu* (winter).[66] In the Lakota language, you can state, "*Ómakȟa kiŋ hé yé,*" which translates to "The season proceeds." Conceptually, this phrase gestures to the temporal understanding of a yearly cycle. The seasons flow no matter what is occurring or what affective or emotional state we might be dealing with. With or without my engagement with the seasons, they will proceed. I work within a seasonal region paradigm and then demand information that may not be ready to be given. I take from the seasons. The practical data gathering, such as archival investigation, formal and informal interviews, participant observation, etc., follow similar patterns of historical and current preparations for each season.

In *Wówayuphike*, my dissertation's research framework similarly grounds my methods in a seasonal conceptualization dictated not only by my tribal community but the land as a relative. I am also situating my approaches to appropriate engagement with the community, especially as

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[66] There is more to articulate about each moon of the seasons, operating on a thirteen-moon calendar; spring includes "The moon when the leaves burst open" and the "Moon When the Geese Return"; summer includes the "Prairie Turnip Moon," the "Moon When Juneberries are Ripe", the "Ripe Chokecherry Moon," and the "Ripe Plum Moon"; Fall includes the "Yellow Leaf Moon" and the "Frost Moon"; and finally, the winter includes the "Winter Moon," the "Midwinter Moon," the "Moon of the Scarce Sun," the "Moon of Popping Trees," and the "Half-Day Half-Night Moon."

an ethnographer and researcher representing the Western academy. As an insider/outsider to my community, I have to be hyper-aware of what is revealed to me as a cultural community member and what is revealed to me as a researcher. I work to ensure that the materials I collect will not cause harm, although I sometimes address harmful statistics. Through Indigenous methodologies, a reciprocal relationship can establish a framework of self-reflective positionality. Indigenous studies scholars provide models for navigating insider/outsider research issues. Bryan Brayboy posits that community ways of knowing and understanding the tribal worldview give a foundation for the ethnographic gathering of data.[67] I sincerely consider when to sit quietly and listen and when my questions and inquiries are appropriate.

The past twenty years have produced a variety of Indigenous methodological perspectives that center on cultural protocol and relationality.[68] To be relational to the research process means to create respectful, reciprocal relationships and demonstrate responsibility for what is produced. Linda Tuhiwai Smith states, "Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values, and behaviors as an integral part of the methodology."[69] Many scholars that write about Indigenous methodologies highlight the importance of cultural tradition and the practical engagement of cultural life in our research. I turn to a Lakota seasonal calendar

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[67] Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, "The History of Anthropology and Future Research: Conducting 'Fieldwork,'" *Counterpoints* 218 (2003): 11–27, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42978150.

[68] The seasonal conceptualization of data gathering was inspired by emerging tribally specific praxis in scholarship such as: Risling Baldy and Yazzie, "Introduction"; Estes and Dhillon, *Standing With Standing Rock*; Pexa, *Translated Nation*; P.J. Deloria, *Becoming Mary Sully*; and Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, *Remembering Our Intimacies: Mo'olelo, Aloha 'āina, and Ea* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021); Haliehana Matrona Stepetin, "Unangam Qaqamiiĝuu [Unangax̂ Subsistence] Cosmologies: Protocols of Sustainability, or Ways of Being Unangax̂" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Davis, University of California, 2003). The seasonal approach to my methods also reflects my understanding of Lakota knowledge systems. I am influenced by concepts in the ceremonial protocol, preparation for the change of seasons, a time for reflection, and an appreciation of season (as other-than-human persons) renewal. The practical gathering of data including archival investigation, interviews, participant observation, etc. follows similar historical and current preparations for each season.

[69] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 36.

because of the Northern Plains' drastic and harsh weather changes, which indicate that I have to be prepared as a researcher to address the rapidly changing weather in the same way I would have to understand the rapidly evolving my relationship with the tribal communities I engage with. Smith posits that a dedicated acknowledgment of positionality results in reciprocity with the community shaped by tribal ceremony, protocol, and values.[70] I interpret a disclosure of positionality as a physical positioning within the landscape, which is vital to the ethical shaping of my research.

As a Lakota scholar, I approach my work from an autobiographical and autoethnographic perspective. Autoethnography provides a framework that facilitates a direct connection to my primary data sources because I am utilizing information shared with me from my grandparents, aunties, uncles, parents, and siblings, as well as the community knowledge that is provided daily going to the elementary, middle, and high school in my tribal community.[71] The autoethnographic approach is the start of a spiral, or like the start of the seasons, which creates a progression of information but allows for reflection or acknowledgment of the previous season and the ancestral knowledge passed down generationally. Preparation for each season is shaped by the last season and is in preparation for the next. Similarly, an autoethnographic approach operates in reflexive and proactive response. For Lakota people and myself, the seasons provide a different perspective on the environment and data available.

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[70] The seasonal approach to my methods also reflects my understanding of Lakota knowledge systems. I am influenced by concepts in the ceremonial protocol, preparation for the change of seasons, a time for reflection, and an appreciation of seasonal renewal. The practical gathering of data including archival investigation, interviews, participant observation, etc. follows similar historical and current preparations for each season.

[71] Heewon Chang, *Autoethnography as Method*, Developing Qualitative Inquiry, v. 1 (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2008). 51.

Wétu (Spring) is when we would move the camp to higher ground and hunt for larger animals again. We have survived the winter. As a marker of renewal, the two moons of spring would be an opportunity to re-introduce me to the place and community. As I gather and analyze, I establish and reinforce accountability for the knowledge I gain and share. During the spring equinox, we celebrate the return of the *wakinya*, the Thunderbeings, in the *Wakinya Aglipi* by climbing to the highest peak in the Black Hills, recently renamed Black Elk Peak. The thunder represents the way seasons have come full circle. Spring is when we hear the Meadowlark sings again, "*Oiyo-kipi! O' Maka teca'a he ye!*" or "The world is renewed! Rejoice!"[72] I frame spring renewal as a re-introduction: how can we imagine this introduction to our research?

Spring was a marker for the beginning of my dissertation research. As northern plains tribal communities understood spring as a way to reemerge from hibernating, I saw my own reemergence in the tribal community where I was raised. For example, I received approval from the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) Research Review Board (RRB), which I applied for in the spring of my first year in the field.[73] Receiving the OST RRB approval was essential for my research.[74] One of the most encouraging experiences I had when presenting in front of the Research Review Board was feedback from Mr. John Haas. Mr. Haas told me that he knew my grandmother Eva (Goes in Center) Witt and that she would be proud of all that I have accomplished.

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[72] Lois Red Elk-Reed, "When The Meadowlark Sings Oiyokipi Omaka Teca," *Mountain Journal*, April 2, 2018, https://mountainjournal.org/a-dakota-poet-writes-about-spring-on-prairie.

[73] On a side note, although I applied for RRB approval in the spring, I was finally granted approval in the fall only after the intervention of an elder in the community advocated on my behalf due to the lack of administrative transparency and communication of a tribal employee. This saga is a tale for another day.

[74] I was also required to get UCLA IRB and OST RRB approval by the Wenner Gren Foundation for which I received a dissertation fieldwork grant.

Summer, *Blokétu*, is marked by the Lakota *Wiwáŋyaŋg Wačhípi* (Sundance), which, aside from the welcoming back of the thunder beings in spring, reflects the ability to come together in ceremony. When preparing for the Wiwáŋyaŋg Wačhípi, individuals state their intentions for the ceremony, prepare medicine materials, and have gifts ready for those that support the individual through the process.[75] I approached research with the same dedication that further reflects the commitment an individual would give to the Wiwáŋyaŋg Wačhípi; I have given similar dedication to my research. Historically, the start of ceremonial time was an announcement of an individual's commitment to the community followed by action. Like providing and receiving tribal research review board approval, I made my research intentions known to the community. Through these processes, I established and reinforced accountability for the knowledge I gathered and analyzed.

Blokétu spans the cycle of four moons and is described as a time when you are picking turnips, berries, and plums.[76] Harvesting plants during the summer is a shared experience often influenced by where your family knows where to get the best fruit or which friends share their field of turnips. We learn from each other during the summer. I learned to harvest the sweetest chokecherries and largest *tíŋpsiŋla* (turnip) from my relatives, and, in the same way, I approach gathering research by asking my relatives the best way to do so.

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[75] I am reflecting on personal experience of the Wiwáŋyaŋg Wačhípi but also referencing works such as Black Elk and Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*; Joseph M. Marshall, *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002); A.C. Ross, *Mitakuye Oyasin: "We Are All Related,"* Rev. ed. (Denver: Wicóni Wasté, 1997).

[76] I was born in the summertime, which is why blokétu is my favorite season. But I also appreciate the simple world-building naming of our summer moons: the Prairie Turnip Moon, the Moon When Juneberries are Ripe, the Ripe Chokecherry Moon, and the Ripe Plum Moon. The moon tells us when it is time to gather.

As an autoethnographic approach, Summer allows me to explain how I have come to articulate certain aspects of Lakota culture personally. The autoethnographic work included gathering and using personal histories, document analysis of material my parents saved from their formal tribal education experience in the Northern Plains, participant-observation of community artist events, informal interviews with artists and culture bearers, and self-reflection.[77] Summertime also shaped how I interacted with my community, friends, and family. Relational individuals helped me revisit information on ceremonial sites and shared oral histories, provided cultural maps, and discussed specific ceremonial songs or prayers. Like harvesting a tíŋpsiŋla (wild turnip), I needed the ability to adapt to other materials I might encounter; if the flower is not ready, you return when the time is right. If a particular aspect of my approach in the summer is inappropriate, I will revisit it in another season when the time to gather is appropriate.

In the Lakota lunar calendar, ptaŋyétu (Fall) is a two-month period that marks the time to prepare for winter. Fall happens quickly, and I utilized the season to assess what material I could gather in the summer to prepare for winter. Historically, the fall would be used to gather supplies and plan for the harsh prairie weather. The assessment I conducted in the fall was a time to conceptualize archival gathering. The archival research ranges from personal archives of family and community members to social media archives. For example, I reviewed the "Winter Camp" workshops presented by Racing Magpie, an arts and culture organization in Rapid City, South Dakota, which I utilize in chapters two and three.[78]

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[77] My use of autoethnography is influenced by scholars like Heewon Cheng and David Delgado Shorter. See David Delgado Shorter, (2016).

[78] See "Racing Magpie (website)," https://www.racingmagpie.com/.

The two-moon fall cycle provides a time to reflect on what was understood at the start of summer as ceremonial time and what might be needed to revisit before the harsh winter season. Informal interviews gathered in the summer helped structure the formal interviews. After reviewing preliminary data collected during the summer, I understood what discussions I needed to proceed with. The fall is a time for preparation. The two moons of fall provide a time to assess the material gathered and create a plan for the long winter.

Waníyetu (Winter) is a five-moon cycle representing a quiet and reflective time. We cannot move quickly, or often safely, in the prairie winters from camp to camp. Winter is a time for storytelling, recalling the year, and creating and making items for spring. These five long moons of winter provided a way to understand the gathering of ethnographic materials from the field, including interviews and reviewing specific archival material.[79] Winter was the time to hear and share stories as well. The five moons of winter give me adequate time to slowly engage with artists, elders, cultural bearers, and community members that would contribute to my research. The ethnographic material used from participant observation and semi-structured interviews also engages with the creation process.[80] Waníyetu was a way to understand the gathering of ethnographic materials from the field and reflect on the training I was provided throughout my graduate career.

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[79] Ethnography scholarship influenced by: Brayboy, "The History of Anthropology and Future Research"; Kim TallBear, "Standing with and Speaking as Faith: A Feminist-Indigenous Approach to Inquiry," in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, ed. Chris Andersen and Jean M. O'Brien (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 78–85; Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2008).

[80] Ethnographic inquiry inspired by: David McDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Sara Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013); Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); Jay Ruby, *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film & Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Historically, Lakota communities would document events through a winter count memory device. Winter counts help connect the past, present, and future in various ways.[81] Many plains tribes used this method to document momentous events. Historically, winter counts would have been made on full bison hide robes with images drawn or painted on them of the year's most significant happenings as decided by the community.[82] In some ways, my dissertation is a winter count of my academic journey, and developing a seasonal methodology to address my research timeline provided me the space to reflect.

My seasonal methodology was imagined as a counter to a strict anthropological framework that often had a fraught relationship with Native peoples, whose lifeways, languages, and ceremonial objects and materials have been, at best, decontextualized, and, at worst, used in ways that harm Native people and communities.[83] Here I signal to ethnographies by early Americanist ethnographers (Boas, Sapir, Whorf) to contextualize the history of research in Indigenous communities, including surveying work by those whose research eschewed Indigenous ontologies (Lewis-Morgan).[84] Early ontological discussions were driven by scholars like Rodney Needham (1972), which demonstrated that a researcher could never thoroughly

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[81] Candace S. Greene et al., eds., *The Year the Stars Fell: Lakota Winter Counts at the Smithsonian* (Washington D.C.; Lincoln: Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History: Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian; University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

[82] Greene et al., *The Year the Stars Fell*.

[83] I started my academic journey trying to think through a research timeline that made sense as an Indigenous doctoral student from the Northern Plains. What would help me better understand the processes that have to be achieved for an ethically sound research project? The practical consideration of how data is developed and considered regarding Lakota communities is often grounded in salvage anthropology and preliminary studies. Documentary form, often linked to methodologies of salvage anthropology and salvage ethnography, reflects a moment in anthropology when extensive collections of data, especially from indigenous communities, were gathered for fear that the cultures were disappearing.

[84] B. L. Whorf, "The Origin of Aztec Tl," *American Anthropologist 39*, no. 2 (April 1937): 265–74, https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1937.39.2.02a00070; Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man: A Course of Lectures Delivered Before the Lowell Institute, Boston, Mass., and the National University of Mexico, 1910-1911* (Macmillan, 1911); Edward Sapir, "Preliminary Report on the Language and Mythology of the Upper Chinook," *American Anthropologist 9*, no. 3 (July 1907): 533–44, https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1907.9.3.02a00100.

comprehend another society's understanding of the world because articulating specific cultural experiences of any society is limited by verbal and linguistic constructs.[85] Cultural anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell (1981) explored Anishinaabe (Ojibwa) metaphysical relationships of human and nonhuman beings as part of his ethnographic work.[86] Because of the contributions of early ontological scholars, the ontological turn, as understood within anthropology, proves that new approaches are needed for a more in-depth theoretical and methodological investigation of culture.[87]

Limitations of the Dissertation

A wide variety of Očéti Šakówiŋ artists, culture bearers, and creatives could have been included in my dissertation research. My choice of collaborators was based on kinship and relational practices I was introduced to as a child and was formed by prioritizing family members or chosen family as experts. Within a Western context, this path of gathering participants might be considered flawed or entrenched in nepotism. However, I am cognizant of the accountability required by my community. Nineteenth-century Dakota ethnographer Ella C. Deloria shared that when she would attempt to interview men from her community, they would ask who her family

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[85] Rodney Needham, *Belief, Language, and Experience* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1972).

[86] Alfred Irving Hallowell, *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of Alfred Irving Hallowell* (Chicago: Universoty of Chicago Press, 1976); and Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and World View," in *Teaching from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Mythology*, ed. Denis Tedlock and Barbara Tedlock (New York: Liveright, 1975).

[87] Current anthropological and ethnographic work by scholars like Audra Simpson, Zoe Todd, and many others continue to sustain needed interventions in the field that I benefit from. See, for example, Albers and Medicine, T*he Hidden Half*; Waziwayatan Wilson, *What Does Justice Look Like?*; TallBear, "Standing with and Speaking as Faith; A Feminist-Indigenous Approach to Inquiry"; Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus;* Zoe Todd, "Fish Pluralities: Human-Animal Relations and Sites of Engagement in Paulatuuq, Arctic Canada," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 38, no. 1–2 (February 25, 2015): 217–38, https://doi.org/10.7202/1028861ar; Marisa Elena Duarte and Miranda Belarde-Lewis, "Imagining: Creating Spaces for Indigenous Ontologies," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53, no. 5–6 (July 4, 2015): 677–702, https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2015.1018396.

was and then make a relational connection.[88] Only after this connection was made would they share with her. The context provided by Deloria demonstrates that Očéti Šakówiŋ communities prefer to talk to people they have a connection with and have a gendered perspective on these interactions.[89] My approach to material has been similar. I was conscious of my positionality relative to the artists I collaborated with and continuously checked in with them throughout the writing process.

My use of feminism is a limitation within the context of Očéti Šakówiŋ frameworks. The term "feminism" is rarely utilized in Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures. I use Black, Indigenous, and people of color feminist approaches to address the failures of internalized white supremacy and misogyny within my tribal communities. I have recognized a need to express frustration with misogyny and patriarchy voiced by women, two-spirit, and non-heteronormative relatives in my community.[90] Their frustration has been a guidepost for my feminist inquiry and feminist framing of my project. The legacy of Indigenous feminist inquiry has provided a foundation to engage with broad Indigenous feminisms.[91] I am challenged by the failures of feminism in my community, especially the popularization of white feminism that permeates mainstream cultures

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[88] Ella Cara Deloria and Joyzelle Gingway Godfrey, *The Dakota Way of Life* (Sioux Falls, SD: Mariah Press, 2007).

[89] The gendered framework is also why I choose to utilize feminist theories.

[90] I utilize the term two-spirit based on conversations I have with L/D/Nakota relatives that identify that way, but the phrase is not all-encompassing of the LGBTQ spectrum in tribal communities.

[91] See Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (2013): 8–34; Joanne Barker, "Indigenous Feminisms," in *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous People's Politics*, ed. José Antonio Lucero, Dale Turner, and Donna Lee VanCott (online edn, Oxford Academic, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195386653.013.007, accessed May 28, 2023; Nancy Marie Mithlo, "'A Real Feminine Journey.'" *Meridians* 9, no. 2 (March 1, 2009): 1–30, https://doi.org/10.2979/MER.2009.9.2.1; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and White Feminism* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2000); Luana Ross, "From the 'F' Word to Indigenous/Feminisms," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 39–52; Goeman, "Indigenous Interventions and Feminist Methods."

in the United States. I continue to find ways to articulate a gendered narrative that manages the failure of hetero-patriarchal social constructs.

I articulate an everyday Lakota relationality that is unapologetically Lakota-centric while providing a strategy for imagining a Lakota future understood outside the extraordinary and unsettling decolonial acts of resistance often popularized in mainstream academic or art institutions. A wide field of writing and research regarding counter-narratives and resistance movements within the field of Indigenous studies exists and has provided a solid foundational conversation for decolonial articulations.[92] For example, in 2008, Susan Miller published an article criticizing the Western History Alliance and positing a move to decolonize history to distinguish "Indigenous historical narrative and methodology from those of the competing paradigm and discourse in American historiography."[93] Miller demonstrates how the field of history continues to shy away from Indigenous research paradigms within the area because of a lack of acknowledgment of Indigenous genocide and the atrocities that have occurred. Miller's work had a profound impact on the work of other scholars. Indigenous historiographies include an intentional Indigenous knowledge formation and intervention in the shape of tribal stories, oral histories, and a proactive, as opposed to a reactive, critique of colonization. Counter-

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[92] A quick nod to some decolonial work includes Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism"; Tony Hall, *Earth into Property: Colonization, Decolonization, and Capitalism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Sarah Hernandez, *We Are the Stars: Colonizing and Decolonizing the Oceti Sakowin Literary Tradition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2023); Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*; Susan A. Miller and James Riding In, eds., *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011); Risling Baldy and Yazzie, "Introduction"; Fekile Nxumalo, "Decolonial Water Pedagogies: Invitations to Black, Indigenous, and Black-Indigenous World-Making," *Occasional Paper Series* 45 (2021), https://doi.org/10.58295/2375-3668.1390; Faye Ginsburg, "Decolonizing Documentary On-Screen and Off: Sensory Ethnography and the Aesthetics of Accountability," *Film Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2018): 39–49, https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2018.72.1.39.

[93] Susan A. Miller, "Native America Writes Back: The Origin of the Indigenous Paradigm in Historiography," *Wicazo Sa Review* 23, no. 2 (2008): 10, https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0013.

narratives are integral to my research because I can focus on the proactive articulation of the intersections of art, land, and culture without the noise of framing my work as such.

My investigation of Ella C. Deloria's work in chapter one, Layli Long Soldier's poetry in chapter two, and the community-based artists in chapter three contributes to an ongoing discourse of gendered narrative analysis and relationality research. Since her fictional novel was published in 1988, scholars have analyzed Deloria's manuscripts, professional life, and scholarly contributions, from which my research benefits. I am eager to see the dialogue grow as new manuscripts and interpretations stem from her anthropological contributions. Deloria gathered data for ethnographic work, but her ability to craft a fictional narrative profoundly impacted my family's gendered criticality and intellectual rigor. Without Deloria's contributions, I would not have pursued a doctorate, and I know that my analysis is one of many. Similarly, my examination of Layli Long Soldier's poetry follows equivalent studies of Očéti Šakówiŋ literary traditions, and I recognize my work to be on trend with scholars well ahead of my research.[94] I am proud to distinguish the everyday material culture of community-based artists who have received national and international recognition while challenging myself to find my place analyzing art.

Outline of the Dissertation Chapters

The three chapters in this dissertation demonstrate a range of present-day creative practices in Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures. My choice of art practices has relied heavily on literature and nonmaterial forms—the first two chapters of my dissertation focus on oral histories, stories, and poetry. The last chapter focuses on personal adornment or wearable art, more specifically on jewelry. I share personal stories in each section as a self-reflective autoethnographic take on my

[94] I am especially grateful for the recent publications by Pexa, *Translated Nation*, and Hernandez, *We Are the Stars*.

research. As framed in the introduction, stories connect the community to the land, articulate sovereignty and self-determination, and express relationality, as various Indigenous scholars demonstrate. The stories I utilize through my work come from experience and an analysis of collaborators and contributors. Within my research, I operate from Očéti Šakówiŋ stories defined by oral stories, personal histories, and autobiographies to demonstrate a relational research story.

Throughout all three chapters of my dissertation, I rely on self-reflexivity and storytelling modeled by the creatives I analyze. Ella Deloria's ethnographic documentation and engagement of community narratives is reflected in chapter one, which overviews storytelling and oral history practices such as sharing creation stories. Chapter two focuses on Layli Long Soldier's 2017 poetry book, *WHEREAS*, in which I analyze her use of grass to theorize about apologies and reciprocity.[95] Layli Long Soldier's intimate connection to other-than-human relatives like grass demonstrates a legacy of Lakota relationality that continues to show our interconnectedness through acts of refusal and reciprocity. In the third chapter, I utilize intergenerational place-based knowledge to articulate how Lakota people engage with other-than-human kin (stones) to demonstrate our relationality (interconnectedness of culture, art, land, etc.) through creative practices. I focus on a case study of Oglala Lakota artist Jhon Duane Goes in Center, a silversmith working with found materials from the northern plains, and Molina Jo (Parker) Two Bulls, who specializes in beadwork and quillwork jewelry. The crafting practices of Jhon Duane Goes in Center and Molina Two Bulls solidify an ikčé engagement with the community. The conclusion of my dissertation focuses on the failures of representations and why everyday creative practices affirm Očéti Šakówiŋ relationality through accessible and affective structures.

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[95] Layli Long Soldier, *WHEREAS* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2017).

CHAPTER ONE: LAKOTA LIFE AND THE GIFT OF RELATIONAL PRACTICES

The large red eighteen-passenger van is filled to the brim with Lakota women, luggage, snacks, and, most importantly, paperback novels. The women's favorite was Ella C. Deloria's novel, *Waterlily* (1988), published almost a decade before this cross-country journey. The grandmas, aunties, mothers, cousins, nieces, sisters, and friends—aged anywhere between forty and sixty years old—are headed to a conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.[96] The twelve-hour drive across the prairie, ranch land, and long stretches of Interstate ninety is beautiful in the July heat. The sky is a soft blue; the prairie grass is still green, and the rolling hills in eastern South Dakota are not yet brownish yellow from the long hot summer. The women in the van sit against tan-colored seats, with their short bobs and permed hair, and listen while my aunt Wanda (my mom's first cousin) read Deloria's novel, *Waterlily,* aloud in the van for the entire trip. Her voice is not abrasive but firm, and she sometimes cracks a joke with the other women, causing a shy smile to cross her lips. Wanda's wired-rimmed glasses reflect the white book cover as she gently turns the pages with her dark brown hands, smiling as she shares the story she has probably read every year since the book was published. My mom, grandmother Eva (her mother), and aunt Angie sit enthralled, remembering their favorite lines from the book.

Shortly after this trip, I would be gifted *Waterlily* for my eighth-grade graduation from junior high, a tradition my mom continues to carry out for our extended family and friends. I

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[96] Though the opening passage is a "critical fabulation" of my aunt Wanda's reading of Waterlily aloud on a road trip; see Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Arts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14. The occurrence happened in similar circumstances, but in a car to Denver (instead of Milwaukee) with my maternal grandmother, my mother, and my maternal aunt Angie. I imagine the van full of aunties traveling to the 58th Annual Tekakwitha Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, held at Marquette University, August 6–10, 1997. Relayed by my mother and considering my experiences with my relatives on similar trips, I constructed the critical fabulation to provide a robust reflection of the experience of reading Waterlily aloud.

listened to Ella Clara Deloria, often quoted in my household as a child. My mother would, and still does, reference Deloria's work as touch points for life lessons. She often says, "Be a good relative," or she reminds me how our grieving should occur at appropriate times. Ella Deloria was also known as a Dakota ethnographer trained under Franz Boas. I knew Ella Deloria as a fiction writer. My mother would give Deloria's novel *Waterlily* (1988) to any young Lakota relative, especially young women graduating from eighth grade or high school. My mother wanted to share what she thought was a guide for good relational practices. Little did I know then, but *Waterlily* would become a touchpoint for me to navigate the world. Although a fiction novel, the text provides a framework to examine *Očéti Šakówiŋ* relationality and the use of stories to convey relational practices. I offer a Lakota literary analysis of the fictional novel *Waterlily* to signal specific moments of kinship, *ikčé* (everyday commonness), and *makoce* (land or place). Utilizing personal narratives, archival material, and community histories, I weave creative practice and artistic articulations, public ceremonial protocol, and place-based knowledge to demonstrate how creative approaches are central to analyzing Očéti Šakówiŋ relationality.

Waterlily provides a map of how creative practices highlight a continuum of Lakota culture and interconnectedness within Očéti Šakówiŋ communities. I rely on the text to represent Ella Deloria's public storytelling and establish how Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota communities have continued sharing culture through storytelling. I utilize the text as both critical documentation of Northern Plains' life and as a way to use stories for mapping and centering Očéti Šakówiŋ ways of knowing. Storytelling is not to be confused with the performance aspect of public engagement. Although performance theory offers critical analytical inquiry that focuses

on identity formation and the public's reception, my analysis hones in on Očéti Šakówiŋ relational practices and the multiple ways ingenuity and relationality intertwine.

Deloria gathered material to contribute to the ethnographic tradition of documentation but became better known in popular culture for her fictional novel. The fictional text based on Lakota and Dakota ethnographic research is a historical narrative utilizing the data gathered by Deloria and others during the 1920s and 1930s. Some of her previous work included extensive ethnographies of the Dakota people and the Dakota language published with Franz Boas. The solo-authored book *Speaking of Indians* (1944) analyzed Dakota communities in the Northern Plains to demonstrate the challenging transition to reservation life, especially the impact on Dakota kinship systems.[97] Although many of her texts are explicitly written about Dakota people during the transition to reservation life—as Deloria is Dakota herself, *Waterlily* has continuously inspired many Očéti Šakówiŋ communities.

The text, told entirely from a female perspective, provides foundational written documentation for the kinship values of the Očéti Šakówiŋ families that were sometimes left out of male-dominated narratives written by outsiders.[98] The novel is an intergenerational journey of Lakota women—Gloku (grandmother), Blue Bird (mother), and Waterlily (daughter), during the transition from Northern Plains prairie life to the inevitable push to reservations (in the late 1880s). In the book, we begin with the birth of Waterlily and witness her life as she grows to adulthood, marries, and has children. As witnesses to Waterlily's life, the novel takes place at a

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[97] Ella Clara Deloria and Vine Deloria, *Speaking of Indians* (1944; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

[98] Thankfully, work like that of María Eugenia Cotera has addressed some of the concerns of the politics of ethnographic work by Black, Indigenous, and women of color. See Cotera, *Native Speakers: Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, Jovita González, and the Poetics of Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

time when the world and landscapes of Očéti Šakówiŋ were disrupted by impending colonization that looms in the background of the text. Waterlily's experiences as she grows from a child into adulthood provide opportunities to demonstrate Deloria's work on kinship embedded in tribal rituals and the nuances of everyday life on the prairie before the confinements of reservation life.

Ella C. Deloria's use of the fiction genre emulates the type of storytelling our communities would have done historically, enabling me to analyze her work alongside other kinds of storytelling in my dissertation. *Waterlily* is an origin story for my family—through the use of the novel by my mother, grandmother, aunties, sisters, and myself. Through the novel, especially one written by a Dakota woman, I frame public-facing storytelling within a present-day context that engages with a continuum of Očéti Šakówiŋ creative practices. In an online presentation about Očéti Šakówiŋ's creation stories, prominent elder and educator Edward Starr stated that anytime you get lost or confused about something (intellectually) that you should return to your creation stories.[99] I return to Deloria's fictional novel, which has profoundly impacted my intellectual framework because she modeled how Očéti Šakówiŋ communities continue to shape títuŋwaŋ philosophies of relationality through tribal values and examples of everyday life through creative practices.[100] Like Mark Rifkin's reading of Dakota author and activist Zitkala-ša's work, I utilize "ethnographic form to register and value Indigenous

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[99] Edward Starr and James Star Comes Out, "Ohuŋkákan Wicowe Oglaka or 'Sharing Stories with Relatives.'" (Virtual Presentation, April 12, 2023).

[100] Many scholars have utilized Ella Deloria's work in ways similar to my analysis. Some examples include but are not limited to: Charles King, *Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Doubleday, 2019); Kirin Narayan, "Ethnography and Fiction: Where Is the Border?" *Anthropology and Humanism* 24, no. 2 (December 1999): 134–47, https://doi.org/10.1525/ahu.1999.24.2.134; Julian Rice, "Narratives Styles in Dakota Texts," in *Sky Loom: Native American Myth, Story, and Song*, ed. Brian Swann (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 73–93; Sean Teuton, *American Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017);
Kamala Visweswaran, "Histories of Feminist Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26, no. 1 (October 1997): 591–621, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.26.1.591.

peoplehood," but from a positionality of fictional fabrication of Lakota life.[101] Indigenous studies and literary scholars have demonstrated Deloria's impact on ethnography and her work of fiction in various ways. I rely on their work to aid in examining creative and relational practices.

The text carries significant weight in my *tiospaye* (extended family). Deloria's kinship and storytelling work continues to impact how we share and bring stories into our Očéti Šakówiŋ communities. My aunt Dr. Agnes Pictotte (my mother's first cousin), was also one of the first researchers to find Ella Deloria's unpublished manuscript in the archive and bring the work to the attention of university publishers. Aunt Agnes wrote a biographical sketch of Ella C. Deloria for the original 1988 paperback printing. The concluding sentence of the biography continues to serve as a model of what I take from Deloria's work. Dr. Picotte writes, "Not only was she [Ella Deloria] a meticulous and knowledgeable researcher; she had a deep and heartfelt understanding of –a true kinship with– those whose culture she both studied and shared."[102] The kinship demonstrated in the present day is also embedded in the ways the community still references Deloria. Different community members have shared that Deloria was often referred to as "Tunwin Wicazo" or "Wicazo Win," loosely translated to "Auntie Pencil" or "Woman with the Pencil" because she would show up with a notebook and pencil, always ready to take notes. Deloria's fictional writing has become a touchpoint for many Očéti Šakówiŋ families that did not have access to cultural knowledge. The influence of Ella Clara Deloria continues to impact my family today.

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[101] Mark Rifkin, *Speaking for the People: Native Writing and the Question of Political Form* (Durham: NC: Duke University Press, 2021). 191.

[102] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, 229.

Waterlily was published several years before I was born and came into public existence at a time when gendered narratives about Indigenous women were sorely needed. Although written in the 1940s, *Waterlily* was not published until 1988, seventeen years after Deloria's death and almost forty years after Deloria wrote the novel. When Deloria was gathering data, she wrote the manuscript at a time when other female ethnographers were either married to another male ethnographer or from an elite family. As a result, her work as an ethnographer was not well-known. Ella Deloria was the daughter of an Episcopal archdeacon and navigated the nuances of a hetero-patriarchal world. Although she was allowed to attend college, her experiences differed from those of her white counterparts in higher education. She understood that an ethnography published by an Indigenous woman's scholarship would not be received, as well as a fictional book.[103] In *Becoming Mary Sully*,Phil Deloria writes about the struggles his aunts (Ella Deloria and Mary Sully) faced, which included constantly trying to find a way to access resources to fund their research and art practices.[104] The gender narrative Ella Deloria provides is subtle but vital to my work. I worked tirelessly to see her through the haze of anthropological confinement and the dominance of the world she navigated.

Identity, Gender, and Storytelling

I discourage non-native people from utilizing fictional novels as a touchpoint for cultural knowledge-making. My literary analysis and close reading of *Waterlily* align with other Indigenous academic scholarship that has been produced for other Očéti Šakówiŋ students that

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[103] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, xvii.

[104] P.J. Deloria, *Becoming Mary Sully*.

might need somewhere to start.[105] In part, I see my dissertation as a piece of writing for Indigenous students who may find themselves with historical ethnographic material that does not precisely fit with the narratives they receive from their communities. I am not the first to analyze or engage with Ella Deloria's work, but *Waterlily* is part of my origin story as an academic, and the ways I reckon with intimate knowledge of the community and the ongoing discourse of Očéti Šakówiŋ g lives in the academy. How do we, as tribal students, make sense of the absences in the archives? I have access to cultural knowledge not published in the pages of *Waterlily*, not the multiple ethnographies published from Ella Deloria's materials. The ability to decipher between stories and real life is essential to the future of our research about and for our tribal communities.

The Lakota communities I participate in define their relationship with a place through "story," which becomes a primary cultural affinity marker of interconnectedness. My approach to this chapter establishes a philosophical understanding of non-commercial, place-based knowledge that engages with Indigenous feminisms and Lakota ways of knowing that are intergenerational and self-reflexive. Throughout the chapter, I share stories and anecdotes to model Indigenous feminist praxis and sharing stories, which ground my analysis in a tribally specific setting. Like how my mother would share *Waterlily* with extended family, I am sharing *Waterlily* in my dissertation, establishing a kinship bond with my reader. The stories shared across generations reflect our connections to each other and place, and my dissertation will continue to share an intergenerational reflection long after I leave the university.

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[105] Examples of scholarship that has taken up the topic of literary analysis and its use within Indigenous studies are not limited to but inclusive of works like: Penelope Myrtle Kelsey, *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature: Dakota and Haudenosaunee Writing and Indigenous Worldviews* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Cotera, *Native Speakers*; Hernandez, *We Are the Stars*.

Let me again pause and discourage the use of stories without a foundational ontological and epistemological grounding in a specific tribal place or relational worldview. I utilize a broad definition of relationality, the scaffolding of tribal and cultural ways of knowing, to demonstrate the interconnectedness of humans, nonhumans, material culture, etc. But I also include the strict accountability of kinship and kinship protocol. Ella Deloria often wrote, in personal correspondence with other ethnographers, about being an insider/outsider researcher, but she understood that kinship rules were the ultimate guide to relating.[106] The long trajectory of Lakota communities' interconnectedness to land, culture, and kinship has faced many disruptions over the past five hundred years, and identity politics continue to play a role in belonging to a particular land or community. Indigenous relatives who were lost, disconnected, or taken have the right to reconnect and find their communities. But the academy is not always the place to do so. A story about a connection between a snake and a human or a grandmother and a dog operates on a long continuum of interconnectedness that provides reciprocal relationships of sharing temporal stories and space. The stories Lakota people share are not to exert power or dominance but to connect and hold others accountable.

I rely on Ella C. Deloria's work because she offers a gendered intervention, often lacking within the ethnographic materials from former Indigenous studies scholars and researchers. Vine Deloria, Jr. (Ella Deloria's nephew) comprehensively examines "the world we used to live in."[107] He outlines a historicized look at dreams, rituals, interspecies connections, and sites of relational significance. There is one small subsection on "Women's Vision Quest Experiences," but it

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[106] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, xvii.

[107] V. Deloria, Jr., *The World We Used to Live In*.

focuses mainly on woodlands or other plains tribal communities, including articulation of Anishinaabe, Crow, Pawnee, and Salish women.[108] The majority of the materials Vine Deloria, Jr. cites are from the perspective of male ethnographers.[109] More recently, Lakota scholar Sarah Hernandez nourished the field with a needed intervention of a comparative analysis of Očéti Šakówiŋ literary traditions with a gendered focus with *We Are the Stars: Colonizing and Decolonizing the Oceti Sakowin Literary Tradition* (2023). Not only does Hernandez demonstrate the colonizing of literary practices within Očéti Šakówiŋ communities, but she also hones in on the importance of a gendered tradition of storytelling and knowledge-keeping using Ella Deloria's unpublished manuscripts. I depend upon all contributions of Očéti Šakówiŋ literary tradition but focus on how a gendered narrative is sustained through my contributions.

The Waterlily Institute

At present-day, the Ihanktowin community hosts the Waterlily Storytelling Institute in the small community of Lake Andes on the Yankton Reservation in South Dakota. The institute is hosted in the winter, right before the spring solstice, by the Brave Heart Society led by Faith Spotted Eagle (Dakota).[110] I attended the institute in March 2022 and could listen to elders and community members and engage with youth in various ways. The institute models itself after "Tunwin Ella" to share stories, share history, and discuss important issues the community faces. Attending the institute provided me with intellectually challenging and affirming ideas and conversations. I was affirmed in how I can imagine creative practices integral to relationship-

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[108] V. Deloria, Jr., *The World We Used to Live In*, 31.

[109] Of course, I am not discounting Frances Densmore or other female ethnographers publishing in the early 1900s through the 1920s and beyond.

[110]"Cante Ohitika Okodakiciye," 2022, https://braveheartsociety.org/.

building and sharing in Očéti Šakówiŋ culture. However, I was challenged with a deep sense of colonial entanglement that still exists in tribal communities.[111]

The gendered dynamic at the institute was a shock to witness, as most of the presenters were men while most attendees were elder women. I do not know if the choice only to have men presenting was on purpose. But the gender dynamic between the presenter and the audience reminded me of the influence of settler colonialism on the shaping of gendered societal roles. Historically, men's and women's spaces operated differently than they do today. The community protocols that separated roles were not because of a Western framework of gender but operated at a time when kinship rules or societal roles, as described by Ella Deloria, were based on the function of the *wicoti* (camp unit) as a system of care and not a system of power. The gendering of the space forced me to acknowledge how I must articulate my positionality as a child of a community that has internalized misogyny and as an Indigenous feminist scholar when analyzing my communities. The times that I have witnessed the Western gendered biases upheld can be frustrating when kinship and societal roles operate differently in a historical context or are analyzed through an anthropological lens.[112] The privilege of theorizing about how settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy continue to impact Očéti Šakówiŋ communities does not lessen the realities of misogyny that my communities continue to face.

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[111] I reference the obvious legacy of colonial entanglements within our tribal nations as analyzed by scholars like Jean Dennison, but also the cis-heteropatriarchy that impacts tribal leadership as demonstrated by Jennifer Nez Denetdale. See Jean Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First-Century Osage Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Chairmen, Presidents, And Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, And The Politics Of Tradition," *Wicazo Sa Review* 21, no. 1 (Spring, 2006): 9–28.

[112] Dr. Beatrice Medicine worked tirelessly to create space in academia through her research but also the service she engaged with in the field of anthropology (Medicine 1988a; 1988b; Medicine and Jacobs 2001; Albers and Medicine 1983).

The institute provided a way for me to fathom the wide breadth of how artistic Lakota cultural life creates enthusiasm for alternative sources of intellect, which inspire innovation within the theoretical inquiry. Throughout the four-day storytelling event, participants were encouraged to share stories, listen to presentations about ceremonial life, and share language revitalization efforts. I attended mainly to support a theater camp hosted by Cornerstone Theater Company. Our theater group worked with the youth while the older relatives sat through presentations and discussions. In the four days, Cornerstone was able to help the Dakota youth develop a short play that they read for their families and the elders on the event's last day. The intergenerational exchange between new storytellers and their families emulated *wowayupike* (art), defined as ingenuity within a Lakota context. The theater work demonstrated that Očéti Šakówiŋ communities contribute to a continuum of creative practices across time and space.

While attending the institute, I visited the burial site of Ella Deloria, which was a couple of miles from the meeting place. I traveled to Ella's burial site with my good friend, colleague, and collaborator, Dakota scholar Jessica Fremland. The snow had recently fallen, and we were bundled up as we drove the few miles to the small church just outside the town. Faith Spotted Eagle had given us rough directions to the gravesite, and as we turned off the main road onto a gravel and snow-covered road, we searched for the path to the cemetery. We turned past a broken-down wooden church hall. We parked just off the makeshift road and began walking around to find Ella Deloria's tombstone. The ground was snow-packed but not enough to cover the headstones. After a few minutes of searching in the cold, we found Ella's resting site next to her sister Mary Sully, an artist in her own right. My Dakota friend Jessica and I laughed that we did not know any songs to sing for Auntie Ella. Laughter has echoed across generations. We

laughed instead of crying, even though tears would have been appropriate as we faced all that had been lost. Instead, we felt joy. We chatted about Deloria's work and how it impacts our trajectories through the western academy. We left tobacco for Ella and her sister. I also left a pencil that I had brought for her, so she could continue to take notes in the next world.

Understanding the Field

Drawing upon contemporary Očéti Šakówiŋ scholars like Beatrice Medicine (Lakota), Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Dakota), Delphine Red Shirt (Lakota), Christopher Pexa (Dakota), and Sarah Hernandez (Lakota), I contribute to the ongoing practice of Očéti Šakówiŋ literary practices to tell our stories within new styles and literary methods. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn takes a staunch political stance; she has utilized Dakota stories to interrogate non-native people telling our stories.[113] While Bea Medicine provided an in-depth analysis of gendered narratives within an anthropological framework. I remember reading Delphine Red Shirt's *Bead on an Anthill* (1997) in high school and affirming stories from the book with my parents.[114] More recently, Christopher Pexa and Sara Hernandez have provided foundational literary analyses addressing the impact of settler colonialism and the ways literary ancestors like Ella Deloria provided an ongoing Očéti Šakówiŋ legacy of relational practices. I reference Cook-Lynn, Medicine, and Red Shirt because of their similarities to Ella Deloria's work, especially when considering kinship and relationality.[115]

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[113] An example of Cook-Lynn's anthology is *Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner and Other Essays: A Tribal Voice* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996) that interrogates white supremacy and other settler-colonial legacies.

[114] Delphine Red Shirt, *Bead on an Anthill: A Lakota Childhood* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

[115] Beatrice Medicine, "Professionalization of Native American (Indian) Women: Towards A Research Agenda," *Wicazo Sa Review* 4, no. 2 (1988): 31, https://doi.org/10.2307/1409276; Delphine Red Shirt and Lone Woman, *Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *The Power of Horses and Other Stories* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990).

Pexa and Hernandez have provided tools to understand the literary continuum in Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures utilizing ethical guidance from a re-reading of Dakota writers and manuscripts. As defined later in chapter two of my dissertation, Pexa's *Translated Nation: Rewriting the Dakhóta Oyáte* (2019) analyzes Dakota ancestors like Ella Deloria, who wrote during the assimilation period (the 1790s and 1920s). Pexa demonstrates how ancestors like Deloria continue their work through a kinship engagement as Dakota relatives. Sarah Hernandez's *We are the Stars: Colonizing and Decolonizing the Očéti Šakówiŋ Literary Tradition* (2023) offer a comparative analysis of the lasting legacy of Christianization of Očéti Šakówiŋ stories versus the gendered narrative sustained by relatives like Ella Deloria. Hernandez provides an in-depth historical analysis of *ohų'kaką* tales that Ella Deloria had prepared for publication in a manuscript titled *Dakota Legends* but was never able to publish before her death. Hernandez analyzes the ohų'kaką tales gathered by Deloria; the tales are "tribal land narratives based on ancestral star knowledge and are intended to convey an important cultural or moral lesson."[116] Hernandez's book was published as I edited my dissertation, but the book provided a boost in my positioning of literary ancestors in a long line of Očéti Šakówiŋ creative continuums. The analysis of ohų'kaką tales by Hernandez and the articulation of Dakota literary ethical and political navigation by Pexa nod to similar frameworks of kinship, interconnectedness, and our relationship to land, place, and other-than-human kin.

Structuring my analysis around stories, I articulate Lakota concept of kinship, ikčé, and our interconnectedness to land and other-than-human beings. I utilize Ella Deloria's work to model a mode of storytelling that documents the histories of the Očéti Šakówiŋ people. Stories of

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[116] Hernandez, *We Are the Stars*, 86.

family and place become a way to establish kinship connections. Being a good relative provides a sense of responsibility toward the community and shapes Lakota and Dakota understandings of morality and ethics, especially when sharing intellectual space. In *The Dakota Way of Life*, Ella Deloria shared that many elders would only speak to her once they knew her family.[117] An elderly man drew a far-reaching connection to Deloria and was more comfortable calling her "niece" once a relational interaction was established.[118] Similarly, the collaborators of my dissertation have some type of relational connection to my family. In the novel *Waterlily*, we repeatedly see that community members would not interact unless a familial connection were established. To be a good relative means demonstrating interconnectedness.

I weave Očéti Šakówiŋ ideas of gift-giving throughout the chapter to indicate how my articulation of Lakota relationality relies on exchange. Gifting is a sign of ikčé because we should never be too proud to honor someone with a simple gift. Deloria explains gifting within the context of courtship;

> Giving was a lordly gesture not to be denied to the humblest Dakota. It was everyone's right to give personal expression of the tribal ideal of generosity. No matter how poor he might be, his gift might not properly be refused.[119]

Not only is giving an exchange of and establishment of kinship, but the exchange is also affirmed by being a common relative. Our connection to other-than-human beings and the ways gift-giving can bolster protocols and cultural reciprocity beyond affective forms of interaction. Gift-giving can be world-building because I articulate how gifts shape our interactions and relation exchanges. I connect giving and gifting to relationality, an integral part of a relational

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[117] E.C. Deloria and Godfrey, *The Dakota Way of Life*.

[118] Ibid.

[119] E.C. Deloria and Godfrey, *The Dakota Way of Life*. 117.

exchange highlighted by creative practice (i.e., making a crafted item to present). Indigenous creatives "reveal truths about themselves, their communities, and the world" through ingenuity and gendered creative practices and, as demonstrated through *Waterlily*, the moments of gifting that symbolize kinship, humility, and interrelatedness.[120] My use of relationality and relational approaches to gift-giving and creative practices employs knowledge organization or the "practice of finding linkages, or relationships, among concepts to build semantic webs or ontologies."[121] I am operating on the notion that using art or creative practices allows me to examine relational exchange, like gift-giving or storytelling, while still centering many different Očéti Šakówiŋ philosophies and ideas.

Kinship Protocols

There are many stories of kinship in Deloria's *Waterlily*. In speaking about our interrelatedness in Očéti Šakówiŋ life within my research, I am drawn to Gloku, the grandmother, and the story of painting the face of her lead dog when they gather firewood. In the simple telling of Gloku's wood-gathering-dog pack, she calls them friends, and they know their duties.[122] Gloku names her favorite dog "Burnt Thigh" after the Sicangu person she received the dog from.[123] When Gloku is ready to gather wood, she calls to Burnt Thigh, and the dog "would crawl into the tipi and sit up on his haunches in front of this mistress to be decorated."[124] In the

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[120] Molly McGlennen, *Creative Alliances: The Transnational Designs of Indigenous Women's Poetry*, American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series, volume 62 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014). 15.

[121] Sandra Littletree, Miranda Belarde-Lewis, and Marisa Duarte, "Centering Relationality: A Conceptual Model to Advance Indigenous Knowledge Organization Practices," *Knowledge Organization* 47, no. 5 (2020): 410–426, https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2020-5-410.

[122] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 43.

[123] Burnt Thigh is the loose English translation of *Sicangu*, which is a specific band of the Očéti Šakówiŋ Lakota.

[124] E. C. Deloria, *Waterlily.* 44.

text, Gloku paints the dog's face with vermillion paint and states, "Now we are relatives and won't be disloyal to each other."[125] As the story from *Waterlily* exemplifies, kinship-making with nonhumans is vital to Lakota lifeways. Grandmother Gloku's narrative demonstrates how kinship can come in many different forms and how telling the story within a specific context and place in the novel's plot when Deloria establishes the movement of camp and how relational practices are shown.

Kinship within the camp circle, the *wicoti*, often relies on the ingenuity exchanged between parties. The story about the dog Burnt Thigh comes at the novel's beginning as Deloria sets up different protocols, camp dynamics, kinship bonds, and seasonal frameworks. The story is shared shortly after discussing the weather change and how Waterlily's younger brother Little Chief would sneak his camp dog into the dwelling in the colder months. Little Chief is chastised for bringing the dog inside for "Dakota dogs should be as hardy as their owners."[126] Burnt Thigh, Grandma Gloku's dog, is used in contrast while signaling the ingenuity and usefulness of the kinship between grandma and dog. Burnt Thigh is honored by Gloku when she paints him, and Gloku appreciates his sturdiness and reliability. Not to say that all kinship bonds have to operate along an exchange of goods but that kinship operates in various ways when interconnectedness goes beyond parent or child or shared biology.

Lakota kinship is a complex network of ideas and formations of relationality dictated by virtues, ceremonies, and lineages. Sharing stories aids in Lakota and Dakota collective understandings of kinship. Practicing "good" relationality is following Lakota virtues and

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[125] E. C. Deloria, *Waterlily.* 44.

[126] E. C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 43.

ceremonial practices. One definition of kinship can be defined as blood relationships, as in sharing DNA. Biology used in this manner upholds racial constructs undermining the authority of tribal kinship bonds.[127] Kinship is defined in *Waterlily* as "being a good relative."[128] Lakota relationality is not regulated by blood or ancestral kinship relations, as the dog's story exemplifies, but rather is formed by the interactions with tribal culture protocols and established lineages that sometimes operate outside the confines of DNA or even species. Lakota kinship is defined by the intentional and common creative practices embedded in the stories we access through public-facing engagement, like the painting of the dog Burnt Thigh's face by Grandmother Gloku.

The kinship indicated in the novel centers around strict familial protocols, complex social norms, and an operation of everyday Lakota life that centers on safety and care for the community. The publisher's preface to the most recent *Waterlily* (2009) edition conveys how Ella C. Deloria interweaves Lakota and Dakota relationality into her fictional novel. The publisher states that "the ultimate aim of Dakota [Lakota] life stripped of accessories was quite simple: One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative."[129] From Deloria's articulation of being a good relative, my mother also shaped her understanding of relational interaction. In turn, the idea of being a good relative has been embedded in my understanding of kinship and relationality. To be a "good relative" dictates that any other individual concern is secondary to kinship. As I will explore further in the section, kinship dictates a specific set of ethics.

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[127] Kimberly TallBear, "DNA, Blood, and Racializing the Tribe," *Wicazo Sa Review* 18, no. 1 (2003): 96, https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.2003.0008.

[128] "Being a good relative" is utilized in a majority of Ella C. Deloria's published writings. See E.C. Deloria, Waterlily; E.C. Deloria and Godfrey, *The Dakota Way of Life*; and E.C. Deloria and V. Deloria, *Speaking of Indians*, among others.

[129] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, xxxiv. The preface references a quotation from Deloria in *Speaking of Indians*, 17.

Kinship Ethics and Gift-giving

Good relational ethics are shaped by how an individual might interact with the nonhuman world. As shared in the opening story in this section, Grandmother Gloku treats her wood-gathering dogs as relatives and provides kinship honorifics. In *Waterlily*, Ella Deloria provides other stories focusing on the relationship between humans and nonhumans. For example, Grandmother Gloku comes up with a cache of beans collected by the mice. She takes a share of the beans collected by the mice and tells Waterlily they must provide an even trade, leaving an equal amount of corn. Focusing on the food exchange between human and mouse nations demonstrates the shared practice of being a good relative.

Kinship and gift-giving often operated in tandem to provide appropriate protocols to the community. Deloria evaluates the way kinship is demonstrated in *The Dakota Way of Life* (2022), especially addressing the situations that sometimes occurred "out of resentment and hurt feelings over some kinship slight."[130] I heard a similar story to the mouse bean story (above) when I attended the Waterlily Institute hosted by the Ihanktowin community in 2022. Renowned elder Faith Spotted Eagle shared a story about a woman from their community that happened upon mouse beans stored along the river. The woman began to take her to fill the crop. A mouse caught her taking the beans and accused her of stealing. But instead of humoring the mouse, she ignored them, took the beans, and returned to camp without an exchange. The Dakota relatives back at camp were shocked when the woman shared and joked about taking the mouse beans without a gift exchange. The woman's relative told her to inform the camp leaders about the mistake. The Dakota camp leaders then went to the river and found leaders of the Mouse nation

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[130] E.C. Deloria and Godfrey, *The Dakota Way of Life*, 42.

to apologize and asked if an agreement could be made for a trade. The mouse nation said they had to take time to decide, but ultimately, an agreement was reached, and now an equitable exchange had to occur between humans and the mice. In *Dakota Way of Life* (2022), Deloria provides examples of dealings of food when a quarrel would happen and that the consequences of the dispute would not stay private; the argument would "become the concern of the entire community."[131]

Lakota people have been in many dire situations challenging our kinship with other-than-human relatives from the first interaction with colonial settlement heightened by our people's missionization and Christianization. First, we were forcibly put onto reservations in the late 1800s; we had to re-imagine our world and relationships with the land, plants, and water around us. *Waterlily* interrogates that moment right before reservation life. The novel tells how Lakota communities prevailed in imagining and reimagining kinship through changing times, especially the smallpox epidemic. Deloria's adjustment to context and situation meant she was incorporating present-day circumstances. Her ability to engage in the everyday did not take away from understanding relationships when kinship is embedded in our interactions with land and place but was drastically interrupted.[132] Christian evangelization harshly crushed our kinship

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[131] E.C. Deloria, *The Dakota Way of Life*, 42.

[132] My analysis does not even cover the queer kinship disruption that took place in Očéti Šakówiŋ communities, but has been researched by scholars such as but not limited to Mark Rifkin. See Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

formation and disrupted our kinship formations and disrupted Očéti Šakówiŋ kinship roles, and societal protocol, all while framing our community as heathen or savages.[133]

Kinship, articulated through our connection to water, animals, or even land, provides an alternative to the dominant Western formation of power dynamics over nonhuman relatives. *What Does Justice Look Like? (2008),* Dakota scholar, Angela Cavender Waziyatawin Wilson, states, "We [Dakota people] all must rethink our ways of being and interacting in this world to create sustainable, healthy, and peaceful co-existence with one another and with the natural world."[134] Waziyatawin's call for better interaction with the world attempts to shape an analysis based on Dakota and Lakota's understanding of kinship to other-than-human persons. Waziyatawin frames Dakota and Lakota community needs and moral guidance through kinship protocols extending beyond humans. I draw connections to the ethics essential to Lakota relationality and other-than-human persons.

In relational articulations with nonhumans, Waziyatawin's concept of an equitable engagement with nonhumans demonstrates patience. Waziyatawin's articulation exemplifies a communication of our interconnectedness to our surroundings by not engaging in a power hierarchy of humans above all else. Another scenario in *Waterlily,* which indicates how we historically interacted with animal nations, is a story regarding a snake. Waterlily's mother gives birth to a younger brother, *Ohiya*. When Ohiya is a baby, a snake crawls into the tipi dwelling

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[133] Vine Deloria, Jr. wrote extensively regarding the similarities between Christianity and Dakota religious ideologies, while other authors like Stolzman and Steinmetz wrote about the contrast between Christianity and Lakota religion. See Vine Deloria, *Evolution, Creationism, and Other Modern Myths: A Critical Inquiry* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2002); Vine Deloria, Barbara Deloria, Kristen Foehner, and Samuel Scinta, *Spirit & Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr., Reader* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Pub, 1999); Paul B. Steinmetz, *Pipe, Bible, and Peyote among the Oglala Lakota: A Study in Religious Identity* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998); William Stolzman, *The Pipe and Christ: A Christian - Sioux Dialogue*, 4. ed. (Chamberlain, SD: Tipi Press, 1992).

[134] Waziyatawin Wilson, *What Does Justice Look Like?*

and coils around the sleeping child. In a panic, the family is unsure of what to do until someone suggests calling a "snake dreamer," which is an individual that can communicate with the snake nation.[135] After deliberation, the snake dreamer sits with the snake and baby, only to discover that the snake made a mistake and, due to the time of year (winter), was confused and wrapped itself around the baby by accident. In the Northern Plains, animal relatives like snakes hibernate in the winter due to extreme cold. Deloria's inclusion of the snake story in the larger *Waterlily* narrative demonstrates a brief insight into using dreams in communicating and articulating moral interactions shaped by kinship. If the tribe had killed the snake to protect the baby, the action would be unjust. Instead, they were given a chance to explain the mistake to their human counterpart and move on from that accident. The kinship between snake and human informs caretaking within a relational framework.

Kinship within Očéti Šakówiŋ communities depends on other-than-human relatives and how we care for them. The kinship between a human and a nonhuman can come in many forms. In the novel, Deloria categorizes the snake dreamer as having a snake as a "spirit helper."[136] *Spirit* is a loose translation and does not necessarily align with the failure of the Western academy to encapsulate Indigenous spirituality, but at the time when Ella Deloria was gathering material, the use of spirit to refer to connectedness with the metaphysical was the normative way to categorize interrelatedness.[137] The use of "spirit"—in the context of the period (the 1940s)

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[135] Waziyatawin Wilson, *What Does Justice Look like?*, 68.

[136] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, 68.

[137] David Shorter illustrates that the word "spirit" (and also "sacred") has created a specific ethnographic representation of Indigenous spirituality that is problematic because of the dismissal of an Indigenous relatedness that is often described as "sacred" by non-native ethnographers. The chapter is in *The Oxford Handbook of American Indian History*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie, vol. 1 (Ocford: Oxford University Press, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199858897.013.20.

when the novel was written—provides an articulation of how other-than-human kinship bonds engage beyond the typical plane of human existence.[138] In more recent texts, spirit helpers are articulated as many different animate nonhumans such as rocks or animals.[139] The story of the snake spirit helper was a simple demonstration of how Lakota people interacted with nonhumans through kinship bonds demonstrated every day.

Kinship and Public-facing Ceremony

Deloria's use of the *huŋká* (adoption ceremony) in her novel *Waterlily* is a prime example of public-facing rituals, especially those in public stories, essential to establishing and understanding Lakota kinships. In the book, public ceremonies demonstrate the variety of ways morality and establishing kinship shape our understanding of relationality. A just or moral world demands particular kinship protocols, which Deloria weaves throughout *Waterlily*. Some key moments in the novel that emphasize kinship protocol include public-facing ceremonies like the adoption ceremony, which is central to the main character's journey. The huŋká ceremony is vital to Lakota lifeways and understanding kinship structures.[140] I utilize Deloria's crafting of the huŋká ceremony in the novel to transform my articulation of kinship because her sharing of the ceremony is accessible and not private. The huŋká ritual is a formal adoption process in Očéti Šakówiŋ. The public-facing ceremony of the huŋká ritual establishes an understanding of reciprocity and adoration that relies on responsibility between the adopter and adoptee while also

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[138] Frances Densmore, *Teton Sioux Music* (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, 1918).

[139] David C. Posthumus, *All My Relatives: Exploring Lakota Ontology, Belief, and Ritual*, New Visions in Native American and Indigenous Studies (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press : The American Philosophical Society, 2018). 77.

[140] As I stated previously, I will not reveal or analyze a cultural ritual that has not been discussed publicly by a tribal member or culture bearer.

engaging in a public kinship that requires a public framework of responsibility. The ceremonial practice's publicity allows the community, anyone physically present at the ceremony, to witness and hold accountable the kinship bond created between the person receiving the huŋká and the individual (and family) enacting the ceremony.

The ceremony establishes an intimacy between relatives that is held accountable by community awareness. The huŋká ceremony is an honorific that someone else bestows on you and entails a reciprocal interaction that operates differently than a typical family association. Many descriptions of the ceremony have been provided in historical accounts, and Deloria writes about the ceremony in her ethnographic work as a public-facing rite that taught "hospitality and generosity."[141] The ceremony also entailed mentorship depending on the societal roles of the individual adopting the other; for example, an uncle could request to huŋká a nephew and would become close relations. The uncle could enact the ceremony if the need for a mentor were dire. The ritual "would have been most unseemly for a person to arrange his own *huka*, since that would be self-glorification."[142] In the description of the ceremony in Deloria's ethnographic work, the word stems from other words like parent, ancestor, sibling, or one designated to lead.[143] The huŋká is one example of a public-facing ceremony that maintains kinship ties.

In the novel, Waterlily is struck by an illness shortly after her mother marries a new husband. Everyone in the community is fearful for Waterlily's life. Her new father declares that he will perform a huŋká ceremony, which will officially tie Waterlily's kinship fate to his own.

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[141] E.C. Deloria et al., *The Dakota Way of Life*, Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022). 124.

[142] E.C. Deloria and Godfrey, *The Dakota Way of Life*, 220. I am utilizing the word "huŋká" spelled with an english "n" as opposed to the "huka" spelled in English by Ella Deloria. I learned to spell the work "huŋká" with an "n" in my elementary education.

[143] Ibid.

The family prepares for the ceremony. The huŋká is a public declaration of adoption and is understood by the títuŋwaŋ communities to have metaphysical binding force. But in the public display, the care is demonstrated in how a person is adorned. Note how adornment operates in the following passage:

> And now Waterlily was sitting stiffly attired in the rare outfit, so heavy with an elegance that she hardly dared move, not even so much as look sideways because of the ear ornaments that hung well below her collarbone on either side. She was all ready, there in the honor place of the tipi, but as yet, she was not wearing the face paint Rainbow [step-father, soon-to-be huŋká father] had promised her.[144]

Throughout the ceremony, Waterlily needs help understanding the more significant implications of the huŋká ceremony but recognizes the gravity of being adopted ceremonially. Through the use of the huŋká in the novel, we are shown how sharing and declaring a public connection of kinship are essential to the health and well-being of a family. The father is now accountable to the huŋká child and, as Waterlily ages, she understands the ramifications of being a huŋká child. In her ethnographic work, Deloria shares that those who become huŋká relatives "live under a compulsion for the rest of their life, for with that honor went the obligation to be exemplary persons—that is, to be generous and hospitable."[145] The huŋká resulted from Waterlily's near death and her stepfather's publication declaration of care for her. The adoption connection is not limited to the public ceremony but must be demonstrated publicly for the families to hold the adoption accountable in everyday life.

The public-facing demonstration of care through the huŋká ceremony is a prime example of how Lakota relationality forms and shapes kinship beyond the confines of current Western

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[144] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 75.

[145] E.C. Deloria and Godfrey, *The Dakota Way of Life*, 220.

society. But the public-facing rituals also rely on creative practice to illustrate kinship. Waterlily's aunt Dream Woman designed beautiful regalia, including porcupine-quilled moccasins. Waterlily sees them as "extravagant and unnecessary," asking if she will break the quills when she walks.[146] Dream Woman replies, "But you will not walk," and explains that Waterlily will be carried to the ceremony for the "child-beloved moccasins for the *huŋká* were always decorated so, and that one did not walk to the ceremonial tipi."[147] Deloria utilizes ceremonies like the *huŋká* ceremony to demonstrate public interactions like gift-giving to establish kinship relationships within Lakota culture.

The kinship demonstrated in *Waterlily* provides necessary concepts for an imagined future for Očéti Šakówiŋ communities that operate outside the confines of tribal enrollment or blood quantum. In the novel, Ella Deloria lays the foundation for Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota communities to see themselves reflected in her articulation of Očéti Šakówiŋ life while providing a framework for kinship protocols that uphold tribal autonomy for future generations. *Waterlily* continues to be a model of narrative form and a historical and cultural reference for Očéti Šakówiŋ scholars. Similarly, in the upcoming chapters, I use reflexive writing, fiction, and poetic writing from individuals like Layli Long Soldier (*Whereas*, 2017) to understand and demonstrate how kinship and land are vital to the framework of Lakota relationality.

Ikčé and Relational Practices

Humility and the everyday interaction of ordinary people are essential articulations of Očéti Šakówiŋ life. When you make a spectacle of yourself by disobeying kinship protocol or

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[146] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 75.

[147] Ibid.

publicly shaming another without adequate reason, the relational practice embedded in tribal culture is disrupted. Shortly after Waterlily is born in the novel, her biological father, Star Elk, is described as irritable and attempts to disown Blue Bird (Waterlily's mother).[148] Star Elk is described as "ill-tempered" in his married life. Within the short narrative of his interaction as Waterlily's biological parent, he is seen pouting and making outlandish claims about his family. Blue Bird, Waterlily's mother, gives a solo birth as the camp circle moves across to a new site, and when they settle for the night, she stays with her cousin on the outskirts of camp because she is tired. Blue Bird's in-laws are excited about the baby but worried about Star Elk's behavior when Blue Bird does not immediately return with the baby (childbirth is exhausting, and Blue Bird should not be expected to exert herself). Instead of going to see his wife and new baby Star Elk spends a few days brooding, and at the next social gathering, in celebration of a hunt, he takes a stick to the circle and throws the stick into the public circle in an attempt to shame Blue Bird, stating, "This is that woman! Whoever needs a woman to fetch fuel and water can have her!"[149] Star Elk attempted to conduct a "throwing away the wife" ceremony by throwing the stick publicly, but instead of improving his character, he was seen as foolish.[150] Historically, the protocol within Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures was to ensure that individuals would act accordingly and not act shameful but conduct themselves in a manner suitable for an ordinary, everyday person.

Articulating everyday within my research, I utilize *ikčé* to signal how Lakota relationality operates outside of extraordinary circumstances in formal institutions or formal settings. Ikčé provides a way to analyze Očéti Šakówiŋ ideology that is accessible to both Lakota and non-

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[148] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 14.

[149] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 15.

[150] Ibid.

native people. “Ikčé” in Lakota can translate to “unceremoniously” or “ordinarily, commonly, being usual”—the loose translation here is from a more contemporary dictionary.[151] The more contemporary dictionary is edited by non-natives and was pulled from research over the past two decades.[152] From another older dictionary, ikčé is translated as “common, wild, in a state of nature,” and other iterations of the word include “an Indian person”—“not white men.”[153] A non-native Jesuit also edited the older dictionary, but I find the older orthography essential. Communicating and understanding ikčé as Lakota-specific, the “Indian person,” “state of nature,” and “not white men,” is critical as the focus is on nature and not necessarily on the unceremoniously. Both definitions provide needed insight into understanding the ideas around embodying ikčé.

Ikčé is often articulated as a limitation of ourselves through the structures and a sense of humility. Humility is a vital virtue in Lakota culture. Albert White Hat, Sr. interprets Christianity's internalized power structure that Lakota people inherited through religion, in which being common has a different meaning in a Western context.[154] White Hat challenges (Christian) religiosity in creating a hierarchy of “sacred” and a “higher power” as “perfection” and instead offers a way for Lakota people to imagine the ordinary as something we all can reach.[155] He states, “The whole thing has become something mysterious, beyond the reach of ordinary

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[151] Ullrich, *New Lakota Dictionary*.

[152] I begrudgingly utilize the dictionary entry from the most recent version of the *New Lakota Dictionary: Lakȟótiyapi-English/English-Lakȟótiyapi & Incorporating the Dakota Dialects of Yankton-Yanktonai & Santee-Sisseton*, edited by Jan F. Ullrich. In 2023, there are still ongoing issues with Ullrich and his research team with tribal nations like the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, which banished them from the reservation.

[153] Buechel, “Lakota-English Dictionary,” 220.

[154] Albert White Hat and John Cunningham, *Life’s Journey—-Zuya: Oral Teachings from Rosebud* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2012). 74.

[155] White Hat and Cunningham, *Life’s Journey—Zuya*. 75.

people."[156] White Hat advocates and reminds Lakota relatives to be ordinary and, in turn, to be humble. The importance of being an ordinary person is to ensure that individuals are held accountable to the larger whole of the community.

Being ikčé is world-building. And by world-building or world-making, I refer to the ontological and epistemological structures that help shape Očéti Šakówiŋ interaction with the world.[157] The world I imagine is not a separated world between other-than-human persons and humans, but the blurring of the bifurcated relationship between the Western standard of "human culture" and "non-human nature," which disrupts animacy and agency of our relations.[158] ikčé operates against the drive to focus on Očéti Šakówiŋ ceremonies that have been written about for a century.[159] Additionally, writing from the perspective of a common person or *ikčé wicasa,* a common man, relieves me of the stress of being the expert.[160]

We often need the ikčé version of ourselves to be accessible. Individualism and the uplifting of an extraordinary life are essential within Western standards. We are awarded for greatness. But the binary created between ordinary and "exceptional" people can create inaccessibility. That inaccessibility can be expressed as having specific cultural knowledge not accessible because of settler colonialism or the exceptional performances created by individuals

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[156] White Hat and Cunningham, *Life's Journey— Zuya*. 75.

[157] Nathanael Elias Mengist et al., "World Building: Creating Alternate Worlds as Meaningful Making in Undergraduate Education," Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education 20, no. 1 (April 1, 2021): 29–47, https://doi.org/10.1386/adch_00028_1.

[158] [158] Megan Bang and Ananda Marin, "Nature-Culture Constructs in Science Learning: Human/Non-Human Agency and Intentionality," *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 52, no. 4 (April 2015): 530–44. https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.21204.

[159] Referencing back to some of the first ethnographic report published by the Peabody Museum by Alice C. Fletcher in 1884.

[160] I admit that getting a doctoral degree positions me as an "expert" within western academic standards, but that was never my goal.

who compensate for the lack of connection to any community. I rely on ikčé on framing because the concept is a good reminder that the everyday engagement of the world around us is vital to our future. I turn to the small ways I am kept humble, such as, a simple task provided by my relatives, like running errands or showing up for an event to provide organizing support. Small undertakings remind us that we are relational, which is critical because of concepts like ikčé.[161]

Ikčé and Gift-giving

In *Waterlily*, Deloria shares stories of everyday creative practices that include making moccasins or clothing for children, performing acts of honor, and establishing kinship through ordinary cultural acts of gift-giving. In chapter four of *Waterlily*, we are introduced to Dream Woman, who, throughout the novel, creates beautiful moccasins, clothing, and gift items for her relatives.[162] Characters like Dream Woman represent the common ways Lakota people make and design for their families. Throughout the novel, Waterlily's aunt, Dream Woman, creates beautiful items for the family. Deloria writes;

> Dream Woman did things like that, quietly making her relatives happy—That was why she was named Dream Woman, because, like one who dreamed or saw visions of beauty and then remembered them, she worked such designs as nobody else imagined or originated. Women said she had supernatural help or she could not be so skilled in art.[163]

Dream Woman's art skillfulness, or ingenuity, is appreciated when she makes and creates items for her relatives. Throughout the novel, we witness how Dream Woman's art is admired and revered, but she stays humble by continuing to make moccasins, dresses, playthings for the

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[161] I am never too humble to break down tables at a community gathering, serve food for my relatives, or set up chairs at an event.

[162] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, 118.

[163] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily,* 37

children, and so on. The moments of ikčé described by Deloria put into perspective the usefulness of a relational exchange that is not reliant on having extraordinary skills but the best possible effort of being an ordinary person.

In *Waterlily*, we witness characters gifting adornments like clothing and jewelry as a signifier of relationships. Gift-giving and gift-making reflect an everyday engagement with relatives. The physical exchange of a gift or a creative practice displays our ideas of wolakota or finding a balance of peace. Gift-making and gift-giving provide a way for Lakota communities to honor one another, establish kinship, or acknowledge hurdles in the relationships. Throughout my experience as a Lakota youth into adulthood, I witnessed family members creating jewelry, pow wow regalia, and hand-crafted gifts for each other. My uncle Jhon often talks about how his first pow wow regalia was mismatched items passed down to him by older relatives. Although he did not have the most uniform regalia in the pow wow arena as a kid, he felt the most cared for in his life.

Sometimes the exchange of gifts brings honor between humble families and sets into motion cultural protocols that can establish good relational practices. In the earlier part of *Waterlily*, Blue Bird Woman shares an appreciation for a young boy who visits and plays with Waterlily when she is a baby. The interaction between the boy and Waterlily occurs after Blue Bird woman leaves her first husband, Star Elk (as we remember, he foolishly throws her away) and returns to her former community's camp circle. The young boy, Little Chief, stays with his grandparents while his father is away. Waterlily, as a baby, is delighted by his company, and Blue Bird observes the kindness of Little Chief. Blue Bird makes a pair of moccasins for Little Chief and states they are from Waterlily. The interaction draws attention from Little Chief's

grandparents, who orchestrate bringing Blue Bird and her grandmother Gloku into their friendship and social circles.[164] The exchange's simplicity and the moccasins' gifting eventually lead to Blue Bird marrying Little Chief's father. Though the interaction is humble and emulates a sense of ikčé as everyday people making kin and exchanging gifts, the actions demonstrate a continuum of creative practices –moccasin making– that measure relational practices.

Much of that interconnectedness and interaction depends on our ability to understand power dynamics and navigate the world as individuals. I analyze creative practice through the lens of ikčé. Like the creations by Dream Woman for Waterlily before her huŋká ceremony, gift-giving is a framing of humility. Our interaction through the creation of material culture or the creation of a story aids in demonstrating relationality that is accessible to anyone within Očéti Šakówiŋ culture. Creating a cultural item as a gift (whether the thing is expertly done or not or is formed by historic craft or present-day methods) provides a tangible representation of that interconnectedness. In my own life, I witnessed my mother create handmade items as gifts yearly, whether that was crafted photo albums for her parents or my first pair of ribbon pants when I moved home. Her creations are sometimes humble but made with care.

When I focus on gift-giving as a function of ikčé, I do so because of how gifts appear in Očéti Šakówiŋ's storytelling. *Waterlily* is not a comprehensive look at all Lakota life. One example of a creation story for the concept of ikčé, as told by many cultural bearers, regards the emergence of the first humans from a cave in the Black Hills.[165] The creation story highlights the engagement of *Pté Oyáte* (or Buffalo Nation) and their establishment in the current iteration of

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[164] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 24.

[165] The cave is often understood as Wind Cave which I reference in another section of the dissertation and is currently, designated as a National Park in the United States.

our relationship with the present-day bison. *Pté* means together, and *Oyáte* means life form in the original context of the world, especially in story form. Pté also references the female or birthing bison. Other translations of Pté frequently refer to buffalo or buffalo calves, and Oyáte is often understood as signaling to a nation or a group.

> This story begins at a time when the plants and the animals were still being brought into existence, but there were no people or bison living on the earth. People at that time lived underground in the Tunkan Tipi — the spirit lodge — and were waiting as the earth was prepared for them to live upon it. To get to the spirit lodge, one must take a passageway through what the ancestors referred to as *Oniya Oshoka*, where the earth "breathes inside." This place is known today as Wind Cave, referred to in modern Lakota as Maka Oniye or "breathing earth." Somewhere, hidden deep inside this passageway, is a portal to the spirit lodge and the spirit world.[166]

The story progresses to get the living beings in the cave out on the earth's surface. The journey had challenges, and ultimately, the individuals who first attempted to come out of the cave became bison due to the hardships on the Earth's surface. When the planet is finally ready for habitation, they follow *Tokahe*, a humble leader, to the surface and can maintain their shape as humans:

> On the surface, the people saw the hoof prints of a bison. The Creator instructed them to follow that bison. From the bison, they could get food, tools, clothes, and shelter. The bison would lead them to water. Everything they needed to survive on the earth could come from the bison.[167]

The human transition from cave dwellings to ordinary life on the earth's surface was difficult. But the relationship and the gifts of essential food, clothing, tools, and shelter provided by the bison to the first people were integral to the survival of all humans and all living things. The

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[166] Wilmer Meseth, "The Lakota Emergence Story," *National Park Services*, Wind Cave, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/wica/learn/historyculture/the-lakota-emergence-story.htm.

[167] Meseth, "The Lakota Emergence Story," 2018.

story encompasses gift-giving, nonhuman relationships, and the commonality of everyday people.

Ikčé and Identity Formation

Identity formation within a foundational articulation of being an ikčé person depends on your community's cultural protocols. Familial accountability embedded in kinship is integral to the everyday expression of relationality. Ikčé is a "connection to the world around you."[168] I asked my brother, Nathaniel, if he remembered where we learned what ikčé wicasa meant.[169] He shared a story about some of our *tiwahe* (extended family) demonstrating ikčé:

> Then all of a sudden, they were making me help, sing and get ceremonies ready. They always asked, though sometimes I couldn't do it, and they had others who could help, so it was good. It's why I believe in the ikčé Wicasa way; the people are the power, the people are the way, and a common person is good with their family and home. For a lot of people, that's all they want, family, home, and, when you get to that point, a connection to the universe/cosmos.[170]

My brother references a more significant relationship to the world embedded in family and home life. The intimacies of your relatives holding you accountable to the community's everyday needs maintains a cultural continuum of relational practices that can morph and shift to present-day conditions. For example, in *Waterlily*, as the children become older and become siblings, they are held accountable for the younger siblings who may not know the protocols of camp life.[171] Little Chief, Waterlily's older brother, is chastised for her noisy behavior because "Waterlily was too

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[168]Nathaniel Bordeaux, "Family Correspondence," January 23, 2023.

[169] My brother was the first member of my immediate family to engage in many of our Očéti Šakówiŋ ceremonies without the burden of Christianity. My maternal grandparents embraced catholicism and my parents chose to raise us participating in catholic rites because of the colonial pressure to distance ourselves from ceremonies that were outlawed until the 1970s. Because my brother felt empowered to reconnect to our Očéti Šakówiŋ ceremonies, I often turn to him for insight on this journey back to our ritual lives.

[170] Bordeaux, "Family Correspondence," January 23, 2023.

[171] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, 36.

little to be reprimanded yet."[172] Shaping their identities in correlation to each other epitomizes how our accountabilities as relatives are strengthened in everyday interactions. Ikčé demonstrates a simple kinship that is essential to Lakota relationality.

The ordinary life I interrogate hones in on specific moments of creative practice highlighted by gift-giving and gift-making between ordinary people. The everyday analysis within ethnographic research is essential but has often been grounded in a framework of ethnic identity. For example, Kristin Erickson conducted a study on a gendered Yoeme ethnic identity in their text *The Everyday Production of Ethnic Identities* (2008), in which they state, "Ethnicity can be communicated through women's clothing and — how Yaquiness is ingrained in the challenges women face and the tactics they employ to ensure their families' economic struggle."[173] Many other ethnographies and identity formation scholarship provide similar articulations of the ethnic and cultural identity formations of Indigenous life and ethnic identity formations.[174] I draw attention to the everydayness of Lakota life; the ethnographic structure of documenting everyday life is not typical in the presentation of my analysis.[175] Building upon that work which established how identities within Indigenous communities continue to be articulated,

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[172] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*, 36.

[173] Kirstin C. Erickson, *Yaqui Homeland and Homeplace: The Everyday Production of Ethnic Identity* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008). 83.

[174] Research on the formation of ethnic identities spans a wide range of time periods, fields, and scholarship, I mention a few different scholars to provide a brief glimpse into that work, including but not limited to: David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978); Guy E. Gibbon, *The Sioux: The Dakota and Lakota Nations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003); Berlo and Phillips, *Native North American Art*; Marla N. Powers, *Oglala Women: Myth, Ritual, and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L. Vignoles, eds., *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2011), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9.

[175] Although I am building upon the ethnographic notion of everyday life, I am documenting the every day life of Očéti Šakówiŋ communities as if this chapter was an ethnography.

limits the mobility and expansiveness of Lakota identity that is often historicized in extraordinary ways. Previous ethnographic studies have used clothing only as a communicator of identity. I find these studies lacking in that they ignore the deeper relational qualities involved in craftwork and relational exchanges.

Furthermore, forming Western social identities within law and policies framework in dominant and formal Western institutions has created a different sense of identity. For example, the needed intervention of intersectionality by Kimberly Crenshaw brought to the forefront the failure of the court systems in the United States in which Black women were erased through the categories of race and sex.[176] Crenshaw's work brought to the forefront of legal scholarship the impact of white supremacy. Without Crenshaw's critical intervention, the research interrogating the judicial system in the United States and beyond would continue to actively and violently erase individuals with intersecting identities outside the confines of white cis-heteronormative bodies. However, some identities are still working on the preconceived notions that race, class, gender, etc., are markers of belonging. Western societal identities are often constructed in ways to oppress and maintain a cis-heteronormative white male body in power. But, as most feminist interventions tell us, many social identities are produced and not in our favor. Therefore, a different way of relating to one another is necessary within Indigenous communities.

The impact of ikčé is demonstrated as operating from a place of care. Rather than depending on a power dynamic to keep a particular individual in power, Očéti Šakówiŋ identities are based on kinship structures. Ikčé relational identities, then, are not necessarily depending on

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[176] Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 8 (1989): 139–67.

race, class, or gender but on the societal roles you engage with to care for others within a tribally specific context. The colonial disruption of Indigenous identity formation has been analyzed from the perspective of residential and boarding school violence, government removal, and the destruction of sexuality and kinship concepts, and the scholarship is immense.[177] Kinship roles within an Očéti Šakówiŋ context shape identities that ensure everyone is cared for. In *Waterlily*, we witness the care of the community operate in various ways that encompass everything from mourning to birth celebrations. First, when we read of Waterlily's birth, her mother is reminded of losing her parents and brother to a warring tribe and how they had to be on the run until they found kin to care for them. Once they find safety with other títuŋwaŋ people (not their original camp), Blue Bird and her grandmother are quickly cared for within which the community—they are provided with lodging, food, and clothing, and once they are settled into the camp circle, are met with community members to help them grieve. The power dynamics of community care are not based on what Blue Bird and her grandmother have to offer the neighboring camp but rather on how to care for each in humble moments of need.

Očéti Šakówiŋ identities rely on kinship and the interrelatedness of our surrounding community. In the telling of Blue Bird and her grandmother seeking safety, Deloria writes, "They could not entertain grief and fear at the same time," demonstrating that at times when we are in extreme circumstances, our emotions cannot get the better of us.[178] The line is one of my

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[177] The scholarship addressing the impact of settler colonial and empire on Indigenous people is vast, here are some quick recommendations that include but are not limited to authors like Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).; Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*; Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America: A Voice from Tatekeya's Earth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman*; Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?;* Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

[178] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 10.

favorites of the book because the quote highlights that our basic safety is sometimes more important than the immediate affective challenges we face. To affectively humble yourself as an ikčé relative, with feeling, means that "you must be humble enough to put your thoughts out of your mind" and make an effort to understand the current situation.[179] Instead of entertaining grief, in a very stressful time, Blue Bird and her grandmother run to safety, and when they find safety, they are cared for. Their experience in the novel helps me understand the humility of being an ikčé individual.

***Makoce* (the land)**

After a series of events where the community in *Waterlily* faces severe hardships, Grandmother Gloku takes Waterlily and her new (step) brother to Box Butte to pray. In the scene, Gloku brings Waterlily and her brother to the top of a butte before the community moves camp. Gloku uses red vermillion paint to cover the children's hands and places two rocks on the butte to represent their prayers for the children.[180] Prayer within Lakota culture can be used anytime by anybody and often occurs in familiar places and places like a butte with your sibling or by the river with your grandparent. The exchanges between relatives in the moments of common prayer are often other-than-human persons, like rocks, grass, water, and land. Gloku demonstrates to Waterlily and her brother the importance of connecting to the stones, butte, and the ancestors who have passed on. Gloku does not create an extraordinary ceremony out of prayers but a simple action they could do themselves as they age:

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[179]Warren Cariou, "On Critical Humility," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 32, no. 3–4 (2020): 1–12, https://doi.org/10.1353/ail.2020.0015.

[180] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 40.

> Great Mystery!
> See these little ones!
> They have become your relatives today!
> Treat them as such!
> Pity then; be kind to them!
> Grant them to live long and good lives![181]

The relationship specified through the prayer is a reciprocal interaction. Gloku closes the intimate ceremony, as she and the children sit and share food, with the thought, "I have done all I can—if they are to enjoy a long life, that is up to the Great Spirit," affirming that through the small actions taken up by everyday people, a reciprocal relationship with other-than-human beings can be maintained. Grandmother Gloku established a common way to pray and connect with other-than-human relatives, like land, which is an integral part of the novel and essential to Dakota and Lakota everyday lives.

Throughout my broader research, I refer to any critical geographic location as sites of relational significance, and often I informally direct to sites as "land" in an encompassing sense. Land, because, as formed in the last section, humility or commonness is needed to make something unattainable seem accessible. The word "land" or "makoce" is my attempt to encompass all other-than-human persons. Land use is the framing tool to articulate the relationships with other-than-human persons on that land. In Lakota, "land" can translate to *maká*, meaning dirt or soil, the earth, or the world. Očéti Šakówiŋ communities also use the word *makoce* concerning the interconnectedness of someone or something. In *Waterlily*, makoce signals a more extensive relationship to the land, earth, dirt, or soil. Grandmother Gloku paints the children with red vermillion paint and has them place rocks in a particular order to pray.

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[181] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 41.

Within Indigenous studies, "Land," as an animate relative, is often the marker for connection or justification for Indigenous communities to establish their claim to a place or region.[182] I utilize land more as an embodiment of other-than-human relatives and a catchall to signal an interconnectedness beyond the limitations of human beings. Land in the prominent "L" articulation is utilized as pedagogy. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson theorizes that a resurgence of land-based pedagogy is essential for embodying our tribally focused protocols, oversight, self-determination, and political protocols.[183] Present-day cries for #LANDBACK reiterates that Indigenous people's connection with the land is integral to our everyday lives. My use of "land" use relies on the more minor "l" articulation of land accessible to ordinary people. I utilize land as an embodiment of other-than-human relatives and a catchall to signal an interconnectedness beyond the limitations of human beings. As Cutcha Risling Baldy illustrates through a case study of traditional ecological knowledges, "the sharing of resources, space, and knowledge is essential to the continuing strength and survival of the people," in this case, Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk communities.[184] The shared and accessible ecological knowledge and connection to land between the Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk occurs to exemplify the interconnectedness of "all things (be it nature, humans, the universe, or the cosmos)" and will continue to be cared for within the

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[182] Some examples of scholarship that demonstrate land or landscapes as a teaching tool include but are not limited to: Jo-Ann Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Celia Haig-Brown and Kaaren Dannenmann, "The Land Is the First Teacher: The Indigenous Knowledge Instructors' Program," in *Cultural Education - Cultural Sustainability: Minority, Diaspora, Indigenous, and Ethno-Religious Groups in Multicultural Societies*, ed. Zvi Bekerman and Ezra Kopelowitz (New York: Routledge, 2008); Craig Phillip Howe, Lydia Whirlwind Soldier, Lanniko L. Lee, and Oak Lake Writers' Society, eds., *He Sapa Woihanble: Black Hills Dream* (St. Paul: Living Justice Press, 2011); Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*; Charles Sepulveda, "Our Sacred Waters: Theorizing Kuuyam as a Decolonial Possibility," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 7, no. 1 (2018): 40–58; Sandra D. Styres, "Land as First Teacher: A Philosophical Journeying," *Reflective Practice* 12, no. 6 (December 2011): 717–31, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2011.601083; Waziyatawin Wilson, *What Does Justice Look Like?*

[183] Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy"

[184] Cutcha Risling Baldy, "Why We Gather: Traditional Gathering in Native Northwest California and the Future of Bio-Cultural Sovereignty," *Ecological Processes* 2, no. 1 (December 2013): https://doi.org/10.1186/2192-1709-2-17.

context of tribal knowledge and relational practices.[185] The accessibility of land and our interconnectedness should be and can be sustained through simple acts.

The humble relationship between land and the world around us can be articulated in multiple ways. *Mahpiya Waci Win* (Brook Spotted Eagle) shares a story about her mother, Faith Spotted Eagle, and great-grandmother *Tunka Inajin Win* (Standing Stone Woman), eating dirt.[186] I have heard this story firsthand and have thought deeply about how we connect to the land around us. Storytelling as a transmission of interrelatedness. The story demonstrates how to communicate with other-than-human relatives through humble interactions:

> She began digging in the ground, between her feet and beneath her legs. Searching. My mom looked on. Grandma eventually sat up straight and held two small clumps of dirt. She handed one to my mom.
>
> "*Wota.* [Eat.]"
>
> My mom looked down at her hand and stared at the dirt. The first time I heard this story, I remember quickly asking what she did. She answered, "I took a bite."
>
> On their way home, my mom asked, "Why did we eat dirt, Grandma?"
>
> "She said our bodies need that sometimes and I eventually learned what that meant."[187]

Sometimes we have to eat dirt as Faith Spotted Eagle did with her grandmother, or sometimes we paint our grandchildren as Gloku did in *Waterlily*. We demonstrate connections to place through vital stories passed down to the next generation about the physical land. The simplicity of eating dirt was not performed in a grand gesture but a determined walk to the river and a bite of the earth to literally ground us. Faith's story demonstrates a long history of humble kinship to land.

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[185] Risling Baldy, "Why We Gather." 9.

[186] Brook Spotted Eagle, "Winyan Okodakiciye: Indigenous Resurgence & Women Society Lifeways" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Seattle, University of Washington, 2021).

[187] Spotted Eagle, "Winyan Okodakiciye: Indigenous Resurgence & Women Society Lifeways." 6.

Articulations of relationality rely on Indigenous kinship established through caretaking with the land. Relationality and caretaking build upon a theoretical perspective of Indigenous feminist relationality.[188] The intergenerational care between grandmother and child, connecting culture, prayer, and other-than-human persons, is vital in Lakota culture because of the commonality and accessibility of intimate interactions. Like the story of Faith Spotted Eagle as a child with her grandmother, we learn humble ways of connecting that we carry with us into other spaces. Caretaking from my reflection on Očéti Šakówiŋ's teaching is demonstrated through the interaction between grandmothers, aunties, sisters, cousins, nieces, and friends. As illustrated in *Waterlily*, whether kinship is created through a public ceremony like the huŋká or protocol bonds of marriage, kinship also means that we are responsible for our exchange within a given geographic location, whether on a reservation or roaming without settlers' consequences (the carceral confinement of the nation-state). For example, in *Waterlily*, Lakota people's existence on the land (that we call home) is a responsibility, not a right—a right of caretaking.[189]

The ethics embedded in kinship and our relationship to a place is reflected in the cultural framing of the Black Hills as a *wizipi* or *wizipan* (sometimes understood as a parfleche bag or a round native trunk). A wizipi or wizipan was historically carried by women and would be a keep-safe container. To break down the work linguistically, "wizi" refers to very old lodging or the smokey part of the lodge.[190] "Pi" is usually added to create plurality or encompasses the use of something by more than two people. For example, the word "tipi" reference a home dwelling; "ti" translate to a place to reside, and the "pi" signals "they." The combination of the two words

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[188] Risling Baldy and Yazzie, "Introduction," 18.

[189] Howe et al., *He Sapa Woihanble*, 30.

[190] Buechel, *Lakota-English Dictionary*.

results in “tipi,” roughly translating to “they dwell” or “their dwelling.” A more in-depth analysis could be done regarding the linguistic framework of understanding the Black Hills as a wizipan. But the current structure of the word and the títuŋwaŋ understanding of a wizipan is as a container. I imagine the English version to be “an ancient thing that holds stuff,”—which may be a little informal for the translation, but the gist of the interpretation is there. I prefer the idiomatic translation because the sentiment aligns with my analysis that relationality is demonstrated through ikčé interactions. Očéti Šakówiŋ author Lydia Whirlwind Soldier states that her grandparents used to say that “the Black Hills was a wizipa.”[191] The concept rings true as the Black Hills contain sites of relational significance in which ceremonial protocol is held regularly, and tribes across the Northern Plains travel great distances to visit and conduct a ritual. The Black Hills are the container of all the essential items for the Očéti Šakówiŋ people.

The material location of the Black Hills region is physically, geologically, and visually significant to illustrate why land and other-than-human persons are essential to Lakota relationality. In *Waterlily,* Deloria references the northern plains region in many different ways. First, in the terrain, she describes the weather patterns.[192] Even the naming of the main character of the book, Waterlily, by her mother, Blue Bird, is based on other-than-human kin:

> All around, the waterlilies in full bloom seemed to pull her eyes to them irresistibly until she turned to gaze at them with exaggerated astonishment. How beautiful they were! How they made you open your eyes wider and wider the longer you looked — she glanced from one to another, and suddenly it was impossible to distinguish them from her baby’s face.[193]

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[191] Howe et al., *He Sapa Woihanble*. 31.

[192] A seasonal approach to my methodologies is outlined in the introduction to the dissertation.

[193] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily*. 6.

Waterlillies, or prairie lilies, are rare to find. Blue Bird's comparison of Waterlily's face to the wildflowers creates a beautiful metaphor that positions our admiration of other-than-human beings as integral to our understanding of our interrelationship with the region. The use of the flower for the main character indicates Deloria's attention to the importance of Waterlily's experiences in the novel and how the region profoundly impacted what the Lakota people saw and understood as worthy of praise. Naming in Očéti Šakówiŋ communities often signaled our relationship with nonhumans. Once a Lakota person understands their kinship structure, and the commonality of a kinship exchange, then a connection to place-based knowledge is integral to understanding a Lakota relationality.

The Gift of Creation Stories and Sites of Relational Significance

Stories are how we identify sites of relational significance and articulate our connection to the land, especially in the seasonal changes of the Northern Plains. Telling creation stories or stories about our relationship to place teaches lessons and provides a framework for understanding how the world operates within a regional context. When we share a story about a place, like the Black Hills, the Black Hills become a *wizipan* (container) for the stories. And when the stories are told during the winter or the summer months, the narratives pertain to what lessons need to be heard. In *Waterlily*, storytelling would travel from camp to camp during the winter and when stories are shared. In the novel, we are introduced to the character *Woyoka* (a knowledge keeper and storyteller), who has arrived at Waterlily's camp. *Woyoka* explains to the young audience that they are teaching through a story. Woyoka proclaims that storytelling is integral to learning and "that the children of my relatives sit at the feet of a master and learn

tribal lore—they must hear the myths and the legends; they must know our people's history."[194] The knowledge keeper and storyteller share stories of creation; they recount events of the year taken on a winter count and, through creative practice, connect Lakota people to place through culture.[195] The relationship between weather, region, and audience becomes apparent when we hear the stories and the lessons shared across generations.

Lakota communities understood that the formation of geological sites, like the Black Hills, happened simultaneously as our communities formed social kinship structures. The stories we tell of kinship structure are influenced by the stories we tell of geological formations and vice versa. When I use the word "land," I think of the Lakota use of makoce. Land as the Lakota word "makoce" is demonstrated in the stories shared across Lakota culture as relational. Land use and the accounts of the land in my analysis maintain a straightforward way of conveying broader relationships to place. The Great Race Story, which I share here, establishes the social structure of Očéti Šakówiŋ communities and the land, including humans, animals, plants, rocks, etc., that live within the boundaries of the Black Hills;

> A great race was held between the two and four-legged as the world slid into chaos. A young bison was favored to win the race for the four-legged. A young Lakota man and the birds ran for the two-legged. Ultimately, the young man fell behind, like all the birds except one. A single magpie rode on the back of the bison and had gone unnoticed throughout the race. And at the end of the race, the magpie flew from the bison's back and won the race for the two-legged. The race created the red race track around the Black Hills and simultaneously pushed up the formation of the Ȟesápa, adding its place as "the heart of all that is."[196]

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[194] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily,* 249.

[195] A winter count is a mnemonic device of pictographs painted on a bison hide to highlight the year's major events.

[196] I enjoy hearing the Great Race story and the story is told any time of the year because the story signals a Lakota relationship to the land of the Black Hills. I share the Great Race story from memory. "The heart of all this is" references several oral and historical narratives about Black Hills, especially the recent work by Bob Drury. *The Heart of Everything That Is: The Untold Story of Red Cloud, an American Legend*. First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.

The *Great Race* and other Lakota stories map our relationship to land and other-than-human kin. Although not directly shared in the *Waterlily* novel, the Great Race is a story I imagined the storyteller *Woyoka* shared with the children to share a history as they venture out to witness the Black Hills firsthand. Every time Waterlily might have seen a magpie, I hoped she was reminded of our appreciation for winning the race.

The story reflects an ontological understanding of place and our ties to other-than-human kin. The story introduces vital players; buffalo, magpie, humans, and the racetrack. Each element of the story reminds Lakota people of their responsibilities to sites of relational significance and reflects a sustained relationship. The Great Race does everything I am trying to do in this chapter; establishing kinship values, articulate the reasons why we should be humble (as the humbling experience of the bison's loss to the magpie), Lakota connections to other nonhuman relatives, and connecting Lakota people to a specific place. Understanding an ontological and epistemological relationship with a place not shaped by the identity formation of the Western racial construct is vital to a sustained relationship with a region. Not shaped by Western constructs, the land does not care if you are a woman, man, or non-binary. Although historic Lakota societal roles might dictate how an individual would conduct certain rituals, our relationship with the land was ultimately maintained through sharing stories and visiting the physical places.

Using the Great Race Story transforms Lakota cultural knowledge into markers of the authority of that place, specifically the *Ȟesápa* (the Black Hills). In other tellings of the story, the vibrations of the race lead to the physical formations of Ȟesápa, that as the two-legged and four-

legged ran, the geological formation of the hills grew in the center of the race. The land formation shapes Lakota's ways of understanding. Quandamooka scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson demonstrates that relationality is grounded in cultural knowledge and is "a matter of ontology, our being- not a matter of identity."[197] Moreton-Robinson explains that relationality provides a validating structure that shapes and supports research standards specific to the researcher; for myself, that would mean not revealing private or internal ceremonies in my analysis.

Further, Moreton-Robinson reminds us that Indigenous researchers frame relationality as we push back against the Western academy by centering land, water, and nonhuman relatives. The motivation to maintain Indigenous relational structures throughout our research demonstrates the need to include culturally specific knowledge systems outside researchers should have addressed more frequently in analyses of Indigenous cultures. Lakota peoples assert their understanding of self through a connection to the land and stories of the land. But often the stories of our connection to land have been categorized as overtly mystical in the past. As Moreton-Robinson shares, Indigenous accounts of other-than-human beings provide vital connections to land and place, demonstrating that stories, kinship, and relationships are crucial for a relational analysis.

Indigenous studies scholars such as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson have emphasized place-based learning for Indigenous communities, especially when examining cultural knowledge systems. "Land as pedagogy" shifts the importance of Western educational pedagogy

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[197]Aileen Moreton-Robinson, "Relationality: A Key Presupposition of an Indigenous Social Research Paradigm," in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, ed. Chris Anderson and Jean M. O'Brien (London and New York: Routledge), 328.

back toward focusing on how Indigenous communities intimately connect to the land. Simpson utilizes her own Nishnaabeg cultural stories demonstrating that place-based knowledge results in immersive learning of our languages, cultural rituals, and understanding autonomies embodied in homelands.[198] Simpson also uses Nishnaabeg creation stories to transform what was once understood as myth or legend in Western academia into necessary articulations of Nishnaabeg intelligence.[199] Similarly, I connect land and focus on the site of relational significance that places Očéti Šakówiŋ people in a specific place of importance, following in the footsteps of Deloria.

Another account of the Great Race story speaks of the race track surrounding the Black Hills Region. In the other version of the story, the telling of the Great Race focuses more on the location and shape of the race track and not necessarily the types of animals in the race, only to specify that many animals perish because they run themselves to death, get trampled, and bleed into the earth. Because of their deaths, the "race track" surrounding the Black Hills consists of red-looking dirt. Yet, in another adaptation, the red ring comes from animals and humans cutting their feet on the sharp quartz that makes up the race track. According to some geologists, the deposit is "red sandstones and shales with gypsum in the upper part and a bed of limestone."[200] Satellite images of the area show the red sentiment from space. Lakota communities knew of a red circle of sediment surrounding the Black Hills long before any present-day geologist documented the phenomenon.

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[198] Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation," 14.

[199] Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy," 16.

[200] George B. Richardson, "The Upper Red Beds of the Black Hills," *The Journal of Geology* 11, no. 4 (1903): 365–393, www.jstor.org/stable/30056747.

The racetrack intertwines the artful storytelling practices, geology, and Lakota worldview. Lakota elder and culture bearer Jerome Kills Small told the Great Race story recently to a group of Lakota youth before they performed their crafted tales for a theater camp. I listened in awe as he retold a story I had heard dozens of times, and I felt like I had listened to the story anew. Later, a non-native crew member asked our Lakota playwright what the racetrack was "really made of." The playwright responded by ignoring the question. I draw attention to this interaction to demonstrate that the non-native crew member did not have the ontological or epistemological foundation to understand that the racetrack was significant and red. We do not need the Western geological explanation of the racetrack. As a Lakota community, we had grown up listening to the Great Race Story, seeing the physical location of the track, and understanding the story as communicating our complex societal structure. Lakota people see the blood of their ancestors, especially our other-than-human kin, in that place and do not need a mainstream geological explanation to understand the significance of the Great Race Story and where the race occurred.

The kinship publicly produced through telling the Great Race story is not a representative connection; the kinship affirmed between bison, magpies, and humans provides a more significant protocol of responsibility. The diverse narratives remind me of particular protocols in my everyday life and address the idea of kinship introduced in the previous section. The winning animal (the two-legged human via the magpie) becomes responsible for the other animals, especially the buffalo and the magpie. Winning does not indicate power but rather an acceptance of responsibility. Unlike the structure of "the great chain of being," a hierarchical structure of life, the Great Race story recognized a mutual relationship of care, not a hierarchy of power we

witness daily in settler colonial structures.[201] According to the narrative and other Lakota understandings, every item humans and two-legged beings take from the four-legged or the land should be reciprocal. The kinship protocol reaches beyond human and other-than-human relationships to create a harmonious understanding. Responsibility and reciprocity are critical to the ways we interact as relatives.

The lessons I continue to learn from Lakota stories demonstrate a connection to other-than-human persons like the two-legged and four-legged from the Great Race story. Lakota's interaction with the western magpie and other animals from the region is significant because of the victory of the magpie and the ways we still offer thanks to animals. For many hunters, for example, after every extensive hunt, you are supposed to give meat to the magpies to thank them for their victory in the Great Race. Furthermore, because the two-legged were victors, we care for all animals, especially the buffalo. In many Lakota stories, buffalo are kin and are our brethren. The separation between species is due to the necessity of life rather than a power dynamic. We are taught various lessons through stories about how nonhumans interact with humans.

Conclusion

My dissertation title includes wówayupike, which loosely translates to art. But many elders I have spoken with describe wówayupike as ingenuity and often say there is no word for "art" in the Lakota language. As an English translation, art becomes a placeholder for forms typically categorized as art within a Western lens. Art is an ingenious process that connects us

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[201] Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, The William James Lectures 1933 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

beyond the confines of settler noise. And rather than my research operating as a tool to decolonize or indigenize—because those terms seem to take on different meanings when applied to creative practices—I imagine my analysis performing alongside those vital movements of radical anti-colonial practices in academic spaces and beyond.[202] Wówayupike, art, is a place-holder for how I might articulate creative practice throughout the rest of the dissertation, in the subtle moments of crafting or gifting that my analysis hones in on. This chapter is one step towards reframing ethnographic material, storytelling, and interconnectedness that can be found in creative practice—in our giving and establishing kinship protocols, relational procedures, and stories of place—art, within my research project, shifts and morphs into connecting other-than-human persons, cultures, and creative engagement.

Throughout this chapter, I focused on the importance of storytelling methods to underscore the inclusion of Očéti Šakówiŋ narratives that are only sometimes included in ethnographic analyses. My reflections in analyzing ethnographic materials are that something needs to be added; I often feel absent in the archival structure established by non-native and non-Očéti Šakówiŋ research. I seek that connective tissue that links being ikčé and recognizes other-than-human persons, gendered narratives, and creative approaches within a larger picture of Lakota relationality. Since Deloria's novel was based on ethnographic material, the plotline focuses mainly on everyday interactions she documented over decades —Deloris's novel and ethnographic work is integral to my research.[203] I affectively feel the parallel between the

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[202] I reference decolonizing concepts defined by scholars like Amy Lonetree and Linda Smith. See Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*; and Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

[203] I do not intend to provide a comprehensive ethnographic view of Lakota culture. Any scholar could find ethnographic research and literary analysis about Lakota culture from the past forty years, especially from non-native scholars. See, for example Black Elk and Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*; Powers, *Oglala Religion*; Walker and Jahner, *Lakota Myth;* DeMallie et al. *Lakota Belief and Ritual;* or Powers, *Oglala Women*.

ethnographic story and the fictional fabrication of Lakota life. The storytelling and the ethnographic narrative I engage with must happen simultaneously. The assortment of everyday cultural life complements the stories I know from growing up in my Lakota community.

Ella Deloria navigated storytelling and ethnography out of necessity because she was researching and analyzing in a period that was not always welcoming to women or Native women in the academy. I continue to lean on her fictional work because, when she was writing her ethnographies, a particular kind of pressure was established to be objective when the academic framework was dominated by patriarchy and settler colonialism.[204] Deloria was trained under Franz Boas as anthropology was being established. The beginning of the field of anthropology resulted in little objectivity, salvage anthropology, and a framework of cis-heteronormative articulations of tribal life. Deloria stated in correspondence that she knew her ethnographic work would often be dismissed because she was a Dakota woman collecting data within her tribal communities.[205]

Ella Deloria crafted narratives that we, as Očéti Šakówiŋ people, would benefit from later. In the introduction to *Speaking of Indians* (1983), written by Dr. Agnes Picotte and Professor Paul Pavich, they describe Deloria:

> Her training as an ethnologist at Columbia enabled her to make objective assessments of the successes and failures not only of her Indian people but also of those of white society. Her intense devotion to Christianity permeates the work as it did her long life.[206]

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[204] Kamala Visweswaran analyzes Deloria's work within the times periods with a Western context: from the 1880s–1920s when biological sex harshly dictated social roles; then when sexuality was beginning to demarcate from gender during the 1920s into the 1960s; and finally when ideas that different societies might see gender and sexuality differently than through a Western lens, beginning in the 1960s–1980s. See Visweswaran, "Histories of Feminist Ethnography."

[205] E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily,* xvii.

[206] E.C. Deloria, Agnes Picotte, and Paul N. Pavich, *Speaking of Indians*, Third ed. (Vermillion, SD: State Publishing Company, 1983), xvi-xvii.

The curse of objectivity was constructed at the time by a system that categorized Lakota life in harmful ways.[207] We, as Očéti Šakówiŋ scholars, have Deloria's work to fall back on, but other authors were writing about "Sioux" people as a warring society that relied on violence or reformed ourselves within a settler context to be in power.[208] Her ethnographies are essential to my research. As I posit storytelling and stories as a foundational mechanism for Lakota relationality, *Waterlily* remains that touchpoint for me. As a fictional novel, Deloria's use of story to communicate Lakota relationality through the intersection of kinship, land, and everyday life is essential to my analysis of creative and relational practices. I turn to Deloria's work because, as a trained ethnographer, her documentation of Northern Plains' life provides a gendered narrative sorely missing in the archive of Očéti Šakówiŋ material.

Current research about Lakota culture has successfully addressed recent activist oppositions to settler incursion, provided an in-depth analysis of ontological inquiry—especially within private ceremonial practices—and discussed the impact of contemporary art history and Dakota women's aesthetics; these works by scholars like Nick Estes, David Posthumus, and Phil Deloria are necessary and foundational for my analysis.[209] I benefit from their research to progress my articulation of Očéti Šakówiŋ communities outside the confines of counternarratives or spiritual arguments. But I must pause and lament that Estes, Posthumus, and P. Deloria are all

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[207] Objectivity that was skewed by the influence of Christianity.

[208] Pekka Hämäläinen, in *Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power*, utilizes archival material from the early sixteenth to the early twenty-first century to demonstrate how Lakota communities "ruled supreme" in the Northern Plains. Pekka's archival work is extensive but comes at the cost of Indigenous silence, in which our intellectual rigor is not demonstrated on a continuum but historicized in a manner that continues to frame Lakota people as "less than"—a white supremacist engagement. See Pekka Hämäläinen, *Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

[209] The work published during the last five years have been crucial for my analysis, thank you to the work by scholars like P.J. Deloria, *Becoming Mary Sully*; Estes, *Our History is the Future*; and Posthumus, *All My Relatives*.

straight, cis-heternormative men. As a queer Lakota woman, I still have to navigate societal roles on many levels to articulate myself clearly and be received by specific audiences differently. Fortunately, the interdisciplinary nature of Native American, American Indian, and Indigenous studies draws on the work of scholars like Estes, Posthumus, and Deloria to navigate ethnography, history, public scholarship, and art history with more ease than if I had to find my stories alone in academic fields where I often feel unwelcomed. Like the beacon of light that Ella Deloria continues to be for my research, I hope to continue contributing to a discourse of ikčé relatives who want to build kinship bonds for better relational and creative practices.

CHAPTER TWO: THE *grassessgrassesgrasses*

I remember critical thinking about other-than-human beings in the fourth grade at Red Cloud Indian School, a Jesuit Catholic institution on the Pine Ridge Reservation. We were in our elementary religion class when I asked the teacher who had named grass "grass" and how we, as a people, have come to understand that. I distinctly remember thinking about the creation of words, the power of naming, and what if someone from somewhere else did not call grass "grass." I did not even imagine the politics of naming outside the English context because this was before I reached intermediary Lakota language learning at Red Cloud Indian School. Instead of humoring an elementary student's curiosity, my teacher told me that I should ask my parents, who had named grass, and that it was too big of an idea for such a young person to have. The tone of their response immediately signaled to me that the question I had asked was not typical.

I did not realize it then, but my question was an ontological inquiry that addressed epistemological and other world-building ideas. Even as a child, I was curious about the "how" and "why" of the world and the interconnectedness of us all. As an adult living and working in art and academic spaces, I still ask how we relate to grass within a larger paradigm of gendered Indigenous narratives. Instead of analyzing why we call grass "grass," I turn to the work of Oglala Lakota poet and artist Layli Long Soldier to understand Očéti Šakówiŋ relationships with grass and other-than-human beings.[210] The ontological and epistemological relationships I analyze within Long Soldier's poetry represent the intersection of creative practice, culture, and

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[210] Layli Long Soldier earned a BFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts and an MFA from Bard College. She is the author of the chapbook *Chromosomory* (2010) and *WHEREAS* (2017). She has been a contributing editor to *Drunken Boat*; in 2012, her participatory installation, *WHEREAS We Respond,* was featured on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In 2015, Long Soldier was awarded a National Artist Fellowship from the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation and a Lannan Literary Fellowship for Poetry. She is also a recipient of a 2016 Whiting Award. A citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation, Long Soldier, lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with her daughter.

place-based knowledges that I seek to articulate in my broader dissertation. The relationality mapped in Long Soldiers' poetry occurs because of the creative and artistic endeavors she engages with beyond the confines of settler colonialism.

Ikčé: Being a Common Relative

To articulate a Lakota way of knowing through an analysis of creative practice, I utilize Očéti Šakówiŋ values of humility and *ikčé*. I consider the limitations of colonial language and use Long Soldier's poetry and creative work to reflect being an *ikčé* relative, or in current use, articulated by Očéti Šakówiŋ people as *ikčé wicasa* or *ikčé winyan*, an ordinary man or woman.[211] The commonality of everyday engagements as Lakota people—primarily through humble actions of interconnectedness—becomes a marker of personal autonomy best articulated through creative practices grounded in Očéti Šakówiŋ ideas of being an ikčé relative. Long Soldier demonstrates ikčé, humility, and autonomy in how she plays with words and sentence structure and engages nonhuman beings. I utilize theories of affect and refusal to concentrate on Long Soldier's use of humility through reciprocal acts of apology defined through poetic writing. Long Soldier's creative poesis not demonstrated in the stark empty apologies issued by formal institutions like settler governments. Long Soldier's poetry weaves personal stories, relationships with other-than-human persons, and tribal belonging, which influence her understanding of kinship and the commonality of her experience as a sister, mother, daughter, and tribal member. I have continued to return to Long Soldier's innovations to illustrate kinship and connection to

[211] *Ikčé wicasa* is a common man, and *ikčé winyan* is a common woman. This idea is utilized by *Tituwan* (Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota) language groups across the northern plains of what is now the United States and Canada.

land and place because her work highlights the nuances of everyday Očéti Šakówiŋ life throughout her creative works.

Long Soldier's poesis demonstrates a continuum of Lakota creative practice that contributes to intergenerational learning. I turn to poetry and poesis, which have always existed in Northern Plains tribal culture. Poetic writing in Lakota culture is a newer occurrence since we have only written down the language over the past hundred and fifty years. Poetry came in other forms: potential love interests created songs in courtship, dramatic stories demonstrated and retold epic battles and skirmishes across the prairie, and storytellers would travel from camp to camp to share well-known stories, while the documentation of new tales and current Lakota history was artfully painted or drawn on mnemonic devices called winter counts.[212] A community storyteller could poetically recount the experiences of a specific *tiospaye* (extended family) and *wicoti* (larger camp units) by reviewing the winter count. The poetic action of naming was a skill that families sought out for their children's coming of age or when you demonstrated an admirable effort as an adult.[213] *Tiwahe* (immediate family) would poetically pass down given names from the larger tiospaye to encourage similar virtues of bravery, humility, and wisdom.[214] Lessons were captured by telling *Iktomi* (trickster) stories that were poetically adapted to the storyteller and audience. Throughout these experiences, poesis prevailed.

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[212] Greene et al., *The Year the Stars Fell*.

[213] In my family, we have a fantastic story about the name *Dismounts Four Times* that is shared regularly.

[214] My Lakota name is *Tehilapi Win*, which my grandmother gave me and loosely translates to "Everyone dotes on her" or cherishes her. As one of the youngest child of my tiwahe (immediate family), I had a precarious introduction to the world. My mother had a very hard pregnancy and was bedridden the last month of our pregnancy. When I was born my family was relieved that we survived and my grandmother recognized this in the way our larger tiospaye (extended family) treated me.

In chapter one of my dissertation, I defined my use of Lakota relationality through three Lakota perceptions of everyday life, kinship, and land. Kinship is an overarching drive for Lakota communities to ensure cultural protocols and rituals are performed appropriately. My articulation of kinship as a Lakota framework is not regulated by human-to-human interaction. Kinship is reflected in a broader interconnectedness with the land and other-than-human persons surrounding us. The other-than-human persons or kin that I reference are what Očéti Šakówiŋ people often refer to as nations.[215] The weaving of kinship nations, including land, is a connection not regulated by extraordinary moments often depicted in mainstream media about Lakota people (think of the nostalgia for the American Indian Movement's occupation of the Wounded Knee in 1973 or the current continued fixation on the #NoDAPL movement). Lakota relationships with other-than-human nations better articulate everyday life, marked by the accessibility of commonplace interactions. Instead of extraordinary acts of resistance, which in a quotidian framing of accountability does not feel or appear unique but are often framed outside the context of Lakota life as exceptional.[216] I posit that Lakota relationality is demonstrated in these more humble moments of accountability and reciprocity. However, unlike the usual analysis of Lakota ceremonies and rituals deemed sacred by Western paradigms, I do not focus on private or intimate rituals.[217] I practice generative refusal as established and popularized by the work of Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson, in which refusal as a stance and theoretical scaffolding provides the ability to reject to engage with specific academic engagement. The

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[215] In Lakota stories, we often say the "mouse nation" or the "grass nation" to give relational qualities to nonhumans.

[216] Resistance, not as an afterthought or constantly in opposition to the nation-state as if we had a choice, but resistance in the utter lack of engagement with the colonial process as the center of an analysis.

[217] Here I reference Walker, DeMallie, and Jahner, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*; Steinmetz, *Pipe, Bible, and Peyote among the Oglala Lakota*; Powers, *Oglala Religion*; Posthumus, *All My Relatives.*

information or dialogue we refuse to engage with can help us focus on areas of necessity and articulate everyday relationality. The relationality I seek to highlight encompasses Lakota life's ordinary and commonplace interactions that often operate alongside moments of refusal and work within Long Soldier's poetic articulations.

I utilize self-reflexivity by providing a Lakota intervention. Like Audra Simpson's refusing a settler-colonial ethnographic approach to reflect her ethical engagement the intimate knowledge, I refuse to analyze or reveal private information. I utilize self-reflexivity by providing a Lakota intervention. In using, Audra Simpson's articulation of refusal, I am refusing a settler-colonial ethnographic approach that reflects my ethical engagement with the intimate knowledge I carry and my refusal to analyze or reveal private information. I use an ethnographic refusal to understand a Lakota cultural analysis that does not center on critiquing Western paradigms in a reactionary manner or exposing what is not mine to tell within nonnative spaces. I analyze Long Soldier's published work WHEREAS (2017) to offer insight into a Lakota intellectual and poetic tradition. I am modeling a refusal, but I am also attempting to engage in my portrayal of an ikčé relative. The self-reflexivity I engage throughout my chapter is sometimes expressed through passive voice or a more casual articulation of an analysis of the subject.

WHEREAS

In 2018 during my doctoral studies, I first critically read *WHEREAS* (2017) in a graduate seminar led by Professor Mishuana Goeman. I shed tears after reading certain poems and felt a deep sense of home thinking of prairie grass. I leaned into the affect, the connection between my emotional response and occupying the classroom space as a Northern Plains tribal relative. We

read *WHEREAS* alongside Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's *Land and Reconciliation: Having the Right Conversations* (2017) and Glen Coulthard's *Place against Empire: Understanding Indigenous Anti-Colonialism* (2010).[218] In the course and across the three texts, the class discussed the importance of a reciprocal relationship to land while understanding the issue that arises from the lack of settler colonial engagement with relationality. Coulthard demonstrates land as an ontological framework, while Simpson critiques the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's failure to mention relationships to land. All three authors articulate the frustration of settler colonialism and the ways the nation-state continues to fail tribal communities. Indigenous people utilize relationality to resist settler frameworks and re-focus on land as a relative. In the course, we aimed to understand and communicate how a lack of engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing, especially relationality, impacts intergenerational relationships with the land.

All three authors contrast the language used by the settler governments with elements taken from their Indigenous languages to demonstrate how land should be treated. As a seminar, we analyzed Long Soldier's work, especially the socio-geographical and how Indigenous peoples have been removed from their place (settler colonial dispossession, forced onto reservations, institutionally run boarding and residential schools, etc.). We discussed the ways Coulthard's political science analysis aligned with Long Soldier's poetry to unpack the use of certain words and phrases to interrogate settler subjugation of Indigenous groups' connection to the land. Through the discussion, we highlighted terms and concepts such as "land, grass, containment, confinement, movement, history, languages, discipline, structural poverty, infrastructure,

[218]Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Land & Reconciliation; Having the Right Conversations," *Watershed Sentinel,* November 23, 2017, https://watershedsentinel.ca/articles/land-reconciliation/.

motherhood, bodies, perception, memory, and belonging."[219] We discussed the importance of reciprocal relationships to land demonstrated across the three texts. I felt affirmed in the work as we analyzed the lack of settler colonial engagement with relationality.

The lack of attention to relationality by nation-states injures Indigenous relationships across generations. I was reminded of how creative practices like Long Soldier and Simpson's poesis continue transforming how we process and reach back toward relationality. Since that first critical analysis of *WHEREAS* in my graduate seminar, I have continued to utilize Long Soldier's work to articulate relationality and a Lakota way of knowing embedded in creative practice. *WHEREAS* is often raw, emotional, and devastating to read, and I need to acknowledge how Long Soldier's creative practices impact me.

Structure of the Chapter

I have separated chapter two into five sections along with an introduction and conclusion; humility, sovereignty over language, grasses to theorize, Indigenous feminisms, and radical relationality. The first section of this chapter embraces two Očéti Šakówiŋ concepts, humility and ikčé, which highlight the importance of common people (discussed previously) and how Long Soldier utilizes both concepts in her poetry to express Lakota relationality through apologies. The second section engages Layli Long Soldier's assertion of "sovereignty over language," describing how to contend with the creative writing process when intimidated by the confinement of colonial language, providing a framework to understand her creative and artistic practices. The third section, on grasses, considers the importance of other-than-human beings,

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[219] The words and concepts were taken from notes I kept from the 2018 seminar. I want to acknowledge week seven Group A; Carolyn, Tabatha, Alana, and Megan.

such as grass, as a tool to theorize and decipher Lakota lifeways. Focusing on Long Solider's grass usage throughout *WHEREAS*, I analyze her emphasis on other-than-human persons to discuss reciprocity and demonstrate how poesis is essential to our interconnectedness as Lakota people. Through the fourth section, I employ Indigenous feminisms to situate my position as a collaborator and researcher concerning Long Soldier, which is integral to the ethical structure of my dissertation study. In the final section, I articulate radical relationality, providing an analysis of grass as a tool of ethnographic refusal, as defined by Audra Simpson, and how Long Soldier's re-telling of historical events demonstrates an unholding, as defined by Kevin Bruyneel.[220] I conclude with a conversation about breaking camp and how we, as Očéti Šakówiŋ people, can realize the importance of articulating our ways of relating that are not tied to settler colonial logic.

Humility and Being an Ikčé Relative

Apology "is the heart of this whole response."[221] *WHEREAS* is broken into "PART I: THESE BEING THE CONCERNS" and "PART II: WHEREAS." I focus most of my analysis on the recurring themes of apology and how connecting with our other-than-human nations shapes our relationships through a sense of humility. *WHEREAS* was crafted in response to the 2009 Congressional S.J.Res.14 joint resolution, an "apology" to Native Americans on behalf of the United States government issued by President Obama's administration. The joint resolution was

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[220] "Ethnographic refusal" is cited from Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson, "On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship," *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialouge*, no. 9 (December 2007): 67–80 and "unholding" is cited from settler scholar Kevin Bruyneel, *Settler Memory: The Disavowal of Indigeneity and the Politics of Race in the United States*, Critical Indigeneities (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

[221] Layli Long Soldier, "The Freedom of Real Apologies (The On Being Project)" (YouTube, September 23, 2019), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ0YKDTxdqA.

passed "to acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and [to] offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States."[222] When the initial apology was given in 2009, the resolution was signed on a Sunday without any engagement with tribal officials. Long Soldier's critique of the apology started a more extensive conversation she has carried throughout her work over the past decade.[223] The moments of apology throughout her poetry book, apologies between relatives and not institutions, emote intellectual and cultural space with everything that bears witness to her life when she wrote the book as a mother, tribal member, and beyond.[224]

I consider Long Soldier's poesis, her creative practices, integral to reciprocal interactions with relatives that center on humble or ikčé practices. As she demonstrates throughout *WHEREAS*, apology coincides with a sense of humility that can operate within Lakota ways of knowing. Long Soldier's poetry that engages with personal apologies shows kinship, relationships with other-than-human persons, cultural protocol, and the commonality of Lakota life, unlike the governmental apologies she interrogates with critical rhetoric. Although the foundation for Long Soldier's critique of settler colonial was based on the congressional apology in 2009, in *WHEREAS*, Long Soldier shares tender moments of an apology from her father, which are simple and demonstrate a sense of humility:

> There at the breakfast table as an adult, wondering what to talk about if he liked my cooking, pushing the invisible to the plate's edge I looked up to see he hadn't sneezed, he was crying. I'd never heard him cry, didn't recognize these symptoms. I turned to him

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[222]"S.J.Res.14" (11th Congress, April 30, 2009), https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/14/text.

[223] Long Soldier first addressed the congressional apology in a collaborative art exhibition in 2012 at the Red Cloud Heritage Center on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

[224] I do not intend to pathologize Layli and reflect often on her public readings in which she shares a lot about her thinking while she was writing certain poems and in response to certain circumstances.

> when I heard him say I*'m sorry I wasn't there sorry for many things* / like that / curative voicing / an opened bundle / or medicine / or birthday wishing / my hand to his shoulder / *it's okay* I said *it's over now* I meant it / because of our faces blankly / because of a lifelong stare down / because of centuries in sorry[225]

The use of apology transforms ideas of reciprocity into deeper understandings of Očéti Šakówiŋ relationships. A simple and humble approach—at the everyday kitchen table—bolsters the apology.

The emotional affect of the apology, shared between father and daughter, engages in an intimacy influenced by cultural ways of knowing. The affect displayed in the quiet moments between child and parent exemplifies the interpretation of affect as feeling. The apology between Long Soldier and her father illustrates how "pushing the invisible to the plate's edge" signals the ways we feel or engage with intangible relations.[226] Affect, the edge of the invisible plate has been theorized by Indigenous studies and Feminist scholars as the way we emote that which is often dismissed within a settler or Western way of thinking.[227] Affect also signifies the emotions we engage with in a multitude as opposed to just being contained in one body—between Long Soldier and her father or the affective ways we engage with nonhumans.[228] The affective relation between humans and non-humans should be understood as operating in the same way between parent on child and our feelings of connection to the Land. Within a Lakota paradigm, the

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[225] The passage can be found in the " (1) Whereas Statements"—in the the second section of the book. There are twenty different "whereas" statements addressing a wide rage of topics. Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 65.

[226] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 65.

[227] I reference here Dian Million's original discussion about *Felt Theory* (2009) and the ways we perceive the impact of overwhelming feelings. See Dian Million, "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 53–76, https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0043.

[228] Mel Chen's articulation: "Affect inheres in the capacity to affect and be affected." See Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, Perverse Modernities (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012). 11.

context is the same, as demonstrated by Long Soldier's shifts from her father's apology and the governmental apology critique.

Long Soldier distinguishes a reciprocal interaction between parent and child not as patriarchal but as relational. Long Soldier illustrates a reciprocity that correlates to a continuum of hurt that spans "centuries in sorry."[229] This phrase, "the centuries in sorry" links the ongoing legacy of settler colonialism to the governmental apology's failure but highlights the intimate apology's success from Long Soldier's father. The sorry from her father, which spans centuries, acknowledges an apology that needed to be passed down intergenerationally (but not necessarily from formal institutions like the nation-state). Although some communities might need to hear apologies from settler colonial empires like the United States government, the apology that Long Soldier accepts is from her father. His apology is an extended engagement with harm and reciprocity reflecting the intimate impact of colonialism. The simplicity of an apology shared between Long Soldier and her father demonstrates a familial intimacy that provides a deeper reflection of affect within a relational context.

As demonstrated in the *WHEREAS* book*,* an apology from kin draws upon humility while providing an affective critique of apologies, which addresses that lack of feeling. Dian Million analyzes affect or "felt theory," the emotions needed to evoke and understand the dire conditions of First Nations communities in Canada.[230] Based on the gendered testimony of First Nations women, Million demonstrates how the feeling of violence, dispossession, and oppression is their

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[229] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 65.

[230] Million, "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History."

affective "felt knowledge."[231] The felt knowledge is used to then shames capitalist and colonial structures into action. My engagement with a felt knowledge is understanding how shame and, ultimately, a sense of humility can interrogate different types of apologies. The use of affect or the feelings needed to intellectualize our understanding of colonial systems of knowledge are the same—shame or humility, both concepts evoke feelings depending on the worldview. Colonial empires need to be shamed, as Million analyzes in her research. At the same time, our relatives find a humble position in apologizing for our intimate relations. The supposed ability of a humble apology has a more profound impact than how one might shame a colonial government into apologizing. Long Soldier repeatedly demonstrates that felt knowledge throughout her poetry helps convey how an apology from kin is more effective than an apology from an institution.

The ontological orientation of Indigenous communities, like the Očéti Šakówiŋ, demonstrates that human and nonhuman beings have obligations to everything that shares the land, which entails reciprocity in all actions. Therefore, a humble apology offers a commonality accessible to all parties engaging in the apology process. The apologies given by large institutions like the U.S. Government and the Roman Catholic church are grand, public, and often empty (from an affective standpoint).[232] The apologies issued by these colonial institutions remain just words on paper or words announced publicly without action. Political theorists have demonstrated the fraught histories of colonial empires across the globe, including critiques of Canadian truth and reconciliation by Glen Coulthard, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, while

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[231] Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013). 56.

[232] I refer to the extreme examples of Pope Francis' Roman Catholic apology on a grand stage and the quiet signing of a U.S. presidential apology on a Sunday with no one around.

scholars like Manu Karuka and Elizabeth Povinelli have addressed the failure of Australian multiculturalism in regards to Indigenous peoples.[233] Apologies are essential when dealing with trauma, historical harms, and approaching reciprocity from a Lakota perspective, which is vital to analyzing Lakota life.

A Lakota analysis of an apology gleans a subtle claim of reciprocal space when we understand our positionalities as common, everyday, or ordinary. In *WHEREAS*, Long Soldier ties kinship to grief, failure, acceptance, care, and how we imagine *ikčé* (ordinary or everyday) as a way to navigate the world. Although Long Soldier does not directly use the term ikčé in her book, I read the foundation of her work as demonstrating ikčé. For example, apologies offer a lens to understand the need to be ikčé, or common, in our approach to understanding Lakota creative practices that result in relational interconnectedness like that between parent and child.[234] ikčé is framed as a limitation of ourselves and guided by humility. Humility is a vital virtue in Lakota culture and essential to understanding Lakota life.

Humility is a crucial component of apologies within an Očéti Šakówiŋ context. Humility is often lacking when settler institutions give apologies. In Očéti Šakówiŋ culture, humility is "a virtue that the Lakota of old expected their leaders to possess."[235] Sicangu Lakota language specialist and culture bearer Albert White Hat, Sr. illustrates that "a quiet, humble person, we believed, was aware of other people and other things," demonstrating an awareness of kinship

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[233] See Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Manu Karuka, *Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019); Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2011).

[234] But an interconnectedness that is not patriarchal.

[235]Joseph M. Marshall, *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2002). 21.

and cultural protocol. A recent public apology to First Nations peoples in what is now Canada, an apology that was issued by the Roman Catholic leader Pope Francis on January 4, 2022, acknowledges the harm committed by the Roman Catholic church as an institution but does not provide any substantial actions to reduce that harm.[236] An apology in broad Western culture represents an acknowledgment of past damages or a statement of atonement but little acknowledgment of how to proceed once the apology is issued. And like the 2009-10 U.S. congressional apology, Long Soldier addresses a sense of humility in *WHEREAS*, which is necessary to acknowledge an ongoing relationship between giving and receiving an apology.

WHEREAS delineates how humility, as a Lakota virtue, is demonstrated through how we can apologize without the confinement of colonial language. To break down what an apology from a Lakota perspective might offer, I must consider how Lakota virtues shape our interconnectedness. As an elementary-age student, I was taught that seven Lakota virtues are considered integral when growing and understanding a Lakota way of being.[237] Of the seven broad virtues, the four fundamental virtues include bravery, generosity, fortitude (endurance or perseverance), and integrity (sometimes articulated as wisdom) and should be held in the highest regard.[238] In his book *The Lakota Way* (2002), Joseph Marshall III states that "virtues such as humility, respect, sacrifice, and honesty carry a different weight and substance than they do in Western culture."[239] The four fundamental virtues are cited often. I focus on humility because, as

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[236] "Udienza alle Delegazioni dei Popoli Indigeni del Canada," Holy See Press Office, April 1, 2022, https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2022/04/01/0232/00500.html#en.

[237] The seven virtues are: Praying, Respect, Caring and Compassion, Honesty and Truth, Generosity and Caring, Humility, and Wisdom.

[238] I was taught Lakota virtues as a child, but I can reference citable sources including Black Elk and Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*; Deloria et al., *The Dakota Way of Life;* Howe et al., *He Sapa Woihanble;* Walker and Jahner, *Lakota Myth;* White Hat and Cunningham, *Life's Journey—Zuya*; Marshall, *The Lakota Way.*

[239] Marshall, *The Lakota Way,* 12.

Joseph Marshall states, these virtues are not elusive; instead, they are "essential parts" of everyday life.[240] The challenge (or maybe the benefit) of Lakota virtues like humility are taught through example and modeling behavior within tribal communities.[241] I understand humility via Lakota virtues of kinship, represented in small ways throughout the *WHEREAS* text. Humility is integral to an apology, and connecting ourselves to cultural virtues shapes how a Lakota person might understand an apology.

Long Solider transforms an everyday breakfast conversation into a humble and straightforward retelling of her father's apology. The interaction between Long Soldier and her father occurs outside the cis-heteronormative patriarchal, cis-heteronormative structure of Western society.[242] She demonstrates an Očéti Šakówiŋ understanding of apology that evoked being an ikčé relative. In a 2019 book talk, she described the poem about her father's apology as "the most effective and miraculous apology [she had] ever received."[243] The apology occurs over breakfast, as Long Soldier cooks eggs for her father, but the apology is not paternalistic. The apology shared in the poem is unexpected and humble. Her father does not make a grand apology performance but simply acknowledges the harm. Unlike the paternalistic apologies from these institutions, the apology delivered by Long Soldier's father was unexpected and quiet. We could all take a moment and remember the "centuries of sorry" and look forward to the humble apologies of an ikčé relative.[244]

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[240] Marshall, *The Lakota Way*. 12.

[241] Warren, "On Critical Humility."

[242] And by cis-heternormative, I mean the structures of western societies that write formal apologies in documents signed by public officials. I refer to the extreme examples of Pope Francis' Roman catholic apology on a grand stage and the quiet, signing of a U.S. presidential apology on a Sunday with no one around.

[243] Long Soldier, "The Freedom of Real Apologies."

[244] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 65.

The ikčé demonstrated in *WHEREAS* builds upon Očéti Šakówiŋ standards of kinship. From a creative practice perspective, kinship is how we acknowledge our communities' legacies because the interconnectedness is not only built upon our familial connections, but the kinship demonstrated through gifting, creating protocols, and community care. As shared in the introduction, ikčé wicasa or ikčé winyan translates to "common man" or "common woman" or an everyday individual, as I have used in my research. Albert White Hat, Sr. interprets Christianity's internalized power structure, which Lakota people inherited through religion.[245] White Hat challenges (Christian) religiosity in creating a hierarchy of "sacred" and a "higher power" as "perfection."[246] He states, "The whole thing has become something mysterious, beyond the reach of ordinary people," Like the reach between Long Soldier and her father.[247] White Hat advocates and reminds Lakota relatives to be ordinary. The importance of being a common person is to ensure that individuals are held accountable to the larger whole of the community.

The sense of humility is a calling, an invitation to participate in relational practices (like poetry) that demonstrate a continuum. Long Soldier presents and shares with us through her poetry to understand an affective response to an apology, she provides an innovative approach while staying humble or ikčé. Long Soldier shares the apology from her father as a poem, but the feeling is carried beyond the poetics. As an ikčé artist and relative, the sense of humility in the poem about her father strengthens a relational analysis of *WHEREAS.* Ikčé transforms the mundane into a necessity for Lakota life. Lakota philosopher Victor Douville shares that "*ikčé*

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[245]White Hat and Cunningham, *Life's Journey—Zuya*. 74.

[246] White Hat and Cunningham, *Life's Journey—Zuya*. 75.

[247] Ibid.

means the original one and *wicasa* means human, the first human or original human."[248] Being the first within an Očéti Šakówiŋ context also establishes the care you are to provide for others. Without the humility of ikčé and the commonality of everyday life, Lakota people become historicized in a cycle of activism rather than engage in ongoing relational practices.[249] Ikčé is a respite to settler-colonial, neo-liberal, and capitalist ideology.

Long Soldier utilizes the violent language of the United States government to interrogate treaty agreements, empty governmental apologies, and assimilation tactics of oppressive forces.[250] Many analyses of the book focus on using the phrase "whereas" and how Long Soldier creates a clear reactive position to settler colonialism, as I demonstrated in the previous section; *WHEREAS* utilized grass as a marker of reciprocity and connection to Očéti Šakówiŋ life alongside the failures of the nation-state.[251] To create an inverse to the *Congressional Resolution of Apology to Native Americans*, Part II and the *(1) Whereas Statements* in the book employ the use of political language, reflecting the confines of settler logic and formal political

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[248] Victor Douville, "The Očéti Šakówiŋ" (online presentation). 2006.

[249] I refer to the current fixation on pipeline activism in the Northern Plains.

[250] There continue to be many conversations about reconciliation, and political apologies around the globe, I refer to scholars such as Jesse A. Allpress et al., "Atoning for Colonial Injustices: Group-Based Shame and Guilt Motivate Support for Reparation," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* (IJCV), April 28, 2010, 75-88 Pages, https://doi.org/10.4119/IJCV-2816; Tom Bentley, "Colonial Apologies and the Problem of the Transgressor Speaking," *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (March 4, 2018): 399–417, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1401922; Tom Bentley, *Empires of Remorse: Narrative, Postcolonialism and Apologies for Colonial Atrocity,* 1st ed. (Routledge, 2015), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315746722; A. Dirk Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism: Australian Indigenous Alterity and Political Agency," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 2 (April 2011): 145–59, https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2011.549698; Terence Turner, "Representation, Collaboration and Mediation In Contemporary Ethnographic and Indigenous Media," *Visual Anthropology Review* 11, no. 2 (September 1995): 102–6, https://doi.org/10.1525/var.1995.11.2.102; Dale A. Turner, *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Ernesto Verdeja, *Unchopping a Tree: Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Political Violence, Politics, History, and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009); Stephen Winter, "Theorising the Political Apology: Theorising the Political Apology," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (September 2015): 261–81, https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12047.

[251] Some Očéti Šakówiŋ specific criticism produced by scholars like Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*; Deloria and Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice; Estes*, "Wounded Knee"; TallBear, "Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming"; Waziwayatan Wilson, *What Does Justice Look Like?*.

documentation formats but placing the confines of settler logic and legal, political documentation formats the reader in new ways of reading. The use of "whereas*"* reflects the discourse of contractual documentation used within federal law while indicating non-binding language or a colonial unholding.[252] For example, in a treaty, the term "whereas" is similar to a phrase like "considering that" and becomes a non-essential operative within the document. They are building upon the emptiness of a word. In contrast, Long Soldier uses personal narrative and experience to remap what the initial 2009 U.S. apology did not address and what she deems worthy of including to address the issues in Lakota communities. An apology with concrete action for Lakota people might look different than what the federal policy would or could allow.

A Sovereignty Over Language

In public conversations about poetry, "sovereignty over language" is a phrase that Long Soldier has used to describe how to engage with the creative writing process. Sovereignty over language evokes a long legacy of understanding tribal self-governance, autonomy, and tribally specific worldviews across creative practice, legal frameworks, and the inherent relational processes we know as tribal people. When I heard Long Soldier share about teaching poetry or literature, she expressed how English language structures can be frustrating or overwhelming; "If I'm transformed by language, I am often crouched in a footnote, or blazing in the title, where, in the body do I begin?[253] As she states in the quote, Long Soldier often feels like she is "crouched in a footnote," unable to navigate the confined spaces of the English language or the grammatical

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[252] Kevin Bruyneel articulates "the space of unholding" when the "meanings are not in the hold of the settler discourse." See Bruyneel, *Settler Memory.* 395.

[253] Layli Long Soldier, "'Where Did I Go Wrong?' With Layli Long Soldier (The Poetry Project)" (YouTube, April 9, 2021), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDz_I9GeAts.

structures. Long Soldier primarily expounds upon sovereignty over language when relaying her experiences teaching tribal students. She explains that English is confusing, especially when encouraging students or tribal participants to write poems.[254] She shares that tribal students often do not want to write poetry or to write creatively for fear of getting something wrong.[255] The ability to govern words—to have a sovereignty over language—without the limitations of grammar or formal English writing structure has enacted the possibility of poetry.

The historic ways sovereignty has been realized within the interdisciplinary frameworks of Indigenous studies extend from inherent and intellectual sovereignty to visual and beyond sovereignty. In a 2020 article discussing the myriad of ways sovereignty can be articulated, especially within a comparative context, Indigenous studies scholars Matthew Wildcat and Justine De Leon constructed three categories of analysis of creative sovereignty, highlighting visual sovereignties, temporal sovereignties, and nested sovereignties.[256] Wildcat and De Leon's analysis does not include the work of Osage scholar Robert Warrior in their overall analysis.

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[254] Layli Long Soldier and Tilda Long Soldier, "A Capacity for the Unlimited within Constraints Part I" (Video, Winter Camp, Racing Magpie, November 21, 2022).

[255] Long Soldier often turns to dadaism (the avant-garde art movement in the early 20th century) to help students restructure English writing and creating new forms of poetry.

[256] Matthew Wildcat and Justin De Leon, "Creative Sovereignty: The In-Between Space: Indigenous Sovereignties in Creative and Comparative Perspective," *Borderlands Journal* 19, no. 2 (October 1, 2020): 1–28, https://doi.org/10.21307/borderlands-2020-008. I appreciate the extent of their research as they identified fifteen academic books that have discussed sovereignty over the past fifteen years. The scholars Wildcat and De Leon analyzed include: Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*, Indigenous Americas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Coulthard, "Place Against Empire; Jessica R. Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Bruyneel, *Settler Memory*; J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 5, no.1 (Spring 2016); Paul Nadasdy, *Sovereignty's Entailments: First Nation State Formation in the Yukon* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); L. Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation."; Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape*; Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Rifkin, *The Erotics of* Sovereignty; Raheja, *Reservation Reelism*; David J. Carlson, *Imagining Sovereignty: Self-Determination in American Indian Law and Literature* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016); Marisa Elena Duarte, *Network Sovereignty: Building the Internet across Indian Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017); Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

Warrior challenged Indigenous scholars in 2014 to complicate articulations of identity, suggestively countering an "essentialist" ideology based on notions of a fixed Native identity contributing to "an ossifying of American Indian existence."[257] As identity politics is not a focus of my research but integral to conversations of sovereignty, tribal autonomy, legal frameworks of sovereignty, and visual sovereignties, I signal the historical foundation of the complicated legacy of sovereignty analyses. Of the fifteen scholars Wildcat and De Leon identified, Jolene Rickard's assertion of visual sovereignty, which pre-date the fifteen books analyzed for the article, was not included.[258] In addition to inherent sovereignty—the right to govern a nation—Rickard's initial position was in response to how photography was perpetuated by colonial gaze. Rickard states, "It was a rejection of the singular notion of sovereignty as referring to only an Indigenous interpretation of sovereignty as legal or nationhood."[259] Seneca scholar Michelle Raheja further demonstrates the ways visual sovereignty has continued to expand with the contributions of scholars and artists across many different genres, including thinking outside legal boxes, cultural sovereignty, and intellectual sovereignty.[260] The long-standing articulations of sovereignty continue to morph and adapt as scholars take differing frameworks of autonomy and control over how our tribal worldviews can be understood and shared.

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[257] Robert Allen Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). xvii.

[258] Jolene Rickard et al., "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand," Aperture, no. 139 (Summer 1995): 50–59.

[259] Jolene Rickard, "Art, Visual Sovereignty and Pushing Perceptions," in *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada*, ed. Heather L. Igloliorte and Carla Taunton (New York: Routledge, 2022). 25.

[260] Michelle H. Raheja, "Visual Sovereignty," in *Native Studies Keywords*, ed. Stephanie N. Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle H. Raheja, Critical Issues in Indigenous Studies (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 25–34.

Sovereignty can be analyzed through critiques of federal negotiations and Indigenous communities' attempts to decipher what sovereignty looks like when tribal governments are forced to function within the nation-state. Dakota scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. expressed power complications when articulating sovereignty. Deloria spent most of his career making a case for North American Indigenous people to confront colonial legacies and redefine what power looks like for us within settler systems. Deloria posits that sovereignty takes on a different meaning when the power of governing shifts from governmental authority to community power, and "then it becomes apparent that power is manifested in a major way by the willingness to enter into agreements between communities."[261] Still, other Indigenous studies scholars critique sovereignty because they consider the concept irrelevant to Indigenous worldviews. Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholar Gerald Taiaiake Alfred posits that sovereignty, as currently understood in terms of the nation-state, cannot be seen as an appropriate framework or applicable to Indigenous values of *Peace, Power, and Righteousness*.[262] Alfred further demonstrates that sovereignty within the present-day legal formations "is an uneven process of re-establishing systems."[263] Alfred acknowledges that there are benefits from the constant reforming of governing systems within a nation-state, but ultimately, tribal nations have to ask what the "end goals" of sovereignty are and what they mean to inherent tribal structures.[264]

Power dynamics have a profound effect on tribal understandings of sovereignty. In Long Soldier's work, she explicitly engages with sovereignty through her poetry by refusing the

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[261] Vine Deloria, Jr, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). 119.

[262] Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness.* 54

[263] Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness*. 2.

[264] Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness*. 3.

confines of the English language or the confines of Western beliefs. In the second part of *WHEREAS*, in the section "(2) Resolution," Long Soldier signals explicitly to the language of legal frameworks, stating, "**I recognize** the special legal and political relationship Indian tribes have with the United States."[265] The "I recognize" is bolded, signaling to the tribal people directly impacted by the nation-state—while the rest of the sentence is in light gray font "the special legal and political relationship Indian tribes have with the United States."[266] Long Soldier is signaling to the legal frameworks that continue to manipulate through rhetoric and structure.[267] The confinements of colonial language continue to exclude particular individuals from spaces of hierarchy.[268] The sovereignty Long Soldier addresses simultaneously confronts the colonial legacies of the legal framework of sovereignty within the settler nation-state and how Lakota and Dakota peoples engage in inherent sovereignty.

To coherently express "sovereignty over language" within an art field, I examine the poetic work of Long Soldier by aligning the long legacy of sovereignty within Indigenous studies with a specific Očéti Šakówiŋ experience with creative practice and relational practices. A sovereignty over language is best understood when framed by a *tiospaye* ethics, which provides protocols for understanding our Indigenous positionalities within written narratives.[269] Christopher Pexa (Dakota) puts his own relatives' histories and stories into the conversation alongside the work he analyzes in his book *Translated Nation: Rewriting the Dakhóta Oyáte*

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[265] The bold emphasis designated by Long Soldier, *WHEREAS,* 89.

[266] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS,* 89.

[267] V. Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins.* 121.

[268] Even my passive writing style often excludes me from the "expertise" of academic writing.

[269] Pexa. *Translated Nation.*

(2019), which focuses on narrative writing in the assimilation era produced by Dakota physician Charles Eastman, Lakota philosopher Nicholas Black Elk, and Dakota ethnographer Ella Cara Deloria. In addition, Pexa's articulation of ethics is an appropriate form of relationality that aids in my framing of Long Soldier's sovereignty over language within the structure of her poetry. Pexa illustrates tiospaye ethics as "a flexible matrix for thinking Dakota survival, remakings, and change."[270] Utilizing the foundational thinking of relationality, as connecting with nonhumans like earth, water, and skies, Pexa defines the guiding principle of a tiospaye ethics as "a mode of placemaking" while also temporally bridging the past while thinking of the future.[271]

Long Soldier's poems become a mode of placemaking while demonstrating a sovereignty over language as she plays with the structure and space of the page to express an ontological relationship and sense of temporality as the reader engages with the poem's movement. For example, a sovereignty over language can be demonstrated in the structure of Long Soldier's poetry in *WHEREAS*.[272] Long Soldier plays with space in the book's first section. In the poem "Three," the four lines of the poem make a box on the page, breaking normative English writing.[273] Long Soldier rewrites the line "this is how you see me the space in which to place me" four times, each time a little differently, and framing a box on the page.[274] The way Long Soldier plays with the poem's structure defies the confinement of typically written poetry, and each time she changes the length, we are reimagining our relationship to the space on the page.

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[270] Pexa, *Translated Nation*. 21

[271] Ibid.

[272] I also want to take note that I am emphasizing the "a" in "a sovereignty over language" throughout the chapter because I understand there are multiple ways to demonstrate sovereignty and my analysis is just one example.

[273] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 8.

[274] Ibid.

When we pause to read and reread the poem's lines, we face ethics or, rather, a sense of sovereignty over the movement on the page. That means we may turn the page upside down to read, but we are jarred into a different way of relating to the words and concepts on the page. Like Long Soldier's strategy to have sovereignty over language, the tiospaye ethics informs "a notion of translational withholdings and proliferation thus allows for thinking translation beyond a model of communication."[275] The connection we feel as a reader to the poem simultaneously takes us out of a normative Western reading of the page while linking our experience to the poem and holding us accountable to the words we read.

We face obstacles like self-doubt or the limitation of English grammar structure when engaging and enacting a sovereignty over language. These are internalized impediments of self not necessarily dictated by a tiospaye ethics. In a virtual poetry workshop in 2020 that Long Soldier conducted with her aunt Tilda Long Soldier; they challenged the participants to think about the "constraints" of poetic practices.[276] Long Soldier asked the audience to provide words that reflected the idea of constraint, and people shared "holding back, a boundary, an obstacle, a limitation, or acknowledging protocols (rules of conduct)."[277] As audience members shared more phrases, Long Soldier reminded us that "constraints can sometimes be self-imposed and/or from the outside circumstances," which coincides with the limitations we often faced when evoking emotions.[278] The modes of expression and emotions regulate how we interact, or rather, the

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[275] Pexa, *Translated Nation*. 13.

[276] L. Long Soldier and T. Long Soldier, "A Capacity for the Unlimited within Constraints Part I" (Video, Winter Camp, Racing Magpie, November 21, 2022).

[277] L. Long Soldier and T. Long Soldier, "A Capacity for the Unlimited within Constraints Part I."

[278] Ibid.

feelings “bind us,” as Sara Ahmed demonstrates.[279] Utilizing psychoanalysis of language used to express feelings, Ahmed posits that we can examine emotions “in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective” to address more significant issues of confinement.[280]Ahmed does not directly capture the confinements of sovereignty or the issues tribal communities face with the nation-state, the ability to understand and address constraints we face while generating a sovereignty over language.

The commonality revealed through a sovereignty over language relies on our interconnectedness and the humility of that connection. The affective participation in poetic creating signals the feelings that enable an individual to navigate between the internal and external.[281] Sovereignty over language enables individuals to express themselves to the collective through emotion, bypassing Western standards' limitations of connecting through our feelings. As demonstrated in the previous section, linking to each other is illustrated through a commonality or a standpoint of humility. The every day or the ikčé, the common, established that a framework of breaking free of the confinement of the nation-state or stepping out of the footnotes of the English language, can be and is accessible to us all. Long Soldier invites us to claim sovereignty over the creative process and utilize language as we see fit to express our cultural kinship through poesis and show ourselves as everyday relatives.

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[279] Sara Ahmed. "Affective Economies." Social Text 22, no. 2 (2004): 117-139. muse.jhu.edu/article/55780.

[280] Ahmed. "Affective Economies." 118.

[281] N. Scott Momaday, “The Man Made of Words,” in Introduction to Indigenous Literary Criticism in Canada, ed. Armand Garnet Ruffo and Heather Macfarlane (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2016), 7–20.

Discerning an everyday worldview of Lakota cultural life through a lens of commonality and establishing a sovereignty over language keeps the ideas of culture and creative practice grounded without historicizing Očéti Šakówiŋ communities while contributing to the legacy of sovereignty. Problematizing and acknowledging how difficult everydayness is to historicize also demonstrates how we can utilize a sovereignty over language in our writing (creative or academic) and put into academia our relatives' histories.[282] I see Lakota intellectuals move in and out of time, intergenerational, and adapt to new settings to stay grounded in the present while adjusting to cultural protocol and understanding. As I reference at the beginning of the section, Christopher Pexa explains that "Dakota philosophy emerges continually— though at time figuratively — over time and from many sources."[283] As Long Solider's work demonstrates, Lakota cultural life shifts, and adapting an analysis that articulates a continuum of creative practices demonstrates present-day Očéti Šakówiŋ understandings. The everydayness of Long Soldier's creative practices aids in the ongoing autonomy we seek as tribal people in our writing and our contributions over time.

Long Soldier proactively responds to colonial ideas by writing back, another layer to engaging in a sovereignty over language. She utilizes structures and rhetoric to make her point about the failures of the United States government. In the poem *Wahpanicia*, Long Soldier writes,

> I wanted to write about wahpanica, a word translated into English as *poor* comma which means more precisely *to be destitute to have nothing of one's own*. But tonight, I cannot bring myself to swing a worn hammer at poverty to pound the conditions of that slow frustration. So I ask what else is there to hear? A comma instructs me to divide a

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[282] Pexa, *Translated Nation*. 28.

[283] Pexa, *Translated Nation*. 27.

> sentence. To pause. The comma orders a sequence of elements the comma is caesura itself. The comma interrupts me with, quiet.[284]

I read *WHEREAS* as Indigenous historiography and, more specifically, as an intentional formation and intervention of Očéti Šakówiŋ knowledge systems through tribal stories, oral histories, and cultural knowledge as a pause, a comma, a moment to write back. Seminole Historian Susan A. Miller advocates indigenizing history to distinguish "Indigenous historical narrative and methodology from those of the competing paradigm and discourse in American historiography."[285] Miller demonstrates how the field of history continues to shy away from Indigenous research paradigms that are tribally specific. Within history and historical analysis, Miller recognizes a lack of acknowledgment of Indigenous genocide and the atrocities that ensued. Long Soldier's use of the phrase "whereas" demonstrates the failure of a colonial apology and how to analyze an apology from an Očéti Šakówiŋ intellectual practice. Considering Miller's articulation of criticizing Western history, Long Soldier's work profoundly impacts Western academic fields and theoretical ways of knowing that sometimes fail tribal communities. Long Soldier's poetry provides a model of ways to document our histories through Indigenous ways of knowing.

Sovereignty, from a present-day legal framing, relies heavily on governing concepts that still operate within a colonial system and takes little of Indigenous perceptions of shared governance into account, let alone incorporate a creative or artistic practice. In some of Long Soldier's public-facing book talks, she states that she sees herself "often couched in the

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[284] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 43.

[285] Miller, "Native America Writes Back." 10.

footnote."[286] At least half of the poems in *WHEREAS* play with space on the page, turns sideways, move in circles, and play with diction and grammar. As readers, we are challenged by these poems; Long Soldier's poetry reshapes legal rhetoric and plays on spatial formations. We have to turn the book to get the full impact of the spatial disruptions. Long Soldier enacts her autonomy, individual sovereignty, over the creative practices passed through the page, not based on creating a hierarchy—instead, the spatial disorder humbles the reader. Throughout *WHEREAS,* Long Soldier changes the confinement of proper English sentences and grammar structures. As an Indigenous feminist thinker, specifically a Lakota feminist scholar, ikčé expands the space for me and transforms the extraordinary into the mundane.

"grassesgrassesgeasses" to Theorize

I remember as a child pulling long pieces of grass from the ground to chew on at the local pow wow grounds because the grass tasted sweet.[287] The sweetness of the grass, more like a reed, was comforting. I would not chew on the grass often, but I plucked long grasses as I waited for a grand entry to start. It is a fond memory for me, and I would seek out similar-looking grass at home, but it was never the same away from the pow wow arbor. Later, as an older adolescent, I pulled apart the grass to see what the inside looked like, only to find small grubs living in the grass. I never chewed on grass again.

Whether the grass has grubs or not, I am keen to articulate how we, as Indigenous people —more specifically as Očéti Šakówiŋ people—poetically and creatively use other-than-human persons to discuss reciprocity and demonstrate how poesis is essential to our narratives. I utilize

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[286] Long Soldier. "Where Did I Go Wrong?"

[287] I imagine this grass was buffalo grass, which is a bit more like a reed than a flat blade of grass.

grass to theorize Lakota relationality. How does grass become a marker of exchange? How does Long Soldier's use of grass map Lakota relationality and reciprocity? Grass, and other-than-human beings, are integral to our cultural protocols. If we utilize creative practice, we can connect to the continuum of tribal knowledge that operates outside the confines of formal institutions. The grasses I specifically rely on come from the ways artists like Layli Long Soldier articulate relationality in *WHEREAS* (2017).

In Lakota culture, we begin an event with an invocation, often through prayer. Prayer is usually a grounding practice or time to set intentions. In the beginning section of *WHEREAS*, Part 1, Long Soldier explores the confinements of space and language while performing an invocation. In ten words, the section's opening poem evokes a type of prayer:

> Now
> make room in the mouth
> for grassesgrassesgrasses[288]

Long Soldier gives these ten words as an invocation for her book. Her use of the phrase "grassesgrassesgrasses" is a tool for pain, apology, and understanding reciprocity. Grassesgrassesgrasses offer ways to understand oppression. Long Soldier begins with this invocation, revealing moments of pain and a larger interconnectedness. With her invocation, I want to dive into the grasses and make room in my mouth.[289]

As an invocation, grassesgrassesgrasses relates to many specific engagements with grass that are important to a Lakota worldview. Očéti Šakówiŋ communities will burn sweetgrass as

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[288] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS.* 5.

[289] I reference here the poem again and the line "make room in the mouth," Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*, 5.

medicine to create a welcoming atmosphere for an event.[290] Historically, before a social gathering, we would ask certain people, the grass dancers, to open a social meeting or space for ritual.[291] The grass dancers would slowly move across the gathering space and flatten the grass ahead of the rest of the dancers and the community. As the dancers would move, they would flatten the grass, pick pieces of the grass, and fasten the grass to themselves. I have not seen this practice occur firsthand, but I have heard stories again and again shared by pow wow announcers explaining the grass dance to spectators.[292] I know the protocol has begun to make a resurgence outside of the pow wow circle as people remember what grassesgrassesgrasses mean to us in cultural gatherings.[293] Since most social gatherings occur in spaces already prepared with cut grass or in permanent structures, these protocols are not always standard. As Long Soldier presses the grassesgrassesgrasses together on the page, I witness Očéti Šakówiŋ people push our grasses together through protocol and public ceremony, filling not only our mouths with the sonic grasses but stuffing grass underfoot and making way for cultural protocols.

As the grass dancers open a social dance space for Northern Prairie communities, Long Soldier opens our mouths and asks us "make room in the mouth for grassesgrassesgrasses," and maps Lakota kinship across the first half of *WHEREAS* in seven poems as a gendered reading of grass.[294] Literature and Gender studies scholar Mishuana Goeman in *Mark My Words: Native*

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[290] Očéti Šakówiŋ communities also utilize tobacco, cedar, and sage depending on the ceremony, ritual, or event.

[291] We were gifted the grass dance from our Omaha relatives. We have many stories about the Omaha and the gifts we traded. I use this article for quick reference: Robert DesJarlait, "The Contest Powwow versus the Traditional Powwow and the Role of the Native American Community," *Wicazo Sa Review* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 115–127.

[292] I need to mention that Ella Deloria shares about the poetic exchange of the grass dance for other ceremonies with the Omaha peoples in the novel *Waterlily.* See E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily,* 107.

[293] Grass dancing is still a large part of Lakota pow wow life, but the ritualistic performance is rare because of the lack of necessity to clear prairie grass from an area manually.

[294] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 5.

Women Mapping Our Nations (2013), provides Indigenous feminist theories of space and place to demonstrate how territory claims are beyond ideas of property and colonial ownership.[295] As illustrated in section three of this chapter, when Long Soldier reveals how the grass is used as a marker of reciprocity, grass maps Lakota relationality beyond the confines of settler colonial entanglements. Throughout *WHEREAS,* Long Soldier juxtaposes different types of apologies and acts of exchange to demonstrate a Lakota understanding of relationships. Long Soldier's use of grass as a map to "challenge hegemonic conceptions of race, gender, and nation too often mapped onto Native people both ideologically and physically."[296] Mapping as an Indigenous feminist praxis provides a framework to understand discursive, experiential, geographical, and political space.

After the innovation of grassesgrassesgrasses, we meet grass in various ways throughout WHEREAS. In the poem "Look," Long Soldier plays with space and cadence as we read across three pages between light and death and light and grass that is a part of the body, grass beads, grass wires, and grass skulls.[297] We find "solstice grasses" in the poem "Steady Summer," which reminds us of the seasons and our other-than-human kinship.[298] Long Soldier writes, "I don't trust nobody but the land." Solstice grasses and the land underneath the grass provide touchstones for understanding how Lakota people might relate to the grasses. Long Soldier weaves grass into poems to give nods to connections to place and signals how we might rethink

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[295] In her text, Goeman presents many stories demonstrating how Native women continue to navigate a changing landscape in the academy and the communities. See Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*, First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies (Minneapolis: MN, University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

[296] Goeman*, Mark My Words*. 23.

[297] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 11 - 13.

[298] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*. 31.

our relationships to the grasses. Throughout the book's first part, grass maps our relationships and continues to demonstrate where we find ourselves on and with the land.

The reciprocity demonstrated with grass is as simple as picking and braiding sweetgrass for use later. In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2013), ethnobotanist Robin Wall Kimmerer described a study that was pertinent to the relationships Indigenous communities have with Sweetgrass.[299] Kimmerer guided a graduate student to conduct a survey to determine if sweetgrass plants should have fewer human interactions for a better growth pattern. Their hypothesis was, "If we use a plant respectfully, it will flourish."[300] Kimmerer's research team initially received pushback from the university, which was relying on Western scientific methods and dismissing Indigenous traditional knowledge systems. In the survey, her team discovered that the sweet grass that had regularly been visited, harvested, and used by humans flourished, while the sweet grass with little interaction did not grow and eventually died. The study lasted several years and helped Kimmerer determine that the sweetgrass plants needed exchange, and relationality was essential to their growth.[301] We can recognize through this study that sweetgrasses, in this particular example, share our stories and want to participate in our journeys of interconnectedness.

"Grassesgrassesgrasses" continue to appear throughout the book to indicate affective moments representing different relationships. Long Soldier's use of grass as an invocation, as a cultural protocol, articulates a relationship between animate and inanimate, between human and other-than-human persons. Similarly, Ella C. Deloria presents kinship between humans and

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[299] Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass.*

[300] Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. 159.

[301] Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. 175.

nonhumans within Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures in *Waterlily* (1980), which is shown through cultural protocols but also the everyday interaction of kin like grandmother and dog or snake and snake dreamer.[302] We also repeatedly engage with the land and grass as the camp is set up and taken down during the nomadic summer months. Quandamooka scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson writes that relationality is shaped by epistemological paradigms, which focus on cultural understandings of protocols that dictate the interconnectedness with the world around us.[303] Relationality is a framework grounded in and engaged in stories, land, and sovereignty that relies on how we communicate our relationship to place, body, and protocol within Indigenous worldviews. Long Soldier's creative use of grass demonstrates the mediated nature of how art captures Lakota relationships to land, emphasizing discussions of relationality throughout the book. The grass represents the physical land, but as we move through the text, the grass stands in as a marker of Očéti Šakówiŋ cultural ideas of reciprocity, primarily through articulating Lakota relationality.

Sharing stories is a way we push or pull through the grasses; the tall grasses that need to be cleared for a gathering or the sweet grasses that we braid burn as medicine. In a poetry reading at Harvard in 2018, Long Soldier shared that she wrote a lot about grass because she lived in the four corners of the Navajo Nation. When she returned home to the northern plains, "the first thing that represented home was the grass, smell, and sight."[304] She explains further

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[302] In Deloria's *Waterlily* (1988), the story of Grandmother Gloku and the lead dog Burnt Thighs is on pages 43 - 44, and the Snake Dreamer story is on page 68. See E.C. Deloria, *Waterlily.*

[303]Moreton-Robinson, "Relationality: A key presupposition of Indigenous social research paradigm."

[304] Layli Long Solder, "WHEREAS || Radcliffe Institute, (video)," Harvard University, April 4, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCpvSiaz_Ps.

that she would pick a handful of grass and pick it apart. Grass continues to teach me how Lakota people relate to the world, each other, and ourselves.

The Lakota relationship with grass is critical to recognize in the larger scheme of Lakota relationality. Humility and apology demonstrate the lived experience of Očéti Šakówiŋ interconnectedness. Humility, especially, is "an openness to learning" that can be displayed through listening or showing respect, which would be understood within a specific tribal context.[305] Though the limitations of an apology are shaped by the entity apologizing, the entity receiving the apology, like the engagement of grass, is integral to Lakota relationality; how an apology feels is vital to Indigenous ways of knowing. Dian Million's (2009) "felt theory" demonstrates that the lived experience of historically oppressed Indigenous communities, although filled with pain and grief, transforms the feelings of intergenerational trauma into a continuum of hope.[306] As demonstrated in *WHEREAS*, an humble apology between relatives is more impactful than a public performance of an apology without action.

A Lakota Feminist Praxis and Indigenous Feminisms

Long Soldier contributes to a long legacy of feminist Očéti Šakówiŋ scholars. *WHEREAS* offers a complex lens to analyze power, voice, and colonial relations. Significantly influenced by Dakota scholars Ella Deloria and Zitkala-ša, I utilize her work as a long representational trajectory of cultural production that provides a framework for Očéti Šakówiŋ feminism. Long Soldier has created a thoughtful and innovative text to examine histories, landscapes, and how Lakota people operate in and outside the nation-state while also leaning into the accounts of our

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[305] Cariou, "On Critical Humility." 6.

[306] Million, "Felt Theory." 54.

communities. Long Soldier has stated that she considered Zitkala-ša "a literary ancestor" and understands the ways we can build upon gendered narratives that focus on the cultural protocol.[307] Consistent with Deloria and Zitkala-ša's writing inside and outside the academy, Long Soldier strengthens writing as kin intergenerationally.

Without kinship and other Očéti Šakówiŋ cultural values, an analysis of Oceti Sakwoin's creative practices is historicized when put into reactive spaces to settler colonialism. I affirm that there was no escape from the rapid assimilation of Očéti Šakówiŋ communities into Western society. However, Christopher Pexa (2019) takes an opportunity to analyze Dakota writers during the allotment and assimilation era, drawing connections between their accounts of Dakota cultural life as a temporal link between the past and the future. Pexa demonstrates the ways Dakota writers transform settler models of writing as "a mode of placemaking," establishing a very Dakota way of narrative building.[308] Long Soldier demonstrates this mode of placemaking from an Očéti Šakówiŋ perspective through her use of humility; although she is writing within a poetry context, she engages with the temporal link of our literary ancestors that Pexa outlines:

> Ella Deloria wrote a romance novel, ethnographies, and pageants, while Nicholas Black Elk performed mock ceremonies for white tourists. At the same time, Charles Alexander Eastman helped white children play Indian by working with Ernest Thompson Seton and the Boy Scouts of America.[309]

Long Soldier utilizes creative poetry practices and demonstrates specific kinship through her use of apology while demonstrating Očéti Šakówiŋ placemaking like Deloria, Black Elk, and Eastman. Pexa establishes that the modes of expression in Dakota writing communicate "an

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[307] Layli Long Solder, "ENCLAVE Series: Layli Long Soldier (video)" *CHAX: poetry & fine press*, November 30, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2Dr6SFVYfQ.

[308] Pexa, *Translated Nation*. 21.

[309] Pexa, *Translated Nation.* 1.

ontological relationship to ancestral lands and their human and other-than-human occupants," which I will further explore in the section that theorizes grass. [310]

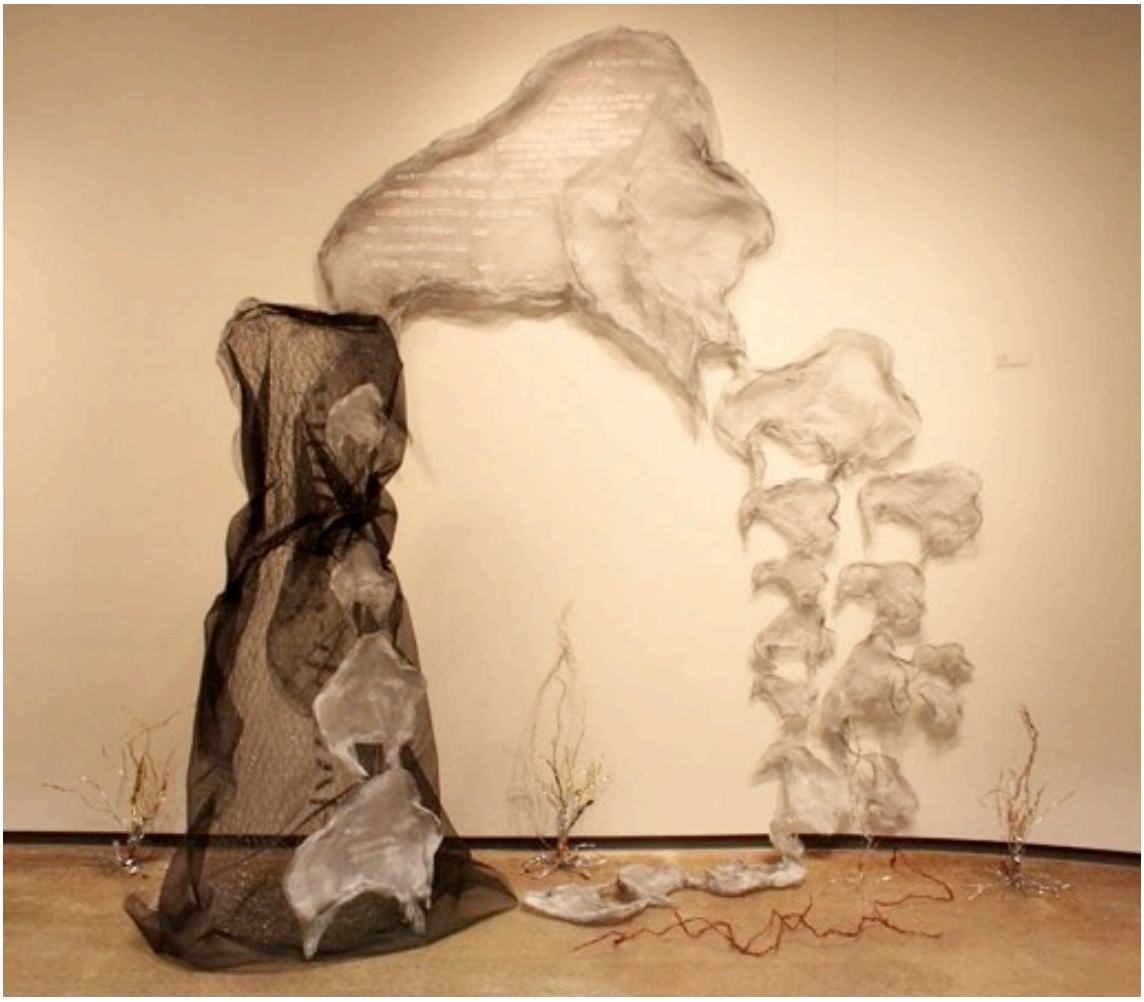

Figure 2: Layli Long Soldier, *Buffalo Book*, 2013. Chicken wire, window screen, copper wire, metal sheets. Photo provided by Mary Bordeaux.

Long Soldier's use of grass and kinship permeated her creative practices before publishing her poetry book. In 2013 Long Soldier participated in an exhibition at the Red Cloud Heritage Center called *Pte Oyate* (Buffalo Nation).[311] Her installation consisted of a full-size aluminum wire screen dress silhouette with a "spine" going through the center of the form,

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[310] Pexa, *Translated Nation*. 21.

[311] *Pte Oyate* (Buffalo Nation), exhibition, Red Cloud Heritage Center, August 12–November 30, 2014. Curated by Mary Bordeaux.

which you could see through the mesh (see Figure 2). The spine consists of Lakota family names with "Bull" in them. Long Soldier has stated that she wanted to list names to illustrate “the very old connection to Pte Oyate and the land and grasses (which nourishes our buffalo relatives).[312] A cascading “robe” made from a black acrylic mesh flowed behind the dress form. Ascending from the shoulder of the dress form were wire mesh clouds that seemed to float above and to the right of the silhouette and the robe. Then the mesh clouds seem to flow down to the floor to connect to the bottom of the installation, creating a circular effect with the entire form.

The poem accompanying the installation piece originated the opening verse in *WHEREAS* (2017). Similar to the invocation for her book, Long Soldier utilizes the poem as an opening for the installation, stating her purpose and reflecting on the form:

> This is the book
> I’ve been meaning
> to write
>
> An account of each
> family member.
>
> Before me after.
>
> To pronounce the names
> Sound out each letter
> Make a space in the mouth
> For the grassesgrassesgrasses[313]

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[312] The names include Sitting Bull, Bullman, Black Bull, Left Hand Bull, Jumping Bull, Three Bulls, Short Bull, Crazy Bull, Two Bulls, Bull Child, Medicine Bull, Brown Bull, Thunder Bull, Bull Chief, Tall Bull, Wallowing Bull, Red Bull, Yellow Bull, Spotted Bull, Bad Heart Bull, Plain Bull, Bull Bear, White Bull, Eagle Bull. Quote and list shared by Layli Long Soldier in personal correspondence. Long Soldier also shared that the list was longer but all she could fit on the installation piece is what is listed.

[313] Poem shared with me by Layli Long Soldier, personal correspondence 2022.

When Long Soldier shared images of the installation and discussed gathering Lakota family names, she spoke of the stories and experiences that her tiwahe (immediate family) and how each account shared about our names drew up more significant connections across time and space. The kinship demonstrated in our naming poetically illustrates how the Lakota communities recognize these interconnections.

Many Lakota people connect and relate with each other by sharing personal stories.[314] As a methodological and theoretical practice, sharing stories has been a woman of color feminist framework since the 1980s.[315] Indigenous writers like Linda Hogan, Paula Gunn Allen, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, and Beatrice Medicine have contributed to the continuum of feminist writing and laid the foundation for the intersection of creative practice and feminist ideology or, instead, an embrace of gendered narratives.[316] Long Soldier's use of familial "bull" names within an exhibition titled *Pte Oyate* (Buffalo Nation) builds upon the feminist tradition of sharing gendered narratives. First, the name "pte" is the gendered Lakoa name of the bison. In the language, we call the birthing bison "Pte" and the bison bull "Tatanka." *Pte Oyate* (Buffalo Nation) curator Mary Bordeaux deliberately titled the exhibit "pte" to signal the matrilineal nature of Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures. However, the names listed on the spine of Long Soldier's piece are from the "bull" names in Long Soldier's family, which also points to the settler colonial

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[314] Throughout the chapter, I weave personal narration into my analysis, demonstrating the affective engagement with Layli's poetry as a little sister, a daughter, a community member, and a Lakota scholar. My voice in my research is critical to me, and I sometimes transform my voice in my analysis as a demonstration of care for Layli's work. The transformation is often navigating between a passive voice because, historically and presently, this is how Lakota people would communicate publicly.

[315] Similarly, other women of color were shifting feminist writing and analysis with the publication of the 1981 anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa. See Moraga and Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 4th ed. (1983; repr., Albany: SUNY Press, 2015).

[316] Although, some of the writers I would consider my Indigenous feminist ancestors, might not necessarily be considered themselves feminists—I claim them as such.

construct of only writing down male names on the census rolls that are now passed down. As we see in naming the buffalo Spine, the relationships are diverse but still gendered. Long Soldier embraces the male-dominated names of the family while also placing them within a dress form, typically seen as a female form. The continuum of Long Soldier's work stems from these deep conversations of relationships over space and time, so I continue to return to her text.

The broadly Indigenous feminist analysis of reflexive writing that transforms the retelling of harm and the everyday actions taken to operate alongside colonial structures often comes in the form of memoir. Another excellent example of oral histories and Indigenous feminist narratives in action is *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (2012) by Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen scholar Deborah Miranda.[317] In *Bad Indians*, Miranda uses memoirs to map a personal narrative of her experience being a California Native and navigating the histories of the California Missions. Miranda states that "culture is ultimately lost when we stop telling the stories of who we are, where we have been, how we arrived here, what we once knew, what we wish we knew; when we stop our retelling of the past, the imagining of our future, and the long, long task of inventing an identity every single second of our lives."[318] Deborah Miranda demonstrates that culture is lost when we stop telling our stories. Long Soldier's poetry reminds me that the telling of culture through poetic writing is what we have always done as Lakota people. We have created stories about our lives that we artfully get to tell and remind ourselves that our telling is about our everyday interactions. Memoirs and personal narratives perpetuate and demonstrate an Indigenous Feminist tradition for a new generation of scholars and artists.

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[317] Deborah A. Miranda, Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir (Berkeley: Heyday, 2012).

[318] Miranda, *Bad Indians*. xiv.

While feminisms and feminist praxis do not begin to encompass the broad framework of tribally specific relationships, the terms are adequate placeholders for the points I am trying to make about the ways Očéti Šakówiŋ relatives like Long Soldier focus on gendered narratives and disruption of Western norms. Within the broad field of feminist studies, Black, Indigenous, and radicalized scholars in the 1980s offered a new iteration of feminist thought through stories. For example, Beth Brant's (Mohawk) 1988 anthology *A Gathering of Spirit: A Collection of Writing and Art by North American Indian Women* shifted away from a white feminist analysis that typically centered on critiques of gender exclusion and focused on gendered Indigenous voices within the emerging field of Indigenous studies scholarship and feminist scholarship.[319] Long Soldier's poetry builds upon the legacies provided by Indigenous women across genres but especially, for me, as a Lakota scholar within Indigenous feminist studies.[320] Not only does Long Soldier's work contribute to a long line of Indigenous feminists that utilize memoir, personal writing, and gendered narratives that operate along a continuum of sexuality studies that interrogate how and who we interact with as relatives.[321] My use of Indigenous feminisms-

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[319] With *A Gathering of Spirit*, Brant led a much-needed intervention of content that engages a wide variety of topics, including identity, abuse, family dynamics, and self-reflection. See Beth Brant, ed., *A Gathering of Spirit: A Collection by North American Indian Women* (Ithaca, N.Y: Firebrand Books, 1988).

[320] Those Očéti Šakówiŋ scholars include Zitkala-ša and Ella D. Deloria. Scholars like Beatrice "Bea" Medicine, a trained Lakota anthropologist receiving her Ph.D. in 1983, contributed to the Indigenous feminist movement. Her research focused on mental health, gender issues, linguistic inquiry, substance abuse, the research needs of American Indians, and identity issues within children. I include Dr. Medicine in this legacy because of her scholarship on issues of gender and identity. She wrote avidly about the roles of Lakota women and established a foundation for Lakota feminist inquiry demonstrating a need for focused and specific Lakota analysis. See Deloria et al., *The Dakota Way of Life*; Beatrice Medicine, "Native American (Indian) Women: A Call for Research," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (June 1988): 86–92, https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1988.19.2.05x1801g; Zitkala-Ša and Layli Long Soldier, *American Indian Stories* (New York: The Modern Library, 2019).

[321] See, for example: Barker, *Critically Sovereign*; Scott L. Morgensen, "Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2010): 105–31, https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2009-015; Kim TallBear, "An Indigenous Reflection on Working Beyond the Human/Not Human," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015): 230–35; and many others.

always grounded in a particular place- attempts to situate my analysis within an academic field that provides the framework to interrogate the use of stories and non-academic theoretical writing. Indigenous feminist scholars have tirelessly examined and indicated the link between heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism as deeply problematic for tribal communities. Indigenous feminist scholars have continued to speak about the challenges of using terms like "feminist" and "feminism" while articulating the gendering and Western social constructs we face as members of tribal nations operating alongside, against, and within settler colonial empires.[322] I continue to build upon the long legacy of Indigenous feminisms, which links land, people, and language to express nation-building and self-determination for tribal communities.

Očéti Šakówiŋ feminist scholars like Zitkala-ša, writing in the early 1900s, center reflective writing in various forms to present dynamic research and articulate a more nuanced investigation of Indigenous culture. My use of public-facing material and poetry published by Long Soldier aligns with this method of Indigenous feminist analysis. The use of stories has become a dominant characteristic of Indigenous feminist scholarship. Although Long Soldier's poetry continues to be well-received in non-native poetic circles, I read Long Soldier's work as Lakota-centric without attempting to pathologize her position as a Lakota woman, which has a

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[322] Many scholars have demonstrated the importance of feminist interventions. See: Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism"; Barker, *Indigenous Feminisms*; Goeman, "Indigenous Interventions and Feminist Methods"; Mithlo, "A Real Feminine Journey"; Luana Ross, "From the 'F' Word to Indigenous/Feminisms," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 39–52.

long history within the academy.[323] I focus on her public-facing work; she has offered a lot of insight into the ethics of creative practices; in this context, I hone in on the work she has provided to everyone.[324] I take a concentrated analysis from an Očéti Šakówiŋ perspective of her published materials to ensure that I engage with her work without revealing beyond the scope of what she wants to share in public-- the intimacies often shared between Lakota people do not need to be subjected to an outside gaze. As I illustrate in this chapter, public-facing and published materials received by diverse audiences do not diminish Long Soldier's gender articulations she creates with and for the Očéti Šakówiŋ community but empower her creative practices as a Lakota relative.

My focus on her public work allows me to demonstrate the continuum of Lakota relationality represented in creative practices not centered on whiteness or the construction of counter-narratives. Black, Indigenous, and radicalized artists do not have the luxury of separating their personal lives from the perception of their creative work. My analysis is not centered on how Long Soldier might be perceived by a non-native audience or the colonial entanglements determined by the broader art world, including the challenges of capitalism, hierarchical economies, and settler-colonial logics that influence Northern Plains' artists to navigate the art

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[323] We see the erasure of autonomy of gendered narratives when attempting to understand the Missing and Murdered Indigenous women movement as well as the long history of carceral systems. For the extensive work on addressing the ways Indigenous bodies and people have been pathologized by the state, see works such as but not limited to: Elizabeth Comack, *Coming Back to Jail: Women, Trauma, and Criminalization* (Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2018); Andrew A. Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan, *Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State* (Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2018); Jaskiran Dhillon, "Indigenous Girls and the Violence of Settler Colonial Policing." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 4, no. 2 (December 17, 2015): 1–31; Carmela Murdocca, "From Incarceration to Restoration: National Responsibility, Gender and the Production of Cultural Difference," *Social & Legal Studies* 18, no. 1 (March 2009): 23–45, https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663908100332; Luana Ross, *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

[324] My goal is not to analyze the interiority of Long Soldier's choices but how her creative work can be analyzed through a Lakota-centric framework.

world. I read Long Soldier's work as operating alongside and not necessarily against Western art institutions. Sometimes we do not have the energy or the focus to combat these institutions or the time to fixate all of our intellectual and philosophical vitality on that discussion. I have witnessed Long Soldier navigating colonial practices like national book awards and university talks while presenting as unapologetically Oglala Lakota. I admire her patience and grace in institutional settings, the continued centering of Lakota virtues, and the ethics she demonstrates.

To better articulate my positionality and why I am best suited to provide a Lakota-centric analysis of Long Soldier's poetry, I offer insight into my collaboration with her as a relative. In 2017 I had the fortune to co-curate an exhibition with Long Soldier and my sister Mary Bordeaux. We collaborated to create an interactive art exhibition titled *Responsibilities and Obligations: Understanding Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ* (2017).[325] Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ is a phrase in the Lakota language and culture that loosely translates to "we are all related" or "all my relatives." The term is used by Lakota and non-Lakota alike. The expression has been appropriated as an all-encompassing idea of inclusiveness. This exhibition was a reflective journey highlighting Lakota female perspectives surrounding this idea and concept of Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ. The show opened a few months before I began my doctoral program and has been an intellectual guidepost for my inquiries into gender narratives and Indigenous feminist thought. The project engaged Lakota artists, scholars, and general audiences to reflect on the appropriation of Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ through mixed and multimedia installations. The exhibition provided an opportunity to

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[325] *Responsibilities and Obligations: Understanding Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ*, exhibition, Racing Magpie, Rapid City, SD, 2017–18, curated by Clementine Bordeaux, Mary V. Bordeaux, and Layli Long Soldier, https://www.racingmagpie.org/mitakuye-oyasin-exhibit.

share the Lakota language and build understanding within the Títuŋwaŋ (Lakota/Dakota/Nakota languages) of the region and Native and non-Native populations through arts and culture.[326]

I did not realize at the time that we were working in (what the Western academy would consider) an Indigenous feminists praxis or, rather, a Lakota feminist praxis. Working with Layli and my sister has influenced how I understand and articulate an analysis of Layli's work, grounded in what I illustrate as Indigenous feminist thinking. We worked as kin and collaborated with our participants as kin. We created art grounded in our cultural ways, utilizing new technologies and mediums and creative sharing methods. I acknowledge that "feminism" is minimal within the broader Lakota paradigm of relating. I use feminist concepts to articulate a way of describing that recognizes the entanglements of cis-heteronormative patriarchy while providing relief from attempting to explain an entire field of colonial settler ideology.[327] For now, feminism and feminist praxis are how I aim to frame my analysis. I do see myself as a feminist, which I define as being a good relative. I understand being in good relations operating before and alongside the Western societal structures that are in place to oppress specific communities. Not all Lakota feminists see themselves as such, even if they are approaching ways of relating that are similar to mine.[328] The process I see between Layli, my sister, and I demonstrates a deep sense of care for approaching the subject of relationality that we knew could be overwhelming and sensitive to our community.

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[326] I utilize the word *titunwan* to represent the broad Očéti Šakówiŋ and surrounding Northern Plains tribal groups.

[327] There are many ways to articulate and problematize the use of feminisms within Indigenous communities, some scholars I reference include: Barker, *Indigenous Feminisms*; Goeman, "Indigenous Interventions and Feminist Methods"; Mithlo, "A Real Feminine Journey"; Luana Ross, "From the 'F' Word to Indigenous/Feminisms," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 39–52.

[328] I also use feminisms because I want other Indigenous people to understand and articulate themselves as feminists, especially within an academic institutional setting.

Layli utilizes grass to indicate how she relates to the world, especially when faced with challenges outside our comfort.[329] Articulating Indigenous approaches to how we relate to each other is integral to Indigenous feminist research theories. Melanie K. Yazzie (Navajo) and Cutcha Risling Baldy (Hupa, Yurok, Karuk) demonstrate how relationality operates as Indigenous feminist praxis when we interact and include other-than-human persons our theorizing. In the"Introduction: Indigenous People and the Politics of Water" in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* (2018), Yazzie and Risling Baldy articulate relationality as the "network of life that simply refuses to disappear" for Indigenous communities that reclaim our interconnectedness to nonhuman relatives like water, land.[330] Relationality, as a praxis, incorporates Indigenous ways of knowing and being in our everyday life that are a "project of inter-reflexivity, a struggle for decolonization premised on the accountabilities we form in lively relation to each other."[331] Layli's poetry, through her use of grass, posits the need to build relationships between each other and nonhumans.

Layli demonstrates the radical relationality Yazzie and Risling Baldy articulate through a critical consciousness that operates outside the confines of hegemony that reimages the world of interconnectedness and bolsters a coming together to provide opportunities towards a movement to disturb power relations. Yazzie and Risling Baldy center conversations around water but provide a more broad articulation of relationality that is a "multidirectional, multispatial, multitemporal, and multispecies theory of relationships and connections forms the terrain of

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[329] For the rest of the chapter, I will refer to Layli using her first name.

[330] Melanie K. Yazzie and Cutcha Risling Baldy, eds., "Introduction: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water,* 7, no. 1 (2018): 1.

[331] Yazzie and Baldy, "Introduction," 2.

decolonized knowledge production."[332] Although Layli is not directly engaging with water in her framing of relational practices, her use of grass becomes our tool to theorize. In the poem titled "Irony," Layli uses grass in comparison to the dry desert.[333] She writes, "I grass nothing, here I meta-grass, I sleep-walk grass."[334] Instead of relying on a re-telling of loneliness, often how colonial isolation and disconnection are articulated, an Indigenous feminist praxis, a radical relationality, provides a framework to utilize other-than-human persons to communicate our discomforts with the power dynamics set forth by settler states. For example, the contrast of grass and desert offers relief to the trope of loneliness by Layli in a landscape outside the beautiful grasses of the Northern Plains. Loneliness often results from displacement or relocation forced on us by outside entities. Yazzie and Risling Baldy center on the evolving traditions of the Indigenous community in which "we see a critical process emerging, one where we are learning how to work together as good relatives even while carrying all the contradictions and injuries that colonialism has imposed upon us into these relationships."[335] Layli writes, "I grass nothing, here," establishing that she misses prairie grass, not rabbitbrush, and in the closing of the poem, she writes, "I'm alone."[336]

Grass and dessert reflect how a Lakota person is reminded of finding connection with other-than-human persons and teaches us how to share our ways of relating more creatively when we are not in our physical homelands. The irony of grass that is familiar to Layli versus the

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[332] Yazzie and Baldy, "Introduction," 1.

[333] Yazzie and Baldy, "Introduction," 45.

[334] Ibid.

[335] Yazzie and Baldy, "Introduction," 10.

[336] Yazzie and Baldy, "Introduction," 46

dry desert helps her realize that she feels alone in the desert, ending the poem with "I'm alone."[337] But unlike the trope of colonial difference in which Indigenous people oppose their discomfort with white normativity, Long Soldier utilizes relationships with other-than-human persons to define her loneliness and mark a more significant connection to "home" versus what is different. When Layli writes, "I grass nothing, here," she signals what is missing in the dessert. Layli re-centers the critiques of the dessert to focus on the relational practices she is used to in the Northern Plains.

The radical relationality that Layli demonstrates coincides with a sovereignty over language that operates as a type of refusal. Layli utilizes the "revenge" of Dakota ancestors to comply with oppressive measures by settler colonialism. Still, revenge in the context provided by Layli operates on a cultural level that shifts how retaliation is defined and communicated. Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson employs revenge as "hailing historical consciousness."[338] Simpson demonstrates that revenge takes many shapes and, within a settler context, is often articulated as refusal.[339] Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson employs refusal as "hailing historical consciousness." Simpson also demonstrates how Mohawk communities remind non-tribal people of Mohawk sovereignty and utilize refusing as an expression of the hyper-recognition of historical events. The authority that Simpson articulates is the ability of an Indigenous person to voice their own experience within an ethnographic narrative, especially concerning events that have been historicized in a particular viewpoint by Western academia. The documenting of

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[337] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*, 46.

[338] A. Simpson, "Consent's Revenge," 330.

[339] Ibid.

historical events that Layli demonstrates throughout *WHEREAS* becomes more apparent as we enter "Part II: Whereas."[340]

During the Dakota Wars, a local farmer, Myrick, said, in response to the Dakota people starving on the reservation, "Let them eat grass."[341] In the weeks following the statement, a group of Dakota men killed the farmer, stuffed his mouth with grass, and took his cattle to feed their community. I interpret stuffing the farmer's mouth with grass as how the Dakota men recognized the power dynamic during this time in 1862, a stressful time for tribal communities forced onto reservations in the northern plains.[342] The Dakota community dealing with Myrick had attempted to create an exchange with the farmer because they were starving, but that trade was rejected.[343] Yes, stuffing the farmer's mouth with grass is an act of revenge. But revenge from whose perspective? Their defiance is a refusal to let people starve. Initially, grass could be understood as a marker for revenge, which is often how Indigenous acts of defiance are categorized. Instead, I analyze how grass becomes a marker for shared reciprocity while also understood as an act of refusal and revenge.

This articulation of physically stuffing his mouth full of grass transformed a simple statement of dismissal into a legacy of hyperawareness and a poetic anchor for other Očéti Šakówiŋ descendants. Even in extreme circumstances, the Dakota community poetically

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[340] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS,* 56.

[341] Linda M. Waggoner, "Sibley's Winnebago Prisoners; Deconstructing Race and Recovering Kinship in the Dakota War of 1862," *Great Plains Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 25–48.

[342] The act of the Dakota men is often framed as "revenge," especially during the trials of the accused. See John A. Haymond, *The Infamous Dakota War Trials of 1862: Revenge, Military Law, and the Judgment of History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2016), 85.

[343] Haymond, *The Infamous Dakota War Trials of 1862*.

responded to the farmer. In Layli's poem "38," in lines seventy-eight and seventy-nine, she writes:

> When Myrick's body was found,
>
> his mouth was stuffed with grass.
> I am inclined to call this act by the Dakota warriors a poem.[344]

As demonstrated by Layli, the anger the Dakota warriors felt was appropriate, and how it was handled in 1862 still echoes today.[345] We still feel the rage of being told to eat grass when the accountability of the nation-state leaves us without resources to feed ourselves. The grass in the farmer's mouth demonstrates an ontological difference between settler notions of consumption and denial and people's ongoing relationship with other-than-human persons and places. The lack of humility or ikčé (commonness) in Myrick's action transforms the response of the Dakota relatives. Layli's use of the Dakota warrior's action aligns with her poetic reading of apology throughout her book. If the stuffing of Myrick's mouth with grass was a poem, then the step demonstrates sovereignty over language, an affective engagement outside Western norms. Settlers continue to create violent and dismissive situations that Očéti Šakówiŋ communities are forced to react to instead of existing in our time and place.

The narrative of accountability via an other-than-human person is one example of how weaving poetry, history, and intellect continues to connect our stories of oppression with processes of relationality. Layli's use of the grass manifests anger in the immediate reaction to starvation and the long-term impact of settler ideology. "Let them eat grass" was not lost on Dakota communities who chose whether or not to react to the violence. They could have eaten

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[344] Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*, 53.

[345] The Dakota 38 + 2 is an infamous historical event in which 40 individuals were mass executed in Mankota, MN through an executive order by President Lincoln.

grass (i.e., starved), but they decided to act instead. Layli leans into the uncomfortable images of accountability. The Dakota relatives' actions demonstrated a choice that would be carried with Myrick into the next life because Očéti Šakówiŋ communities understand any action taken in this life, even verbally, is carried on to the next plane of existence. Our understanding is Myrick is now eating grass in the afterlife.[346]

The grass in the soldier's mouth might be understood as revenge, inflicting hurt or harm on someone for an injury or wrong suffered at their hands. A settler notion of revenge is reactionary. But Dakota's refusal demonstrates an ontological difference between settler notions of consumption and denial and the ongoing relationship Dakota people have with other-than-human persons. Additionally, the grass could be understood as resistance; Kevin Bruyneel writes in the preface to *Settler Memory* (2022) that, in *WHEREAS,* Layli demonstrates "that settler colonialism's past is not really of the past for Indigenous peoples nor the settler society; the damage continues as does resistance to it."[347] Bruyneel expands, using Christina Sharpes' articulation of rupture, that for the past to rupture, the present demands settlers to be accountable (and he includes himself).[348] Bruyneel's articulation of Layli's resistance is grounded in an analysis of grassesgrassesgrasses as an "unholding," which takes on different meanings within different contexts.[349]

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[346] Layli's engagement of the afterlife of the Dakota 38 represents the Očéti Šakówiŋ intellectual continuum Christopher Pexa established in his reading of Dakota writers during the assimilation period. See Pexa, *Translated Nation.*

[347] Bruyneel, *Settler Memory*, 14. See also Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

[348] Ibid.

[349] Bruyneel, *Settler Memory* . 222.

Layliuses the Dakota warrior's action to align with her poetic apology reading. Because settlers continue to create violent and dismissive situations that Očéti Šakówiŋ communities must react to, we have continually had to respond rather than just exist. Where is the accountable relationship within the settler context? Accountability in the present day is not physically stuffing a settler's mouth with grass, but the poetic quality of stuffing the mouths of settler memory is deeply satisfying. As noted, Dakota relatives stuffing Myrick's mouth with grass was a choice that would be carried with him into the next life because Dakota people and Očéti Šakówiŋ communities believe that any action taken, even verbally, can be carried through to another lifetime.[350] I do not read Layli's work as resistance only, like the "unholding" that Kevin Bruyneel introduced in *Settler Memory* (2022), which he articulated as Layli loosening the hold of the settler state.[351] I see a refusal to comply with the colonial language of the nation-state. Layli's use of "whereas" is a metaphorical stuffing of the nation-state's mouth with grass. This is not an act of revenge but a call to reciprocity and an assertion of ontological difference.

Layli Long Soldier's poetry demonstrates a critical radical relationality process that tiptoes the line between kinship, Lakota and Dakota inherited settler memory, and unapologetically refusing. My understanding of Lakota/Dakota kinship between land, body, water, and place is working toward untangling from settler ideology. Yazzie and Risling Baldy

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[350] There are many ways to articulate the idea of reciprocity beyond life and death. In some Lakota communities, the idea of "same as above, as below" is the phrase to indicate the action taken in this lifetime carried into another lifetime. In visual form, the idea of "same as above, as below" is represented in a shape called *kapemni,* in more recent publications Lakota scholar Kite and non-native scholar Justin De Leon have articulated kapemni within Lakota cosmologies. The kapemni symbol and ideology behind the concept also align with the more board Indigenous concept of seven generations, which signals the impact of today's choices by seven generations in the past and seven generations in the future. See Justin de Leon, "Lakota Experiences of (in)Security: Cosmology and Ontological Security," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 33–62, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2018.1527183; Suzanne Kite, "'What's on the Earth Is in the Stars; and What's in the Stars Is on the Earth': Lakota Relationships with the Stars and American Relationships with the Apocalypse," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 45, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 137–56, https://doi.org/10.17953/aicrj.45.1.kite.

[351] Bruyneel, *Settler Memory*. 239.

define radical relationality as the "ontology of being-in-relation-to that describes all life and futurity; keeping ourselves open to the possibility of making new relatives is one of the essential functions of life and, indeed, decolonization."[352] Layli's work continues to be a map to oppose settler incursions and uplift a radical Lakota relationality that transforms words, speaking, and art into resurgence. Layli reminds me to return to Lakota stories and the articulations of sovereignty, land, and relationality and meet again in the grassesgrassesgrasses.

From a Dakota perspective, scholar Waziwayatan argues for an innovative way to rethink our relationships with other-than-human persons, especially land and water—primarily focusing on the ongoing interconnectedness interrupted by settler colonialism. As demonstrated in *What Does Justice Look Like?,* "We all must rethink our ways of being and interacting in this world to create sustainable, healthy, and peaceful co-existence with one another and with the natural world."[353] Waziwayatan is looking specifically at the interactions in Minnesota and utilizes creation narratives to establish and posit a specific way of viewing the world. Considering the dynamic ways Layli uses alternate forms of rhetoric, Waziwayatan attempts to shape different research goals based on Dakota ideology by positing that Dakota communities need access to land to "break camp" and start the slow process of recovering from colonization.[354] Historically breaking camp would be for multiple reasons: following game for hunting, a change of seasons, or moving for a celebration, etc. Although Layli does not necessarily attempt a "breaking" of camp in her text, the poetic articulation of being dissatisfied with colonial language and colonial

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352 Yazzie and Baldy, "Introduction," 11.

353 Waziwayatan Wilson. *What Does Justice Look like?* 13.

354 Waziwayatan Wilson, *What Does Justice Look Like?*

frameworks indicated a type of "unholding."[355] Layli helps us break camp, or untold settler logics, through her poetic and creative practices.

Conclusion: Breaking Camp

Breaking camp is another way to imagine *WHEREAS* as a transformation of refusal and revenge into a call for reciprocity. Breaking camp's ontological and epistemological formation can be expressed in a Lakota-specific worldview in creative practices like poetry. I expanded upon ideas of humility, sovereignty, and relationality by utilizing Layli's poems of apologies to map reciprocal Lakota ways of understanding the commonality of our kinship—providing a gendered Lakota response to the "Congressional Resolution of Apology to Native Americans" (2009), *WHEREAS* relates to culture through time and space by highlighting acts of refusal, connection to land, place, and memory. Therefore, Layli provides many ways to break camp through her poetry—first, by encouraging relatives to articulate themselves better as ikčé people through our apologies; second, by challenging readers and relatives alike to have sovereignty over our language, whether that is turning colonial rhetoric upside down or reframing the structure to suit our own needs; and, finally, we break camp through a radical relationality that engages both gendered narratives and other-than-human kin as integral to our ways of being.[356] Layli's poetry helps us map a way to break camp, to reimagine creative ways of being and interacting as everyday Očéti Šakówiŋ relatives.

After breaking camp, depending on where the next camp needs to be built, a goal of creating has to be in place. I think back to the 2017 interaction art exhibition I curated with Layli

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355 "Unholding" is articulated by Bruyneel, *Settler Memory*.

356 And by gendering, I mean the intersectional ways that Očéti Šakówiŋ women and female kin navigate the world, which is better articulated in the last section of this chapter.

and my sister, Mary Bordeaux; *Responsibilities and Obligations: Understanding Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ*. From my perspective, the collaboration between the three of us felt thoughtful, operating on a feminist praxis that aligned with a paradigm of radical relationality. Although the exhibition was initially in reaction to settler colonial logics, the creativity comes from a place of relational practices. We exercised a methodology of gathering stories from our tribal communities and collaborating to produce for our tribal communities. The curation between the three of us, as relatives, and the engagement of the participants provided an ethics of care. I am often in dire need of interconnectedness in Western spaces, especially the moments when I need to break camp from the academy. Building relational practices with my kin is necessary for my theorization. The work with Layli and my sister offers an excellent framework for relationality

The exhibition, curated by Layli, my sister, and I, created visual and sensory layers to experience shared histories and memories. In the show installation, we used other-than-human motifs, including a dragonfly, porcupine, buffalo skull, cricket, and rock. All the nonhuman kin referred to cultural stories or items used in our ritual practices. These other-than-human objects in the exhibition held audio interviews that I conducted with Lakota and Dakota women (see Figure 3 above). For example, my sister Mary created a large *tuwseca* (dragonfly), and embedded in the piece was audio of Dr. Agnes Picotte stating "Mitakuye Ki Oyasin" and explaining that the additional "ki" was added when you were formally using the phrase.[357] We chose educators and teachers in some capacity and range across diverse, intergenerational age groups. The hanging of other-than-human objects was made from wireframes covered in cloth.

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[357] *"Responsibilities and Obligations: Understanding Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ."*

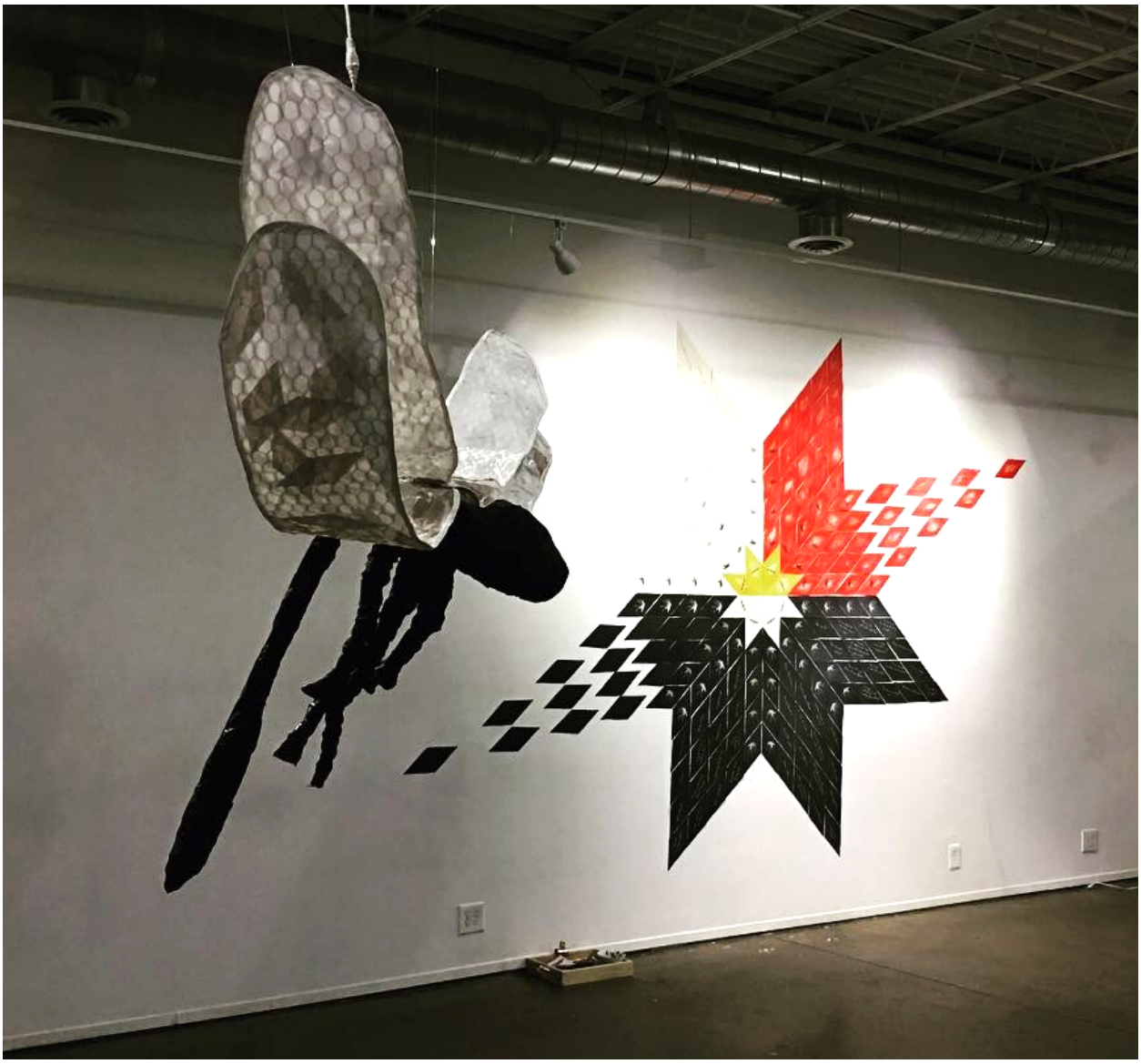

Figure 3: Mary Bordeaux, *Tuwseca* (Dragonfly) and Layli Long Soldier, (Mosquito) *Starquilt,* paper, cotton, chalk, chicken wire, 2017. Image provided by Racing Magpie: installation view of the 2018 show at Public Functionary, Minneapolis, MN.

Layli created quilts for the exhibition, which signaled a gendering and a legacy of creative practice. The poems held on the quilt patterns were pulled from the words and writings of Lakota women descended from our relatives that used to write those ideas on buffalo hides but

now are written on a paper quilt.[358] The paper quilts Layli produced were significant in the more extensive exhibition as they were the show's highlight. Another quilt held eight poems (not pictured) that Layli made for each section of her paper quilt to evoke a different concept the show was attempting to engage. The poems embedded in the quilts offer truths about our worlds and the ways we narrate truths through creative mediums.[359] I read the quilts Layli produced as operating within a continuum of gendered narratives.

Quilts have become a significant addition to craft-making and creative practices across Northern Plains tribal cultures. Many Indigenous studies researchers have acknowledged the significance of quilt designs, domesticity, and construction to address various issues.[360] In collaboration with Patricia Albers, Lakota scholar Beatrice Medicine co-authored "The Role of Sioux Women in the Production of Ceremonial Objects: The Case of the Star Quilt," which addresses societal roles for women historically and sets up scholars to understand societal and gender roles have shifted since settler contact.[361] Medicine focuses specifically on female identity and the gender roles of Lakota women in contemporary and traditional spaces by examining the continuum of creative practice through quiltmaking. Layli's quilt engendered a

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[358] I reference the Lakota mnemonic device of a winter count because extensive research surrounds this mode of history telling. It also served as a blanket resulting in these buffalo hides being given to specific communities or families for certain reasons. This tradition was then transmitted to the use of quilts after the reservation system was established. Since, in modern society, purchasing a buffalo hide is costly, the framing of the found poetry on a paper quilt is meant to resemble the device of holding memory and engaging with multiple epistemologies over time.

[359] McGlennen, *Creative Alliances*. 15.

[360] On this domesticity research, see: Patricia Albers, "Autonomy and Dependency in the Lives of Dakota Women: A Study in Historical Change," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 17, no. 3 (1985): 109–34; Albers and Medicine, eds., *The Hidden Half*; Antoinette Burton, "Toward Unsettling Histories of Domesticity," *The American Historical Review* 124, no. 4 (October 2019); Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014); Beth H. Piatote, *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); Jane E. Simonsen, *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860–1919* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[361] Albers and Medicine. *The Hidden Half*.

similar sense of societal roles within Oceit Sakowin tribal communities. As Bea Medicine shaped research that articulated gender roles specific to Lakota/Dakota cultural needs and demonstrated a Lakota/Dakota research story, Layli has continued the legacy of quiltmaking through her work.

The quilts help me imagine the possibilities after breaking camp with settler colonial failures and how artists like Layli and my sister are operating on a continuum of Očéti Šakówiŋ creativity. The second quilt (see Figure 3) Layli made for the exhibition was based on *The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman* (1921) by Zitkala-ša. The use of Zitkala-ša's text evokes an ongoing question that many Lakota people struggle with "Who am I?" Within the framework of the exhibit of shared realities, there are lingering questions of identity, authenticity, and, ultimately, the impact of colonization. The story introduces us to Blue-Star woman navigating the newly formed reservation system and capitalist economies. The enigma is that under the confines of the western land ownership model, Blue-Star Woman requested land on the reservation but is thwarted by tribal leadership operating under the guise that they do not know who her family is. In a sense, Blue-Star Woman must find a way to rebuild her own camp within the confines of settler colonialism, while Layli's present-day work operates similarly. Layli's quilt constructs a new camp for the audience to interact with.

In the co-curated exhibition and within *WHEREAS*, grass challenges us to be common people. We must break camp with settler norms and imagine different ways of creating. In an interview we conducted for the exhibition with Lakota scholar Jace DeCory, she speaks to the nonhuman relatives that we all must acknowledge when embodying *Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ*. This acknowledgment is not regulated to the animals that naturally would be honored, like the buffalo or horse, but to the insects and creatures often seen as nuisances. What happens when we can

imagine an ethnography of mosquitos as relatives? This idea draws me back to the notion of ikčé, of the common. We have to imagine relationality with other-than-human persons within the poem and in ways that grass continues to materialize throughout Lakota's life. Prairie grass often looks like an ocean sweeping across the landscape. The interconnectedness of our lives at Očéti Šakówiŋ tribal peoples is grounded in these relationships with the grass nation and all other-than-human nations. The grass reminds us to stay grounded. I gladly open my mouth to the grasses if they teach me to remain humble and engage as an everyday relative.

CHAPTER THREE: CREATIVE AND RELATIONAL PRACTICES

My favorite local *wacipi* (pow wow) to attend has always been the Oglala Nation Pow Wow and Rodeo on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. My dad, an avid photographer, has an extensive collection of photos from "Og Naysh." One of my favorite photos of myself is as I stand, facing the camera, away from the center of the grassy outdoor arena, half smiling at my family. Wearing a cloth red dress hand-crafted by my maternal grandmother Eva Witt, I have a black sequinned shawl with matching black cloth leggings made by my aunt Angie Stover. My buckskin cape and animal fur hair ties were hand-me-down items worn by various siblings and relatives. The small eagle feather plume affixed with a porcupine quill barrette in my hair was gifted to me when I received my Lakota name a few years before my dad took this photo. My family ensured I had appropriate regalia items to wear to dance at the pow-wow yearly. They crafted and sewed to make my new moccasins, dresses, and shawls as I grew. Without the interconnectedness of their creative practices, I would not have had the same opportunities or experiences in the social circle of local and regional pow wows. I did not know then, but the familial and relational connections I experienced as a child was shaped by creating and gifting artistic items.

I have sought ways to understand the interrelatedness of creative practices in Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures because, as a kid, I thought art was relational. I did not understand the disconnect I witnessed in formal and institutional art spaces I participated in away from my tribal communities. I wanted to hear the stories of the pieces I was seeing on display or visiting in the collections. The stories I receive in formal institutions do not always address the significant

experiences like sharing or giving gifts of adornment items that support relational exchanges.[362] The stories in formal institutions are often outside of a tribal context or clouded by settler colonial noise of diplomacy or cultural exchange that still misses the point of relational practices.[363]

I understand that intertwining relational and creation practices are embedded in the making and everyday interaction. For example, at the Oglala Nation pow wow another year, I spent an entire rotation of intertribal songs (with an average of twenty drum groups per rotation with four minutes a piece, resulting in over an hour passed) watching a Random community member make a quilled bracelet for the first time. Instead of spending the round of dancing out in the arena, I sat silently, watching her wrap porcupine quills around and around while inlaying different colors for a design. She meticulously flattened and weaved the quills together, and I had never seen it done before firsthand. I never got her name, and I do not remember seeing her again, but at the end of the day, when she finished the quilled bracelet, she gifted it to me without a word. Her gift impacted me, and I wore the quilled bracelet for the rest of my adolescent and teenage pow wow career. The simplicity of our interaction was precious to me.

Creative practices such as creating the quilled bracelet or my dance regalia have always shown me how to relate to others and how others relate to me. Throughout my educational experience, I have sought ways to understand creative practice as a relational practice. I engage

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[362] As demonstrated in chapter one of my dissertation, gifting and giving are essential for Lakota relationality.

[363] Many scholars have addressed the failure of collection practices, while also analyzing the continued impact; including but not limited to Sonja Dobroski, "'This Stuff Speaks to Me': Settler Materiality, Identity and Nationalism among Collectors of Native American Material Culture," *History and Anthropology,* February 23, 2022, 1–21, https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2022.2037583; Melissa M. Adams-Campbell, Ashley Glassburn Falzetti, and Courtney J. Rivard, "Introduction: Indigeneity and the Work of Settler Archives," *Settler Colonial Studies* 5 (2015): 109–16; Michael S. Nassaney, ed., *Interpretations of Native North American Life: Material Contributions to Ethnohistory* (Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2003).

with material culture and the analysis of Lakota life that operates on a continuum of relational production not historicized by specific periods. I am engaging with particular production methods while also attempting to demonstrate that relational practices are vital to understanding Lakota lifeways outside a gendered regulation of production.

In this chapter, I analyze the work of two artists, Oglala Lakota artist Jhon Duane Goes in Center and Oglala Lakota artist Molina (Parker) Two Bulls.[364] I demonstrate the accessibility of northern plains' creative practice that illustrates relationality while documenting the subtle nuances of how each artist operates within the larger paradigm of arts and culture. Near the end of the chapter, I offer a short critique and literature review of the field of museum studies to address where I see my analysis situated within the broad area of art history and anthropology. The two artists I analyze in my chapter have expressed dissatisfaction with formal institutions. I acknowledge their navigation of museums, art galleries, and art market spaces to continue producing their work. I focus on relationality through storytelling, crafting, and familial and gender narratives.

I have broken the chapter into four sections (aside from the introduction and conclusion); anti-economic driven practice, relationality, stories, and autonomy. I loosely based the chapter sections on the structure of *The Routledge companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada* (2022), which the editors Heather Igloliorte and Carla Taunton provide.[365] My first section on anti-economic driven practices looks at the work of Oglala Lakota artist Jhon

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[364] Jhon spells his name like this.

[365] Heather L. Igloliorte and Carla Taunton, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 2022). 4. The five topics of the book include: sovereignty and futurity, kinship, care, relationality, indigenous ways of knowing and being, anti-colonial practices, stories, living knowledge, continuity and resurgence--which have been guiding principles, theories and methodologies for my dissertation research. Thus far, I found it appropriate to frame my findings similarly.

Duane Goes in Center and his personal adornment pieces.[366] The components of Jhon Duane's jewelry that I analyze focus on pieces made for relatives or as a reflection of some aspect of Lakota culture. The second section focuses on relationality and gendered narratives by introducing a case study of Oglala Lakota artist Molina Two Bulls.[367] In my analysis of Molina's wearable art, I focus on the gendering of her creative practice and the often dismissal of craft art within the study of material culture. The third section, on stories, demonstrates why the ontological turn within anthropology contributes to analyzing art and viewpoints of craft. Throughout each section, I introduce intersubjectivity, ontology, epistemology, and other world-building concepts to illustrate how Lakota's creative practices are integral to Lakota life. The final section before my concluding thoughts examines the ways museum practices are not neutral but that effective interventions have occurred and are the foundation for the future of analysis of creative techniques. I conclude by addressing some of the constraints of my study, which include the use of a passive grammatical voice throughout chapter three and a more casual tone when regarding relatives' work that I am analyzing.[368]

Anti-capitalist and Anti-economy-driven Productions

Behind the local *American Legion* location in Rapid City, South Dakota, is a small white building that stands out in front of a large hill on the corner of a somewhat industrial-looking lot.

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[366] Jhon Duane received a Museum Studies degree on top of training in Geographic Information Sciences.

[367] Molina attended the Institute of American Indian Arts to study different artistic approaches, like painting.

[368] Throughout my dissertation, I often lapse into a passive writing voice or a more casual vernacular to address certain topics, such as: art making, creative practice and culture. I do not deem myself an expert by any means. Often, we are placed in a position of hierarchy and professionalism in the western academy that demands a performance of expertise. I hope people disagree with my academic stance because they have had a different experience than mine. I write from a self-reflexive and personal voice throughout my research study, which helps me articulate the intimate and everyday experiences I attempted to understand throughout my dissertation.

A colorful mural with “Očéti Šakówiŋ Territory” boldly in red adorns the wall next to the building. The mural is a collage of images essential to the Očéti Šakówiŋ people. The mural includes sage, sweetgrass, buffalo skulls, water droplets, moccasin designs, timpsila (local turnip), thunder and storm clouds, and other images depicting Lakota connection to a specific place. The mural was designed by Michael Two Bulls and Pejuta Press and commissioned by Racing Magpie. The small white building next to the mural is home to four artists' studios and a small gallery space owned and operated by Racing Magpie, an art and culture organization in Rapid City that uplifts Očéti Šakówiŋ artists and culture bearers from the Northern Plains. The Oglala Lakota artist Jhon Duane Goes In Center rents a studio at Racing Magpie and is one of my main collaborators.

Jhon Duane’s work operates both inside and outside formal art spaces. Although Jhon Duane continues to participate in local and regional art markets and provides consultation for regional heritage and culture centers, his focus is not on economic gain but on the engagement of Očéti Šakówiŋ's relatives and culture bearers.[369] As Jhon Duane has said in his own words, “I’ve been accused of giving away more than I ever sold,” demonstrating that the focus of his creative practice leans toward non-economic development markets.[370] I got to know his work through gift-giving and receiving.[371] I remember my mother wearing a bronze bracelet with a ruby-encrusted turtle design created by my uncle. Later in my young adult life, my mother would gift me a turquoise ring, or rather; I rescued the finger ring from my mother’s jewelry box that Jhon

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[369] Jhon Duane also engages with a myriad of other art forms—from painting to sculpture and regalia making. He has continued to learn new creative techniques with what he designates as ‘personal adornment.’

[370] Jhon Duane Goes in Center, “Virtual Residency,” April 18, 2020, Racing Magpie YouTube channel, 00:02:59:00, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9R1BjdG1rU&list=PLYdOO0zOYjvInn1MkdJ_v8TAdrROCN9fB&index=31.

[371] I am Jhon Duane’s niece. My mother is his eldest sister.

Duane, my uncle, had made for my mother in his early career.[372] My uncle has stated that he appreciates seeing his adornment pieces worn daily. The exchange of gifts became small markers of connection in my family, items we could pass to each other or show off at family gatherings.

The confinement of the market-driven output does not provide an adequate experience of Lakota culture. The work Jhon Duane continues to produce operates outside a typical Western economy, demonstrating an understanding of Lakota culture that is relational. He understands the creation of adornment as a "cultural reciprocity" that is not embedded in capitalist economies.[373] I am also aware of the issue of reproducing frameworks that create a binary in which Indigenous production is framed in isolation from the general economic scaffolding of society, and I hesitate to fall into the trap of depicting Lakota creative practice as a narrative of colonial and capitalist opposition.[374] My uncle Jhon Duane does not call himself an anti-capitalist. Still, he focuses on the expression of Lakota culture, and I imply that his work operates outside Western economies' confinement. He does sell his adornment to returning customers and new admirers; however, his goal often is not to sell to make money but because he can create items inspired by regional cultural material and stories. Cultural reciprocity depends on expressing Lakota culture, not the drive to produce for capitalist consumption.

Settler trade had a profound effect on Northern Plains tribal groups and shifted the economies of our communities. Many factors impacted the transition from a bartering-trade

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[372] I still wear this ring regularly, especially after my mother said she never wore the ring.

[373] Jhon Duane Goes in Center, interview by author, October 15, 2021, interview 1, transcript and recording.

[374] Albers, Patricia C. "From Legend to Land to Labor: Changing Perspectives on Native American Work." In *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives*, edited by Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, 245–73. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996. 91.

economy to capitalist and Western economy-based production.[375] Transformation in material culture production shifted while new materials like silver were introduced to tribal creative practices.[376] The trade network was extensive before the European expansion of Western economies; trade was often centered around a creative approach and seen as a necessity.[377] As settlers extended their reach, Lakota and other tribal participation in capitalist trade economies was "a strategy by marginal groups to cope with asymmetrical power relationships."[378] Introducing new materials shifted creative practices, such as using beads and trade cloth instead of porcupine quills and buckskin. Jhon Duane's work engages with found materials from the Northern Plains region and new materials; two main items in Jhon Duane's work are German silver and agate stones.

Western economies have shaped the manufacturing of craft and creative items, and the impact of new materials has shifted jewelry production. I focus on an ontological and epistemological understanding of Lakota livelihood through the use of stories and our stories of other-than-human beings. The use of agates draws essential connections between *inyan* (stones), place-based knowledge systems, a Lakota worldview, and the personal adornment items Jhon Duane gifts to relatives. The personal adornment he produces aligns with Lakota aesthetics while also engaging in new materials. He said that "everything I do, I consider jumping right back on

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[375] Many studies have demonstrated the impact of trade economies before and after European contact—for example, see Sarah Rotz, "'They Took Our Beads, It Was a Fair Trade, Get over It': Settler Colonial Logics, Racial Hierarchies and Material Dominance in Canadian Agriculture," *Geoforum* 82 (June 2017): 158–69, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.04.010.

[376] Many studies have been conducted on incorporating new materials into tribal aesthetics, for example, see Yve Chavez, "Basket Weaving in Coastal Southern California: A Social History of Survivance," *Arts* 8, no. 3 (July 23, 2019): 94, https://doi.org/10.3390/arts8030094.

[377] Wigginton, *Indigenuity*. 21.

[378] Guy E. Gibbon, *The Sioux: The Dakota and Lakota Nations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003). 20.

the creative continuum of my ancestors."[379] Stones or rocks, called inyan, are essential in various ways. Lakota artist Dr. Suzanne Kite shared her grandfather's story that "Stones are considered ancestors, stones actively speak, stones speak through humans, stones see and know."[380] As A. Irving Hallowell (1960) demonstrated in his work with the Ojibwe (Anishinaabe, Ojibwa, etc.), interaction with stones and the animacy understood between humans and other-than-humans is necessary for understanding a specific tribal ontology. An agate stone would mean little to a non-Lakota person that does not have the same relationship to the significance of the stone or design. Jhon Duane's use of stones is vital to an ontological understanding of Lakota culture.

A. Irving Hallowell articulated ontological relationships through linguistic structure and cultural behavior and demonstrated that cultural insights with rocks, as focal points for the Ojibwa worldview, differed from Western viewpoints. Hallowell provided an example when he asked an elder, "Are all the stones we see about us alive?" After a quick reflection, the elder replied, "No! but some are."[381] Through the elder's response, Hallowell linked linguistic structure and cultural behavior to understanding other-than-human persons as a focal point for an Ojibwa worldview that grammatically categorized some rocks as animate. Lakota language structures, especially in creation stories, grant animacy to rocks and understand a relationship with the Rock Nation as having agency in how Lakota people interact with rocks. Animacy is a framework for understanding Očéti Šakówiŋ worldviews concerning other-than-human persons, which is also essential for Lakota worldviews.

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[379] Goes in Center, "Virtual Residency," 00:02:38:00.

[380] Jason Edward Lewis et al., "Making Kin with the Machines," *Journal of Design and Science*, July 16, 2018, https://doi.org/10.21428/bfafd97b. 11.

[381] A. Irving Hallowell. "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and World View." In *Teaching from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Mythology*, edited by Denis Tedlock and Barbara Tedlock,. New York: Liveright, 1975. 147.

Figure 4: Jhon Duane Goes In Center, polished Fairburn agate, year unknown, photograph by the author.

Rocks (or stones) also play a significant role in ceremonial life for Očéti Šakówiŋ communities. We utilize rocks in our purification ceremony. We have stories of "spirit" rocks, usually small stones found in a perfect sphere, or rather, the spirit rocks find us when we need support.[382] In one of the more common Lakota creation stories, the universe was created from Inyan, who, at the beginning of the current time, was a shapeless, formless, and omniscient being. But Inyan was lonely and thought about other creations; from that singular thought, more life came into being, and Inyan gave of themselves. As Inyan's life escaped into the universe, Inyan shrunk down to become a hard rock (or stone).[383] The story of Inyan demonstrates a long connection with stones that the Lakota people still remember today. The type of stone that Inyan shifts to address the audience and context, but I like to imagine that one iteration of Inyan is as a Fairburn agate (see figure 4). Jhon Duane's craft primarily focuses on integrating Fairburn agates

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[382] There are many stories about the Lakota connection to rocks. I referenced authors and storytellers like White Hat and Cunningham, *Life's Journey—Zuya;*Walker and Jahner, *Lakota Myth*; Lewis et al., "Making Kin with the Machines;" Deloria, *Waterlily*; Posthumous, *All My Relatives*.

[383] I capitalize *Inyan* because of the significance of their role in this version of one of our creation stories.

found only in the Northern Plains region. Jhon Duane indicates how the creation story of Inyan has impacted his practice;

> The natural world inspires my creations. My creative processes are exacting and challenging; metalwork, engraving, and lapidary techniques to profile the beautiful Lakota Fairburn Agates. Lakota homeland agate tells the Lakota Creation Story of Inyan, the first stone in creation who created the essence of life, water. The wearer of my creations becomes my gallery and shows my work to the world.[384]

The Fairburn agate is not typically used in ceremonial practices; the agate is more commonly used as decoration. However, Jhon Duane's use of the rock articulates an innovative approach to expressing a Lakota way of life as we have always done. Jhon Duane's aesthetics rely on a cultural continuum evident in relationships with other-than-human nations and their stories.

I understand that Jhon Duane's adornment is not meant as ceremonial items but demonstrates a relational significance that he says is spiritual.[385] The production of his creative practice – especially with the pieces he creates for relatives – operates along a cultural continuum instead of an economically driven position. The significance of the elements, like the Fairburn agate, is shared through stories (see Figure 4). His stories demonstrate an ontological and epistemological understanding of using the Fairburn agate. Stones and rocks, like the agate, provide significance of The Stone Nation to Lakota livelihood and the region's interconnectedness to other-than-human beings. He shares personal and geological stories about the Fairburn agate;

> It [the Fairburn agate] is pretty special to me. I use it [a Fairburn agate], and every time I find one or see one, it's almost like a spiritual experience, but knowing how ancient they are and how they were formed in water. Because all these other agates were formed by

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[384] Jhon Duane Goes in Center, "Lakota Jewelry; The Art of Personal Adornment," 2021, https://lakotajewelry.com/.

[385] As theorized in my dissertation's introduction, I do not use the phrase "spiritual" in my analysis, but Jhon often articulates his use of stones as spiritual.

> igneous, metamorphic rock formations. But this one [the Fairburn agate] was formed in limestone, which is sedimentary.[386]

The significance of agate to Jhon Duane reflects the simplicity of Lakota relationships to non-humans that can operate outside formal ceremonial spaces and economically driven places like an art market. He is not sharing about the cost of the agate but rather about the ways the stones come to him. In the third section of my chapter, I expand more on the importance of articulating ontological and epistemological analysis. I also touch upon the stories here to demonstrate that interaction is an everyday exchange that is not the focus of market-driven economies. Wearing a simple adornment piece with a Fairburn agate illustrates an ordinary and daily engagement representing a long-standing relationality with a place and culture.

Jhon Duane tells stories about the design utilized to produce personal adornment signaling the relationships he wants to emulate. He shared, "Stories – create interest with a sector of society that would appreciate that."[387] For example, he shared a story of utilizing a spider web design for his silver etching; "I like to use that design, and I use it with the intention of what the spider – the power that their webs, withstand hailstorms and thunderstorms and – they endure."[388] He has shown me countless Fairburn agates with the shapes of buffalos and other motifs in the sediment designs in the rocks that align with regional stories. Jhon Duane reads the stories directly from the agates and, in turn, reads the stories of the land and the region. The stories strengthen the cultural significance of the designs and the ontological formation of his jewelry work. Stories are often how Jhon Duane communicates about his artwork.

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[386] Jhon Duane Goes in Center, interview by author, October 15, 2021, interview 1, transcript and recording.

[387] Jhon Duane Goes in Center, interview by author, Feb 1, 2023, interview 3, transcript and recording.

[388] Jhon Duane Goes in Center, interview by author, October 15, 2021, interview 1, transcript and recording.

I have learned many things from my uncle, my *leksi*, especially how to think about and engage with other than human kin.[389] His gifts to me are stories I carry with me as I grow.[390] When I competed and became the pow wow ambassador for the *He Sapa Wacipi Na Oskate* (Black Hills Pow Wow and Exposition), he crafted me a leather belt with handmade and engraved German silver adornments.[391] The buckle has an eagle pattern engraved at the central design. The conchos that adorn the rest of the belt have parfleche designs, reminiscent of the practices that historically have been put on our parfleches boxes used to store essential items. Over the past twenty years, he has gifted me with numerous Fairburn agate jewelry, from finger rings to brooches, to necklaces and earrings. I also found older rings and earrings he made for my mother when they were younger. One of my brother's favorite regalia pieces is a bronze cross with engravings that my Leksi Jhon Duane made for him. Now, we have stories we can carry with us. In the third section of my chapter, I expand on stories but continue to include personal stories to demonstrate how and why storytelling is a creative and relational practice.

The stories about the unique and intimate spaces personal adornment creates are essential, and the stories of the personal adornment we carry on our everyday selves are vital to our interconnectedness. Jhon Duane shares how stories have impacted him over time,

> But as I grew older and reflected on my grandmother and my older relatives, – things started being revealed to me just by a Lakota way of life. Now, all of those stories like that, especially the creation story about the first thing that relates to all these things we do in our ceremonies, you read about these spiritual leaders with stones. All of a sudden, all

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[389] I utilize the Lakota word "leksi" and English "uncle" throughout my chapter.

[390] Jhon Duane is my uncle. He is the eldest sibling in my mother's family (she is the second oldest and first sister). I grew up seeing and visiting my uncle during the summers since they lived in Colorado with a wife and two children, my older cousins Natalie and Willie. Eventually, he moved home to South Dakota when his children were grown.

[391] I will wear that belt today, which is more than fifteen years old and I introduced the belt in the introduction to my dissertation (figure 1).

> that is just coming at you, and you're absorbing it and realizing it. There's a truth to it because this creation story, when I started, really, studying it, well, I studied it kind of a long time ago, to realize that that's how everything is so interrelated – it was the formation of our social system, how everything was related. So that was the important thing about who you are is who our relatives are. But that all came from that story about the first thing in creation.[392]

The personal stories provide a reflexive shift for scholars to understand better what is being left out of the Western academy. As Irving Hallowell explained in the 1960s, Ojibwa articulations of animacy were communicated through storytelling. Kwakwaka'wakw scholar Sarah Hunt posits that an Indigenous ontology comes from stories. Her article "Ontologies of Indigeneity: the politics of Embodying a Concept" subverts what has been established about Indigenous ways of knowing in the field of geography.[393] Hunt challenges researchers to think about place-based practices within Indigenous communities to interrogate "categories of being," meaning the ways Indigenous communities interact with one another.[394] Similarly, with the stories Jhon Duane shares me and the stories I share throughout my dissertation, I seek the meeting point of the Lakota concept of relationality that exists in our creative practices.[395]

Agate stones influence Očéti Šakówiŋ creative practices while contributing to a sustained relationship with the region marked by their use in personal adornment. Agates are born from water, initially formed under sedentary pressure (slow or little movement). In the ancient seas that used to cover the Northern Plains region, cavernous space was left in the limestone. As the

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[392] Goes in Center, Interview, October 15, 2021.

[393] Sarah Hunt, "Ontologies of Indigeneity: The Politics of Embodying a Concept," *Cultural Geographies* 21, no. 1 (January 2014): 27–32, https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474013500226. Hunt uses stories throughout the article to communicate specific examples of Kwakwaka'wakw ontology to shift mainstream academic analysis.

[394] Hunt, "Ontologies of Indigeneity: The Politics of Embodying a Concept," 22.

[395] Although I am not a trained cultural geographer, the subversion of mainstream analysis through Indigenous stories provides an opportunity to uplift and analyze the everyday narratives of Lakota's livelihood.

billions of years progressed, silica and other trace minerals began replacing the limestone and created nodules or geode formations embedded in the limestone.[396] The Fairburn agate was born from this process and made the colorful banding we see today (see Figure 4). The stones Leksi Jhon Duane utilizes are around a billion years old and are called *Fairburn* agates because they are found regionally in the northern plains; he likes to call them Lakota agates. He usually finds them in the badlands when hiking, but Fairburn agates can be seen as far west as Montana.[397] Many Lakota people utilize the line work of Fairburn agates in other forms of creative practices. For example, another Oglala Lakota artist, Dustin Twiss, creates striking paintings of other-than-human relatives using agate linework. Twiss has created brightly colored images from regional plant and animal nations like the elk or deer and trees but also prints of dinosaurs and saber tooth tigers.[398] As artists like Jhon Duane and Dustin Twiss demonstrate, Fairburn agates represent a profound interconnectedness with the region that spans billions of years and signals a relationship with place.

My use of specific tribal worldviews, a Lakota perspective, illustrates a Lakota interconnectedness that I sometimes do not see when encountering Lakota material culture on display or being sold for a market-driven economy. Like others surviving the current iteration of the settler state, Indigenous artists are doing their best (selling at local markets, through online platforms, etc.) to work within capitalism's objectifying and objectivist confines. An argument justifying the incorporation of new materials fails my analysis. Instead, my focus on the impact

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[396] Sarah Chadima, "Fairburn Agate: State Gemstone of South Dakota," Fact Sheet, South Dakota Geological Survey (Vermillion, SD: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, 1994).

[397] The agates found in the Black Hills region (next to the badlands) are called limestone agates. Agate collectors that note the difference, see Patti Polk, *Collecting Agates and Jaspers of North America* (Iola, WI: Krause Publications, a division of F+W Media, Inc, 2013).

[398] Dustin Twiss, "Twiss Gallery," 2018, https://www.twissgallery.com/.

of other-than-human relations, like stones, contributes to a more extensive understanding of place-based knowledge that can be accessed by looking at items like jewelry. I see the Fairburn agate operating on a continuum of Lakota creativity that does not rely on interrogating the use of silver or new materials to showcase the stone. The pieces created by Jhon Duane and similar artists, representing our connection to place, orient Lakota people directly to a specific region and shape a particular worldview of that place.[399] Furthermore, the analysis of signs or motifs limits the trajectory of interconnectedness by focusing solely on the legacy of symbols.[400] Engaging with tribally specific ontological and epistemological studies of Jhon Duane's jewelry pieces, I can recognize, in specific geographic locations, a Lakota approach to relationships with culture, community, art, and place.

Jhon Duane shares a legacy of Lakota aesthetics, Lakota creative practice, and Lakota designs to make accessible a cultural understanding of Lakota relationality for other Očéti Šakówiŋ people. His inspiration comes from the use of stones, which I have demonstrated play a significant role in Očéti Šakówiŋ creation stories. In addition, he has utilized German silver and copper since he began experimenting with metalwork. The metalwork includes adornments such as earrings, finger rings, wrist cuffs, belt buckles, and necklaces – all pieces that can be worn daily. Every time I see one of my aunts or cousins at a community event, they wear a piece of jewelry my uncle has made. In the past few years, my Leksi has spoken more often about the drive to create for relatives and demonstrate the interconnectedness of gift-giving. As illustrated in chapter one, gift-giving in Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures, giving is "everyone's right to give personal

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[399] In *Indigenuity*, Wigginton demonstrates a similar way that "Native peoples oriented and reoriented themselves to the Upper Mississippi River Valley and its network of relationships." See Wigginton, *Indigenuity,* 49.

[400] Powers WK. *The American flag in Lakota art: An ecology of signs.* Whispering Wind. 1996;28(2):5. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/american-flag-lakota-art-ecology-signs/docview/200932623/se-2.

expression of the tribal ideal of generosity."[401] As he has stated, Jhon Duane has been accused of giving away more than he has ever sold regarding his jewelry production.[402] The cultural continuum through Jhon Duane's jewelry production continues to demonstrate a very Lakota ideology.

Leksi Jhon Duane's creative practice reminds me of the homelands and how Lakota culture is reflected regionally and vice versa. A regional continuum of creativity directly influences the designs he utilizes and creates. Jhon Duance states, "I am Lakota. Everything I do is 'Lakota-ized." The legacy Jhon Duane participates in is formed alongside the engagement of Northern Plain's motifs and styles. With each new rock he shows me, I see a different part of the region; the blue skies in the spring, bison grazing across the prairie, or the depth of the badlands. The "Lakota-ized" jewelry I carry becomes tokens of culture I can adorn myself in anywhere. The personal adornment he has gifted me has traveled globally, from Europe to New Zealand. The relationships I recognize through the silverwork and agates connect me not only to Očéti Šakówiŋ homelands but the family that shaped my relationship with creativity. Jhon Duane jokingly says that every Lakota should have an agate in their pocket when they cross the milky way to join our ancestors after our human death.[403] And I do carry an agate with me everywhere I go. I take that relative in a ring, necklace, or bracelet he has given me or in the agate's raw form.

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[401] Deloria et al., *The Dakota Way of Life*. 117.

[402] Goes in Center, "Virtual Residency," 00:02:59:00.

[403] Očéti Šakówiŋ communities understand that when your mortal body ends, you travel across the Milky Way to a plane of existence where our ancestors now reside.

Relationality and Gendered Narratives

About forty-five miles south of Rapid City, a dirt road leads away from the main paved South Dakota Highway 41. You can mark the turn with two rubber tires hanging from a wire fence, painted with the Oglala Sioux tribal flag emblem. If you take this turn, the road will lead you down a dirt road up a small hill, and veering to the right, you come to a large metal gate, which you must open yourself. After entering the entrance, a few hundred yards ahead is the home of Oglala Lakota artist Molina Jo Two Bulls and her studio.[404] The studio is next to a cozy home set against the Badlands National Park as a backdrop. You can see a few horses, a pony (named Pretty Girl), and some small corgi-Aussie shepherd dogs running in the field. Molina's studio is a newly renovated storage unit that she converted into a workspace when her handmade jewelry bulk orders became too cumbersome to manage in her two-bedroom home during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Taught by her mother and grandmother, Molina started beading at a young age and is proud to continue the family tradition to the next generation. She comes from a long line of artists and is married to an artist. Molina believes passionately in her art, and beading and crafting are ways to keep Lakota culture alive. She hopes to pass the skill on to her child one day, a daughter already exploring painting and sewing. Molina loves to create wearable art, and she hopes that the people who wear and collect her pieces will appreciate the talent and quality of craft her works represent.[405]

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[404] I first met Molina in 2018; when my sister Mary worked for a Black Hills museum and cultural center. Molina was one of the local artists set up to sell crafts to summer tourists. We knew of her family, the Two Bulls *tiwahe* (extended family) is well known in the region for their creative practices across various art forms.

[405] I always joke with Molina that her excellent craftsmanship has influenced my expectation of beadwork and quillwork from other artists.

I utilize Molina's work in my analysis of material culture because her journey as an artist is dynamic and accessible to everyday people. Molina is an excellent example of a community-based artist that creates wearable art based in a relational context grounded in her familial and cultural connections.[406] She has been surrounded by a grandmother, mother, aunt, and community members who have helped her come into her craft through sewing, beading, painting, and other relational practices. The gendered narratives of her family and our community have profoundly impacted Molina's work. Unlike Jhon Duane's journey as an anti-capitalist creator, Molina initially began crafting items as a source of economic gain. So, in addition to examining Jhon Duane's work, I analyze Molina's handcrafted creative work because her experience balances my uncle's journey as a jewelry creator. Both artists describe their jewelry making in different terms, like wearable art or personal adornment, and both artists ground their practices in relational terms as Lakota people.

Analyzing wearable art as an everyday example of Lakota relationality demonstrates a space outside an economic-driven art space, even though some of Molina's early experiences might have started within capitalist confinement. She shares, "I always had my beadwork to fall back on as extra money."[407] Molina, like many of her relatives, participated in what Tressa Berman articulates as a ceremonial relation of production, which accounts for the "contradictions American Indian women face in their response to the state intervention and commercial exploitation on the one hand and their resistance to hegemonic domination on the other."[408] If not

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[406] I utilize the term 'wearable art,' because Molina has often cited her work as such.

[407] Molina Two Bulls Interview 1, July 10, 2022, transcription, and recording.

[408] Tressa Lynn Berman, ed., *No Deal! Indigenous Arts and the Politics of Possession*, Global Indigenous Politics Series (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2012). 31.

allowed to explore and expand her creative practices, Molina might still be crafting quick earrings to sell for fast cash, cause in the contradiction of production and resistance. She said in an interview, "One thing that I've found when I do have extra money or extra time, I end up creating for the people I love."[409] Earlier in the interview, she spoke of the desperate moment of being a young mother making quick art with her husband to make ends meet. As an audience, we often only see the production, not the process artists endure to maintain their creative practices and livelihood. I consider the gendered narratives of her positionality as an Oglala Lakota woman, mother, sister, and cousin. The wearable art Molina continues to explore should not be limited to what she can sell to pay her bills or what she creates because of the structures of capitalism.

There are many ways to categorize and articulate the work of Molina Two Bulls, but I avoid using terms like "contemporary" or "craft" when referring to her jewelry. Whether she is submitting pieces to Indigenous art markets or when is being featured in popular magazines such as Vogue, her creative practice occupies a multifaceted way of being.[410] Phrases like "modern craft" or "art renaissance" have been applied to her creative method.[411] I avoid using terms like modern when articulating Molina's art and innovative practices because I do not want to historicize her Lakota relational practices that continue to incorporate new mediums or designs. In a recent study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and First Peoples

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[409] Berman, *No Deal! Indigenous Arts and the Politics of Possession.* 31.

[410] Christian Allaire, "Meet 8 Indigenous Beaders Who Are Modernizing Their Craft," *Vogue*, April 24, 2019, https://www.vogue.com/vogueworld/article/indigenous-beadwork-instagram-artists-jewelry-accessories.

[411] Julian Brave NoiseCat, "The Two Bulls Family Leads an Indigenous Art Renaissance," *High Country News*, February 8, 2019, sec. Arts and Culture, https://www.hcn.org/issues/51.3/tribal-affairs-in-south-dakota-the-two-bulls-family-leads-an-indigenous-art-renaissance.

Fund, a false binary between contemporary and traditional is often created because of outside viewpoints:

> The tendency to classify creators as engaging in traditional practices or their perceived opposite, contemporary practices, suggests a binary that creators must choose between to make their work legible to funders, presenting organizations, and audiences.[412]

Creating historized dichotomies within the material cultures of North American Indigenous communities emplaces confinement on the continuum of creative practice.[413] Furthermore, the Western art concept of "craft" and the binary created between "traditional" and "contemporary" Wearable art is viewed as more utilitarian, craft, and not considered fine art, contemporary, in mainstream institutions. Molina's creative practices often straddle the line between categories of craft, fine art, contemporary, and traditional.

Molina's bead and quillwork reflect an ongoing continuum of Indigenous craftwork that relied on the creative use of material culture in a specific region. Like our ancestors, she incorporates present-day items that we value because of their significance to our daily lives or a lasting impact of interconnectedness. Craftwork can take on many shapes and forms while engaging in aesthetics and sensory knowledge about Očéti Šakówiŋ relationship to place. Očéti Šakówiŋ creators and culture bearers continue to use and adapt that knowledge of our creative connection to the Northern Plains to demonstrate our ongoing interconnectedness. For example, Molina often encompasses insects, flowers, and landscapes in her beadwork, representing regional relatives (see Figure 5). But she also engages in a meditation on current popular culture,

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[412] Rugg et al., "Brightening the Spotlight."

[413] Many North American Indigenous artists utilize beadwork in their practice, but I am focusing on regional and local artists operating in the Northern Plains.

like the incorporation of "Skoden" into her creative practice.[414] Incorporating present-day culture within our Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures presents an accessible cultural continuum. Her use of regional life with popular culture demonstrates the Lakota relationality continuum in our creative practices.

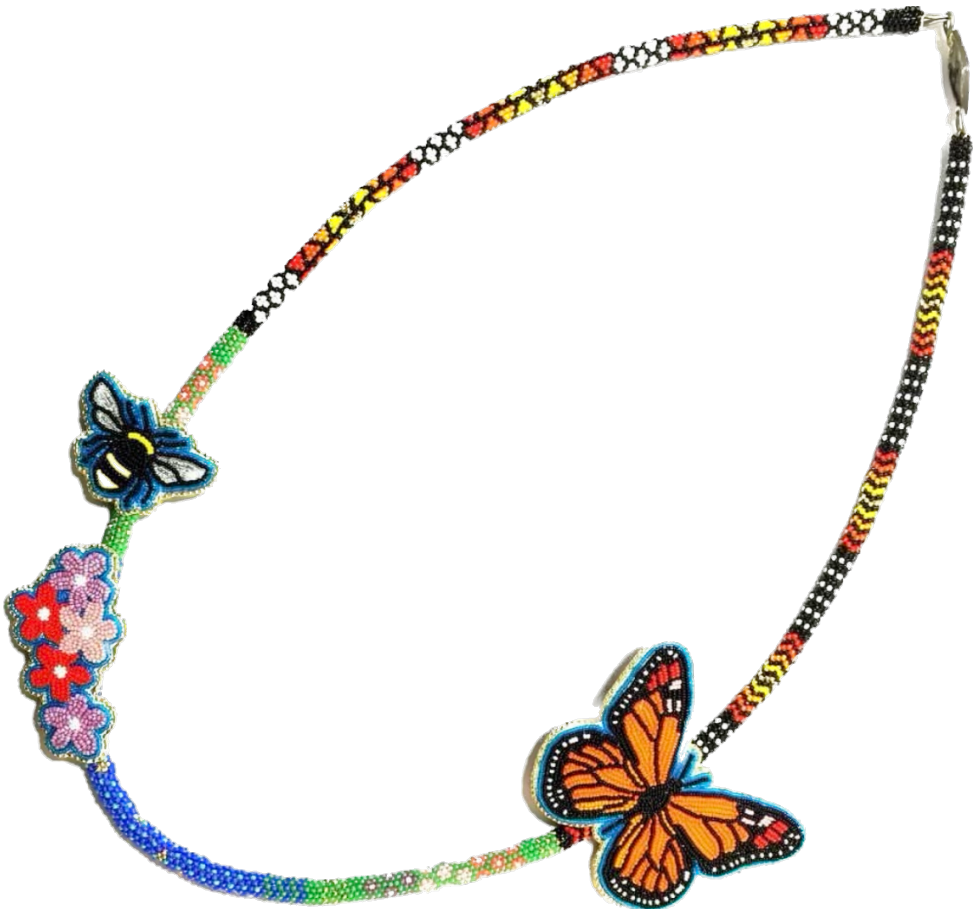

Figure 5: Molina Two Bulls, *Grandma's Garden*, 2015, seed beads, thread, and metal closure; photo provided by the artist.

Historically, women would practice the gendered practices of staying busy with craftwork from adolescence into adulthood. The present-day provides cultural logics that supports our gendered and Indigenous ways of knowing. At the start of a menstruating individual's cycle, they

[414] "Skoden" is present-day pan-Indigenous slang for "Let's go, then."

would reside in a dwelling away from others to engage with "fancywork: porcupine quill work, traditionally, and beadwork in the more recent times," as described by Ella Deloria in the ethnography *Dakota Life.*[415] We have carried this practice of fancywork into another aspect of life. As Molina has done, we create fancywork in the form of jewelry, quilts, and other items to help manage high emotional times or address the need of our relatives. The fancywork of the necklace (see Figure 5) was one of the first significant pieces Molina took the time to create without the drive to make fast cash. The small flowers reflect the lilac bushes her grandmother planted and tended yearly. Molina shared that losing her grandmother – an influential individual in her crafting – was a catalyst for a shift in her crafting. Molina turned to her crafting practice and that making the necklaces (she crafted two necklaces in memory of her Grandmother) "really helped me process my grandma's loss because my first piece had to do with the lilac bush in front that she had planted – I went out there one day, and it was just teeming with insects."[416] In addition to the flowers, we see a vibrant monarch butterfly and a bee. Molina created other pieces around the same time frame that emulated nature with bright colors and regional plants, birds, and insects. The creation reflects culture, the way Lakota people, especially within a gendered context, would address high-stress times.

The process of creating was just as important as the final product. Molina and Jhon Duane have talked about the process of designing and the transformation process has had on their work. Molina shared that she remembers a child playing under the loom during her

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[415] Ella Cara Deloria et al., *The Dakota Way of Life*, Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022). 348.

[416] Molina Two Bulls Interview 1, July 10, 2022, transcription, and recording.

grandmother's quilting circles.[417] Sherry Racette and other Black, Indigenous, and scholars of color have theorized the process of creating and producing within intimate spaces a kitchen table logic;

> For a long time, I saw beadwork as content: the forms and meanings of objects, patterns, and motifs, stories carried by individual pieces, and the stories and laughter shared while beading together. It was quite some time before the act of beading became more critical than the beadwork itself. It started when, as an art historian reconstructing the life stories of women artists, I was struck by the contrast of their lives full of trauma and upheaval and the vibrancy and joy of their beadwork.[418]

Craftwork that pushes us out of our comfort while also providing solace as a way to process and create affective space is an excellent example of the kitchen table logics.[419] Sometimes the undertaking of making art is not always at the kitchen table but under the quilt loom. The relational processes become as important as the resulting piece. The jewelry has a different life when the exchange moves from artist to wearer. What we make at the kitchen table grows and evolves just as our cultures have grown and evolved through creative practices. As Molina demonstrates in the concentrated shift in making jewelry as a memorial, we should challenge ourselves to slow down and initiate new processes that remind us of relational practices.

Molina comes from a long line of artists but commiserates that her beadwork and quillwork are often not received in the same regard as her brother's or male cousin's painting abilities, which are lauded by nonnatives spaces as more impressive or essential to mainstream Indigenous art history. Molina's work is often not valued because of the framing of jewelry or

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[417] Molina Two Bulls Interview 1, July 10, 2022, transcription, and recording.

[418] Sherry Farrell Racette, "Kitchen Tables and Beads; Space and Gesture in Contemplative and Creative Research," in *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada*, ed. Heather L. Igloliorte and Carla Taunton (New York: Routledge, 2022), 89.

[419] Barbara Smith, "A Press of Our Own Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 10, no. 3 (1989): 11, https://doi.org/10.2307/3346433.

adornment pieces within a typical crafting framework. Craftwork is usually regulated to gendered space; the production value is often targeted due to colonial influences like the division of labor by European standards of gender.[420] Molina shares that her work is framed within a craft articulation in mainstream art spaces;

> The common thread – especially [among] females that do the art forms that I do is that it's considered craft more than art. And so it's extremely undervalued – when it comes to talking about craft, people expect it to be priced like a souvenir – I think female artists have been pushed to the wayside.[421]

A gendered labor emplacement on Molina's pieces does not deter her from continuing to create work that reflects her relationships with culture, family, and place. She continues crafting regardless of the social structures a non-native or non-Lakota audience internalizes. Molina's craftwork operates along a continuum of gendered Očéti Šakówiŋ relationality that aids in understanding that Indigenous crafting "melds of utility" while also illuminating culturally relevant aesthetics and nuanced affect.[422] The craftwork is ingenious but evokes appropriate cultural feelings of pride and empowerment.

The limitations of "craft arts" create a false dichotomy against "fine art" practices. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) often positions Indigenous arts within their folklore and traditional arts umbrella. The NEA states that artisans are "those that practice living traditions and the individuals and organizations that work in service of them."[423] For example, over the past decade, the Lakota and Dakota artists that were awarded national USA Fellowships – a fund

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[420] Alan M Klein, "The Plains Truth: The Impact of Colonialism on Indian Women," *Dialectical Anthropology* 7, no. 4 (1983): 299–313.

[421] Cante Nunpa Strong, "Episode 3: Interviewing Molina Jo Two Bulls," The Heart of Art, 2023.

[422] Wigginton, *Indigenuity.*

[423] Cliff Murphy's response "The State of the Folk and Traditional Arts 2021" https://www.arts.gov/stories/blog/2021/state-folk-and-traditional-arts-2021.

granting agency that stemmed from significant budgets cuts in the NEA – were majority situated in traditional or crafts arts.[424] Moreover, Federal Indian Policies such as the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 were enacted to protect "authentic" made arts and crafts created by members of federally recognized tribes in the United States. Fine arts are usually situated outside of the Arts and Crafts Act, which was designed to "protect" tribal communities from non-native entities "counterfeiting" Tribal arts.[425] However, the act has perpetuated a legacy of authenticity and identity politics that entangle Tribal people within Federal policies and perpetuates Indigenous material culture within a craft category.

I utilize an analysis of Lakota creative practice as a relational practice by concentrating on ontological (theories of being) and epistemological (views of understanding) articulations of Očéti Šakówiŋ cultures. The interrogation of cultural items through the study of materials or representations has perpetuated a separation of stories from the pieces.[426] Ontological and epistemological commitments are often left out of conversations about categorizing "craft" within Western art fields. Scholar Sally J. Markowitz suggests that a criterion of aesthetic or semantics be considered when distinguishing arts from crafts within a more significant art history analysis.[427] Her analysis of the art-craft distinction begins with acknowledging that "art" has a positive connotation while "craft" has a more negative sense. Markowitz, analyzing within a specifically Western ideology, demonstrates that aesthetically pleasing art evokes emotion,

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[424] Four out of the six Očéti Šakówiŋ awardees since 2015 have been in traditional or crafts artists: https://www.unitedstatesartists.org/.

[425] "Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990" (Washington, D.C, January 23, 1990), https://www.doi.gov/

[426] Thankfully, the work of museum studies and art historian scholars has brought to the forefront the importance of knowing how, why, and when cultural items were collected.

[427] Sally J. Markowitz, "The Distinction between Art and Craft," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 28, no. 1 (1994): 55, https://doi.org/10.2307/3333159. 56.

while craft items are strictly utilitarian.[428] Although published in 1994, this argument is very well embedded within a Western framework. Molina still experiences the sentiment of being regulated to a "craft" within the dated dichotomy presented by Markowitz. Since the 1970s, art historians have argued that what makes art "art" is the detachment of "objects" from the real world and making them part of a different world, an art world, a world of interpreted things."[429] Although parallels are being made between outside art and tribal art, Molina still feels the brunt of being confined by craft.[430] The continued homogenizing of formal art spaces into a flat plane of creative existence is hyper-colonial. The perpetuation of craftwork on a specific genre or style is a stagnant limitation.

The meaning attached to items within formal institutions (often articulated by Molina as museums and popular art galleries) frequently prioritizes the material aspects of the work alone, regulating craft items outside the fine or high art framework. I rely on older research to represent the confinement that Molina is still experiencing. Her craft continues to be historicized in a particular manner. Molina shared that she did a presentation at a local tribal college in 2021 about the legacy of her creative practices,

> I did my presentation about artists that I looked up to and how I feel native women artists are severely overlooked. Because they see our work as craft or less. And [the instructor said] said, 'You really changed my mind about some things, but then [the instructor] still continues to work with the same people.'[431]

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[428] Markowitz, "The Distinction between Art and Craft," 58.

[429] Arthur C. Danto, "The Transfiguration of the Commonplace," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 33, no. 2 (1974). https://doi.org/10.2307/429082. 12.

[430] Dyani Reynolds-White Hawk, "Unexpected Parallels: Commonalities between Native American and Outsider Arts," *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012): 47, https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0047.

[431] Molina Two Bulls Interview 1, July 10, 2022, transcription, and recording.

As experienced by Molina, formal institutions frequently interpret adornment or jewelry as a craft, and societal gender biases consider adornment marginal because the makers and wearers are predominantly women. Although the instructor said Molina had changed their mind, the instructor continues to work with well-established artists not seen by mainstream institutions as craftworkers.

I witness a gendering trend in mainstream art spaces that reflects the confinements of Western art categories. Očéti Šakówiŋ male artists dominate the art field. For example, on a national stage, a retrospective of Dakota artist Oscar Howe's work was shown at the National Museum of the American Indian's New York facility in 2022. Also, in the same year, 2022, a retrospective was exhibited of Lakota artist Robert Penn at the Rapid City Dahl Fine Arts Center in western South Dakota. The Oscar Howe and Robert Penn exhibitions showcased two painters who profoundly impacted Očéti Šakówiŋ and broad Indigenous fine art. But I have yet to see a retrospective of an Očéti Šakówiŋ female artist not tied to Ella Deloria, Zitkala-ša, or Beatrice Medicine. The market continues to be full of Northern Plains male artists. I appreciate their dedication to their work.

The gendering of craft art occurs because of settler colonialism's incursion. Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (1980) demonstrate how Northern Plainswomen made (and continue to make) significant contributions to social and ceremonial art.[432] In the 1980s, the criticism of settler ideologies by Indigenous scholars like Medicine was demonstrated through the analysis of gendered craft practices. The continuum of gendered craft practices is represented in Molina's upbringing. She shares memories of being a child and sitting beneath the quilting

[432] Albers and Medicine, *The Hidden Half*.

tables of her grandmother, mother, and aunties - listening to their conversations in *Lakotapi* (Lakota language) and watching relatives quilt together. In present-day terms, we are faced with similar gendered craft practices. Because of the gendering of Molina's creative approaches, her work is sometimes dismissed.

Molina's participation in national art markets is irregular, and she discussed the importance of bartering. She shared, "We still practice the barter system at these [art] shows" even when not participating in an official booth.[433] Bartering allows artists to operate outside of the typical Western art market environment. Bartering or trade also reflects a continuum of creative practices of northern plains tribal people. Historically, Očéti Šakówiŋ communities would trade from coast to coast and from neighboring tribes. For example, I have heard stories about using the west coast shell dentalium in Lakota nuptial ceremonies.[434] When a baby was born, a message would be sent via trade routes to the coast to send dentalium in preparation for joining two individuals in the marriage. By the time the message would reach the west coast, and traders would return with items to the northern plains, the baby would be of marrying age, and the dentalium would be used for personal adornment and given as gifts to the families involved.

Bartering also reflects the importance of everyday artists, and an everyday audience that might not be able to afford to spend hundreds of dollars on a piece, is still worthy of wearing the adornment. Molina expressed that bartering is how she can afford to own high-end artwork from other Indigenous artists and vice versa. When mainstream art markets drive up the cost of creative works by well-known artists, they are inaccessible to the everyday consumer, often from

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[433] Molina Two Bulls Interview 1, July 10, 2022, 00:35:48.

[434] The stories of dentalium I have heard from my father, uncle and brother regarding trade routes.

other Indigenous communities. Molina's bartering and the bartering happening with other artists also reflect being an *ikčé* relative, as defined in chapter one, and being ikčé gauges accessibility and humility within an Očéti Šakówiŋ context. Bartering is an example of ikce because relationality operates outside of extraordinary circumstances in formal institutions or formal settings and outside (or counter to) a capitalist regime. Not every Lakota person can attend a prominent art market to engage with creative practitioners on a large-scale platform. The everyday person that utilizes wearable art is significant to the legacy of Lakota culture.

Molina is contributing to a legacy of a creative cultural continuum that engages with present-day relationship building. She has continued demonstrating how creative practices shared between grandmother, mother, and child are essential to Lakota relational practices. Molina continues an intergenerational cultural practice rather than just creating a dichotomy between modern and historical, a trend in Western art spaces. As she has stated herself, "I end up creating for the people I love," as opposed to focusing her craft on a specific historical trajectory.[435] The confinements of Western art spaces that perpetuate a gendering of craftsmanship limit how the current public audience receives modern beadwork and quillwork.[436] Her wearable art is an excellent reminder of creating relational pieces grounded in familial and cultural connections.

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[435] Molina Two Bulls Interview 1, July 10, 2022.

[436] I use "modern beadwork and quillwork" to refer to other authors that categorize Molina's work as modern. Still, I rarely use terms like "modern" or "contemporary" in my dissertation to avoid historicizing Molina's work in a particular period.

Intersubjectivity, Ontology, and Epistemology

I want to tell you a story because stories are how I was taught to illustrate my tribal worldview, articulated through intersubjectivity, ontology, and epistemology theories. In February of 2023, the resident porcupine named "Quill" at the Denver Zoo passed away at thirteen. Danielle SeeWalker, a Hunkpapa Lakota artist in Denver, Colorado, contacted the Zoo and requested the harvest of the quills and guard hair from Quill. SeeWalker shared with the zoo that fabricating new creative works would extend the porcupine's life. Quill's life contributed to a legacy of Očéti Šakówiŋ innovative practices. The zoo agreed, and SeeWalker was able to take a quillwork apprentice class to the zoo to help with the harvest and learn how to clean the porcupine properly. The group, led by SeeWalker and elder Cecelia Bull Bear from the Four Winds American Indian Council in Denver, sent Quill off by honoring him by harvesting his quills and guard fur. The relationship that Očéti Šakówiŋ people have developed with other-than-human persons encompasses a wide range of connections that include harvesting animal parts for the development of personal adornments but are also intergenerational. Because of our relationships with nonhuman kin, intervention in collecting and analyzing ethnographic data is integral to providing more explicit articulations of Indigenous ways of knowing within the Western academy. Conversations about and with other-than-human kin inside formal institutions like the Denver Zoo and the porcupine Quill being utilized after his death are possible because of the ongoing creative continuum of Lakota artists using their tribal worldviews. There are many ways to understand Očéti Šakówiŋ intersubjectivity that demonstrate how artists as creator shape their work with an audience in mind. The stories, personal adornment, and artistic items

produced by Quill, the porcupine, will contribute to a continuum of Northern Plains' creative practices that speak to our shared and specific tribal worldviews.

Stories are a significant component of how ontologies and epistemologies are shared; stories are what are essential to Lakota peoples when establishing relationships and understanding connections. I am making room for Lakota ontologies and epistemologies through my use of adornment and the stories we share about how and what we wear. Lakota theories of being (ontology) are based on our relationship with the world around us and rely on the views of understanding (epistemology) to define how those relationships came into being. In the introduction of *Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter,* Oglala Lakota scholar Delphine Red Shirt says that her mother "honored me by trusting me to tell her story." Steven Loft calls the knowledge transference an "aesthetic of nexus based on a storytelling tradition."[437] Stories, as demonstrated in chapter one, become markers of cultural interrelatedness. Sharing stories establishes how we might honor someone; in turn, sharing their stories is keeping them.

I was invited to present at an art history symposium in the spring of 2023, shortly before my dissertation was completed. I had synthesized a section of this chapter about my Uncle Jhon Duane's work to share with the gathering.[438] Months up to the symposium, I talked with my uncle about his work and how I might articulate Lakota and Northern Plains' creative practices as cultural interrelatedness with an academic community. Jhon Duane shared stories about his work. He shares stories, sometimes minor ones referencing a specific design like an eagle, or more in-depth stories about significant relationality experiences he has received through cultural practices

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[437] Steven Loft, "Decolonizing the Web," in *Coded Territories: Tracing Indigenous Pathways in New Media Art*, ed. Steven Loft and Kerry Swanson (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2014), xv.

[438] The symposium had Dr. Phil Deloria as a respondent.

and protocols. The stories I hear are accessible but focused explicitly on Northern to Plains culture. Rarely do Jhon Duane's narratives feel out of reach of an average person's experience, and the articulations of adornment pieces he creates to express his stories reflect the going on in his life, big or small.

Figure 6: Jhon Duane Goes in Center, *Tabloka Waphegnaka,* 2020, flicker feathers, bison fur, bison hair, German silver, seed beads, ring, Fairburn agate, photo provided by the artist.

Jhon Duane shared with me an image of a *wa'pesa* (head ornament typically used in dance regalia) that he made shortly after the first time he went up on the hill to *haŋbléčeya*.[439] Jhon Duane calls the wa'pesa piece *Tabloka Waphegnaka* (see figure 6 above), loosely referring to a buffalo hair ornament. I immediately recognized his crafting of the hair embellishment within an intersubjective framework that relied on our shared ontological and epistemological understandings. The adornment is typically fashioned in the hair near the back of your head to flow down toward your back. Jhon's *Tabloka Waphegnaka* is made from a piece of bison hide with full fur on the outside, which is beaded on the edges with yellow, baby blue, white, and dark red seed beads. Sticking out of the top of the piece is a small fan of bright yellow flicker feathers. Jhon then adorned the work with a large agate stone cast in German silver in the shape of a bison skull. Cascading down the bison hide are four round silver concho engraved with four directional patterns. The end of the Tabloka Waphegnaka is a larger rectangular concho with a lightning bolt design connecting bison hair to the finish.

Each piece of the Tabloka Waphegnaka was inspired by my uncle's experience on his haŋbléčeya and told a story. The ontological relationship he established in utilizing nonhuman components in the Tabloka Waphegnaka draws upon deeper connections with Lakota stories and narratives about Lakota culture. He attributes his use of the agate stone to his experience in the ceremony because the stone presented itself at the end of his time on the hill. The agate that my

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[439] I reiterate that I do not openly discuss private or internal ceremonial practices of Očéti Šakówiŋ communities; however, my uncle Jhon shared this piece and discussed the first time he was on a haŋbléčeya, a vision quest, and this is when the ideas came to him regarding his wa'pesa and the use of Fairburn agates. In common Lakota rhetoric, we say "going up on the hill" as a reference to this experience because individuals often chose isolated areas on a hill to experience this ceremony.

uncle attached to the top of the hairpiece is meant to reflect the stone that was left for him during his prayers but also can connect to Očéti Šakówiŋ origins stories of the first rock.[440]

At one point during his time on the hill, my uncle said there was a thunderstorm that he could hear and see in the distance, but he also listened to a bison nearby, which he interpreted as coming to protect him. We have many stories about the protection of bison and their relationships with thunderstorms. The storm never came close enough to hinder his experience. To honor the bison, he used bison hide, fur, hair, and the image of the bison skull for the agate stone to sit in. A flicker came to greet him every morning, so he used the bright feathers to adorn the top of the Tabloka Waphegnaka. The adornment is a story within a story, as each piece has a history connected to a larger whole.

The intersubjectivity Jhon Duane developed through the creation of his Tabloka Waphegnaka was established because he wanted to share a story of his time on the hill and remember that experience in other parts of his life. The story he tells through the hair adornment connects other Očéti Šakówiŋ people to similar experiences; we might have connective stories of a flicker or hearing thunderstorms in the distance. Our shared perception of the world and an establishment of reality through the stories of adornment is essential to understanding Lakota livelihoods and provides a mnemonic telling similar to a Northern Plains winter count.[441] Jhon states, “Every time we hear the story, we have new lessons ourselves. So when we hear it again, we make different connections to the story. It grows with you as you grow.”[442] The different

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[440] I have heard a variety of creation stories about Inyan, the first rock, throughout my lifetime. I utilized one of the James Walker versions often as a reference point for citational purposes and, more recently, the story has been documented by Linea Sundstrom. See Linea Sundstrom, ed., *Voices of the Eagle Woman: The Black Hills in Native American Mythology* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Buffalo Bean Books, 2022) and Walker and Jahner, *Lakota Myth.*

[441] Greene et al., *The Year the Stars Fell.*

[442] Goes in Center Interview, October15, 2021.

pieces of the Tabloka Waphegnaka might mean something different to another person perceiving the adornment piece for the first time. Our shared understanding of the adornment piece as Očéti Šakówiŋ relatives carries a different meaning than a non-Lakota relative that sees the piece outside or within another context. The Tabloka Waphegnaka, especially in Lakota, is world-building within a situational Northern Plains region.

Artists demonstrate Očéti Šakówiŋ intersubjectivity with audiences, gift recipients, and, we might say, "future relations" intentionally. Indigenous studies scholars utilize ontological and epistemological theoretical frameworks to interrogate intersubjectivity within creative practice. The shared perspective of "art" within an intersubjective model often relies on defining aesthetics against the "subjective, private and incommunicable" in contrast to the "institutional, intersubjective and communicable."[443] My focus on ontological and epistemological articulation demands a multiplicity and plurality of understanding of the adornment pieces created by the artists. As Dylan Robinson demonstrates in *Hungry Listening* (2020), the "'more-than-human agency described in new materialism and non-representational theory has long been a quotidian fact of Indigenous lives and epistemologies."[444] Robinson transforms performative writing to articulate interconnectedness within music spaces between listener and space while centering Indigenous ways of knowing, especially in relationship to ancestors and other nonhuman kin.[445] Robinson examines tribal musicians' performances for nonhuman items held in museum collections and demonstrates that the Indigenous musician's ontological formations enable an

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[443] Frederick Potgieter, "On Intersubjectivity in Art and Everyday Aesthetics," De Arte 51, no. 2 (July 2, 2016): 3–15, https://doi.org/10.1080/17532523.2016.1237173. 4.

[444] Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*, Indigenous Americas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020). 79.

[445] Robinson, *Hungry Listening*.

intersubjectivity that embraces other ways of knowing and being that does not rely on Western structures of subject/object interconnectedness.

The ontological turn within anthropology addresses the failures of the historically focused practices of collecting and extracting Indigenous cultures, which often created a damaging narrative of Tribal communities by articulating those cultures as savage or without sophistication. The history of anthropology perpetuated a research cycle that embedded colonial practices that would have dismissed engagement with other-than-human persons like porcupines as savage or in opposition to civilized societies. Our oral histories and stories were largely ignored during the time or skewed depending on the circumstances. The salvage anthropological and mass data collection procedures (like that of the mainstream museum) supported analytical frameworks that left research gaps within the specific understandings of Indigenous culture and consistently provided a misunderstanding of Tribal culture within anthropology and similar fields of study. I am a daughter of the Očéti Šakówiŋ nations, which influences how I build a relationship with my research. The historical misrepresentation of Lakota people as fierce warriors, or patrilineal communities, articulations formed by now-deceased ethnographers, have structured past research about my community through a limited lens. The ontological turn, especially in anthropology, proved that new approaches were needed for a more in-depth theoretical and methodological investigation of culture.

The ontological turn pushed the field of ethnography and cultural and linguistic anthropology to decentralize the focus from humans to include nonhuman kin like porcupines and other animal relatives. I use epistemological and ontological analyses of rocks, animal parts, and place-based knowledge systems to understand creative practices as an extension of Lakota

ideas of culture. The scaffolding of ontological and epistemological (world-building) stories rely on tribal articulations to create a more informed analysis of culture. Ontological theorists scaffold a set of theories about a reality that can help future researchers maneuver a more comprehensive data collection, data management, and data analysis within that specific cultural worldview (that may not be the same as the researcher). Eduardo Kohn (2015) defined the ongoing development of ontological anthropology as the "nonreductive ethnographic exploration of realities that are not necessarily socially constructed in ways that allow us to do conceptual work with them."[446] Utilizing foundational arguments from animism, perspectivism, and semiotics, ontological theorists like Kohn argue for a different anthropology, one that does not focus only on humans.[447] Although initially popularized within the field of anthropology, the vital contributions from the ontological turn provide an avenue to acknowledge and see Indigenous ways of knowing to provide critical ways to engage with the thought processes of other beings; the stories of our interactions demonstrate that there have to be an intentional understanding of the nonhuman transmission of ideas.

Alongside the philosophical contemplations of the nature of relationships, the ontological turning of anthropological research demonstrates how researchers can continue to tease out ontological perspectives from research data. Although non-native scholars, theorists like Eduardo Kohn, Philippe Descola, Tim Ingold, Viveiros de Castro, and Nurit Bird-David contributed necessary interventions. Kohn offers an unconventional perspective of ethnography that focuses

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[446] Eduardo Kohn, "Anthropology of Ontologies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44, no. 1 (October 21, 2015): 311–27, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102214-014127. 315.

[447] Using his interactions with a Runa community in the village of Avila in the Amazon, Kohn convinces us that an "anthropology beyond the human" exists. See Kohn, "Anthropology of Ontologies."

not only on humanistic behavior but recognizes the importance of animal and plant selfhood.[448] Descola (1992) utilized research from Amazonian tribes to articulate animism and a drive to reject a "relativist point of view" to focus on cultural and linguistic systems that are integral to Indigenous ways of knowing.[449] Viveiros de Castro's (1998) scholarship persuaded ethnographers to adopt perspectivism and determined that to use perspectivism within research means to understand and recognize that Indigenous ideas have been present in ethnographies through the characterization of "Amerindian" people in the academy.[450] Nurit Bird-David (1999) renews A. Irving Hallowell's work analyzing Ojibwe animacy, which challenges the "dividual" by utilizing Timothy Ingold and Khon's challenge to turn away from centering humans and challenging the engagement with other ways of seeing and understanding the world through non-western societies and hone in on tribal worldviews.

The scholars that contributed to the ontological shift in anthropology cite A. Irving Hallowell's research, which demonstrates Anishinaabe (Ojibwa) ontological concepts using language as a structure of analysis. I take a step back to Hallowell's work because the dynamics of animacy described by Indigenous peoples are essential to my research.[451]Hallowell's

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[448] Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

[449] Kohn, *How Forests Think,* 108

[450] Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (September 1998): 469, https://doi.org/10.2307/3034157. 469.

[451] First published in 1960, A. Irving Hallowell's work provided one of the first analyses of Indigenous culture that specified and homed in on linguistic practices to highlight how animacy was used for other-than-human persons. The analysis of chapter four frames that relationships with other-than-human persons, like rocks, are integral to creative practices. In the essay "Ojibwa ontology, behavior, and world view"–published in different iterations– Hallowell dives into linguistic specificity to articulate an Ojibwa tribal conception of society, religion, and the metaphysical in contrast to a dominant Western culture. Hallowell proves that the Northern Ojibwa community understands metaphysical relationships between humans and other-than-human persons through Ojibwa's articulation of animacy. Hallowell advanced his theory by analyzing the Ojibwa language structure by discussing other-than-human persons as animate or inanimate. See Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and World View."

intervention in ethnographic research shifted the foundation of how, why, and what data to collect to present a more thorough analysis. Linguistic structures and storytelling have become common in more extensive Indigenous studies research paradigms—for example, *Titawun* language structures for Očéti Šakówiŋ communities animate other-than-human persons by calling them nations. This chapter deals with the Mouse Nation, Buffalo Nation, and Rock (stone) Nation. We articulate relationships with other-than-human kin through their nationhood. Other researchers have built upon Hallowell's articulation, and his work continues to influence how researchers communicate the specificity of other-than-human persons in various communities. The use of storytelling reinforces the animacy of other-than-human persons and reflects an Ojibwa ontology that had not yet been used in ethnographic analyses at that time.

I demonstrate the continuation of dialogue with ontological theories and Lakota studies, which is essential to determine how Lakota worldviews persist alongside the active conversations within the field of ontology. I turn to David C. Posthumus, who offers a revisionist history of Lakota ontology in his book *All My Relatives: Exploring Lakota Ontology, Belief, and Ritual* (2018) as a non-native Anthropologist who spent about eight years on the Pine Ridge Reservation teaching an elementary language project and conducting fieldwork. Posthumus builds upon the theories put forth by A. Irving Hallowell and Philippe Descola to investigate notions of interiority and physicality that function simultaneously. Posthumus demonstrates how animist beliefs, as described by Descola, permeate the understanding of the Lakota relationality through such phenomena as the personhood of rocks, meteorological happenings, and what Lakota people describe as spirits or ghosts of deceased humans and animals, which are also seen

as spirit helpers, and finally, cultural items Lakota communities call 'medicine bundles.'[452] Posthumus relies on Hallowell's study of the Ojibwa because "there are also many underlying similarities in terms of ontology and worldview."[453] Hallowell and Descola influenced Posthumus' interventions of articulating Oglala Lakota ontology through other-than-human persons and perspectives. As one of the first texts specifically about Lakota culture in almost a generation, Posthumus presents basic cultural signifiers to demonstrate an introductory look at Lakota ontology.[454]

Posthumus utilizes ontology to attempt a deeper understanding of Očéti Šakówiŋ culture and the similarities across Indigenous cultures, which is embedded in Lakota communities' linguistic phrases structure. Posthumus encompasses Oglala Lakota ontology to a regional analysis by including Ojibwa examples from Hallowell while also demonstrating that specific Lakota ontological structures are found in the way other-than-human relationships are understood in phrases used in ceremony and protocol or prayer.[455] Posthumus provides claims that the commonalities of the interconnectedness of Indigenous culture through the title of his book *All My Relations,* which he describes as a "common Lakota ceremonial adage, is that all life- forms are related."[456] *Mitakuye Oyasin*, commonly translated as *all my relations,* "is more

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[452] Posthumus, *All My Relatives.*

[453] Posthumus, *All My Relatives*. 17.

[454] By generation, I mean in about 20-30 years.

[455] Posthumus, *All My Relatives*. 19.

[456] Posthumus, *All My Relatives*. 22.

than treating the other Lakota around you as your relatives; it is treating all of creation as a relative, as kin that have the same affordances and rights to be treated as equals."[457]

Indigenous studies scholars have utilized ontological theories to address Indigenous life, kinship, and relationality within the environmental framework, legal rhetoric, and many other aspects of the dominant culture. Although ontological conversations might appear inaccessible, I embrace the dense ontological dialogue to demonstrate the types of conversions artists like my Leksi Jhon and Molina continue to have outside the academy. Indigenous scholars like Zoe Todd (Metis) utilize other ontological scholars like Kim TallBear (Dakota) articulating human/ nonhuman relationship with pipestone and Heather Davis' interrogation of plastic as integral to our present-day life.[458] Todd uplifts TallBear and Davis to understand and better articulate the kin that is not "fleshy beings" like the animals that Indigenous people after uplift –fish, bison, birds, etc.– but to challenge ourselves to reimagine the pluralities of other material kin.[459] In the case of Zoe Todd, they frame the Indigenous relationship with fish to reimagine the human relationship with fossil fuels to articulate better the "complex responsibilities" that using oil kin entails.[460] Though Todd's articulation of ontological relationships differs from the framing, Posthumus offers a difference in interpretation of formal ceremonial practices versus the uncomfortable investigation of fossil fuels during the stress of climate disasters. The presentation of Indigenous ways of knowing, like that of Metis people (Todd's analysis) or Lakota people (Posthumus'

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[457] Daniel P. Modaff, "Mitakuye Oyasin (We Are All Related): Connecting Communication and Culture of the Lakota," *Great Plains Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2019): 341–62, https://doi.org/10.1353/gpq.2019.0055.

[458] TallBear. "An indigenous reflection on working beyond the human/not human."

[459] Todd, "Fish Pluralities." 15.

[460] Ibid.

analysis), transforms Indigenous interconnections with nonhumans and is vital to understanding our worldviews.

Shaping a Lakota worldview through creative practice or expressive culture is paramount to shaping Lakota identity. However, I do not focus my analysis on identity formation in terms of societal structures of race, class, or gender. Instead, I demonstrate Lakota culture through relationships essential to Lakota identity, the interconnectedness of creative practice that signals to give or receive, and the stories behind our personal adornments. Jenny Tone-Pah-Hote explains that Kiowa identity is formed by art practices that developed during the Progressive Era (1896–1916) as Indigenous people shifted to new ways of expressing themselves.[461] Much like the formation of Kiowa identity through regalia, dance, and beadwork, a Lakota worldview is shaped by creative and crafting practices. Lakota communities relate through epistemological and ontological connections to other-than-human nations. Like using rocks in the ceremonial protocol, using stones in our creative practices is essential to our continued articulation of culture and self. Lakota ontological and epistemological ideas continue guiding the daily production of personal adornment and wearable art.

The adornment items Lakota people carry with them hold stories. In chapter one, I articulated the Black Hills region as a *wizipan or wizipi* – a container to hold special things.[462] Like the Black Hills being a wizipan for tribal knowledge, kinship values, and site of relational significance, jewelry some artists create contains our intimate and everyday stories. Like the adornment pieces made from Quill, the Denver Zoo porcupine, the relational stories of our lives

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[461] Jenny Tone-Pah-Hote, *Crafting an Indigenous Nation: Kiowa Expressive Culture in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019). 3.

[462] Howe et al., eds., *He Sapa Woihanble.*

will continue through the adornment items we create. Jhon Duane tells stories of the land with his use of Fairburn agates, and Molina tells stories with her vibrant beadwork. Of course, all artists are storytellers in their own right and provide vital interpretations and articulations of cultural life. But I am constantly seeking out the informal interactions between Očéti Šakówiŋ relatives and the accessibility of crafting and giving that contributes to a continuum of culture. When I read Jhon Duane and Molina's stories, I see their adornment demonstrating interrelationships with the region, animal nations, and what our communities might find aesthetically pleasing. I hold their work dearly and look forward to more stories they create.

Situating Research Alongside Formal Institutions

In the spring of 2022, my nephew Austin Big Crow, Jr., participated in the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) commencement ceremonies.[463] The keynote address was given by W. Richard West, Jr. (Cheyenne and Arapaho), founding director of the National Museum of the American Indian and Emeritus Director of the Autry National Museum. Listening to Dr. West's inspirational words reminded me of the importance of my dissertation research. Rick West commended the admirable work IAIA has accomplished in creating and demanding space in mainstream institutions like museums and art galleries. But what he wanted to remind the graduating classes that:

> Art created by Native peoples from time immemorial has never been the child of Europe's Enlightenment, Western rationalism, or Western art, with their binary division between "nature" and "culture" and the multiples of vertical disciplinary categories that are its offspring – "art," "science," "history," "ethnography," to name only a few. Native

[463] Institute of American Indian Arts administration had invited the graduating classes of 2020 and 2021 to join the class of 2022 to celebrate their achievements. Although we had celebrated my nephew's accomplishments many times over since spring 2020, our family traveled from South Dakota to New Mexico to mark this occasion.

> art comes, instead, from a far different place that sees art and culture as parts of the same whole – with far different intended purposes and community impacts.[464]

The speech resonated with my entire family as we cheered on the 2020, 2021, and 2022 graduating classes. When Austin started college years ago, he was following in the footsteps of his parents, who were both alumni of IAIA.[465] We witnessed Austin become a part of a legacy we all dreamed of, advocating for and working towards creative practices within the context of our tribal nations. The graduates and their relatives, like our *tiwahe* (immediate family), imagined a future that contributes to the continuum of culture bearers and creative practitioners that do not have to contend with the upward battles of representation, identity politics, and the confinement of settler exceptionalism. Rick West's speech was a stark reminder of how far Indigenous creative practices have come since the inception of IAIA.

I continue to benefit from the decolonial work in formal institutions like museums and collection spaces. The tireless work of collection managers, curators, museum directors, professors, and community activities continues to challenge formal institutions. My research relies on the analysis and questions brought forth by my predecessors. I have relied on their methodological and theoretical frameworks, which are grounded in tribal viewpoints and worldviews and are now included in more museum spaces.[466] New standards of decolonization practices in museums and art collections are occurring more often, which is the result of the work of Indigenous art historians, practitioners, curators, collection managers, and students that

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[464]W. Richard West. Jr., "Institute of American Indian Arts Commencement Address" (2022 Commencement, Santa Fe, NM, May 15, 2022).

[465] Austin's mother Mary (my sister, who eventually received her Masters of Fine Art in Exhibit design) and his father, Lee, an artist in his own respect that died young – both attended IAIA when Austin was a toddler.

[466] I simply cite Amy Lonetree's work not as a catchall, but as a quick reference for the type of ongoing work that has occurred over the last few decades. See Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*.

have shifted the paradigms of institutional change. However, when we, as Lakota people, are shown as ordinary people, we are often dismissed when we do not exhibit exceptionalism by mainstream society.[467] Not every artwork has to be framed as decolonial or anti-colonial. Lakota people are currently in precarious positions within the settler colonial nation-state in places like South Dakota, North Dakota, and other Northern plains regions, which is demonstrated in carceral logics of the prison industrial complex or within border town violence.[468] Much of the focus on Lakota people in dominant society is through exceptional spaces like resistance movements, institutional spaces, or ceremonial spaces. But I seek the stories of the more intimate work, the simplicity of a jewelry exchange between relatives.

The material culture reproduced by artists like Jhon Duane Goes in Center and Molina Two Bulls communicates our relationships with each other beyond the scope of aesthetics or the binaries created from the European enlightenment that are embedded in formal institutional spaces. Rick West's assertion that Indigenous people view "art and culture as parts of the same whole" contributes to the continuum of Indigenous creative practices that should not be historicized. My uncle Jhon Duane continues to state that his work is a production of everyday life and the incorporation of new ideas firmly positioned in Lakota life. The decades of work of scholars and practitioners like Rick West have strived to reframe material culture on a continuum of creativity instead of framing art practices within a historicized period, which traps Očéti Šakówiŋ artists within a specific art style deemed Northern Plains.

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[467] I understand mainstream exceptionalism to be the ways Lakota lives are historicized or categorized by our resistance to settler colonialism and how our lifeways continue to be framed as decolonial.

[468] Nick Estes et al., *Red Nation Rising: From Bordertown Violence to Native Liberation* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2021).

Jhon and Molina have expressed frustration navigating mainstream institutions like national Indigenous art markets or fellowships organized by non-native institutions. Jhon has joked that his silverwork is often dismissed as Northern Plains artwork when silverwork has historically been analyzed within southwestern regional perimeters.[469] While Molina has engaged with popular culture aesthetics that sometimes do not have colors or motifs typically formulated for "Northern Plains" styles. Both artists produce work that operates as markers of a legacy of Očéti Šakówiŋ creative practice that grounds us in the region but as a changing people throughout time.

The museum is not a neutral space.[470] Museum studies and art history theorists have continued to draw attention to the political area within which the museum operates. During the establishment of museum institutions in the United States, categorization and representation came into the whole operation, placing Indigenous people within limiting and historical frameworks.[471] Museum and academic collection practices were problematic coming out of the

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[469] Silverwork has largely been analyzed within a Southwest regional context; examples include but not limited to scholars like Paula A. Baxter and Allison Bird-Romero, *Encyclopedia of Native American Jewelry: A Guide to History, People, and Terms* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 2000); Dexter Cirillo, Michel Monteaux, and Stephen Northup, *Southwestern Indian Jewelry* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992); Lois Sherr Dubin, Togashi, and Paul Jones, *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment: From Prehistory to the Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999); Margaret Nickelson Wright, *Hopi Silver: The History and Hallmarks of Hopi Silversmithing*, 4th ed., rev.expanded including eighty new silversmiths (Flagstaff, Ariz: Northland Pub, 1989).

[470] #MuseumsAreNotNeutral was an international initiative co-produced by La Tanya S. Autry and Mike Murawksi in 2017 to uncover the myth of museum neutrality. The movement insisted upon social justice and equity-based transformation. See La Tanya S. Autry and Mike Murawksi, "Museums Are Not Neutral: We Are Stronger Together," *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2019), https://doi.org/10.24926/24716839.2277; La Tanya S. Autry and Mike Murawksi, "Museums Are Not Neutral," *Artstuffmatters* (blog), 2017, https://artstuffmatters.wordpress.com/museums-are-not-neutral/.

[471] The early 1900s also resulted in a simultaneous shift in Federal Indian policies that influenced how American Indians were seen within the U. S. government landscape, impacting the museum world. For example, Federal policies like the 1906 Antiquities Act and the 1928 Meriam Report led to the Indian Reorganization Act, the 1935 Historic Sites Act, and a slew of assimilation and relocation policies have all transformed the landscape of how American Indians are represented, categorized, and consumed.

19th century and going into the 20th century.[472] Scholars like Franz Boas, Stewart Culin, and Ruth Bunzel encouraged Collection methods that resulted in harmful practices and were occurring due to the field's trends. The intervention of Indigenous studies scholars within the fields of art history provided the needed relief to imagine and reimagine "Indigenous futurities grounded in Indigenous worldviews" within museums and beyond.[473]

Collection practices fueled by the European Enlightenment period situate Indigenous people opposing modernity. Collection practices historically put Indigenous cultural items next to Western technologies to create a dichotomy of inferiority.[474] The stereotyping of Northern Plains creative practitioners to genres like Ledger drawing does not include the evolving engagement with new materials or styles. Accessing some of the articles collected during the "preservation" period are inaccessible to tribal communities.[475] The barriers to accessing cultural items held in museum collections sometimes seem difficult to overcome and continue to be an issue faced by Tribal communities. As recent as 2022 and 2023, well-known museums like the Peabody Museum (Harvard) and the Hood Museum (Dartmouth) still house human remains of

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[472] I reference the work of art historians to provide insight into Western discourses and the impact of categories established by Art History, Anthropology, and similar disciplines.

[473] In the section "Sovereignty and Futurity" in T*he Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories* (2022) Indigenous scholars like Jolene Rickard, Mique'l Dangeli, and Heather Ahtone remind us that our sovereignties and approaches to art history should be grounded in our Indigneous ways of knowing. See Igloliorte and Taunton, *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada*. 6.

[474] Nancy Marie Mithlo and other scholars like Duarte et al. (2019) have demonstrated the practice of othering or the hierarchical structures of knowledges that exist in data management and Western collection practices. See scholars like Duarte et al., "'Of Course, Data Can Never Fully Represent Reality'" and Nancy Marie Mithlo, "Native American Art in a Global Context: Politicization as a Form of Aesthetic Response," in *Exploring World Art: Eric Venbrux, Pamela Sheffield Rosi, Robert L. Welsch*, ed. Eric Venbrux, Pamela Sheffield Rosi, and Robert Louis Welsch (Long Grove, Ill: Waveland Press, 2006), 371–87.

[475] S. Jordan Simms, "A Polluting Concept of Culture: Native Artefacts Contaminated with Toxic Preservatives," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11, no. 4 (January 2005): 327–39, https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250500235633.

North American Indigenous peoples.[476] Moreover, late 19th-century collection practices have harmed Indigenous communities, such as displaying material culture not meant for public viewing.

A shift in Anthropology, Art History, and similar fields occurred with the birth of tribal cultural centers during the 1960s through the 1970s. Tribal heritage centers, cultural centers, and museums arose as social movements transformed the social consciousness of the public from both inside and outside formal institutions. During the late 1970s, the North American Indian Museums Association was founded and brought together Indigenous thinkers to consider how to engage with religious items held in museums.[477] The founding of the North American Indian Museums Association coincides with the Religious Freedom Act of 1978, which emerged after the Civil Rights movements across the United States.[478] The shift to emphasize tribal worldviews within formal institutions impacted tribal museums, universities, and governmental policies in various ways, like the inclusion of cultural protocols. The Religious Freedom Act was also passed at the same time as the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act of 1978.[479] Tribally controlled institutions like tribal colleges or heritage centers did not lead to equitable art training or funding for those institutions. As stated by Nancy Marie Mithlo, "Simply

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[476] Tarah D. Gilles, "Harvard Pledges to Return Hundreds of Native American Hair Samples Housed at Peabody Museum," *The Harvard Crimson*, November 12, 2022, https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2022/11/12/peabody-hair-samples/; Staff, "Remains of 15 Native American Individuals Discovered in College's Collections," *The Dartmouth*, March 28, 2023, https://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2023/03/remains-of-15-native-american-individuals-discovered-in-colleges-collections.

[477] George H.J. Abrams, "Tribal Museums in America," American Association for State and Local History (The Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2002), https://www.atalm.org/.

[478] Civil rights organizations like the American Indian movement spurred many policy changes with their direct action in places like Washington, D.C.

[479] As a child of tribal educators, I find the conversation of treaties and tribal poligices important to highlight the integral work occurring at Tribal colleges and universities like the Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico while also critiquing the Federal and philanthropic funding framework that overlooks Tribal leadership and Tribal focused institutions.

selecting a Native recipient and sending them into a museum collection is not the only investment that needs to be made in ensuring a diverse professional workforce."[480] Tribal colleges and universities train Tribal members to work with the community in various capacities, but not all mainstream museums are Tribally focused or prepared to work with Tribal communities. The move to have institutions interpret tribal life from a tribal perspective was paramount and continues to be an apt solution to the long legacy and failures.

The impact of the tribally controlled and tribally focused institution has led to the incorporation of intergenerational and community-learned skill sharing inside and outside formal institutions. The foundation of familial and relational practices in tribally focused spaces is essential to Lakota creative practices. Molina and Jhon are trained in different formal art educational settings, and most of their current work is based on techniques they learned from intergenerational and familial knowledge. Molina attended the Institute of American Indian Arts to study different artistic approaches. Jhon Duane received a museum studies degree and formal training in geographic information sciences. Yet, the current work I analyzed is based on intergenerational knowledge Molina, and Jhon gained outside of institutions. The importance and strength of intergenerational connections are vital to articulating Lakota relationality while also understanding that our learning and growing happen simultaneously. Even my training in higher education has been supported by community-based work. The practical knowledge that has occurred in between coursework and grassroots organizing has aided in my position as a scholar and is as crucial as the scholarship I continue to produce.

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[480] Mithlo, *Knowing Native Arts*. 31.

I seek the uncomfortable uncertainty of articulating creative practice through a relational lens rather than Western " art " ideologies that categorize Indigenous innovation in particular ways. I employ the idea of being uncomfortable because that is how I often feel in white museum spaces – I cannot touch the material culture that is on display which, before contact, would have been used until unusable and put back into nature.[481] I am frustrated with mainstream institutional categorization often siloed between "art, science, history, ethnography."[482] As an Indigenous studies scholar, I apply uncertainty because I operate from a promiscuity of fields requiring art history, anthropology, literature studies, gender studies, and cultural studies while ensuring I articulate a nuanced Lakota perspective. Art continues to be my touchpoint because, as Rick West stated in his IAIA commencement address, "Native art comes, instead, from a far different place that sees art and culture as parts of the same whole – with far different intended purposes and community impacts."[483] My position continues to be uncomfortable, not in the painful or intolerable articulations of navigating settler colonialism but in the awkward moments of growth, because of artists' work, historians, curators, and community-based practitioners.

Conclusion and Constraints

I am helping my dad set up his booth at the 2022 winter holiday art market at the Dahl Fine Arts Center in Rapid City, South Dakota. I carry large portable latticed metal walls from his car to the building. We slowly assembled the ten-by-ten structure as other artists set up their booths nearby. I notice Molina Two Bulls pass by us with small rubber tubs. I am anxious to see

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[481] Simms, "A Polluting Concept of Culture"

[482] West. Jr., "Institute of American Indian Arts Commencement Address."

[483] Ibid.

what beautiful items she has brought to the market; she recently has been creating beaded cuffs and earrings. After my dad and I have set all his large landscape photographs in their places, I head to Molina's booth. We chat and joke a bit about this and that. Then I mention that I'm waiting for my uncle Jhon Duane to arrive so I can inquire about a set of silver dangle earrings with buffalo skulls. She exclaims she wants the same pair. We both saw a Facebook post from the night before previewing the jewelry Jhon was bringing. Right before the market's opening, Molina and I see Jhon come in and quickly set up his booth. We march to the booth together, giggling about who will get to the earrings first. But as we arrive at Jhon's booth, we discover that he has already given the earrings to his sister. Disappointed but happy that the earrings will be well-loved, we looked at Jhon's beautiful work, and I purchased a round agate ring. A few weeks later, we are all at another community art event, and Jhon pulls out two small boxes, one for Molina and one for myself. They are smaller versions of the buffalo skull earrings we were aiming for at the previous market. He gifted each with a pair of earrings. His generosity always humbles me.

In this chapter, I analyzed the everyday use of personal adornment or jewelry to demonstrate Lakota's relationality through other-than-human persons, cultural connection through kinship, and creative production. To articulate how Lakota people express an interconnectedness to each other, culture, and other-than-human persons, I utilized ontological theories to shift the discussion of creative practices from the confines of the historical legacy of museum collection practices, the gendering of craftwork and capitalistic-driven economies. To demonstrate kinship in Lakota culture, I relied on relationality to examine everyday wearable art like finger rings, earrings, necklaces, brooches, and bracelets. Jewelry is portable and can be

passed intergenerationally, unlike a museum or art gallery setting that often provides stagnant or limited engagement with cultural items meant to be worn or displayed on the body. My focus on ontological and epistemological analyses utilized the interdisciplinarity of Indigenous Studies to demonstrate the importance of a Lakota worldview of other-than-human persons, like rocks or stone and porcupine quills.[484]

As I dive further into my research with Lakota creative practice, I realized a study of adornment and "craft" items outside of formal institutional settings like a museum, art gallery, or service to a national funding agency is central to understanding Lakota relationality.[485] The artists I collaborated with spoke fervently about their work outside museums, galleries, and formal spaces. I have understood their work to be accessible in the everyday setting of Lakota life that operates on a cultural continuum rather than focusing on a specific period. Furthermore, I bypassed the focus of craftwork that is often analyzed as symbolism, motifs, and material highlighted by the impact of European cultures, including the use of silver, glass beads, and the

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[484] Though relationships with formal institutions are constantly evolving, Hunkpapa Lakota artist Danielle SeeWalker recently asked Denver Zoo if she could harvest the quills and guard hair from "Quill," their resident porcupine that recently passed away at age thirteen. I referenced the story of Quill, earlier in the chapter. See Darren Thompson, "Porcupine's Passing at Denver Zoo Inspires Community, Cultural Teachings," *Native News Online*, February 15, 2023, sec. Arts and Entertainment, https://nativenewsonline.net/arts-entertainment/porcupine-s-passing-at-denver-zoo-inspires-community-cultural-teachings.

[485] "Craft" is in scare quotes because of the confinement of well-recognized categories like arts and crafts which permeate Indigenous creative practices like sewing, jewelry making, and other creative practices utilized by Indigenous people in everyday life.

like.[486] The everyday is often framed within an ideology of crafts in the larger structure of material culture within art history or anthropology. However, the everyday helps me understand how operating outside the confines of museum collections or art galleries is vital to my articulations of relationality. I know that the history of art and the ways artists contend with formal institutions is significant to the discussion of Indigenous material culture. I benefit from Indigenous art historians contributing research that engages with relationality.[487] Their work operates inside and outside the confines of traditional art, historical or anthropological practices.[488] With their contributions, I could refocus my analysis elsewhere and hone in on their journeys through creative practice.

I utilized epistemological and ontological commitments embedded in the everyday Lakota communities' ways of knowing and understanding the world. The worldviews that shape Lakota livelihood influence personal adornment and wearable art accessible to ordinary people who might be unable or unwilling to visit a museum, university archive, or mainstream art

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[486] Although the research I cite is from two decades prior, the scholars I reference demonstrate the trend of analysis that the artists I interviewed continue to face in the present day. See Paula A. Baxter and Allison Bird-Romero, *Encyclopedia of Native American Jewelry: A Guide to History, People, and Terms* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 2000); Ettagale Blauer, *Contemporary American Jewelry Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991); Justine M. Cordwell, Ronald A. Schwarz, and International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological S Chicago, Ill.>, eds., *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment* (De Gruyer Mouton, 1979); Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Phillips, eds., *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture*, English ed, Wenner-Gren International Symposium Series (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2006); Beverly Gordon and Melanie Herzog, *American Indian Art: The Collecting Experience: Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, May 7-July 3, 1988* (Madison: The Museum, 1988); Shepard Krech and Barbara A. Hail, eds. *Collecting Native America, 1870-1960*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2010. Shelby J. Tisdale, "Railroads, Tourism, and Native Americans in the Greater Southwest," *Journal of the Southwest* 38, no. 4 (1996): 433–62; Hilary N. Weaver and Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heartz, "Examining Two Facets of American Indian Identity: Exposure to Other Cultures and the Influence of Historical Trauma," *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 2, no. 1–2 (January 1999): 19–33.

[487] Igloliorte and Taunton, *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada.*

[488] There are amazing Indigenous studies scholars doing Art History, archival, and museum studies work, especially junior scholars like Megan baker, Celestina Castillo, Kristen Dorsey, Viki Eagle, Jessica Fremland, Jenine Hillaire, Noah Mape, Taylor Rose Payer, Isabella Robbins, and many others.

gallery.[489] The commitment of the Lakota people to understanding and articulating a world through creative practice is paramount to the future of our livelihoods outside the extreme circumstances that have been formed through our interactions with non-natives over the last five hundred years. Although Lakota ontological and epistemological senses might differ from other ontological commitments, I did not center my analysis on Lakota people's "resistance" to settler colonial knowing and colonial worldviews. Yet, I understand the importance of an assessment that does focus on anti-colonial frameworks and the ways our ideas become political when they differ from mainstream ways of knowing.[490] I articulate an intergenerational and culturally grounded study that engages with the ontological and epistemological formations of Lakota creative practice and communicates interconnectedness that is not just a resistance to settler colonial incursion because sometimes focusing on the how and why of resistance does not leave room for celebrating the everyday.

The mainstream art world perpetuates identity politics while issuing favoritism to artists they deem worthy of aesthetic praise because of activism. In my 2022 article, "The American Indian Movement and the Politics of Nostalgia," I demonstrate that the legacy of mainstream media perpetuates a particular image of Lakota people.[491] The artists I discuss here center on relationship building within a regional locale. Of course, artists continue to create and utilize their creative practices to express themselves and relate to their tribal communities; however, in

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[489] For example, the first museum-type institution I visited was a Heritage Center at the Jesuit-run kindergarten through 12th-grade school I attended. The first time I went to a non-reservation art gallery, I felt uncomfortable and unwelcome, even though many of the exhibition was about Indigenous life.

[490] Martin Porr, *Ontologies of Rock Art: Images, Relational Approaches, and Indigenous Knowledges*, ed. Oscar Moro Abadía, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2021), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429321863. 7.

[491] Clementine Bordeaux, "Unsettled Debts: 1968 and the Problem of Historical Memory| The American Indian Movement and the Politics of Nostalgia: Indigenous Representation From Wounded Knee to Standing Rock.," *International Journal of Communication* 16 (2022): 23.

museums and galleries, when artists exhibit other than the tropes of resistance or reactionary approaches in the Western world. For example, Anishinaabe Sarain Fox was interviewed about crafting a documentary for VICE about the #NoDAPL movement in which she highlights the "How Art Immortalized #NoDAPL Protests at Standing Rock" (2017). I utilize Sarain Fox's interview as an example of how popular culture and the framing of art practices as radical resistance is perpetuated within multiple creative spaces. The art created as resistance is vital to Indigenous communities, and my contributions fill in the gaps where needed.

My analysis situates creative practices within relationality rather than individual identity formation. Indigenous studies scholars have demonstrated that craft and creative practice contribute to forming Indigenous identities that stretch beyond inherent sovereignty, transforming artistic practices into markers of peoplehood. Instead of recirculating characteristics that contribute to pan-Indian rhetoric, I use a specific tribal worldview to articulate interconnectedness. Engaging with ontological and epistemological analyses of the artist's jewelry pieces, I can contribute to a more extensive understanding of place-based knowledge than relying solely on stories of identity or the formation of individuality. We are impacted by other-than-human relations in our specific geographic locations, reflected in creative practices like personal adornment and wearable art. I analyze creative practices to demonstrate a long trajectory of relationships with culture, community, and place that continue to operate without a homogenous or historicized view of identity.

In the formal interviews with my two main collaborators, Molina and Jhon Duane, we discussed grief and how mourning shifted their creative practices away from market-driven economies. The interconnectedness of sharing creative practice with relatives is the primary

marker for my analysis and how we interact with nonhumans, like the Denver Zoo porcupine, Quill – whose death brought new life through crafting. Our relationships that support our ways of knowing, seeing, and articulating the world are demonstrated in the creative and ingenious ways we share. Jhon Duane and Molina lost loved ones during my fieldwork (as we all did during the uncertain times of the Covid-19 pandemic). Losing loved ones caused a slight delay in collaborations during my dissertation research. I watched Molina and Jhon Duane's craft shift as they moved through their grieving; they found joy in sharing new works with other relatives and the community. The work produced during their mourning was not tied to presenting at art markets or galleries. Molina began making hand-sewn dolls, and Jhon Duane created adornment specifically for gifting. Their creative practices became an outlet for their grief. The stories Jhon and Molina produce will carry stories we can share.

CONCLUSION: THE "GOOD INDIAN" VERSUS THE "BAD INDIAN"

I keep dreaming about death. And not in the opposite, death equates rebirth or new life, but in the necropolitics of Indigenous life.[492] I keep seeing in my dreams how our bodies, as Indigenous bodies within a settler colonial framework, are marked for death. I have nightmares about Native men getting killed by the police and Native women going missing, never to be found nor laid to rest. I fear the day I am taken away from my family because I am a woman with no children or too queer for the dominant society. All I want is for people to be safe. Instead, I dream of the earth's slow decline into a chemical landscape without sustainable life. I joke nihilistically about the world swallowing us whole and how I will join the winning team when the zombie apocalypse arrives. But I do not do this in jest. The joke is on me because I keep dreaming of death.

A clear articulation of Očéti Šakówiŋ relationality in present-day mainstream fine art spaces must be improved. I want to see myself reflected in art spaces as an everyday relative and a Lakota scholar, activist, and creative practitioner. Instead of dreaming about the death scape of my community, I seek out the creative ways my community produces relations with each other and the land. As demonstrated throughout my dissertation, relational practices like storytelling, gift giving, poetry, and adornment creation ground Očéti Šakówiŋ people in being everyday and accessible good relatives. Making art in a good way demonstrates a connection to place and

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[492] The foundational Foucauldian analysis of biopower helps to understand how indigenous bodies, especially women's bodies, are assumed within the colonial occupation. Achille Mbembe (2003) builds on Foucault's analysis, necropolitics allows the creation of a different understanding of spatial analysis and a deeper understanding of space. Mbembe introduces the concept of necropolitics by including various ideas of the states of siege and exception. The political is not detached from the power; both rely on the control of bodies. Biopolitics, necropolitics, and the discussion of biopower lay a solid foundation for theorizing indigenous bodies within settler states.

understanding of culture recognizable to Indigenous people who are grounded in specific forms of knowing.[493] Often what occurs in mainstream art spaces is an aesthetic catered to a pan-Indigenous or homogenous viewpoint of Native peoples, which puts pressure on artists or culture bearers to perform a specific type of Indian-ness. As I shared in the introduction of my dissertation, Očéti Šakówiŋ relatives continue to be forced into a "good Indian" and "bad Indian" dichotomy that has been created because of the necropolitical and deathscapes that surround our communities.[494] Art and creative practices can relieve the dichotomy created by outside forces, as created by a settler landscape, and instead demonstrate relational practices grounded in our ways of knowing.

We, as Lakota people, are faced with images firmly rooted in poverty or violence perpetuated by non-native cis-heteronormative photographers and media makers. I want to see myself as a Lakota relative reflected in the pictures created about my community for my community. Instead, I see re-creations of Edward Curtis's wet print and tintype photography reproduced by non-native artists.[495] The photography influenced by Curtis and similar historicized images of Indigenous peoples has been analyzed and critiqued thoroughly.[496] Some scholars have demonstrated the nuances of how images produced through Curtis-like photography have been received more positively (because people see their relatives) but also the ongoing complications of Indigenous people just wanting to be seen in some way, shape, or

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[493] I reference "making art in a Good way" from Suzanne Kite's doctoral dissertation (2023). See Suzanne Kite, "Hél Čhaŋkú Kiŋ Ȟpáye (There Lies the Road): How to Make Art in a Good Way" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Concordia University, 2023).

[494] Our creative practices are a relief from this dichotomy.

[495] Many contemporary Indigenous photographers like Matika Wilbur, Will Wilson, Ryan Red Corn, and Viki Eagle have been using wet print and portrait photography to reclaim Indigenous space in front of and behind the camera.

[496] Because of the work of scholars like Nancy Mithlo, Nicole Strathman, Michelle Raheja, Liza Black and many others over the past two decades I am able to critique photography more thoroughly.

form.[497] The dominance of a historicized image of Indigenous peoples continues to permeate art spaces locally, regionally, and nationally and continues to produce narratives of the necropolitical "bad" Indian.

A historicized image of an Indigenous body connects our deaths to the present, especially when we, as Indigenous people, can only be imagined in the past.[498] When will the past stop haunting the present?[499] I recently accompanied my sister Mary, a creative, cultural, and curatorial practitioner, as she attempted to have a civil and productive conversation with a white curator in Rapid City, the nearest our home reservation and located at the base of the Black Hills. The curator was preparing an exhibition of an up-and-coming white male photographer who utilizes Indigenous peoples as his subjects.[500] We met with the white curator at a predominantly white gallery space from a place of care and concern but were met with resistance. The gallery's exhibition, funded through the local municipal government, was re-creating Edward S. Curtis-style sepia tone images of unsmiling Native people in cultural regalia via wet plate photography. They are beautiful images. However, the gallery exhibited these photographs when the city where the institution was located suffered from public displays of racism. At the time, the rhetoric of "good Indians" and "bad Indians" was thrown around by prominent business owners in the area. Our concern for the historicized image of Indigenous people dominating art spaces is and was at a time when Indigenous people needed to be seen as present-day members of society.

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[497] Mishuana Goeman, "Introduction to Indigenous Performances: Upsetting the Terrains of Settler Colonialism," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 4 (2011): 1–18.

[498]Ross, *Inventing the Savage*; Miranda, *Bad Indians.*

[499] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, New University of Minnesota Press ed (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[500] I am enacting a refusal. I will not name the photographer.

But no matter how much information, research, and opinions we shared about the harmful practices of portrait photography perpetuated by non-native photographers, the white curator could not or would not understand.[501] She considered the concern a personal attack (shedding tears after the conversation ended). She continued to justify the exhibition of the white photographer's work by hiding behind Native people who uplifted the photographer (and continue to uplift his work). Later, when the exhibition went up, the local state public broadcasting radio interviewed the photographer, challenging his viewpoint.[502] Instead of providing a rationale for targeting Indigenous subjects, he felt attacked. He started a smear campaign against the broadcasting organization by violently targeting the female journalist that had interviewed him – her body was also marked for violence, even as a white woman, for her alignment in trying to attempt accountability. His response, like the white curator's (in my opinion), demonstrated a typical and violent (passive and aggressive) response that continues to permeate how Indigenous people are documented through the creative practice of image-making.

Indigenous people face a long legacy of visual culture that spans documentary form to ethnography. As the documentary and ethnographic fields progressed, theorists began to articulate how visual materials produced through a photographic method acknowledge that the creator, the person behind the camera, shapes what is in the frame.[503] The shift to incorporate the

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[501] Aaron Glass, "A Cannibal in the Archive: Performance, Materiality, and (In)Visibility in Unpublished Edward Curtis Photographs of the Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa," *Visual Anthropology Review* 25, no. 2 (November 2009): 128–49, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-7458.2009.01038.x.

[502] Again, I refuse to name the photographer, but the interview was hosted by Lori Walsh for South Dakota Public Broadcasting in 2022.

[503] See David MacDougall and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, *Transcultural Cinema* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1998); John Collier and Malcolm Collier, *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, Rev. and expanded ed (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); Karl G. Heider, *Ethnographic Film*, Rev. ed (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

behind-the-camera creator's point of view became helpful in further theoretical and cultural inquiries, especially in conversations that have interrogated the discipline of visual anthropology and the discussion of ethnography. While argued by some scholars, the idea of vision as a primary perception of the world is a focus in the work of contemporary ethnographers.[504] Indigenous creatives grapple with the ways our lives are documented. Some documentary theorists have shifted discussions of form and representation to prompt critical investigations of historical influences and the current model of visual media. Bills Nichols provides a straightforward look at ethics, documentary form, historical aspects, and compelling documentary filmmaking.[505] Other scholars transform conversations of how the medium of films plays with time, space, and corporeality to include the theoretical and emotional links between creators and collaborators.[506] Unlike some of their predecessors, MacDougall and Lucien Castaing-Taylor (1998) articulate the cultural differences between filmmaker and subject by demonstrating that different mediums could provide a broader range of data gathering from many types of material culture – in their analysis, they build a gradual understanding of film as a tool for the ethnographic method, the film is a stand-alone genre and not a replacement for the written word. Plenty of analyses can be done regarding materials gathered from ethnographic methods.

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[504] Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Susan L. Feagin and Patrick Maynard, eds., *Aesthetics*, Oxford Readers (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Anna Grimshaw, *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2001), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511817670.

[505] Here I reference Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2001).

[506] David MacDougall, *The Looking Machine: Essays on Cinema, Anthropology and Documentary Filmmaking*, Anthropology, Creative Practice and Ethnography (ACE) (Manchester: Manchester University press, 2019); Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real: The Griersonian Documentary and Its Legitimations* (London: British Film Institute, 1995); David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2006).

What do these shifts in the field of documentary and ethnographic form mean when we are trying to understand why representation within fine arts spaces is so important? The documentation and portrayal of Indigenous people on screen, in film, and in photographs have led to severe misrepresentation. Jacqueline Kilpatrick (1999) demonstrates that stereotypes of Indigenous characters can be seen in three ways, one that addresses a mental category, another an over-sexualization, and finally, an overt mysticism of characters.[507] The mental stereotype can be seen as encompassing the other two since words like "stupid" or "dumb" are replaced by "filthy" or "noble" if the phrases are then intertwined with "savage" or "Indian." We face tropes that place the characters in gendered positions or contrast with the settler framework. However, the trope is disrupted with images of intelligence and sincerity echoed through technology and Indigenous language.

Autonomy in representation is vital to how Native and non-native audiences receive our lives on screen and off. The perpetuation of stereotypes and stigmas on screen has led to a misunderstanding of the Indigenous relatives in film and popular culture. Michelle Raheja's *Reservation Reelism* (2010) leans into an ever-expanding process of reimagining, reinventing, and reappropriating Indigenous bodies in moving images to create a "virtual reservation." By investigating the many instances of "redfacing" or "playing Indian," Raheja reveals the failures of the film industry.[508] The analyses by Raheja and similar scholars challenge the ongoing formation of "bad Indians" through images. Without the intervention of BIPOC and Indigenous

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[507] Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indian.*

[508] Raheja was one of the first scholars to popularize "redface" as a concept to be explored in a book-length setting, and it is successfully demonstrated without accusatory condemnation of the individuals engaged in red-face. Rather she analyzed "redface" as a failure of the hierarchical structures of the film industry. See Michelle H. Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (UNP - Nebraska, 2011), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1dfnrq6.

feminist scholars, there would not be an ongoing dialogue about how to reimagine Indigenous portrayals in mainstream media.[509] As we reimagine and see ourselves portrayed differently on screen, maybe we can start to imagine ourselves as everyday Indians, whether good or bad.

Creating Everyday Art

My Northern Plains seasonal framework, a Lakota articulation of the weather as an animate other-than-human person, was crucial to my writing process when creating a timeline to finish my dissertation. I came to a seasonal methodology because I sought out a way to understand my theorizing and implementation that reflected my tribal upbringing. I edited my dissertation in the winter months at the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023. We faced some intense sub-zero weather in the northern plains, with long days of no travel and hunkering inside for safety. I prayed for spring. I looked forward to the meadowlark songs and lilac blooms, but as I read, re-read, and revised my dissertation chapters, I was thankful for the long winter. The kinship ethics, as demonstrated throughout my dissertation, was embedded in these ways of navigating research and writing as a non-linear, cyclical timeline and provided me with an acknowledgment of the relationships I must have with my field sites, dissertation, and community to move forward. Although we welcome *Maga Agli Wi*, the moon when the geese return, we continued to receive snow flurries throughout April. The cold prairie winds and heavy snowfalls forced me to face the edits I actively avoided.

I keep returning to the image and idea of a "bad Indian" versus a "good Indian." As I furthered my academic career, I realized that the framing of the savage Indigenous body or the violent native community came from a long history of systemic issues. When I started college as

[509] I am happy and encouraged by the production of shows like *Rutherford Falls* (2021) and *Reservtion Dogs* (2021)

an eighteen-year-old, I realized alcoholism was rampant among all communities. But growing up on the reservation, I had internalized the idea that only "Indians" were "drunks." The narrative surrounding substance abuse was that the problem was with the people, not systemic issues across generations. As an impressionable child, I did not understand why the border towns of the reservation treated us so poorly.[510] I carried the fear of white people and a fear of police into adulthood, not realizing that the problem was a "them" problem. The community framed as "bad" are my cousins, friends, classmates, and relatives I hold dearly.

Structural racism and the long historical trajectory of oppression in the United States and on the North American continent continue to be studied and analyzed within the academy and beyond. The many hurdles Očéti Šakówiŋ communities face range from environmental justice battles to police brutality to active historical erasure.[511] Settler supremacy is the context for the invention of race and the creation of the "bad" Indian. Settler colonialism and settler supremacy have a long legacy because the system "covers its tracks."[512] Understanding settler colonialism helps us to see that racism is not human nature; it was invented to explain stealing land and

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[510] Some characteristics of a border town, as shared by Nick Estes, include "Geographic location near an Indian reservation and/or community; Dependent upon Native resources such as land, cheap labor, water, mineral resources, and economies; In some cases, Native people are dependent upon border towns for basic needs such as employment, food, education, access to health services, access to social services, and conducting business in general;" in his blog 2012 post "Border Towns: Colonial Logics of Violence."

[511] A vast amount has been written about the oppression and dispossession of Lakota peoples, including work by and not limited to Archambault "The Standing Rock Protests and the Struggle for Tribal Sovereignty"; Albers and Medicine, *The Hidden Half*; Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*; de Leon, "Lakota Experiences of (in)Security"; Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins*; Echo-Hawk, *In the Courts of the Conqueror*; Estes and Dhillon, *Standing With Standing Rock*; Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows*; Gonzalez and Cook-Lynn, *The Politics of Hallowed Ground*; Green, *American Carnage* Hauff, "Beyond Numbers, Colors, and Animals: Strengthening Lakota/Dakota Teaching on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation"; Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation"; Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?*; White Hat and Cunningham, *Life's Journey-- Zuya*; Zitkala-Ša and Long Soldier, *American Indian Stories*.

[512] Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing: Settler Colonial Studies," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 2011): 1–12, https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648799.

stealing people for labor.[513] The structural racism, oppression, and dispossession Očéti Šakówiŋ people face are enduring, but so are our creative practices.

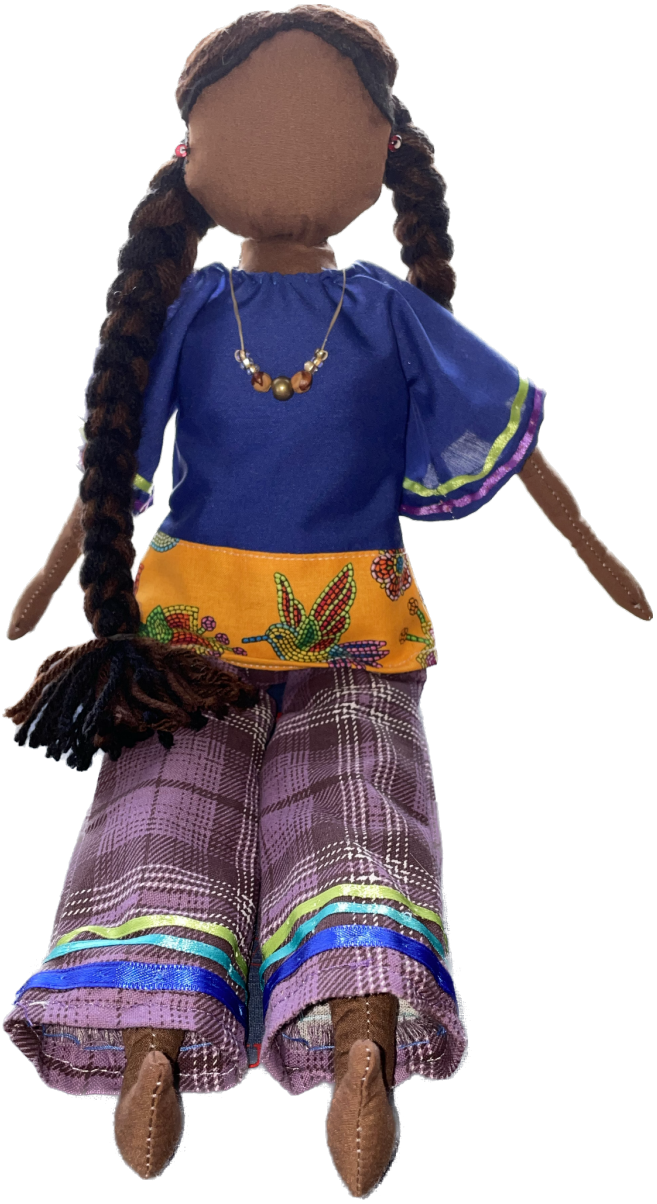

Figure 7: Hand-crafted doll made by the author. 2022.

[513] Major contributions to settler colonial studies include Kauanui, "A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity."; Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism"; Simpson, "Whither Settler Colonialism?"; Speed, "Structures of Settler Capitalism in Abya Yala"; TallBear, "Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming"; Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native."

I keep searching for a way to articulate the everyday Lakota relationality I learned was typical in the face of extreme circumstances. We make each other bread and soup when we are mourning or staying longer after a family gathering to help wash dishes. I want to be seen and represented as a relative operating from a place of care. While drafting my dissertation, I attended a doll-making workshop hosted by Molina Two Bulls and made my first handmade doll (Figure 7). My doll is imperfect but a perfect example of everyday art. The room was full of Lakota women, sharing stories, laughing as we struggled to craft new patterns and operate fancy sewing machines, and spent an entire day creating together. I proudly display my doll in my home. The doll helps me recognize my experience with Molina and our relatives as a profound example of Lakota ingenuity, the wowayupike, the art-making, and the kinship-making that being an everyday relative entails. When I remember the doll, I do not think about death but the potential of relational and creative practices.

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