

Spring 2020

Subjugation Schooling on Standing Rock: Education, History, and Theories for Change

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This capstone is a two-part creative project. The first part is a traditional academic essay that weaves together Indian boarding school history, two Lakota educational memoirs, and analysis of contemporary Standing Rock schooling. I will show how Standing Rock schools, differing little in some fundamental ways from Indian boarding schools of the past, continue to assimilate students through western epistemologies while neglecting our traditional Lakota knowledge, language, and culture. The second part is my personal intellectual journey. I reflect on my schooling starting in grade school and ending in my senior year of undergrad at Yale College. I discuss my personal theories for educational change on Standing Rock to not only decolonize -but indigenize. Through my schooling and reflections, I have concluded that we need to return to our own Indigenous ways of knowing. We need to teach through Lakota and come together as a community to heal from over a century of insidious brainwashing and cultural destruction.

Suggested Citation: Warren, C. (2020). *Subjugation Schooling on Standing Rock: Education, History, and Theories for Change* (Unpublished Education Studies capstone). Yale University, New Haven, CT.

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Chase Warren

Education Studies Capstone

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April 14, 2020

ABSTRACT

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Part 1

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

For the first part, the essay charts the history of Native education starting with the boarding schools and ending with contemporary narratives of experiences specific to Standing Rock. After explaining boarding schools and its impacts, I discuss the lives of two Lakota people who grew up around the time boarding schools began to dwindle: Albert White Hat, Sr (born in 1938) and Delphine Red Shirt (born in 1957). These two are prime examples of how Lakota children grew up in the 1940s and 1960s, the last two major generations of fluent speakers. Both of their stories show how life and schooling used to be for Lakota, which are important to understand that we aren't as disconnected from the old ways as we think. We have elders who were alive when entire communities spoke in Lakota and were taught in the old Indigenous way.

Then, there is a gap in the 1980s and 1990s, but I pick up the narratives in the 2000s and 2010s. I discuss the experiences of a mentor and peer who grew up in Standing Rock to show how contemporary schools are terrible both in western and traditional Lakota education. Finally, I end the project with a thorough reflection on my own educational experiences and what I have learned at Yale. I learned that above all else, America brainwashes Natives (and everyone else) to think that capitalism and settler-colonialism are morally acceptable. We have been taught that America is the land of the free when it incarcerates (mostly Black men) people at an absurd rate. We have been taught that taxes are just ways that government bureaucrats steal our money and do nothing. Meanwhile, much of that tax money goes towards the military that invades countries for economic gain. I could keep going on and on but you get the picture.

I argue that Standing Rock needs to do everything it can to teach the future generations in Lakota rather than teaching about it or treating it as an extracurricular like it has for the last 50 years. If we want to truly indigenize our schools and “decolonize,” we must do so through the language. This project focuses on Lakota language education because I have seen the current children at the small immersion school speak Lakota and do cultural activities with elders. They are the ones who are going to continue our stories and traditions. I believe that if we revitalize the language in schools, everything else will follow. *We want to create a system that: is collaborative rather than competitive, is with us rather than for us,¹ is personalized rather than standardized, is traditional/cultural rather than western, and is healing rather than harming.²* We will do that through Lakota, not English.

¹ Paulo, Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2014.) 48.

² Carol Black. *On the Wildness of Children*. (<http://carolblack.org/on-the-wildness-of-children>); M.Y. H Brave Heart. and Lemyra DeBruyn. "The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief." (*American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* 8 (2): 60-82. 1998); Deloria, Vine, Jr. *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and*

I write about the similarities between boarding schools of the past and today's tribal schools because I want people to clearly see that school continues to destroy language and culture and perpetuate white supremacy.³ I write about my personal experiences in school because people rarely take a moment to examine how traumatic school actually is, for both the "lazy" and "smart" students.⁴

In Lakota culture, it was traditional for people to venture out on a *zuya*,⁵ which is commonly thought of only as going to war. But Albert White Hat writes that it was also an educational journey of varying duration meant to teach people self-reliance and responsibility. Upon returning home, the tribe knew that the travelers gained wisdom about the world through experience, and the traveler would tell the tribe about their journey. People don't do that anymore.⁶ They may travel and go to college or the military but the tradition of storytelling and sharing personal journeys with the tribe has been lost. Because of generations of settler

the Myth of Scientific Fact. (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997); Vine Deloria, Jr, and Daniel R. Wildcat. *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. (Fulcrum Publishing, 2001); Leanne Simpson. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.); Linda Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. (London: Zed Books, 1999. Second Edition 2012.) Eve Tuck and Rubén A Gaztambide-Fernández. "Curriculum, Replacement, and Settler Futurity." (*Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 29, no. 1 (2013): 72-89.) Mary Hermes and Erin Dyke. "Still Flourishing: Enacting Indigenizing Language Immersion Pedagogies in the Era of US Common Core State Standards." In: McKinley E., Smith L. (eds) *Handbook of Indigenous Education*. Springer, Singapore. 2019.

³ I think of education and schooling as two different things. Education encompasses everything we learn in life. It includes playing in the sandbox with friends as a toddler and college conversations at 2 A.M. We learn constantly through the things we experience - there is no off-switch in our brains. Schooling is a particular, often compulsory, type of education. Schooling is tied to class and prestige and success in this field implies that one is "smarter" or more "intelligent" than those who fail in it.

⁴ By "smart," I mean the conventionally successful student with high test scores and grades. By "lazy," I mean the conventionally unsuccessful student who zones out, has behavior issues, or is otherwise not performing well in school.

⁵ White Hat, 177. Zu- meaning the "journey" or "mission" and -ya meaning he/she is going on that mission.

⁶ White Hat, 47.

colonialism, people either don't want to tell their stories or the tribe doesn't want to listen. It's most likely both or that the current societal structure, one that emphasizes 9-5 work schedules, doesn't allow for such meetings. In any case, I find it vital that I reflect critically on my *zuya* for my own sake but hopefully for any Lakota/Dakota willing to listen.

PROBLEMS WITH STANDING ROCK SCHOOLS

Today's tribal/public schools on Standing Rock are largely the same as assimilatory boarding schools of the past.⁷ The schools still teach entirely in English and treat language and culture as an extracurricular. We do not learn our own histories nor read about our own stories, even in English. We have one small immersion school⁸ where students, roughly K-4, only speak in Lakota/Dakota, but the vast majority of youth do not speak and have no one in their immediate family who does. The best example of Lakota/Dakota language learning outside of the small immersion school is a three-week program⁹ during June. Few young people on Standing Rock are proficient enough in Lakota to say more than "my name is ___, I am from ___, I live in ___, and I am a ___ Lakota boy/girl." The public-school language curriculum, for many years, taught the same basic vocabulary from elementary school (apple, buffalo, dog, horse, red, seven, car, etc.) again in middle and high school.¹⁰ In other words, there was no progression nor plan of action.

⁷ David Wallace Adams. *Education for Extinction*. University Press of Kansas, 1995; Chase Warren. "Education and the Lakota Language Movement on Standing Rock." Yale College, Undergraduate paper. (Writing Tribal Histories, Professor Blackhawk. 2018.)

⁸ Lakhó'iyapi Wahóhpi Wičhákini Owáyawa. The "Lakota Language Nest" is currently located at Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates, ND. <http://wotakuye.weebly.com>

⁹ Dakota/Lakota Summer Institute is held every year at Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates, ND for teachers, both Lakota/Dakota language and other subjects, and community members including children and elders, who may or may not be fluent.

¹⁰ Warren. "Education and the Lakota Language Movement on Standing Rock." 2018.

At least 75 percent of Native North American languages have died since European contact in 1492. As of the 1960s, languages north of Mexico totaled about 175, and 136 of those had 2,000 or fewer speakers, most of whom were elders at the time. Since then, census data has reinforced those bleak statistics; 4 percent of people living on reservations speak a Native American language. However, there are language revitalization efforts on many reservation communities to teach their youth.¹¹ Some, like the Santo Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico, boast 95 percent speaking rates for children and adults.¹² On Standing Rock, the Lakota Language Nest survives on grants and has yet to garner reservation wide interest on Lakota rather than English instruction.¹³ The idea is to one day have bilingual schools where our communities' histories and values are taught in collaboration with each other with respect to all living things. Language revitalization is vital to healing and to promoting healthier learning environments built around community and not individual achievement.

A large obstacle we face is lateral oppression from within our own communities. Though we technically have influence over our education system on the reservation, we have internalized colonialism¹⁴ and teach colonized ideas and traditions without knowing it. The schooling system is not broken. It was meant to assimilate us into American society because our ways were too “savage” and not “civil.”¹⁵ The ones who were oppressed during the boarding school era of the 1880s through the 1940s did not teach Lakota to their children and so on. English and the white

¹¹ The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. *The State of Native Nations*. (Oxford University Press. 2008.) 283.

¹² The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 284

¹³ Warren. “Education and the Lakota Language Movement on Standing Rock.” 2018.

¹⁴ Freire, 45; Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. (Editions de Seuil, 1952. English translation: Grove Press Inc, 1967. London: Pluto Press, 2008); Glen Coulthard. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2014.)

¹⁵ For more see Luana Ross. *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality*. 1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.

man's way became normalized¹⁶ and those ideas became "traditional" so that by the time we got actual "freedom" in the late 1970s, we did not know what to do with it.¹⁷ Using our sovereignty is difficult when intergenerational trauma affects everyone in the community. People still mourn the Wounded Knee Massacre and the loss of their relatives from boarding schools, which is not seen as legitimate by the whites because it happened so long ago.¹⁸ In addition to a multitude of ideas I will explain later, it is crucial to prioritize language and culture education.

In reality, the school boards and a vast majority of administrative officers, including the superintendent, are Native and were born and raised Standing Rock students. I think these people care about the language and culture, but Standing Rock Schools produce non-speaking graduates. We may have more Native "controlled" entities but we still operate within the colonial system imposed upon us from the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which still has not been dismantled despite the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975, which allowed tribes to take control of their own schools - removing the paternalistic barriers in place.¹⁹ I believe the answers lie within our communities on Standing Rock. I have talked with many people about an ideal future education system.

Standing Rock and their public-school systems do not prioritize language and culture for many reasons. I believe these are the biggest factors holding the Lakota/Dakota language back: the lack of Native teachers, the dwindling population of fluent speakers, the lack of financial compensation for learning Lakota/Dakota, and ultimately that it is incredibly difficult. Others

¹⁶ Freire, 58.

¹⁷ Sandy Grande. *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*. (Rowman & Littlefield publishers. 2004.)

¹⁸ Brave Heart, M.Y. H. and DeBruyn, Lemyra. "The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief." (*American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* 8 (2): 60-82. 1998) 67.

¹⁹ Sandy Grande. *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*. (Rowman & Littlefield publishers. 2004.) 45-46.

add that many tribes prioritize combating poverty rather than using resources for language.²⁰ Further, because learning language and culture is hard, it is easier to redefine what it means to be Native through emphasizing things like enrollment and blood quantum.²¹ People in our communities are still hurting and need tribal support and healing - I believe - in the form of complete school restructuring. It's hard, especially when attempts to convert the public tribal schools to Lakota immersion schools have been shut down.²²

Ideally, one day Standing Rock Schools would teach entirely in Lakota/Dakota and have majority Native teachers. We would teach our stories and histories and live like Lakota/Dakota people always have. However, we would also teach necessary western epistemologies so that our children can operate outside of Lakota society. That may include things such as how to write a coherent scholarly paper in English or dissecting a pig to learn about anatomy. I don't have all the answers, but I am sure that we as a community can come up with a sufficient curriculum. Bottom line: if our children want to go to college, we will help them get there. Not believing at least somewhat in the western system would be hypocritical of me, a privileged Rez kid who has experienced Phillips Academy (in the summer) and Yale. It is Lakota tradition, after all, to go out on a *zuya* and learn about the world through experience. That is what I have done and that is what the future generations will continue to do.

One day, we hope to speak Lakota/Dakota casually in the streets everyday. We want to speak it more often than English. We want to dream in Lakota/Dakota and think in Lakota/Dakota first. Although our Lakota/Dakota language learning community is growing, it is not growing fast enough. We subscribe to colonial institutions and ways of doing things too

²⁰ Anton Treuer. *Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians but were Afraid to Ask*. (Borealis Books: Minnesota Historical Society, 2012.) 121.

²¹ Treuer, 122.

²² Warren. "Education and the Lakota Language Movement on Standing Rock." 2018.

much. We need to get our educational system to teach at least 50 percent Indigenous ways compared to western, if not 90 percent. With this multifaceted creative project, I hope to inform my community about our educational past, present, and what we can create for the future.

HISTORY OF NATIVE SCHOOLING

The point of Indian education was, and remains to be, the perpetuation of white supremacy. Settler colonialism, the primary framework for Native American Studies, is all about the “elimination of the native.”²³ In present day America, settler colonialism started with genocide and land theft. In the 1890s, following the Wounded Knee Massacre, many settlers began to believe that Indians would die out soon in the era of the “vanishing Indian.”²⁴ It was true that Indian population was at an all time low at around 290,000, and the assimilation era had started with Allotment and Indian boarding schools.²⁵ The birth of salvage anthropology, Edward S Curtis photos, and numerous other publications came out supporting the “vanishing Indian” idea in the early 20th century.²⁶

The “Indian Problem”

In the late nineteenth century, policy makers pondered how to solve the “Indian problem” and decided to tackle three areas: land, law, and education. In 1882, Herbert Welsh and Henry Pancoast, after spending some time among the Lakota/Dakota people, concluded that “Indians were capable of being assimilated into the mainstream of American life,” and formed the “Indian

²³ Patrick Wolfe. “Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native.” (*Journal of Genocide Research*, 8:4, 2006) 387-409.

²⁴ Charles Wilkinson. *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations*. (W.W. Norton & Company, 2005) 52.

²⁵ David Wallace Adams. *Education for Extinction*. University Press of Kansas, 1995. 9.

²⁶ Wilkinson, 52.

Rights Association” - the most influential Indian reform group.²⁷ Henry Dawes, the sponsor of the General Allotment Act of 1887, began discussing Indian reform with the Boston Indian Citizenship Association in 1879. The Allotment Act split up Indian lands and gave plots to all tribal members before offering surplus land for white settlers. A disastrous policy designed for land theft, Allotment caused Indians to lose 88 million acres from 140 million in 1887 to 52 million in 1934, when the Indian Reorganization Act put an end to the bleeding.²⁸ Essentially, reformers solved (or so they thought) the issue of land and reservations. Now, they needed to “civilize” the “savages” through “education.”

Reformers needed to educate the children rather than killing them for economic purposes. Carl Shultz, former senator and Secretary of the Interior, estimated that it would cost “nearly a million dollars to kill an Indian in warfare, whereas it cost only \$1,200 to give an Indian child eight years of schooling.”²⁹ The reformers essentially wanted Indians to utilize their land through farming because “barbarism” was “wasteful.”

One of the largest aims of Indian education, other than the obvious areas of language and christianization, was individualization. David Wallace Adams aptly wrote, “whereas a Protestant American measured an individual’s worth by his capacity to accumulate wealth, an Indian did so by what he gave away.” Settlers wanted the Indian men to know how to work the land and for the Indian women to be housewives. According to a school superintendent among the Lakota/Dakota, learning from textbooks was almost pointless for Indians because of our “centuries of laziness.” Further, John Oberly said that we needed to stop saying “we” and “this is

²⁷ Adams, 9.

²⁸ Wilkinson, 43.

²⁹ Adams, 20.

ours” and instead say “I” and “this is mine” to correct our “degrading communism.” Thus, Indian education aimed to instill capitalism and greed (even though it’s a sin according to the bible).³⁰

Ultimately, the overall goal of Indian education was to create docile, patriotic Indians who are completely assimilated and trained to work as laborers for a capitalist economy. Reformers knew that Indians should be taught the myths of American history like the inevitable westward expansion of America. Indians were to be taught that their way of life was backwards and wrong and that white civilization was superior. To do so, educators had to separate Indian children from their homes and beat into them the justification of American settler colonialism. Merrill Gates said in 1891 that Indians wars were over and that now it was time for an “army of Christian school-teachers.” Instead of guns, it was going to be books killing the Indians.³¹

Before turning to off-reservation boarding schools, reformers experimented with reservation day schools and reservation boarding schools. The hope for reservation day schools starting in the 1860s was that the students would convince their communities back home of the ideals of civilization. One agent criticized day schools in 1878 saying that four or five hours a day in school “makes the attempt to educate and civilize them a mere farce.” In 1879, another agent said that day schools produced “happy” Indians with “little ambition to change for the better.” Thus, by the late 1870s, reservation boarding schools provided close proximity so that children could civilize their communities but also more time spent in school to become better indoctrinated. However, this model too was not harsh enough to assimilate the Indian children. Agents to the Wichita and the Mescalero Apache noted that Indians would forget everything they were taught within a few weeks and return to traditional tribal life. Seeing as day schools and reservation boarding schools were not meeting their goals, Indian problem reformers began to

³⁰ Adams, 22-23.

³¹ Adams, 24, 27.

argue for off reservation boarding schools. Off reservation boarding schools grew to almost half of Indian enrollment in boarding schools by the late 1920s.³²

Off Reservation Boarding Schools

Richard Henry Pratt, a Yale graduate, founded the first off reservation boarding school in 1879 called Carlisle Indian Industrial School (PA). He is most infamous for the following quote, “[A]ll the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian and save the man.”³³ The demographics of Carlisle when it started were majority Lakota children. Pratt went to the Dakotas and concentrated his recruiting/kidnapping on Rosebud and Pine Ridge. Chief Spotted Tail and other elders in Rosebud initially rejected the idea of Pratt taking children to Carlisle. Pratt, however, was persistent and eventually persuaded Rosebud on the basis that the best defense against whites was to learn their language and their ways. Pine Ridge was apparently easier to convince and in total Pratt left Lakota country with 60 boys and 24 girls.³⁴

Among the first children to go to Carlisle was Ota Kte (Plenty Kill - literally “He Killed Many”), better known as Luther Standing Bear of Rosebud, who was also the first to step foot on Carlisle grounds. In the fall of 1879, Ota Kte peered into an agency building filled with children and a few white men. He recalled being drawn into the building with candy from a man named Charles Tackett (Long Chin). Tackett told Ota Kte that those children were on their way to a school in the east run by Pratt.³⁵ Ota Kte decided to go with the group of boys and girls on the train and later recalled his reasoning,

When I had reached young manhood the warpath for the Lakota was a thing of the past. The hunter had disappeared with the buffalo, the war scout had lost its calling, and the warrior had taken his shield to the mountain-top and given it back to the elements. The victory songs were sung only in the memory of the braves.

³² Adams, 28-31, 56, 59.

³³ Wilkinson, 53.

³⁴ Adams, 48.

³⁵ Adams, 99, 97.

So I could not prove that I was a brave and would fight to protect my home and land. I could only meet the challenge as life's events came to me. When I went East to Carlisle School, I thought I was going there to die;... I could think of white people wanting little Lakota children for no other reason than to kill them, but I thought here is my chance to prove that I can die bravely. So I went East to show my father and my people that I was brave and willing to die for them.³⁶

A couple of days later, the train stopped at Sioux City, Iowa and the whites took the children to a restaurant. Older boys painted their faces and put feathers in their hair as if expecting war. On the way, townspeople mockingly war hooped and frightened the younger children. Once in the restaurant, whites pressed up against the window as if the Native children were on display like zoo animals. All the children were so upset that they collected their food in their blankets and took it back to the train.³⁷ Just 3 years after the Battle of the Little Bighorn, this traumatic event shows blatantly racist settlers were against Natives, especially the Lakota/Dakota.

The Regime

Off-reservation boarding schools were essentially military academies that prepared Native children to be patriotic citizens (and soldiers). The overarching reason for a military style school was due to policy makers' perceptions of Native children. The policy makers thought that the Native children had a "wildness" in them that needed taming since their communities simply let them run free, which of course is antithetical to white supremacy and its later developments of capitalist oppression. Schools like Carlisle forced Native students to march everywhere and signaled movement at meals with bells, and how to handle guns and follow military schedules. Following strict time schedules taught students to follow orders and respect hierarchies.³⁸ At one school, students were told,

³⁶ Adams, 98.

³⁷ Adams, 99.

³⁸ Adams, 98-99, 117-120.

Obedience is the great essential to securing the purpose of life. Disobedience means disaster. The first disastrous act of disobedience brought ruin to humanity and that ruin is still going on... The same applies to school life... What your teachers tell you to do you should do without question.³⁹

Boarding schools used harsh discipline like corporal punishment and even confinement for kids who refused to be obedient. The government said in 1890 that corporal punishment should be used only in extreme cases of violation, but in practice it was a regular occurrence. Superintendents were allowed to inflict corporal punishment and even confinement in the guard house for a multitude of misbehaviors. Commissioner Morgan believed in slight punishments before harsher ones but he also said that Indians were too “brutish” and that they could not be disciplined in other ways besides “corporal punishment, confinement, deprivation of privileges, or restriction of diet.”⁴⁰ By 1896, the Indian Office essentially recommended corporal punishment as “thoughtful and humane” even when the *Rules for the Indian School Service* said it was off limits.⁴¹ The official policies, much like mission statements of schools today, were littered with humane ideals when the actualities of treatment were anything but. The government wanted to seem like they were a benevolent master and parent to the growing Indian.

The “Indian problem” reformers and the Indian Rights Association (all whites) privately investigated harsh punishment in schools. One extreme example is of George Harvey, superintendent of Pawnee Indian School, in 1903. Virginia Weeks was 18 and had a disagreement with the school’s laundress, so Harvey took her into his office, locked the door,

³⁹ Adams, 121.

⁴⁰ Adams, 121.

⁴¹ Adams, 121-122.

and beat her with a yardstick. He took her to the laundress to apologize but she refused so he took her to the barn. At the barn, he got a 5-foot-long strap and beat her for a while until she finally was weak enough to agree to apologize. Another ruthless example happened in 1912 when a 13-year-old boy was handcuffed and almost beaten into “insensibility.” Sixteen days later he had 26 scars on his body and 11 on his right arm. In many schools, teachers also sent students to jail or the guard house where they were confined for a time.⁴²

At Carlisle, one former student talked about how girls would fear going to the bathroom during the night for fear of getting raped.

We would cower from the abusive disciplinary practices of some superiors, such as the one who yanked my cousin’s ear hard enough to tear it. After a nine-year-old girl was raped in her dormitory bed during the night, we girls would be so scared that we would jump into each other’s bed as soon as the lights went out. The sustained terror in our hearts further tested our endurance, as it was better to suffer with a full bladder and be safe than to walk through the dark, seemingly endless hallway to the bathroom. When we were older, we girls anguished each time we entered the classroom of a certain male teacher who stalked and molested girls.⁴³

Physical punishment and sexual abuse, however, were not the only tools boarding schools used to kill the Indian.

The Impact of Punishment

The most significant assimilatory practice that schools enforced was learning English and speaking only English. Native children, especially those whose parents chose not to teach them their Native language, lost cultural meanings and perspectives. Punishment, of course, extended to speaking “Indian” too. The superintendent of Haskell in 1886 split students into five groups to separate tribal and lingual similarities so that they were forced to speak English. Those who disobeyed likely experienced any number of punishments like eating soap, eating less at dinner,

⁴² Adams, 123.

⁴³ David Treuer, 139.

or simply receiving a beating. Other than physical beatings and cruel tasks, schools also incentivized students to speak English. At Carlisle, Pratt awarded students who went through prolonged periods of time without speaking their Native language. At the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, the superintendent organized their military companies into orders of who could speak English the best.⁴⁴

Another way boarding schools taught Native children to hate themselves and assimilate to white culture was through forced hair cutting. At Carlisle, Ota Kte, like many others, remembers crying after getting his hair cut and not being able to sleep. The obvious reason for cutting hair was to transform the children from “savages” into “civilized” men. Some of the boys had talked about refusing to have their hair cut but only one did. The boy who made a stand later cut off his own braids and caused everyone in the dorms to loudly wail like they were mourning the loss of a relative.⁴⁵

Further, boarding schools and missionaries killed Indian culture through enforcement of gender norms and the heteropatriarchy. Schools sometimes forced boys to march for long periods of time through the courtyard in girls garb as a means of humiliation.⁴⁶ Boarding schools instilled the notion of gender norms and the gender binary. Still, among the Lakota/Dakota, the winkte people, who are “men” who occupy women’s roles, still exist today. In the 1940s, missionaries terrorized the winkte by condemning and blaming bad events on them. The missionaries convinced community members, especially those who were aggressively christian (and brainwashed), to ostracize winkte people on behalf of the church. The missionaries pressured the

⁴⁴ Adams, 118-199, 123, 139-141.

⁴⁵ Adams, 101, 103.

⁴⁶ Adams, 123.

winkte people to dress and act like “men” to the point where some hanged themselves.⁴⁷

Boarding schools started to brainwash Natives into believing their ways were wrong and that white was right.

Boarding Schools wanted to transform Native children into white adults who would blindly submit to the power structures that were and continue to be. Beginning even before Carlisle in 1879, Pratt saw success in brainwashing Native prisoners he sent to the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute using it to procure funding from Congress.⁴⁸ In one essay from Hampton, a student wrote, “The Caucasian is the strongest in the world. The semi-civilized have their own civilization, but not like the white race.” In another essay, “The white people they are civilized; they have everything and go to school, too... The red people they big savages; they don’t know nothing.”⁴⁹ To this day, some Native people worship school even though it has continued to exacerbate our trauma and marginalize our languages and cultures.

Some parents apparently internalized the ideals of civilization and assimilated to white culture as their children were going to boarding school. At Hampton, Booker T. Washington gloated in the 1881 *Southern Workman* that Ziewie, the father of a 15-year-old Lakota girl from Crow Creek was making strides towards civilizing himself. The father’s name was “Unapesni” meaning “Don’t Know How,” but I believe this is a misspelling of Uŋspé Šni, which means “He doesn’t know how to do it.” So, Washington wrote, Uŋspé Šni grew tired of a dead culture and cut his hair, started a business, earned \$3,000, and abandoned his tipi to build a house next to his white neighbors while adopting the name “D. K. Howe.”⁵⁰ There are other letters apparently

⁴⁷ Walter Williams. *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986. Reprint 1991. 182.

⁴⁸ David Treuer, 133.

⁴⁹ Adams, 148.

⁵⁰ Adams, 252.

written by Native parents supporting their children and encouraging them to become white and drop their Indian ways. Neither I, nor David Wallace Adams, know how accurate these letters may have been, especially considering the bias of interpreters and/or Indian agents. It may very well have been a deliberate ploy to convince hurting and confused Native children that white was right.

Many students, like Ota Kte, went to boarding schools prepared to die. Little did they know death would come to mean a lot of things - language, culture, and literal malnourishment and disease. According to the 1928 Meriam Report, Native children were six times as likely to die during childhood at boarding schools than the rest of the children in America.⁵¹ But all did not die. Native people continued to resist amid the brainwashing and utter despair and longing for their past lives.

Resistance

Not all Native students became brainwashed and resisted against boarding schools in a number of ways. Some students simply tried to run away, but many either died or received harsh punishment upon returning to school. Others, students at the Blackfoot Agency in 1899 and Carlisle in 1897, tried to set their schools on fire after learning that some students were released after a non-intentional fire destroyed parts of the school. However, after widespread fire issues, many schools began to arrest students, starting with two “Menomini” girls who burned down their reservation boarding school in 1905 - Lizzie Cardish, the principal offender, received a life sentence.⁵² Besides such drastic measures, there were more subtle forms of resistance used every day.

⁵¹ David Treuer, 140.

⁵² Adams, 228-230.

Native students refused to settle down and passively accept the white way. They played pranks and defied their teachers constantly. Mostly, they refused to participate in things and did not respond. Despite the “best” teachers’ attempts to “get through” to some Native kids, they simply sat there expressionless and said nothing. Further, many students from the same tribes told each other traditional stories they had learned from elders and even performed ceremonies sometimes.⁵³ A Navajo student wrote a poem about school,

If I do not believe you
The things you say,
Maybe I will not tell you
That is my way.

Maybe you think I believe you
That thing you say,
But always my thoughts stay with me
My own way.⁵⁴

Even back then, Native students were lazy and refused to accept anything they were told by the white teachers. Today, this is still the same. Some students, like me, listen to everything that the teachers say and reap the benefits of succeeding in the white world. Others are “lazy” and goof off in class or rebel in other ways - anything but blindly accepting society as it is. Access to knowledge about language and culture depends on who your family is, and if they’re even still alive. Still, the 21st century has proven to be the beginnings of an Indigenous renaissance - we are finally proud and not focusing on the past but preparing for the future.

In the next section, I tell the tale of two Lakota individuals and each of their unique educational journeys. Sometimes, there are pockets of isolation that allow some Lakota to continue teaching their lifeways to their children. At other times, there is abuse, ignorance, and

⁵³ Adams, 231, 233-234.

⁵⁴ Adams, 231.

suffering. But, there are always moments of triumph through communal strategy and perseverance.

Albert White Hat, Sr.

Albert White Hat, Sr. (Sičhánǵu) was born in 1938 and grew up in the Spring Creek community on the Rosebud reservation. It was an isolated community with no modern technology so people traveled on horses. After tribal day school, White Hat and his friends would pick which storyteller (5 people out of about 200 in the community) they wanted to listen to and learn from that night. They would chop wood and haul water for the storyteller, have dinner back at their homes, and return later that night for the storyteller.⁵⁵ Back in the 1940s, White Hat grew up speaking his language and learning through the culture. Because of the isolation, people still regarded the old ways as sacred rather than the prevailing notion that Lakota spirituality and language were backwards and satanic. Other than the truck that would take people to potato fields in Colorado before winter, the economy was entirely self-sufficient and consisted of farming and trading goods.⁵⁶ It was relatively calm after the horrible Indian wars, the reservation and ration system after the extermination of the buffalo, and the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. This calm also followed the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which ended the Allotment Act that had stolen huge amounts of Native land. Apart from WWII, the 1940s in Spring Creek on Rosebud were a peaceful and wonderful time for Albert and his community.

White Hat and his community spoke almost entirely in Lakota during the good days. The government day school in his community was awful by American standards. None of the students knew how to speak English except for a few words. They knew basic words like apple,

⁵⁵ White Hat, 3.

⁵⁶ White Hat, 4.

buffalo, dog, horse, red, seven, car, etc. The students at the day school just spoke to the teacher in Lakota even though he didn't speak. The school janitor actually acted as a translator and would tell the children what the teacher wanted them to do. White Hat and his friends often sang made up words while the teacher played the piano.⁵⁷

The days ceased to be good after 1953, when the Lakota could legally buy alcohol. White Hat remembered that many people bought too much alcohol during the Colorado potato harvest - some even got stranded and brought back nothing. In 1954, at the age of 16, White Hat began school at a reservation boarding school, where the teachers taught him that the Lakota way of life was wrong, shameful, and outright satanic. The school forced White Hat to question his identity and his community's culture. White Hat graduated at 20, angry he was born an "Indian" and confused at his childhood experiences. However, deep down, he knew that the Lakota way of life was not evil but instead a source of his strength and happiness.⁵⁸

By the late 1950s, White Hat began to notice that people began to talk about the Lakota way of life as it was a thing of the past. In 1968, he conducted a survey that found that almost 100 percent of Lakota people denied knowing the language. White Hat knew that most of these people were fluent speakers, yet they denied it because they were ashamed. It was around the time that most boarding schools had only just closed. Federal Indian law and policy at the time focused on termination of certain tribes and the relocation of reservation Natives to the city, either outright denying a tribe's existence or splitting up communities further without support. For nearly 100 years, schools beat the language and culture out of Natives everywhere. Lakota people in Rosebud were no different. Many felt defeated and told White Hat to let it go - let it die. In 1980, two years after Native religion and ceremony became legal, White Hat decided to

⁵⁷ White Hat, 5.

⁵⁸ White Hat, 5.

build a sweat lodge in his backyard. People feared that he was going to hold ceremonies, or worse, try to become a medicine man. Many people were still ashamed to be Native and afraid of the Lakota way of life.⁵⁹

One way missionaries convinced Lakota people to accept christianity was through the Lakota language - Episcopalians and Catholics alike. Other Natives on the reservations developed a third “subculture” around alcohol, sex, and violence. All three of these subcultures spoke Lakota with the same grammar and vocabulary, but they developed different contextual meanings for words and phrases. For example, the word “makuje⁶⁰” means lazy and the word “othehi⁶¹” means “having a hard time” to White Hat. To Rez kids he was teaching in 1975, “makuje” meant hangover and “othehi” meant “you had nothing to sell or hock to get another [alcoholic] drink.⁶²”

The education system, besides continuing to stifle the Lakota language, aimed to make Lakota people dependent on authority or the government. School did not prepare people for any careers outside of maybe vocational training, but this training was so poor that people could make more money off of social welfare than an actual job. White Hat was an above average student and made the honor roll three times in his final two years of high school, graduating in 1959. He met with a guidance counselor from the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] and went to Dallas to apply to be an X-ray technician, only to find out that he couldn’t speak English well and only knew basic math and science.⁶³

⁵⁹ White Hat, 7.

⁶⁰ The New Lakota Dictionary developed by the Lakota Language Consortium lists this word as “*makhúže*” meaning “I am sick” but also lists “lazy” as a second meaning supposedly only used in Santee and Yankton/ai communities. Perhaps, the original meaning was “lazy” and it shifted to mean “sick” because of its association with hangovers.

⁶¹ Othéhi in Standard Lakota Orthography

⁶² White Hat, 17-18.

⁶³ White Hat, 19-20.

The education system for Lakota people by the late 1950s and early 1960s around White Hat's graduation was probably the worst it ever was. On the one hand, they were the last generation to experience the boarding schools aimed to kill the language and culture. On the other hand, there were reservation day schools that hardly taught basic skills by the end of high school. White Hat grew up in Spring Creek, a small community largely unaffected by Americans, living the old, peaceful way of life in a sustainable, non-exploitative economy. By the end of his boyhood, he saw Lakota communities become ravaged by teachers in colonial schools, missionaries in churches, and white spirits in bottles.

Delphine Red Shirt

Delphine Red Shirt (Oglála) was born in 1957, the generation after Albert White Hat, Sr. In her early childhood around kindergarten she lived in Nebraska just off the Pine Ridge reservation. Just like White Hat, Red Shirt grew up speaking mostly in Lakota with limited English. Her mom, just like White Hat's mom, harvested potatoes in September.⁶⁴ She went on to experience multiple types of schools after the white Nebraska school: reservation day school, a school run by nuns, and a mission boarding school in Pine Ridge. White Hat showed that the Lakota way of life shifted after 1953 when alcohol became legal, and Red Shirt shows us that language and culture persisted in new forms.⁶⁵ She watched the old ways die and the new ways emerge as her grandparent uttered phrases never to be said again.⁶⁶

Red Shirt went to an off-reservation school in Nebraska and felt like an outsider at school because of her English. In kindergarten, her younger brother used to play with her and pretend he was speaking English saying words like, "flurs" for "flowers." Red Shirt remembered hating

⁶⁴ Delphine Red Shirt. *Bead on an Anthill: A Lakota Childhood*. (University of Nebraska Press, 1998) 14.

⁶⁵ However, Native tribes themselves can prohibit alcohol through tribal laws.

⁶⁶ Red Shirt, 91.

how her classmates stared at her and made her feel so different. Her older brother, six years older than her, kept her from skipping school with other Native children. He taught her English outside of school, emphasizing, “May I go to the bathroom?” because he remembered a Native classmate who wet her pants due to not knowing English. In that way, her older brother served as an important role model that she followed to survive.⁶⁷

Red Shirt remembers not engaging in conversation with white people when she was younger for many reasons. On the streets of a Nebraska marketplace she recalls standing eating ice cream as a small white girl came up to her and said, “Look Mom, a little Indian boy.” In her day in the 1960s, Lakota did not converse with white people and vice versa because it often ended in stereotyping. That small white girl on that day treated Red Shirt almost like a rare zoo animal. She may have thought, “Wow! I didn’t know Indians could eat ice cream!” White people were uncomfortable talking to Natives because they, among other reasons, were assumed to have poor English skills. Red Shirt also remembers shopkeepers assuming her mom had extremely limited speaking skills. The shopkeeper would yell at her mom, “How are you doing?!” Red Shirt’s mom would yell back, “Okay!” likely in a slow, mocking manner. She made side comments to Red Shirt saying things like, “Does he think I am deaf?” in Lakota.⁶⁸

Many Lakota students today, both on the Rez and off, experience apathy due to no fault of their own. We’re still in the process of retraining our minds to think in Lakota and live like relatives. After moving back to the Pine Ridge reservation Red Shirt attended a government day school from fourth to sixth grade. She still had trouble with English but learned to say “I don’t know” slowly and clearly as a response to everything. The reservation school was much different than the white school in Nebraska. Red Shirt, instead of being taught by bright and cheerful

⁶⁷ Red Shirt, 13-17.

⁶⁸ Red Shirt, 31-32.

teachers, was taught by old teachers who sometimes fell asleep and were more concerned with order than teaching and learning. She quickly learned how the teachers taught her shame and how her classmates fought all the time to get out their frustrations. However, she did appreciate not being the only Native in the room and having peers with the same Lakota background as her.⁶⁹ Reservation day schools continue to focus on discipline and hold low expectations for Lakota students. Red Shirt's educational opportunities increased once she left the reservation school and finally got a decent grasp on English.

Starting in seventh grade, Red Shirt attended a school taught by nuns from the Notre Dame order. There, she learned how to read, write, and talk in English. She appreciated how the nuns put her through a "reading lab" where she independently read strips of film and answered comprehension questions at her own pace. Determined, Red Shirt also avoided cheating even though another girl found the answers hidden in a file cabinet. At the government day school, there was no library, no art, no music, and no freedom - compared to Friday art sessions in Nebraska. At the nun middle school, she regained the freedom to read, listen to classical music, and be artistic. She also borrowed books from her older brother that she would write about in her compositions. Her teachers were real people eager to teach as opposed to the angry government sloths that the reservation day school had.⁷⁰ Given the opportunities, Red Shirt was a sponge, soaking up everything that she could.

For high school, Red Shirt went to Red Cloud Indian School, which had previously been a strict reservation boarding school in Pine Ridge.⁷¹ Since Red Shirt's mom had boarded there as

⁶⁹ Red Shirt, 92, 98-99.

⁷⁰ Red Shirt, 97, 100-103.

⁷¹ Red Shirt, 134. Formerly known as Holy Rosary Mission founded in 1888. The school expanded to high school ages in 1937 and officially became Red Cloud Indian School in 1969. Red Cloud History retrieved from <https://www.redcloudschool.org/page.aspx?pid=429> on February 6, 2020.

a child, much had changed. Red Cloud no longer boarded students younger than ninth grade, daily mass was no longer a requirement, and Lakota was taught by Lakota teachers. Red Shirt's math teacher, a white woman from New Jersey, offered an opportunity for four students to teach Lakota at her old high school for the summer. With courage, Red Shirt won the lottery and traveled with her math teacher and three other students packed into a small car. The group went on a tour of cities: "Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, Charleston, Washington DC, and finally New York City."⁷²

The trip out east was a turning point for Red Shirt. She developed great ambition and hunger to explore life outside the reservation. In addition to teaching Lakota in New Jersey, the group saw a play on Broadway in New York City and drank wine with the cast. They spent a week at Cape Cod on a yacht, ate caviar, ice cream, and all sorts of experiences a Rez kid could never imagine. After the trip she reflected,

It was then that I became restless. I wanted something more, and I was never really sure what it was until I went away to college. I didn't realize that the morning I loaded my gear in that car and headed for the East Coast, that I would never really unpack my suitcase on the reservation again. I would, from that day forward, always look for the next opportunity to leave the reservation and see what lay beyond its borders.⁷³

Language and culture are intertwined. The old Lakota, however, can be over-romanticized especially when we speak of it as such a sacred thing. It is sacred but languages change constantly. Our daily lives are so different now than they were 50-100 years ago so we talk differently. One unfortunate consequence is that Lakota grammar and pronunciation have shifted to emulate English because young people have only recently begun learning Lakota seriously. In terms of culture, ceremonies in my experience have stayed the same for the most

⁷² Red Shirt, 136-138.

⁷³ Red Shirt, 139.

part. The only difference is a lack of youth participation. Kinship systems have shifted significantly since the old days of White Hat and Red Shirt. White Hat remembers a time when familial respect was a top priority - no one dared to disrespect or dishonor a family member.⁷⁴ Now, almost no one addresses each other by kinship terms and knows the old rules of talking or not talking to someone out of respect/tradition. Red Shirt used to *think in Lakota* and compares the old thoughts to roots of an old tree lost in her subconscious.⁷⁵

Many aren't as lucky as Red Shirt or me when it comes to off-reservation opportunities. Many also aren't as lucky as White Hat or Red Shirt to grow up learning Lakota consistently and progressively, let alone *thinking* in it. Recently, Lakota language education on Standing Rock has produced no fluent speakers. Red Shirt's generation, also known as the Red Power generation who experienced the American Indian Movement and the occupation at Wounded Knee, are currently some of the last fluent speakers of Lakota. On the side of western colonial education, Standing Rock has had trouble sending students to colleges away from home. We have had consistently low test scores, discipline issues, and treat our Lakota way of life (language and culture) as an extracurricular. It's not our fault that our own school continues to assimilate us because it is funded by the government and is full of white teachers. However, it will be our fault, if we continue to let the school operate as it has.

Part 2 - CONTEMPORARY SCHOOLING ON STANDING ROCK

Apathy

One problem with changing the current Standing Rock school system that I have observed throughout my own life is apathy. It's easy to simply live and let the years fade away.

⁷⁴ White Hat, 40-41.

⁷⁵ Red Shirt, 74.

Some of my friends don't care about learning the language at all. Perhaps the school system beat the love for learning years ago and they have never recovered. Or it could be that people truly just don't want to change. Maybe it's because people are always dying and it's hard to shake depression. I wrote the following paragraph inspired by how easy it can be for people on Standing Rock to become depressed.

Death

Growing up on the Rez means knowing death like the back of your hand. Non-Natives will never understand what Rez Natives go through. Most of my non-Native peers now probably have not been to more than one funeral in their entire life.⁷⁶ Because our communities are often small, it usually means everyone knows each other, or at the very least your grandma knows all the other grandmas - that is if she's alive still. Every year, there will be at least one person you know personally who dies. If not, it's your friend's cousin who drowned in the river or OD'd or got drunk and drove into the ditch. Most of the time it's another elder dying of old age, but too often it is a young person. Almost every year another one of my peers dies due to suicide or a horrible accident. In the summer, everyone plays in memorial basketball tournaments. Death never seems to stop, even for a minute. I remember there was a stretch during my childhood where one of my grandma's sisters or brothers died every year. To be from the Rez is to understand that funerals are really just family reunions. After a certain amount of pain and crying, nothing seems to hurt anymore. This feeling of complete nothingness at funerals may stem from my own internalized notions of Lakota masculinity, but I think it's just total and utter

⁷⁶ Barbara Cameron. "Gee, You Don't Seem Like An Indian From the Reservation." In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Edited by Cherríe L. Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa. 4th Edition. State University of New York Press, 2015. 42.

numbness. A lot of those memories I've blocked out. I don't want to feel anything because it is exhausting. It is so much easier to just forget and so I do. I feel nothing.

Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang talk about damage centered versus desire centered narratives in "Decolonization is not a metaphor." Many Native narratives are damage centered because they focus on total hopelessness. They talk about poverty-stricken communities, abusive and alcoholic relatives, and meth heads. Many Native people have similar childhoods and may even find comfort in these narratives, but many others find damage centered narratives overdone and harmful. Desire centered narratives do not focus on what is wrong and focus on what is right in our communities. In my personal narrative, I do try to keep this in mind on writing my dreams for the future rather than the nightmares that have plagued my past.

Years ago, a few Lakota people wanted to change the Little Eagle School, so they got Montessori training and started something new. The Little Eagle district of Standing Rock in South Dakota converted to a Montessori school in the 2000s under the leadership of Dave Archambault Sr and Betty Archambault. Test scores in Little Eagle were bad before the change, but some were skeptical of how effective the new Montessori method would be. The school refused to test their students. When the state tried to make them, the school dodged it by having parents fill out a form to opt out. For five years, the school operated as Montessori until the community questioned what the students were learning. The community wanted the school to return to its western model with testing - so they did. As it turns out, the year after the old model was reintroduced test scores were higher than ever before. Many were pleased and attributed the growth to the traditional model instead of the Montessori one.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Warren. "Education and the Lakota Language Movement on Standing Rock." 2018.

Back in the day, even after most of the boarding schools were shut down, many people spoke Lakota/Dakota within the household. They hid ceremonies from Indian agents and kept them out of sight. People did not realize, until now, that schools were killing language and culture. Many youth on the Rez grow up within “non-traditional” families. In my case, it’s because my grandma moved away to Romeoville to raise my mom and her siblings. My mom grew up as an urban Native but reversed the relocation by moving back home to Standing Rock. I grew up on the Rez and was given a name but other than that I didn’t experience a lot of culture or language. Part of the reason is that my dad is Ojibwe from White Earth but I still wish I learned more about Lakota culture from my grandma’s sisters. I was too young to care and they were too old or too busy to tell me stories or teach me Lakota. As I have expressed above, all the elders who are related to me died one by one. I am now tasked with finding elders and building relationships with them, regardless of whether they can speak or not. I have to build my community and language and culture revivalists within my own community.

Unschooling Influence

Like many unschoolers and Indigenous educators, I believe in one simple thing, freedom. I believe that students should be able to ask the questions they want and study what they want. Oftentimes, I think that students are so defeated by school and cease to care about anything, not even themselves. The “gifted” students, too, tend to follow whatever is put before them. In my case, people told me to pursue math and science because that was the epitome of success. I had a gift. In reality, it was just a lot of hard work that I didn’t necessarily enjoy doing. I don’t believe in absolute freedom. Of course, teachers should be trained to facilitate class discussion and encourage peer interaction. In a slightly oversimplified way, there are two schools of thought when it comes to teaching. There are those who “teach to the test” and train students and there

are those who let students have too much freedom and don't facilitate class discussion (some Montessori teachers). Somewhere between these two extremes exists the perfect medium where students are curious and teachers promote discussion and allow students to explore.⁷⁸ At the end of the day, the decision to learn has to be up to the student.

My Schooling

My educational story could be celebrated as a Rez kid who made it against all odds. The story of someone who overcame generations of trauma and any and every obstacle that came their way. The story of someone who, despite their peers' lack of ambition and desire to leave the poverty stricken Rez, persevered and never succumbed to peer pressure. The story of someone who never stopped studying and working towards their goals. And yeah, my story is all of those things, but it is also a story of privilege and opportunity. I had the privilege of having both parents work most of the time and support me. I had the privilege of not having to care for younger siblings. I had opportunities to focus on school and do well. I was labeled as a smart kid as early as 2nd grade and never told otherwise. I was told I could accomplish anything once I got over my laziness. I never had to worry about anything. Still it wasn't perfect, but I had stability. Yet, I don't think success within western academia is what my ancestors wanted.

I think college will always be relevant, but I think too often it is the site where students from the Rez realize they should be learning oral history, language, and culture from their community elders. We finally unlearn all of the American propaganda we learned, whether directly in class or passively through the media. Even if we realize that language is important young, many students don't have grandparents alive or elders willing to teach them. We are running out of time. In the words of Leanne Simpson,

⁷⁸ Susan Engel. "Children's Need to Know: Curiosity in Schools." *Harvard Educational Review*, 81(4), 625-645. 638. 2011.

I am not saying that Indigenous peoples should forgo learning Western-based skills altogether, but we currently have a situation where our greatest minds, our children and youth, are spending forty hours a week in state-run education systems from age four to twenty-two if they complete an undergraduate degree. Next to none of that takes place in an Nishnaabeg context, and although many Indigenous parents and families do everything they can do to ensure their children are connected to their homelands, this should be the center of the next generation's lives, not the periphery. To foster expertise within Nishnaabeg intelligence, we need people engaged with land as curriculum and in our languages for decades, not weeks. Shouldn't we as communities support and nurture children who choose to educate themselves only within Nishnaabewin? Wouldn't this create a strong generation of elders? Don't we deserve learning spaces where we do not have to address state learning objectives, curriculum, credentialism, and careerism, where our only concern for recognition comes from within? Are the state-run education system and the academic industrial complex really a house worth inhabiting?⁷⁹

April 2016 - Reading Carol Black

After a typical day of school, I came home and laid on my bed as I checked my social media. I opened Twitter and scrolled for a while before tapping on something that caught my eye: a picture of a boy suspended in midair as he dove into the water. An intriguing sight for sure, I read "On the Wildness of Children - Carol Black." The essay completely changed the way I thought about schooling and education. Of course, I had known about the boarding school period and about how important language and culture was to revitalize, but I didn't see a problem with the system. I expected *rigor* and believed that hard work and time spent focusing were the *only* ways to learn and *be* in school. Anyone who was "lazy" or undisciplined was destined to leech off of society. Then, Carol Black convinced me otherwise. School is this recent modern experiment meant to create worker bees for a capitalist economy. I never stopped to think *why* some of my peers refused to work and slugged through school. They told me it was a prison and I nodded politely, telling myself *they were troubled* and couldn't see the truth - that

⁷⁹ Leanne Simpson, 172.

school was enlightening and essential to development. While school certainly has the potential to be that, I finally stopped to think that schools were *actually* prisons (even before I read Foucault).

If I had to pick one piece of writing to read for the rest of my life, my absolute favorite, it would be Carol Black's *On the Wildness of Children*. I read the essay at a critical stage in my life. On that fateful day in April I was thinking about Yale and visiting for Bulldog Days. I was still super interested in studying biology or pre-med to eventually become a doctor. *On the Wildness of Children* eventually made me realize that teachers are *probably* more important than doctors. The impact schools have on children is immense and should be treated with the level of respect akin to medical doctors and lawyers. It's just too bad that the institution of education itself is extremely harmful - even for the ones who succeed in it. Yalies are the kids that Black says are okay with the bars/rules that society enforces upon them. I am that kid that *thrives* on order and control, which Black says is very unusual. Kids who act up in class for being too disruptive and rowdy are the real revolutionaries. They pound against the bars that schools imprison us in. As Carol Black says, "the revolution will not take place in a classroom."⁸⁰

One of the most important takeaways from Black's essay is the idea that children should be allowed to choose their own destiny. They need freedom to some degree to explore and experiment. If they are given enough freedom, then they will likely develop what Suzanne Gaskins calls "open attention," which Black says is widely focused but also alert. A child with "open attention" will notice everything within their field of vision and can observe something that intrigues them for hours at a time - like a bird singing a song or a squirrel leaping between trees. Essentially, kids who are allowed to develop with an "open attention" are daydreamers.

⁸⁰ Carol Black. *On the Wildness of Children*. <http://carolblack.org/on-the-wildness-of-children>

They get to look outside windows and roam about as they please. They will absorb their surroundings and learn the things they actually want to learn with absolute fervor. I believe that I used to be one of those kids with a kind of open attention.

I used to love being outside and playing with bouncy balls or driving my red toy car around the backyard. My parents tell me I used to simply say “side?” and stand near the door. I lost some of that love for the outdoors when I discovered video games, but I would argue that they helped me learn how to read just the same as Sesame Street and Blue's Clues - both of which I watched growing up. Around 2nd grade, I distinctly remember being quiet and reserved; sometimes I would draw lines in the dirt during recess. In 2nd grade art class, I got a 0, a fat F. For projects where I had to simply color, I wouldn't. For some reason I just hated to make art but would also draw in the dirt and observe anthills during recess. Putting color on a page just didn't interest me (and still doesn't). Now that I'm older, I do remember having moments where I had possessed a kind of “open attention” that Black talks about. It was around the 3rd grade that I think school finally started to break me out of my daydreams. I transferred from the public-tribal school to the mission school.

3rd grade

The 3rd grade was such a weird year for so many reasons. It was the year I got glasses after my teacher said I squinted too much. It was the year I learned about Jesus Christ, our Lord and savior, and it was the year I did *no schoolwork in class*.

I, like many Natives before me, was broken by (and in) church. I'll talk about the indoctrination of catholicism later, but for now I want to hone in on a specific moment in 3rd grade after our required Friday mass. That Friday morning, it was particularly sunny out. We walked in and sat on the left row of pews facing the altar. The light came in at such an angle that

it illuminated the dust particles in the air. Anyone who has ever paid attention to light patterns has observed this phenomenon. The angled beam of sunlight, contrasted by the dark wood and bricks of the interior church, made the dust obvious. I, being the curious little child I was, began to try to catch those small dust particles I saw before me. I obviously was paying no attention to what the priest was saying. Instead of chastising me in the moment for all to see, my teacher chose to humiliate me in front of the class after mass by miming my claw-like attempts to capture the dust. My classmates laughed and I think I laughed too, as to play it off and avoid further embarrassment. *At that moment, I was broken and tried not to daydream again, especially not in front of Jesus.*

Like I said earlier, I was extremely lazy when I was younger but was somehow also labeled as “smart” according to these weird tests the schools made us do on the computer. So, that year I did some work in school but much of the work I did was “homework,” even though we weren’t assigned any. It got bad enough that, at one point, I was carrying three textbooks home every night to catch up on work I neglected. I was bored and hated school; I rather would have been home playing video games or playing with my cat. For sheer will of not wanting to flunk 3rd grade, I did my work at home for a time.

But I do think there was something more about my teacher wanting me to succeed. I was a quiet kid who had “potential” based on silly tests. I had the “ideal” nature for an obedient school boy but I STILL had to be forced to do schoolwork. It was from this point on that EVERY single teacher would say something like, “you’re smart BUT you don’t work hard enough.” Once I actually started to work hard in 8th grade, the teachers started to say, “you’re smart BUT you don’t talk enough.” What if I didn’t score well on those silly tests and didn’t like school and didn’t have parents who cared too much to let me fail? I am definitely thankful to my

parents and teachers, don't get me wrong, but also schools fail too many kids. I think everybody telling me I was smart made me eventually start trying to succeed in school. I can't help but constantly think about my peers who were told they weren't *smart* and are now scarred forever because of it.

7th and 8th grade

Seventh grade was the first year that I transferred back into the public/tribal school. It was awkward but I had friends that I went to the catholic mission school with so I did fine socially. In language arts class, I remember being so lazy that I would hardly do any work and so I got a C my first semester. I may have also gotten a B in reading class. At the end of the year, I had a good GPA (probably around a 3.7) but I knew that I had barely tried outside of class. I merely paid attention and did the work I was told to do, except in classes that bored me like anything related to reading and writing. I thought of myself as a math and science whiz. At the end of the year, the school awarded me with student of the year for the 7th grade class. After reflecting on whether I deserved this award, I told my mom that I didn't try my best. It was also around the time that I heard about other people in the community, particularly Nacole Walker, who had done well in school and gone to Dartmouth College, a mysteriously prestigious "Ivy League" university. So I said to my mom that, in 8th grade, I would actually try my best and get straight As from there on out. In the 8th grade, I did exactly that. I focused and did my homework promptly and studied hard. I had no trouble earning a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Rez Outlier: Opportunity, Privilege, and Support

In the ninth grade, I was a scared kid but determined to get straight As. In the eighth grade, me and about 12 of my classmates took algebra 1 but I was the only one to enroll in geometry in ninth grade. At the time, I had to fight the person in charge of making schedules

because the default for all freshmen was algebra 1. So, I took geometry with mostly sophomores and juniors and a couple seniors. I was the youngest in the room but I quickly gained the reputation as a math whiz kid. We had these standardized tests that we had to take called Measures of Academic Progress issued by the NWEA. In my freshman year, I scored the highest MAP math score in Standing Rock High School and would continue to be the only one to score in the “advanced” range for my four years. Later that year I would take advantage of an opportunity only I was told about.

Sometime in the middle of fall, a history teacher named Susan (because she’s friends with my mom, who is the music teacher) told me about a program that would change my life, Math and Science for Minority Students (MS2). It was a math and science program for 5 weeks at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts for three consecutive summers (after 9th, 10th, and 11th grades). So, I applied and was the only Native from the plains region to get accepted out of a cohort of 40 students, who were split into thirds of African American, Latinx, and Native students. Most of the Natives were from the southwest and Navajo but I still got along with them well. Looking back on it, MS2 is the reason I’m at Yale.

I learned more math and science at MS2 than my entire high school career at Standing Rock. Even though it was only 15 weeks total over 3 summers, I quickly realized I would learn more there than all of my yearlong classes corresponding to the MS2 classes. For example, geometry during my freshman year would be the last high school math class I took because I tested out of algebra 2 - MS2 had already taught me everything to move up. So, in my

sophomore year I started taking classes at Sitting Bull College (SBC) for dual credit. I took college algebra and elementary statistics that year.⁸¹

In biology, I had already learned the basics and dissected a pig my first year at MS2. My sophomore year biology class was so unorganized and taught directly out of the book with worksheets to go along with it. When we dissected our pigs, the teacher had no learning objectives and basically let the students cut it up and play with the organs. At that point, I had given up on some of my peers. I became frustrated with my teachers and even thought that I could have done a better job because I had taken a 5-week class at Phillips Academy. Imagine that, learning more in 5 weeks with a cohort of like-minded, ambitious peers with a deliberate, articulate teacher. I began to hate my school and tried to do everything I could to work hard so that I could make a better life for myself - away from all the poverty, drugs, alcohol, and apathetic teens with no drive even to learn about language and culture. And, to be fair, I wasn't too concerned with learning Lakota language and culture either. But at least I memorized the vocab lists our Lakota teacher gave us our freshman year, which by the way was only the level 1 book designed for first graders.

At some point in high school after taking summer classes at Phillips Academy Andover I adapted a theory to fix the Rez schools based on KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) Charter Schools. Essentially a no-excuses charter school, I took the idea of extending the school day and starting early and ending later in the day. My idea of a school would be a revolutionary and rigorous approach to Rez education. Of course, at some point I thought that was too punitive of an approach as I talked to my mom and peers about Standing Rock High School's infamous "No

⁸¹ My plan was to take Pre-Calc in the spring so that I could place into the higher "C" classes at MS2 instead of the "A" classes. However, Pre-Calc was not offered at SBC that semester.

NCs” rule for extracurricular/sport eligibility.⁸² At the end of the day, I realized that Standing Rock High School had become stricter over the years and was starting to look more and more like a no-excuses school. At first, I wanted to tip the scale to go full no-excuses maybe even with uniforms. Then I began to notice more instances of my peers totally giving up, or resisting settler colonial pedagogy as I would call it now. The system had failed them.

School Punitiveness

Standing Rock Schools, I believe, are far too punitive, especially for students who completely reject the system. The school system, instead of asking what the students want to learn and catering to their needs, force feeds them oppressive standardized lesson plans catered to western knowledge systems and the perpetuation of white supremacy. When students do not pay attention to these colonial lessons or disrupt class with laughter, they get punished with write ups and bad grades, which ultimately does nothing to “improve” their behavior. Punishment, in this case, only serves to further depress the students. The school has never truly listened to their cries for help - to give them the freedom to choose. *My personal theory is that most students, including myself, lose their love for learning sometime in elementary school and start rebelling against years of intellectual containment in middle school and through high school. The difference between the “good” and “bad” students is that the “good” have been told that they were “smart” for years and that the “bad” have been told the opposite.*

Sherman Alexie’s *Part Time Indian*

Alexie writes a pessimistic, damage-centered story about a teenage boy caught between the Native and white world. His character, however, continuously suggests that “smart” reservation kids should leave the reservation behind using nomadism as an excuse. The question

⁸² An NC is a No Credit, equivalent to an F

becomes: should one leave their tribe and assimilate into the white world, or should one stand up to the colonial powers and fight for their people? Reading this book in 7th grade made me want to leave the Rez so bad. It made me hate myself and hate that I was born into such a poor situation. While at times, I lived the life of a Sherman Alexie character, I now realize that I had a steady enough life to be able to take advantage of every opportunity I could, unlike most of my peers. Still, this book influenced my thinking for years.

Call for more Native teachers

One huge takeaway from Alexie's *Part Time Indian* is that we need Natives to invest and return to their respective communities. Alexie taught us that the rez is a hopeless place devoid of opportunity where alcoholism, drug use, and many other horrible things run rampant. For the most part, he was right. But he left out the rich culture that many of our communities have and the wealth of knowledge that our elders have. Alexie allured us to look at the western academy for hope and aspiration. Instead, we should be looking to our elders and increasingly, each other, for inspiration to bolster the next generation of rez kids with the education and life they deserve. One huge fix is recruiting and maintaining many more Native teachers, especially those from the community (or similar Lakota communities), so that they learn Indigenous ways of thinking and doing.

We can't let the rez continue to be a stereotypical place of poverty. People around the rez joke about being poor or acting "rezzy," and in most cases it's all fun and games. However, a lot of the time, we use humor as a coping mechanism for trauma. It is only the first step to healing. We cry about how the old missionaries and teachers beat the language out of us, then we laugh about beating the language right back into our kids to fix the issue. I admit, a lot of these jokes that reflect past trauma are really funny. To this day, I chuckle to myself when I mess around

with my Native peers at Yale saying, “[look at these] goddamn Indians!” Somehow, we need to make teaching sought after again. As I have discussed, schooling has been at the epicenter of many recent peoples’ trauma. I believe if we can take back our education from the western whites and teach our ways (especially through our languages), then we can finally heal.

Lakota Language Immersion

In the early 2000s Doctor Mary Hermes helped start an Ojibwemowin immersion school in Wisconsin. In her reflection of that experience she talked about the contradiction of people using English as a way out of poverty when our languages are rich but declining. Ojibwe culture was taught in and through English so the only option was to create an immersion school combining language and culture. There are many problems in the early days of an immersion school that would make almost anyone quit. Many communities have “culture cops” and “language cops” that police people on how to practice the culture or speak the language. They criticize and belittle people into dropping both altogether (and at least from what I’ve observed it is always an “elder” or two who acts as a supreme know it all without actually putting in the effort to teach anyone anything). This phenomenon is one of the most frustrating things beside the lack of support and time devoted to language and culture in the public schools. Hermes is a long-time student of tribally run schools and teaching culture in Native schools so she decided to push immersion as the solution.⁸³

Tribal schools are not the solution for Hermes because they teach culture through English and essentially divide those who want to know the culture and those who want academic success. To anyone who doesn’t know how some Native schools run, we are plagued by lack of time and

⁸³ Mary Hermes. “Waadookodaading Indigenous Language Immersion: Personal Reflections on the Gut-Wrenching Start-up Years.” In: Ibáñez-Carrasco JF, Meiners, E (eds) *Public acts: disruptive readings on making knowledge public*. *Routledge*, New York, pp 57–72. 2004. 60-62.

devoted teachers for language and culture - we are now just getting the ball rolling in many places. Back when I was in middle and high school, culture club was a separate after school activity that ultimately alienated athletes and others who couldn't afford the time. Tribal schools that "focused" on culture did not work for Hermes. After all, she pointed out that there were little to no results in terms of western academic excellence in those schools. Native schools still saw high dropout rates and low college matriculation rates. I would go as far as arguing that teaching culture through English trivializes it and does more to hurt interest than revitalize it. Culture needs language needs culture needs language.⁸⁴

Immersion is hard. Immersion is also the best antidote I've seen to fight against internalized colonialism and self-hatred. After a year of arduous days of unpredictability and uncertainty, Hermes wrote in her journal on January 8, 2003, "Today I am ready to quit." She vented her frustration about not being able to get students interested in learning math and hearing about her students deteriorating home lives. Hermes vented about how hard it was to keep going and how easy it was to hear or speak an Ojibwe word and having no idea what it meant. She was learning right along with the students. If she couldn't understand the material how could the students? She was mad at the University for trying to poach two of the immersion teachers and how alluring the Ivory Tower must be for someone on the Rez - she too was a part of the University and wanted to only work there because it was easier. The worst thing to happen there was a heated academic debate. The worst thing to happen at immersion school would be another community of kids who don't know the language. At the University people can be cynical and talk trash about the world without doing much. At the end of the day, academics still get their comfy coffee chats by the fire while the rest of the world burns. Immersion is heartbreaking but

⁸⁴ Hermes, 63.

it is the work that needs to be done to truly better the community. With immersion and healing from boarding schools comes future healthy generations knowing who they are.⁸⁵

Standing Rock's situation with our immersion school is eerily similar to Hermes and the Ojibwemowin immersion school. One of my classmates from high school opted to teach Lakota at the Lakota Language Nest here in Standing Rock right after high school. Jesse Many Horses used to tell me about all her struggles with learning the language and learning how to teach right on the fly. She told me about how hard it was and how *burnt out* she got. Parents would occasionally yell at her for one reason or the other expecting the world from our school. Parents are encouraged to learn and speak Lakota to their children in the school but it's really hard especially when many jobs are demanding on top of having to raise young children. The cognitive load is simply too great at times. Still, we will continue to build and create a better future for our children.

College and DLSI Summers

Reading Carol Black's "On the Wildness of Children" radicalized me and is still the most influential piece of writing to me. Going into college, I was scared of the name Yale because I was going to be a Pre Med student and I had a below average ACT score according to Yale's standards. Still, I had been schooled on the Rez and took advantage of every opportunity I saw. Imagine if I had been given the same privileges as a rich white kid who went to Phillips Academy Andover? I'd be a surgeon by age 16. Still, I wanted to be the next great Native MD who went back to their community and saved lives. However, little by little life took me down and I began to realize that education is the key to revitalizing the Rez, but not in the way most people would think.

⁸⁵ Hermes, 67-68.

Many different moving parts influenced me to drop the Pre Med track after my first semester at Yale. Overwhelmingly, Standing Rock's fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline and the election of Trump made me realize that there are too many social issues for me to train in science and medicine. Another reason was that I hated the culture of Pre Med students and most Yale students in general. They're all so worried about getting a corporate job or high paying job and maintaining their class status while still supporting radical action for social/political clout. I knew about boarding schools in high school and about language revitalization but I didn't really see the need for it. Yale and elite culture are so profoundly different and disgusting that I couldn't help but switch my major to Ethnicity, Race, and Migration because it was simply the only major that made any sense to me. How does one learn about oppression once and then study something completely different and essentially turn a blind eye to it? This isn't all ER&M majors but I craved learning about the things that high school doesn't teach - the histories of the oppressed and theories of radical change. After reflecting on becoming an ER&M major I went home that summer after my first year and became an intern at the Lakota Summer Institute [LSI] hosted by Sitting Bull College [Thátháŋka Íyotaka Owáyawa Waŋkátuya].

In the spring of 2017, I started taking Lakota classes through the Native American Language Project at Yale via Skype with four other students taught by Sam Iron Hawk. One day, I want to be a teacher for a Lakota/Dakota community, so I took the class seriously despite it not being counted for credit by Yale. Even though the classes amounted to two hours a week, they kept us busy enough to receive credit.⁸⁶ Major institutions like Stanford and big state schools like the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin - Madison offer Native

⁸⁶ Katherine Hu. "A Vocal Revival" last modified April 30, 2018. <http://www.thenewjournalatyale.com/2018/04/a-vocal-revival/>

language classes for credit.⁸⁷ Rigorous coursework and teacher availability are not the problems; Yale just does not have the policy in place. Still, the other Native students and I still study our respective languages despite being forced to study harmful colonial languages like Spanish.⁸⁸ Another Yale classmate from Pine Ridge and I have college credit for Lakota from Thátháŋka Íyotaka Owáyawa Waŋkátuya.

In the summer of 2017, after a crazy first year at Yale filled with stressors such as switching majors, worrying about family in Očhéthi Šakówiŋ’s fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and adjusting to college course loads, I got an internship with Sally Carson to work with Standing Rock Department of Education - Language Culture Institute [LCI]. Like Sam Iron Hawk, I felt that my experience working for Sally and taking Lakota classes at LSI was a life changing experience. I learned more language than I ever had in high school and got to meet people vital to revitalization efforts like Sally, Sam, LCI staff, community members/teachers, and Jan Ullrich from Lakota Language Consortium [LLC]. It was also the longest LSI ever at four weeks in the month of June. LSI made me realize that Lakota language revitalization was possible and it gave me a new life purpose - make a Lakota school that heals the community.

The next summer in 2018, LLC and Standing Rock LCI decided to part ways and operate as separate programs. Standing Rock LCI still partnered with Thátháŋka Íyotaka Owáyawa Waŋkátuya in Akíčhita Háŋska but changed the name to DLSI - which offered more Dakota dialect classes. It was an even better experience than LSI had been the previous year because there were so many visitors from Fort Peck and Spirit Lake. Both tribes speak Dakota variations that opened all of our eyes into how similar the languages are. There were many more interns as

⁸⁷ Seth Schuster. “Penn looks to ‘lead the pack’ in Native American studies following NEH Grant.” February 26, 2018.

⁸⁸ Britton O’Daly. “Students seek Native language credit”
<https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/01/23/students-seek-native-language-credit/>

well, some of whom were still in high school. The more youth we get involved with the movement the better. DLSI embodied promise and hope for the future, and I am proud to have been a part of it. I wrote my best poem about Native kids who go off to college for a final project as the program concluded - it made a few people cry.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ See Chase Warren, WIYÓHIYADPATA (THE EAST)

Conclusion

The point of Indian education was, and remains to be, the perpetuation of white supremacy.

When I went East to Carlisle School, I thought I was going there to die;... I could think of white people wanting little Lakota children for no other reason than to kill them, but I thought here is my chance to prove that I can die bravely. So I went East to show my father and my people that I was brave and willing to die for them.⁹⁰ - Ota Kte (Luther Standing Bear)

The impact schools have on children is immense and should be treated with the level of respect akin to medical doctors and lawyers. It's just too bad that the institution of education itself is extremely harmful - even for the ones who succeed in it. Yalies are the kids that are okay with the bars/rules that society enforces upon them. I am that kid that *thrives* on order and control, which is unusual. Kids who act up in class for being too disruptive are the real revolutionaries. They pound against the bars that schools imprison us in. As Carol Black says, "the revolution will not take place in a classroom."

At that moment, I was broken and tried not to daydream again, especially not in front of Jesus.

My personal theory is that most students, including myself, lose their love for learning sometime in elementary school and start rebelling against years of intellectual containment in middle school and through high school. The difference between the "good" and "bad" students is that the "good" have been told that they were "smart" for years and that the "bad" have been told the opposite.

We want to create a system that: is collaborative rather than competitive, is with us rather than for us, is personalized rather than standardized, is traditional/cultural rather than western, and is healing rather than harming. We will do that through Lakota, not English.

⁹⁰ Adams, 98.

CAROL BLACK, “ON THE WILDNESS OF CHILDREN”

“We are engaged in a vast dystopian project of one-upping our Creator, of treating the Kosmos as though it were a fixer-upper, and of imagining we can redesign ourselves as well as the world we are to live in. The social engineers who shaped our world understood very well that no matter how far civilization “progresses,” each new human being is born wild — in other words, *human* — and they made it their overt goal to create an institution that would break the will, the “self-will” the “self-determination”— that would subdue the wildness — of our children. It works. But like any other radical intervention in the natural world, like dams, like pesticides, like genetically modified crops, the mass institutionalization of children alters our lives and our planet in ways that are both unanticipated and beyond our control.

Species die, our planet warms, and in the name of teaching our children to save the world, we go on destroying their wildness, “socializing” them away from nature and into the cage we have built around childhood. Our nice teachers try to find ways to make it “fun,” to limit or at least soften the damage that is done; like zookeepers giving beach balls to captive polar bears, they try to find substitutes for what is lost. But the world is too beautiful to substitute for, and the wildest of our children—the ones they have to put on Ritalin, the ones they have to put on Prozac— know it. These children are the canaries in the coal mine, the ones who will not obey our masters, who will not take their place as cogs in the machine that is destroying the earth. They are not the ones who have a “disorder.” They are the ones who still hold the perfect Kosmos in their hearts.

The revolution will not take place in a classroom.

In wildness is the preservation of the world.”

VINE DELORIA, JR. “WHERE IS THE ACADEMY GOING?”

“We fight desperately to maintain what we call ‘intellectual freedom’ for academics. But what is academic freedom in the United States? My conclusion is that academic freedom in the United States is the right to support whatever doctrine the senior scholar or scholars in a particular field favors. Neils Bohr once noted that the new theories arise when the proponents of the old theories die out. Surely we can do better with the vast amount of data now available to us. My Japanese correspondent told me that he went to China and met with some Chinese scholars. A Chinese scholar said, ‘Why is it that in China we can criticize Darwin, but not the government, and in the United States you can criticize the government, but not Darwin?’ The Realization that this quip adequately and eloquently describes our situation today continues to haunt me. Let’s free up graduate education, treat grad students as colleagues, open avenues for minorities, and become aware of the struggles over meaning occurring in the streets around us. Let’s tear into existing dogmas asking, ‘But what if?’ I leave you that as something to ponder.”⁹¹

MICHEL FOUCAULT. DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

“Schools serve the same social functions as prisons and mental institutions - to define, classify, control, and regulate people.”

⁹¹ Deloria, “Where is the Academy Going?” 12.

CHASE WARREN, WIYÓHIYAᎠPATA (THE EAST)

Theúŋkičihíhila kta iwáhounkičhiye. (You and I promised to love each other)

Ačhíyuštaŋ wakápiŋ. (I dreaded abandoning you)

Wičhóthitaŋhaŋ wiyóhiŋyaŋpata iyáyemayakhiye.

(You made me depart from the village going to the east)

Héčhanuŋ kte šni škhá héčhanuŋ. (You weren't supposed to do that and yet you did)

Čhéyemayaye. (You made me cry)

Blé wačhíŋ šni, ichíŋ amáyala šni. (I didn't want to go because you weren't taking me there)

Wašiču makhóče-ta waí. (I arrived at white man's country)

Mayúwašičupi. (They assimilated me into white society)

Lakhóta thámakhóče-ta wagliyaču. (I started coming back to Lakota country)

Thiyáta wakú. (I was on my way back home)

Waglí na tuwé waŋží amáyutapi šni. (I arrived and no one looked at me)

Ómayakiye šni. (You did not help me)

Éyaš, (But)

Échiktuŋže šni. (I did not forget you)

Émayaktuŋže. (You forgot me)

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