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presented by

QWO-LI DRISKILL

has been accepted towards fulfillment of the requirements for the

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GOD TAUGHT ME THIS SONG, IT IS BEAUTIFUL: CHEROKEE PERFORMANCE
RHETORICS AS DECOLONIZATION, HEALING, AND CONTINUANCE

By

Qwo-Li Driskill

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ABSTRACT

BOUCH AGGO ISZIYL OTASR/

YELESALEHE HIWAYONA DIKANOHOGIDA NAIWODUSV/
GOD TAUGHT ME THIS SONG, IT IS BEAUTIFUL: CHEROKEE PERFORMANCE
RHETORICS AS DECOLONIZATION, HEALING, AND CONTINUANCE

By

Owo-Li Driskill

This dissertation examines the importance of performed and embodied rhetorics to Cherokee survival and resistance and argues for performance as a primary site of Native cultural continuance and rhetorical production. Two historiographic studies are central to making this argument. The first, Indian In The Archive: Performance Historiography as Cherokee Ghost Dance (Chapter Three) looks to the Cherokee Ghost Dance and the Redbird Smith movement as models for radical, decolonial, performative historiography. With a particular focus on recovering a history of nineteenth century Cherokee theatre, this chapter focuses on how archives are and can be used by Cherokee people to re-establish dormant and/or obscured Cherokee performance traditions and histories. The second study, On The Wings Of Wadaduga: Towards the Performance of Two-Spirit Critiques (Chapter Four) focuses on revising both archived and embodied records through the development of an historiographic performance with Two-Spirit, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer-identified Cherokees. This chapter examines performance as historiography and argues for performance as a means to revise both archival and embodied cultural memories. Both studies are grounded in the methodological concepts of SGAP (duyuk'ta, "balance") and \$SY (gadugi, "cooperative labor") as a way of conceiving decolonial scholarship, practice, and pedagogy within the field of rhetoric and composition.

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INTRODUCTION: A CALL TO ASSEMBLE

BCUCP	Yelesalehe	God
ade.	hiwayona	taught me
18ZFYL	diganohogida	song
OTUSR	naiwodusv	is beautiful
JOZFY	dikanohogida	song
400A	nuwolosa	the way it went
Boug.	yelesalohi	God
.9G.f.	hiwayona	taught me

These are the lyrics to a Cherokee stomp dance song (Heth 121-122). They reflect the centrality of performance to Cherokee lifeways, community identity, and histories of resistance. These lyrics are just one example of the ways that Cherokees employ poetics and embodied practices in struggles for decolonization, and healing historical trauma. Cherokee performance rhetorics involve multiple and complex contexts, identities, histories, and forms. They emerge from Cherokee landbases, communities, and national struggles as tactics to ensure the survival and continuance of Cherokee people.

Rhetoric and composition has mostly ignored the powerful rhetorical work of community performance, particularly within Indigenous contexts. Indigenous rhetorics—as well as numerous other marginalized rhetorics—carry unique modes of

¹ Following Powell's suggestion that in order to understand various terms "as what they are: stories that explain how the world works" that we "divest them of their initial capitals—Theory to theory, Discourse to discourse..." I have not capitalized the names of fields and disciplines ("Listening" 18).

analysis and political obligations that require a shift in our field's theories and practices.

Moves to "decolonize" rhetoric and composition have been well-established for a number of years. Victor Villanueva's famous call to the to reshape our scholarship in order to intervene in Eurocentric discourse and include the rhetorics of the Americas helps provide a context for a decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric:

We tend to get our Great Thinkers from Europe.... I am not saying we shouldn't. I am grateful for *habitus* and hegemony as concepts that came from Europe. I have a great deal of affection for the rhetoricians of Greece and Rome. But we must break from the colonial mindset and learn from the thinkers of our own hemisphere as well. [...] Break precedent! We are so locked into the colonial mindset that we are now turning to the excolonials of Europe to learn something about our own people of color (Rhetoric 658-659).

His call to "break precedent" was issued the same year as Malea Powell's "Blood and Scholarship." Since these publications, Native rhetoricians and other rhetoricians of color working in the field have both taken up these calls and put out calls of their own.

Scott Richard Lyons published "Rhetorical Sovereignty: What Do American Indians

Want from Writing?" in 2000 continuing a decolonial challenge to the field:

Rhetorical sovereignty is the inherent right of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse.

Placing the scene of writing squarely back into the particular contingency of the Indian rhetorical situation, rhetorical sovereignty requires of writing

teachers more than a renewed commitment to listening and learning; it also requires a radical rethinking of how and what we teach as the written word at all levels of schooling.... (449-450).

Lyons continues by calling on the field to support rhetorical sovereignty through recentering our current discourse: "I suggest that we begin by prioritizing the study of American Indian rhetoric...in our graduate curricula and writing programs, focusing on the history of both secret and not-so-secret wars in the contact zone" (464).

Powell continued her critiques of what Lyons calls "The C&R Ranch" (450) through the publication of her 2002 essay, "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians *Use* Writing":

There is little work on American Indians being done in our discipline and much of it suffers from the burdens of a colonial mindset and a general lack of understanding about the diversity of American Indian cultures and histories on this continent. [...] In short...we've done a pretty good job of not doing a very good job of critically engaging with Native texts. That alone makes the attempts of Native scholars in composition and rhetoric both necessary and quite difficult (Survivance 397).

This dissertation is a way of contributing to work in rhetoric and composition that is rooted in, and responsible to, Native communities. By looking to performance as an act of rhetorical and intellectual sovereignty we can shift both the subject of analysis as well as our discipline's methodologies in order to be more accountable to rhetorical histories and traditions rooted in the Americas.

My own interest in Cherokee performance rhetorics emerges from my work as a Cherokee activist, poet, and performer who extensively uses radical performance and poetics as tools for decolonization and healing historical trauma. My scholarly interest in kinesthetic knowledge—inclusive of what I am now calling performance rhetorics—began while working on an MA that focused on how writing, theatre, and story can be used in Native communities to build coalitions working for decolonization. I am currently not only interested in contemporary performance rhetorics of Cherokee communities, but also the connections between contemporary and historical Cherokee performance rhetorics. I am particularly concerned with how Cherokee performance is utilized as a tool of survival, resistance, nation building, and decolonization.

The restoration and continuance of Indigenous performance practices aid in larger struggles for decolonization and healing historical trauma. For Cherokees, and no doubt for many Native people, performance has been used historically as a means of resisting colonization and genocide. As it has since European invasion, the use of performative resistance in our lives and struggles remains central to movements for decolonization and healing. This dissertation is meant to contribute to ongoing decolonization struggles in as well as continuing work within the field to Indigenize our analyses, methodologies, and scholarship.

Decolonization

Because concepts of decolonization are central to Indigenous methodologies, I would like to discuss my own formulations of decolonization here, particularly in their relationship to rhetoric and composition. When I speak of decolonization I am speaking

of an ongoing process Native people and our allies are engaged in to end the occupation and wounding of our homelands. Decolonial work by Native scholars and our allies within the academy is connected with bell hooks' concept of *yearning*:

Yearning is the word that best describes a common psychological state shared by many of us, cutting across boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexual practice. Specifically, in relation to the postmodernist deconstruction of 'master' narratives, the yearning that wells in our hearts and minds of those whom such narratives have silenced is the longing for critical voice (Natoli and Hutcheon 314).

Yearning for the decolonization of our landbases, bodies, and communities moves Native people in the academy to yearn for a decolonial approach to the stories told by, about, and on our bodies.

When we speak of a decolonial approach to scholarship, we must be committed to current struggles for Native people. The struggles of Native people—inside and outside of the academy and the discipline—should be of pressing concern to Native and non-Native people alike. Winona LaDuke says powerfully, "In the final analysis the survival of Native America is fundamentally about the collective survival of all human beings. The question of who gets to determine the destiny of the land, and of the people who live on it—those with the money or those who pray on the land—is a question that is alive throughout society" (5).

Decolonization is a multifaceted process, and academic scholarship has an important role in engaging the following facets of decolonial movements:

Land Redress

Perhaps central to decolonization are current struggles for land redress being engaged in by Native peoples. If we are not concerned with land redress, I doubt very much that we are talking about decolonization. Projects such as the White Earth Land Recovery Project or the establishment of Nunavut in Canada are important models and examples of land redress occurring in Native communities in North America, as are continuing struggles to protect sacred landbases. Colonialism, by its very definition, seeks to erase Indigenous title to the land. Just as colonialism attempts to erase Native people from land and history, dominant accounts of rhetorical history and theory within our field erases the presence of Native peoples from its telling, claiming the territory of rhetoric as European. A consciously Indigenous approach to rhetoric must interrupt manifestation of colonial thinking within our scholarship.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a central struggle for Native nations and peoples. Like land redress, it is difficult to argue that one is speaking of *decolonization* if sovereignty is not being addressed. Scott Richard Lyons writes, "Sovereignty is the guiding story in our pursuit of self-determination, the general strategy by which we aim to best recover our losses from the ravages of colonization: our lands, our languages, our cultures, our self-respect. For indigenous people everywhere, sovereignty is an ideal principle, the beacon by which we seek the paths to agency and power and community renewal" (449). Lyons' idea is connected to Robert Warrior's concept of "intellectual sovereignty." Warrior writes that a "process-centered understanding of sovereignty provides a way of envisioning the work Native scholars do" (87). Similarly, Craig S. Womack defines

sovereignty as "an intellectual idea in Native cultures, a political practice, and a theme of oral traditions; and the concept, as well as the practice, predates European contact" (51). Because of its centrality to Native resistance and intellectual movements, sovereignty is a necessary concept in any discussion of decolonization. Further, concepts of *rhetorical sovereignty* are not only important as conceptual frameworks when addressing writing by Native people, but are also important because those concepts emerge from—and are intended to contribute to—grassroots struggles for sovereignty.

Healing Historical Trauma

The concept of historical trauma is rooted in trauma studies and psychoanalytic theory, and carries with it strong connections to Holocaust studies and postcolonial theory. The authors of the essay "Healing the American Indian Soul Wound" write, "Historical trauma is trauma that is multigenerational and cumulative over time; it extends beyond the life span. Historical trauma response has been identified and is delineated as a constellation of features in reaction to the multigenerational, collective, historical, and cumulative psychic wounding over time, both over the life span and across generations" (Danieli 342). Decolonization actively engages with healing the wounds of colonization that continue to manifest in our community, familial, and individual lives. One of these wounds has been an attempt to erase the histories of Native peoples. Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes, "...history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others" (34). Speaking our own histories is one way to mend the damages of dominant history. Smith continues, "Telling our stories from the past, reclaiming the past, giving testimony to the injustices of the

past are all strategies which are commonly employed by indigenous peoples struggling for justice. [...] ...[T]he need to tell our stories remains the powerful imperative of a powerful form of resistance" (35). A decolonial approach to rhetoric helps to heal the trauma inflicted by colonial narratives.

Recovery and Continuance of Indigenous Knowledges and Lifeways

Recovery and continuance of our traditions is inseparable from a process of healing historical trauma. Several factors in the genocidal history of the continent have contributed to a wounding of cultural memory in many Native communities. Part of colonization always attempts to eradicate Indigenous lifeways and lives from the planet, or to appropriate and misuse those knowledges for profit and for the continuance of colonial powers. A perfect example of such appropriation is corporate interests in putting patents on life, both human and more-than-human, in order to further corporate and imperial powers, which are increasingly one and the same. Decolonization requires not only the halting of colonial practices that seek to destroy or steal Native knowledges, but also works to ensure that our lifeways remain rooted within our cultural practice and memory. Native communities have our own histories and rhetorics, which are carried on in various forms into the present. Even so, colonization has often intentionally attempted to destroy Native knowledges and lifeways. Most Native people in North America, for instance, do not speak our Native languages. A decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric aids in a process of restoring and continuing these knowledges and practices for the benefit of Native communities.

Accountability and Reparations to Native Communities

The devastation of genocidal practices in the Americas has created intergenerational wounds that must be attended to. A process of healing requires that governments, communities, and individuals that have perpetuated violence against Native communities take responsibility for their actions. Movements for accountability and reparations are central to struggles for decolonization. Rhetoric and composition, like all fields in university, must be accountable to the Native people whose lands are being occupied in order for us to do our work. Part of this accountability is to engage in decolonial practices and scholarship, what I will call intellectual reparations to Native communities. Educational systems in the US and Canada (and certainly other occupied territories) have done enormous damage to Native communities through assimiliationist and missionary projects, the establishment of universities in order to appropriate land bases, and research projects that physically and psychically injure Native communities. In such a context, a decolonial approach to scholarship should be a matter-of-course. Further, a decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric in our field is not simply a corrective act to the master narratives too often told by the discipline, it a reparative act. A decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric—and indeed the history of our fields and institutions—is part of struggles for accountability and reparations. Intellectual reparations and accountability are important steps towards in a process of reconciliation.

Reconciliation

Decolonization is also a process of reconciliation with non-Native peoples who have been part of the occupation of our land bases. A decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric is an act that aids Native and non-Native people in a process of reconciliation and collaboration. Powell's call for "alliance" is rooted in decolonial politics that hope for reconciliation and the mending of human relationships. She urges, "Maybe, as allies, we can spur one another on to even more disruptive tactics. Maybe we can learn to take hold of one another and emerge at the beginning of a new story about ourselves..." (River 57).

I am not asserting that there is any linear order to a decolonial process I have outlined above, nor do I think that these are the only aspects in such a dynamic and complex undertaking. I do think, however, that such criteria should be present if we are to speak of *decolonization*. If decolonization is a process of suturing the wounds of colonialism and bringing it to a halt, decolonization must directly engage and interrupt colonialism. A decolonial approach to scholarship within our field, then, must find ways to engage decolonial struggles. Such an approach moves beyond Native people or histories at the "subjects" of study, but instead builds and supports already existing connections between Native struggles and academic scholarship.

I hope that my work—here and elsewhere—contributes to decolonial struggles. By looking to the radical rhetorical work that performance does in Native communities, this dissertation is meant to contribute to ongoing scholarship and activism by Native people both within and outside of academia. It is deeply influenced by radical movements and arts which I am involved. Performance disrupts colonial taxonomies and enables us not only to "restore" both delivery and memory to the discipline, but also to re-center our analysis on embodied, practiced rhetorics more conducive to understanding Indigenous rhetorical productions. Performance disrupts rhetoric/poetic splits, which can aid in struggles to re-root rhetoric and composition studies into the soil of the Americas.

Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor writes, "The rift, I submit, does not lie between the written and spoken word, but between the archive of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral repertoire of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)" (19). My historiographic work in part looks at the relationship between the archive and the repertoire in relation to Cherokee performance rhetorics. How can and do Cherokee communities utilize the archive to bring performances back into the repertoire? What is the relationship between my own work in the archive and Cherokee performance repertoires, and how can engagement with both be useful to Cherokee communities? This dissertation seeks to answer these questions.

Chapter Descriptions

The first chapter of this dissertation, SGA 6° D6° \$SY/Duyuk'ta and Gadugi:

Doubleweaving a Theory and Methodology of Cherokee Performance, provides a
theoretical base for my scholarship. An in-depth discussion of my methodologies are
included in Chapter One, rather than within this introduction, as a way of arguing for the
entwined nature of theory and practice. Doublewoven baskets, one of our oldest arts and
technologies as Cherokees, is used as a metaphor to examine the theoretical work
possible through thinking of doubleweave as a Cherokee a Cherokee theory. I look to the
Cherokee values of SGA6° (duyuk'ta, "balance") and \$SY (gadugi, "cooperative
labor") as methodologies that can doublewoven, drawing on the work of Emma Pérez to

argue that through doubleweave a third space emerges that can engage in radical decolonial work.²

Chapter Two, **L\$B**, **L\$B DC**(CT/Daksi, Daksi, Daksi Alegwui/Come On All You Shell Shakers: Cherokee Performance Rhetorics, Resistance, and Decolonization, articulates a theory of Cherokee performance rhetorics, specifically in relationship to struggles for decolonization and healing historical trauma. Employing de Certeau's, notions of practice, space, place, tactics, and strategies I argue that performance is a central to Cherokee practices used to maintain **SGAO** (duyuk'a), ensuring the maintenance of Cherokee space. Further, I look to a broader history of Indigenous performance to position performance as integral to Indigenous rhetorics and resistance. By doing this, I am able to examine the parallel—but very different—rhetorical work taking place in both stomp dance communities and in the Society of American Indians in the nineteenth century.

Chapter Three, Indian In The Archive: Performance Historiography as Cherokee Ghost Dance, looks to Cherokee revialization movements as a model for engaging decolonial historiographic work. The so-called Cherokee Ghost Dance movement in the early ninteenth century and Redbird Smith's wave of the Keetoowah Society both employed historiographic tactics, making use of both what Diana Taylor calls the archive and the repertoire (2003), to reconstruct and revitalize Cherokee performance traditions and other lifeways. I use these revitalization movements to think about Cherokee

While it is outside of the scope of this dissertation, by looking at the rhetorical work that doubleweave does, this chapter also begins to articulate relationships between performance and material rhetorics that I am interested in pursuing further.

historiography, including my own historiographic work to recover a history of nineteenth centry Cherokee theatre. I also look the historiographic and decolonial work of being done by the Warriors of Anikituwha, a performance group at the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, who work to revive and maintain particular Cherokee performance traditions.

Chapter Four, On The Wings Of Wadaduga: Towards the Performance of Two-Spirit Critiques, is in many ways the heartbeat of this dissertation. GLS\$ (wadaduga) means dragonfly in Cherokee. I've been searching for several years to learn more about the place of GLS\$ within traditional Cherokee stories while also searching for the stories of Two-Spirit people within the Cherokee past and present. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, GLS\$ (wadaduga) has surfaced for me as a metaphor for Cherokee Two-Spirit people. On The Wings Of Wadaduga is the beginning of a much larger project that gathers the stories of Cherokee Two-Spirit people through archival research and interviews, which will be collaboratively transformed into a public performance in the future. What I provide in this dissertation is merely the raw materials from which the performance will be collaboratively woven.

I conceive this project as historigraphic rather than ethnographic, and originally thought that I would employ fairly straight-forward oral history methods. ³ As I continued

I am choosing the term Two-Spirit, rather than other terms I could use such as Native Queer or Native Trans People, for several reasons. The term Two-Spirit is a word that is intentionally complex. Like other umbrella terms—including queer— it risks erasing difference. But also like queer, it is meant to be inclusive, ambiguous, and fluid. Some Native GLBTQ folks have rejected the term Two-Spirit, while others have rejected terms such as Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Queer in favor of Two-Spirit or tribally-specific

work on this dissertation, I was asked by a few potential participants if, rather than being interviewed and recorded, they could write responses to questions.⁴ Their request made me reconsider an exclusive "oral history" approach to these interviews, bringing into question if such an approach is truly in the spirit of \$SY (gadugi) which—as discussed in Chapter One— is one of my core methodologies. If the preferred method of potential participants is to transmit their story through writing rather than through an oral history, and if I believe participants should have control of the authorship and representation of their stories, then using oral history exclusively ceases to make sense. While all of the participants within this dissertation participated in recorded interviews, they also had the opportunity to edit and revise their words. Daniel Heath Justice made some very minor revisions and clarifications to his interview, but has otherwise remained the same as the original. Robin Farris made some substantial edits and additions to her interview. None of the other participants have revised any other their original interviews. It is important to me, however, that participants have the opportunity to revise their original interviews, shifting my method from oral history to a collaborative interview and writing process more conducive to a project rooted in Cherokee methodologies.

My original call for participants for this project brought some critique. I received an email from a prominent Cherokee activist, David Cornsilk, challenging my criteria of who could participate in this project, and an email from Richard LaFortune—another

terms. Still others move between terms depending on the specific rhetorical context, rhetorical sovereignty.

While none of these individuals have participated in this project in time to be included in the dissertation, I expect that they will all participate in the future.

prominent Two-Spirit activist—pointing out the problematic nature of some of the ways I was using **GUSS** (Wadaduga) as a metaphor in my call.

In my original call for participants, I make clear that one does not have to be an enrolled Cherokee from a federally recognized Cherokee nation to participate in this project:

This research is for all Cherokees who also identify as Two-Spirit, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexed, Genderqueer, or Queer. For the purposes of this project, "Cherokee" people will be defined as those who meet at least two of the following criteria: 1.) Have Cherokee ancestry. 2.) Are enrolled members of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the United Keetoowah Band, or the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 3.) Are involved with Cherokee community and are recognized by other Cherokees as being Cherokee.

Cornsilk felt that if I included non-citizen Cherokees, then I needed to require some sort of proof of their Cherokee heritage. I am a non-citizen Cherokee myself, and the political decolonial commitments of my Native communities—Cherokee and not—are opposed to such pressures around identity verification. It is not my place as a scholar in rhetoric and writing—and contrary to my politics and values—to require documentation of Cherokee ancestry to participate in this project.

However, I appreciated Cornskilk's concerns and his willingness to approach me about them. Cornsilk's critiques did bring up the important question of how one determines Cherokee-ness within the context of this project. In the end, I have found that the few people who have contacted me whose connection to Cherokee communities is

perhaps questionable—I had one person who claimed to be trained as a "shaman" while spending time at the Qualla boundary, for instance—did not pursue participation in the project after I began asking who their family was and what their connection was to Cherokee communities. I want to be clear here, however, that just because I found a few individuals suspect because of New Age rhetoric, this doesn't mean that these individuals aren't of Cherokee descent. It does mean, however, that it finally comes down to an individual judgment on my part of whether it seems appropriate to include an individual in this project. While I'm not entirely comfortable with this, it seems the best way to be inclusive of non-citizen Cherokees.

While I did not change my criteria because of Cornsilk's concerns, LaFortune's critiques did prompt me to revise some of the language in my original call. My original call stated:

Wadaduga (Dragonfly) is an animal that enters only peripherally in recorded Cherokee stories. Wadaduga is a species currently in grave danger of extinction. Like Wadaduga, Cherokee Two-Spirits are currently being attacked and erased and our histories ignored. While contemporary writing and activism has demonstrated the roles of Two-Spirit people within various Native traditions and histories, discussions of Cherokee Two-Spirits have largely been left out of discussion. This project aims to bring our experiences to the center for both our present for future generations.

LaFortune emailed with concerns about describing Two-Spirits as "in grave danger of extinction" and worried that it ignored the contributions of Cherokee activists in Two-

Spirit movements. I found that I agreed with LaFortune. While my intention was to express the very real violence that racism, colonialism, queer/transphobia, and other forms of oppression have on the lives of Cherokee Two-Spirits, I could clearly see LaFortune's concerns. I revised the language in the call, which now reads:

Wadaduga (Dragonfly) is an animal that enters only peripherally in recorded Cherokee stories. Like Wadaduga, the histories and stories of Cherokee Two-Spirits are too often ignored within contexts of colonialism, homo/transphobia, and other systems of oppression. This project aims to continue work to bring our experiences to the center for both our present and future generations.

Finally, I would like to say how much of an honor it is to work on this project.

While it is difficult within the context of Chapter Four to hear the complexity, humor, and joyful resistance in these interviews. Many of the stories that I think may be most prominent in future ensemble performances and not included in my analysis. However, what these stories do is simultaneously perform vital critiques and imagine future liberation by drawing on cultural memories. I think this is the rhetorical work possible in performance and poetics that is not easily done within scholarly genres and constraints, and so the stories in the appendices are truly the basket that carries this dissertation.

Chapter Five—**Jhfh** Jw PV+60/Hiyohunihiya, Hedohalena/This Is Your Part,

Start It Quickly: Performance, Decolonial Pedagogy, and Cultural Rhetorics—

contextualizes performance and decolonial pedagogy within the context of disciplinary shifts towards cultural rhetorics. Performance, I argue, helps to "decolonize" established histories of rhetoric. This chapter is a call for rhetoric and composition to shift our

methodologies, practices, and pedagogies in order to engage with issues of colonization decolonialization.

Finally, what is important for me in this dissertation is not only what it does, but what it cannot do. Rather than see this dissertation as an early draft of a single manuscript, I see several coils of basket reed that help me to imagine and design future nested projects. I believe that my work on histories of Cherokee performance that I begin here may very well join other work I've done on Native performance to become it's own project. *Indian in the Archive* likewise feels like it will evolve into its own project, one that will look more deeply at the work of Native people revising embodied practices through archival research and serve as a practical guide for Native people wanting to use archives in their activism. *On the Wings of Wadaduga* will likely evolve into more than one manuscript: one I envision as a collection on Native Queer theory, and the other will be a collection of the oral histories from this project along with whatever script should emerge from the ensemble performance. This dissertation, then, weaves together several moments of my current work that will likely develop into several projects that engage radical, decolonial rhetorics through embodiment and performance.

If we are to Indigenize and decolonize our field, academia, and this continent, then we must deeply re-examine our taxonomies, histories, and methodologies. Within rhetoric and composition, performance unsettles our obsession with alphabetic writing and textuality, reminding us of the importance of bodies and embodied memory to all rhetorical production. If we are to engage in decolonial work, we must look to decolonial practices in which Indigenous communities are engaging. Performance is only one of these practices, one that disrupts dichotomies between archive and repertoire. It is

employed by Native communities to resist colonization, heal historical trauma through mending cultural memory, and continue the lifeways of our ancestors through embodied *practices*.

This dissertation pays close attention to performance as a way of reshaping our relationships with rhetoric and history. It contributes to a growing disciplinary turn toward cultural rhetorics by looking to performance as deeply rhetorical. By seriously considering performance as rhetorics, scholars in rhetoric and composition can begin to undo practices that have ignored bodies—particularly Indigenous bodies—and recreate our work to be contribute to radical decolonial activism.

CHAPTER ONE

SGA® DØ \$SY/DUYUK'TA AND GADUGI: DOUBLEWEAVING A THEORY
AND METHODOLOGY OF CHEROKEE PERFORMANCE

Introduction

Native people have long been objectified and marginalized by white supremacist institutions seeking to continue colonial projects through the creation of "knowledge." In many ways, academe is an outpost of Empire, attempting to spread dominant European and EuroAmerican thought and control throughout colonized lands. Responsible work within the academy, then, must address issues of power and colonization, and further, seek an activist approach to research and scholarship that decolonizes. Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls decolonization "a process that engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices" (20).

The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of my research draw from numerous intellectual genealogies, what Smith call "dissent lines" (13). These dissent lines include: Cherokee traditions, other Indigenous traditions, grassroots activisms, Queer and Trans studies and politics, rhetoric and composition, Native studies, (post)colonial theory, performance studies, feminisms, and radical psychoanalytic theory. Within Cherokee traditions there exist two concepts which are central to my own methodologies, traditions which reflect concerns of critical, decolonial analysis: SGAP

Cherokee performance through Cherokee stomp (ceremonial dance) grounds. SGAP can be defined as "truth," "justice," and further, a mode of conduct and behavior in which one strives balance. SSY is a community of cooperative labor. Articulating SGAP and SSY as central to my theories and methodologies is part of claiming rhetorical and intellectual sovereignty. It recenters academic discourse so that it focuses on Native thought systems, and also critiques the historical European domination of research by indigenizing the terms of discussion. Such a stance is rooted in Powell's assertion of "alliance as a practice of survivance," attempting to build intellectual alliances between traditional Cherokee concepts and the theories of the academy ("River" 38).

Rhetoric and composition has made particular demands for reciprocal, accountable, and transparent methodologies that engage civic responsibility. Likewise, Native studies insists on methodologies that serve Indigenous communities and struggles. Taylor makes the case that scholarship focusing on performance must alter its methodologies: "By shifting the focus from written to embodied culture, from the discursive to the performatic, we need to shift our methodologies. [...] This shift necessarily alters what academic disciplines regard as appropriate canons, and might extend the traditional disciplinary boundaries to include practices previously outside their purview" (16, 17). SGA6 and SSY can be seen as maps for ethical research that can

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⁵ The work to articulate **SGA** Pand **SSY** as Cherokee methodologies has formed through the collaborative intellectual production between myself and my colleague Angela Haas.

be woven into calls for scholarship that pays attention to social justice, analyses of power, transparency in the research process, and performance-centered methodologies.

What are Cherokee Performance Rhetorics, Anyway?

In order to articulate **SGA6** (duyuk'ta) and **\$SY** (gadugi) as methodologies suited to pursue inquiry into Cherokee performance rhetorics, it is important to make clear my current thinking around what such research comprises. I see Cherokee performance as inclusive of a wide range of presentational and participatory practices defined by Cherokee communities as performance. Taylor writes, "To say something is a performance amounts to an ontological affirmation, though a thoroughly localized one. What one society considers a performance might be a nonevent elsewhere" (3). This is where Michel De Certeau's notion of practice can be useful.

De Certeau's theory of *practice* is connected to my understandings of performance, particularly the ways in which performance can be used to subvert power structures:

Dwelling, moving about, speaking, reading, shopping, and cooking are activities that seem to correspond to the characteristics of tactical ruses and surprises: clever tricks of the 'weak' within the established order of the 'strong,' and art of putting one over on the adversary on his own turf, hunter's tricks, maneuverable, polymorph mobilities, jubilant, poetic, and warlike discoveries" (*Practice* 40).

Practices, like performances, are embodied acts. The distinction between what I am calling performance and what de Certeau calls practice is that de Certeau urges us to look

at the "practices of everyday life," whereas performances are that which are marked by the community are *outside* of the everyday. Performance may be a practice, though a practice is not necessarily a performance. Performances are marked by the community as somehow extra-ordinary.

Dominant Western formulations often interpret performance as entailing a passive audience that watches performers on the proscenium, or in another space, specifically for entertainment. Considering histories of the colonizers, "whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (Pratt 7), the use of the word *performance* can carry troubling connotations. When I speak of Cherokee performance rhetorics and traditions, it is my understanding that Cherokee performance is often bound together with community and the sacred, and does not emerge from the same concepts of performance that currently permeate dominant culture. "Traditional" Cherokee performances such as the stomp dance require reciprocal and participatory engagement. One could argue that even within proscenium theater, Cherokee performance calls for engagement and commitment to Cherokee communities rather than passive consumption. When I discuss performance, I am including both "traditional" and "contemporary" dance, oratory, song, storytelling, and theater.

Notions of performance offer important considerations and questions to rhetoric and composition. Despite the assertion by contemporary rhetoric and composition of a split between rhetorics and poetics, within "classical" Greco-Roman rhetoric the canon of delivery has an obvious connection to performance. The Greek and Latin terms for delivery, *hypocrisis* and *actio* respectively, both refer to acting, embodied gestures, and vocal tone. While *actio* is often claimed as a lost canon in the rhetoric and composition,

it is certainly alive and well in other fields and disciplines, such as performance studies and communication studies. Current understandings of delivery in the field are too often removed from the body. Recuperations of delivery have come to mean the presentation of non-embodied compositions. While such an approach is valuable, I would like to challenge the field to also re-embody delivery and pay attention to performance—

embodied delivery—as again central to rhetoric.

Performance is rhetorical: Not only does performance have a historical presence and precedent in Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions, it is also an important *tactic* of *surviance* for Native peoples. De Certeau writes that a *strategy* is "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power...can be isolated. [...] ...[I]t is an effort to delimit one's own place in the world bewitched by the invisible powers of the Other" (36). A *tactic*, on the other hand, "is an art of the weak" (37). Within the contexts of colonization, Cherokee performances are often *tactics* for *survivance* and continuance. Taylor argues that "performance transmits memories, makes political claims, and manifests a group's sense of identity" (xvii). Performance rhetorics can be defined as any discourse that uses embodied performance as its central modality.⁶

For the purposes of my current work, I am drawing a clear distinction here between *performance* and notions of *peformativity* discussed by theorists such as Judith Butler, J.L. Austin, and Jean-Françios Lyotard. Butler argues, "Gender reality is performative, which means...that it is real only to the extent that it is performed" (qtd in

⁶ I include written scripts in this category because, while textual, they are composed in order to be performed.

Schechner 131). Austin writes that the *performative* "...indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action" (qtd in Schechner 111). Lyotard's notion of the performative is rooted within a systems analysis of the mechanisms of oppression and power in relationship to knowledge production:

Technical devices [...] follow a principle, and it is the principle of optimal performance: maximizing output...and minimizing input.... Technology is therefore a game not pertaining to the true, the just, or the beautiful, etc., but to efficiency.... [...] Power is not only good performativity, but also effective verification and good verdicts. It legitimates science and the law on the basis of their efficiency, and legitimates this efficiency on the basis of science and law. It is self-legitimating, in the same way a system organized around performance maximization seems to be (Lyotard 44, 47).

These notions of *performativity* are indeed important, and certainly such theories inform my inquires. What I wish to make clear here, however, are distinctions between my understanding of *performance* and the usage of performance-based terms such as *performativity* as used in postmodern scholarship.

My research into Cherokee performance rhetorics entails an examination of historical performance practices in the nineteenth century, how Cherokee communities are involved with the recuperation and continuance of performances through the archive, and the ways in which oral history, interviews, and archival work can be utilized in community-centered performances.⁷ It is my hope that my work can not only help to

⁷ See Chapters Three and Four.

decolonize the field of rhetoric and composition, but also aid in the struggles of Cherokees and other Native peoples in a process of healing historical trauma, decolonizing our bodies/minds/homelands, and working for the continuance of our traditions, memories, and lifeways. Ellen Cushman writes, "Through activism, we've taken the first, tentative steps toward social change outside of the social confines of the university classroom. Finally, we not only fill a civic responsibility with activism, but also inform our teaching and theories with the perspectives of people outside the university" (22). My theories and methodologies approach Cherokee performance rhetorics as tools for decolonization and continuance.

How do SGA of and SSY (Duyuk'ta and Gadugi) Help Us Situate and Understand Cherokee Performance Rhetorics?

rhetorics. In order to understand **SGA6** and **SSY** as methodological frameworks, it is necessary to address some of the historical and cultural contexts from which these concepts arise. Cherokee ceremonial dance is performed to maintain **SGA6** and ensure the continuance of the world, and **SSY** is both the spirit of cooperation integral to stomp grounds as well as the traditional town structures that stomp grounds inherit. Employing **SGA6** and **SSY** as methodologies helps to recenter rhetorical analysis and scholarship onto the embodied practices and memories of Cherokee communities.

SGAP is essential to Cherokee values and community. In addition to "truth" and "justice," SGAP is used to translate the following English words: honest, outright, and right. It is also connected with the concept of being pious, duyugidv asdawadegi (Cherokee Nation "Dikaneisdi"). SGAP is often referred to as "The White Path," likely because the concept of SGAP is told through the use of wampum belts, one of which depicts a white path against a field of purple beads.

It is important to mention wampum belts here, because **SGA6**'s relationship to performance is through both stomp dance communities and wampum belts. Wampum records are themselves connected to performance. Wampum records, in Cherokee and other Native traditions, contain stories and memories that must be *told*. They require that their messages are transferred into community and cultural memory through recitations of their meanings. Angela Hass writes:

Wampum belts signify a surviving intellectual tradition that communicates living stories of a living culture. The treaties (and other messages woven into the wampum) are renewed by regularly revisiting and re-"reading" wampum vis-à-vis community memory and performance (92).

Traditional wampum recitations often involve following particular community protocols (such as an exchange of gifts), positioning the wampum record in a place that can be seen

⁸ **GV** (*Wa'do*) to Angela Haas and Malea Powell for their ongoing rhetorical work on wampum, and to Robin McBride Scott for teaching me to weave wampum.

by those present, explaining the particular visual mnemonics used in the record, and reciting the specific message of the record so that it can be remembered by those present.

In Oklahoma, the Keetoowah Society—a traditionalist organization—keep seven wampum belts that are used to teach the concept of **SGA6** (*duyuk'ta*) as a core religious teaching. The story of the belts is performed annually for Cherokee ceremonial communities in Oklahoma (Jones). While kept by the Keetoowah Society, the belts are also important to cultural memory and performance for Eastern Cherokees.

In her introduction to *Living Stories of the Cherokee*, Barbara R. Duncan includes a story that links wampum, performance, and **SGAP**. This story, told by Lloyd Sequoyah in 1978, relates the wampum belt's significance and meaning. Sequoyah, who believed this belt was lost during removal, tell us this story: "Years ago/....an old man came to the city of Old Echota./[...] Before he spoke he took a wampum belt/ And threw it up over two of the crossbeams" (Duncan 26-27). Placing the belt over the beams

⁹ While I speak again of wampum in Chapter Three, I have not included a detailed discussion of the relationships between performance rhetorics and wampum records here. I am extremely interested in the specific performance protocols around wampum records, particularly within Cherokee history. This is constitutes its own detailed study, which cannot be fully addressed here. Hass and I, however, plan to continue our scholarship around Cherokee wampum rhetorics and other Cherokee rhetorical traditions in the near future.

¹⁰ The relationship between these wampum belts, historiography, and performance will be discussed in Chapter Three.

This story was told by Lloyd Sequoyah in 1978 during the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' legal challenge to the Tennessee Valley Authority's (unfortunately successful) plan to build the Tellico Dam, which flooded the site of the ancient Cherokee capitol, Echota (Duncan 25).

is part of the performance that wampum requires: it situated for the audience to see the record while paying attention to the recitation. Sequoyah continues,

The white path of beads down the center of the belt represents Duyukta, the path of harmony, of being in balance.

The black beads on both sides of the white path represent all the things that you can do to stray from the path of being in harmony.

The checkerboard of squares at the other end of the belt represents all of the good things that will come to you at the end of life's journey

if you stay on the path of harmony (26).

Sequoyah relates that "as [the old man] finished speaking the wampum belt burst into flame./ The people were horrified,/ thinking this signified the end of them as a people./
But when the flames died down,/ they saw that the belt was still intact..."(26). In this story, the burning belt—regardless of how it occurred—is part of a performance intended to teach Cherokees how to survive and continue. Lloyd Sequoyah's story here is likewise a performance that transmits cultural memory, a specific performance demand of wampum. Even though the belt is not present, Sequoyah transmits cultural values and memory through remembering and telling the story woven into the belt.

SGA (duyuk'ta) is connected to Cherokee performance rhetorics through wampum traditions well as through the stomp dance communities that maintain these wampum records. My understanding of **SGA** as part of a Cherokee methodology,

then, connects this methodology to Cherokee performance traditions and cultural memory through the context of stomp dance traditions.

\$SY/Gadugi

Like **SGA6** (duyuk'ta), **\$SY** (gadugi) is a concept and practice that serves the continuation and survival of Cherokee communities. Raymond D. Fogelson and Paul Kutsche's 1959 essay "Cherokee Economic Cooperatives: The Gadugi" describes the **\$SY** as "a group of men who join together to form a company, with rules and officers, for continued economic and social reciprocity" (87). It is important to point out that, despite the patriarchal language used in this description, women and children are both clearly part of the **\$SY** structure. Wilma Dunaway reports, "Men and women alike formed the gadugi, a labor gang that tended the fields and garden lots of elderly or infirm members of the village" (qtd in Cherokee Nation "The Origin of Gadugi").

Fogelson and Kutsche trace the **\$SY** to town structures, red (war) and white (peace) organizations, as well as agricultural and hunting parties. Looking to the work of James Mooney and Cherokee language speakers in the Qualla Boundary, Fogelson and Kutsche posit that the word *gadugi* is related to *sgatugi* (township), *Gatutiyi* ("town

¹² Until the early nineteenth century, Cherokee politics were defined by these opposing—
but complimentary—political modes. Red (war) organizations led the people in times of war, while white

(peace) organizations lead the people in times of peace. Daniel Heath Justice has used these political modes

as a way of analyzing and interpreting Cherokee literature (Justice 2006).

building place") and suggest that all of these words have an etymological relationship with gadu (bread):

Gadu anigi, according to one informant, means "to eat bread." According to the same informant Gadugi means not only the cooperative work organization, but also, "Where all the group meets and eats bread together." [...] Our informant told us, "If a Cherokee asks, 'When are we going to have Gadugi?' he means, 'When are we going to have the bread eating and the working?'" (Fogelson and Kutsche note 2, 88).

\$SY, then, is entwined with concepts of community, continuance, and sustenance. It is labor that emerges out of community needs and is carried out to sustain survival. Robert K. Thomas' 1953 thesis, *The Origin and Development of the Redbird Smith Movement* points out that in the 1890's, "Although the families lived in individual homesteads, much of the work was done communally. The Cherokee of this time were a very compact and united people. Most of the large efforts in their economy were accomplished by community work" (81).

Since Chad Smith's second inauguration as the Principal Chief of the Cherokee

Nation of Oklahoma in 2003, he has conceived of \$SY (gadugi) as part of a larger spirit

of cooperation: "Gadugi means to come together and work.... Gadugi is our culture, our
heritage and our tradition. We must work together for the good of the Cherokee people"

(Cherokee Nation, "Chief Stresses Gadugi"). \$SY continues to be used as a central
metaphor and motif of Chief Smith's tenure at the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, where
he connects it to the concept of "building one fire" (Cherokee Nation "Chief Stresses

Gadugi"). Smith's use of \$SY as a not only an act, but also a Cherokee theory of

cooperation, provides a place from which to theorize **\$SY** as part of a methodology that centralizes collaboration that serves Cherokee communities. ¹³

Along with the concept of **SGA0** (duyuk'ta), my research seeks to utilize \$SYas one of its central methodologies. For example, in On the Wings of Wadaduga, which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four, research participants maintain legal authorship of their oral histories in future publications, shifting my role as a researcher to be more in line with the editor of an anthology, a coordinator in bringing previously unheard perspectives and experiences to the public. Such an act is way of ensuring justice, and a way of maintaining power balances between researcher and research participants. Ensuring that participants have control of their histories as authors also minimizes possibilities for coercion in order to extrapolate stories, and helps participants understand they have control over what aspects of their stories are brought to the public eye through print and/or performance. While breaking silence is an important goal for my work, it is not my intention to pressure participants to break silences. Silences often exist for very important reasons of safety, comfort, and/or survival. My analysis here is informed by the scholarship of Janice Gould who writes, "I would like to believe there are vast reserves of silences that can never be forced to speak, that remain sacred and safe

¹³ It cannot go without saying that under Chief Smith's governance that Cherokee Freedmen descendents have been purged as citizens of the CNO and Cherokee same-sex marriages have been fought against in tribal court. Smith's use of gadugi in his rhetoric, then, seems increasingly troubling, a totalizing discourse that attempts to construct a Cherokee nationalist agenda that erases differences and complexities. The use of \$SY (gadugi) as a theory and methodology that includes Freedmen descendents, Cherokee Two-Spirit people (see Chapter Four), and non-citizen Cherokees subverts this rhetoric.

from violation" (qtd. in Brant Writing 20). Approaching my work with Cherokee Two-Spirit people with SGA6° (duyuk'ta) as a central methodology helps ensure research that collaborates and contributes to work happening in Cherokee Two-Spirit communities.

As mentioned earlier, **\$SY** (gadugi) has a specific relationship with stomp dance communities. Jason Baird Jackson points out that stomp dance grounds are seen "as the present-day manifestations of town organizations," a basic unit of traditional civic organizations for Southeastern Native people (30). 14 Thomas discusses the fact that when the Keetoowah Society was formed in Indian Territory in 1859, that it was "a partial return to some type of town organization. The Keetoowah Society provided for a little captain for each community and for committee members chosen from the community" (63). ¹⁵ As the descendents of townships, stomp grounds are sometimes referred to as sgadugi. Charlotte Heth's 1975 dissertation on the Cherokee stomp dance music and communities says that the Stokes Smith Ceremonial ground is called ajiskvnvgesdi skadugi or ajiskv nagehesda skadugi (60), and in an analysis of a stomp dance song she translates the phrase "heye gedugi" as "this stomp dance" (124). **\$SY** (gadugi), like **SGA** 6 (duvuk'ta), has a critical relationship with performance as a means of survival and cultural continuance and locates performance within cooperative communities. **\$SY**

While Jackson is speaking specifically of Creek and Yuchi ceremonial grounds, the same is true for Cherokee ceremonial grounds.

¹⁵ "Little captain," usdi sgaigunst, is a specific title from the Red Organization that was reinscribed as a title by the Keetoowah Society (Thomas 62).

provides an understanding for a methodology that is collaborative, reciprocal, and surfaces out of community needs.

The Question of Liberatory Methodologies

Coming from the stance that liberation should be a goal of research brings one up against important considerations and dilemmas. Indeed, too often researchers have conducted "liberation" research without the understandings of power and privilege inherent in such a stance to disastrous results. The off-reservation boarding school system, considered a grand experiment, is one example of the danger of such a stance. Within the white supremacist and genocidal reality of the nineteenth century, the boarding schools were considered progressive and liberatory. The oft-quoted slogan of the schools, "Kill the Indian and Save the Man," was a huge departure from the outright slaughter of Native people. Further, bringing "civilization" to the "savages" was viewed as a way to liberate Native people from savagery while simultaneously liberating the US of its "Indian Problem."

The entire idea that "going into communities" as necessarily helpful to those communities smacks of a missionary history in which universities are implicated. ¹⁶ Smith reminds us that, "Indigenous peoples were classified alongside the flora and fauna; hierarchical typologies of humanity and systems of representation were fuelled by new discoveries; and cultural maps were charted and territories contested by the major

¹⁶ A particular **GV** (wa'do) to Colin Kennedy Donovan for the numerous conversations about the current colonial phenomenon of activists wanting to "go into communities" in order to bring political "enlightenment."

European powers" (59-60). Knowing that the academy and researchers have been part and parcel with colonial (and often genocidal) projects, research without critical analysis and self-reflection can have dire and damaging consequences within communities for generations to come.

Decolonial methodologies must approach research carefully and collaboratively, helping to minimize power differences between the researched and the researcher, and further, helping to ensure little to no risk for the people and communities being researched. Gesa E. Kirsch and Joy S. Ritchie assert:

Engaging in more collaborative approaches to research can help reduce the distance between researchers and participants. Participants can be brought in as co-researchers.... Not only should participants co-author the questions, they can also work with researchers to negotiate the interpretations of the data at both the descriptive and interpretive level (Kirsch and Ritchie 22).

Scholars within rhetoric and composition, as in other fields, have called for transparency and disclosure of positionality and researcher motivations. Royster, for instance, has called for "[a]n acknowledgment of passionate attachments..." (Kirsch et al 228, italics in original). She contends that such acknowledgment

reminds us that knowledge has sites and sources and that we are better informed about the nature of a given knowledge base when we take into account its sites, material contexts and points of origin. My point here is that knowledge is produced by someone and that its producers are not

formless and invisible. They are embodied and in effect have passionate attachments by means of their embodiment (Kirsch et al 228).

My own "passionate attachments" are rooted in my identity as a Cherokee Two-Spirit activist and performer that believes deeply in the necessity of social change, resistance, healing historical trauma, and cultural continuance. Too often the maneuvers of researchers from marginalized communities that try to decentralize the authority of the privileged in the academy, such as calls for self-reflexivity and examination of positionality, are misappropriated by the privileged to recentralize discourse around communities in power. "Rights do not flow from hardship," Lyotard states, "but from the fact that the alleviation of hardship improves the system's performance. [...] In this sense, the system seems to be a vanguard machine dragging humanity after it, dehumanizing it in order to rehumanize it at a different level of normative capacity" (63). In other words, and in the context of postmodern scholarship, calls for methodologies that could minimize potentials for exploitation and oppression are often taken up by the academy only to restabilize itself in the face of challenge and continue to perpetuate—and mask—oppression. As Cushman has pointed out:

[T]he incessant focus on the personal as political has led scholars to ask invasive and troublesome questions about a researcher's background and identity, resulting in flat, or worse, narcissistic disclosures about the researcher's positionality. [...] The fixion of the self...presents an easy story that scholars want to hear about the researcher. Yet it tells precious little about the social relations that actually positioned researchers and participants" (Brandt et al 44-45).

And, it is those social relations that the original demands of radical postmodernism were hoping to make transparent.

While I am particularly interested in engaging the ways Cherokee communities use performance tactically in struggles against colonization and for sovereignty and continuance, it is important to simultaneously acknowledge the ways performance has been used by some Cherokees as a strategy of reinforcing colonial power relationships. In her history of the Cherokee Female Women's Seminary, Devon A. Mihesuah reminds us, "...darker-skinned students participated in the seminary's productions in blackface.... Although blacks were given property and citizenship within the Cherokee Nation...separation of the Cherokee and black races remained in effect, as did the separation of whites and blacks in other parts of the country" (83). In this instance performance was used as a strategy to construct racial differences and dichotomies in the Cherokee Nation, even while "blacks" and "Cherokees" often shared—and share—both Cherokee and African ancestors in common, and Cherokee Freedmen and their descendents were—and are—often Cherokee-African mixedbloods. Utilizing tactics and strategies helps bring to the surface the ways complex power relationships between the governmental body of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the governmental body of the US, and Cherokee communities are manifested through performance. For example, and as discussed in Chapter Four, participants in On the Wings of Wadaduga are critical of

the *strategies* of Cherokee politics that attempt to erase the presence of Two-Spirit people in Cherokee histories.¹⁷

Including an analysis of tactics and strategies in my methodological approach also enables me to articulate power differences that may exist between myself and the Cherokee communities my inquiry is taking place with. It is important to acknowledge that while the work I am doing has a decolonial focus, and that perhaps such a move is a tactic within a colonial institution such as the university, as a researcher involved with a colonial institution, my research relationship is not necessarily one made up entirely of tactics. Researchers must acknowledge that as people who are a part of the academy that our work is, in part, is a strategy that participates in the demands of a colonial institution.

SGA (duyuk'ta) and SSY (gadugi) demand a balancing of power relationships through collaborative, cooperative scholarship that builds a reciprocal relationship between researcher and research participant.

Rhetorics and Historiography

Historiography offers methodologies that germinate important questions and challenges to Cherokee performance rhetorics and help to create the central ribs of my research. Chapter Three looks to Cherokee revitalization movements as a way of informing a decolonial historiographic practice, and Chapter Four looks to both the archive and the repertoire to revise historical memory. Hayden White reminds us that

While not addressed in Chapter Four, but evident in the interviews included in the appendices, participants in this project are also critical of the CNO's *strategy* of using enrollment as *the* defining factor of Cherokee identity.

historical studies had no discipline proper to call itself alone. [...] Historical writing, in fact, was regarded as a branch of the art of rhetoric" (64). I see historicarphy as a rhetorical tactic in decolonial struggles within and outside of rhetoric and composition.

Decolonial methodologies informed by **SGA6** and **SSY** underpin my theory and practice of historiography. Historiography, if it is to be meaningful for Native communities, cannot take place in the archive alone, and my work includes historiography in both the *archive* and the *repertoire*. Julie Cruikshank asserts that "local voices from North American indigenous communities provide more than grist for conventional disciplinary paradigms and have the power to contribute to our understanding of historiography" (Shoemaker 6).

Historiography also provides a means to engage in activist scholarship within traditional academic discourse. Thomas P. Miller and Melody Bowdon assert that archival research can be used "to achieve the civic potential that opens up as rhetoric expands its purview beyond the teaching of academic discourse" (Miller and Bowdon 594). Within rhetoric and composition, Jacqueline Jones Royster and Malea Powell both provide methodological models to engage archival research as part of rhetorical, civic engagement. Royster's formation of an *afrafeminist ideology* as a guiding methodology in her historiography offers a model to other social justice, decolonial based methodologies:

We are free to do our own intellectual business, and at the same time we are also obligated to have that work respond to sociopolitical imperatives that encumber the community itself. We...are accountable ultimately to

the merging of the interests of mind, body, and soul as part and parcel of the wholeness of the knowledge-making enterprise, which includes accounting for our own social obligations as members of the group. We speak and interpret with the community, not just for the community, or about the community (Kirsch et al 224).

While an *afrafeminist ideology* cannot be removed from the cultural and gendered contexts for which it was intended, Royster does offer a responsible methodology that urges collaboration, accountability, and attention to "mind, body, and soul" too often split from one another in academia.

Powell's work offers a similar model for collaborative and accountable methodologies within historiography. She argues, "'successful' texts are collaborative and are meant for the community, not for the self; and that through continued textual production the community (and the knowledge of its members) survives and gives thanks for its survival" ("River" 44). Historiography as textual production must aid in what Gerald Vizenor and Powell have termed *survivance*, survival + resistance. (Vizenor 1999; Powell 2002, 2004). My engagement with Cherokee performance rhetorics, then, has goals of transmitting community-based knowledge and history through performance and textual production and examining relationships between *the archive* and *the repertoire* that can be useful for Cherokee cultural engagement and movements.

Historiography is not without its methodological dilemmas. Taylor argues that the archive was created in an attempt to erase Indigenous cultural memories:

...[T]here is a politics...which in the Americas dates back to the

Conquest, of thinking of embodied knowledge as that which disappears

because it cannot be contained or recuperated through the archive.

Nonetheless, multiple forms of embodied acts are always present,
reconstituting themselves—transmitting communal memories, histories,
and values from one group/generation to the next (Taylor 193).

Looking to the repertoire in addition to the archive helps to indigenize and decolonize historiography. LeAnne How's concept of tribalography, for instance, helps articulate the importance of embodied, Indigenous knowledges to historiography. In "The Story of America: A Tribalography," Howe roots tribalography within Indigenous stories, and says it "comes from the Native propensity for bringing things together, for making consensus, and for symbiotically connecting one thing to another" (Shoemaker 42). Howe's concept of tribalography, while best known in the context of Nancy Shoemaker's collection Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies, also has an explicit connection to performance. In an introduction to her play Indian Radio Days (co-written with Roxy Gordon), Howe writes, "American Indian playwrights and writers tend to create stories from the experiences of our people. In turn, our work belongs to the ancestors, and the next seven generations of American Indians. I call this process 'Tribalography' " (D'Aponte 104). Performance, both its historical implications and its creation and practice, are central to an understanding of tribalography. Tribalography can be understood as a way to place performance and story into Indigenous methodological approaches to historiography that emerge from, and are given back to, communities.

SGA O DO SSY/ Duyuk'ta and Gadugi: Cherokee Responsibility Maps

George Noblit points out that "(p)eople of color have had to live postmodernity for some time, but only recently has it come to privileged white intellectuals" (deMarrais & Lapan 193). I would argue that this is not only because as communities of color oppression has made us acutely aware of the importance of understanding the role of oppression and power in society, but also because our traditional understandings of the world are often relative and in motion, unlike dominant European and EuroAmerican intellectual traditions which often understand the world as fixed, finite, and quantifiable.

One of the underlying assumptions of current academic discourse is that concepts of responsibility, social justice, and critical scholarship are "postmodern." And while within the histories of academia this is certainly true, within many Indigenous communities, the calls of postmodernism are rooted deep within our cultural experiences. This is not to say that I am rejecting the research and scholarly demands of postmodernism, quite the opposite is true. I am attempting to articulate SGAP (duyuk'ta) and \$SY (gadugi) as components of a radical, Cherokee-centered, bricolage that informs my engagement with narrative inquiry, historiography, performance, cultural rhetorics, and other research methods and methodologies.

Like the methodologies and methods of researchers mentioned earlier such as Powell, Smith, and Royster, incorporating **SSY** into my methodologies necessitates collaboration and a focus on the well-being of the community. **SSY** is a collaborative act, which not only means that each individual is part of a larger whole for which they are laboring, but also that each member of the community is responsible and accountable to

that community. As researchers engaged with work inside our communities, we are responsible not only for collaboration that disrupts power imbalances, our work must always be responsible to the community. We must approach our work with **SGAP** (duyuk'ta) in order to walk a sometimes tricky line between researcher and community member. As Beverly Moss discusses:

...tensions emanated from my dual roles as community participant and researcher. [...] I forgot is was okay to acknowledge my role as a community participant. In fact, it was necessary to acknowledge that role. Yet [...] from time to time, I was trapped by that ancient model of research that dictated that any reference to one's self in a study [...] be done in an impersonal, dispassionate, third person way—the researcher. That model tries to erase the personal, affective experiences of the researchers (Moss 16).

I would further argue that the model Moss speaks of also tries to erase the community as a whole by disconnecting relationships and individualizing the researcher. It is important for those of use who are "insiders" doing work that we *are* insiders, and that acknowledging and speaking about that insider status is part of articulating our locations. We are intricately and undeniably connected to our communities. **SSY** requires we understand ourselves as part of those communities, not as distant and objective. **SSY** requires our work be part of, and for, our communities.

SGA6° (duyuk'ta) is likewise a part of responsible research and action in the world. While one translation of SGA6° is "truth," I do not wish to confuse SGA6° with

the dominant European positivist idea of "Truth." SGAP is a way of being and behaving in the world that strives for honesty, and in this way resonates with postmodern concerns for transparency, self reflexivity, critical analysis, and positionality. Postmodern critiques of modernist, positivist movements have asserted that without acknowledging one's locations and worldviews, and by asserting that there is a "Truth" to be found, that researchers mask their own biases and hide multivalent realities and understanding of the world. Denzin and Lincoln note, "Many members of the critical theory, constructivist, poststructural, and postmodern schools of thought reject positivist and postpositivist criteria [...]. They see these [...] as irrelevant to their work and contend that such criteria reproduce only a certain kind of science [...] that silences too many voices" (Denzin and Lincoln 15). **SGA** or as a methodological component, then, seeks honesty in understanding that the world contains multiple stories and realities. SGAP insists on responsible behavior in the world and strives for goodness. In this way it reflects calls for critical work that has social justice and transformation as its goals.

Looking at the methodological work of other scholars, and by bringing Cherokee worldviews into the discussion, I am weaving a basket to carry Cherokee-centered research and scholarship. Naming of locations, understanding the complexities of identity and power, creating a theory and practice in which power is critiqued and power differences minimized, and engaging in activist-minded work is vital to my own values as a scholar. Incorporating SGAP and SSY into my methodological approach is part of decolonization: it is radical stance against dominant European treatments of Indigenous people in mainstream scholarship. SGAP and SSY, like postmodernism, insist on the

naming of positionality in order create responsible, ethical work and critically engage with systems of power.

demand respectful behavior with the communities, ancestors, and bodies that are involved with inquiry. Royster writes, "The challenge is to teach, to engage in research, to write, to speak with Others with the determination to operate not only with professional and personal integrity, but also with the specific knowledge that communities and their ancestors are watching" (33). My research goals in Cherokee communities, then, are not only to engage oral and archival performance histories, but also to build relationships that can aid in social transformation and decolonization. Historiography, archival and embodied, is a process that helps Native communities recuperate and continue cultural memory, tactics of resistance, and embodied knowledge.

SSY (Gadugi) and Decolonial Skillshare

A concept and practice that I'm calling decolonial skillshare— rooted in activism, popular education, and contemporary Native artistic practice— is embedded in a theory and methodology that employs **\$SY**. Because of the reciprocal nature of **\$SY**, decolonial skillshare requires that information gathered from research with Indigenous communities should then be shared with those communities. The purpose of a decolonial skillshare is not only to disseminate scholarly or theoretical work, but also to learn and share specific embodied practices.

With its focus on embodiment, a *decolonial skillshare* as a facet of a **\$SY** methodology disrupts the rift between *archive* and *repertoire*. It asserts that it is not only

also be revised through historiography. **\$SY** methodology is not only collaborative in its process, it is also employs collaborative means for the presentation of research findings. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, the design for an ensemble performance based on oral histories, interviews, and archival work focused on Cherokee Two-Spirit people is reflective of a **\$SY** methodology. It is important that any future performance is ensemble-based, not a solo performance, and that the performance itself is created through a collaborative process that is intentionally decolonial.

The concept of a *decolonial skillshare* comes from my experiences as a grassroots activist in primarily Queer and Trans communities of color on the West Coast. For the past ten years, my activist work has focused on popular education and arts that can work to heal historical trauma and build communities of responsibility and resistance. In order to provide a context for a *decolonial skillshare*, I want to briefly talk about the experiences that gave rise to the idea.

"Skillshares," while undoubtedly having countless origins, is a concept that I locate within punk and anarchist communities seeking to disrupt authoritative and capitalist powers though sharing specific "do-it-yourself" skills that aid in building cooperative, egalitarian economic and social structures. Building egalitarian social structures while disrupting hegemonic powers are values that I share with punk and anarchist communities. However, within the United States and Canada, punk and anarchist activism tends to be dominated by white people (often men) from middle class backgrounds who, rather than disrupt hegemonic powers, actually reinforce them through oppressive organizing. The skillshares that I'm familiar with often have a very narrow

analysis of oppression and power that tends to ignore colonization, racism, sexism, ableism, and queer/transphobia. The skills shared at such workshops tend to follow pat themes of interest to particular activist communities, such as bicycle repair. While I have no problem with the foci of these workshops—learning to repair a bicycle is certainly an important skill for anyone who rides them—I worry that skillshares tend to ignore the skills that Native people and other people of color see as necessary to the continuance of our communities. The concept of a *decolonial skillshare* deliberately subverts and critiques claims to radicalism that—in actuality—reinforce white colonial powers.

The idea for a "decolonial skillshare" comes directly from my own frustrating, disheartening experience with a white-dominated Trans community on Vancouver Island, BC. Such an experience is one familiar to many activists of color, one that reflects larger patterns of racism and colonialism throughout the US and Canada. In February 2004, a call for workshops and artists was distributed for an event on Vancouver Island called "The TransMission Festival." I responded to the call, and my ideas to conduct a workshop and read poetry at the event were initially received enthusiastically. When I proposed a workshop specifically for Indigenous Two-Spirit and Trans people, however, the organizers began back-peddling on their initial enthusiasm. I was told by one of the festival organizers, "...I'm wondering if we would have enough First Nations people attending for your workshop to take off—how many people would you like to see to make it a success in your mind" (Donovan 4)? I responded to this question with an open letter of concern and critique about the place of anti-racist organizing at the TransMission Festival. "What does it mean," I asked, "that an event for Trans folks is expecting there to be a small turn out of First Nations folks or other folks of color? What does it mean to

be creating a movement of non-Native / non-folk of color Trans movement" (Donovan 5)?

The response from the organizers of the conference was—to say the least—defensive, and the focus of the festival began to shift in response. An organizer responded to my concerns by writing,

One of the things that we might be shifting towards slightly is focusing the workshops on "hands on" or "do-it-yourself" kind of things, and especially around art and creativity, as that was one of the key things about the festival. Most people were pretty clear that we want a "festival" atmosphere rather than a "workshop" one (Donovan 7).

Two-Spirit Mi'kmaw artist and activist Louis Esmé Cruz likewise wrote an open letter to the organizers of the TransMission Festival about concerns over racism taking place in regards to my request to have an Indigenous-focused workshop. Cruz was told, "The main reason why I had raised concerns with Qwo-Li about hir workshop proposal was because the idea itself was excellent, but it didn't fit within the format of the festival (which is 'hands on', skills-based, and celebratory)" (Donovan 9).

Now deeply upset by the shifting terms of the festival's goals, I wrote yet another open letter to the organizers that included the seeds of the idea of a *decolonial skillshare*: "If your intent for workshops was a skills-share, as is now reflected on your website, it should have been made clear in your initial call. (And, on that note, I would argue that there are few skills more important to First Nations people and other people of color than to find ways to survive the continuing destruction of our peoples and the continuing occupations of our homelands)" (Donovan 12). Needless to say, the festival did not

include my workshop, or any other workshops or events with a focus on colonization or race. While the challenges to the TransMission Festival continued after these dialogues, what is most important for my purposes here is to contextualize my personal and community experiences with "skillshares" and outline one of the genealogies of a "decolonial skillshare."

The other genealogy for a "decolonial skillshare" comes from craft circles that take place in the Native communities. As in many other communities, craft circles in Native communities are places where people can come together and talk while working on specific art projects. My experiences in Native craft circles have been a place to learn specific Indigenous arts. Edge beading, weaving Cherokee doublewoven baskets, and weaving wampum are all skills that I learned in craft circle settings. And, through craft circles, I have been able to pass on these skills to other Native people.

The skillshare and the craft circle came together for me in a context of decolonial activism after being invited to submit a workshop proposal to Homo-a-Gogo, a biannual Queer Music and Arts festival. Informed by my PhD coursework, the rhetorical work on memory being done by Haas, Villanueva, and Powell, and my own poetic and activist work on memory and historical trauma, I designed a workshop entitled *Memory as*Resistance: A Decolonial Skillshare:

Colonization and genocide in the Americas and elsewhere depends on the destruction of cultural memory. Knowledges and lifeways of people of color/mixed-race people are routinely appropriated, erased, or interrupted by systems of colonization and white supremacy. How can

and do we relearn and/or continue our artistic (visual, material, performative, etc) traditions as Queer and Trans folks of color/mixed-race people? How do we restore, continue, and transform the embodied practices that create cultural memory? How can engagement with our traditional/community-specific arts aid in healing historical trauma? How can we work to pass cultural memory on to others? Using interactive theater, traditional, and contemporary arts, this workshop will examine our cultural memories and practices as Queer/Trans people of color/mixed-race/non-white people (Homo A Gogo).

A decolonial skillshare, as I will speak more to in Chapters Four and Five, creates spaces for Native people to both learn and teach specific embodied practices as a specific tactic in processes of decolonization. I see decolonial skillshare as a practice of \$\$\$\mathbf{y}\$ as a methodology, a process of collaborative labor that answers community needs. Further, decolonial skillshare has a focus on both activist and pedagogical concerns of Native people. Like other skillshares, it has a focus on teaching and disseminating specific embodied practices. And like Native craft circles, the decolonial skillshare focuses on embodied practices that continue cultural memories. Decolonial skillshares have intentional and specific goals to heal historical trauma, resist colonization, and continue our traditions.

Decolonial skillshares creates a precedent within **\$SY** not only to work collaboratively, but also to ensure that the information and knowledge-making generated though scholarship does not remain within the academy or only disseminated through academic discourse. It calls for knowledge to not only be built reciprocally, but to also

be shared with Indigenous communities. Decolonial skillshares have a specific focus on practice. The research that emerges from our work should help generate and continue embodied practices that aid in larger struggles for decolonization. As discussed in Chapter Four, this idea is the basis for using performance and rehearsal space as a means to share research, theory, and practice. Decolonial skillshare as a practice of \$SY helps to ensure that our research is accountable and useful to Indigenous communities both inside and outside of academia.

Doubleweaving SGA6° (Duyuk'ta) and SSY (Gadugi): The Construction of a Third Space

In The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History, Emma Pérez writes, "I believe that the time lag between the colonial and the postcolonial can be conceptualized as the decolonial imaginary" (6). She theorizes the decolonial as "a rupturing space, the alternative to that which is written history" and "that interstitial space where differential politics and social dilemmas are negotiated" (6). She continues to propose that the decolonial imaginary is a location in which a third space surfaces: "If the colonial imaginary hides something, then the decolonial imaginary teetering in a third space recognizes what is left out" (55). Pérez' analysis of a third space between the colonial and the postcolonial—the space Indigenous people in North America currently survive in—provides a theory that more fully develops my own methodologies. By looking at the use doubleweave in Cherokee rhetorical traditions, we can theorize a third space that materializes through the process of doubling SGA6 (duyuk'ta) and \$SY (gadugi).

Doublweave is a form of weaving in Cherokee (and other Native Southeastern) traditions that has its origins in river cane weaving. Sarah H. Hill writes: "One of the oldest and most difficult traditions in basketry is a technique called doubleweave. A doubleweave basket is actually two complete baskets, one woven inside the other, with a common rim" (Hill 44). Cherokee rhetorics, regardless of their genre, often centralize doubling in their construction. Doublewoven baskets and Cherokee performance—for instance—both utilize doubling to reflect Cherokee attention to **SGA6** (duyuk'ta).

Doublewoven baskets can have two independent designs as a result of the weave, one on the outside and one on the inside. Doubling is likewise employed as a rhetorical strategy outside of basketry, in which two seemingly disparate rhetorical approaches exist concurrently. Like many other Native traditions from the eastern part of what is being called the United States, call and response is a central feature of our performance discourse. Call and response can also be seen as a doubling strategy, in which the individual and the collective are woven together through song, dance, and ceremony.

I draw the concept of doubleweave as a feature of Cherokee rhetorics through Marilou Awiakta's book Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom, which is deliberately constructed after doublewoven baskets. She explains, "As I worked with the poems, essays and stories, I saw they shared a common base.... From there they wove around four themes, gradually assuming a double-sided pattern—one outer, one inner—distinct, yet interconnected in a whole" (Awiakta 34). Cherokee scholar and creative writer Daniel Heath Justice's utilizes doubleweave as an interpretive devise in his essay, "Beloved Woman Returns: The Doubleweaving of Homeland and Identity in the Poetry of Marilou Awiakta," focusing on the balance created between homeland and identity in her work.

He writes, "The Cherokee philosophy of balance...is the basic foundation upon which Awiakta crafts her work. Intimately connect with the concept of balance is that of respect—one cannot exist without the other" (Rader and Gould 74).

Doubleweave can also be seen as a rhetorical feature of Justice's scholarship (2006) as well as his fantasy fiction series, *The Way of Thorn and Thunder*. As mentioned earlier, Justice looks to red and white town structures to build a Cherokee methodology that interprets literature. Daniel calls these a red "Chickamauga consciousness" and a white "Beloved Path" reading of Cherokee literature (30). This approach *doubleweaves* these modes: "Neither exists independently; there is a necessary tension that brings the war and peace perspectives together into constant movement.... This interdependence and relationship provides an interpretive guidepost to much of the Cherokee literary tradition" (30). Similarly, *The Way of Thorn and Thunder* uses the structure of fantasy fiction as a way to critique colonialism, racism, queer/transphobia, and misogyny. On the outside of the series is the fantasy genre apparatus, while on the inside is woven a story that deals with historical and contemporary Indigenous politics (2005, 2006, 2007).

Cherokees have long been known as people who are adaptable to interferences on our lifeways by incorporating them as part of our culture. Jack F. and Anna G. Kilpatrick note our "amazing ability...to maintain an equilibrium between two opposing worlds of thought. [...] Behind the television set in the cabin of his fellow tribesman lurk the Little People, and the Bible and Thunder share Cherokee reverence" (*Friends* xv). Not only has this occurred out of a necessity to maintain our culture during the colonial period (which has yet to end), but also because the idea of doubling is deeply rooted in Cherokee rhetorical traditions.

Using basket weaving as a metaphor enables me to articulate a methodological approach that draws on and intersects numerous dissent lines in order to weave together SGA6° and \$8°. Like doublewoven baskets, in which a third space materializes between the basket walls, the weaving together of SGA6° and \$8°. within a context of decolonization and the decolonial imaginary, creates a third space. The space created through this doubleweaving contains the stories that colonial culture has ignored or that have been intentionally and tactically hidden by Indigenous people as an act of survival. In the case of my research, it is in this third space of the decolonial imaginary that Two-Spirit histories, stories, and performances surface. Pérez writes, "If the colonial imaginary hides something, then the decolonial imaginary teetering in a third space recognizes what is left out" (55).

Pérez' historiographic work locates the lives of Chicanas within a third space, which she articulates through the concept of third space feminism. Similarly, my historiographic work on nineteenth century Cherokee theater (Chapter Three) locates itself in a third space in which histories, practices, and lives marginalized by colonial cultures are listened to. The third space created in the doubleweaving of SGAP and *SY is a location in which those practices and stories that colonialism has actively sought to suppress, discredit, and destroy are able to come to the center of discourse. Through this doubleweaving of methodological approaches, a theory and practice surfaces that can carry the complexities of decolonial engagement within community contexts. Doubleweaving SGAP and SSY privileges the voices and stories that

colonial projects have attempted to destroy but, hidden in a *third space* forgotten about by colonial cultures, survive.

Understanding **SGA6** and **SSY** as Cherokee-centered methodologies helps us create both theories and practices that are uniquely suited for decolonial activism and scholarship within Native—and in this case specifically Cherokee—contexts. **SGA6** and **SSY**, when conceptualized as intertwined walls of a doublewoven basket, enable us to see the numerous splints—including Native politics, postmodern scholarship, and grassroots activism— from which these methodologies are woven. *Doubleweaving* helps us conceive of a *third space* that emerges through the weaving together of **SGA6** and **SSY** in which forgotten and/or intentionally hidden stories can be told.

Cherokee performance rhetorics because of these concepts' relationship to Cherokee performance through stomp dance communities. They provide a means to indigenize our scholarship and engage in decolonial work that is responsible to dismantling power imbalances and engaging in cooperative scholarly work. Further, they enable scholarship that contributes to decolonial practices through decolonial skillshares. By doubleweaving SGAP and SSY within a context of the decolonial imaginary, we can theorize a third space from which marginalized stories can emerge. These methodologies are integral to responsible, reciprocal, and balanced scholarship within Cherokee communities that engages radical, decolonial activism.

CHAPTER TWO

SHELL SHAKERS: CHEROKEE PERFORMANCE RHETORICS,

DECOLONIZATION, AND HEALING HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, call and response is a central rhetorical tactic in Cherokee traditions, woven into our sense of community and history. Like our doublewoven baskets, call and response is a representation of SGAP (duyuk'ta).

Traditional Cherokee cosmology conceives the world as an island floating on water, attached to a sky vault by woven cords at the four cardinal directions. When the cords break, the world will sink back into the water. Maintaining SGAP (duyuk'ta) is necessary in order to for the world to stay afloat.

Traditional practices help maintain **SGAO** (duyuk'ta). Duncan writes that "(t)he Cherokee believe that stories, along with ceremonies, arts and crafts, and other traditions, help the individual and the culture to 'stay in balance.' The Cherokee attribute their survival as a people...to their closeness to the land and their adherence to Duyukta" (25). Performances—whether through dance, song, storytelling, theater or other genres—are central practices to maintain **SGAO** (duyuk'ta). Colonial projects have often sought to suppress and destroy Cherokees through attacking our performance traditions, throwing Cherokee communities out of balance. The practice of our performance traditions, then,

is not only a means to maintain \mathbf{SGAP} (duyuk'ta), but also and act of resistance to colonization that heals and restores \mathbf{SGAP} (duyuk'ta).

Performance asserts the survival of Cherokee communities and ensures our continuance. It is a tool for healing from intergenerational grief and trauma brought about by colonization. This chapter will articulate a theory and history of Cherokee performance rhetorics through examining performance as central to Cherokee rhetorics, movements of Indigenous resistance, and the healing of historical trauma. In order to have a deeper understanding of Cherokee performance and its relationship with SGAP, I would like to contextualize it within the context of the Cherokee story of Ocoo

Call And Response: Cherokee Performance Rhetorics

C C O P O N *Vy* '*unuw*'/Stoneclad: The Origins of Cherokee Performance

^{8 -}

¹⁸ O O O O O (Nvy'unuw') is also often translated as "Stone Coat" and "the Stone Man" and rendered in several ways in English alphabetics. My use of "Stoneclad" is based on the Kilpatricks' translation in Friends of Thunder: Folktales of the Oklahoma Cherokees (59).

In the version of this story told by Eastern Cherokee Will West Long, ODO 10 (Nvy'unuw') was a shapeshifter who could transform himself into a human in order to live among people and eat their livers. OOO 10 (Nvy'unuw') transformed himself into the likeness of an orphaned boy, and was then taken in by a man and his family. Soon afterwards, the man's children were found dead, their livers removed. After realizing that the orphaned boy was responsible for the murders, the man consulted elders and the tribal council and a plan was devised to kill the monster by bringing seven women menstruating during the full moon to wait along a path for OOO10. The power of the seven women caused OOO10 to become sick, immobilized, and he began dying.

When they lighted the fire Stone Coat began talking to them, telling them that while he was burning...there would issue forth a series of songs.

These, he told them, were his offering to the people to aid them in all branches of life. As the songs came forth, he commanded, they were to learn them and teach them to their children, to be used forever by the Cherokee. [...] He said, "You kill me, so I leave disease in the world behind me. But my songs will cure that." He also told them that besides leaving with them the magic songs for dances in fulfillment of their social life, and song formulas, he would leave them a quantity of powerful medicines in the form of pieces of stone forming his stone coat... (Speck & Broom 15).

This story not only reflects the origin of Cherokee songs and formulas, it illustrates **SGAO** (duyuk'ta) as a deeply Cherokee value woven into the cosmology of Cherokee performance. **COOOAO** (Nvy'unuw') is a monster, murderer, and cannibal who is a danger to Cherokee people. At the same time, **COOOAO** is also a powerful spirit who gifts Cherokees with songs to help them in all aspects of their lives. While **COOOAO** punishes Cherokees with disease, he also leaves his songs and medicines as a means of curing. This story is both a call and a command that the songs be learned, performed, and passed on to all Cherokees. Through this story, we can begin to see the ways in which Cherokee performance rhetorics are practices that maintain **SGAO** (duyuk'ta) in Cherokee communities and the world.

\$16 OOW OY O1/Gatiyo Unalskisdi/Stomp Ground: "Traditional" Cherokee Performances

Pre-invasion Cherokee communities and governments were structured as semiautonomous townships linked together through a shared clan system, language, history,
culture, and cosmology. Because townships were independent entities often separated by
great distances, Cherokee community *practices* have never been unified. The Cherokee
Nation of Oklahoma's website is careful to note when including "traditional"
information that "Cultural information may vary from clan to clan, location to location,
family to family, and from differing opinions and experiences. Information provided
here is not 'etched in stone'" ("Literature").

Cherokees don't always agree on what is "traditional" and what is not. Further, while some activities such as the stomp dances in Oklahoma are considered core to "traditional" culture, they are also fairly recent manifestations of Cherokee performance traditions. Cherokee Baptist churches are, for many Cherokees in Oklahoma, a core of "traditional" culture. The Eastern Band's performance traditions, while sharing core rhetorical features with those of Oklahoma Cherokees, are in many ways distinct from those *practiced* in Oklahoma. And, this is to say nothing of the numerous Cherokee people and communities in diaspora outside of our traditional homelands and our post-removal landbases west of the Mississippi.

The designation of particular performances as "traditional," then, is problematic. However, the term "traditional" is also commonly used within Cherokee and other Native communities to designate particular *practices* defined by local communities as being core to the maintenance of specific cultural identities, *practices*, memories, and futures. While it is a term that is far from static, certainly complex and often contradictory, my usage is meant to follow community precedents by speaking of "traditional" performances and *practices* as those that are designated by Cherokee communities as such.

As discussed earlier, responsorial community performance—call and response—is a central manifestation of **SGA6**. This rhetorical feature and core value is evident through performance at the **SJA OOW** OYOJ (gatiyo unalskisdi, stomp grounds), the central site of Cherokee non-Christian religion and performance in Oklahoma. ¹⁹ I will

¹⁹ Because of an often unbalanced and problematic relationship academic research and writing has with Native communities, particularly their religious ceremonies, I want to be clear that my analysis here is

focus on the \$Jh OOW DY DI (gatiyo unalskisdi) here in order to articulate the rhetorical features and functions of traditional Cherokee performance.

Charlotte Heth's work on Cherokee stomp dance music helps us identify numerous instances of call and response in Cherokee performance contexts. Call and response is not only a central rhetorical feature of Cherokee song and dance, it is a central feature of Cherokee community practice, a reflection of SGAO (duyuk'ta).

Call and response is seen not only through responsorial singing, but also through the calls of stomp dance leaders for community participation in both the dance and in Cherokee communities. Heth reports that as the dance is getting ready to begin "the chief firekeeper gives a call for the people to assemble" and after they have gathered, the chief delivers a speech that is a call for participation in Cherokee communities:²⁰

The chief's speech is a kind of sermon admonishing the people to follow the old Ketoowah ways. He urges them to follow God's way, to sing and dance all night, raising the song up to heaven with the smoke. He prays to God to teach them and the children the way to sing. He cautions people to

based on research already completed and/or published, and I believe respectfully so, concerning stomp ground communities and other Cherokee performances. Central to my discussion here are Thomas' *The Origin and Development of the Redbird Smith Movement* Heth's *The Stomp Dance Music of the Oklahoma Cherokee*. Certainly much has changed in stomp dance communities since their fieldwork, though the core rhetorics of Cherokee performances have remained constant. I want to make clear, however, that my discussion is based in previous research rather than my personal experiences or relationships with stomp dance communities.

²⁰ Firekeepers are responsible for maintaining the sacred fire, which burns at the center of the stomp ground.

be good and peaceful, and to cause no trouble in that ground. He asks them to be honest and to join in the ceremony (77).²¹

After taking up a collection and attending to business, "the chief turns the meeting over to the firekeepers who call for the dancing and singing to begin" (77-78). The firekeepers give the following calls for participation for a lead singer and for shell shakers: "hvlalv sagwvnahvye kanogi alskidv alegwui/Come here number one singer dance hurry" and "daksi daksi daksi alegwui alegwui daksi/turtles turtles turtles hurry hurry turtles" (Heth 79).

In Cherokee ceremonial traditions, singing is usually considered the men's role and shell shaking—dancing with terrapin shells filled with pebbles strapped to one's legs—is considered the women's role. ²² SGA (duyuk'ta) is maintained in the performance through the balancing of gender reflected in both men's singing and women's shell shaking. It is also manifested through the physical placement of men's and women's bodies in the dance around the sacred fire: "In a stomp dance, the first seven men enter from the west side of the fire.... They begin walking around the fire

In this context, Keetoowah (also Ketoowah and Kituwah) is the name used in Oklahoma to designate the traditional Cherokee religion and \$76 OOW&Y&I (gatiyo unalskisdi) communities. The Keetoowah Society as a spiritual organization is distinct entity from the federally recognized United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians. Keetoowah comes from the Cherokee word YSG (Giduwa), the name of the Cherokees' ancient mother mound. Dh YSGY (Ani Giduwagi, "People of Giduwa") is our oldest name for ourselves.

As will be discussed in Chapter Four, these roles are not necessarily based on biological gender. Brian Joseph Gilley, for instance, mentions the fact that some male-embodied Two-Spirit Cherokees are shaking shells as a reflection of their place within ceremonial communities and traditions (141-143).

counterclockwise. The shell shakers and other women take their places between the men, and the singing begins" (Heth 89). Call and response can again be seen here through the musical relationship between both the lead singer, who is answered in chorus by the men, and also through the musical relationship between the singers and the shell shakers.

Women's shell shaking is necessary in order for stomp dancing to take place. The songs cannot be sung in the stomp dance without the shaking of the shells.

SGA6° (duyuk'ta) is performed through call and response and through numerous reciprocal relationships needed to maintain community. Jason Baird Jackson's scholarship on Yuchi stomp grounds and other ceremonial communities are particularly useful in analyzing call and response as a central rhetorical tenet of Cherokee performance. Jackson's work examines the importance of reciprocity in stomp dance communities:

Within the stomp dance, expressions of reciprocity operate at several levels at once. In an intimate way, each dance is a test of the social bonds that hold groups and individuals together. When a man is called out to lead a dance, he relies on his kinfolk and fellow ground members to support his effort. [...] Without the support of his peers, a leader is weakened and his performance is lessened. When his townspeople enthusiastically file behind him, they indicate that he is a man of esteem.... This indicates to other participants that the ground is a unified whole (168-169).

Jackson also asserts that stomp dance communities depend on what he calls "performance circuits" in which "each community interacts with a smaller subset of other groups" (143)

and "bind themselves and their supporters more tightly in the web of reciprocal support" (148). The performance circuits are networks of stomp dance participants who aid various grounds in singing and shell shaking. These performance circuits are "a collective transaction. For most ceremonial grounds to build or sustain their reputations and the vitality of their activities, they must actively seek to support the dancers of other groups. This support is reciprocated as hosts who have benefited from the participation of a regular guest in turn become visitors" (169). The structure of **\$16 OOW DY DJ** (gatiyo unalskisdi), then, is one built on interrelationships and **SSY** (gadugi) in which call and response is not only a feature of traditional performance, but also means to participate in civic and ceremonial life. Dancers and singers actively call for assistance from other stomp communities and are expected to respond to calls for assistance from other grounds. Traditional Cherokee performances utilize call and response as an active engagement with and reflection of **SGAP** (duyuk'ta). Call and response is both a central rhetorical feature of Cherokee performance and a philosophical base of Cherokee community.

Cherokee Performance as the Creation of Space

Cherokee traditions and worldviews are linked to performance as a means of building relationships, continuing culture, and engaging with spirituality. Performance is epistemologically bound to Cherokee understandings of the universe and human relationships with the more-than-human world. De Certeau makes a sharp distinction between *space* and *place*. "A place," he writes, "... is the order... in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. [...] A place is... an

instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability" (117). A space, on the other hand, "is composed of intersections of mobile elements. [...] In short, space is a practiced place" (Practice 117). Following de Certeau's frameworks, Cherokee understandings of traditional land bases are always "spaced." Cherokee conceptions of traditional geographies, and Cherokee cosmology as a whole, are dependent on understanding places as practiced. Cherokee epistemologies, then, do not conceive of place, but rather always see the world as a space.

Cherokee creation stories see creation as *practiced*. The world is one which natural and supernatural beings have created through embodied action. This is markedly different from dominant Anglo-Western creation stories told in The Bible. Creation in Genesis begins simply with God's desire and then command: "Let there be light." While speaking is certainly an act, God's series of creationist events in Genesis are not conceived by dominant European Christianity as practice. Providence has an amorphous relationship with both place and space. The central place created—the Garden of Eden is one in which humans are forbidden to transform into a space. Eve makes two revolutionary acts which destabilize the place created by God: 1.) Having a relationship with the more-than-human world by befriending a snake 2.) Eating the forbidden fruit. These acts cause humanity's fall from Grace. The Garden of Eden becomes a concept with no geographic specificity. In this story, the act of attempting to turn Eden into a space means that humans are forever barred from Eden as a place, and the "Western" imagination's relationship with the more-than-human world and space becomes steeped in shame.

Cherokee stories, on the other hand, are firmly rooted in touchable, knowable, spaces. "Spacing" place is part of the act of Creation, as opposed to an act contrary to the will of the Divine. The creation of place is impossible without creating space simultaneously. For instance, the Cherokee story of the creation of the Smokey Mountains depends on space. In this story, the Smokies are created through a practice: the flapping of Buzzard's wings against the muddy ground of a newly created world. The Smokies are a geography that the tellers of traditional stories, and all Cherokees, have an ancient relationship with. They are not an Eden where the act of creating space is banned. Unlike Eden, the Smokies can be seen, lived in, and experienced.

Cherokee stories are always rooted within land. They are stories about specific geographies. The places in Cherokee stories exist are significant because of the creation of space. Cherokee cosmology sees the earth as existing in a delicate balance that humans live in right relationship with. Ceremonial performances such as the stomp dance exist to maintain this balance, to affirm a practice with space. Cherokee cosmology understands humans as in relationship with the more-than-human world, always in an effort to maintain SGAP (duyuk'ta). Places are always spaces. In Cherokee language places are often understood only in context of their practice. For example, a pool in the Ocanaluftee River in North Carolina is called Gihili-dinehuh-i, (Place of the Dogs) because "Two 'red dogs,' which normally live underwater, were once seen playing on the bank here" (Rossman 20). In another example, the literal translation of "reservation" is "told to stay there." These instances are understandings of space.

De Certeau's articulations of space and place help bring dominant discourse to epistemological understanding that Cherokees, and other Indigenous people, have long

understood. He breaks the Biblically mandated silence around articulating the existence of space, and pushes scholars towards a more Indigenist analysis of the world.

Much of Cherokee Christianity has indigenized dominant European Christianity through *practices* that simultaneously emphasize the performative aspects of Creation and through the use of Christianity to continue specific embodied *practices* and knowledges. Cherokee rhetorics understand that words have the power to shift the world. Jack F. and Anna G Kilpatrick write that "most Cherokee magical rituals consist of something that one says (or merely thinks) or sings, called the *i:gawé:sdi* ('to say, one'), and some recommended physical procedures, called the *i:gv:n(e)dhi* ('to do, one')..." (Walk 4-5).

Growing up, my mother occasionally quoted Bible verses. One of the most often quoted, John 1:1, seems particularly Cherokee: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Margaret Bender's Signs of Cherokee Culture: Sequoyah's Syllabary in Eastern Cherokee Life discusses, in part, the use of Cherokee language bibles and hymnals. She asserts:

Reading...the New Testament was for most readers a performative demonstration of faith. [...] ...Christians frequently read John 1...over and over again in their effort to learn the syllabary. The 'word,' as reflected in the New Testament, and God have the same timeless beginning and immutability" (Bender 100).

Bender neglects to consider that John 1 also may be used as a learning tool because the verse makes sense within Cherokee worldviews. John 1's reference to *Genesis* and the beginning of the world with a performative act, God's utterance of "Let there be light,"

(Genesis 1:3), can be *doublewoven* into Cherokee traditions that centralize the power of performance and utterance to both shift reality or maintain **SGAP** (*duyuk'ta*). Howard Meridith and Virginia Milam Sobral write that

[t]he Cherokee language is a system of relationships. It establishes categories and makes distinctions through networks of action-oriented metaphors. The language system reproduces cultural relations. Culture, as the pattern where meaning is generated and experienced, becomes a determining, productive field through which social and natural realities are experienced and interpreted (30).

Consistent with de Certeau's understanding of space as "intersections of mobile elements," the Cherokee language's "networks of action-oriented metaphors" are a part of a constant making of *space* through utterance. Cherokee understandings of the world are linked intimately with embodiment, *practice*, *space*, and performance.

Performance Rhetorics and Indigenous Traditions

Just as dominant European discourses traditionally argue for the existence of a rhetoric/poetic binary, they also insist on a literate/oral binary, and have reduced writing to an alphabetic phenomenon. Indigenous rhetorical traditions in "the Americas" include numerous systems of recording and transmitting information, even if colonial discourses since the first invasions have tried to destroy, deny, or minimize them.

Wampum belts, Lakota winter counts, Peruvian quipus, birchbark scrolls, Mexica amoxtli, and Mi'kmaw pictographic writing are only a handful of the systems traditionally used to record information. While European discourses also include and are rooted in

non-alphabetic writing, those rhetorics were likewise disregarded and minimized during European Christian colonization. As Walter D. Mignolo has demonstrated, in this process "the Book" was centralized and embodied knowledge denied:

...[W]hen the word was detached from its oral source (the body), it became attached to the invisible body and the silent voice of God, which cannot be heard but can be read in the Holy Book. [...] Christianity is not, of course, the only religion having a holy book or Scriptures.... But it shares with those others the disequilibrium of power between religions possessing the Book and those without it. At stake here is the role played by the book as a text during the process of colonization carried on by literate societies (82).

Colonial Christianity divorced the body from rhetorics, compositions, and cultures and attempted to squelch Indigenous rhetorical productions.

Performance has historically been a center of Indigenous rhetorics throughout the Americas. Instead of seeing embodied rhetorics at the opposite end of the spectrum from written and/or composed rhetorics, Indigenous rhetorical traditions pay attention to the relationship between these rhetorical expression: "Since before the Conquest...writing and embodied performance have often worked together to layer the historical memories that constitute community. [...] The telling is as important as the writing, the doing as central as the recording, the memory passed down through bodies and mnemonic practices" (Taylor 35).

Historical Trauma: Beyond the Hiawatha Asylum

Because of performance's centrality to Native rhetorics, colonization's attempts to supplant Native cultures with those of Europe entailed a fierce suppression of Indigenous performance practices. Indigenous performances were often seen as threatening to European power and white supremacy. European powers have gone to extreme levels in order to extinguish and contain Native performative resistance—such as the Ghost Dance on the plains—causing ongoing historical trauma in Native communities.

Colonization is a kinesthetic reality: it is an act done by bodies and felt by other bodies. Violence is not just an intellectual knowledge, bur rather one that is known because of damage done to our skin, flesh, muscles, bones, and spirits. Both our homelands and our bodies are violated through colonization. If we take the boarding and residential school systems as just one example of numerous colonial acts, colonialism as a kinesthetic act becomes very clear. It is in our bodies, and as bodies, that we understand what it means to be Native people enacting survival and continuance through the present colonial period. If colonization is a kinesthetic wounding, decolonization is a kinesthetic healing. We must address the healing of historical trauma in our communities in order to help heal ourselves and homelands. Because our performance traditions have often been a target of colonial violence, they are also central to healing historical trauma and mending the wounds left by invasion.

Historical trauma can be defined as trauma so widespread as to impact the collective memory and identity of a community. It results from violence that has been carried out to control, wound, marginalize, or destroy an entire people. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart explains, "The concepts of a historical trauma response and historical

unresolved grief are intended to be inclusive of massive, genocidal trauma across generations upon which life span trauma is superimposed" (3). Historical trauma is not ethereal, it impacts human relationships and family structures and has real, immediate impacts on the descendents of survivors. Brave Heart asserts that "[t]rauma response features include elevated mortality rates and health problems emanating from heart disease, hypertension, alcohol abuse, depression, and suicidal behavior" (2). ²³

Countless acts of violence against Native people can be seen throughout colonization's history as the roots of historical trauma. One example of such a traumatic event is the establishment of the Hiawatha Insane Asylum for Indians—also known as the Indian Insane Asylum—in Canton, South Dakota in 1899, only nine years after and four hundred miles away from the Wounded Knee Massacre. If the massacre at Wounded Knee was meant to bring the Ghost Dance and Indian performative resistance to an immediate halt through slaughter, the establishment of the Hiawatha Asylum was meant to contain Indian performative resistance by pathologizing it.

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Having said this, I want to acknowledge that not all Native communities have had to survive acts of historical trauma or see addressing such issues of particular importance. Genocide, forced removal, boarding schools, and land theft are concerns for many Indigenous communities in North America, but I want to be cautious not to project my own tribal experience, nor make overgeneralizations about Native experiences under colonialism. However, I also think that even communities that have not been directly impacted by historical trauma feel its waves, and those waves can have impacts. Those waves, after all, are racism, sexism, homophobia, authenticity debates, and other forms of oppression that are often used to divide Native communities. Institutions such as slavery impact all Americans, even if their ancestors had no involvement in that peculiar institution either as slaves or slaveholders, because slavery continues to dictate race relations in this country.

The Hiawatha Asylum was established by the US Congress in 1899, admitting its first "patient" in 1903. The authors of a 1999 article in the American Journal of Psychology nearly mythologize the asylum and its creators:

The promoters of this asylum were genuinely concerned with alleviating suffering among Native Americans by providing better care than jails, "hospitals," or workhouses for the mentally ill, who were often homeless and poorly treated by the community. They argued that a separate institution for Native Americans was needed because they had unique mental health "afflictions." In less than three decades after the hospital opened, the reformers were attacked for poor mental health care at the asylum (Bhatara et al 767).

Recent research and critiques of the asylum by Native activists and survivors of psychiatric abuse paint a more realistic—and much grimmer—portrait of the motivations behind the establishment of the Hiawatha Asylum. Pemina Yellow Bird argues that the institution was created "as a pork-barrel project in the minds of two South Dakota congressmen who wanted to attract settlers, create jobs and generally build the economy of their newly minted state..." (4). Yellow Bird claims that the asylum had very little to do with "alleviating suffering among Native Americans." "Many of the inmates at Canton," she insists, "were there for reasons that had nothing to do with mental illness. Some where there because of a physical ailment.... Most...were young—thirty years and younger—with many children present at any given time" (5). Instead, "patients" were often incarcerated in Hiawatha for resisting white authority or policy:

These...individuals found themselves incarcerated at Canton for arguing with a reservation agent, a schoolteacher or a spouse. Many were there because they refused to give up their ceremonial or spiritual ways of life. Still others were there because they refused to allow their children to be kidnapped and carted away to government boarding schools, or for refusing to be stripped of some other basic human right. [...]

Incarceration at Canton meant no medical care of any kind and what's more, incarceration there was terminal: institutional policy declared these Native people to be "defectives," and as such, procreation must be prohibited and they must be sterilized before they could be discharged. Since the superintendent did not know how to conduct sexual sterilization procedures, inmates simply remained until they died. Of the average ten discharges per year at Canton, nine were due to death (5).

The Hiawatha Asylum was finally closed in 1933 after investigations exposed gross mismanagement of the facility and horrific abuse of patients (Yellow Bird 6-7). After the closure, the asylum was torn down and the grounds later turned into the Hiawatha Golf Course by the city of Canton.

On the back of a 1918 postcard of the Indian Insane Asylum is this inscription:

"This is the only institution of the kind in the world. Do hope they won't break jail while we are here. There would be some lively doings I expect. I hope you are having a good time" (Disability History Museum). This inscription is chilling both because of its flippant humor and its appearance on the back of a tourist postcard. The casual ease of colonial violence is reminiscent of photographs of other atrocities such as the lynchings

of African Americans and massacres like Wounded Knee. I want us to remember the Hiawatha Asylum as one of many examples of the ways in which colonial violence pathologizes Native peoples and bodies in order to contain resistance and perpetuate genocide and historical trauma. Because of the traumatic histories of pathologization and the use of institutions such as Hiawatha to contain Indian performative resistance, I believe that the majority of healing must take place outside of medical institutions. Performance offers one space in which the healing of historical trauma can occur.

Performative work is intensely kinesthetic. In performance, the body becomes the central rhetorical tool. I agree with Augusto Boal when he writes, "Theatre is a form of knowledge" (Boal 20). I would go on to say that it is also a way of knowing. If we can find ways to kinesthetically explore historical trauma, power, and oppression, we can more deeply understand the nature of our oppressions and the impact of colonization on our lives and communities. Performances, both "traditional" and contemporary, are powerful *practices* that resist racism and genocide, continue our communities, bear witness to our histories, heal historical trauma, and imagine decolonial possibilities.

Indigenous Performance Rhetorics and Resistance

Performance as a means of resistance has precedents within several Native movements in this country. An analysis of performance enables us to examine rhetorical maneuvers of Native communities across perceived barriers and differences. The "racial reform movements" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries share performance as a common *tactic* for intervention in genocidal policies of the US government. During the same time period, Cherokee resistance movements against US

annexation of Indian Territory and the dissolution of tribal governments employed traditional performance as a *tactic* of resistance and continuance. While these two movements have stark differences in many of their goals, both employed performance as a central means to *practice space*. Both movements, while concerned with the specific tribal concerns of their respective communities, spring from intertribal relationships and *alliance as survivance*.²⁴

Powell's work examines the importance of alliance not only in the interpretation of rhetorical/historical productions, but also as a form of activism and scholarly behavior. Her work is grounded in both Miami histories of resistance (specifically the Miami Confederacy), and "diplomatic discourses that were rooted in indigenous insistence on shared relations and shared responsibilities between partners" ("River" 42). It also evidences a rooting in historical and contemporary coalition-based work of grassroots movements for social justice, including Black/Native intellectual and political alliances of the nineteenth century and contemporary women of color feminisms. Alliance is central to Indigenous survival and continuance in the Americas, both historically and contemporarily: "Our strength was, and is, in alliance and in the ability to adapt to rapidly changing worlds," Powell writes ("River" 39).

The work of Native literary scholars such as Robert Allen Warrior and Craig S.

Womack (among others) have called for an analysis of Indigenous writing that is
embedded in tribally/nationally specific histories and contexts that assert sovereignty and

Intertribal suggests the coming together of distinct native nations for a specific purpose or moment, while pan-tribal suggests movements across cultures. I prefer the term intertribal not only because it points towards interactions between distinct nations, but also because it is a word that connotes performance for many contemporary Native people, intertribal dances at powwows.

resistance. Womack has famously and influentially argued from "the assumption that Indian viewpoints cohere, that Indian resistance can be successful, that Native critical centers are possible, that working from within the nation, rather than looking toward the outside, is a legitimate way of examining literature..." (12). Nationalist approaches to examining the rhetorical productions of Native communities, however, do not eclipse the importance of intertribal, pan-tribal, and pan-Indigenous modes of rhetorical resistance. Womack's reading of Joy Harjo's work asks, "(H)ow do we justify literary nationalism in relation to powerful pan-tribal movements" (225)? Womack offers the answer that Harjo's pan-tribal work is successful because it is "rooted in a solid national center" and that it is a continuation of Creek history that has "always experienced powerful cultural growth as a result of pan-tribal influence" (223, 260).

Warrior's work, while similarly rooted in struggles for sovereignty and resistance, is focused on pan-tribal struggles against colonization and racism. By using the intellectual work of Vine Deloria Jr. and John Joseph Matthews to push towards Native critical theory, Warrior is able to demonstrate pan-tribal intellectual engagement that bolsters the sovereignty of Native peoples:

If our struggle is anything, it is the struggle for sovereignty, and if sovereignty is anything, it is a way of life. That way of life is not a matter of denying a political ideology or having a detached discussion about the unifying structures and essences of American Indian traditions. It is a decision—a decision we make in our minds, in our hearts, in our bodies—to be sovereign and to find out what that means in the process (123).

While Native nations certainly retain specific cultural and national identities, intertribal coalitions and rhetorical influences often deeply inform these identities. It would be naïve, then, for my own work on Cherokee performance rhetorics to take a too separatist approach. Indigenous *tactical* maneuvers in the face of ongoing colonialism share performance as a key mode of resistance throughout the Americas. Further, Native resistance movements in what is being called the United States commonly share and build on one another's rhetorical *tactics*.

The rhetorical resistance of Cherokees during the period shortly before Cherokee removal is certainly influenced by other Indigenous rhetoricians of the period and previous to this era, just as Cherokee rhetorics have influenced other Native rhetorics.

The *Memorial of John Ross and Others*... from the 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, reveals the *tactics* Ross and other Cherokees used in an attempt to protect Cherokee sovereignty and lifeways that are employed by earlier Native rhetoricians such as Francis Occum and Joseph Johnson, as well as by their contemporaries and intellectual descendents. Ross, Richard Taylor, Daniel McCoy, Samuel Gunter, and William Rogers make this appeal in 1835, the poignancy of which is worth quoting at length here:

Persuaded that the United States have the power to protect them, and convinced that the United States are bound by the most sacred engagements to exert that power, they have no appeal left upon earth but to your honorable bodies. They earnestly and anxiously make that appeal, for themselves, for their wives and children, for the aged and helpless; in a word, for the nine or ten thousand unoffending human beings of their nations residing within what are claimed to be the charter limits of

Georgia, they respectfully pray that measures may be adopted by your honorable bodies to vindicate the faith of treaties, to preserve to them their rights guaranteed by those treaties, to arrest the hand of rapine now stretched forth to despoil them of their homes and possessions, and to save them from being driven out to perish from starvation and misery; if not condemned even to a speedier death, by the ruthless spoiler (Ross et al 2).

The use of dominant EuroAmerican discourse here, as in numerous examples from post-invasion Native rhetorical history, is clearly not a move towards assimilation, as some would argue. In her important analysis of Cherokee political resistance of this period, Maureen Konkle asserts:

Neither Boudinot or the other "elite" and "acculturated" Cherokees...ever denied being Cherokee, abandoned the nation, or accepted subordination to whites. They counter EuroAmericans' removing them from time to deny them political autonomy and equality by insisting that they have always been in time and are rapidly moving forward and becoming a modern Indian nation" (79).

Such rhetorical *tactics* are consciously engaged with to protect Cherokee interests. Ross and his colleagues compose a savvy defense of Cherokee people: not only are they engaged astutely with the rhetorical devices of their oppressors, they also expose the US government's own hypocrisy while making appeals to the pathos and logos of their audience. The US is challenged to not only act humanely towards the Cherokee Nation, but to also hold fast to their "most sacred engagements" and "to vindicate the faith of treaties, to preserve to them their rights guaranteed by those treaties."

It is important to remember that while Cherokee political discourse of this period was often through written appeals, it was not limited to written texts. Oratory was central to Cherokee (and certainly other) diplomatic relations and resistance *tactics* of the nineteenth century. Both John Ridge and Elias Boudinot were skilled and popular orators during this period, using their performances to raise money and to persuade white audiences to aid in Cherokee struggles against US imperialism. Cherokee rhetorical traditions included oratory long before invasion. Many rhetoricians, including Boudinot, were also highly influenced by the sermonizing and preaching traditions that were part of their Christian educations. Cherokee leaders utilized the popularity of oratory among white abolitionists and those who supported Native causes to gather support for the Cherokee nation: "The Cherokee council sent [Boudinot] on a speaking tour of eastern towns and cities in the spring of 1826 to solicit donations to buy a printing press and type in both English and Sequoyah's newly invented Cherokee syllabary, as well as to found a Cherokee national school" (Konkle 50).

While Cherokee rhetors may have been advocating Cherokee-specific issues, the tactics they employ are shared with other Native activists of this era and earlier. In her discussion of Boudinot, Konkle asserts that he "must be understood in relation to other

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While Ridge and Boudinot continue to be considered betrayers of the nation through the signing of the Treaty of New Echota, and I agree, it is important to remember that Ridge, Boudinot, and others were also fighting tirelessly to protect Cherokee nationhood and ensure Cherokee survival. While I disagree deeply with many of the arguments and actions of the Treaty Party, much of their work did aid in Cherokee resistance and continuance. Their work reminds us that "there were and are many perspectives among Native intellectuals and political leaders about how to best deal with the effects of U.S. colonialism" (Konkle 96).

Native and African American writers active at the time, including David

Cuscik,...William Apess...and the African American writer David Walker" (50).

Performance, not only writing, is a central mode of resistance these activists employed.

Boudinot performed with William Apess at "an evening of oratory on behalf of the

Cherokees" in Boston in 1832 (Konkle 97), and much of Apess' own written works are
his published sermons. The tactics that are expressed in Apess' sermons show traces of
other Native Christian performers and writers, notably Occum and Johnson. These
earlier rhetors were able to use the pulpit and published sermons to argue that Native
people were both more Christian (converted or not) and more "civilized" than European
invaders imposing EuroChristian notions of "Christianity" and "civilization." Such
rhetorical maneuvers can be seen in Cherokee memorials and published speeches, which
often point out the "savage" and un-Christian behavior of white Christians.

Performance was also a tactic in Native resistance movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Performance was placed at the center of two very different resistance movements: the racial uplift movement of organizations such as the Society of American Indians, and the political/spiritual resistance movements of Indian Territory that rooted themselves in the \$Jh OOWDJDI (gatiyo unalskisdi, stomp grounds). While these movements might be seen as being on very separate political poles, an analysis of performance rhetorics allows us to examine some of the shared modes of resistance of these movements.

Lucy Maddox's Citizen Indians: Native American Indian Intellectuals, Race & Reform is integral to an understanding of the performance rhetorics of Native intellectuals. Maddox examines "the ways in which Native intellectuals, in attempting to

create a public, political space for themselves, deliberately adopted, manipulated, and transformed the means already available to them for addressing white audiences, particularly the means of performance" (16). Maddox argues that Native activists of this period subverted and used dominant ideas of performance to intervene in racist systems. Major figures of this period, such as Gertrude Bonnin, Charles Eastman, and Luther Standing Bear, were all performers:

Although they are all now primarily known as writers, all three were also accustomed to addressing white audiences through a variety of other kinds of performances as well: both Eastman and Bonnin lectured frequently, and Bonnin gave recitations and musical performances; Standing Bear toured and performed with Wild West Shows, lectured, and later played Indian roles in Hollywood (Maddox 128).

These activists believed that performance could shift racist concepts held by predominately white audiences who could then aid in struggles that public Native intellectuals were engaged. Performance allowed Native activists to place their own bodies at the center of rhetorical moves against racism. Maddox asserts that performance was important rhetorically to Eastman because he spoke English as a second language and "he was also attempting to translate a philosophy and an intellectual system from its natural linguistic home into a foreign language. Eastman's reliance on physical images and performance—that is, on embodied, visual forms of his philosophy—should

²⁶ It is also true that Native rhetors used writing as a performative act that subverted notions of "the Indian" as acts of *survivance*. Powell demonstrates, for instance, that Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins and Charles Alexander Eastman "perform a kind of civilized Indian-ness" in their writing as well as their public performances ("Survivance" 405).

therefore not be surprising. The body and its performance did not require translation" (140-141). Similarly, Bonnin's activism and life were intimately concerned with performance as a rhetorical tool for social change. A musician and composer as well as an orator, Bonnin "sometimes combined her music with her oratory" (152). And, like Eastman, "regalia and...music were wordless forms of communication to which she turned often" (153).

While these performers intentionally placed their bodies between the white gaze and white constructions of "the Indian" in order to intervene in systems of racism that were injuring Native communities, other Native resistance movements used performance as a central means of building resistance among Native people. \$\frac{316}{316} \text{ OOWDYDI}\$

(gatiyo unalskisdi) in Indian Territory/Oklahoma were (and are) central to movements for both intertribal and national survival and resistance. The \$\frac{316}{316} \text{ OOWDYDI}\$ (gatiyo unalskisdi) are a clear example of how Native peoples placed performance traditions at the center of cultural continuance and survival while members of the SAI were simultaneously using performance as activism. While what I will call the stomp dance movements from the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth differed substantially from contemporaneous racial reform movements, both movements employed performance as a core rhetorical tactic against white racism in hopes for the survival and continuance of their communities and nations.

Organizations such as the Keetoowah Society and the intertribal (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek) Four Mothers Society used traditional performance practices as a tactic for community resistance to white racism, Christianity, US westward expansion, and allotment. Heth provides some historical context of the intertribal yet

nationalist histories of stomp grounds, pointing out their emergence through interactions and shared histories between Cherokee, Creek, and Natchez communities in the late nineteenth century (53). "In the latter part of the 1880's," she explains, "stomp dancing had gone through a gradual decline and had stopped" (52). Before his 1871 death, Redbird Smith's father, Pig Smith, specifically chose a man named Creek Sam (Natchez) to teach Redbird Smith spiritual traditions:²⁷

The choice of a Natchez ceremonial priest as a mentor to the leader of the Cherokee movement had many ramifications. The Sams today are of mixed Cherokee-Natchez blood but believe that since their "fire" was the original one for the area, all subsequent changes must be wrong. On the other hand, the Cherokees in getting back "what they lost," re-interpreted the ceremonies in a Cherokee fashion. Creek Sam's picture, however, is still displayed at the yearly ceremonial honoring Redbird Smith's birthday (53).²⁸

While there may be internal politics among various stomp dance communities, it is clear that it is through intertribal histories and reciprocities that they have been able to continue. Continuance—the central hope of both members of SAI and the stomp dance movements—relies on embodied memory and *practice*, on the intentional *use* of bodies that creates *space*. Performance rhetorics remind us that bodies are always present in

²⁷ Redbird Smith, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, was chosen by the Keetoowah Society to help lead their revivalist movement in the late nineteenth century.

²⁸ The historiographic aspects of this revitalization process is discussed in Chapter Three.

rhetorical contexts, that embodied knowledges and expressions are integral to rhetorical resistance, and that performance carries culture. Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez tell us that "Memory is...the cultural storehouse. [...] Memory should...be understood...in its collective and *physical* manifestation: as remembrance and transmission of the community's knowledge through that community's performance forms..." (Broylez-Gonzales 15). Cultural rhetorics make room for the vital work performance does, insisting that the most important aspects of rhetorics—the bodies that produce and engage them—are not sloughed off in colonial mindsets that attempt to ignore or destroy embodiment.

Cherokee Performance Rhetorics: Resistance, Healing, and Decolonization

I would like to return for a moment to West Long's story of OrdO 10

(Nvy'unuw') to imagine what it can teach us about performance in the face of the devastation of colonization. Like any narrative, our stories take meaning through our relationships with them, through the infinite layers of interpretation that they hold. West Long's telling of OrdO (Nvy'unuw') is particularly useful in understanding the trauma and complexity of colonization as well as the role of performance in healing, decolonization, and continuance. West Long relays:

The dying Stone Coat...told them that if they had tried to kill him by force in the beginning that they would have failed because it was ordained that they should not have relief until they had learned what suffering was.

Knowing the depths of suffering and the joy of relief, he said, would make

them value the songs they were now to learn and the medicine they were to gain by his death and sacrifice (Speck & Broom 15).

have attempted to destroy Cherokees. Like Ocoo (Nvy'unuw'), colonial powers invaded Cherokee communities, threatening our very existence. Our ancient ways of understanding the world, the songs and medicines given to us by Ocoo (Nvy'unuw'), were attacked by missionaries numerous times in our history. Our relationships with our homelands were interrupted through waves of encroachments and removals.

And yet, we survived. The trauma that colonization caused us, and continues to cause us, can be more complexly understood through listening to the story of **COOPSO** (Nvy'unuw'). Colonization has immensely wounded us, broken our hearts over and over again. Certainly through this devastation Cherokees come to have an intimate and intergenerational understanding of the "depths of suffering." If we listen to what this story teaches us, though, it is that through this devastation we are offered the tools for our healing and continuance. If we are to take **SGAO** (duyuk'ta) seriously, then we must look at the complexity of colonization and healing.

The story of OOOOO (Nvy'unuw') teaches us is that while colonization has wounded us, if we listen carefully to our experiences as survivors, the means of decolonization and healing historical trauma are already present. From the dying body of colonialism rises the songs, stories, dances, and medicines that ensure our survival. The story of OOOO (Nvy'unuw') creates a precedent for performance as necessary to decolonization.

Cherokee stories assert that despair and disease are not put in the world without joy and healing to balance them. Invoking the Cherokee cosmology of the world being suspended by cords, Cherokee playwright Diane Glancy sees performance as important to maintaining **SGA6°** (duyuk'ta): "...[O]ur existence hangs on a cord from a theater which is the sound of voices telling our stories and facing our difficulties and even rejoicing" (Geiogamah & Darby 361). Through the deep despair that colonization causes, we survive and resist. We listen to the voices that rise out of the chaos of the past several hundred years. We learn the songs and stories. We sing, dance, and continue. Through our performances we keep the world afloat.

In this chapter we have seen a theory of Cherokee performance rhetorics rooted in SGAO (duyuk'ta) and manifested through call and response. By looking at the story of OOOOOOO(Nvy'unuw') we can understand how both of these concepts are deeply embedded in Cherokee worldviews of performance and how performance is central to healing historical trauma. We have seen how Cherokee cosmologies are tightly bound to performance through an understanding of the world as a space. Further, by paying attention to performance as a central rhetorical tactic of Native people, we can have a broader understanding of Native rhetorics. Native rhetors in the SAI, Cherokee leaders facing forced removal, Cherokee stomp dance movements, and other Native rhetors utilized performance intertribally as central means of activism.

Now that we have an understanding of a theory and history of Cherokee performance rhetorics as resistance and healing, the next chapter will examine how Cherokees are using the archive, a site wrapped up in colonial projects, as a tool to revive Cherokee performances and performance histories. This decolonial work can be

understood as a Cherokee Ghost Dance that revives the past by re-embodying it in the present.

CHAPTER THREE

INDIAN IN THE ARCHIVE: PERFORMANCE HISTORIOGRAPHY AS CHEROKEE GHOST DANCE

At night when the streets of your cities and villages shall be silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The white man will never be alone. Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not altogether powerless. Chief Si'ahl, Duwamish (H.A. Smith).

restoration of SGAP (duyuk'ta) and Cherokee decolonization movements often place performance at the center of resistance. Crucial to the enactment of many of these performances is a historiographic practice—utilizing memory through both archive and repertoire—in order to re-imagine and re-embody the past. Historiography is intimately tied to movements to revitalize cultural performance traditions, as is made evident through examining revitalization movements from the nineteenth century to the present. The so-called Cherokee Ghost Dance movement of 1811-1813, Redbird Smith's revivalist movement with the Keetoowah Society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the current work of the Warriors of Anikituwha at the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to revive dance traditions have all relied on historiographic processes in order to resist colonization. My own archival work to recover nineteenth century Cherokee theater and Cherokee Two-Spirit histories is informed by these movements: it is an attempt to subvert colonial archives by using them to recover cultural memories.²⁹

²⁹ Chapter Four will further address Cherokee Two-Spirit histories.

Performance is both rhetorical and historiographic, it re-embodies the past and leads us to remember that the ways that the dead—our ancestors—return to us and remain present through our embodied *practices*.

Cherokee Ghost Dance

Before the Ghost Dance in the West, Cherokees had our own Ghost Dance.

"Ghost Dance" is a term most often associated with the Ghost Dance religion founded by Northern Paiute religious leader, Wovoka/Jack Wilson, and likely is based on a translation of the Sioux name for this movement, "spirit [ghost] dance" (Kehoe 8). As mentioned briefly in Chapter Two, Wovoka's Ghost Dance was a spiritual resistance movement which claimed that through the *practice* of particular songs and dances, white people would disappear from the continent, buffalo herds would return, relatives who had been killed by EuroAmericans would come back from the dead. While it originated among the Northern Paiute, Wovoka's religious teachings spread quickly throughout the West, and it was during the Ghost Dance that over three hundred Lakotas were murdered by members of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry on December 29, 1890.

Because of the massacre at Wounded Knee, James Mooney left his fieldwork with the Eastern Cherokees and conducted an extensive study of both Wovoka's religion and the events that led up to the Wounded Knee massacre. Mooney's 1896 report to the Bureau of Ethnology, *The Ghost-dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, popularized the term "Ghost Dance" in relation to various Indigenous revitalization movements throughout the Americas, of which Wovoka's religion is only one. 30

³⁰ For more information, see Kehoe (1989) and Mooney (1996).

News of the Cherokee Ghost Dance was originally published by Thomas L.

McKenney in 1838, and later by Mooney in both his 1896 work on the Ghost Dance and in his 1900 Myths of the Cherokee. Because Mooney's interpretation of the Cherokee Ghost Dance is what most Cherokees and non-Cherokees have access to, and because a critique of this interpretation is central to William G. McLoughlin's later interventionist work, The Cherokee Ghost Dance, Mooney's description is worth quoting at length here:

From the Creeks the new revelation was brought to the Cherokee, whose priests at once began to dream dreams and to preach a return to the old life as the only hope of the Indian race. A great medicine dance was appointed at Ustanali, the national capital, where, after the dance was over, the doctrine was publicly announced and explained by a Cherokee prophet introduced by a delegation from Coosawatee. [...] The Cherokee had broken the road which had been given to their fathers at the beginning of the world. [...] If they would live and be happy as before they must put off the white man's dress, throw away his mills and looms, kill their cats, put on paint and buckskin, and be Indians again; otherwise swift destruction would come upon them. [...]

The prophet had threatened after a certain time to invoke a terrible storm, which should destroy all but the true believers, who were exhorted to gather for safety on one of the high peaks of the Great Smoky mountains. In full faith they abandoned their bees, their orchards, their slaves, and everything that had come to them from the white man, and took up their toilsome march for the high mountains, There they waited

until the appointed day and come and passed, showing their hopes and fears to be groundless, when they sadly returned to their homes and the great Indian revival among the Cherokees came to an end (*History* 88-89).

McLoughlin disagrees with Mooney's account and argues that the Cherokee Ghost Dance was *not* connected to Creek revivalist movements, as it predated the Creek revivalist movements during that period. Further, he argues that it was "much more complex and disjointed than the standard accounts indicate"; "Far from being a trivial incident, the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement marked a critical turning point in Cherokee history" (113-114).

McLaughlin's work allows us to question Mooney's linear narrative of the Ghost Dance, and instead look at the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement as non-linear and complicated:

There was not one prophet...but a number of different prophets; some of the visions appeared not to one person but to several witnesses. While some of the prophecies did speak of a catastrophic hailstorm, others predicted a three-day eclipse. While some looked forward to the restoration of an idyllic past, others spoke of the end of the world or the beginning of a "a new earth." [...] Some called for the total rejection of the white man's culture and some for selective rejection. Some of the prophecies show obvious influences of Christian millennialism (114).

Like Wovoka's Ghost Dance, the Cherokee movement had as its vision the hope for protection from European invasion and the preservation and continuance of Indigenous lifeways and traditions. Yet, unlike Wovoka's Ghost Dance, and most

significant to my work here, the Cherokee Ghost Dance did not focus on the *practice* of "new" performances, but instead focused on revitalizing traditions of the past.

Colonel Return J. Meigs, a federal agent to the Cherokee, wrote in 1812, "They have revived their religious dances of ancient origin with as much solemnity as ever was seen in worship in our churches. They then repair to the water, go in and wash" (qtd. in McLaughlin 148). The Cherokee Ghost Dance was not a new religious movement, but rather a movement to continue traditions of the past. Looking to the past and reembodying those traditions in the present is the central feature of both the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement and the Cherokee revitalization movements that followed.

Rhetorically, the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement asserted the importance of Cherokee traditions and worked to disrupt Christianization that literally demonized Cherokee religious traditions. The Ghost Dance subverted the rhetoric of the missionaries and colonists by asserting that it was European traditions—not Cherokee—that were dangerous to the well being of the world and would cause God's judgment. According to the Moravian missionaries at Springplace, Georgia, a Cherokee called Chief Keychzaetel related the following story: A man and two women who claimed to have received a vision of "a whole crowd of Indians arriving on the hill from the sky" (142), and the leader of this group imparted this message to those present:

God is dissatisfied that you are receiving the white people without any distinction. You yourselves see that your hunting is gone—you are planting the corn of white people—go and sell that back to them and plant Indian corn and pound it in the manner of your forefathers; do away with the mills. The Mother of the Nation has forsaken you because all her

bones are being broken through the grinding [of the mills]. She will return to you, however, if you put the white people out of the land and return to your former manner of life. [...] You may keep good neighborly relations with them, just see to it that you get back from them your old Beloved Towns (qtd. in McLoughlin142).

The Cherokee Ghost Dance movement looked at particular European practices—not necessarily all Europeans—as disruptive of Cherokee lifeways, and looked to Cherokee traditions in an attempt to rebalance the world. In the example above, it is important to understand that **4M** (Selu) Corn, is considered a spiritual mother of all Cherokees.

Women's relationship with the planting, harvesting, and processing of corn was central to women's gender roles, which—as a matrifocal and matrilineal culture—were in turn central to Cherokee cosmology, politics, and economics. Theda Perdue explains, "Women farmed because Selu first gave birth to corn...and then became the source for corn...for all Indians. [...] A person's job was an aspect of his or her sexuality, a source of economic and political power, and an affirmation of cosmic order and balance" (18-19). The admonishment and warning to plant and harvest Cherokee corn in a traditional way was an attempt to interrupt colonial projects that were throwing traditional Cherokee gender—and thus Cherokee spirituality, economics, ecology, and politics—out of SGA6° (duyuk'ta). 31

Further research is needed to confirm this, but the statement, "The Mother of the Nation has forsaken you..." leads me to guess that there was a specific ecological crisis happening in Cherokee communities during this period specifically surrounding corn. Whether particular EuroAmerican farming *practices* were diminishing Cherokee harvests or the importation on non-Cherokee corn hybrids were jeopardizing

EuroAmerican practices adversely impacted a complex web and delicate balance

Cherokees had with the cosmos, and were seen by followers of the Ghost Dance

movement as a threat to Cherokee life. McKenney claims that Major Ridge, a Treaty

Party member who later illegally signed the treaty of New Echota, was told that a prophet

named Charles declared:

The Great Spirit said that the Cherokees were adopting the customs of the white people. They had mills, clothes, feather beds, and tables—worse still, they had books and domestic cats. This was not good—therefore the buffaloe and other game were disappearing. [...] The nation must return to the customs of their fathers. They must kill their cats, cut short their frocks, and dress as became Indians and warriors. They must discard all of the fashions of the whites, abandon the use of communication with each other except by word of mouth, and give up their mills, their houses, and all of the arts learned from the white people (136).

If, as argued in the previous chapter, Cherokee worldview sees *practice* as part of the creation of *space*, and understands *practice* as deeply connected to maintenance of relationships to land, it makes sense that the adoption of European *practices* by Cherokees was seen as risking Cherokees jurisdiction over landbases. This is not only a philosophical issue, but in fact had—and has—a very tangible impact on Cherokee life

Cherokee corn species—and it seems clear from this statement that many Cherokees were not planting traditional corn strands—the idea of Selu abandoning Cherokee communities suggests that Cherokee corn plants were either not growing or not producing food.

and land. If *space* is a *practiced place*, then adoption of European *practices* threatens to restructure Cherokee landbases into EuroAmerican *spaces*.

EuroAmerican *practices* literally transformed Cherokee landscapes and ecosystems. Sarah H. Hill describes the major environmental—and thus cultural—changes that happened in Cherokee territory in the eighteenth century, changes that no doubt gave rise to the Cherokee Ghost Dance:

Missing from the landscape was the plant so closely associated with women in one of their most fundamental responsibilities—rivercane. [...] By mid-century, the destruction of cane was well underway in Cherokee settlements.... Horses and cattle ravaged cane breaks. [...] Hogs caused far greater damage as they scoured the earth to gouge out nutritious roots. [...] The destruction of the cane also derived from the European practice of firing woods in early spring to 'reveal the new green grass to the cattle and other stock.' [...] Spring firing, repeated grazing of new growing, and root disruption gradually eliminated the great Southeastern stands of cane. By the end of the eighteenth century, the destruction of canebreaks became a mark of civilized settlement. [...] (90-91).

Hill goes on to describe how the population of wild game and other animals on Cherokee land dramatically shifted because of colonialism. The re-creation of Cherokee spaces into EuroAmerican spaces through EuroAmerican practice—whether enacted by

EuroAmericans, Cherokees, or enslaved Africans—radically altered landscapes and transformed ecosystems, leading to major disruptions to traditional Cherokee life.³² The Ghost Dance's urging of Cherokees to abandon particular EuroAmerican practices and return to Cherokee traditions, then, was not merely a symbolic gesture of protest. Asking Cherokees to return to Cherokee lifeways was seen as a way of ensuring Cherokee landbases remained Cherokee.

The Cherokee Ghost Dance, while pacifist, was nonetheless confrontational to invading powers. By placing traditional Cherokee performance at the center of rhetorical resistance, it both subtly and explicitly rejected European attempts to usurp Cherokee lands. Philip J. Deloria remarks that Indigenous religious dances "offered (a)...visible threat for they suggested a willful breaking away from the hold of church and civilization" (27). Through the reclamation of traditional dances, songs, and other religious practices. Cherokees were reasserting jurisdiction over Cherokee landbases and rejecting European practices that threatened to usurp Cherokee land.

Some followers of the Ghost Dance publicly burned their European-style clothes as a performed rejection of European practices. Cherokees and non-Cherokees alike recognized these rhetorics of resistance and many attempted to suppress the movement. Colonel Return J. Meigs—a federal agent to the Cherokees—expresses outrage at the Ghost Dance, illustrating that colonial powers did not see the movement as innocuous:

³² While I cannot pursue this line of thought here, and I am no historical ecologist, I would like to raise the possibility that Cherokee Ghost Dance leaders call for Cherokees to kill their cats was not merely because domesticated cats were distinctly EuroAmerican, but also because domesticated cats were an invasive species that radically disrupted Cherokee ecosystems.

Amongst them are some fanatics who tell them that the Great Spirit is angry with them for adopting the manners, customs, and habits of white people who they think are very wicked. In some few instances some have thrown off their clothing into the fire and burned them up; some of the females are mutilating fine muslin dresses and are told they must discontinue their dancing reels and country dances which have become very common amongst the young people, being told by these fanatics that these are amongst the causes of the displeasure of the Great Spirit (McLoughlin 148).

The movement was clearly seen by colonial powers and some Cherokees as dangerous because of its opposition to the United States' cultural and physical encroachment. Major Ridge was one of the Cherokees opposed the Ghost Dance movement. McKenney relates this story: "Major Ridge perceived at once the evil effect that would be produced by such haranges.... He rose in his place and addressing the tumultuous assemblage...said, 'My friends, the talk you have heard is not good. It would lead us to war with the United States, and we should suffer'" (qtd. in McLoughlin 137). Colonists, missionaries, and their Cherokee allies quickly began trying to contain and discredit the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement's radically decolonial rhetorics.

Not only was the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement explicitly decolonial, it was also historiographic. Rather than a historiography that utilized the *archive* as its primary source and employed alphabetic texts to transmit historical interpretations, the Ghost Dance utilized the *repertoire* as both its central source and means of delivery. If performance does not disappear, as Taylor argues, but instead remains present through

embodied memory and *practice*, then performances that reproduce *practices* of the past are part of an embodied historiography. During the Ghost Dance movement, Cherokees looked to a collective *repertoire* of Cherokee *practices* to reassert Cherokee traditions as a radical act of resistance and continuance. Ancestral performances were centralized to resist colonization, continue Cherokee lifeways, and maintain relationships with traditional landbases.

Taylor argues, "Performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called 'twice-behaved behavior'" (2-3). If we understand performance as an act of transfer—what our field might call delivery—we see the ways in which the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement insisted on the importance of transferring and maintaining Cherokee historical memory. The Cherokee Ghost Dance did not teach that the practice of traditional dances would literally bring back the dead, as did parts of Wovoka's movement, but instead argued that our ancestors are made present through the reenactment of their practices. This same tenet is present in other Native revitalization movements, including Redbird Smith's movement to reestablish Cherokee ceremonial traditions in Indian Territory.

As mentioned previously, some leaders of the Ghost Dance movement insisted that not following the Ghost Dance movement would bring about God's wrath. Mooney argued that the failure of apocalyptic prophecies to manifest put a quick end to the Ghost Dance. Using McLaughlin's more recent work and looking to the rhetorical features of the Ghost Dance in relation to other Cherokee revitalization movements may bring us to

different conclusions.³³ While 1813 is considered to be the "end" of the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement, McLaughlin's work acknowledges that such an assertion is problematic: "For the traditionalist, loyalty to the faith is itself a measure of pride. Open espousal of the new religion may cease, but the religion may continue underground, in personal talks, in the poses of private thought. [...] In any case, traditionalism did not die with the Ghost Dance movement" (135). Kehoe likewise brings attention to ongoing revitalization movements in Native communities: "Revitalization is strong, from multiplying Sun Dances on the Plains reservations, to a growing serious literature by self-consciously Indian authors" (133).

To demarcate a particular closure to the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement, then, is difficult. "Cultural reformulation necessarily occurs over and over again in every society. [...] This is not a matter of 'progress' but of adaptation to necessity; there is no single line of development but a multitude of adaptations" (Kehoe 126). Revitalization movements resurfaced in Cherokee communities after removal, in the face of allotment, and are taking place in the present. Paying attention to performance rhetorics allows us to see connections between the Ghost Dance movement and Redbird Smith's movement in Indian Territory/Oklahoma. By looking to later revivalist movements among Cherokees—including those currently underway—we can see traces of the Ghost Dance movement, a movement that argued Cherokees must engage in ancestral performances and other *practices* to resist, survive, and continue.

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³³ It is interesting to note that catastrophic disaster—the removal—*did* come to Cherokees and that, in fact, those who hid in the mountains—now the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians—were spared removal.

Redbird Smith and the Keetoowah Society

Even if some of the particular doctrines of this movement may have faded, many did not. The fact that Cherokee spiritual, ceremonial, and performative traditions survived through to the present may very well be owed to this particular revitalization movement. Revitalization movements after removal contain traces of this movement, as do *practices* and belief systems of many contemporary Cherokees. Wilma Mankiller, for instance, writes, "There is an old Cherokee prophecy which instructs us that as long as the Cherokees continue traditional dances, the world will remain as it is, but when the dances stop, the world will come to an end. Everyone should hope that the Cherokees will continue to dance" (29).³⁴

Performance uses embodied *practice* to carry rhetoric over time and space: "The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there,' being a part of the transmission. [...] The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning. [...] But even though the embodiment changes, the meaning might very well remain the same" (Taylor 20). 1811-1813 is plenty of time for particular *practices* to be transmitted, continued, and passed on to others, and later revivalist movements drew (and draw) on embodied memories of performance traditions. While looking at archival records alone might suggest that the Ghost Dance ended in 1813, looking to the *repertoire* complicates this version of history.

In Chapters One and Two, I discussed some of the rhetorical features and contexts of stomp dance communities as a way to examine the rhetorical work of performance in

³⁴ Considering that this is a prophecy from the Cherokee Ghost Dance, it is my assumption that Mankiller is—in fact—making a direct reference to beliefs rooted in this movement.

Cherokee resistance. I want to take some time here to further contextualize Cherokee stomp dance communities within a longer history of Cherokee revitalization movements. Cherokee stomp dance communities have looked to the past, utilizing both the *archive* and the *repertoire*, as an integral aspect of re-embodying history through performance. Like the Cherokee Ghost Dance, Redbird Smith's movement with the Keetoowah Society sought to revive Cherokee ceremonial performances as a way of resisting EuroAmerican cultural dominance and colonization, arguing for the embodiment of Cherokee traditions as central to resistance.

Redbird Smith's movement was not the first Cherokee revitalization movement in Indian Territory, and was in fact a revival of earlier iterations of the Keetoowah Society. The Keetoowah Society was originally formed in 1859 to counter the secret societies started by pro-slavery, pro-secessionist interests in the Cherokee Nation. The Keetoowahs were explicitly anti-slavery and pro-union. In addition to these particular political commitments, the Keetoowah Society worked to preserve ancient Cherokee religion and revive the township political structures of the past.³⁵

The choice of the name *Keetoowah* (**YSG**) was itself a performative act to maintain cultural memory and argue for the reestablishment of ancient *practices*. As noted in the previous chapter, **YSG** is the name of the original mother town of the Cherokees, near present-day Bryson City, North Carolina. The **YSG** (Giduwa) mound remains a sacred place for Cherokee people. According Thomas, the name *Keetoowah*

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³⁵ I rely heavily here on Robert K. Thomas' *The Origin and Development of the Redbird Smith Movement*, which provides a comprehensive and in-depth narrative of this particular revitalization movement.

was decided by founders of the Society because "they decided that 'we are still A-ni-Ki-too-wha-gi' or People of Ketoowha" (61-62). By choosing this name, Keetoowah Society organizers argued for Cherokees to remember their most ancient histories, landbases, and ceremonies. Regardless of the many differences and fissures between Cherokees—especially those that emerged because of invasion, colonization, and removal—traditionalists asked Cherokees to recall their earliest cultural memories as a unified people, **Dh YSGY** (Ani Giduwagi).

Not only did Cherokee traditionalists seek to reconstitute the past through the naming of the organization, the Keetoowah Society—while pacifist—adopted aspects of a "red town" governmental structure (Thomas 62).³⁶ This incarnation of the Society lasted until after the Civil War, but broke into smaller groups after the 1872 death of head chairman Lewis Downing. The society was then reorganized by Bud Gritts in 1874 until his death in 1885 (Thomas 67-68).

In 1887 the Dawes Act was passed and in 1889 Oklahoma Territory was opened by the U.S. government for white settlement. This same year, the Keetoowahs moved from a mostly political secret society to a public political and religious organization (Thomas 114-115). In 1894 the Dawes Commission began negotiating with the Five Tribes around issues of land allotment and dissolution of tribal governments and in 1896,

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Thomas writes, "Exactly what the reasons for using the titles of the old red organization, e.g., the captain (skai-gunst) is not known. Perhaps the full-bloods still looked to the Cherokee government led by John Ross as the white organization and did want to sever relations with it, so they used the red titles" (62).

within the context of the allotment's threat to the Cherokees, Redbird Smith was chosen by the Keetoowahs to aid in cultural revival and resisting allotment.

Redbird Smith was already involved with the Keetoowah Society as well as the Cherokee Nation, and was selected by the Society to "get back what the Ketoowahs had lost" (qtd. in Thomas 119). It was at this point that the Keetoowahs began to focus on a reclamation of Cherokee ceremonial traditions through historiography in both the *archive* and the *repertoire*. Like the Cherokee Ghost Dance nearly one hundred years earlier, the Keetoowahs looked to the past in order to find ways to resist colonization in the present, specifically focusing on particular performative *practices* as central to resistance.

Performances were once again seen as part of a *practice* that made particular *places* into Cherokee *spaces*.

While the Ghost Dance movement relied on the *repertoire* as its main source of historical memory, Redbird Smith's wave of the Keetoowah Society utilized both *archive* and *repertoire* in order to revive and revise cultural memory and *practice*. One of the central archival sources for the Keetoowahs were the seven wampum belts kept by John Ross' grandson, Bob Ross. Thomas writes, "The first step that was taken to 'get back what the Ketoowahs had lost' was to recover the Cherokee wampum belts" (119). While the original purpose and history of the belts is debatable, the Keetoowahs felt that the belts would help them in the reconstruction and revival of Cherokee ceremonial knowledge. The Keetoowahs saw the belts as belonging to traditional communities, not to be kept as family heirlooms, and after convincing Ross to lend the Society the belts, they refused to return them. As mentioned in Chapter One, the belts continue to be held by the Keetoowah Society.

The process of interpreting the belts in order to reconstruct ceremonial knowledge was historiographic: it relied on the wampum belts as archival material, combined that material with cultural memories in order to interpret them, and transferred those interpretations into community memory and practice. Thomas writes, "When the Ketoowah Society first got possession of the wampums, they knew nothing of the interpretation of them. [...] All the following acts of the great nativistic revival stemmed from the interpretation of these wampums" (120-121). The revitalization of Cherokee performance and religious traditions were dependent on the interpretation of archival knowledge in order to move this knowledge into the repertoire. Performance and ceremonial traditions as well as political and social structures were put back into practice through using the belts as an archival source. The Keetoowahs did not rely on the archive alone, but—like the Cherokee Ghost Dance—looked to the repertoire to re-construct Cherokee ceremonial performances. The Keetoowah Society's revival relied on Natchez and Creek ceremonial tradition that had informed them, but drew on Cherokee cultural knowledge to re-establish particular Cherokee traditions.

The Keetoowahs also relied on the work of a Native scholar to recreate Cherokee ceremonial *practices*. In 1915, a graduate lawyer from the Oneida tribe of Wisconsin named C.P. Cornelius joined the Keetoowah Society, helping to make particular Iroquoian additions to Keetoowah ceremonials. Thomas points out, "The Oneidas of Wisconsin had been Christian for many years and do not keep up with the rites of the Long House. But C.P. Cornelius, being an educated man, must have read much of Iroquois history and probably had visited the Six Nations in New York and Canada" (182). Through his own cultural memory from both the *archive* and the *repertoire*,

Cornelius helped to re-interpret the wampum belts and brought Iroquoian customs the ceremonial and political structure of the Keetoowah Society. Thomas argues:

After these innovations...the organization of the Fires very closely approximated the organization of the Cherokee town fires in aboriginal times. The Cherokee town organization seems to have been a basic Southeastern town organization modified by the Iroquoian emphasis on clan. The Ketoowah Society had started out by taking on a modified version of the Creek town organization and then had modified this further with the help of an Iroquois, C.P. Cornelius (187).

Through a decolonial historiography using both *archive* and *repertoire*, the Keetoowahs were able to revive *practices* of the past and return them to an embodied memory in the present.

The revival and continuance of Cherokee ceremonial and performative resistance in the face of colonial powers has necessarily looked to *practices* of the past. The Ghost Dance movement utilized the *repertoire* as its central source for knowledge, while Redbird Smith's wave of revitalization in Cherokee communities drew on both the *archive* and the *repertoire*.

These revitalization movements provide a model for historiographic work that places decolonization and continuance as its central motivation, and further, they insist that historiography is a *practice* that makes the past present. My own historiographic work uses revitalization movements as a model, paying close attention to the ways historical memory can be revived and revised through research in the *archive* and the *repertoire*. My archival work has focused on recovering a history of nineteenth century

theater as a means of revising our memories of Cherokee rhetorical history, and—as will be discussed in the following chapter—has looked to both *archive* and *repertoire* to recover Cherokee Two-Spirit histories in order to revise both the archival record and contemporary historical memory regarding these histories. Within contexts of decolonial activism, historiography can become a radical act to revive historical memories by placing them back into the *repertoire*. The Ghost Dance has yet to end: we are still dancing.

Historiography as Ghost Dance: Recovering Nineteenth Century Cherokee Theater

I am in the reading room in the Newberry Library looking at a copy of a nineteenth century Cherokee primer, whispering the Cherokee syllables to myself in a beginning-level literacy in my ancestral language. **bT. bT.** Siqua, siqua, I make out.

Pig. pig. But I don't know enough Cherokee to decipher the rest of what appears to be a nursery rhyme or children's story. I rely on the woodcut images to help me through the book: **£O+**, tlameha, bat. A word I can't read that must mean "gun" or "rifle." Another word must mean "boat" or "steam ship," but I can only read one letter. And it occurs to me that I'm engaged in a subversive act, performing a story that is the antithesis of the colonial project. I remember the many Indian children forced into English literacy through the boarding schools and missions, imagine them reading similar English primers, sounding out each letter, studying the images to make sense of the text. What

does it mean to go "back to the blanket" in this way?³⁷ The archival project was not created *for* Indians. It was created to consolidate knowledge *about* Indians. Thomas Richards writes that *the imperial archive* "was a fantasy of knowledge collected and united in the service of state and Empire" (6). And yet here I am, an Indian in the archive, using it as a *tactic* in a process of Cherokee tribalographical and historiographical production. Sitting in the archive, touching books that my ancestors may have touched, feels like a Ghost Dance. The library throngs with (g)hosts.³⁸

De Certeau says of historiography, "The dear departed find a haven in the text because they can neither speak nor do harm anymore. These ghosts find access through writing on the condition that they remain forever silent" (Writing 2, italics in original). Yet, as de Certeau and Howe both assert, the silence of the dead and the past is a part of distinctly dominant Western European cosmology. Native historiography/tribalography understands the dead as present, as a continuing part of the story, as "not altogether powerless." While Native historiography may very well be, in part, what de Certeau calls a "discourse of the dead" (46), understandings of our relationships with the dead are often drastically different than those of Europeans. Historiography as a Ghost Dance understands that part of our work as Native historiographers is sustaining relationships

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³⁷ "Back to the blanket" is a pejorative phrase from the U.S. Indian boarding school systems that referred to Native people who—rather than assimilating after their boarding school education—returned to their communities and continued their traditions.

³⁸ Wa'do to Malea Powell for bringing up ghosts and the Newberry Library in her own archival work in her essay "Dreaming Charles Eastman: Cultural Memory, Autobiography, and Geography in Indigenous Rhetorical Histories" (Kirsch et al 115-127).

with our ancestors, bringing back their words and acts that have too often been stolen or hidden from us. Indigenous historiography does not merely recover and re-contextualize archival information, but moves the *archive* into cultural memory and *practice*. For Native people, historiography is a *practice* that helps to constantly make and re-make Indigenous *space*.

And here is the why the Indian in the archive threatens the very structure of dominant discourse: unlike Indian artifacts and texts claimed by libraries and museums, the Indian in the archive comes out of the archive again, bringing our ghosts with us. We are not Indians in the cupboard, teeny playthings for white supremacy's imagination. We are real and alive, just as our communities and histories are living and unruly. Indians in the archive transform the archive into Native *spaces* by employing decolonial *practices*. We disrupt the fantasy of the *imperial archive* by transferring the *archive* to the *repertoire* of cultural memory.

Until the recent recovery of and critical work about Lynn Riggs by Jace Weaver (1997; Riggs 2003) and Craig S. Womack (1999) and most recently Daniel Heath Justice (2006), little history has been written about non-ritual Cherokee theater. Even with these significant contributions, there still exists a void of history regarding Cherokee theater. Examining its role as a tool of resistance, continuance, and nation-building, my archival research focuses on recovering nineteenth century Cherokee theater and placing these performances within a larger context of Cherokee histories.

It is important to say in an Indigenous-centered methodology that I feel that my work in Cherokee historiography is aided by the dead, that ancestors are watching and helping me in this work. While doing research at the Newberry, I told an archivist that I

was interested in finding information on nineteenth century Cherokee theater. His answer was, in brief, that it would be a difficult project, one that could take a decade, and he suggested I try to find sources in other libraries.

A few hours after examining the Cherokee primer, I decided to simply jump into an extensive card catalog and look under "Cherokee" for anything that might be of use to me. I thought while looking through hundreds of titles, that perhaps ancestors would push me in the right direction. After writing down about ten call numbers for books I thought sounded interesting, I went to the fourth floor and chose three titles to look at in the hour before the library closed. One of them was a slim volume from 1889 called *Literature of the Cherokees* by George E. Foster, where I stumbled upon (or perhaps it stumbled upon me) the following entry:

Brinton cites under the head of "Dramatic Literature," an instance. "A pantomime where the actors appeared in costume was seen by Lieutenant Timberlake among the Cherokees in the middle of the last century, which he spoke of as 'very diverting,' where some of the actors dressed in the skins of wild animals, and the simulated contest between the pretended beasts and the men who hunted them being the motives of the contest."

We cite a later instance: when John Ridge, Elias Boudinot and other Cherokee youth hereafter mentioned, attended the Mission School at Cornwall, Conn., they arranged a drama, and it was acted in the school and called a "Cherokee Council of War" (Foster 3-4).

This was the beginning I needed to pursue further archival work. This fragment of history is a clear example of Cherokees—and in this case Cherokees who became quite

prominent in Cherokee politics—using a Cherokee-centered performance within a context meant to acculturate Cherokee people. This play is also mentioned in an 1822 edition of *The Christian Disciple and Theological Review*, discussing the missionary work at the Mission School:

The present state of this institution the object of which is the education of young heathens may be acceptable to our readers. It is five years since its establishment. The annual examination and exhibition of the school were very interesting to a crowded audience. Among the visitors were several strangers gentlemen of intelligence and distinction who were much gratified. Among the pieces exhibited were a *Cherokee Council of War* on the subject of the present dispute between the Cherokees and the Osages...(Worcester and Ware 62).

During this period, some Cherokees were willingly removing to present day

Arkansas and Oklahoma, onto Osage lands. This caused a series of major conflicts

between Cherokees and Osages that lasted from the beginning of the nineteenth century

until directly before removal. While John Ridge—the son of Major Ridge—and Elias

Boudinot pursued an education at the Cornwall school in order to aid in Cherokee

struggles against U.S. domination, it is clear that the mission school hoped to "civilize"

Indigenous people as a means of containing resistance. Ridge and Boudinot's use of

performance to address specifically Cherokee politics and concerns undermines the goal

of colonialism to contain resistance. Instead, this performance addressed Cherokee

politics and asserted Cherokee self-determination in the face of complex and overlapping

colonial projects.

While I don't know the text of this performance at this point—it's quite possible that the script was never written down—the fact that such a performance took place exemplifies what I described in detail in Chapter One as a *doublewoven* rhetorical strategy. On the outside of this performance is a public presentation to "gentlemen of intelligence and distinction" to showcase the work of the mission school in "the education of young heathens." The performance was used by both the school and by the Cherokees involved to demonstrate that Indigenous people were able to successfully incorporate dominant EuroAmerican culture and discourse.

On the inside of this performance, however, we see Cherokees utilizing performance to re-center discourse onto Cherokee politics and struggles. Far from containing resistance, the education at the Cornwall school enabled the Cherokees who attended to subvert colonial projects. Uncovering this small fragment of documentation helps imagine some of the ways Cherokees were using theater during the nineteenth century rhetorically, and to have a clearer idea of the contexts and spaces in which such performances took place. Furthermore, it illustrates one instance—likely one of many—in which Cherokees were using theater to make particular arguments in the face of major political and social upheaval.

While there is little doubt that A Cherokee Council of War was not an isolated performance, the archival records I've accessed don't mention theatrical presentations in Cherokee communities until after the removal. However, Cherokee theater and other kinds of proscenium performances—music, oratory, dance, vaudeville—and certainly performances like the Wild West Show—were taking place in Indian Territory at the turn of the century. Perhaps the most obvious evidence of theater and other proscenium

performances taking place in the Cherokee Nation is the fact that opera houses were built throughout the Nation, including in Tahlequah, Claremore, and Vinita. Numerous kinds of public performances and activities took place in these establishments, and in Tahlequah the opera house was utilized for public performances of students from the Cherokee National Male and Female Seminaries. One can imagine that the performances that took place in Cherokee opera houses were similar to those that occurred in non-Cherokee opera houses in the United States during this same period.

In a record book from the Cherokee National Male Seminary, on May 2, 1899 the following is recorded: "The proposition to give an entertainment, the proceeds of which to be given as a subscription to the erection of a statue in the memory of Sequoyah, was heartily supported and the details of the work allotted to the several teachers" (Seminary Record Book 7). The organizing and execution of this "entertainment"— which certainly included music and likely included oratory and theater—is mentioned again on May 19th, and on June 9th is a detailed account of the expenses and earnings from the fundraiser.³⁹ The record notes the cost of renting a piano and the opera house in Tahlequah, and states that the event raised \$19.10 for the seminary (8-9)

On February 18, 1901, the production of an "entertainment" as a means to raise funds for the school is mentioned again: "At a meeting of the faculty a committee of six from Cherokee and Sequoyah societies, was present waiting permission to give an entertainment about the first week in April 1901, for the benefit of the Athletic Association" (49).

³⁹ We must make an educated guess and assume that this "entertainment" included similar performances as the seminaries conducted during commencements.

The fact that performance was being used by the Male Seminary to raise funds, and the fact that opera houses such as the one in Tahlequah were utilized, tells us that "entertainments" were not only performed, but that there was a paying audience in the Cherokee Nation for such events. While the records from the Male Seminary are few, it makes sense that such events were a regular and established means to raise money.

The National Cherokee Female Seminary likewise used theater and other performances as part of the curriculum and activities of the school. After the National Council authorized the construction of additions to the original building in 1877, the seminary included an auditorium, and the library was also used as a "recitation room" (Mihesuah 55). Further, both "Elocution" and "Expression" were a part of the education of women at the Female Seminary (Fry 104). In Maggie Culver Fry's histories collected in the late 1980s of lives in the Cherokee female seminary—Cherokee Female Seminary Years: A Cherokee National Anthology—a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream is mentioned several times, as are numerous other performances. Mae McSpadden Poole, who happens to be a niece of Will Rogers, shares these memories:

I am Mae McSpadden Poole, daughter of John Tomas and Sallie Rogers McSpadden. I am also a Cherokee National Seminary graduate of 1905. [...]

At the close of my last year there, we presented Shakespeare's A Midsummer-Night's Dream, with Miss Allen, our Seminary principal, and miss Minta Foreman spending their time for a year attending dramas and operas in Kansas City and Dallas.

Miss Allen was a spending organizer and gave parts of the play to each Seminary teacher for their acting participants to learn. Thus we lived Shakespeare for a whole year. I was Puck in the play and enjoyed it immensely. Our presentation was at the Tahlequah Opera House" (147-148).

Poole's experiences at the seminary show that not only were Cherokees involved in theater, but that—at least for students and teachers at the Female Seminary from 1904–1905—theater was central to people's lives. 40 Poole continues:

After I graduated, I taught at Wheelock Academy in the southeast corner of the state. It was located in the Choctaw Nation.

Working from some of the same primary sources I have consulted, Devon Mihesuah refers to an annual Shakespeare production at the Female Seminary. As of this writing, I have had difficulty confirming this. Poole's memory of the production of A Midsummer Night's Dream occurred during her last year at the seminary, 1904-1905. Fry mentions the production happening in 1907, but the description of events surrounding the performance sound like Poole's memories from 1905, leading one to wonder if these are actually the same event:

When the Female Seminary Drama Committee selected Shakespeare's A Midsummer-Night's Dream as their final drama in the 1907 school year, both Miss Allen and Miss Minta Foreman spent their vacation time going to opera and drama presentations in Kansas City and Dallas, observing stagecraft and expression to the smallest detail (83).

Poole's story does not seem to indicate a precedent for Shakespeare being performed before her last year at the Seminary, though while at the Wheelock Academy Poole notes that Cherokee Seminary students performed A Midsummer Night's Dream at least one additional time. While there may have very well been an annual Shakespeare production—and there was certainly a Drama Committee which decided on an annual production of some sort—I am unsure how long this tradition lasted. Without a deeper examination of archival records, I hesitate to claim that a Shakespearian production was annual.

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It was while I was teaching at Wheelock Academy that some of the Seminary players again presented A Midsummer-Night's Dream, this time in a natural setting out in the open.

And again the Misses Allen and Foreman came to our assistance.

After the play was scheduled, we began to worry over one thing we had overlooked.

Where would the audience come from?

Wheelock was near a little place called Millerton, just a "wide place in the road." It was sparsely populated and the roads were rough. People lived miles away from the Wheelock Mission.

After watching the distant roads for the longest time, there in the distance we saw the outline of a hack. And soon, other figures appeared in the distance.

They were actually coming...

By nightfall, one thousand Indians had gathered to see the play that was presented by moonlight in an amphitheater, with the aid of electric lights.

The people had left their work and traveled miles to see the play.

With the aid of the Female Seminary players and their directors, the play was a success (148-149).

This memory shows that there was a huge Indian (and probably non-Indian) audience for theater in Indian Territory. While we cannot be sure that it was actually "one thousand Indians" that traveled to see the production at Wheelock, it was no doubt a

significant number of people willing to travel several miles and lose pay in order to attend such an event.⁴¹

Shakespeare was not the only kind of theatrical performance that took place at the Female Seminary. "Pantomime" was performed by students within the seminary and during public events (Fry 104-105). Mihesuah reports:

"The graduation activities for both seminaries were quite elaborate. [...]

The final night of the 1877 festivities was typical. A large group of visitors gathered to hear some "well-delivered" compositions.... The Park Hill Seminary (Female Seminary) Glee Club sang songs.... Another student...recited "The New Church Organ," and prominent Cherokee dignitaries gave speeches. [...] At other commencements, visitors attended church services, recitals, plays, and programs consisting of vocal solos, dances, instrumentals, and dramatic soliloquies (74-75).

Far from being an isolated or unusual occurrence, theater (among other performances) was *practiced* and watched by Cherokees within a variety of contexts.

While the very beginnings of a recovery of nineteenth century Cherokee theater are of no doubt exciting to me, the process of interacting with the archive has been almost as important in my research as the actual recovery of such a history. In particular, I've been struck with how, almost across the board, archivists have told me that I won't find information on Cherokee theater during the this period, and further, that Cherokees weren't engaged in theater at this time. What I've found, instead, is that there are

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⁴¹ It is important to note that, while employees of the Cherokee Nation, the instructors mentioned here are not Cherokee.

numerous references to theater in the Cherokee communities during the nineteenth century, even with some of the major holes that exist in the archival record because of removal, the Civil War, and the loss of both the Cherokee Male and Female Seminaries due to fires.

What this tells me, then, is that there is a particular notion of both Cherokees and "the Indian" that has been constructed that is removed from the actual *practices* of Cherokee people in the nineteenth century. Cherokees performing theater are, as Phillip J. Deloria claims, *Indians in unexpected places*. Deloria argues that "At stake in discursive/ideological formations throughout U.S. history has been the body of accepted knowledge about Indian people, the ways in which knowledge helped constitute individuals and groups as subjects, and the new and old ways in which power was to be allied to Indians and non-Indians alike" (11). The recovery of nineteenth century Cherokee theater has been ignored not because of its absence in the archival record but because of its absence in the minds of many scholars and researchers.

While the stomp dance utilized traditional Cherokee performances to argue against dominant EuroAmerican culture, theater—at least the performances I point to here—utilized a dominant EuroAmerican discourse to make arguments about the Cherokee Nation as "civilized." By engaging in EuroAmerican theatrical practices—whether through scripts created and performed by Cherokees such as A Cherokee Council of War, or by Cherokees performing Shakespeare—Cherokees asserted that they could become more "civilized" than EuroAmericans, asserting their sovereignty as well as historical and legal relationships to land.

What does it mean to choose to ignore or forget this particular aspect of Cherokee history? It means that we forget the complexities of Cherokee resistance that took place through performance, trading a complicated cultural memory for a more convenient construction of "Indian" or "Cherokee" that forgets the particular *practices* of our ancestors. To forget theater as an important aspect of Cherokee resistance to EuroAmerican colonialism ignores rhetorical and cultural work that was important to many Cherokee people during this period. While different than arguments being made by the stomp dance movement, Cherokee theater nonetheless employed performance to make arguments about Cherokees as a people and as a nation.

Ignoring Cherokee theater in the nineteenth century leaves a gap in our cultural memory, and recovering our rhetorical histories must entail a better understanding of theater and other performances as part of rhetorical struggles. Reviving a memory of these *practices* is part of a Ghost Dance that provides us with a more complete and complex understanding of Cherokee histories of resistance. Reestablishing a memory of nineteenth century Cherokee theater is part of larger Cherokee (and other Indigenous) revivalist movements happening through the archive. Many Native people, including myself, are making use of archival materials—texts, letters, wax reels, archeological "findings"—to put particular *practices* back into the *repertoire*. My archival work on both Cherokee theater and Cherokee Two-Spirit traditions is meant to contribute to this effort in order to revise cultural memories through both *archive* and *repertoire*.

The Warriors of Anikituwha

Like previous Cherokee revivalist movements, contemporary Cherokees are using both the archive and the repertoire to reestablish dormant practices. Part of this revivalist movement takes place on a small scale: anytime a Cherokee learns and then sings a traditional song from a CD—for instance—they transferring a cultural memory from archive to repertoire. Another part of this revivalist movement is happening on a larger level: Cherokees are doing work within archives in order to completely revive practices that are no longer within the repertoire. James "Bo" Taylor and Marie Junaluska's work with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to revive performance practices holds traces of the Cherokee Ghost Dance and other Cherokee revivalist movements.

In 2003, Junaluska—a storyteller, Giduwa Cherokee speaker and teacher, and tribal council member—approached Taylor—an archivist at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian—to help recreate ancient Cherokee dances. 42 Out of this process emerged The Warriors of Anikituhwa, a performance group that has re-established the Cherokee War Dance and the Eagle Tail dance. The group also performs Cherokee social dances such as the Friendship Dance and the Bear Dance ("Warriors of Antikituwha").

Dormant dances were recreated through Lt. Henry Timberlake's descriptions of Cherokees during the eighteenth century, wax cylinder recordings, elder knowledge, and embodied cultural memories. According to the website for the Eastern Band, "As Taylor put this knowledge together, he realized that the dance that Timberlake thought was a

⁴² There are two main dialects of the Cherokee language: Otali, mainly spoken in Oklahoma, and Giduwa, spoken in the Qualla Boundary.

'Welcome' dance was actually a war dance, performed to let Timberlake know that the Cherokees were a mighty nation and that visitors needed to be on their best behavior" ("Warriors of AniKituhwa: Cherokee Traditional Dances").

Taylor describes this process in explicitly revivalist ways, suggesting that the reembodiment of these dances is part of a larger process of Cherokee resistance and healing. The re-embodiment of the past helps heal the legacies of colonization on both individual and community levels. Bo Taylor claims, "For a long time, I didn't know who I was, where I came from. [...] From doing this, it has helped me find strength from way back, from deep down" (ElGhazaly paragraph 3). Like the Keetoowah Society, the Warriors of Anikituhwa invoke Cherokees' oldest name to argue for Cherokees to remember our origins and *practices*, using both *archive* and *repertoire* in order to "get back" what was "lost."

While the revival of ceremonial traditions in Indian Territory/Oklahoma focused on reestablishing the social and spiritual structure of ceremonially white—peace—towns, we can see the Warriors of Anikituhwa focusing on a revitalization of red—warrior—traditions once central to Cherokee resistance, government, and diplomacy. Bo Taylor argues that "Anybody who is keeping our culture alive is being a warrior. [...] For a long time, we put on this paint in order to fight our aggressors. Now, we put on our paint to challenge our own people to look down deeper and say this is important" (ElGhazaly, paragraph 6). The performances of Warriors of Anikituhwa are an embodied historiography. Taking information from *archive* and *repertoire*, Taylor and other performers not only reconstruct the past, they move the past into an embodied present,

arguing that these *practices* are necessary and vital to contemporary Cherokee life and resistance.

Just as the War Dance was used as part of international diplomacy in the past, the Eastern Band has designated the Warriors of Anikituhwa their official cultural ambassadors ("Warriors of AniKituhwa: Cherokee Traditional Dances"). The work of the Warriors of Anikituhwa has not only reestablished particular performance practices. it has also reestablished the rhetorical-political significance of those performances within Cherokee communities. The Warriors of Anikituwha does what all decolonial historiography should do: revise our cultural memory of the past, shift our practices of the present, and open the future to additional possibilities of resistance. Like the Cherokee Ghost Dance and the Redbird Smith movement, the Warriors of Anikituwha are arguing that it is through performance and other embodied practices that Cherokees maintain cultural memory and resist colonization. A similar revitalization movement is happening within Two-Spirit communities, which are using the archive to reestablish the histories and practices of Two-Spirit people in various traditions. My archival work pays close attention to a third space that contains stories and memories too often forgotten or minimized.

Ghost Dancing the Archive

Native historiography entails what Malea Powell calls *listening to ghosts*: "[n]ot only those arisen from the mess of blood and bones upon which 'America' is literally built, but also those rooted in other knowledges, other ways of knowing, other ways of

being and becoming that frequently go unheard and unsaid in much of scholarly work" ("Listening" 12). The dead are not altogether powerless.

While I was taking a Giduwa Cherokee language immersion course taught by Bo Taylor on the Qualla Boundary in Summer 2007, I took some time to do archival work at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian. Knowing that I was interested in nineteenth century Cherokee theater, Taylor pointed me to the Eastern Band's transcribed copies of John Howard Payne's manuscripts. Payne's account of Cherokee life during the nineteenth century, while filtered through his own belief that Cherokees have a historical connection of ancient Jewish culture, contain an immense amount of information on Cherokee rhetorics, ceremony, and government. I had a limited time in the archive and hoped that Payne—himself an actor—would make some sort of mention of Cherokee theater.

While my limited time with the manuscripts did not uncover information on Cherokee theater, the archives suddenly offered up an unexpected gift: explicit descriptions of same sex union ceremonies. As I will discuss in the next chapter, archival evidence of Cherokee same-sex love and gender "variant" identities is at only the very beginnings of being recovered, and so such a description is extremely important to Cherokee Two-Spirit activists and tradition bearers. There is another Ghost Dance happening in Cherokee country, the revival of Cherokee Two-Spirit practices and memories.

De Certeau writes, "Archives make up the world of this technical game, a world in which complexity is found, but sifted through and miniaturized, therefore made capable of being formalized" (*History* 9). What does it mean, then, to be an Indian in this game, to consciously subvert the precedents of dominant Western European history while

engaging with its game? It means that we are deeply complicating the game of the *imperial archive*. And, in fact, we are doing something else entirely, while pretending to play the game as a tactical maneuver. Instead of playing this game, we are performing a Ghost Dance that, through reviving and continuing our cultural practices, can bring the dead back home.

CHAPTER FOUR

ON THE WINGS OF **GLS\$** (*WADADUGA*): TOWARDS THE PERFORMANCE OF TWO-SPIRIT CRITIQUES

Splint **E** Saquu/One: Introduction

Cherokee revitalization movements utilize knowledge from both the archive and the repertoire to re-embody the past through contemporary practices. Among the many revitalization movements happening in Indian Country are movements of Native Two-Spirit people reconstructing spaces within our traditions, cultural memories, and practices. On the Wings of Wadaduga, in addition to being the title of this chapter, is the name for a larger research project I am conducting that utilizes both the archive and the repertoire to tell Cherokee Two-Spirit stories through doublewoven performance.

Making a *doublewoven* basket is much more than the physical work of weaving:

Rivercane must be gathered, the stalks split, and the skin of the splits carefully peeled to create long splints to weave into a basket. The stories that I've gathered together from interviews, archival research, and personal experiences are like freshly gathered cane that I have only just begun to process into splints. These splints, the strands of research that will be woven together in the future, have been left raw here so that they can be seen in their material form. The research I am presenting points to the gaps in which a *decolonial imaginary* can take place through processing and *doubleweaving* these splints. There is no way for me to present this material as a completed basket, as the final creation will be *doublewoven* through community, through \$\$\$\mathbf{S}\$\$\mathbf{Y}\$\$ (gadugi).

As I bring these splints together, the story of **GLS** (Wadaduga, "Dragonfly")

emerges as a powerful metaphor for Cherokee Two-Spirit people. **GLS** enters only peripherally in recorded Cherokee stories. Similarly, while contemporary scholarship has addressed the roles of Two-Spirit/GLBTQ people within many Native traditions and histories, discussions of Cherokee Two-Spirits have largely been left out of the discourse. An absence of such scholarship and the lack of recovered archival documents regarding identities we might now call "Two-Spirit" has been used by some Cherokees to argue that Two-Spirit/GLBTO people are, in fact, not a part of Cherokee traditions.

In the fall of 2004 Kathy Reynolds and Dawn McKinley put a call out to the Two-Spirit community to aid them in a battle against the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. After these two women had been issued a marriage certificate by the tribe in May of that year, a moratorium on all marriages was placed, and the day before the moratorium was lifted, an objection was filed against the marriage by Todd Hembree, an attorney for the tribe. Reynolds and McKinley's call came shortly before a court date in which they were being asked to demonstrate the historical existence of Two-Spirit people within Cherokee tradition in order to justify their attempt at a legal recognition of their marriage. Knowing that there was very little information recovered from the *archive* about Cherokee Two-Spirit people, this call prompted me to begin research with Cherokee Two-Spirit people that could revise the *archive* by creating a record of our experiences through interviews and oral histories. Moving these interviews into a public performance in the future can revise both *the archive* and *the repertoire*.

The participants involved with On the Wings of Wadaduga perform what I call

⁴³ After a long battle, the Cherokee Nation's Judicial Appeals Tribunal dismissed the injunction on the couple's marriage in February 2006.

Two-Spirit critiques through the interview process. In the tradition of the Cherokee Ghost Dance and the Redbird Smith movement, the stories from these interviews contribute to Cherokee decolonization, healing, and continuance. This chapter establishes the theoretical basis for Two-Spirit critiques, looks to the stories of those involved with On the Wings of Wadaduga for the ways they perform such critiques, and imagines a future ensemble performance of these stories that can revise both the archive and the repertoire. Cherokee Two-Spirits are currently engaged with numerous projects to re-story ourselves. 44 One the Wings of Wadaduga is a rhetorical tactic that contributes to those efforts.

Splint WP/Tal/Two: Re-storying GLS (Wadaduga)

There is an old Cherokee story about how Water Spider brought fire to the world on her back. Like all stories, it's nested within other stories. Mooney's telling, and similar versions, are the most well known:

In the beginning there was no fire, and the world was cold, until the Thunders...who lived up in Galûñ'lati, sent their lighting and put fire into the bottom of a hollow sycamore tree which grew on an island. The animals knew it was there, because they could see the smoke coming out at the top, but they could not get to it on account of the water, so they decided to call a council to decide what to do (*Myths* 240-241).

Raven, Screech Owl, Hooting-Owl, Horned Owl, the Black Racer snake, and the Great

When I say *re-story*, I am speaking of a revitalizing cultural memories through stories in both the *archive* and the *repertoire*. Restore + Story = Re-story.

Black Snake, all attempted to get the fire, but each failed. The smoke, fire, and ash gave each of these animals their distinct physical characteristics.

Now they held another council, for still there was no fire, and the world was cold, but birds, snakes, and four-footed animals, all had some excuse for not going, because they were all afraid to venture near the burning sycamore, until at last...the Water Spider said she would go. [...] She can run on top of the water or dive to the bottom, so there would be no trouble to get over to the island, but the question was, How could she bring back the fire? "I'll manage that," said the Water Spider; so she spun a thread from her body and wove it into a *tusti* bowl, which she fastened on her back. Then she crossed over to the island and through the grass to where the fire was still burning. She put one little coal of fire into her bowl, and came back with it, and ever since we have had fire, and the Water Spider still keeps her tusti bowl (241-242).

In a brief footnote, Mooney mentions other versions of this story: "In the version given in the Wahnenauhi manuscript the Possum and the Buzzard first make the trial, but come back unsuccessful, one losing the hair from his tail, while the other has the feathers scorched from his head and neck. In another version the Dragon-fly assists the Waterspider by pushing the tusti from behind" (431).

I love dragonflies, and I became interested in thinking about their relationship to Two-Spirit identities while finishing my BA at the University of Northern Colorado.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ This was, in part, influenced by Terry Tafoya's 1998 essay "M. Dragonfly: Two-Spirit and the Tafoya Principle of Uncertainty" (Jacobs et al 193-200). In 2006 Tafoya was found guilty of falsifying academic and credentials. Further, he clearly misrepresented his relationship with Native communities. This was a

Mooney's brief mention of **GLS\$** (*Wadaduga*) in an alternate, and often untold, version of the origin of fire intrigued me. Mooney briefly mentions **GLS\$** (*Wadaduga*) again, this time in relation to a story about a ballgame between birds and four-footed animals.⁴⁶ This story, like the story of the origin of fire, is also about characters that dwell in liminal spaces and cross boundaries. These ways of being—while initially met with derision or skepticism—prove to be valuable assets to community:

The birds had the Eagle for their captain.... The dance was over and they were all pruning their feathers up in the trees and waiting for the captain to give the word when here came two little things hardly larger than field mice climbing up the tree in which sat perched the bird captain. At last they reached the top...and asked to be allowed to join in the game. The captain looked at them, and seeing that they were four-footed, he asked why they did not go to the animals, where they belonged. The little things said that they had, but the animals had made fun of them and driven them off because they were so small. The bird captain pitied them and wanted to take them.

But how could they join the birds when they had no wings? The Eagle, the Hawk, and the others consulted, and at last it was decided to make some

shock to many Two-Spirit activists and our allies, as Tafoya had been a leader in Two-Spirit movements and scholarship. Regardless, Tafoya's essay did prompt me to think about the stories and metaphors dragonflies may hold for Two-Spirit people. Tafoya—deeply troubling as behavior may be—remains a part

of our larger story as contemporary Two-Spirit people.

⁴⁶ Stickball is traditionally an important ceremonial and social event for Cherokees and many other eastern Native people.

wings for the little fellows (287).

Wings for LCC+ (Tlameha, Bat) were made from the groundhog skin from the head of a drum, and wings for TG (Tewa, Flying Squirrel) were made by two other birds by stretching the animal's skin into wings. These two animals helped the birds win the ball game against the larger animals. (287-288). In a brief explanation to a ballgame formula in which GLS\$ (Wadaduga) appears, Mooney writes, "The Watatuga, a small species of dragon-fly, is also invoked, together with the bat, which, according to a Cherokee myth, once took sides with the birds in a great ball contest with the four-footed animals, and won the victory for the birds by reason of his superior skill in dodging" (397). Because of the way both GLS\$ and Cherokee Two-Spirit people have remained marginal in both published work and orature, GLS\$ emerges for me as a powerful metaphor for contemporary Cherokee Two-Spirit experiences.

My call for participants for On the Wings of Wadaduga used GLS\$ (Wadaduga) as a metaphor by pointing to a parallel near absence of both GLS\$ and Two-Spirit people in recorded stories. I was contacted by a Cherokee woman, Cat, who wanted to tell me a version of the origin of fire she had learned.⁴⁷ Cat's version of this story helps to re-story GLS\$ into our consciousness, much in the same way as the stories that

⁴⁷ Cat never identified herself to me as Two-Spirit. Her inclusion in the project was not because of her identification, or lack thereof, with any labels under a "Two-Spirit" umbrella. Rather, she was included in the project because she was willing to share a story that has important theoretical implications for Cherokee Two-Spirits, and in fact all Cherokees.

Cherokee Two-Spirit people are telling are re-storying our place within Cherokee communities and futures. Because of the significance of both this story to my own theorizing, I would like to include Cat's interview here in its here in its entirety:

I was really little, I was probably about four or five, it was right before my grandma died. And, we went down to the creek in the morning. And I think we were either looking for crawdads, or we were gonna go get pawpaws from under the trees down there. And, we were watching the water spiders on the surface of the creek, and the dragonflies. And I was talking about how pretty the dragonflies were, and I always loved the water spiders. So my grandma started telling me the story about how we got fire, and how the water spider brought fire in a little bubble on her back. But her story was a little different from what I've heard since, because what she said was along with all the other animals who went and tried and failed and came back different, Water Spider tried and didn't make it because it was just too far. So, Dragonfly offered up her back. And Water Spider got up on the dragonfly's back and flew to get the fire, and Water Spider got the fire, got back up on the dragonfly's back, and when the dragonfly got tired she sat down on the surface of the water and the water spider got the rest of the way.

So, the story's a little different from how I've heard it told since.

And it's very different from what I've read. And I don't know if my
grandmother was doing that because she wanted me to appreciate the
dragonflies for what they were, or simply because that was the way she'd

heard it. But the other thing she said about the dragonflies after she told the story was we were watching them and I was admiring their color, how beautiful they were and she said that I always had to appreciate them because no matter how frail and delicate they looked, that they were very strong. And that they were very fierce hunters and fighters and lovers. And I was a very little girl when she told me that story, and ever since I've never forgotten that, and I've always admired the dragonflies because of that story. And I've always thought of myself that way sometimes. When I get a little afraid or a little...you know...about the way the world is around me, I think back to that time that was a little more innocent and the power of that moment. And I think of that dragonfly and I think I need to be like that. Because that was my grandmother's lesson for me, was to tell me that that's what I needed to understand, that was no matter how fragile things seem, that they're stronger than we think. So I think that was about it of the story, that I can really tell you. I mean, I could go through the whole story about the different animals who went to the tree to get the fire, but somehow that doesn't seem right to tell you that right now. But that's my story.

Cat's telling of this story does very different theoretical work than the version of the story that most of us are accustomed to hearing and reading. ⁴⁸ Rather than a story

While previous to Cat's telling I had not heard anyone tell a version of this story with **GLS\$**(Wadaduga) involved, Mooney's brief reference to **GLS\$**, however, helped me to imagine other versions of this story to theorize a Cherokee Two-Spirit identity (2002, 2004).

about Water Spider's individual victory, it is a story of cooperative labor—\$SY (gadugi)—of two small animals collaborating in order to ensure the continuance of the world. This version of the story reminds us that there are many stories in Cherokee communities in addition to the dominant stories taken as truth. As discussed in Chapter One, these stories can be imagined as living in what Pérez calls a third space that hold radical decolonial possibilities. By listening to and performing the stories denied or forgotten because of colonialism—re-storying our cultural memories—we engage in radical decolonial performance rhetorics.

It's important to remember that the nature of stories is that they have infinite meanings. A story's significance is through our relationships to and understandings of them. I don't think that "The Origin of Fire" is a "Two-Spirit" story, but rather, that it is one story of many that can help Cherokee Two-Spirits understand our place within Cherokee cosmology and give us strength in our present revitalization movements. By doubleweaving stories of GLSS (Wadaduga) with Two-Spirit stories, additional ways of seeing Cherokee Two-Spirit lives and struggles are able to emerge.

If performance is a rhetorical tool to transmit cultural memories, it is also a rhetorical tool to intervene in dominant cultural memories that marginalize the experiences of oppressed peoples. And, if embodied rhetorics—in this case performance—aid in processes of healing historical trauma and struggles for decolonization, then performance can be utilized by Two-Spirit people to heal from colonization and place gender and sexuality at the center of radical, decolonial movements. In order to understand the radical possibilities of performance within Two-Spirit contexts, it is first necessary to discuss the critical work with which contemporary

Two-Spirit people are already engaged.

Splint KT/Tso/Three: Two-Spirit Critiques

While Cherokees remain largely marginal in scholarship on Two-Spirit people, a very different but parallel erasure of Native Two-Spirit people has also occurred in emergent scholarship being called "Queer of color critique" or "Queer diasporic critique." In his book *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, José Esteban Muñoz writes:

Disidentification can be understood as a way of shuffling back and forth between reception and production. For the critic, disidentification is the hermeneutical performance of decoding mass, high, or any other cultural field from the perspective of a minority subject who is disempowered in such a representational hierarchy (25).

Muñoz' work has been instrumental in the emergence of what is being called "Queer of color critique" or "Queer diasporic critique." Roderick A. Ferguson says that

...Queer of color critique employs cultural forms to bear witness to the critical gender and sexual heterogeneity that comprises minority cultures. Queer of color analysis does this to shed light on the ruptural components of culture, components that expose the restrictions of universality, the exploitations of capital, and the deceptions of national culture (Ferguson 24).

One of the strongest aspects of Queer of color critique is its ability to employ a multiplicity of *tactics* in order to decode nationalist (both colonizing and colonized)

strategies. Queer of color critique uses both Queerness and race as a tactic to disrupt white supremacist heteronomative strategies that constitute and normalize particular practices and bodies through marginalizing others. Further, it seeks to position Queerness as a tactic of resistance to hetronormalizing practices in nationalist discourses.

Another important feature of Queer of color critique is its insistence on drawing from a variety of intellectual and political genealogies, including Queer theory, critical race theory, and women of color feminisms (Ferguson 4). By drawing on numerous locations, Queer of color critique is able to speak from multiple locations to numerous audiences. Such critical interventions are necessary in order to reimagine Queer studies as a space that focuses on intersecting experiences of oppression and resistance. What Queer of color theorists offer to Queer studies, as well as the numerous interdisciplinary fields they are connected with, is of the utmost importance.

Yet, the near absence of Native peoples and histories in the formulation of these emergent theories should give us pause. The fact that Native people have largely (though certainly not completely) been left out of Queer of color critique points to a major rupture in its theories. Native people, then, must disidentify with the very critiques that claim to be decolonial and counterhegemonic interventions for Queer people of color in order to make it a viable theory for our communities. By doubleweaving Queer of color critique with Indigenous theories, other critiques emerge that centralize Native peoples, nations, identities, landbases, and survival tactics, which can be called Two-Spirit critiques.

These critiques not only serve to disidentify with Queer of color critique, I believe they create more robust and effective interventions in systems of oppression from which Native studies, Queer studies, and rhetoric and composition can benefit.

Two-Spirit is a word that itself is a critique. It's a challenge to the field of anthropology's use of the word berdache as well as to the white-dominated GLBTQ community's labels and taxonomies. It claims Native traditions as precedent to understand gender and sexuality, and asserts that Two-Spirit people are vital to our tribal communities. Further, Two-Spirit asserts ceremonial /spiritual communities and traditions and relationships with medicine as central in constituting various identities, marking itself as distinct from dominant constructions of GLBTQ identities.

Two-Spirit is also useful because it recenters a discussion on gendered constructions, both from within and outside of Native traditions. While important work is being done around Transgender, Genderqueer, and other "gender non-conforming" people and communities, *Queer* too often refers to sexualized practices and identities. Two-Spirit, on the other hand, places gendered identities and experiences at the center of discussion. Indeed, many of the traditions that scholars and activists have identified in Native communities as "Two-Spirit" are not necessarily about sexuality, they are about gendered experiences and identities that fall outside of dominant European gender constructions. To make "Two-Spirit" into "Queer" dressed in red, then, is not my intention here. Rather, my intention is to indigenize Queer theory and Queer of color critique by placing Native formulations of gender and sexuality, Native resistance to colonization, and Native efforts of decolonization at the center. Through this process of doubleweaving, we are able to hear the third space stories of Two-Spirit writers and activists who have long been involved with various political movements, using Two-Spirit experiences and identities as a means to critique homophobia, racism, misogyny, classism, and nationalisms. Doubleweaving Native politics and Queer theory subverts,

challenges, and refashions Queer politics, claiming gender and sexuality as a space of radical decolonial potential. From this act of *doubleweaving, third space* Two-Spirit critiques can materialize. No understanding of sexual and gender constructions on colonized and occupied land can take place without an understanding of the ways colonial projects continually police sexual and gender lines. Two-Spirit critiques, then, are essential to an understanding of homophobia, misogyny, and transphobia in the Americas just as an analysis of Queerphobia and sexism is necessary to understand colonial projects.

Part-and-parcel of the colonial experience for Native people in the U.S. is that we are constantly disappeared through the stories that non-Native people tell, or don't tell, about us. Powell calls this process un-seeing (Gilyard 3). Too often, other people of color are as complicit in acts of un-seeing Native people as EuroAmericans. Native studies poses a challenge to Queer studies—including its most recent waves of scholarship—because it problematizes many of the theories that Queer of color critique draws from. Two-Spirit critiques offer important challenges to both Native studies and Native nations by pushing at who exactly is included within current formations and movements of Native nation building and sovereignty struggles, as did Kathy Reynolds and Dawn McKinley's marriage challenge to the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

Native people often have an uneasy relationship with other struggles for social justice because the specificity of our struggles—rooted in sovereignty and a claim to this land—are too often ignored. While women of color feminisms certainly have an important place in the struggles of Native people, they have—again—not necessarily encompassed Native concerns. Native feminist analyses, for instance, often see patriarchy

as a tool of colonization. Chrystos writes, "What we experience is not patriarchy, but the process of colonization, which immigrant women have profited from right along with the greedy boys. Patriarchy is only one of many tools of colonizer mentality & is often used by women against other women" (*Fire Power* 128). Similarly, Andrea Smith addresses the ways in which patriarchal violence is used in genocidal projects launched against Native people (2005). I believe that Two-Spirit critiques and an analysis of the continuing colonization of Native people substantially challenge Queer studies and can push emergent Queer theories to more fully realized decolonial possibilities.

I want to make clear here that I am not attempting to posit Two-Spirit critiques as new or singular. There isn't a Two-Spirit critique. While the claims and work of Two-Spirit activists, artists, and scholars have largely been left out of Queer studies—Queer of color critique included—we have been present and writing and resisting in various activist, artistic, and academic communities for what is now decades (and more). What I would like to do here is tug on a few of the splints of this work and other critical Native theories in order to bring what I'm calling Two-Spirit critiques into the center of a conversation. There are immense possibilities that open up in conversations between Queer of color critique, Native Studies, and Two-Spirit critiques. Such conversations are a part alliance as a practice of survivance both inside rhetoric and composition and outside of the discipline.

In Native studies, the enormous presence of Queer women as central to arts and scholarship has meant that these women can't be ignored. However, they are often included without Queerness being discussed. Out Queer men in Native studies are only recently being published to a degree that intervenes in the field, and too often the

Queerness of these artists and scholars remain in barely tolerated margins. The presence of Trans people in the field, like much of academia, is starkly minimal. In Queer studies, Native people have largely been ignored unless as "subjects" of anthropological and historical research that demonstrated an idealized "Queer" past that can bolster non-Native Queer identities.

While not the only features of Two-Spirit critiques, there are several things that I think Two-Spirit critiques do that are important to ongoing struggles for social justice and radical scholarship. Two-Spirit critiques:

- See Two-Spirit people and traditions as both integral to and a challenge to nationalist and decolonial struggles.
- Are rooted in artistic and activist work and remain accountable to overlapping communities.
- 3. Are able to engage in both pan-tribal and tribally specific concerns.
- 4. Are woven into Native feminisms by seeing sexism, homophobia, and transphobia as colonial tools.
- Are informed by and make use of other Native activisms, arts, and scholarships.
- 6. See the erotic as a tool in decolonial struggles.
- 7. See Two-Spirit identities in relationship with spirituality and medicine.

While Two-Spirit critiques hold Native nations and peoples accountable for misogyny and homophobia, they simultaneously see Two-Spirit people and traditions as necessary—if not central—to national and decolonial struggles. Or, in the words of Craig Womack discussing Southeastern Native conceptions of difference, "Rather than

disrupting society, anomalies actually reify the existing social order. Anomalous beings can also be powerful; Queerness has an important place" (244). Two-Spirit critiques see Two-Spirits as valuable participants in struggles for sovereignty and decolonization, even while it calls into account the heterosexism and gender oppressions taking place in Native communities.

As Queer of color critique draws on and expands women of color feminisms,
Two-Spirit critiques draw on Native feminisms and sees heterosexism and gender
regimes as manifestations and tools of colonialism and genocide. As Andrea Smith
points out:

U.S. empire has always been reified by enforced heterosexuality and binary gender systems. By contrast, Native societies were not necessarily structured through binary gender systems. Rather, some of these societies had multiple genders and people did not fit rigidly into particular gender categories. Thus, it is not surprising that the first peoples targeted for destruction in Native communities were those who did not fit into Western gender categories (*Conquest* 178).

Homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny, then, are part of colonial projects intent on murdering, removing, and marginalizing Native bodies and nations. As several scholars including Perdue, Hill, and Mankiller address, as various waves of European colonialism hit Cherokee territory, Europeans were often disturbed to find a matrifocal culture in which women served as leaders of their communities and families. They encountered communities in which both women and men enjoyed sexual freedom, and there were both males and females practicing the gendered roles of the "opposite" sex.

Further, European agricultural gender roles differed substantially from those of Cherokees, as in Cherokee traditions it is women, not men, who are responsible for farming. From the moment of invasion through the allotment and beyond, Cherokees were seen through a lens of European heteronormativity that saw Cherokees as "variant" in both our sexualities and genders. A central effort of assimilation has been to try to force Cherokees to conform to dominant European gender and sexual norms, which includes concerted efforts to eradiate our spiritual traditions.

Looking at the work of Native writers, particularly Two-Spirit feminist poets, helps us articulate what Two-Spirit critiques are, where they emerge from, and what they do. Drawing on Vizenor's work on trickster hermeneutics, Powell has noted that "...the androgyny of the trickster offers compelling possibilities for unpacking gender binaries in feminist rhetorics. In stories, the trickster is often assigned gender, but frequently cross-dresses and mutates as well" (Gilyard 14). As Powell also notes, trickster figures have played an important role in work by several Native women, including Two-Spirit women such as Beth Brant, Janice Gould, Joy Harjo, and Chrystos (Gilyard 13). Vizenor's concept of trickster hermeneutics, then, lends itself to Two-Spirit critiques. Womack has likewise pointed to tricksters in relation to Two-Spirit people: "...the thinking behind the term 'queer,' which seems to celebrate deviance rather than apologize for it, seems embodied with trickster's energy to push social boundaries" (301). He goes on to look at the term Two-Spirit as itself a trickster *tactic* (302). **Similar, perhaps. to

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⁴⁹ It is important to note here that Womack also offers trickster tactics with a word of warning:

[&]quot;Celebrating tricksters, is seems to me, should be done with caution. It is important to remember that

disidentification and Queer theory, trickster hermeneutics critique, transform, and create new possibilities in the ruptures of discourse.

Native studies insists on methodologies and theories that are rooted in, responsible to, and in service of Native communities. Like women of color feminisms, Native studies positions itself as activist scholarship that centralizes the relationship between theory and practice. Queer and feminist theories in the academy have a history of "theorizing" themselves away from grassroots communities. Not only do Two-Spirit critiques remain accountable to both academic and non-academic audiences, they are informed by both artist and activist movements. Being Two-Spirit is a *practice*, a *tactic* of resistance to white supremacist colonialism. Two-Spirit critiques see theory *practiced* through poetry, memoir, fiction, story, song, dance, theater, visual art, film, and other genres. Theory is not just *about* interpreting genres, these genres *do* theoretical work.

Two-Spirit critiques insist on tribally specific approaches as a way to create pantribal alliances and coalitions. Just as there is no such thing as a generalized "Native" person, there is no such thing as a general "Two-Spirit" identity. Two-Spirit identities and *tactics* are "rooted in a solid national center" (Womack 223).

Two-Spirit critiques see the erotic as a power that can aid in the healing of historical trauma. Elsewhere I have suggested that a *sovereign erotic* can be utilized as a Two-Spirit *tactic* for healing (2003, 2004). Deborah A. Miranda writes, "Grace, or what I call an indigenous erotic, has a particular context for this particular continent: the perpetual act of balancing—always working toward balance through one's actions, intent,

shape-shifting can also be a form of witchcraft and that tricksters can be oppressive assholes as often as liberators..." (301).

and understanding of the world" (4). Other Two-Spirit writers, such as Brant, Chrystos, and Gregory Scofield have likewise formulated the erotic as central to their work.

Two-Spirit people simultaneously challenge and bolster work in Queer studies that seeks to decentralize white, male, middle-class formulations of Oueerness. Through Native disidentifications with Oueer of color critique, emergent Oueer theories are complicated and developed. Muñoz and Judith Halberstam have asked, "What does Queer studies have to say about empire, globalization, neoliberalism, sovereignty, and terrorism? What does Queer studies tell us about immigration, citizenship, prisons, welfare, mourning, and human rights" (2)? In an attempt to answer such questions, Two-Spirit critiques point to Queer studies' responsibility to examine ongoing colonialism, genocide, survival, and resistance of Native nations and peoples as well as Native studies' responsibility to engage radically with issues of gender and sexuality. Two-Spirit critiques ask all of our disciplines—and it is my hope rhetoric and composition will listen—to formulate analyses that pay attention to the current colonial occupation of Native lands and nations, and the way Two-Spirit bodies and identities work to disrupt colonial projects. By moving attention to Two-Spirit critiques, our scholarship can aid in the resistance struggles of Native communities and help create theories and movements that are inclusive and responsive to Indigenous Two-Spirit people. Within the stories told to me by Cherokee Two-Spirit people in my scholarship, Two-Spirit critiques are performed through a re-storying of Cherokee nationhood.

Splint C'y/Nvg/Four: **D4y D&C** (Asegi Ayetl): Cherokee Two-Spirit People Reimagining Nation

In Cherokee, the word for "nation" is **DBC** (ayetl). **DBC** literally means center, the seventh direction in Cherokee cosmology. Unlike dominant European views of the world, which understand only four fixed flat directions, Cherokee traditions understand the world as multifaceted and in motion. "Center" is neither a stable nor singular as a direction—the center is dependent upon one's perspective.

The same-sex marriage controversy and homophobia from both the mainstream and Cherokee communities has spurred Two-Spirit Cherokees to question where **D&C** is and what it means. Two-Spirit Cherokees are critiquing Indigenous nationalist projects modeled after colonizing powers and offering alternative notions of Cherokee nationhood. The concept of **D&C** enables us to theorize nationhoods that are numerous, multiple, and complex.

As a way to further theorize Two-Spirit identities within Cherokee communities, it is useful to look to a term that is being used by some Cherokees to talk about these identities: **D4Y** (asegi) or **D4T CLOV** (asegi udanto). There are numerous ways and terms to talk about these identities within Cherokee, and **D4Y** (asegi) and **D4T CLOV** (asegi udanto) are two of many. 50 **D4Y** (asegi) translates as "strange," or "odd." Durbin

During a language immersion with the Eastern Band, I asked my language instructor, Bo Taylor, if there were words to describe GLBTQ people in Cherokee. Taylor told me that people sometimes use the terms

DFG&I OLOI (age'yusd' udanti) and D&&&G&I OLI (asgayusd' udanti) to speak of particular

Feeling translates the word as "peculiar" (49). David Cornsilk translates this term as "extraordinary" (Sophia).

The word **OLOV** (*udanto*) does not translate well into English's taxonomies. It means heart/mind/spirit. In their work on Cherokee love incantations, Jack and Anna Kilpatrick explain: "The Cherokee terms (there are several) that we have consistently translated as 'soul,' in many instances might just as fittingly have been rendered 'mind' or 'heart.' All derive from the verb stem -da:n(v)dh- ('to think purposefully') (22). **D4T OLOV** (*asegi udanto*), then, refers specifically to a different way of thinking, feeling, and being that is outside of men's and women's traditional roles. Wahde, a Cherokee traditionalist, posted this comment about Cherokee gender traditions in a MySpace discussion forum:

At our Ceremonial Ground and most others, we Have three Gender Roles for participation, they arent enforced, but suggested. Male, Female and other. A woman could live as a male and vice verse, but a third option exists, those that are niether or both. Some folks in other Tribes call it two spirited, we dont. We call it asegi udanto or "other heart", these people are trained in esoteric arts and Traditional Medicine. Among non-Traditional Cherokees they are now both respected and feared, at one time they were just respected, but with Judeo Christian influence, they have become

identities. These can be translated as "s/he feels like a woman" and "s/he feels like a man," respectively. I have also been told in informal conversations that there are two other terms that can be translated "not just

a man" and "not just a woman." And, as is pointed out later in this chapter, I have been told of another term

that can be translated as "s/he has two hearts."

feared; almost like witches among some of our own people ("Gay People"). 51

I want to hold both of these concepts—**D&C** (ayetl, "nation/center," the seventh and moveable direction) and **D&Y** (asegi, "other")— to think about how contemporary Cherokee Two-Spirit people are telling stories that re-imagine and re-story notions of nationhood and disrupt contemporary queer/transphobia within and outside of Cherokee communities. Listening to these other stories—these **D&Y** (asegi) stories—helps us think about some how they perform Two-Spirit critiques that potentially shift and re-create **D&C** (ayetl).

question reductive and autocolonial notions of "nation," and look at the ways that Native nationalisms are not exempt from falling into the same modes of conduct as other nationalisms. **D4y** (asegi) stories are a rhetorical maneuver to intervene in heterosexist imaginings of Cherokee culture and histories. The work of Cornsilk, Reynolds, and McKinley to challenge the marriage laws of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma—for example—do just that. **D4y** (asegi) stories place Two-Spirit identities into a repertoire of cultural memories, employing Two-Spirit critiques in struggles for decolonization. Andrea Smith writes, "...heteropatriarchy is the building block of empire. [...] Heteropatriarchy is the logic that makes social hierarchy seem natural. Just as the patriarchs rule the family, the elites of the nation-state rule their citizens" ("Heteropatiarchy"). Through our stories, Cherokee Two-Spirits people are challenging

⁵¹ Spelling and punctuation has been left as in original.

heteropatriarchy within Cherokee nation-building, exposing the ways oppression is replicated by narrow notions of "nation." I would like to look to the **D4Y** (asegi) stories told to me by four participants in *On the Wings of Wadaduga*—Robin Farris, Daniel Heath Justice, Chad Taber, and Corey Taber—to see how they perform Two-Spirit critiques and re-story **D8C** (ayetl). 52

During the interviews, I asked participants what terms they use for themselves to describe their gender-sexualities, and not surprisingly, the answers point to the complexity and slipperyness of identity labels. While *Two-Spirit* is certainly used often as an umbrella term in contemporary Native Two-Spirit/GLBTQ communities, participants in this research have complex and conflicting relationships with the term. Daniel wasn't comfortable using the term *Two-Spirit* for himself because he felt the term was unnecessarily normalizing:

I actually don't use *Two-Spirit* very often. *Queer* works really well for me. I like its ambiguity, and I like that it kind of shakes things up a bit. For myself, I think *Two-Spirit* is a bit...I understand the reasons for connecting it to a spiritual tradition and I think that's important, but I think in some ways it normalizes in ways that I don't know if necessarily we need to be normalized. I like the idea that whatever roles we may have had in the past are roles today, that we could be really important in shaking up complacency and conservatism and reactionary convention, and reminding

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While all participants' identities are kept confidential as a matter-of-course, they also have the option of waiving their confidentiality. These four participants all wanted their real names to be used in this project.

The entire transcriptions of the interviews are included in the appendices.

people that being Cherokee is about a lot more than blood and it's a lot more than breeding. There's a lot to being Cherokee that is really exciting and powerful and disruptive and beautifully quirky and weird and anomalous. So, I'm very happy with *Queer*. I probably identify myself much more as *Queer* than *Gay*. [...] *Queer* feels very much in keeping with being Cherokee to me. And Gay is weighted by a lot of representational burdens. Cherokees as a rule have always been...weird. For our neighbors. So, in the Southeast we were the only Iroquoian speaking people. We were the people who lived in the mountains. Socially we were similar to the Muskogeean peoples in a lot of ways, but we were also anomalous in a lot of ways. And anomalies are such a big part of our tradition. I mean, you have *Uktena*, you have Wild Boy, you have...even Thunder in some ways is anomalous.⁵³ These are figures who cross between worlds and represent a lot of different realities. That's been a Cherokee experience. Our history of intermarriage, our history of adaptation...we adapted pretty readily. Even traditionalists who didn't speak English adapted to changing circumstances. Not necessarily gladly all the time, but pretty practically, so, we've always been able to adapt and

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⁵³ OSTO (Uktena) is a giant winged, horned serpent that lives in the mountains and waterways. Wild Boy, the son of 4M (Selu, Corn) and OOI (Kanati, the Hunter), was unknowingly brought into existence when 4M washed off blood in a river. Thunder is an important deity in traditional Cherokee cosmology, and is considered a protector of Cherokee people.

shift and...move ourselves as necessary, and I think Queer is a term that really gives us that as well.

Chad, Corey, and Robin all used *Two-Spirit* in specifically Native contexts, but also found it a difficult term to use outside of Native communities. Robin said that she uses the word *Gay* as more of a "universal" term, and also identifies as a Lesbian. On her use of the term *Two-Spirit* she says:

Two-Spirit depends on where I'm at, 'cause so many people don't know what that is [...] Obviously if I'm with Natives I would [use the term], if I thought they'd understand it. [...] I don't like the word homosexual, that's for sure. [...] [I]t sounds like a Christian sermon word to me. It's derogatory, it's meant to separate and define who's doing something they're not supposed to. I like what they said to today, about the fact that Two-Spirit embraces more that just sexuality, that it embraces the whole spirit part of who we are as a person, honoring and being genuine to who we're born as.⁵⁴

Chad and Corey—twin mixedblood Cherokee/Creek/Osage brothers who are organizers in Oklahoma Two-Spirit communities—also spoke about their situational use of the term *Two-Spirit* and some of the challenges of using it outside of Native contexts:

CHAD

It depends probably I guess to whom I'm speaking. Usually I identify as Gay, but also because mainly where I live, it's very urban, there's not

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⁵⁴ Robin is referring to a presentation and discussion lead by John Hawk Co-cké, an Osage Two-Spirit activist, at the 2008 Tulsa Two-Spirit Gathering.

many opportunities for me to use the term *Two-Spirit* and be understood.

So usually I just used the term *Gay* and I identify as Gay and Native

American. (*To Corey*). How do you identify?

COREY

You know, I think that people that are not Native American have no idea what the word *Two-Spirit* means in almost every instance, and so I think it's kind of...it's a useless term in some scenarios...

CHAD

Sometimes...

COREY

...Unfortunately. And I don't mean to take away from it, like to say it's not worth having around, but just that in certain situations it's not applicable as...it's lost in translation, almost, you could say.

CHAD

Sometimes I use that as an opportunity to tell people a little bit about our history.

COREY

To educate.

CHAD

Mmhmm. Especially in my day-to-day life because I come in contact with a lot of people. I work as a stylist, and so I see a lot of people on a daily basis, and a lot of them...just because of the nature of the work, I develop a pretty close relationship with most of my clients, and so and a lot of

them will ask me. And also, when I return from ceremony like Green Corn Ceremony where I have scratches on my body and people see that. Or my tattoos they see on my wrists and wonder what that's from or what it symbolizes. And so that kind of gives me an opportunity to explain a little bit more about myself and maybe even identify with the term *Two-Spirit*.

Cherokee people, then, have a complicated and nuanced relationship with the term *Two-Spirit*. While Chad, Corey, and Robin all used the term for themselves, it was not the only term they used as an identity label. Daniel simultaneously questioned the rhetorical work of *Two-Spirit*, while also seeing its value in relationship to spiritual traditions. All four participants, then, are able to *disidentify* with the term as a *tactic* in constructing **D4Y** (asegi) and **D8C** (ayetl).

Many Cherokee Two-Spirit people who are not fluent in Cherokee—
including myself—struggle or have struggled with the absence and trauma caused by
language-loss in relationship to our identities as Two-Spirit people. One of the first
questions I had about my identity as a Two-Spirit Cherokee was, "What word or words
exist in Cherokee to talk about who we are?" Just as there is no singular answer to this in
English, there is no singular answer to this in Cherokee. The fact that most Cherokees are
not fluent in Cherokee adds additional complexities to searching for these terms, as we
often have to rely on other people—who may or may not be Two-Spirit and may have
various relationships to and opinions about GLBTQ issues—to relay very specific
cultural information. The conflation of sexuality and gender expression under umbrella

⁵⁵ Chad has tattoos of scratches on his writs, symbolizing ceremonial scratches from Green Corn.

terms like "Two-Spirit" and "Queer" may further complicate this process. Asking a language speaker or elder if there is a word for "Gay" in Cherokee, for instance, may cause the elder or speaker to say "no." However, asking elders or speakers if there are words for people who live as a gender other than that assigned at birth may bring different answers. Because the historical identities, roles, and expressions we are calling "Two-Spirit" are primarily about gender role and gender expression—*not* about what genders a person can fall in love with or are sexually involved with—there is no singular or simple answer to questions about Cherokee terms for our identities.

Cherokee Two-Spirit people are looking to language—or lack thereof—to make sense of our places in history, build our *practices* in the present, and transform the future through our stories. Because of the importance of language for contemporary Cherokee Two-Spirits, I asked participants if they knew terms in Cherokee for our identities. In answering a question about terms for Two-Spirit people in Cherokee, Robin responded:

Well, I liked finding out from another Cherokee [...] that there had been a word, because [...] I started out finding that among Native people—'cause I was finding out who I was as a Gay person at the same time I was trying to learn more about my culture as a Cherokee—and then I heard through a Cherokee that here amongst Native people, it's a non-issue. That we've always had them in our society, and I thought, "Oh, this is incredible."

You know, I'd found this community that will accept me as a Gay person.

And then, as I started investigating it, I found out—not the case. We've been so assimilated as a culture that a lot of them don't even know their history and don't even remember. And so, I was angry and disappointed

and very sad. Then I found out from another Cherokee, of the Eastern Band, that yes indeed, we were accepted and that there was a name for us, it was Two Heart. ⁵⁶ And I don't know how to pronounce that in Cherokee. He wrote it down, but I don't remember how to pronounce it.

In response to a similar question, Corey said he hadn't heard a specific positive term for Two-Spirit people in Cherokee contexts:

I would say that a lot of the words that you'll hear, they probably have some sort of negative connotation. Because I haven't ever experienced or haven't ever been informed of any position of reverence, we don't have a pretty word for it—you know what I mean?—like some tribes do. There just wasn't that. Not that I know of anyway. And a lot of the younger people now—well, younger people anyway are the ones who cause a lot of the issues or go out of their way to make people feel uncomfortable and that sort of thing, or harass all of the Two-Spirited people, that sort of thing. It's usually the younger people that do that. The older people have a quieter way. And so, younger people nowadays, a lot of them don't speak our language. And so for that reason they don't even know the words to use other than English words. So I've never really had any experiences or anything like that with being called negative or even positive words in the

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⁵⁶ I have likewise been told of this term by an Eastern Cherokee. I have not included the Cherokee term here because it was told to me informally, not in the context of an interview moving toward publication or public performance.

Robin and Corey's responses here lead to a core concept that all participants had about Cherokee Two-Spirit histories and present lives: that the gender role and/or sexuality of a Cherokee person is less relevant to their place in Cherokee communities than the *practices* of being in reciprocal and balanced relationship with—SGAP (duyuk'ta)—and productive cooperation with—SSY (gadugi)—those communities.

Questions about the traditional place of Two-Spirit people within Cherokee lifeways and worldviews opened up discussions about larger obligations to community. When asked what he thought our traditional place was in Cherokee communities, Daniel said:

I've asked a couple of elders this, both of whom said they don't think we had a special place necessarily, or a culturally defined place, but they both said that was because it just didn't matter, that it wasn't so different as to require a distinctive role. Which surprised me...that wasn't the answer I was expecting. And I wonder about that, I think it's a real possibility that as long as you were still contributing to the community, whether you lived as a man or a woman or whatever, who you had sex with didn't matter. Are you having kids? Are you adding to the safety and security of the town? Are you fulfilling your obligations to your family? That mattered. On the whole, not everybody had to have children. Are you contributing to the welfare of the community? I think that's what mattered. That could very well have been it.

Corey had a very similar answer to this question:

I haven't experienced a great difference between Cherokee and Creek communities, and what I've learned from my experiences with all of those people is that there wasn't necessarily a place of reverence for Two-Spirited people—necessarily. And there could have been, you know, I mean all of our people teach different things, but it was told to us that that's not how you're characterized. What's important is how you help out your family and how you take care of your people, whether it be your community, your family, your tribe—whatever circumstance. How you treat the people around you and what you do to give back. That essentially defines you as a person, and not who you choose for a partner.

Chad likewise emphasized the importance of community participation—**\$SY** (gadugi)—to Cherokee identity rather than contemporary concepts of sexuality, gender, race, and blood-quantum: "Traditionally we're told that you were Cherokee based on your participation in the community and what you do for the community."

When I asked Robin what she thought our traditional place was within Cherokee communities, she replied:

I have no idea. Like [Co-cké] was talking about—and that's what I found in my research—because it's an eastern tribe, so much of it was assimilated before people started getting it down on paper, that unless we do old manuscripts, that the people who wrote down certain things or know because it's been passed down orally or something like that...I have no idea. I've heard that you were defined by your work role, so it could be that. I mean, I know there were warrior women. Whether that meant they were considered Two-Spirit or not, I don't know. I know there were Cherokee warrior women, because I've read about them. Like Nancy Ward

was considered sort of a warrior woman—Beloved Women—I know there's that, but Beloved Women are not the same thing as warrior women or Two-Spirit. I guess you could be both, but not necessarily, so, I don't know. I'm still learning.

While Robin wasn't sure what place Two-Spirit people had within Cherokee communities in the past, she was sure that Two-Spirit people were "a part of the circle," a part of the larger whole of Cherokee community and lifeways:

Now I think we're struggling to get back in the circle. And then I think we were part of the circle, and it was accepted and it was just a different way of being, and unique to each individual, but all part of the whole community. I like what they say about, we didn't throw away people, we put them in their place.⁵⁷ I don't think that's true now. But I think we can get back there. I'm optimistic.

Wahde's posts on MySpace about **D4T CLOV** (asegi udanto) adds another layer to a discussion of traditional roles:

It was out in the open, they often had specific Ceremonial positions set aside for them. Same for women. It was more about gender roles than sexuality. You took a man's role, a woman's role, or the "other" roll. There is historical documentation, that I dont care to quote verbatim...that found two men married, one living as a woman, the other a man, and it was considered normal. Gender roles seemed to be more important than sexual identity ("Matriarchy").

⁵⁷ A reference to Co-cké's presentation at the Two-Spirit Gathering.

Not surprisingly, participants in *On the Wings of Wadaduga* both subtly and explicitly critiqued the Cherokee Nation's reaction to same sex-marriage, seeing the CNO's actions as a detriment to "the circle." Participants countered these politics with **D4Y** (asegi) stories, unsettling and disidentifying with notions of Cherokee **D8C** (ayetl) that are reductive and exclusive. Robin spoke fairly extensively about the same-sex marriage case and her own email exchanges with members of the tribal council. Robin challenges the CNO's arguments and reasoning regarding same-sex marriage:

Our history as a people is evolving, just like all people's history, so that was my big argument to the Nation council was (and is) that, I don't argue with your right to say that you've decided at this point in time that—given how you view the world or morality or whatever—that Gays shouldn't get married, but I do argue with your denial of the fact the Two-Spirit were a part and accepted as a valuable part of our people and our history. I mean, go ahead and say that it used to be okay in the past but that you no longer find that being gay acceptable or whatever, but don't pretend we didn't exist.

Daniel likewise found moves toward exclusion and normalcy contrary to Cherokee lifeways, experiences, and traditions:

I'd be a little hesitant to say that to be Cherokee is to be Queer, but I think that we are in an anomalous position in a lot of ways in broader Native America. I mean, we're hated in Indian Country 'cause we're supposedly not Indian enough, but it's been our transformative Indian-ness that has made us survive. And I find it really troubling that there are so many

people in the Nation who would want to take away that transformability out of some sort of weird misguided fear about cultural purity, when we've always been inclusive, we've always been adaptive. Not always happily. I think that's an important point, too, but, that would be Queer. That's also about being Queer. That's survival. And not just surviving, but thriving.

Corey made explicit and confrontational reference to the erasure of Two-Spirit people by the Cherokee Nation's tribal council during the same-sex marriage case when I asked him what he would want to say to future generations of Cherokee Two-Spirit people:

There's a lot, a lot, a lot of Gay Cherokees and a lot of Gay Creeks. And there always have been and there always will be. And anybody on the tribal council that tells you different is full of fuckin shit. (*Laughter*). And I want you to *believe* that. I want you to *know* that from us. [...] Just in case you didn't hear it anywhere else, you heard it here. I mean that from the bottom of my heart, because that's what our medicine people have taught us. You guys aren't something new, you aren't some kind of spectacle we never seen. They treat us as if it's a non-issue, they treat us like it's nothing out of the ordinary. Because it isn't to us. And I wanna make sure that *that* gets in there. Aaayyeee...

Participants' re-storying Two-Spirit history is nested within larger work to remember **D4Y** (asegi) stories that have been marginalized by some aspects of contemporary Cherokee nationalism. Daniel looked to history to disrupt moves to essentialize and simplify Cherokee "tradition" and "history." Part of Daniel's current

scholarship, for instance, offers an **D4Y** (asegi) narrative to the history of Little Carpenter:

Yeah, Little Carpenter is a really interesting figure to me. We have a lot of information on him but he's...he's kinda quirky. He's honored, but it's clear that even in his own community of Chota he holds a somewhat ambivalent or ambiguous position. He's the father of Dragging Canoe, the great Chickamauga war chief. He's the uncle of Nancy Ward, Nan'yehi, the great Beloved Woman. He's a Beloved Man who is an advocate for peace. He was known as a very strong warrior before. But he disappeared for a long time, he was a captive of the Odawas, possibly. There's also some question that he might have been Odawa. He might have been of another nation who was adopted into the Cherokee Nation. He was renowned for his rhetorical skills, but he was also known to be very, very strategic. He was an amazing politician who worked very much for the benefit of Chota, but not necessarily for other Cherokee communities. He was very town centered. He was on one the first Cherokee delegation that went to London, so he saw this force that was coming across the ocean, and he had a really unique perspective that a lot of other Cherokees at this time did not.

The pictures we have of him, and the descriptions we have of him always that he was small, slight, and he's effeminized in a lot of these representations, even if it's just kind of by an aside. He had a *very* intimate relationship with a British military officer, I want to say John Stuart, but I

don't remember exactly what his name was. Somewhere in memory they did the "brotherhood ceremony," which seems to me to be kind of a nice way of, or a very hetronormative way, of dismissing that intimacy.⁵⁸ I guess when Little Carpenter died, Stuart or whoever this man was, was inconsolable with grief, which could be a brother situation, but just a lot of things lead me to wonder. No evidence, I have no evidence that he got it on with men. But just so many little things point to him being an anomalous figure and a figure who—yeah, he had a son, we know nothing, or very little, about his relationship with his wife. We do know he was estranged from his son, which would have made some sense, because the father would not have been any authority. But in their particular relationship, they were both Wolf Clan—not sure how that happened. They would have had a stronger relationship. And Little Carpenter's relationship with Nan'yehi—he was the uncle of Nan'yehi—he would have had a significant influence over her. And she had a very strong and contested relationship with Dragging Canoe. I also wonder—because we don't know a lot about the women's roles in the council, there's scattered bits and pieces. We know that there probably was a women's council. But we know in other Iroquoian and some Muskogeean traditions, but particularly Iroquoian, the women's council has a male representative to men's council. And his relationship with the women seems to be very strong. So I wonder if there was something maybe similar to that. And

⁵⁸ I discuss this ceremony later in this chapter.

who better than a Queer boy to bridge that gap between the women and the men?

And, his nickname: Leaning Wood. It's really hard for me not to see that as a pun. I need to talk to a language speaker to have a sense of whether that would be the case, but things just point over and over to me that he was family. And, so, he fathered a child. Yeah, and? That would not in any way preclude him from being Queer. He's a Beloved Man at a younger age than a lot of other Beloved Men, if memory serves. So what does that mean? And just because he was a Beloved Man doesn't mean he wasn't also a warrior. But, he supported the British. I would love to know what was going on in England when those Cherokee boys were over there. Did they visit a molly house? Not likely, but they certainly stayed in the area of London where same-sex activities were notorious. I don't know. I have a lot of research to do on this, but...you know?

Just and Daniel brought an **D4***Y* (asegi) interpretation to this part of Cherokee history, he also challenges Cherokees to remember the role of the erotic in Cherokee traditions, histories, and lifeways. Further, he argues that a denial of the erotic disrupts Cherokee community:

Cherokees were *incredibly* sexual people, though not nasty about it. At the Peabody Museum there's a pipe bowl from a Cherokee townsite, with a man and a woman having sex, in explicit detail, with their genitalia pointed right at the smoker. So, somebody's getting a little thrill looking at that. Early European accounts were horrified about how sexually free

Cherokees were, that young Cherokee women had sex, out of wedlock, sometimes extra-wedlock. And young men. And, no mentions are—
I haven't seen any mentions at all or hints at all of same-sex intimacies.
But, people were very much sexual people. And frankly a lot of the fine upstanding folks who don't want to admit it...I'm sorry, but you can either deny your sexual desires and get in weird circumstances, or you can just admit the fact that we love sex, we're very sexual people, and that doesn't mean that we're crass about it. I think Cherokees would not have been crass, and I think that even very sexual Cherokees today have personal modesty, but it doesn't necessarily transfer always over to sexual prudery. But, it's depending on the context. It's depending on who's around, and I think that's okay. I think that's fair. I mean, walking around flashing your dick at everybody is not a nice thing to do. Not everybody wants to see that. So, I think part of it is also just a basic consideration for one another.

Robin, Daniel, Corey, and Chad are pointing to an **D&C** (ayetl, nation/center) that asks Cherokee people, now and in the future, to remember other stories, other histories, that are inclusive—and in fact grounded—in counter-stories—**D&Y** (asegi) stories—to versions of Cherokee history, sovereignty, and nationhood that seek heteronormativity.

Robin, Corey and Chad all emphasized a past in which Two-Spirit people were "a part of the circle." Healing the circle—healing historical trauma—was a central part of the interviews with Corey and Chad. These conversations reflected the decolonial work that Cherokee people and Two-Spirit people are currently involved. This revitalization work critiques the queer/transphobia internalized by Native communities and

simultaneously positions Two-Spirit people as necessary to the well-being of both Native communities and the world:

CHAD

...I think that the basis of our work, fundamentally, is restoring what was lost. And that's a very general statement, but it means a lot of different things. Restoring what was lost as Two-Spirited people, restoring what was lost as Cherokee Two-Spirited people, meaning traditions and ceremonies...

COREY

Healing the part of the Cherokee circle that's been *gone* because these people have *ignored* us and cast us out.

CHAD

Not just that but, healing and restoring what is lost in the world. And I think our work is going to transition from regaining what we've lost in a smaller prospective to restoring what was lost as a whole.

COREY

It's a part of a bigger healing that has to occur.

Corey and Chad's words here are reminiscent of other waves of Cherokee resistance that place practice at the center of maintaining SGAP (duyuk'ta) and the continuance of the world. Like the Cherokee Ghost Dance movement that insisted on reclaiming particular dances in order to maintain the world, and like the Redbird Smith movement which worked to "get back what was lost" through the both the archive and

the repertoire, Cherokee Two-Spirit people are looking to both archive and repertoire both to "restore what was lost" and imagine and create a present and future.

Because the goal of *On the Wings of Wadaduga* is to both revise both the *archive* and the *repertoire*, and explicitly to bring our stories in the present to Cherokee Two-Spirit people in the future and to use our stories to imagine what we want our futures to look like, I asked participants about our future as Two-Spirit Cherokees. When asked what she would want our future to be, Robin replied:

That we'll get back into that place where we're accepted, protected, and allowed to add our spirit and gifts into the circle of our people and our community just like any other member of the tribe. I'd like to see all of us, in all tribes, model to the rest of the world that Native Americans see being Two-Spirit [...] as no big deal. It's just a different way of being, like having blond hair or blue eyes, being tall or short.

Daniel replied to a similar question by also speaking of having a place within what Robin, Chad, and Corey call "the circle:"

I want us to have a place on the grounds, with our partners, where we don't have to worry or feel like our partners aren't gonna be welcomed. I'm not a Baptist, but I don't imagine that one's partner would be welcome in the Baptist Church. There are some grounds where we're welcome, though not many. I want us to be healthy and happy and to not be seen as compromising our Cherokeeness by living honestly and loving honestly. I want that love and living to be seen as contributing to Cherokee nationhood, not drawing away from it.

While there are many ways that Cherokee Two-Spirits are regaining our places within "the circle," one way we are doing this work is through concentrated work in the archive in order to uncover **D4Y** (asegi) stories that have been forgotten or ignored.

Through this work, Two-Spirit people are "regaining what we've lost."

Splint And Hisg/Five: Cherokee Two-Spirits in the Archive

One of the goals of On the Wings of Wadaduga is to revise historical memory through both the archive and the repertoire. Certainly all Two-Spirit people are currently in a process of uncovering this history, but I think that for some Native people—including Cherokees—that this process is more challenging than it is for others. Like the near absence of GLSS (Wadaduga) in recorded stories, I've encountered very little reference to Cherokee Two-Spirit people in historical accounts, though such references do exist. I want to share some of the references I have come across to Two-Spirit people in Cherokee traditions, thinking about them as D4J (asegi) stories, and imagining what they might mean to us now.

I am certainly not the only Cherokee Two-Spirit person involved with uncovering these histories, and I am sure that there is more documentation, published and not, than these brief mentions that I am pointing to here. And—as expressed through the interviews with Cherokee Two-Spirit people—much of this knowledge is held in the *repertoire*. As Daniel insists:

A lot of families have this evidence, as they have Gay and Lesbian and Queer kids, parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, friends, and so on. And they don't necessarily talk about it a lot, but we've all heard stories of very public admissions from high-level people in the community. But these acknowledgments haven't gotten written down...there's power in the words. And there are very important traditionalists who have been very vocal about it, some of whom are Queer. So, yeah, we have the evidence.

In addition to the fact that few records about Cherokee Two-Spirit people have been recovered, the documentation that has been recovered is often based on European colonists' reactions to Cherokee gender, who thought that *all* of our genders were "variant." Colonists likely saw female warriors or women in positions of leadership as living as men, even though these were acceptable—and important—roles for women in Cherokee gender systems. Trying to glean from colonial accounts which of these female-embodied people might now be called "Two-Spirit" and which were simply acting in accordance with Cherokee traditions for women is very difficult. We must remember these kinds of complexities as we continue to uncover our past and re-story our present. I would like to spend some time talking about a few references to Cherokee Two-Spirit histories from published texts and from my own archival research in order to provide further **D4** *Y* (asegi) stories that can be coupled with the interviews with Cherokee Two-Spirit people to reimagine **D8C** (ayetl).

In Hill's Weaving New Worlds: Southeastern Women and Their Basketry, I found a brief mention of male-embodied Two-Spirit people that suggests that males who lived as women were as respected members of their communities as other women:

Pardo...saw among those subsequently known as Cherokees a man who "went among the Indian women, wearing an apron like they did." The

startled Spaniard summoned his interpreters and "many soldiers" to ask the local chief about him. The man was his brother, the chief explained, and was not "a man for war." With neither elaboration nor scorn for the scribe to record, the chief said his brother "went about in that manner like a woman," doing "all that is given to a woman to do." It is a slender thread of history suggesting that among Cherokees, as among many native peoples, gender and labor interwove to create identity (66).

Theda Perdue's Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835 also has some discussion of males and females we might now call Two-Spirit, though I disagree about her conclusions about male-embodied Two-Spirits. While she writes that it is "difficult to ascertain" Cherokee responses to gender "anomalies," some of her information can be coupled with the brief mention of male-embodied Two-Spirits made by Hill and perhaps shift Perdue's conclusions (Perdue 37). While there is very useful information for Two-Spirit people in Perdue's book, she asserts that male-embodied Two-Spirits were not well respected because of a lack blood rites via war or menstruation (Perdue 39). This does not take into account the possibility of other blood rites existing for male-embodied Two-Spirits via ritual scratching, tattooing, or other kinds of activities. If blood rites defined Cherokee gender roles during this period, it only makes sense that blood rites existed for male-embodied Two-Spirits to ensure they remained part of the community. One must at least consider the possibility that male-embodied Two-Spirit people who lived as women would still have a warrior tradition open to them, just as it was open to other women.

Purdue draws conclusions about Cherokee gender constructions based on gender in other tribes, but lacks this sort of analysis when it comes to male-embodied Cherokee Two-Spirit people. While broad generalizations cannot be made, the fact that in some traditions male-embodied Two-Spirits engaged in simulated menstruation could suggest that similar practices may have existed among Cherokees (Gay American Indians & Roscoe 38). Certainly many contemporary Two-Spirit Cherokees go to great length to ensure their physical bodies reflect their gender identities. Regardless of Perdue's interpretation, her book provides important information about Cherokee Two-Spirits that we can use to understand who we are in the present.

Walter L. Williams' The Spirit and the Flesh only marginally speaks about Cherokees, but he cites a manuscript by C.C. Trowbridge that mentions male-embodied Two-Spirits. Williams quotes this excerpt from the Trowbridge manuscript: "There were among them formerly, men who assumed the dress and performed all the duties of women and who lived their whole lives in this manner" (4). During the roundtable "Indigenous Politics and the Question of Same-Sex Marriage" at What's Next for Native American and Indigenous Studies? Cornsilk mentioned that this particular document goes on to suggest that marriage was practiced by all Cherokees, including Two-Spirit people (Kauanui 2007).

In my own archival research, I stumbled across two reference to Cherokee samesex union ceremonies in John Howard Payne's manuscript on Cherokee life. 59 Payne mentions this union ceremony more than once in his manuscript, which describes a

⁵⁹ John Howard Payne was a EuroAmerican actor and playwright who lived for a period of time with Chief John Ross in order to document Cherokee customs.

particular performance to formalize "perpetual friendship." I am including a long excerpt from his account in order to offer this information to other Cherokee Two-Spirits uncovering our histories:

Taking an opportunity sometime during that feast, when the people were seated in the council house, they arose, walked toward the fire, and then turned and commenced dancing around the fire...each having on his best clothes. While dancing, in the presence of all the people, who looking, they exchanged one garment after another till each had given the other his entire dress, even to legings, mocasins etc. and thus each of them publicly received the other as himself, & became thus pledged to regard and treat him as himself while he lived. Sometimes two women, and sometimes a man and a woman contracted this friendship. Thus when a young man and woman fell in love with each other but were hindered from marrying, either by relation or by being of the same clan, they bound themselves in perpetual friendship. While dancing round the fire as above stated, the man threw his blanket over the woman, and the woman as soon as convenient threw hers to the man. The man also, having prepared a cane sieve, & hung it by a string over his shoulder, gave her that. He also presented her with a pestle to pound corn with. The mortar he had for her at home (Volume III, 49-50).

While Payne makes sense of this as a friendship ceremony, I doubt very much that it was a ceremony only to cement a "friendship." The fact that Payne mentions opposite-sex couples in love, but not able to have children because of clan laws, suggests

that the same-sex couples were likewise in love. Perhaps what was common to both opposite-sex and same-sex couples in this arrangement was the fact that they would not be bearing biological children. The fact that the opposite-sex ceremony is not terribly different than contemporary "traditional" Cherokee marriage ceremonies leads me to think that the same-sex ceremonies were likewise a public ceremony to define a loving, romantic, same-sex relationship. Keeping in mind that Cherokee constructions of marriage and relationship have changed dramatically since invasion, it is important to consider that those involved in this "friendship" ceremony may have very well also participated in other "marriage" ceremonies, and that—just as occurred in marriage—it is likely that the ceremony did not demand monogamous sexualities.

What do these fragments of archival history mean for us as Cherokee Two-Spirit people now? I certainly cannot say. It is up to Cherokee Two-Spirit people, through **\$SY** (gadugi), to weave together these pieces of our past and to decide what they may mean in our future. Part of the work of the future ensemble performance will be to collectively imagine the place of these stories in our lives, and to use performance to shift embodied cultural knowledge, as well as the archival record, to listen the **D4Y** (asegi) stories told through both archive and repertoire.

Splint & LP/Sudal/Six: Ghost Dancing the Repertoire

While we can look to the Cherokee Ghost Dance and other revivalist movements as a model for decolonial historiographic work in the *archive*, we can also look to these movements as a model for work in the *repertoire*. Performance can link the ghosts of the past to the memories of the present through embodied *practices*, healing historical trauma

through the restoration of cultural memories. My future work will utilize both the interviews conducted through *On the Wings of Wadaduga* as well as stories from the *archive* to create an ensemble decolonial performance that can transmit these stories back into both the *archive* and the *repertoire*. This project will be rooted in grassroots ensemble performance, drawing from theories and practices from oral history performance.

Oral history performance, as well as other performance-based methodologies, already have a precedent in academia, community activism, and theater. Perhaps the most famous of these are Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theatre Company's *The Laramie Project*, and work by Anna Devere Smith including *Fires in the Mirror*. More recently, and within queer of color scholarship, E. Patrick Johnson has produced one-man performances based on his interviews, *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South*. Because performance transmits embodied cultural memories, it can be a central means with which to revise and challenge dominant cultural memories that marginalize particular stories and experiences. As a *practice* that demands embodiment, it lends itself to decolonial work that calls for particular *practices* to become revived in the *repertoire*. Rivka Syd Eisner argues:

Performing memory is...about bearing witness. Bearing witness, however, does not just entail carrying memory. Bearing the past is to allow it entry into bodily consciousness and continuing social experience, so that living with memory means giving residence to pieces of the past that in turn, even in their painfulness, sustain and change one's own being (Pollock 124).

An ensemble performance based in the **D4y** (asegi) stories of Cherokee Two-Spirit people, then, can do substantial and meaningful decolonial work that aids in struggles to return Two-Spirit people to our places within the circle. It can help both the ensemble and the audience carry cultural memories that can interrupt the erasure of Cherokee Two-Spirit people.

By consciously transmitting cultural memory and resistance through performance rhetorics, a future production of *On the Wings of Wadaduga*—like my archival research—uses Cherokee revitalization movements as a model. Because of its historiograhic work, *On the Wings of Wadaduga* can be seen as what Joseph Roach calls "echoes in the bone" that are part of performative "politics of communicating with the dead" and "refer not only to a history of forgetting but to a strategy of empowering the living through the performance of memory" (34). By re-embodying past *practices*, performance not only communicates with the dead, but also communicates with the present and the future. *On the Wings of Wadaduga* aims engage with these "echoes in the bone" by consciously looking at embodying the past for the well-being of future generations. Chad and Corey's words reflect this consciousness:

COREY

What you're hearing right now is our grandmas. This is our grandmas talking.

CHAD

This is Mary and Betty. No, I'm just kidding. (Laughter).

COREY

It is, it is. We didn't make this shit up. This was taught to us. And this comes from two generations behind us and two generations behind that.

And so that's what's so special about it, is that somebody our age can here sit and tell you things that people who have been dead for a hundred and fifty years can tell you.

Natalie M. Fousekis claims that in oral history performance "[t]he authority comes not from the pen and written word of the historian, but directly from the voices of our interviewees as performers embody and recreate their past. In this case, sophisticated historical analysis emerges from the weaving of words, memories, and histories of individuals into a performance" (Pollock 169). Oral history performance lends itself to Cherokee Two-Spirit people's struggles to "regain what was lost" through a transfer of both archival and embodied memories into the *practices* of the *repertoire*.

Keeping within methodologies and practices that emphasize **\$SY** (gadugi)—including the concept of a decolonial skillshare— a future performance will be an ensemble, rather than a solo, performance that will weave together the splints of this research into a doublewoven basket. The ensemble process opens the possibilities of a decolonial skillshare in which ensemble members can learn and/or share particular cultural practices—language, songs, dances, and material arts—even if these practices do not appear in the final public performance. The design for a future ensemble production, then, is doublewoven: an inner structure focuses on particular embodied practices as part of larger decolonial struggles, while the outer structure delivers Cherokee Two-Spirit stories to an audience through performance.

Performance rhetorics are central to Cherokee resistance, healing, and decolonization. Cherokee Two-Spirit people are linked to other histories of Cherokee performative resistance through their **D4Y** (asegi) stories and practices that critique dominant notions about who Cherokees are now, who we have been in the past, and who we will be in the future. Through the performance of our stories, Cherokee Two-Spirits imagine ways to heal a past that has attempted to erase us. Just as **GLS5** (Wadaduga) is remembered and re-storied through our embodied memories, Cherokee Two-Spirits are re-imagining our places within the larger stories of who we are as Cherokee people.

Daniel's words here imagine an **D4Y D8C** (asegi ayetl) that honors our past and future:

I think we are lorekeepers, we're story-holders, we're history bearers. We are tradition bearers. We're transformers. We shake things up, in necessary ways, hopefully. We're survivors. We're willing to face a lot of hard things to be honest. I mean, one thing we often hear is, "Cherokees are honest people." That honesty is important to us. And yet, the Baptist influence has caused a lot of Queer Cherokees to lie, to have to lie about who they are and what they are. Well, if we're honest people....we're called upon to be honest and that's sometimes the hardest thing in the world to do, but that's what we're here to do.

So, I don't think what we are called upon to do is necessarily different from what a lot of non-Queer Cherokees are called upon to do. But I've not yet met a Queer Cherokee who hasn't been deeply devoted to the people. And I've met a lot of non-Queer Cherokees who have *not* been devoted. So that says something to me. That we have to fight to be

recognized, but part of that fight is also the hard work we're doing in cultural recovery and maintenance and not just looking back but also looking forward. Positing a more humane and dignified future for the Cherokee people. We have really good examples to draw on, but sometimes a lot of weird ugliness comes up that we have to challenge. And just by being ourselves we challenge that.

Splint SPV Y/Gal'quog'/Seven: D4Y (Asegi) Stories Revising Our Futures

My own story as a Cherokee Two-Spirit person is woven tightly into the other stories that Cherokee Two-Spirit people tell. It is woven into our past and into my hope for future generations of Cherokee Two-Spirit people. Alongside the other splints I have presented here, I would like to share some of the experiences that led me to search for the stories of other Cherokee Two-Spirit people that I present in this chapter.

My search for **GLS\$** (wadaduga) is nested within a larger story of my experiences as a Cherokee Two-Spirit activist and poet. During my first year as an undergraduate at the University of Northern Colorado, I read Chrystos' poem "I Walk in the History of My People." Reading a poem by a woman who was both Menominee and a Lesbian helped me realized that I didn't have to compromise any part of my identity. I started to come out in 1994, and shortly thereafter purchased a copy of Gay and Lesbian Poetry in Our Time edited by Joan Larkin and Carl Morse (1988). That collection included the work of several Queer Native poets, including Paul Gunn Allen, Beth Brant, Chrystos, Joy Harjo, Maurice Kenny, and Vickie Sears. Just as importantly, it included an extensive bibliography that listed Brant's A Gathering of Spirit: A Collection by North

American Indian Women and Gay American Indians'/Will Roscoe's Living the Spirit: A

Gay American Indian Anthology as resources. I was hungry for representations of

Cherokee Queerness, both past and present, I became very interested in trying to find out
information about Cherokee "Two-Spirit" traditions, knowing that other tribes has
particular "roles" for Two-Spirit people.⁶⁰

Frustratingly, representations of Cherokee Two-Spirit people were few and far between. As mentioned, Larkin and Morse included work by Sears, as did Brant's *A Gathering of Spirit. Living the Spirit* included some Cherokee contributors (Nola M. Hadley, Joe Lawrence Lembo, and Anne Waters). However, there was no historical information available about Cherokee understandings of gender "variance" or sexuality before invasion, and Cherokees were not listed in the list of "North American Tribes with Berdache and Alternative Gender Roles" at the end of the collection (217-222).

In 1997 two scholarly collections were published with similar titles: *Two-Spirit People: American Indian Lesbian Women and Gay Men* edited by Lester B. Brown, and *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality.* The Brown collection, while there were some strong contributions, was mostly a disappointment as a scholarly contribution. Further, it included little information about Cherokees. The Thomas collection—while extremely valuable—also had hardly any historical or social information about Cherokee Two-Spirit people. Scholars were simply not focusing on Cherokee Two-Spirit folks, and there were few Cherokee Two-Spirit

⁶⁰ "Two-Spirit" was not a term that I was exposed to until a few years after I came out. While "Two-Spirit" was agreed on as an umbrella term in 1992, it was not in circulation in any discourse I had access to in Greeley, CO, until later. I first remember encountering the term "Two-Spirit" in Chrystos' *Dream On* (93).

Cherokee history that mentioned same-sex relationships or non-biological gender expressions. In response to these experiences, *On the Wings of Wadaduga* seeks to bring Cherokee Two-Spirit stories to the public through performance, so that other Cherokees will have access to these stories as a part of decolonial efforts. It is my hope that these stories can be *doublewoven* into a Cherokee Ghost Dance that echoes the words of Si'ahl: "the dead are not altogether powerless." A future performance of *On the Wings of Wadaduga* can provide more **D4** (asegi) stories for our collective future. Corey and Chad's words include a message of deep love and a commitment to Two-Spirit communities that extends past this life. The spirit of these words, directed to our future generations, are a Cherokee Ghost Dance on the wings of **GLS5** (wadaduga) that pushes the fire of our stories across the water for our collective future:

COREY

We love you. We love all of those of you that come after us.

CHAD

There's much love for you here.

COREY

We're bustin our asses tryin to make y'all happy. Aaayyeee... (Laughter).

No, I mean that from the bottom of my heart. I say it jokingly, but I mean every bit of it. We want this kind of thing to be here long after we're gone.

And we're not gonna be up there tellin' y'all y'all are wrong...

CHAD

No, but we will be watching. We'll be watching.

CHAPTER FIVE

JATK JAO PV 4 6 O/HIYOHUNIHIYA, HEDOHALENA/THIS IS YOUR PART,

START IT QUICKLY: PERFORMANCE, DECOLONIAL PEDAGOGY, AND

CULTURAL RHETORICS

Introduction

The same Cherokee stomp dance song that gives this dissertation its title also includes these lyrics: "Hiyohunihiya/ hiyowohalena/ hedohalena." Charlotte Heth translates this as: "This is your part/ this one, you start it/ start it quickly" (121). I would like to echo this call, posing it as a challenge to rhetoric and composition to move to decolonial, radical theories and practices. In the last four chapters I have argued for the importance of embodied knowledge, specifically performance, as a critical tool in Indigenous rhetorics and struggles for decolonization. This chapter argues for a decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric, proposing performance as a radical practice of cultural rhetorics that should be used within rhetoric and composition classrooms and scholarship. In order to do this, I will analyze the ways in which the discipline presents the history of rhetoric while offering decolonial counter-narratives to these stories. I will then suggest cultural rhetorics as a way to re-imagine our scholarship, paying close attention to how cultural rhetorics can disrupts our discipline's commitment to maintaining binaries between rhetorics/poetics and archive/repertoire. I will then argue for performance as a way to intervene in colonial pedagogy, and conclude by arguing for cultural rhetorics as a way of disrupting our discipline's dominant narratives.

Colonization, Decolonization and the History of Rhetoric

As pointed out by Powell, rhetoric and composition teaches a linear history of rhetoric that begins in Greece and Rome, moves to Western Europe and crosses the Atlantic in a process of European expansion and US nation-building (2002). The presence of people of color is mostly disappeared in these formulations, and when people of color are present in token histories it is often only in highlighting their use of dominant EuroAmerican modes of discourse. Both pre- and post-invasion rhetorical traditions of the Americas, Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Pacific are mostly ignored in this telling of the history of rhetoric. In "Blood and Scholarship: One Mixed-Blood's Story" Powell writes:

I believe that rhetoric as a discipline has been and continues to be complicit with the imperial project of scholarship in the United States. I believe that rhetoric as a discipline does not see the foundation of blood and bodies upon which it constitutes itself. I believe that many of us who work within this discipline participate daily in un-seeing, in denying, and, in doing so, perpetuate the myth of an empty continent. (Gilyard 11).

Powell challenges us to interrupt imperial projects through our scholarship, pedagogies, and practices. A decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric can interrupt the constant *un-seeing* of Native peoples and aid in struggles for our lands and the well being of our communities.

While the field has largely ignored Indigenous rhetorical traditions, books and other forms of literacy were widespread in the lands being called the Americas long before the arrival of Columbus. The texts of the Inca, Mexica, and Maya Nations had to

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be destroyed in order for the Spanish to use lack of literacy as proof of savagery. Non-alphabetic literacies of Indigenous people were also devalued and suppressed. Walter D. Mignolo tells us that "the etymological meaning of text (weaving/textile)...began to lose its original meaning when alphabetic writing and the Renaissance celebration of the letter obscured the more generous medieval meaning, which, as Renaissance people, they were trying to conceal" ("Darker" 825). A master narrative of land-theft and genocide began, one too seldom spoken of in our field, especially as an ongoing reality.

Mignolo speaks in depth about writing systems that existed in Central and South America long before the arrival of the Spanish, and their subsequent use in the discursive practices of Indigenous nations resisting the onslaught of European invasion, including pictographic and logographic writing forms by Mexica and Mayan rhetors and Peruvian quipus, a form of woven records ("Darker" 808-825). He writes that that the Mexica word tonalpoa "is a verb which could be properly translated as 'reading the signs of the world' according to a code based on numeracy instead of on (alphabetic) literacy" ("Darker" 814). The libraries of Mexico and Central America were destroyed by Spain in an attempt to conquer the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. One of the colonials during this first wave of invasion, Diego de Landa, wrote, "We found a great number of books...and since they contained nothing but superstitions of the devil we burned them all, which they took most grievously, and which gave them great pain" (Mignolo 71).

Acts of violence such as this functioned (and continue to function) to create the myth of the savage, and to paint European invasion as a merciful and benevolent act, bringing with it the gift of literacy. The current story the field tells about its history is one that perpetuates these colonial mentalities. In the most recent edition of Patricia

Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition*, for instance, Indigenous people are barely present. No mention is made of the rhetorical traditions of Native people until "the rhetorics of men of color" in the nineteenth century. While William Apess is at this point mentioned, his work is not included in the canon. No other Indigenous people are mentioned until a brief inclusion of Gloria Anzaldúa almost at the end of the book—page 1582, to be exact. While Bizzell and Herzberg's work is of no doubt important to our discipline and a deeply valuable resource, it also disappears the particular rhetorical histories of non-Europeans. Further, in Enlightenment fashion, it lays claim to the rhetorical traditions of ancient Greece and Rome as European discourse without acknowledging, as Martin Bernal has done, "the Afroasiatic roots" of those rhetorics. (Bernal 1987; 1991; Moore 2001).

Similarly, Native people are only briefly mentioned in James J. Murphy's A Short History of Writing Instruction in a section by Elizabethada A. Wright and S. Michael Holloran problematically entitled "Education for Girls and Non-Whites," and are simply not present in Sharon Crowley's Composition in the University. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein's scholarship about the printing press likewise perpetuates colonial myths about the history of rhetoric by glossing over the implications of the printing press in spurring processes of land theft and invasion. She writes, "By associating printing with the providential mission of a prospering new realm, English Protestants pointed the way to later trends—to revolutionary messianism in the old world and 'manifest destiny' in the New" (Eisenstein 147). While Eisenstein mentions "manifest destiny," she does critique or analyze its implications and realities.

Eisenstein's closing image of the book, a 1620 engraved title page from Francis

Bacon's *Insaturatio manga* of a European ship setting out for unknown terrain, tells volumes about the entwined nature of print culture and colonial projects. Eisenstein says of the image that it "was associated with the advancement of learning in the early seventeenth century. Overseas voyages were linked to an expansion of data pools which enabled modern investigators to outstrip ancient ones" (Eisenstein 258-259). The gaze of the viewer remains on European land, watching ships embark to lands that cannot be seen. Eisenstein's statement of "modern investigators" outstripping "ancient ones" becomes intensely troublesome when read from a vantage point of colonization. Eisenstein's work should be augmented by scholars engaging decolonial methodologies. Scholars within the discipline—such as Haas, Powell, and Villanueva—offer counternarratives to colonial histories and mindsets. Hass' "Wampum as Hypertext," for instance, "offers a preliminary hypertextual historiographical decolonial narrative that suggests that the concept of hypertext and the rhetorical work it does are not new—nor is it unique to Western culture..." (82-83). Both Powell and Villanueva have both argued extensively in their scholarship for the discipline to pay attention to colonial histories and contemporary experiences in order to decolonize our practices.

An understanding of colonization can offer alternative histories related to but diverging from the history Eisenstein and others offer. If we examine the ways in which the colonization of the Americas financially benefited Europe through a slave industry that exploited both Native and African peoples, and the theft of Native natural and cultural resources—for instance—we may begin to see the print revolution as intimately bound to the financial gains obtained through a process of invasion and genocide that continues to this day. Our field, and all of academia in the Americas, is irrevocably tied

to this legacy, and is thus responsible to engage scholarly and pedagogical *practices* that interrupt this history and work for decolonization and social justice.

Approaching the history of rhetoric with a decolonial agenda carries important questions, problems, and considerations. A decolonial approach must be cautious to not replace one *grands récits* for another. Simply claiming a decolonial approach by using rhetoric associated with decolonial movements is not enough, such a stance must be used as a leverage point within systems of power and control. It potentially can shift the work we are doing in the academy if our *practices*—not only our language—are decolonial. Otherwise, we risk turning *decolonization* into what Lyotard calls a *language game* that works to legitimize the academy as a colonial institution: "The language game of legitimation is not state-political, but philosophical" (33). Indeed, we must not forget that our presence in the academy supports what Althusser calls an *ideological State* apparatus. He argues, "...one ideological State apparatus certainly has the dominant role, although hardly anyone lends an ear to its music: it is so silent! This is the School" (71). We must always, then, proceed with caution and care knowing that—however radical—our work in the academy helps to fuel the *ideological State apparatus*.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes, "Decolonization...does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering our own concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (39). A decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric mustn't create a new story that displaces stories already present, such approach would not be decolonial at all. Haunani-Kay Trask defines decolonization as "[c]ollective resistance to colonialism, including cultural

assertions, efforts toward self-determination, and armed struggle" (251). In academia, Native people and our allies have taken up the arms of scholarship as part of such a struggle, and while metaphors of war give me pause—particularly during bloody US occupations of and wars against Iraq and Afghanistan—there are literal wars taking place in Indian Country. The academy has a history of removing the rhetoric of radical movements from their grassroots contexts, and as academics we must ensure that decolonial struggles in the academy are connected with decolonial struggles outside of the academy. Part of this is acknowledging the privilege scholars currently have in the US, and further, to acknowledge that, as citizens of the US, people are—to be blunt—being massacred in our name. A decolonial approach to scholarship cannot take place if it ignores the connections between the struggles of Native people here and the struggles of people being colonized elsewhere. June Jordan puts the necessity of acknowledging privileges as well as common struggles powerfully in her 1982 poem "Moving Towards Home:"

I do not wish to speak about the bulldozer and the red dirt

not quite covering all of the arms and legs

[...]

Nor do I wish to speak about the woman who shoved

her baby

into the stranger's hands before she was lead away

 $[\ldots]$

I need to speak about living room where the men

of my family between the ages of six and sixty-five

are not

marched into a roundup that leads to the grave

 $[\ldots]$

I was born a Black woman

and now I am become a Palestinian...

 $[\ldots]$

It is time to make our way home (142, 143).

In other words, a decolonial approach to the history of rhetoric—indeed, a decolonial approach to scholarship at all—commits itself in solidarity by acknowledging and engaging with both the commonalities and the differences in experiences of oppression and struggles for change. We must discuss both privilege and oppression if systems of domination and colonization are to be made transparent and disrupted.

Decolonial movements are taking place on many fronts in the Americas, both inside and outside of academia. They are movements attempting to correct colonial history and heal the damages that invasion and genocide continues to cause. As I have already made clear, my scholarship is meant to contribute to these movements. As a discipline, rhetoric and composition can aid in this process through engaging with a decolonial approach to our history, scholarship, and pedagogies.

Performing Cultural Rhetorics, Disrupting Binaries

Indigenous communities are *practicing* performance traditions that contribute to decolonization and continuance. Despite major interventions in the discipline, rhetoric

and composition has continued to do "a pretty good job of not doing a very good job of critically engaging with Native texts" ("Survivance" 397). And despite numerous critiques of the construction of oral/written, archive/repertoire, rhetoric/poetic, and body/mind dichotomies, the field has mostly remained entrenched in and committed to maintaining them. While the maintenance of such dichotomies may help to define and ensure the current scope of our profession, it does little to engage with these critiques or answer the calls of scholars of color (and other marginalized scholars) in the field. The emergent discourses that we are calling "cultural rhetorics," however, are committed to answering these calls. Cultural rhetorics deconstructs the dichotomies our discipline clings to, and helps generate scholarship that is responsible to oppressed communities and committed to social justice.

In 2005, Powell taught an "American Cultural Rhetorics" course in which she collaborated with students to imagine and define what "cultural rhetorics," specifically "American cultural rhetorics" (with a defiant s) is. Among the constellated core concepts that Powell and students created was a clear rooting of cultural rhetorics within Indigenous rhetorics of the Americas, a solid commitment to social justice and anti-oppression, and rhetorical analyses that move beyond the "textual" to material, visual, digital, and performed rhetorics. American cultural rhetorics is an answer Victor Villanueva's call to "break precedent" from Eurocentric discourse ("Rhetorics" 659). In order to break that precedent, our work as rhetoricians must move beyond the archive/repertoire and rhetoric/poetic splits that dominant European discourse is committed to maintaining and promoting.

Rhetoric and composition, and much of academic discourse, has removed the centrality of the body from our work. Our discourse too often excludes kinesthetic, embodied knowledge from analysis. Our field's tendency to turn everything into "text" further removes us from the realities of bodies and embodied knowledge as central to *all* rhetorical work. We are, after all, bodies. The constant disembodiment of our scholarship reinforces binaries that help maintain oppressive systems. To pay attention to bodies and embodied knowledge would mean we would have to pay attention to both living bodies of those injured or destroyed in colonial systems.

Paving attention to performance as both a site of inquiry and as an embodied practice is one way that our discipline can restore the centrality of bodies to our work. Performance studies is a discipline that can inform our scholarship. While rhetoric and composition interprets everything it encounters from textual frameworks, performance studies analyzes the ways a subject performs. Rather than using text, writing, argument, and other rhetorical concepts as a metaphor to interpret non-textual subjects, performance studies uses the body and performance as a metaphor for non-embodied subjects. In this way it attempts to embody, rather than disembody, knowledge. "Any behavior, event, action, or thing," explains performance studies scholar Richard Schechner, "can be studied 'as' performance, can be analyzed in terms of doing, behaving, and showing" (Schechner 32). The interstices of these two disciplines helps articulate a theory of performance rhetorics that can aid in the restoration of kinesthetic, embodied rhetorics into our discipline, and further, disrupt dichotomies between the archive and the repertoire in relationship to rhetorical history and historiography. Looking to the rhetorical work that performance does can shift the discipline to pay close attention to

histories of rhetoric in a decolonial *third space*: "Genealogies of performance," Roach argues, "...attend to 'counter-memories,' or the disparities between history as it is discursively transmitted and the memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences" (Roach 26). Performance rhetorics can provide analyses of the complex relationships between embodiment and text and *archive* and *repertoire* that is central to Native rhetorical histories that dominant histories of rhetoric too often deny.

Cultural rhetorics allow for the inclusion of performance into rhetorical scholarship and methodologies. As an analytic lens, cultural rhetorics is an intervention into the field's tokenization and/or disregard of particular communities and their rhetorical histories. This *poiesis* that we are calling "cultural rhetorics" takes into account the importance of poetics, arts, materialities, and bodies as imperative to rhetorical understandings and radical cultural analyses. As such, it can "restore" performance to the larger discipline while simultaneously critiquing dominant EuroAmerican versions of rhetorical history.

Rhetoric and composition continues to rely on Aristotelian taxonomies in order to argue for a clear distinction between rhetorics and poetics. While this makes sense in the process of building our profession, it makes little sense for those who are interested in addressing the modes of communication, expression, and civic engagement central to most people's lives. Cultural rhetorics aid in subverting Eurocentric approaches to rhetorical analysis by critiquing the rhetoric/poetic dichotomy. After all,

...the only difference between a history, a theory, a poem, an essay, is the one that we have ourselves imposed. We have cut the wholeness of knowledge into little bits, scattered them to the four winds and now begin

to reorganize them into categories to enable empire by bringing order to chaos and civilization to the savage (Powell, "Listening" 15).

Cultural rhetorics critique these perceived splits and pay particular attention to rhetorical histories in which such splits do not exist. Cultural rhetorics pay close attention to *third space* possibilities for the field to more deeply engage complex and dynamic rhetorical work. "Poetics" are rhetorical, and several scholars including Villanueva, Lathan, Powell, Royster, and Smitherman are already deeply engaged with placing poetics into the center of rhetorical work, their pedagogy, and their scholarship.

Paying attention to the important *rhetorical* work of performance holds promise for rhetoric and composition scholars working to disrupt colonial, disembodied discourses. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that our field sees performance as on the periphery of the discipline, considering colonialism's constant suppression (and destruction) of bodies and embodied knowledges. Taylor writes,

The inaugural moment of colonialism in the Americas introduces two discursive moves that work to devalue native performance...: (1) the dismissal of indigenous performance traditions as episteme, and (2) the dismissal of "content" (religious beliefs) as bad objects, idolatry. These discourses simultaneously contradict and sustain each other (33).

The same colonial mindsets that push Indigenous peoples to the edge of discourse push performance—particularly Indigenous performance—to the margins of inquiry. Powell states:

Not only does the imperial power commit material acts meant to crush an unruly indigenous population, but also its institutions of intellectual and cultural exchange (i.e., universities) make the rules by which the firstwave genocide will be studied, and these same rules apply to the study of genocide survivors (Gilyard 4).

Not only do Indigenous people become tokenized and marginalized in the field, the central rhetorical expressions of Indigenous people do as well. In our field, performance is pushed to "poetics," which is constructed as an academic foil to "rhetorics."

The rhetoric/poetic split is one that pushes marginalized peoples' rhetorical work even further into the margins of the "C&R Ranch" (Lyons 458). It is also one that continues a dominant narrative of an European literate culture vs. an Indigenous oral culture. The field replicates the contradictory and co-sustaining discursive moves towards performance that Taylor identifies as part of the "inaugural moment of colonialism:" on one hand rhetoric and composition's dominant story argues that poetics are irrelevant to the field and outside the scope of analysis; on the other it treats poetics—and often "content" (the common language with some composition pedagogical moves and colonial projects is worth noting) as rhetorical "idolatry".⁶¹

Regardless of the efforts of the field to define a clear difference between rhetorics and poetics, many radical scholars and activists of color have insisted that rhetorics and poetics are firmly woven together. In his essay "Memoria Is a Friend of Ours,"

Villanueva argues for and demonstrates a scholarship that places personal narrative and poetry at the center: "The narrative of the person of color validates. It resonates. It awakens, particularly for those of us who are in institutions where our numbers are few"

(15). Poetics serve very specific political and rhetorical functions that are, in fact, the

⁶¹ **GV** (*Wa'do*) to william maria rain-shadid for pointing out some of these parallels in personal conversation.

center of discourses for marginalized communities, and certainly most communities outside of the academy. Audre Lorde has famously insisted, "For women...poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action" (Sister 37).

Powell's work has highlighted over and over again that "inside that great, long story that our discipline tells about itself" ("Survivance" 397) that we insist our work and lives are divorced from poetics, and create fictions in which poetics are not important to our lives. In one of her endnotes to "Rhetorics of Survivance," Powell tells us that stories and storytelling are not important to her work only because she is Indian or that her scholarship places Indigenous people at the center, but also because story is central to *all* of our lives:

...[W]hile I don't deny the importance of storytelling to the Native peoples of the Eastern Woodlands community of which I am a part, neither would I want to overlook the way storytelling works in both the rural midwestern farm community in which I was raised, the "postmodern" academic communities in which I participate, and the dominant narratives used to create and imagine "America." In other words, storytelling isn't just an "Indian" thing for me; it is essential in the creation of all human realities (429).

Warrior has used the work of Native poets as a model of *intellectual sovereignty*:

In developing American Indian critical studies, we need to practice the same sort of intellectual sovereignty that many Native poets practice. As

many of the poets find their work continuous with, but not circumscribed by, Native traditions of storytelling and ceremonial chanting, we can find the work of criticism continuous with Native traditions of deliberation and decision making (118).

Similar to Lorde's, Powell's, and Warrior's attention to the necessity of poetry and story to our lives and work, Augusto Boal posits:

Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that, in this act of seeing, it can see *itself*—see itself in situ: see itself seeing. [...] The human being not only 'makes' theater, it 'is' theatre. And some human beings, besides being theatre, also make theatre" (13, italics in original).

More than considering poetics central to modes of resistance and expression for people of color and marginalized people, cultural rhetorics understand poetics as central to all rhetorics. To ignore poetics in rhetorical work is to ignore the central rhetorical tactics of oppressed communities, most communities outside of academe, and—well—most of the planet. Cultural rhetorics revise dominant Eurocentric approaches to our discipline, and by including poetics as rhetorical work we are able to engage responsibly with marginalized communities and intervene in oppressive systems.

Embodying Rhetorics, Performing Pedagogy

Performance is a means to revise a history of rhetoric and pursue decolonial scholarship, activism, and pedagogy. A radical, decolonial pedagogy acknowledges the body as a center of meaning-making and aids in larger struggles for decolonization of the

Americas, both inside and outside of the university classroom. Performance's explicit centralization of the body potentially aids in radical, decolonial struggles within our field. Further, performance is a means to not only restore both memory and delivery to the rhetorical canon, but to indigenize them as a way of re-centering discussions of rhetoric to address Native rhetorical traditions. Performance disrupts a dominant history of rhetoric and provides additional stories, histories, methodologies, and *practices* into the field.

If embodied *practice* and memory are central to the rhetorics of Indigenous people, then incorporating performance into the classroom within a context of broader decolonial struggles helps to re-root rhetorics within the Americas. While performance helps to "recouperate" the canons of memory and delivery into our discipline—a project that I'm invested in because of the particular relationships these canons have with the rhetorics of Indigenous people, people of color, Queer and Trans people, and other traditionally marginalized people—I also want to approach this project with an edge of caution. Memory and delivery are only "lost" canons of rhetoric within the particular histories of rhetoric and composition in the US in which we are embedded. Both are alive and well and living in other disciplines. I worry that work to reclaim these canons validate a particular nostalgia our discipline has for a "classical" rhetorical education, firmly rooted in an Enlightenment construction of a mythic Greco-Roman past. I am interested in both memory and delivery because they open up discussions to include Indigenous rhetorics from the Americas and elsewhere into our field, as well as other marginalized rhetorics. Obviously, using performance in the writing classroom is not specifically Indigenous. Work to re-embody rhetorical practices, however, can be grafted

on to decolonial and radical practices that can aid in larger decolonial and anti-oppressive struggles.

At the forefront of my pedagogy and scholarship is a struggle for social change and "critical consciousness." My understandings of "critical consciousness" are rooted within my involvement popular education movements of communities of color and Queer/Trans communities. These movements have been highly influenced by the work of Freire and hooks, and my own work has also been rooted in Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed" (TO). I find the incorporation of Boal into a pedagogical *practice* useful in radical and decolonial struggles, even while I remain critical of both Boal and Freire.⁶²

TO is an intellectual sibling to Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed." Like Freire's work, TO was developed in order to provide a tool for communities to imagine solutions to their own oppressions. Unlike Freire, however, Boal has not been widely incorporated into the university classroom. I imagine that this is because Boal's work focuses on embodiment and *practice* in a way that many academics—at least within disciplines that tend to ignore embodiment—perceive as threatening. Freire's pedagogy can be *practiced* while still ignoring embodiment in the classroom. Boal's, however, cannot. Elsewhere I have addressed the potential for TO to be used within decolonial struggles and the healing of historical trauma because of its attention to embodiment ("Mothertongue" 2003; "Theatre" 2008), as well as offered critiques of some of the problematic aspects of Boal's work ("Theatre" 2008). I do not want to be redundant here, then, but would like to

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⁶² Briefly, I am concerned with the colonial and missionary implications of the literacy projects in which both Boal and Freire. I feel that there is a lack of analysis of Indigenous issues in their theories, and further, that there are Indigenous genealogies to their practices that neither acknowledge. For more on my critiques of Boal, see "Theatre as Suture" (2008).

add that attention to Boal (and certainly techniques of other performance movements) is a way of incorporating the *repertoire* into a field that is currently obsessed with the creation of the *archive*. Performance helps to bring **SGAO** (*duyuk'ta*) to our discipline. TO enables kinesthetic engagement with issues discussed in class and brings personal experiences with and issues of systemic oppression to the center of discussion. It also subverts traditional educational techniques by asking students to pay close attention to their bodies, rather than ask them to divide their bodies from their intellects.

Geoffrey Sirc's English Composition as a Happening is one of the few works in the discipline that supports performative moves in composition classrooms. Sirc encourages us to "(alter) the conventional spaces of a writing classroom, allowing the inhabitants a sense of the sublime, making it a space no one wants to leave, a happening space" (1). Using the Happenings as a model for the composition classroom he insists,

Now this is composition. In its explorations of technology; its collaborative nature, its use of imaginative materials, juxtaposed in interesting, poetic ways (as well as its faith in an audience's ability to make sense of the resulting text); its structure as more performative gesture than hierarchical form (working by intuition and impression rather than by received standards);...it represents everything I value in composition. And my challenge as a teacher becomes trying to establish a performative space inflected according to such exciting possibilities (122).

As someone who has been using TO extensively in my communities for the past several years and has incorporated TO into my own pedagogical *practice* in the university, it seems logical to employ TO to establish the composition classroom as a

performative space. TO not only disrupts the often mundane patterns in composition pedagogy, but also engages students with issues of social justice. TO is a means of reincorporating delivery into rhetorical *practices* and pedagogies into our classrooms within radical political frameworks.

Virigina Skinner-Linnenberg's *Dramatizing Writing: Reincorporating Delivery in the Classroom* likewise calls for performance's place within rhetoric and composition courses, and her call remains largely unanswered:

By its very nature, performance incorporates or blends the physical and the noetic processes of delivery, and...can be a valuable tool in the writing classroom. [...] ...[W]e can incorporate performance into a re-visioned theory of delivery, one that reunites the physical and the noetic, and, thus, employs a strategy that has been underused in the classroom (52).

While Skinner-Linnenberg's analysis and methodology are not decolonial, if we doubleweave such calls to a very conscious decolonial theory and practice, the radical and decolonial possibilities of performance in the classroom are brought to the surface. Performance disrupts dominant histories of rhetoric both by pointing to the original centrality of performance within the Greco-Roman tradition, as well as looking to performance as vitally important to Native rhetorics, rhetorics of color, and other marginalized rhetorical traditions. Performance reminds us that writing is only one way to engage the world, make meaning, and build arguments. Embodied rhetorics are just as important to most people's lives—if not more so—than written texts. In order for our field to remain accountable to the lived experiences of our students and the larger public, we must ensure our discipline, practices, and pedagogies pay attention to embodied

rhetorics. I'm not arguing for our disciplines to *replace* writing with performance, but to shift our perspectives in order to understand the relationships between writing and other rhetorical work. As already discussed, Indigenous rhetorics in the Americas have not forced a binary between compositions and performance. An Indigenous, decolonial approach to rhetorical pedagogy intentionally disrupts these binaries, looking at the way compositions (including alphabetic, visual, digital, and material) and performance can be used in tandem to make meaning.

Incorporating performance into the classroom using intentionally anti-oppressive frameworks creates classroom *practices* that enable participants to imagine tactics for survival and resistance both inside and outside of the university. Boal writes, "...if the oppressed-artist is able to create an autonomous world of images of his (sic) own reality, and to enact his liberation in the reality of these images, he will then extrapolate into his own life all that he has accomplished in the fiction. *The scene, the stage, becomes the rehearsal space for real life*" (emphasis mine) (44). Peggy Phelan, within the context of Queer performance, also argues for performance as a radical space:

As an art form whose primary function is to meditate on the threshold that heralds between-ness, theatre encourage a specific and intense cathetic response in those who define themselves as liminal tricksters, socially disenfranchised, sexually aberrant, addicted, and otherwise queerly alienated from the father (16).

Radical performance techniques help put into specific embodied *practice* the pedagogical theories of Freire and hooks. Performance enables students to have a visceral and embodied experience with the subject matter, not a merely intellectual experience. This in

turn can be a way to spur further writing from the students as they reflect on their experiences in a performative space and to understand the relationship between embodied and composed rhetorics. TO also becomes a means to build community—\$S.I (gadugi)—within the classroom. Hooks writes, "Working with a critical pedagogy based on my understanding of Freire's teaching, I enter the classroom with the assumption that we must build 'community' in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor" (40).

Using performance in the classroom rebalances and disrupts the perceived split between the archive and the repertoire by including the embodied knowledge—and remembering the physical bodies—of classroom communities. If framed within radical decolonial pedagogies, performance can be a means to "break precedent" by privileging the rhetorical traditions rooted in the Americas. TO is one of many performance techniques that has the potential to radically shift classroom practices. An attention to performance alters our understandings of rhetoric in our field, revises the dominant history of rhetoric that we teach, and changes pedagogical practices as part of decolonial struggles. Performance rhetorics contribute to an ongoing shift in the discipline towards cultural rhetorics.

Conclusion: Imagining Cultural Rhetorics

As a field still being created by scholars, cultural rhetorics has enormous potential to put social justice at the center of discourse and action. We must root our work (and I believe many of us do) within activist methodologies, using it as part of struggles for social transformation and decolonization. As a field still being defined, we can learn

from hooks' critique of cultural studies: "We need to actualize the politics we are trying to evoke" (Nelson et al 171). Or, as rephrased by Stuart Hall, "Against the urgency of people dying in the streets, what in God's name is the point of cultural studies" (Nelson et al 284)? Or, as articulated by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "In a decolonizing framework, deconstruction is part of a much larger intent. Taking apart the story, revealing underlying texts, and giving voice to things that are often known intuitively does not help people to improve their current conditions. It provides words...but it does not prevent someone from dying" (Smith 3). Cultural rhetorics has the opportunity to address these issues with intentionality, to design a discipline that places social justice at the center. What is the point of our work against the urgency of the material conditions of oppressed peoples? What is the point of our work against the urgency of the mass destruction of the planet? And further, how can our work as scholars, teachers, and activists create discourses and performances of opposition and hope? My scholarship attempts answer these questions through a commitment to radical, decolonial work.

It is true that I am interested in Cherokee performance rhetorics on scholarly levels, but that interest stems from a commitment to the *practice* of Cherokee performance in decolonial struggles. Our songs, our stories, our language, and our dances are part of our ongoing memory as a people. Through their use, we survive and continue. Taylor's words here on Mexica performance traditions can also be said of Cherokee (and other Indigenous) performance, the importance of "the active role of human beings in promoting the regenerative quality of the universe, of life, of performance—all in a constant state of againness" (39). I am concerned with Cherokee performance because I am concerned with the well being of Cherokees and other Indigenous peoples. I am

concerned with radical performance rhetorics because they are a central means of healing, decolonization, and continuance. I am concerned with Cherokee performance rhetorics because I'm committed to maintaining SGA6° (duyuk'ta). Cultural rhetorics allow us—demand of us—engagement with both intellectual and embodied knowledge as part of struggles for social justice that exist simultaneously inside and outside of the ivory tower. For those of us who are part of oppressed communities, it is our bodies—first and foremost—that disrupt and disturb oppressive systems because, as Lorde reminds us, "we were never meant to survive" (Unicorn 32). Cultural rhetorics have a responsibility to bodies, lives, and communities. As scholars, we all have a responsibility to survivance and continuance.

Hooks challenges cultural studies scholars when she says, "I felt...terror about the danger of Cultural Studies approaching issues of race, gender, and sexual practice, and then continuing to hurt and wound in that politics of domination" (Nelson et al 294). I feel the same terror when I think about rhetoric and composition addressing issues of power and oppression. What cultural rhetorics must do, then, is to approach our work consciously, critically, and accountably. Theories of oppression and liberation emerge from the lived experiences of oppressed people. I want our *practices* and continuing scholarship to treasure these lives—my life, the lives of those I fiercely love—to understand the material conditions of oppressed peoples, and to commit itself to social transformation. Much of my work is informed by feminist politics and activism that demands putting theory into *practice* and links the personal and the political. We have no hope of changing systems of oppression if we cannot change ourselves. Cultural rhetorics is a means to do just that, to change ourselves and our discipline.

Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg note Hall's assertion that the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham had as a goal "to enable people to understand what [was] going on, and especially to provide ways of thinking, strategies for survival, and resources for resistance" (Nelson et al 2). I believe that this is an important goal for cultural rhetorics, and in addition, to acknowledge the ways in which people already have complex understandings of their experiences with oppression, have traditions of thinking about their experiences, and have intergenerational *tactics* for survival and resistance. Perhaps this is one of the ways that a rhetorical approach to culture can offer tools for liberation that cultural studies sometimes falls short. Cultural rhetorics should not only attempt to engage with creating resistance *tactics*, but also put at the center *tactics* already in the *repertoire*. It is our responsibility to design a discipline hat deeply engages in both theory and *practice*, both the personal and political. It is our responsibility to imagine a discipline that engages issues of critical consciousness, radical social transformation, opposition, and hope.

Performance is a means to potentially shift our understandings of rhetoric, meaning-making, memory, delivery, and pedagogy towards radical, decolonial, and anti-oppressive *practices* as scholars and teachers. Performance contributes to shifting our discipline toward cultural rhetorical analyses that are more capable of exposing and dismantling systems of power. Our field too often privileges texts over living bodies, alphabetic writing over other compositions, and—despite calls from radical scholars—too often dismisses the histories, rhetorics, and lived experiences of Indigenous people and other people of color. The discipline continues to ignore the "foundation of blood and bodies upon which it constitutes itself." Decolonial performance rhetorics can help to

reveal that foundation, one that haunts the cultural memory of all people in the Americas, while re-rooting scholarly and pedagogical practices in the traditions of the Americas in order to interrupt ongoing colonization. It is our responsibility as both Native and non-Native scholars and educators living on occupied land to disrupt colonial projects through our work. It is our responsibility to provide spaces in our classrooms for students to "rehearse" tactics, to use the classroom as a decolonial skillshare in order to intervene in systems of oppression both inside and outside of academia. It is our responsibility to put into practice activist scholarship that aids in decolonization and radical social change.

36Th.36. 36CDCO. 2VICO. Hiyohunihiya. Hiyowohalena. Hedohalena. This is your part. This one, you start it. Start it quickly.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ARCHIVAL NOTES FROM THE CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER ARCHIVES,
CHEROKEE MALE SEMINARY RECORD BOOK

Cherokee Heritage Center Archives, Seminary Record Book [acc 96.1.71 TE 1413]. [Page 6]

May 2nd, 1899

At a meeting of the Faculty held May 2nd the following business was transacted.

A student, Henry Dameron was deprived of all privileges from this date until June 1st '99, as a punishment for leaving the school-building after nine 'o' clock p.m. for town.

Further discussion during concerning the Annual May Picnic was held and the Principal was requested to confer with the Principal of

[page 7]

the other Institution Concerning the arrangements, etc.

The proposition to give an entertainment, the proceeds of which to be given as a subscription to the erection of a statue in the memory of Sequoyah, was heartily supported and the details of the work allotted to the several teachers. The meeting closed with a review of the work accomplished since last meeting.

May 19th, 1899

Meeting held May 19th for the purpose of making final arrangements concerning the 'Sequoyah Monument' Entertainment.

The teachers were assigned duties to be performed and the meeting closed. R. K. Adair absent.

[Page 8]

June 9th, 1899

At a meeting of the faculty held June 9th a financial statement concerning the aforementioned Entertainment was made and is here appended:

RECIEPTS Sale of tickets, W.J. Richards'.

per Dameron \$1.25

" " Female Sem. 4.95

" " City Drug Store

per Prof. Hough 11.25

Proceeds at Store, per

J.G. Hough 4.05

Sale of ice-cream per

Miss Finley 10.45

31.95

EXPENSES

Printing 200 Admission \$2.00

Tickets and 300 hand-bills

Paid for Use of Piano 2.50

" " Moving 3.00

Rent for Opera House 1.50

	Expenses for ice-cre	eam 3	3.85	
		-		
		:	12.85	
[Page 9]				
Received		9	\$31.95	
Expended			12.85	
Proceeds			19.10	
Received				
Tahlequah I.T. June 10 th 1899				
of George Cox Agt Male Seminary				
Nineteen and 10/100 Dollars				
Proceeds of Entertainment, for benefit				
of the Sequoyah Monument [Illegible]				
\$19.10	\$19.10 [E.M. Spudren Chair? Illegible]			
[Page 49]				

Male Seminary,

Tahlequah. I.T.

Feb. 18, 1901

At a meeting of the faculty a committee of six from Cherokee and Sequoyah societies, was present waiting permission to give an entertainment about the first week in April 1901, for the benefit of the Athletic Association. Permission was given upon the condition that a copy of the program be presented to the faculty for its approval.

Jesse Covel [?] came before the faculty asking for admission as a pupil. Motion made and recorded: That on account of this former conduct while connected with the school in 1900, and on account of his reputation in general, that the application be rejected. Motion carried.

L.M. Logan

Pres.

W.P Thorne, Secy.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WITH CAT

CAT

I was really little, I was probably about four or five, it was right before my grandma died. And, we went down to the creek in the morning. And I think we were either looking for crawdads, or we were gonna go get pawpaws from under the trees down there. And, we were watching the water spiders on the surface of the creek, and the dragonflies. And I was talking about how pretty the dragonflies were, and I always loved the water spiders. So my grandma started telling me the story about how we got fire, and how the water spider brought fire in a little bubble on her back. But her story was a little different from what I've heard since, because what she said was along with all the other animals who went and tried and failed and came back different, Water Spider tried and didn't make it because it was just too far. So, Dragonfly offered up her back. And Water Spider got up on the dragonfly's back and flew to get the fire, and Water Spider got the fire, got back up on the dragonfly's back, and when the dragonfly got tired she sat down on the surface of the water and the water spider got the rest of the way.

So, the story's a little different from how I've heard it told since. And it's very different from what I've read. And I don't know if my grandmother was doing that because she wanted me to appreciate the dragonflies for what they were, or simply because that was the way she'd heard it. But the other thing she said about the dragonflies after she told the story was we were watching them and I was admiring their color, how beautiful they were and she said that I always had to appreciate them because no matter

how frail and delicate they looked, that they were very strong. And that they were very fierce hunters and fighters and lovers. And I was a very little girl when she told me that story, and ever since I've never forgotten that, and I've always admired the dragonflies because of that story. And I've always thought of myself that way sometimes. When I get a little afraid or a little...you know...about the way the world is around me, I think back to that time that was a little more innocent and the power of that moment. And I think of that dragonfly and I think I need to be like that. Because that was my grandmother's lesson for me, was to tell me that that's what I needed to understand, that was no matter how fragile things seem, that they're stronger than we think. So I think that was about it of the story, that I can really tell you. I mean, I could go through the whole story about the different animals who went to the tree to get the fire, but somehow that doesn't seem right to tell you that right now. But that's my story.

APPENDIX C

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH ROBIN FARRIS

[Electronic data damaged.]
QWO-LI
How do you identify? Do you identify as Two-Spirit, or
ROBIN
Two-Spirit.
QWO-LI
As Two-Spirit?
ROBIN
When I'm amongst my white friends, white community, then it's, you know, Lesbian.
But, that's part of me, so it's both/and.
QWO-LI
You grew up in Missouri?
ROBIN
No, I grew up all over. Most of the last 20, 30 years of my life have been in Missouri.
Southwest Missouri.
QWO-LI
What do you think it means to be a Two-Spirit Cherokee person for you?
ROBIN
Well, I'm in the process, I'd say, of interweaving the two roles. First I identified as
Lesbian, and I'd always known I was Cherokee, but as I grew to know myself as Lesbian

I was so proud of hearing through other Cherokee that amongst *our* people, even when I came here to this museum, that it was a non-issue. So I though, oh, this is wonderful, here's a group of my own people that accept me at who I am fully.... And then I was shocked at hearing about the Lesbian couple and that the Cherokee Nation, before anybody else was introducing that whole policy about marriage only being between a man and a woman. So, I've been in the process in the last several years of integrating who I am and what I am and where that fits in with two different cultures.

QWO-LI

How do you think it does fit in?

ROBIN

How it does or how it should?

QWO-LI

How it should.

ROBIN

Well, that we have a lot to contribute to our community, and we've always had a lot to contribute to our community and the Great Spirit makes us as we are and who we are and that it should be a non-issue. You know, my own research has shown that many Native American tribes had more than two genders, they have three and four and five genders and it's only been a European Christian that had a dichotomous view point of black/white, right/wrong, male/female. ... And I can't quite keep my head around why...how you could keep things in two polar opposite camps and not have any interwoven-ness.

QWO-LI

So, when did you start doing research on what Two-Spirit was?

ROBIN

I was in a counseling program at the university and getting my Master's degree in counseling and I [Recording ends.]

APPENDIX D

SECOND INTERVIEW WITH ROBIN FARRIS

Tulsa Two-Spirit Gathering, 2008

ROBIN

Are there questions you want to ask?

QWO-LI

I'm trying to remember some of the stuff we did before, but I think what I started by asking last time is what words do you use to describe yourself, and why, and in what contexts?

ROBIN

Right. In terms of being Gay, right?

QWO-LI

Yeah.

ROBIN

Well, Gay, obviously, I just used it. I would say I use *Gay* as a universal, overreaching...I would call myself a Lesbian, I don't care about that, some people do. *Two-Spirit* depends on where I'm at, 'cause so many people don't know what that is and depending on who you're with. Obviously if I'm with Natives I would, if I thought they'd understand it. So, I'd say those three terms. I don't recall that I've ever defined myself by something else. I don't like the word *homosexual*, that's for sure.

QWO-LI

No?

ROBIN

No, it sounds like a Christian sermon word to me. It's derogatory, it's meant to separate and define who's doing something they're not supposed to. I like what they said to today, about the fact that *Two-Spirit* embraces more that just sexuality, that it embraces the whole spirit part of who we are as a person, honoring and being genuine to who we're born as.

QWO-LI

Did you grow up in Missouri?

ROBIN

No.

QWO-LI

No?

ROBIN

I was born in New Hampshire, and grew up all over. My parents—my mom and step-father—moved around a lot when I was a kid, so I think by the time I graduated I'd gone to something like thirteen different schools in seven different sates. Kind of all over the place. I came to Missouri because my grandfather lived here, he retired here, and—long story short—I ended up living with him out of high school before I started college. And I like Missouri a lot.

QWO-LI

I remember that one of the things we talked about last time is, what do think it is to be who we are, whatever words we use for that within Cherokee contexts now, and what do you imagine they've been in the past, what have you been told or...

ROBIN

Well, I liked finding out from another Cherokee when I was writing my paper that there had been a word, because I think as we discussed before I started out finding that among Native people—cause I was finding out who I was as a Gay person at the same time I was trying to learn more about my culture as a Cherokee—and then I heard through a Cherokee that here amongst Native people, it's a non-issue. That we've always had them in our society, and I thought, "Oh, this is incredible." You know, I'd found this community that will accept me as a Gay person. And then, as I started investigating it, I found out—not the case. We've been so assimilated as a culture that a lot of them don't even know their history and don't even remember. And so, I was angry and disappointed and very sad. Then I found out from another Cherokee, of the Eastern Band, that yes indeed, we were accepted and that there was a name for us, it was Two Heart. And I don't know how to pronounce that in Cherokee. He wrote it down, but I don't remember how to pronounce it. So, anyhow, then...the then and now question is, now I think we're struggling to get back in the circle. And then I think we were part of the circle, and it was accepted and it was just a different way of being, and unique to each individual, but all part of the whole community. I like what they say about, we didn't throw away people, we put them in their place. I don't think that's true now. But I think we can get back there. I'm optimistic.

QWO-LI

How do you think we get back there?

ROBIN

Part of it's gonna mean that each individual is gonna have to be kind of courageous, in stepping out, in stepping up and letting people see who we are and letting us contribute and that we're not weird or scared or afraid or something to be...you know. We're just people, like everyone else with things to contribute. I think seeing us and us keeping it in the forefront and educating people is gonna be what gradually...each generation...I think to have more of that to bring to the whole, and eventually I think we will come back into it. Knock on wood.

QWO-LI

Yeah. What do you think our...I guess...what do you think our present work is Cherokee communities or in Native communities in general or outside of those communities?

ROBIN

I think it's probably education, because I think we're having to educate each other and our little ones not only about our culture as Cherokee people, but then as part of that is the place of the Two-Spirit. It's part of the whole picture, it's not like two little separate things. It's just part of the whole picture. So, that, I think, educating and...like he [John Co-cké] said, just enlightening that pilot on the plane by saying, "Did you know *chief* is a derogatory term and you're dishonoring what it is and what it's come to mean," and all that. I don't think people know that. And so I think sometimes you just have to kind of teach them. So education. I think education. Being who we are and not being so afraid of to be who we are.

OWO-LI

How long have you been doing beadwork?

ROBIN

Just started a couple of years ago. A couple years? Maybe not even that long. Yeah, I'd say a couple years ago. I started with a bead loom. And then someone showed me how you could do jewelry. Actually, I think I stumbled into a bead place in New Mexico. And I was like, "Oh!" I thought "Oh my gosh, I could spend a fortune in here." And then somebody showed me how to do jewelry, and then I thought...I wanted moccasins, and like I told you I got online with Martha Berry and she had this long waiting list for moccasins and I thought, "Well, you know Robin, just get in there, get a pattern, and just make yourself cut the leather and just do it." So, that's what I did. And I'm very, very much enjoying it. It's like I told Deb, the thing is now I'm getting almost done with my first pair and I want to do another pair. I want to make another design, and keep going. I'm trying to make her wear some. She hasn't said yes for sure yet. She wants high-tops. But we've talked about making wedding moccasins. So, anyhow, I just think it's incredible.

OWO-LI

Yeah, it's beautiful. I like that you bring in the four colors.

ROBIN

Well, this particular thing: I thought about doing the four direction colors, and I wanted to go traditional, maybe, rather than modern. But I couldn't find brown beads. And then, the elders that teach me have taught me that unlike the Western tribes that talk about the red path, the red road, the ancient Cherokee it's the white path. So, I thought, you know

my feet, I'm walking a path, and so I wanted to put this white path here of diamonds in there to kind of remind me, to kind of remind myself that I need to live a spiritual since it's such a spiritual thing, and it's just spiritually true. So, the rest of it's just colors that I like.

OWO-LI

So this is your first time at a Two-Spirit gathering?

ROBIN

Yes. I had heard about the international one, but I didn't know it was so close to home till I got online. And I told Deb, I said, "Oh, Deb. They've got one right...." We're still learning about the culture and about the pow-wow and the proper etiquette and the balance of things and dances and stuff like that, and we're aware that as a Gay couple we can't just be out there. And it's kind of like, what can we wear, what can we not wear, what could we wear that might be not exactly what most straight people would do but wouldn't be so disrespectful that we're...because we're trying to balance being Gay and being Cherokee. So, we heard about this and we thought, "This is an incredible opportunity to just be who we are as Gay people, but also learn more about our tradition, and take part in that."

QWO-LI

Yeah. So how have you negotiated in other non-Two-Spirit spaces? How has that been?

ROBIN

You mean as far as Native gatherings that aren't Two-Spirit? It's like being in the heterosexual world. It's kind of like, don't get too far out there. We sit together but we don't hold hands like we were here. And right now we're still kind of in the observational

mode, and enjoying the crafts and the art and learning more about the culture part of it, and not really addressing directly the Two-Spirit part.

QWO-LI

What do you think, or what have you heard, are our traditions around Two-Spirit?

ROBIN

You mean the Cherokee tradition? I have no idea. Like he [Co-cké] was talking about—and that's what I found in my research—because it's an eastern tribe, so much of it was assimilated before people started getting it down on paper, that unless we do old manuscripts, that the people who wrote down certain things or know because it's been passed down orally or something like that...I have no idea. I've heard that you were defined by your work role, so it could be that. I mean, I know there were warrior women. Whether that meant they were considered Two-Spirit or not, I don't know. I know there were Cherokee warrior women, because I've read about them. Like Nancy Ward was considered sort of a warrior woman—Beloved Women—I know there's that, but Beloved Women are not the same thing as warrior women or Two-Spirit. I guess you could be both, but not necessarily, so, I don't know. I'm still learning.

QWO-LI

Where do you hope we can go, and why do think, I guess...what do you imagine for us as Cherokee Two-Spirit people? What do you want our future to be?

ROBIN

That we'll get back to that place where we're accepted, protected and allowed to add our spirit and gifts into the circle of our people and our community just like any other member of the tribe. I'd like to see all of us, in all tribes, model to the rest of the world

that Native Americans see being Two-Spirit (Gay) as no big deal. It's just a different way of being, like having blond hair or blue eyes, being tall or short.

QWO-LI

During the discussion today, you had said something about being treated as an abomination?

ROBIN

Yeah. He [Co-ké] asked the question about "What do people say when you come out?"

That [reference to abomination] is the kind of response I've experienced from many in the Christian community. Even if certain individuals don't say it themselves, there's this quiet agreement of it by not saying: I don't agree with that. The whole national (including the Cherokee Nation, I'm sorry to say...) mindset that voted in these "marriage is only between a man and a woman" thing... That angers me.

QWO-LI

Is that what's happened to you?

ROBIN

Yeah, I mean my sister quoted the scripture for me...She does the "love the sinner but not the sin" thing. That's just another way to me of trying to appear loving and accepting, but really you're not.

[Interview interrupted by an elder looking for scissors to cut a child's jeans into shorts.]

ROBIN

I forgot where we were at.

OWO-LI

You had mentioned your sister quoting scripture...

ROBIN

Oh yeah, about the abomination. Yeah. She said, "The Bible's clear on that." And she quoted it. So, whatever...

QWO-LI

Well, part of what this project is, is to just kind of have people tell their own stories. So, I guess I'm curious about what story or experience that you would want to...

ROBIN

Do I get to talk about Deb? (Laughs).

QWO-LI

You can talk about whatever you'd like.

ROBIN

Let's see. I was a late bloomer. I came out late in life. One of the things that I think is important—whether you're Cherokee, white or whatever—is that kids have got to be allowed to date in high school—Deb and I were talking about this—so you find out who you are and how you relate in a relationship. You know, we do the whole academic thing and the whole finding out what you want to be when you grow up thing, but my daughter at sixteen knew more about herself in relationship to significant others than I did at thirty-eight. All I knew was that I didn't respond to men very well, to men at all. I mean, I liked them as people... I, you know, had emotional attachments, but I couldn't physically/sexually get attracted. I had myself compartmentalized...and it never occurred to me at the time I married my husband, that "sex" is a huge part of a marital and intimate relationship. To me, sex didn't matter and I couldn't understand why it meant so much to my husband (at the time). Later on, I realized how totally unfair this was to him and to

me. He needed someone who could relate to him sexually, and so did I. I also didn't seem to fit in with straight women socially. It was like I could never quite "get" their worlds or how they related to them...like I didn't quite speak their language. I was in my forties...and online one evening having a conversation with a woman who it turned out, was Bi and all of a sudden we were flirting with each other, basically. And it's like the lights all went on. You have to understand this was amazing to me. My husband had often asked me to flirt with him...and it was like...I don't get it. What is this flirting thing and how does one do that—actually? So, long story short, I explored that and realized it fit me. Suddenly everything made sense and the missing puzzle pieces kind of all fell into place. And it was more than just a sexual thing. It was sexual and physical and mental and social more than anything else. There's a group of people now that I just feel in sync with, I feel like I'm on the same page with. And it's just totally different. You almost have to be there. Anyhow, that's probably my whole experience in a nutshell. But then, here you are in your forties suddenly really dating for the first time. And I had a so much to learn, that there was a lot to making a relationship happen besides just finding the correct gender. And that's why I thought, "Man, if I had known this when I was a kid...." I mean, I don't regret my path because I do have my kids out of it, and so on. But if I had known this, what a difference. You know, being in high school. I might have had redheaded children [Deb has red hair]. (Laughs).

I don't know. I can't think of anything else related to the experience. I talk to people who are curious about what it means to be Gay...genuinely interested, not condemning...just trying to understand. A former professor asks me to come talk to her multicultural classes now what it means to be Gay and I do. It's a way of empowering

myself, being a voice for others that haven't yet been able to come out and accept who they are as unique and valuable individuals. It's also a way of giving back to my community of Gay women. Gay men, too, but I can't speak to their experience. You know, trying to present to a class of straight people who may not have had any exposure to what it's like to be a Gay person, and what kinds of issues they may encounter in counseling others that are different that they need to be sensitive to. So, in part I speak where I can to empower myself, but in part I do that for my community to try to give voice to people who still are voiceless, and to help foster understanding and acceptance.

OWO-LI

I guess...I know I'm kind of free-flow with the questions...but what were experiences like growing up as a Cherokee person and as a Queer person?

ROBIN

As a Cherokee person, I knew...my mom had told me, she must have told me really young that we were Cherokee. Because all I remember is that I identified with it all of my life. It was probably my earliest identification of who I was as a person, before even accepting the fact that I was a girl... and I remember "being" Cherokee at age five and six. My grandfather gave me an Indian name of "Laughing Eyes" and I took that pretty seriously I think. My Mom says, "You always wanted to be an Indian brave. You never wanted to be a princess." *That* should have said something about whether I was Gay or straight, maybe...but at the time none of picked up on that. Anyhow, I played Indian constantly. I did not care that everyone else wanted to be a cowboy. *I* was gonna be an Indian. I wanted bows and arrows, I wanted tom-toms, I wanted feathers, I wanted it...I did that all as a kid. And it was more than just "play," I related to the world differently in

a more Native American way I think. I remember crying one time, because our neighbors cut this big limb off a tree...because it was in their way as I recall. And it was so painful; it felt like someone had taken an arm off somebody. It's like, "Why? Because it's inconvenient to you. You whack this arm off." I still remember that. It felt bad. Anyhow, our problem is, there isn't a lot whole lot we know about our family, our ancestors...Why they ended up on this side of the Mississippi? Did they come here before the Trail or on it? My mom and I have been on this genealogical search for years trying to discover who Lee Rogers' parents were and what his story was, and we're having a very difficult time of it because there's not a lot of records that our family had a hold of. And in all that search, I've found that a lot of our ancestors who could pass as white, did so... and so part of all the sorrow and anger of being Cherokee is recognizing and feeling the huge loss of our heritage and the impact of being annihilated as a culture. I was very angry at white people for awhile...and you know, I look white myself...but I just don't relate well to the parts of me that are German and English... I'm still struggling with the shame of all of that, and trying to recognize that like my Cherokee ancestors, my European ancestors were individuals, and as individuals they were just people, but as a government...I have a very hard time with the whole arrogance and white/American supremacy thing. I'm finding out in talking to the elders and in my own discernment though that I don't think all of this journey and searching is about finding out who my great-grandfather was. I think it's more...I think it's about the discovery itself...and our traditions and history...you know, from a Cherokee and Native perspective, and so I think there were things that I was meant to learn and that my ancestors wanted to teach me and this is how they're teaching me, is by making this a journey and not a quickanswer of just names and dates. They are and continue to teach me. I believe that my ancestors...my Cherokee heritage is alive to me and available to me in a here-and-now way...I really do believe in the ancestors.

I didn't know I was "Queer," if you can use that word, when I was little. I've gone back and looked at things now with the new eyes that I have of who I am and, you know, you start thinking, the teacher and the girls I was attracted to in grade school even. What was that all about? I remember this one girl in particular—this was about the fifth grade—and she had this really beautiful long blond hair, she had a Scandinavian background of some kind in her family, and I just thought she was gorgeous. Now I look back on that and wonder if that was a sign that I was Gay. But then my whole sexual development got derailed when I was sexually abused (It started when I was 12...and didn't stop until I turned 18) and the abuse just sort of knocked out that whole concern. I was too busy surviving to start exploring who I was sexually. So, the whole journey just got halted, absolutely halted, and psychologically frozen, and it was only in counseling in my forties in trying to heal through my childhood trauma that I started waking up to the sexual part of myself, that part that I think most people come to an understanding of in their pre-teens, pre-puberty era. "Experiencing puberty in your forties is real embarrassing," but it was also an energizing and exciting time. (Laughs). I got to actually experience the whole hormonal connection. Everything that had been just frozen at age ten, suddenly—you know—like, I'm forty-two and I feel like I'm eighteen, you know? (Laughs).

[Side conversation with Deb].

I'm not sure if that answered everything. Regarding the whole Gay thing that you were asking about. Now, my mom said, when I came out to her finally, that it made things that I had done and ways I had been in my childhood, early childhood—it made sense to her now. She said she used to tell people that she had three boys and a girl and her girl was more boy than her boys were. And I was such a tomboy...much more interested in being outside and climbing trees, running and wrestling with my brothers than I was in dolls and stuff. Mom says that I've changed a lot socially now too, that the way I am seems more connected. She says "You always seemed to be on the outside looking in," and now...once I came out as a Gay person she noticed that I changed a lot, and she feels like I look like I fit in more with people, that I'm more comfortable in myself, that I'm more calm. One of my professors, who watched my whole coming out process, said the same thing recently, that the difference between me when she first got to know me as a new student and now—four-five years later—is totally different. Totally. And...it's been helpful to have people who know me...validate my experience. I know it as genuine, but it is empowering when others experience it in the same way. Which is something you miss if you stay closeted. Because nobody knows.

QWO-LI

And so you've done your own research on Two-Spirit.

ROBIN

Yes. As I was integrating myself as a Lesbian, I was also reclaiming more of my identity as a Native American, a Cherokee. When I had first visited Tahlequah, a Cherokee man there told me that being Gay was "a non-issue." That's what I had heard, that Natives are much more accepting of the different ways of being in this world than the white-Euro

conservative Christian element. So, I was shocked...hurt...angry when I found out that the council of the Cherokee Nation passed...even before the rest of the U.S. did...that one-man/one-woman marriage amendment to their law and constitution. I felt betrayed...and very, very hurt. I tried to communicate with Chief Smith and the council members about this and most of them would not even reply. And, as you know, in Native culture, not speaking is speaking. It is saying something. And I got it. So, I decided to research why and where we had lost this understanding of ourselves as a people—

a tribe—and that's what came out: my seminar paper on being Two-Spirit and how that is just another aspect of the genocide/assimilation of most Native American cultures. We've completely lost so much of our history. What we have now, that so many Cherokee believe in as accurate, is a white interpretation of our history, and so much of it is so inaccurate.

QWO-LI

What kind of research, what kind of work or questions, do you have about Two-Spirit traditions or people that you're looking at or wanting to look at?

ROBIN

My biggest concern regards our own history and tradition, because we've lost so much. I don't even know if or how much we an ever get back. What we have now that is out for the general public is white interpretations and white writings on what we did and why... like this whole thing about Sequoyah having "invented" the Cherokee alphabet. I have a problem with that. I think it was there long before Sequoyah. So, unless you can find elders who have been taught the history, teachings, stories and traditions as they really were, and who are willing to pass them on, and that people will listen to, we're going to

continue with this assimilated version of what it meant and means to be Native American and Cherokee. Our history as a people is evolving, just like all people's history, so my big argument to the Nation over my Two-Spirit paper was (and is) that, I don't argue with your right to say that you've decided at this point in time that—given how you view the world or morality or whatever—that Gays shouldn't get married, but I do argue with your denial of the fact the Two-Spirit were a part and accepted as a valuable part of our people and our history. I mean, go ahead and say that it used to be okay in the past but that you no longer find that being Gay acceptable or whatever, but don't pretend we didn't exist.

QWO-LI

Could you say about...did you write to the council?

ROBIN

Yeah, I emailed them. First, I started off emailing them questions. And I actually got two or three different council members to respond. The chief never responded, which hurt. I felt like he could have at least acknowledged my email, but he didn't. And then in continuing to write, only one of those three even kept up a correspondence. And even that person had to say, "Don't identify who I am, because it could cause problems." This person had to hide their support and response to my questioning. I think that's a pretty sad commentary on our Tsalagi culture. When I finished my seminar paper I emailed them all a copy and asked for *their* opinions. I received one response. No one else even acknowledged my having sent it at all. It was very disheartening, you know, because they're the leaders of our people. They're the ones that are fashioning and creating cultural language and societal definition and stuff. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised, but I was...at the time.

OWO-LI

And this is around the same-sex marriage case?

ROBIN

Yeah, it started out when a lesbian couple wanted to register their marriage with the Nation, and they wouldn't let them...but there was no rule that said they couldn't. So they seemed to quick add this piece to the Tsalagi constitution that "defined" marriage. This was months before the rest of the country went in for that. I mean, that's what shocked me. I thought, "You've got to be kidding me." You know? I thought, "No. Not the Cherokee." I thought I misread it, or misunderstood. Then I started realizing just how much our culture has been assimilated into the white-Euro Christian way of defining who we are and what is accepted. There are a few elders and people who tell me that it wasn't always this way. But most Cherokee today deny that the Two-Spirit were ever even a part of our heritage. They are being taught the white way and the Tsalagi way is forgotten and denied.

QWO-LI

What other things do you wanna add or say? Or was there anything from last time that you remember that we didn't talk about this time?

ROBIN

No, I don't remember. I don't remember about last time. No, I can't think of anything. I think we covered it. I think we did a better job of it this time than last time.

QWO-LI

I think so too.

ROBIN

It seemed more formulated. As I recall it was your first interview last time.

QWO-LI

It was, yep.

ROBIN

And you really hadn't had really quite the time to sit down and figure out exactly where you wanted to come from.

QWO-LI

Yeah. Okay, wa'do.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE

OWO-LI

I think maybe I wanna have you just start telling any sort of story you want about your life or your experience as a Cherokee Two-Spirit/Queer. Well, first of all, how do you...what words do you use?

DANIEL

I tend to go with Queer. I actually don't use Two-Spirit very often. Queer works really well for me. I like its ambiguity, and I like that it kind of shakes things up a bit. For myself, I think Two-Spirit is a bit...I understand the reasons for connecting it to a spiritual tradition and I think that's important, but I think in some ways it normalizes in ways that I don't know if necessarily we need to be normalized. I like the idea that whatever roles we may have had in the past are roles today, that we could be really important in shaking up complacency and conservatism and reactionary convention, and reminding people that being Cherokee is about a lot more than blood and it's a lot more than breeding. There's a lot to being Cherokee that is really exciting and powerful and disruptive and beautifully quirky and weird and anomalous. So, I'm very happy with Oueer. I probably identify myself much more as Queer than Gay.

QWO-LI

Why?

DANIEL

I think 'cause *Gay* sounds...it's about Gay bars and a bunch of Gay white guys. Not that there's anything wrong with Gay white guys, but.... *Queer* feels very much in keeping with being Cherokee to me. And *Gay* is weighted by a lot of representational burdens.

OWO-LI

How do you think that being Queer...how did just you say that?...feels in line with being Cherokee?

DANIEL

Cherokees as a rule have always been...weird. For our neighbors. So, in the Southeast we were the only Iroquoian speaking people. We were the people who lived in the mountains. Socially we were similar to the Muskogeean peoples in a lot of ways, but we were also anomalous in a lot of ways. And anomalies are such a big part of our tradition. I mean, you have *Uktena*, you have Wild Boy, you have...even Thunder in some ways is anomalous. These are figures who cross between worlds and represent a lot of different realities. That's been a Cherokee experience. Our history of intermarriage, our history of adaptation...we adapted pretty readily. Even traditionalists who didn't speak English adapted to changing circumstances. Not necessarily *gladly* all the time, but pretty practically, so, we've always been able to adapt and shift and...move ourselves as necessary, and I think *Queer* is a term that really gives us that as well.

I'd be a little hesitant to say that to be Cherokee is to be Queer, but I think that we are in an anomalous position in a lot of ways in broader Native America. I mean, we're hated in Indian Country 'cause we're supposedly not Indian enough, but it's been our transformative Indian-ness that has made us survive. And I find it really troubling that

there are so many people in the Nation who would want to take away that transformability out of some sort of weird misguided fear about cultural purity, when we've always been inclusive, we've always been adaptive. Not always *happily*. I think that's an important point, too, but, that would be Queer. That's also about being Queer. That's survival. And not just surviving, but *thriving*.

QWO-LI

So, when did you...know that you were Queer?

DANIEL

Well, I always knew that I was a weird little kid. I was a *total* cross-dresser as a child. Wonder Woman, Teela from He-Man. In Oz, I was Ozma, I loved Ozma. Never much cared for that bitch Glinda. I loved dolls as a little boy. And it never seemed odd to me that I could play a male character one day and a female character the next day. Why not? What was it about girls that made them so special that they could play these fantastic characters and I couldn't? And all of my main friends were girls. So, that was just...we got each other. We loved beautiful toys and we loved having fun, we loved dress up. And we would also play with He-Man toys, I mean it was not just Barbie. But gender didn't really have...gender was very malleable. And fun. And of course, once I started going to school and realized that not all kids appreciated that, that's where I really started to kind of pull back from some of that. But, from a very early age I was never a conventional boy.

You know, I would go with my dad, and we'd go camping, and I'd go out with my little cowboy outfit and everything, and I'd be all butch. And then dad would be taking pictures and I'd pose in my little cowboy outfit. And I still have some of those pictures,

they're really cute. But it's a real indication to me. I loved the dress up of being a boy, too. I loved the boy drag. It was very fluid, as far back as I can remember.

QWO-LI

How did your family react to that?

DANIEL

They were indulgent, but to a point. I had this Dolly Parton doll. The first doll I ever had. And I couldn't understand why it kept ending up in the trash. And then one day it just disappeared. And I remember my dad was not pleased when one of my little girl friend's parents bought me a doll for my birthday, because I really wanted one. It was one of this little kinda half-size dolls that their daughters had and I really wanted one, and I got one for my birthday. And Dad wasn't happy about it, but he never... I never felt like I was being pushed into a model of a particular masculinity, since my dad was really indulgent, and so was my mom. I was my mom's only, I was my dad's baby, and they always knew I was a very imaginative kid at an early age. And, I think if I had been my dad's first, like my eldest half-brother, I think it would have been a really different situation. But my dad had mellowed out a lot by the time I came along. So I knew that they weren't...overjoyed about my gender play, but they didn't...it was never punished, it was never made a pathology. It was just... I was a little boy so I knew that they wanted me to play little boy things, so I did. And then when I was by myself, I did dress up. And I don't remember feeling at all conflicted about that, like I was doing something wrong. It was only when I went to school and was starting to experience abuse from other kids, that's when it was a different situation. But never at home.

When did you start coming out?

DANIEL

Oh, that was....I came out to myself...well, I don't know. I first had a really good inkling when I was about seventeen, and a female friend of mine...her aunt had bought her a *Blueboy* magazine. And this friend showed it to me. I've never asked her, we've lost touch, but I've been really curious as to why she showed that to me. What was it that she had an idea before I ever articulated it? I made up some lame excuse to borrow it. I have no idea how...because of course I was "straight." And I just remember looking at it.

When I was going through school, kids would always call me a fag and stuff and I would think, "Well how could I be Gay? I love women." I was not sexually attracted to them, but I loved being around women. I was just a "nice" guy. I was a nice straight guy, and I had no sexual interest in the guys around me—at all. Well, in retrospect I really understand that, 'cause they were not necessarily...I still wouldn't have any interest in them. But when I looked at this magazine I was completely...jolted. 'Cause these were beautiful men. Who were unashamedly sexual. And they'd look out at the camera with this just smoldering desire. I was like, "Holy Shit! I get it."

But of course, I didn't want to admit it. I didn't want to admit it to myself. I didn't come out to myself until I was twenty-one. Even though I was buying Gay porn pretty regularly, and all of my fantasies were about men, it wasn't until I lost my virginity to a woman and ended up having dry heaves in the bathroom afterwards, that I fully realized I was Gay. But then it was a couple of years after that before I was actually with a man.

And then immediately after being with him...I was at a conference...came back from the

on my neck, so I pretty much had to explain that somehow and lying just seemed...it just was not something to lie about. I wasn't ashamed.

QWO-LI

I know, since I know you and all, that you're Oklahoma Cherokee. What is your family's experience? I mean, I know you can't just summarize that, but...I don't know....what do you want to talk about with that?

DANIEL

You mean my family's experience being Cherokee?

QWO-LI

Or, whatever you want to talk about.

DANIEL

I was born and raised in Colorado, and my dad was born and raised in Colorado. My grandparents moved from Oklahoma. I didn't actually...I never set foot in the Nation until I was probably twenty-three. So, our experience was always at a distance...but we knew we were Indians. I didn't really want to be when I was a kid, because Indians to my mind...you know, they were the savages who ran around and killed nice little kids and white women, and...I remember when I was three years old was when I found out we were Indians. My mom and dad and I and one of my dad's friends from his trucking days were out having breakfast, I think in Deckers or someplace in Colorado. And this friend of Dad's was Lakota, and phenotypically. I mean he had the long hair, he had the dark skin, and the whole meal I just glared at this guy. And like my mom says, she knew I was gonna say something, but you can't slap a kid before he says something. So, Mom got up

to take me to the bathroom, and I walked over and I poked the guy, and I said, "Hey. My daddy doesn't like Indians." And of course, they all just roared—they thought it was hilarious. And my mom said, "But honey, your daddy is an Indian." And I threw a walleyed fit, screaming and crying, "My daddy is not an Indian! My daddy is not an Indian!" Snot and tears dripping down my face. You know, my dad has a buzz-cut, and he has phenotypically Native features...people know he's not a white man. But he also wears flannels and...he's not like the Indians on TV. But for me, as a kid...the revelation was horrifying. My mom said, "Yes, he is an Indian." She kind of grabbed me a shook me, and she said, "And that makes you an Indian too." And I said, "Oh, so I'm a little Indian boy, huh Mama?" And then it was okay, there was no problem. But I've always kind of come back to that moment and thought, "At three years old, why would I have been so terrified of the idea that my daddy was an Indian?" And that really shaped the way I approached our ancestry...I was "part Indian." But it wasn't something I...I wasn't ashamed, particularly, it was just not something I claimed. I wanted to be a British professor. I wanted to teach at Oxford, wear jackets with patches on the sleeves and smoke pipes, and sit in oak-paneled drawing rooms and pontificate about the grandeur of the Romantic era of British literature.

And my dad had a really hard life. His mom and dad divorced when he was a boy, and she was the tie to the Nation, and she had tuberculosis and ended up in a tuberculosis sanatorium in Colorado Springs where she died when my dad was fourteen. And that was the last time he saw his grandfather, when his grandfather came to collect the deed to her house and then just left. But Dad had actually been really close with his grandfather before then. Amos Spears was his name. And, my grandmother's family just kind

of...they never were in touch or anything. So my dad lived his life as a pretty isolated Indian kid on the Colorado plains. His sister could pass pretty easily, but he couldn't. And he had to fight all the time, and he was a he was a scrappy little kid, but he was little. He's a short, slightly-built man. But he learned how to fight, and he learned how to give back as good as he got. He was always very proud to be Indian, I mean he was kind of like, "Well, if you assholes think it's a bad thing, then it must be a good thing." But he didn't really know what it was to be Cherokee in a cultural way. He knew what it was to be an Indian in a very anti-Indian world. But he was always proud of it, but it really wasn't until I started reclaiming that, that together we...and I started to ask him questions and I started to get all these stories, that I'd never heard before and that he'd really never had the receptive audience for. So, in a lot of ways our...we've had to do a lot of cultural recovery. We have Oklahoma Shawnee ancestry, too, but don't know much about it—it's the Cherokee that's shaped our history. My mom's family claims Native ancestry, either Cherokee or possibly Chickasaw, although there are some questions about the enrollment records. These could have just been white folks trying to get Chickasaw land, could have been Chickasaw, could have been Cherokees, who knows? So my mom has kind of walked this path as well, with a much less clear sense of what that is for her. But for Dad's line, we know who our family line is. We know we're one of the old families. We had family members who walked the Trail, so...but a lot of that is recovery, and also just asking questions.

My aunt Alverta, she just recently died, just last month. Got a lot of information from her. I actually have photos of my great-grandparents now and I have photos of my grandmother. And my grandmother, she was sixteen when she got married, she started

having babies right away. I think she was seventeen or eighteen when my dad was born. When she got divorced, she ended up having a child out of wedlock who ended up at the Stratton Home in Colorado Springs. She'd been a Cherokee girl in a shitty marriage with my grandfather. And on the eastern plains of Colorado? Prime Klu Klux Klan territory. She was a Catholic, of all things, which the Klan didn't like them, and she was a loose woman, who smoked and drank. So, all of these things are so dangerous. She didn't want her kids to be Indians. She wanted her kids to survive.

Our experience is absolutely a Cherokee experience, but it's not a land-rooted, ceremonial Cherokee identity. It's the Cherokee identity of being outlanders of the diaspora and the scattering of the Nation. Very much a Cherokee experience, but it's not the language experience, it's not the cultural experience, except as the culture of fragmentation and recovery. So we've been able to reconnect with a lot of that history, which has been really rich and beautiful. But I was Cherokee in name only, in a lot of ways, and have only been finding my way to a stronger cultural and historical sense of Cherokeeness since I've been an adult. My first experience with Cherokee pride was reading Asa Carter's *The Education of Little Tree*, which is sick and twisted, but it makes some measure of sense. That was the first time I read a book that was actually made me proud to be a Cherokee man, even if that pride was found in a fake autobiography by an unredeemed racist.

QWO-LI

We've had so many conversations for so long, it's hard to figure out what things to ask in such a small amount time. But I know that last time we saw each other, we started to talk

about *Uktena*, I think and other sorts of precedents in Cherokee stories that...I guess Queer precedent in stories...do you know what we talked about?

DANIEL

Yeah. Uktena in particular, but there are a lot of other figures who are really kind of odd in a very highly stratified society that...a society that places a very high emphasis on purity and separation of certain things from other things and maintaining pretty clear divisions between different categories. And yet there are all of these ways in which those divisions are penetrated. And they're very much embedded within the national consciousness. So, yeah, I think we do have a lot of really fascinating figures in our history. Whether they're a Two-Spirit precedent, I don't know. And I don't know that it matters much. I think we can make them ours. *Uktena* is a dangerous, dangerous monster. But it's also a really important monster for medicine. Just like Stone Jacket is a brutal, carnivorous, bloodthirsty beast. But we got our medicine songs from him after he was killed. There are all of these different ways that those binaries are not necessarily arbitrary, but they're conditional. And I think that we're conditional people. I think that's a really powerful and empowering place. It's a scary place, especially if you're a lightskinned, balding mixedblood who wasn't raised in the geographic boundaries of the Nation. If you don't have the language, if your family experience as an Indian is not necessarily the tribal, cultural experience. Except as the last ten years. So, a third of my life...well, actually, I started when I was nineteen really reclaiming being Cherokee, which is a process that you helped with very much. So, over a third of my life I've been a proud Cherokee. And there's still under two-thirds that I didn't really know who or what I was. I knew what I didn't want to be, and I was trying to fill that void with a lot of

pretense and a lot of very class-oriented wannabe desires. So it's a scary thing to be in a conditional state, but I don't think conditional means...I don't think it means expendable. But I think we have important roles to play. And I think we're doing that.

QWO-LI

What are they? What are we doing, do you think, is going on?

DANIEL

Well, we are memory-keepers. We're memory keepers for our families, a lot of us are scholars who work in literature and in history and in rhetoric and in anthropology. We know the history better than a lot of other folks, because we've had to. Sometimes because we're looking for ourselves in that memory, and sometimes just because that's what we're called upon to do. Some people who are raised on home ground, they have a particular experience which is important and very valid, but they don't have to work at it the same way. Some people, that's just what they're raised in. And that's a beautiful thing and I think that's an important thing, but I think that there's also something beautiful and important about working at it and having to confront the absences in our past and being forced to confront the realities of colonization that have effected us very explicitly. And to know that we have a lot of family members who didn't find that balance, who weren't able to embrace who they were...they were just trying to survive and they were trying to get their kids to survive. I'm very blessed that I'm enrolled, because that enrollment validates that history for me in ways that other people don't have that privilege. But that's not what makes me Cherokee; the experiences and the history and the commitment and the ancestry, that's what defines our Cherokeeness more than anything.

But I think we are lorekeepers, we're story-holders, we're history bearers. We are tradition bearers. We're transformers. We shake things up, in necessary ways, hopefully. We're survivors. We're willing to face a lot of hard things to be honest. I mean, one thing we often hear is, "Cherokees are honest people." That honesty is important to us. And yet, the Baptist influence has caused a lot of Queer Cherokees to lie, to have to lie about who they are and what they are. Well, if we're honest people....we're called upon to be honest and that's sometimes the hardest thing in the world to do, but that's what we're here to do.

So, I don't think what we are called upon to do is necessarily different from what a lot of non-Queer Cherokees are called upon to do. But I've not yet met a Queer Cherokee who hasn't been deeply devoted to the people. And I've met a lot of non-Queer Cherokees who have *not* been devoted. So that says something to me. That we have to fight to be recognized, but part of that fight is also the hard work we're doing in cultural recovery and maintenance and not just looking back but also looking forward. Positing a more humane and dignified future for the Cherokee people. We have really good examples to draw on, but sometimes a lot of weird ugliness comes up that we have to challenge. And just by being ourselves we challenge that.

OWO-LI

I know that you and I have had conversations about this, too, and you have editorial control of this in case it's something you want to do my research on before it's out in the world, but I know you've talked about Little Carpenter, as someone you're interested in learning more about.

DANIEL

Yeah, Little Carpenter is a really interesting figure to me. We have a lot of information on him but he's...he's kinda quirky. He's honored, but it's clear that even in his own community of Chota he holds a somewhat ambivalent or ambiguous position. He's the father of Dragging Canoe, the great Chickamauga war chief. He's the uncle of Nancy Ward, Nanyehi, the great Beloved Woman. He's a Beloved Man who is an advocate for peace. He was known as a very strong warrior before. But he disappeared for a long time, he was a captive of the Odawas, possibly. There's also some question that he might have been Odawa. He might have been of another nation who was adopted into the Cherokee Nation. He was renowned for his rhetorical skills, but he was also known to be very, very strategic. He was an amazing politician who worked very much for the benefit of Chota, but not necessarily for other Cherokee communities. He was very town centered. He was on one the first Cherokee delegation that went to London, so he saw this force that was coming across the ocean, and he had a really unique perspective that a lot of other Cherokees at this time did not.

The pictures we have of him, and the descriptions we have of him always that he was small, slight, and he's effeminized in a lot of these representations, even if it's just kind of by an aside. He had a *very* intimate relationship with a British military officer, I want to say John Stuart, but I don't remember exactly what his name was. Somewhere in memory they did the "brotherhood ceremony," which seems to me to be kind of a nice way of, or a very hetronormative way, of dismissing that intimacy. I guess when Little Carpenter died, Stuart or whoever this man was, was inconsolable with grief, which could be a brother situation, but just a lot of things lead me to wonder. No evidence, I have no

evidence that he got it on with men. But just so many little things point to him being an anomalous figure and a figure who—yeah, he had a son, we know nothing, or very little, about his relationship with his wife. We do know he was estranged from his son, which would have made some sense, because the father would not have been any authority. But in their particular relationship, they were both Wolf Clan—not sure how that happened. They would have had a stronger relationship. And Little Carpenter's relationship with Nan'yehi—he was the uncle of Nan'yehi—he would have had a significant influence over her. And she had a very strong and contested relationship with Dragging Canoe. I also wonder---because we don't know a lot about the women's roles in the council, there's scattered bits and pieces. We know that there probably was a women's council. But we know in other Iroquoian and some Muskogeean traditions, but particularly Iroquoian, the women's council has a male representative to men's council. And his relationship with the women seems to be very strong. So I wonder if there was something maybe similar to that. And who better than a Queer boy to bridge that gap between the women and the men?

And, his nickname: Leaning Wood. It's really hard for me not to see that as a pun. I need to talk to a language speaker to have a sense of whether that would be the case, but things just point over and over to me that he was family. And, so, he fathered a child. Yeah, and? That would not in any way preclude him from being Queer. He's a Beloved Man at a younger age than a lot of other Beloved Men, if memory serves. So what does that mean? And just because he was a Beloved Man doesn't mean he wasn't also a warrior. But, he supported the British. I would love to know what was going on in England when those Cherokee boys were over there. Did they visit a molly house? Not

likely, but they certainly stayed in the area of London where same-sex activities were notorious. I don't know. I have a lot of research to do on this, but...you know?

QWO-LI

Yeah, one of the things that reminds me of, too, that we've talked about, is kind of how there's an image that some Cherokees want to create for Cherokee culture being like, very sexually modest, and have internalized all this stuff about sexuality, that doesn't actually make sense historically or even linguistically or culturally or anything—it doesn't make sense. So, I'm kind of curious about what you think in general from your research and stories or whatever, what kinds of ways Cherokees viewed eroticism and sexuality in general before Christian shame-based things started to be enforced.

DANIEL

Cherokees were *incredibly* sexual people, though not nasty about it. At the Peabody Museum there's a pipe bowl from a Cherokee townsite, with a man and a woman having sex, in explicit detail, with their genitalia pointed right at the smoker. So, somebody's getting a little thrill looking at that. Early European accounts were horrified about how sexually free Cherokees were, that young Cherokee women had sex, out of wedlock, sometimes extra-wedlock. And young men. And, no mentions are—I haven't seen any mentions at all or hints at all of same-sex intimacies. But, people were very much sexual people. And frankly a lot of the fine upstanding folks who don't want to admit it...I'm sorry, but you can either deny your sexual desires and get in weird circumstances, or you can just admit the fact that we love sex, we're very sexual people, and that doesn't mean that we're crass about it. I think Cherokees would not have been crass, and I think that even very sexual Cherokees today have personal modesty, but it doesn't necessarily

transfer always over to sexual prudery. But, it's depending on the context. It's depending on who's around, and I think that's okay. I think that's fair. I mean, walking around flashing your dick at everybody is not a nice thing to do. Not everybody wants to see that. So, I think part of it is also just a basic consideration for one another.

OWO-LI

One of the things that I think is so hilarious about the attempt to ban same-sex marriage in the CNO, and this argument that there's not historical evidence of it—that's what they're trying to say—is that what we do have really clear evidence of is not something they would like.

DANIEL

No. (Laughing). No. And frankly, a lot of...there is a lot of evidence. A lot of families have this evidence, as they have Gay and Lesbian and Queer kids, parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, friends, and so on. And they don't necessarily talk about it a lot, but we've all heard stories of very public admissions from high-level people in the community. But these acknowledgments haven't gotten written down...there's power in the words. And there are very important traditionalists who have been very vocal about it, some of whom are Queer. So, yeah, we have the evidence. But we also have a lot of evidence of—like you said—of things folks aren't thrilled about, like, oh, burning people alive at the stake in the 1700s, torturing them to death. I mean, I think having a bunch of Queer folks running around in the Nation is a much nicer thing than burning people alive at the stake. I understand that there was a social role for that, whatever, but it doesn't necessarily fit my ethical protocols today. Kiss him, mustn't kill him. I think that's okay.

QWO-LI

Are there any things that you—through research or stories or your own feelings or whatever or that you think...I don't know how to phrase the question, but what do you think is our place historically?

DANIEL

I've asked a couple of elders this, both of whom said they don't think we had a special place necessarily, or a culturally defined place, but they both said that was because it just didn't matter, that it wasn't so different as to require a distinctive role. Which surprised me...that wasn't the answer I was expecting. And I wonder about that, I think it's a real possibility that as long as you were still contributing to the community, whether you lived as a man or a woman or whatever, who you had sex with didn't matter. Are you having kids? Are you adding to the safety and security of the town? Are you fulfilling your obligations to your family? That mattered. On the whole, not everybody had to have children. Are you contributing to the welfare of the community? I think that's what mattered. That could very well have been it.

I think because of the really strong gender dichotomies, and there certainly were anomalous figures that could pass between that, it would be odd to have a defined role. But I think we also have to ask, "What are we talking about?" Is it people who are gender variant? Is it people who are having sex with people of the same gender? Is it people who are living in a different gendered experience? In that way, it may very well have been that somebody who was born identifiably male and lives as a woman might have a social role of caring for orphans, or being a healer or something. We certainly know that some of the War Women were gender variant, at least in their transgressing or crossing over

particular kinds of gendered expectations about the sphere of women. They were not in any way pathologized, they were very much honored. I don't see a similar role for men. You have War Women, and warrior men, but I don't see Peace Men. Beloved Men, yes, but that was kind of a different category. So I really don't know, that was really something I've wondered about. And I do wonder if maybe it's not just that...people had sex. That didn't define their identity. What gender role they took, not what sexual role, but what gender role they took, that was the defining feature of their identities. And that makes sense to me. That makes sense within what we know about early Cherokee culture. But, the absence of evidence doesn't mean that it's not there; it's not the evidence of absence. I tend to be kind of evidence-oriented on that, I'd like to see more evidence of something. The few things I've seen that the men who crossed were not kicked out, by any means, but they were made fun of in a couple of the accounts I've seen. Men who weren't masculine enough. But then you have somebody like Little Carpenter who could very well have been Oueer. People didn't make fun of him. But people didn't always trust him or his motives, either. So, I think maybe a man who was shifting a little bit...and that could have very well not just on the part of men but on the part of women. "What is this man doing coming into our sphere of authority?" But I kind of have to hedge on that one, because I just don't know.

OWO-LI

What do you imagine and what do you want for Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit folks? What do you want in the future?

DANIEL

I want us to have a place on the grounds, with our partners, where we don't have to worry or feel like our partners aren't gonna be welcomed. I'm not a Baptist, but I don't imagine that one's partner would be welcome in the Baptist Church. There are some grounds where we're welcome, though not many. I want us to be healthy and happy and to not be seen as compromising our Cherokeeness by living honestly and loving honestly. I want that love and living to be seen as contributing to Cherokee nationhood, not drawing away from it.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW WITH CHAD AND COREY TABER

Tulsa Two-Spirit Gathering, April 19, 2008.

QWO-LI

Okay, well, usually I start off just by asking people what words they use to talk about themselves, as far as Two-Spirit or Gay or both of those things, and kind of why, and in what contexts, or other words, you know?

CHAD

It depends probably I guess to whom I'm speaking. Usually I identify as Gay, but also because mainly where I live, it's very urban, there's not many opportunities for me to use the term *Two-Spirit* and be understood. So usually I just used the term *Gay* and I identify as Gay and Native American. (*To Corey*). How do you identify?

COREY

You know, I think that people that are not Native American have no idea what the word Two-Spirit means in almost every instance, and so I think it's kind of...it's a useless term in some scenarios...

CHAD

Sometimes...

COREY

...Unfortunately. And I don't mean to take away from it, like to say it's not worth having around, but just that in certain situations it's not applicable as...it's lost in translation, almost, you could say.

CHAD

Sometimes I use that as an opportunity to tell people a little bit about our history.

COREY

To educate.

CHAD

Mmhmm. Especially in my day-to-day life because I come in contact with a lot of people. I work as a stylist, and so I see a lot of people on a daily basis, and a lot of them...just because of the nature of the work, I develop a pretty close relationship with most of my clients, and so and a lot of them will ask me. And also, when I return from ceremony like Green Corn Ceremony where I have scratches on my body and people see that. Or my tattoos they see on my wrists and wonder what that's from or what it symbolizes. And so that kind of gives me an opportunity to explain a little bit more about myself and maybe even identify with the term *Two-Spirit*.

OWO-LI

And you grew up in Oklahoma?

COREY

Yeah, we were born and raised in Tulsa. Our parents were also born and raised in Tulsa. And our grandparents come from a few different places. Our dad's mom is Cherokee and Creek and she comes from down by Muskogee, and his dad was white and also came from that same area. Our mom's mom is Cherokee and Wazashe, she's a mixed-race individual, and she comes from Arkansas, Western Arkansas, and her dad was white and came from Tulsa, so we've got family from a few different places, but all within maybe a two-hour drive from Tulsa. Regionally I guess you could say it's all about the same.

Part of what I'm hoping with this project is that it can be a way for Cherokee Two-Spirit folks who maybe are scattered around to be able to find stories that they can, you know, identify with, they can hear and know that they are part of a community. So, I guess I'm kind of wondering how you see yourselves as far as, or in relationship to, Cherokee tradition and Cherokee community. And I know that that's complex, and we were talking about some of the politics inside—and that stuff is fine too.

COREY

Well, I guess you could say that it would start with our dad's mom. And the reason for that is because our parents had us when they were pretty young, and so they worked, you know? And we spent all of our time with these old ladies. And it was kind of by default and kind of by tradition. That's pretty standard. That's an old tradition. It's how it used to be. The whole rest of the family would take care of these kids, that would be the elders, and other community members. And that's just a natural way for us to live. Our family is not extremely traditional, like most Cherokee families, especially those living in cities by relocation or choice or force or whatever. And so, while we did not grow up speaking Cherokee as a first language, or did not necessarily grow up spending every weekend at the stomp dance, we grew up with a lot of traditional understandings and traditional knowledge and lifeways that I think maybe other people don't, especially when they're not close to their elders like that. And so most of our waking hours until we were seven or eight was spent with her and her sister and at her mother's house, around all of these old Indian ladies. And so that's how we came to identify as Cherokee people. That was our primary identification, we grew up knowing we were Cherokee. We didn't grow up

being told, "Well, you're Cherokee and you're white," or "You're white, but you've got a little Cherokee in you." It was, "You're a Cherokee person. And that's who you are." And I think that maybe in most traditional communities that's how people still identify: they are because they *are*. You're not just "part Cherokee." You either are or you're not. And I think that that's a pretty common perspective here in Oklahoma.

QWO-LI

So you're both really involved with organizing Two-Spirit community and this gathering.

Could you talk a bit about why you are doing the work that you do, and what you're hoping could happen and...why you do this work?

COREY

I think it comes from, at the very root, a sense of feeling different. A sense of feeling ostracized. The discomfort that comes from being different. It's like John [Co-cké] said, if you're different there's a power that comes with that. And I think that power that he was referring to is the power to make the difference the similarity. What I mean by that is just that we're *not* alone, there *are* many of us, and we're scattered but this is our chance to build that community back and take back what has been lost, and revitalize a part of our culture that maybe other people aren't already focused on.

CHAD

Like Corey said, we both grew up knowing that we were Cherokee and identifying as that, but we both grew up in communities that weren't—especially after age seven or eight when we moved from the Tulsa area to the Oklahoma City area, which is more urban and demographically more Caucasian.

COREY

And non-Cherokee anyway.

CHAD

And non-Cherokee in general, yeah, definitely non-Cherokee. I think that's probably where a lot of that sense of "I'm different" started to come from.

COREY

Yeah, because up until that point we weren't different we were surrounded by other

Cherokees.

CHAD

Right.

COREY

Mixed-race people, whatever, but still Cherokees.

CHAD

And when you're faced with that feeling I think that a lot of times it's—like John said—that's where the similarities come into play and you start to seek out other people that are like you. And you have commonalities and your life experiences, stuff like that. And a lot of times, the unfortunate think is those commonalities are points of pain. And discomfort and rejection and they can come from something simple as rejection or torment or being

COREY

Abuse of all sorts.

harassed or...

CHAD

...Abusive...yeah. Just any kind of negative feelings, and so I think that both of us kind of evolved in a similar way out of those experiences.

COREY

It's all about turning something bad into turning something good.

CHAD

Right, right. And it's not necessarily...I think that for both of us—and you can tell me whether you agree or not but I really think for both of us—it's really not a personal thing, it's more of like something you're looking forward, looking ahead, you know? Not that we seek something we have a business pursuing is, at least for us, but maybe to align people of a similar experience or a similar identity so that they don't have to have the same experience that we had, the same negative experiences that we had.

COREY

I think it's both. I think that even in some instances, for example in traditional communities that have limited exposure to Gay people or Two-Spirited people, you can still get ostracized by your own people. And that's unfortunate and we have experienced that. To a lesser degree than in society in general, but it's still there due to varying degrees of assimilation into non-Indian culture by our own people. And so, even in those traditional communities there are times and places where you'll still be exposed to that sort of dis-harmony, that distrust, or that exclusivity as if there's no reason for you to be there because you're Gay, or there's no reason for you to be there because you're mixed. That invalidation. I think that those personal experiences provide you with the desire to make those changes. And so I can definitely say in my case the personal experiences

were so frustrating that I wanted to subvert it somehow. And so I do that just by being here and exemplifying the ideas that I was taught to exemplify as best as I can.

CHAD

Not only that, but I think as we get older I definitely I feel more and more of a sense of duty to younger generations. Not only to make a their path easier, but to...

COREY

To make a path at all.

CHAD

To make a path at all, but also trying to regain and reconstruct and reassemble what we have lost, because that's their right as much as it is ours. At this point going forward it's only going to become more difficult. So at this point where we're at, when we each feel that sense of duty and when we feel that sense of obligation to our future generations, I think part of our responsibility is to do those things so that they're not lost forever.

COREY

I think it has to come from, though, a personal place. I think it has to begin that way...

CHAD

I think so too.

COREY

...in order for it to have that depth of meaning and that depth of importance and that permanent sensibility, you know?

CHAD

You were asking us why we do the work that we do. It's not just for our specific communities. I think that a lot of the good that comes from gatherings like this is that all

of our communities are brought together and we all share—whether we identify as

Cherokee or not—we all share a common goal and we share common hopes, common

desires for all of us. And so I think that that's another thing, is just bringing communities
together. And...

COREY

Fixing some of those old hurts, those old wounds, and those old rifts that still exist, for whatever reason, especially in smaller communities people tend to perpetuate. It just happens, you know? And sometimes it happens for no reason at all. People are just doing it and they don't even know why. It's 'cause they didn't stop to think, or because So-and-So told them that's how it is. I've seen that happen so many times in so many different ways that it's frustrating, and...I don't know, for whatever reason I feel compelled to take it upon myself to be like, "No! That's enough. It stops here." And I think it starts as a personal journey and I think it ends with as sense of obligation, or continues with that. It becomes bigger than yourself. And certainly you have to feel it deeply to begin there.

QWO-LI

What do you think, or what have you been told, is our traditional place within Cherokee community and tradition?

COREY

I haven't experienced a great difference between Cherokee and Creek communities, and what I've learned from my experiences with all of those people is that there wasn't necessarily a place of reverence for Two-Spirited people—necessarily. And there could have been, you know, I mean all of our people teach different things, but it was told to us that that's not how you're characterized. What's important is how you help out your

family and how you take care of your people, whether it be your community, your family, your tribe—whatever circumstance. How you treat the people around you and what you do to give back. That essentially defines you as a person, and not who you choose for a partner.

CHAD

But blood-quantum, too, or...

COREY

Or racial existence, any of it.

CHAD

Exactly. We don't identify just because you're a certain percentage of Cherokee blood, or whatever. Traditionally we're told that you were Cherokee based on your participation in the community and what you do for the community.

COREY

And also, I've heard our medicine people say that everybody deserves a place at the fire. There's room for everybody at the fire. And the fire is how we pray and how we commune. And we don't waste people. And *that's* not a good enough reason to throw somebody away. So that's kind of been my experience. It's more of a non-issue than a point of reverence. Just a non-issue altogether.

QWO-LI

What do you think is our work right now, and what do you think it will be in the future? Why are we here?

COREY

I think that we're here primarily to...for one thing, to honor those who came before us. To show them that their words and their lives not for naught. That we remember them and we honor them. And I think that anytime you honor yourself you *are* honoring the Old Ones. And if you're being true to yourself by following whatever path your heart leads you to follow, as long as it's a good path. I'm saying this in reference to the topic. But, as long as you're following that path and you're doing it in a legitimate and genuine type of way, then it's a means by which to honor people. And it's a means by which to honor the Creator. The Creator put us here to honor the Creator, and also to honor our own selves and to enrich ourselves somehow. And I feel like you can't do that if you're stifling yourself.

CHAD

But I also think we're all here...I mean, that's a very broad prospective, but I think in a more narrow prospective, I think you are here, and you are here, and I'm here—the three of us, and the ninety of us that are here—however many—are here specifically for a reason. Because I've never experienced, in all of the gatherings and different things that I've been to, so many powerful people in one place. And I've never witnessed things like I've witnessed here, and in ceremony—I don't know if I can really talk about it on recording and stuff like that—but just to witness some of the things that I've seen. The power like the ceremony that we had this morning, the amount of healing that I witnessed, and not just with my eyes but just felt. And so, our work is many different things to different people. You can ask me what our work is, and I'll tell you something, and Corey will tell you something, and you can go ask somebody else over there and

they'll tell you something else. And, it just depends. And so, we can give you answers to that and that's wonderful, but, I think that our work is a lot of different things. But I think that the basis of our work, fundamentally, is restoring what was lost. And that's a very general statement, but it means a lot of different things. Restoring what was lost as Two-Spirited people, restoring what was lost as Cherokee Two-Spirited people, meaning traditions and ceremonies...

COREY

Healing the part of the Cherokee circle that's been *gone* because these people have *ignored* us and cast us out.

CHAD

Not just that but, healing and restoring what is lost in the world. And I think our work is going to transition from regaining what we've lost in a smaller prospective to restoring what was lost as a whole.

COREY

It's a part of a bigger healing that has to occur.

CHAD

And I think the world is even trending more toward that, toward healing. Because people evolve. Life evolves. All life forms evolve. The world keeps spinning, but it can't continue on the way that it is right now forever. And if we do want life to continue—which I think is the general goal of all people, to preserve life—if we want it to continue and we want it to continue in a positive manner, then we must evolve. And sometimes evolving doesn't mean just going forward, but it means looking back. Because some of

the problems that we are facing right now as—not only as a Cherokee nation but as a United States nation and as a world in general...

COREY

They're old problems.

CHAD

They're old problems, but some are new. And some of the new problems we're facing are because of some of the old problems in the past. That's part of our work, and like I say, here we have a concentrated amount of really powerful people, and we're kind of like satellites. And our work is to go out into our communities—whether it be Cherokee and Two-Spirited or whether it be neither—and try to heal the people, in whatever that means.

During the ceremony today I was blessed with a really big honor as being a circle keeper, and that's not to say that I'm a holy medicine person, but I carry medicine. That's a duty, a job, an obligation to the people. And, as far as my understanding, all of that is about is healing. Healing people like in the ceremony we did today, and healing people on a personal level, whether they come to you as a Cherokee person, or even as a non-Native person.

COREY

Healing means a lot of different things, but I think that's the best term.

CHAD

Yeah, I think that pretty much sums up our work here, today, tomorrow, and in the future: healing. And maybe someday we'll come to a point where we are healed, when we can just exist in beauty. Part of me thinks that.

QWO-LI

One of the questions that people ask me a lot, and maybe they ask you all too, is if there are words in Cherokee. I've heard a few, but are there any words that you've heard or that you want to talk about?

COREY

You know, not really any that I've experienced, especially...I would say that a lot of the words that you'll hear, they probably have some sort of negative connotation. Because I haven't ever experienced or haven't ever been informed of any position of reverence, we don't have a pretty word for it—you know what I mean?—like some tribes do. There just wasn't that. Not that I know of anyway. And a lot of the younger people now—well, younger people anyway are the ones who cause a lot of the issues or go out of their way to make people feel uncomfortable and that sort of thing, or harass all of the Two-Spirited people, that sort of thing. It's usually the younger people that do that. The older people have a quieter way. And so, younger people nowadays, a lot of them don't speak our language. And so for that reason they don't even know the words to use other than English words. So I've never really had any experiences or anything like that with being called negative or even positive words in the Cherokee language reference that GLBT status or anything like that.

CHAD

Same for me.

OWO-LI

Knowing that part of what these stories are is to give stories in the future, and our future generations, what kinds of things do you want to say to them? Or what things to you want people to know?

COREY

I want them to know that regardless what they hear from outsiders of any kind, that we tried. (*Laughs*). We tried and tried as best as we could to preserve what's left and regain what was lost for them. Because, it's theirs. It's their legacy. And we want them to have that, because we find solace in that. And we find ourselves in that. And they won't find themselves in something else. *That's* where they will find who they are.

CHAD

That's the most important thing for us. That you're not gonna find yourself inside of something else.

COREY

Because if you are Cherokee, you already are that. There's not something you do that's gonna make you that. You can't become more Cherokee. You're born as much Cherokee as you're ever gonna be. No matter what you do, you're not gonna change. Either you are or you're not, like we said earlier. And if you are, then that's not just something to be taken lightly, you know? If you are then you should respect that, and you should do what we're doing. (Laughs). You know, you should do whatever you can do—whatever that may be to preserve whatever's left and regain whatever is lost for those that come behind you. Because it's important to us, and it was important to those that came before us. And

for that reason we're *here*. And for that reason people will follow. And that's continuity right there.

CHAD

And I think the best advice that I could probably give someone in the future would be to listen...

COREY

Just take the time...

CHAD

Just stop and listen to the spirits, because they'll tell you. And that sounds so esoteric, but it's really true. And it's hard for me sometimes because I'm so hyperactive and my energy is so unfocused sometimes, in so many directions, that it's hard for me to quiet my mind and just listen, or watch, signs and be aware of what is going on around me. On every level, not just what I can see with my eyes or what I can hear with my ears, but what is going on around me that I can sense. And developing that ability to sense not just to recognize it but to follow it. That's the best advice I could probably ever give. The spirits, they're not gonna lead you wrong. And they see more than we could ever see. And sometimes it's really hard, especially being someone that was raised by Indian people, but after a certain age when you're socialized in a school setting and stuff like that, you're kind of—I hate to use that term, "whitewashed," but...

COREY

It's true.

CHAD

You kind of are. I just hate that term. You're kind of socialized to believe a certain way or whatever. And it's not even just in whitewashing, but it's...

COREY

You internalize a lot of the ignorance and prejudice that you're exposed to.

CHAD

Well, it's a lot of Americanization, even. It's Americanization. It's very culturally

American to be a consumer and to be a capitalist and to just be so out of touch with all...

COREY

It's a Western ideology.

CHAD

Yeah.

COREY

You can call it anything in the world, but that's what it is.

CHAD

I think that what's so amazing and what's so fortunate for us is that we can sit in this setting and be surrounded by trees. [Unintelligible section of recording due to wind]. You don't see this in Manhattan unless you sitting in Central Park. We're surrounded by all this nature and all this beauty. I mean, obviously, I just got distracted by a butterfly. But, we're surrounded by all this beauty, and so it's easier for us in this setting to try to be more in touch with that. But I think that that's so important, because as life evolves and stuff and nature's shrinking and you notice the effect on the climate. And we've got to listen.

QWO-LI

Do you have any other things that you wanted to talk about?

COREY

Do you?

OWO-LI

I like talking about all of this.

COREY

I don't know. I don't know how you can tell somebody to do this and actually expect them to, because it has to be something that you can feel. But the most important thing is to connect with your culture. And if you're not in a Cherokee community, it's hard as hell. And if you don't have a connection to a Cherokee community, it's sometimes harder. 'Cause if the Cherokee people, quote unquote, don't know you or your family, it's hard to connect to a culture without a community. And so, when that's the case it's very frustrating and, I think the thing is—if you really care about it—you can't lose sight of that. And you have to persist, and you have to keep going and keep trying. And I think that even if you do live in a Cherokee community, and even if you do get exposed to traditional ways and non-traditional ways and Christian ways, or whatever. I think that if you have it within yourself anyway that you want to reconnect and you want to me more culturally appropriate—that's what I call it—if you want to be more culturally connected to your culture, your people, whatever, it's an effort. And it's a painful process sometimes. And it's not easy and it can be very frustrating. But I think it can be very rewarding.

CHAD

We keep talking about connecting, and it's kind of hard for me to identify as someone that's a leader, because I'm like more of a reluctant leader. I don't really view myself as someone that's a leader among any of the social classifications that I identify with: as a Gay person, as a male, a someone of my age—you know, twenty-seven. Even in my social group I really don't identify myself as a leader. I'm more of a reluctant leader. Even being a circle keeper, I don't think that that's a leadership position. And so, without that connection, all the things I'm doing I feel compelled to do. I feel compelled by the Spirit or by our Creator, and it just comes to you *that* way. So, that's why I think we keep talking about that connection, because everybody's job is different. We all have a different purpose, in the future...

COREY

But there's something there. There's something for everybody.

CHAD

Absolutely. We all have our own purpose.

COREY

I think a lot of people, especially those who are not connected to the community, seek a purpose and get discouraged because it's not easy to uncover...

CHAD

And that's why I say listen.

COREY

...If you're not connected.

CHAD
And that's why I say listen. Because eventually—eventually—the path will come
COREY
The path with present itself.
CHAD
Yeah, will present itself. Absolutely. It will be shown to you.
COREY
If you're doin' right. Aaayyeee(Laughs).
CHAD
But the thing is, you know, you say that but I have to say, I consider myself a reluctant
person in some ways, because I consider myself to be so flawed. You know, I'm not
perfect by any stretch of the imagination. But that doesn't matter, because
COREY
'Cause it's not about you.
CHAD
Exactly. It's not me, it's about
COREY
You taking on what you can do to give back.
CHAD
And it's about what the Creator or what the Spirit sees in me that I can do for the people
COREY

That you may not ask for yourself.

CHAD

It's about the people. It's about the people, above all. It's about them, that we're talking to.

COREY

Yeah, we're doing this for them, we're not doing this for us.

CHAD

None of this is for us. That's why I say "reluctant." Not because I don't want to do it, just because I would have never sought that out specifically on my own. But it found me.

COREY

But you know, those type of credentials can be imaginary. They can be so imagined sometimes. And so that's a whole 'nother problem within our culture, you know? Everybody tries to out Indian each other or out Cherokee each other: "You're not qualified to do this," or "You're not qualified to do that."

CHAD

My turquoise is bigger than your turquoise. Mine's greener than yours...

COREY AND CHAD

Aaayyeee...

COREY

But I think if you're speaking from the heart, and if you're a genuine person speaking from the heart, and you're doing it without some sort of ulterior motive, then I think that's appropriate.

CHAD

I think that above all, I think all of us are here to walk our own path. And if you're walking in a good way, and in a right way, then it'll find you. Your path will find you.

COREY

It will reveal itself more easily.

CHAD

It will reveal itself whether you like it or not.

COREY

That's true, that's true. Well, you know along with all of those things, I think that a huge misconception among non-Indian people or non-traditional people is that there's glamour to be found in some of the hard work that is done. And there's not. There's satisfaction to be found.

CHAD

It's more fulfillment.

COREY

It's fulfillment. Well, yeah. I feel satisfied whenever I do something well, or whenever I do something and it's appreciated by those who it was intended for. I get satisfaction from that. Fulfillment, you call it whatever. But, I mean, there's no glamour in it. There's no glamour in being a medicine person. There's no glamour in being the leader of a Two-Spirit organization. It's not glamour, and it's not about that, that's not how Indian people operate. That's a totally inaccurate perspective. It's about the people, and it's about making sure your people aren't hurtin'. And whenever people are disparaging you, or disparaging your friends, or disparaging your lifeways, you're hurting. You're wounded by that. You're abused. If they're doing it intentionally, and intentionally informing you that you are wrong or bad or sick or confused, then that's damage that they're doing to you and your people and whoever you may come in contact with, 'cause you may take it

in and give it back out. So, I think that it's very important for us just to be here, just to show by example that we don't think that we're ill and we don't think that we're bad and we know from a cultural perspective that it's okay for us to be here, and it's okay for us to switch dance, and it's okay for us as men to shake shells if we feel compelled to do that. And it's okay for us to be at whatever ceremony we're invited to. Not just show up somewhere, but you know, if there's a legitimate reason for you to be there, then that's okay. You shouldn't not go because you're Gay or Two-Spirited. You should be there, because you belong there. And that sense of belonging is hard for a lot of people to find, and like I said, even harder if you're not connected to a traditional community. But it's there, it's there.

CHAD

I think that sense of belonging is what instinctively we all begin seeking.

COREY

I think getting that, I think achieving that, and finding that—even if it's just here, at gatherings like this—is the jumping off point for you to go out and give back. You have to get before you can give, 'cause you can't give if you don't have. You can make some shit up, but that's not gonna do anybody any good. That's gonna do far more damage than anything else. But if you have that love and that community that's been given to you, and that you've been brought into and accepted by, if you have that sense about you, then you can give that back. And that's the whole purpose for attaining it in the first place: to make sure that everybody has that. And you have to get it before you can give it. And I think that's why people start out looking for it.

QWO-LI

Is there anything else you want to say?

COREY

(Speaking to future generations). We love you. We love all of those of you that come after us.

CHAD

There's much love for you here.

COREY

We're bustin' our asses tryin' to make y'all happy. Aaayyeee... (*Laughter*). No, I mean that from the bottom of my heart. I say it jokingly, but I mean every bit of it. We want this kind of thing to be here long after we're gone. And we're not gonna be up there tellin' y'all y'all are wrong...

CHAD

No, but we will be watching. We'll be watching.

COREY

But that's the thing though, you have to have that kind of foresight. You have to be able to look that far in the future and know. Because if you can see that far into the past, you can see that far into the future. If you look at how our people used to live, you know what was important to them. You can tell. And I mean, that's what we try to keep going. That feeling, that good feeling, you know? In the age of flat-screen TVs and four-year-olds with cell phones, it's hard to keep it real. You know? It is so hard. But, things like this—places like this—are very convenient and very easy places for you to get a little glimpse of that. You know, and a little taste of that. Just to remind you of who you come from.

Because once we leave. like Chad said, we're satellites and we go out into the world and we share all of this with white people, green people, and everybody else. And it's not meant to be divisive. Two-Spirit people and our Two-Spirit movement is not an act of divisiveness. It's an act of faith, and it's an act of love and hope and continuity and preservation. Of nothing *but*, you know?

CHAD

And going forward I think, like I said earlier, evolution is inevitable. We must evolve if we want to preserve life. And so, bringing our way of life and—not just our way of life speaking of tradition, but our way of life as far as perspective and the way that we love and the way that we care for one another—bringing that to other people and other cultures is necessary for our survival.

COREY

We want love to be our legacy. I can't wait...

CHAD

And beauty, because we're so pretty.

COREY

I can't wait until a hundred years from now, whenever they're looking at our pictures...

CHAD

I can't wait until an anthropologist finds this recording and they're like, "Ah, I wish I could see their faces 'cause they're so cute." (Laughter).

COREY

What you're hearing right now is our grandmas. This is our grandmas talking.

CHAD

This is Mary and Betty. No, I'm just kidding. (Laughter).

COREY

It is, it is. We didn't make this shit up. This was taught to us. And this comes from two generations behind us and two generations behind that. And so that's what's so special about it, is that somebody our age can here sit and tell you things that people who have been dead for a hundred and fifty years can tell you.

CHAD

It sounds the same.

COREY

It's the same message. I just can't wait till they see my pictures, when we're all dressed up, and I think that's gonna be great, 'casue they'll see all these drag pictures and they'll be like, "OH! That must have been a traditional Chickasaw dress!" No, gurl. We did drag back then. Aaayyeee ...

CHAD

That's tranny fierce.

COREY

No, but I just think it'll be great. My one hope for future generations is that our message is received in the feeling and sentiment with which it was intended. I fear that things will be lost in translation. And I just hope that there's little bits and pieces and bigger bits and bigger pieces that we have for them to work from and operate from in order to build a life that holds true to our values, regardless of what it looks like. Because that's what really

makes us who we are, is our values. The way we walk through this world. And I think that if we can do something to make other people—or to *encourage* other people—or inspire them to do that same thing and live that same way then we've done what we were here to do.

CHAD

Aho! (Drum beat).

COREY

What else?! No more questions?

QWO-LI

If you want we can keep talkin'.

COREY

I don't know what to say, really, but if you have more questions then that might give us a jumping off point.

OWO-LI

Well, I don't know if I have anymore specific questions.

COREY

Well you know what, I wanna say this too: We have a lot of Gay relatives. There's a lot, a lot of Gay Cherokees and a lot of Gay Creeks. And there always have been and there always will be. And anybody on the tribal council that tells you different is full of fuckin shit. (*Laughter*). And I want you to *believe* that. I want you to *know* that from us.

CHAD

Not just our tribes. Not just our tribes though, they're everywhere. We're everywhere.

COREY

Just in case you didn't hear it anywhere else, you heard it here. I mean that from the bottom of my heart, because that's what our medicine people have taught us. You guys aren't something new, you aren't some kind of spectacle we never seen. They treat us as if it's a non-issue, like I said, they treat us like it's nothing out of the ordinary. Because it isn't to us. And I wanna make sure that *that* gets in there. Aaayyeee...

QWO-LI

Well, wa'do so much. I appreciate it.

COREY

Howa!

CHAD

Howa!

COREY

We're happy to participate.

APPENDIX G

ARCHIVAL NOTES FROM THE MUSEUM OF THE CHEROKEE INDIAN
ARCHIVES, JOHN HOWARD PAYNE MANUSCRIPTS

Museum of the Cherokee Indian: Cherokee, Qualla, North Carolina

John Howard Payne. Vol. II & III

VOL. II The Life of George Gist

VOL. III Indian Antiquities

VOL. III

[p. 49]

Among the Cherokees there used to be a custom of cementing perpetual friendship between individuals. Supposed two young men conceived a particular fondness for each other, and desired to enter into the strongest bonds of perpetual friendship, they went to that feast or fast of purification when the Yowa was sung.

Taking an opportunity sometime during that feast, when the people were seated in the council house, they arose, walked toward the fire, and then turned and commenced dancing around the fire, what is called the A to hu na, or friendship dance, each having on his best clothes. While dancing, in the presence of all the people, who looking, they exchanged one garment after another till each had given the other his entire dress, even to legings, mocasins etc. and thus each of them publicly received the other as himself, & became thus pledged to regard and treat him as himself while he lived. Sometimes two women, and sometimes a man and a woman contracted this friendship. Thus when a

young man and woman fell in love with each other but were hindered from marrying, either by relation or by being of the same clan, they bound themselves in perpetual friendship. While dancing round the fire as above stated, the man threw his blanket over the woman, and the woman as soon as convenient threw hers to the man. Then man also, having prepared a cane sieve, & hung it

[p. 50]

by a string over his shoulder, gave her that. He also presented her with a pestle to pound corn with. The mortar he had for her at home.

Friends among the Cherokees, must share with each other whatever they might have. They must also, if request always reveal whatever secret they might know. To hide anything from a friend was betraying a want of confidence inconsistent with the ties of that friendship by which they were bound. But friends must never reveal secrets thus made known to them.

T. Smith (A ska lo tigi ski)

Raven & Zachariah.

John Howard Payne Manuscript. John Howard Payne.

Vol. IV Book 2

[p. 207, pp. 321-334 in original]

٧,

A to hu na (or)⁶³

⁶³ Note via Bo: A dv hv na (gathering wood dance), in Speck & Broom.

Feast of Expiation

The fifth great national feast, or fast, was called A to hu na. The signification of this word, is no easily ascertained. It implies that connexion the Indians enter into on certain occasions. Thus, when two young men conceived a peculiar⁶⁴ fondness for each other, they entered into a state of perpetual brotherhood, if I may so call this relation. which cannot be expressed by any word in our language. They put on their best clothing, and met by mutual agreement, at a time & place appointed. Without much conversation, one took off a certain garment and gave to his friend. In this he was immediately imitated by the other. Another garment was then exchanged, and another, until there was an entire inter change of clothing. Thus each one gave himself to the other and was clothed by the other, & were of course one. This relation embraced all that is implied in peace, reconciliation, friendship, and brotherhood, and much more than either or all of these terms. When two were thus giving themselves to each other, and entering into that clossst connection, it was said of them A no to no ka, and the relation thus formed was termed A to hu na. So the feast under consideration was termed A to hu na. And may we not suppose that this word, whatever its precise meaning may be is, designed to express an idea some thing similar to expiation, reconciliation or atonement? When the two parties concerned, viz. God and his people, become reconciled, and mutually through the infinite, condescension of God, give themselves to each other, and become one (in Christ).

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Transcription error? In the earlier excerpt (p. 276) while describing this ceremony, Payne uses the word particular. Payne's manuscript will need to be revisited to verify if my transcription is correct here.

The nature and design of this feast may also be inferred from the name give the great priest of all time, or while

[p. 208]

officiating, viz. U na wi san u hi, i.e. one who renews heart and body, or cleanses from mental and bodily defilements. And while attending to the ceremonies of this feast, it was said of him Te ko tlu hi si ha. Nut s a wi (pinelong?)

[....]

We may also learn something respecting the nature and intention of this feast from the time & manner of its celebration.

The great new moon feast, as we have already seen was commenced at evening about the time that moon made its first appearance, and continued through the next day and night, so that the people dispersed on the morning of the second day of the moon. Soon after the people had retired from that feast, the seven prime counselors, (i.e. the seven counselors of the great priest above mentioned) convened an assembly at the council house. Probably, however, not till the next day after the people had retired. At that convention they appointed the great A to hu na, to commence in seven nights from that time; and dispatched their messenger through all the towns and to give notice of this appointment, and to direct all the people to convene on the evening of the sixth day.

They gave orders to the hunters to commence the business the next morning.

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