

TÉELAMAL//EVERY WORD IN OUR LANGUAGE IS A LITTLE PRAYER: WEAVING
TOGETHER INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES OF LANGUAGE

By

Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Philosophy—Doctor of Philosophy

2019

ABSTRACT

TÉELAMAL//EVERY WORD IN OUR LANGUAGE IS A LITTLE PRAYER: WEAVING TOGETHER INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES OF LANGUAGE

By

Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner

Analytic philosophy of language, as a subdiscipline of academic philosophy in the Western tradition, predominantly centers an abstract, disembodied, and decontextualized conception of language removed from communities and land. While the work of traditional philosophers of language is fascinating and important, I noticed that my training as an analytic philosopher of language did not prove to be as helpful as I had anticipated in my work as an Indigenous language activist. After working with several Indigenous communities on language reclamation work, including my own community's work on 'atáaxum pomtéela//the Luiseño language, it became clear to me that Indigenous language activists are continuously offering nuanced conceptions of language embedded with insights on tribally-specific, land-based onto-epistemologies and cosmologies, and co-creating decolonial and liberatory strategies for language reclamation and cultural resurgence. Though linguists and anthropologists have dedicated many decades of scholarship to the documentation, preservation, and revitalization of Indigenous languages, the world-views encapsulated and expressed in Indigenous languages are given little attention in the scholarship, and Indigenous communities distinct philosophies of language are often only characterized as mere “language ideologies” (Iyengar 2014; Leonard 2017). The political projects and goals of language reclamation activists are also often sanitized from academic endeavors that focus solely on grammar, lexicons, and fluency (Leonard

2017). It is my attempt in the following chapters to show that philosophy of language can benefit immensely from the philosophizing being done within Indigenous communities regarding the nature of language and the just avenues for achieving language and cultural reclamation.

Each of the essays in this dissertation stand alone as individual and independent articles, but share several lines of argumentation and methodologies. In a departure from top-down theorizing about language in which universal theories of language and grammar inform philosophizing about language, each of these essays begins from a community context in which Indigenous peoples work to reclaim their languages and cultures, and then gathers and offers theories and recommendations about the nature of language as well as practical applications for language reclamation, language policy, language research, and coalition-building in activist spaces.

Though each chapter stands alone as an independent essay, I have used similar materials and methodologies in each to offer up, from community contexts, a tradition of politically-informed Indigenous philosophies of language. I have also attempted to argue several connected points in each essay, including but not limited to: Each essay 1. centers or promotes linguistic sovereignty; 2. illustrates that incommensurability is a site for coalition-building across political contexts; 3. shows that commitments to ontological pluralism in decolonial and liberatory strategizing aid the flourishing of language reclamation projects; 4. depicts politically-informed Indigenous philosophy of language as community-centered in that many reclamation projects uplift the voices of elders, youth, Two-Spirit, and non-binary community members.

Copyright by
SHELBI NAHWILET MEISSNER
2019

Téelamal Chamkwíinamu Pokwáan

*(nohúu'univuktum pí' nopilá'chivuktum
'atáaxum Chamtéela pomkwáan)*

Pilá'chiqan notéelapiy chamtéelangax.

*Chamkwíinamu, súspul téelamal nopiláchiqat
'áaq téelat kihúut 'omkwáan.*

*'atáaxum Chamtéelangax, téelaqan 'ayáalinik 'omwóllaxpiy;
'ompáa'ipiy chamtéelay moyóoniwunti.*

*Téelaqan 'omnáqmapiy 'á'wolum pomhéelaxi;
'om'onánnipiy şú'lami, 'óomayi, Yáamayi.*

Chamkwíinamu, náo puyámangay téelaq 'omkwáan.

Po'éekup.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
INTRODUCTION: Tupiq̓tup̓íq̓iwun//Weaving Together Indigenous Philosophies of Language.....	1
Motivating, Situating, and Connecting This Work.....	1
Basketweaving As Methodology.....	5
<i>Tóonava // we go to our ancestral gathering place</i>	7
<i>Yúulalakiwun // we gather materials accountably</i>	8
<i>Tupiq̓tup̓íq̓iwun // we weave alongside one another</i>	9
<i>Túkmal Tavánnish // we gift our baskets</i>	10
<i>A Note On Basket Designs</i>	11
Dissertation Chapter Outline.....	12
CHAPTER 1: “laxwalxwash potamáay súngaán 'áawq // to be between the blind snake’s teeth”: Language Reclamation Between The Fangs Of A (Simulated) Dilemma.....	18
Introduction.....	18
The Linguistic Sovereignty Dilemma.....	19
<i>The First Fang: Exogenous Partnerships in Language Reclamation</i>	20
<i>The Second Fang: Grassroots Language Reclamations</i>	24
Subverting the Dilemma.....	27
<i>Some Counterexamples To the Linguistic Sovereignty Dilemma</i>	29
The Linguistic Sovereignty Dilemma as Simulation.....	36
<i>Fluency Standards as Manifest Manners</i>	37
<i>Linguistic and Cultural “Purity” as Manifest Manners</i>	38
<i>Terminality and Trauma Narratives as Manifest Manners</i>	39
<i>Western Philosophy of Language as Manifest Manners</i>	40
<i>Trickster Hermeneutics</i>	41
Conclusion.....	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	46
CHAPTER 2: ‘World’-Traveling By Tule Canoe.....	53
Introduction.....	53
Some Key Concepts In Indigenous Philosophies of Language.....	56
<i>Indigenous Languages’ Link With Land</i>	56
<i>Indigenous Languages Are Infused With Spirituality, Governance-Value, and Communal Responsibilities</i>	57
<i>There Are Protocols For the Proper Exchange of Indigenous Languages</i>	59
<i>Language and Knowledge are Interwoven</i>	60
Incommensurability.....	62
<i>Impassable Incommensurability: Big Water Through A Rock Garden</i>	64
<i>Incommensurability With Technical Passages: Heavy Water Through A Rock Garden</i>	68

Some Concluding Thoughts: Navigating Incommensurability.....	71
<i>We should be cognizant that not all worlds are open</i>	72
<i>We can work together to re-tool dominant canoes</i>	74
<i>Tip your guide</i>	75
<i>"World" and "fluency" are not metaphorical in many Indigenous spaces</i>	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	78

CHAPTER 3: "şuşngalum yúunanik tilá'ya; şú'lam pomşúun taványa//And The Starwomen Devised a Strategy...": Constellating Models of Decolonization, Indigenous Liberation, and Language Reclamation.....

Introduction: Starstories.....	82
Constellating Models of Decolonization and Indigenous Liberation.....	84
1a. <i>téeivuktum//nest-builders</i>	85
2a. <i>néqpivuktum//protectors</i>	88
3a. <i>tavánivuktum//alliance-builders</i>	94
Language Reclamation.....	99
1b. <i>téeivuktum//nest-builders & language reclamation</i>	100
<i>Center intergenerational, community-engaged language learning</i>	100
<i>Center the voices of Two-Spirit, trans, and queer community members</i>	101
<i>Center linguistic sovereignty</i>	101
2b. <i>néqpivuktum//protectors & language reclamation</i>	102
<i>Track, describe, and predict the tactics of linguistic imperialism</i>	102
<i>Name settler-colonial influences on language curricula</i>	103
3b. <i>tavánivuktum//alliance-builders & language reclamation</i>	104
<i>Be vigilant regarding toxic partnerships that compromise linguistic sovereignty</i>	104
<i>Build relations with advocates and allies</i>	105
<i>Center heritage language communities, not federally-recognized, geo-politically divided communities</i>	106
Conclusion.....	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	109

CHAPTER 4: Navigating Sites of Violence in Indigenous Language Archival

Engagement.....	114
Introduction.....	114
The Compass.....	115
Examples Of Indigenous Language Archival Engagement.....	120
<i>Non-Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive</i>	120
<i>Non-Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive</i>	123
<i>Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive</i>	124
<i>Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive</i>	125
The Violence: Sites of Violence in Indigenous Language Archival Engagement.....	127
<i>Violence in the SE Quadrant: Non-Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive</i>	127
<i>Violence in the NE Quadrant: Non-Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive</i>	133
<i>Violence in the SW Quadrant: Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive</i>	136
<i>Violence in the NW Quadrant: Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive</i>	140

Conclusion.....	143
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	145
CONCLUDING REMARKS: Tókmal Tavánnish//We Gift Our Baskets.....	148

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Rattlesnake basket pattern.....	18
Figure 2: Tule canoe basket pattern.....	53
Figure 3: Starwomen basket pattern.....	82
Figure 4: Compass basket pattern.....	114
Figure 5: Compass locating example archives according to positionality of Indigenous languages researchers and archive hosts.....	115
Figure 6: Compass highlighting quadrants according to positionality of Indigenous language researchers and archive hosts.....	127

INTRODUCTION: Tupiq̓tup̓iq̓iwun//Weaving Together Indigenous Philosophies of Language

Motivating, Situating, and Connecting This Work

Analytic philosophy of language, as a subdiscipline of academic philosophy in the Western tradition, predominantly centers an abstract, disembodied, and decontextualized conception of language removed from communities and land. While the work of traditional philosophers of language is fascinating and important, I noticed that my training as an analytic philosopher of language did not prove to be as helpful as I had anticipated in my work as an Indigenous language activist. After working with several Indigenous communities on language reclamation work, including my own community's work on 'atáaxum pomtéela//the Luiseño language, it became clear to me that Indigenous language activists are continuously offering nuanced conceptions of language embedded with insights on tribally-specific, land-based onto-epistemologies and cosmologies, and co-creating decolonial and liberatory strategies for language reclamation and cultural resurgence. Though linguists and anthropologists have dedicated many decades of scholarship to the documentation, preservation, and revitalization of Indigenous languages, the world-views encapsulated and expressed in Indigenous languages are given little attention in the scholarship, and Indigenous communities distinct philosophies of language are often only characterized as mere "language ideologies" (Iyengar 2014; Leonard 2017). The political projects and goals of language reclamation activists are also often sanitized from academic endeavors that focus solely on grammar, lexicons, and fluency (Leonard 2017). It is my attempt in the following chapters to show that philosophy of language can benefit immensely from the philosophizing being done within Indigenous communities

regarding the nature of language and the just avenues for achieving language and cultural reclamation.

Each of the essays in this dissertation stand alone as individual and independent articles, but share several lines of argumentation and methodologies. In a departure from top-down theorizing about language in which universal theories of language and grammar inform philosophizing about language, each of these essays begins from a community context in which Indigenous peoples work to reclaim their languages and cultures, and then gathers and offers theories and recommendations about the nature of language as well as practical applications for language reclamation, language policy, language research, and coalition-building in activist spaces.

Though each chapter stands alone as an independent essay, I have used similar materials and methodologies in each to offer up, from community contexts, a tradition of politically-informed Indigenous philosophies of language. I have also attempted to argue several connected points in each essay, including but not limited to: Each essay 1. centers or promotes linguistic sovereignty; 2. illustrates that incommensurability is a site for coalition-building across political contexts; 3. shows that commitments to ontological pluralism in decolonial and liberatory strategizing aid the flourishing of language reclamation projects; 4. depicts politically-informed Indigenous philosophy of language as community-centered in that many reclamation projects uplift the voices of elders, youth, Two-Spirit, and non-binary community members.

Linguistic sovereignty refers to an Indigenous communities' control over the creation, maintenance, and interrogation of the materials, written, oral, digital, or analog, pertaining to their ancestral language and the ideologies and philosophies thereof. Chapter

1 directly addresses the *linguistic sovereignty dilemma*, which is imposed on Indigenous communities in language reclamation contexts where Indigenous communities are forced to choose between making exogenous partnerships with non-Indigenous-led agencies to access language resources or refusing partnerships and being left with scarce language resources. Chapter 2 centers linguistic sovereignty in its depiction of incommensurability, specifically in its depiction of *strategic impassable incommensurability*. Strategic impassable incommensurability is the view that Indigenous worlds, knowledges, and languages are intricately linked to one another and onto-epistemologically distinct from other worlds such that they *should not* be translated, transposed, or expressed in other languages or by outsiders. Chapter 3 outlines several approaches to decolonial and liberatory strategizing, many of which center homeward facing, separatist language projects (the *téeivuktum*//nest-builders), the politics of refusing to translate Indigenous agendas to colonial powers (the *néqpivuktum*//protectors), or projects that focus on eliminating toxic partnerships with non-Indigenous agencies (the *tavánivuktum*//alliance-builders). Chapter 4, which focuses on engagement with Indigenous language archives, centers positionality, which I argue is necessary in the pursuit of linguistic sovereignty. Chapter 4 also details some of the risks of privileging tribal sovereignty over linguistic sovereignty.

Incommensurability refers to the (metaphorical and sometimes literal) untranslatability of political goals, concepts, world-views, and or languages between epistemically diverse populations. Chapter 2 directly details three different types of incommensurability expressed by Indigenous language activists, and argues that these forms of incommensurability 1. should not necessarily preclude coalition-building and 2. are important for would-be “world-travelers” to be cognizant of. Chapter 1, in addressing

potential coalitions between language activists, indirectly argues that incommensurability between language reclamation paradigms need not cause tension, rather, incommensurability is a site for potential coalition and project building. Chapter 3, which offers a conceptual outline of decolonial and liberatory strategies employed by several multidisciplinary theorists, argues that though the political projects of many different approaches to language reclamation may be incommensurate, the insights and recommendations of these theories can inform intertribal approaches to language reclamation. Chapter 4, which addresses Indigenous language archival engagement, argues that non-Indigenous-led language archives ought to accommodate the often incommensurate goals of Indigenous communities attempting to access language resources and highlights the risks of Indigenous-led archives' aversion to accommodating the sometimes incommensurate goals of communities who rightfully deserve access to shared heritage language resources.

Part and parcel of the lines of argument regarding incommensurability, each of the following chapters also enact commitments to ontological pluralism, as well as depict the ontoepistemic diversity of Indigenous cosmologies. All four chapters are concerned with the implementation of strategies and language policy recommendations, many of which cannot be analyzed until a practitioner is willing to posit that many Indigenous epistemologies are land-based and committed to ontological pluralism, meaning that 1) ethical, reciprocal relationships with the land inform our world-views and languages and 2) there are *as many* true world-views, origin stories, and cosmologies as there is land from which they spring. Chapters 1, 2, and 3, in particular, emphasize that commitments to

ontological pluralism allow Indigenous language activists to see the strategic interventions, or trickster hermeneutics, of incommensurate language programs.

Finally, all of the following chapters depict politically-informed Indigenous philosophy of language as community-centered in that many reclamation projects uplift the voices of elders, youth, Two-Spirit, and non-binary community members. Each chapter begins from the community context, taking seriously that the conceptions of language offered by Indigenous language activists are indeed philosophy of language. Each chapter centers different intergenerational language projects; for example, Chapter 2 begins with a close-reading of an epistolary disagreement between Derek Rasmussen, Tommy Akulukjuk, and Joanasie Akumalik, an esteemed elder from their community (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk, 2008). Chapters 1 and 4 highlight the inter- and transgenerational work of Two-Spirit and non-binary language activists like Deborah Miranda, L. Frank Manriquez, Saylesh Wesley, and Qwo-Li Diskill and depicts the radical spiritual resurgence inherent in their work (Miranda 2010, Wesley 2014, Driskill 2010).

Basketweaving as Methodology

In constructing and organizing this dissertation, I draw from a tradition and responsibility I have inherited from a long line of Luiseño, Cupeño, and Cahuilla basketweavers. I take this moment to name my grandmothers, the weavers of túkmal//baskets in my family – Joaquina Nahwilet Scholder, Regina Guassac, and Isabel Guassac Scholder – and share the knowledge-gathering protocols that have been handed down to me. How would my ancestors have gone about weaving a basket? Regina, from La Jolla, would likely have first gone to a traditional gathering space to collect her túkmal lóxalash, basket-weaving materials. She would know what to look for because she likely

would have had an image in pošúun, her heart, from a dream or a prayer. She would go somewhere like Tóonava, a deergrass gathering place in La Jolla, offering medicines to the spirits there as she collected túkmal lóxalash, basketweaving materials. She would gather with company and with a thankful heart. Then she would weave her basket, likely in the company of other women, maybe with her daughters and nieces and granddaughters, outside in the warm sun or in the cool shade of a lofty black oak. As the image of her dreambasket was actualized by her weaving, she might be chatting with her family, maybe even gossiping if there was some exciting news about so-and-so! Finally, when her basket was finished, she might use it to gather elderberries to make medicines for her people, she might gift it to a young woman who has just performed her puberty ceremony, she might send it to a beloved relative who makes wonderful wíiwish//acorn mush, or she might fill her basket with delicious foods, and offer it to the spirits in a feasting ceremony. The basket the weaver weaves is not for herself, it is for her community and their nourishment.

Reciprocal, ethical research regarding our language and cultures, much like the weaving of a túkmal, is never practiced in isolation; rather, language and cultural reclamation is essentially communal, centering our elders, our children, and the land. In the description of this methodology, I have looked to my language, and pulled out four words to represent the four steps. The steps in weaving a basket according to traditional protocols evade easy, analytic translation into English, but roughly, are: Tóonava, Yúulalakiwun, Tupiqtupíqiwn, and Túkmal Tavánnish. Very loosely translated, these steps might be: we go to our ancestral gathering place, we gather materials accountably, we weave alongside one another, and we gift our baskets. It is important to note that as Luiseño people, we are never alone as we weave our baskets, and we are never alone as we engage in our research.

I have modestly attempted to follow the path carved by this methodology that emerges from Luiseño basketweaving traditions in the construction and organization of these essays, and take some time here to illuminate how the steps Tóonava, Yúulalakiwun, Tupiqtuqíiwun, and Túkmal Tavánnish are represented within this project.

Tóonava // we go to our ancestral gathering place

If my grandmother wanted to weave a túkmal, she would first go somewhere like Tóonava, a deergrass gathering place in La Jolla, offering medicines to the spirits there as she collected túkmal lóxalash, basketweaving materials. Tóonava is a space infused with protocols, clan responsibilities, and a weaver is expected to enter with offerings and mindfulness of ancient instructions. Tóonava, as a step in this methodology, resonates with me in two ways with respect to this dissertation. In Chapters 3 and 4, I briefly describe a language reclamation project I worked on in my own community, the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians. Returning to this place as a language activist with academic credentials taught me countless lessons about positionality, about my responsibilities to language and culture as a part of the Guassac, Albañas, and Kaval clans, about maintaining reciprocal relationships, and about the struggles language reclamation faces in community contexts outside of the academy. This research would not be possible without the insights I gleaned from going home. In another sense, the work in this dissertation reflects the Tóonava step in that each essay in this dissertation begins in community contexts, gathering insights from Indigenous language activists who work on the ground in community on language and culture reclamation or from Indigenous theorists concerned about their communities' futurities. That the Indigenous activists and theorists centered in this dissertation privilege

their communities first and foremost and are accountable to the protocols and expectations of accountability and reciprocity in that relationship is a strong echo of the Tóonava step.

Yúulalakiwun // we gather materials accountably

Some Luiseño elders say that at creation, certain people volunteered to become deer, oak trees, fish, and elderberries so that 'atáaxum//the people would not be hungry. When a Luiseño basketweaver gathers túkmal lóxalash to make a basket, she is not simply plucking grasses that might look neat in the design she dreamt of the night prior, rather, she is visiting with ancestors who volunteered to become túkmal lóxalash. She is listening to a message in her dream about what sort of túkmal her ancestors might become. This listening and visiting would also be done with an offering of tobacco, sage, or elderberry water, to gift the spirits and ancestors present in a túkmal lóxalash gathering space like Tóonava. In conducting the research necessary for this dissertation, it was important to me that the sources I gathered were gathered ethically, and situated according to knowledge-sharing protocols and citational practices that are sometimes not encouraged in the Western academy. For example, in Chapter 4, while discussing texts that Indigenous communities have spoken out against and accused of epistemic theft, the authors of the texts in question are not cited.

Accountable gathering of sources also pertains to the scarcity of Indigenous-led language reclamation materials. Work on Indigenous philosophy of language is rare and precious, much like túkmal lóxalash such as juncus, deer grass, and sumac. Colonial occupation, climate change, and environmental racism affect our basketry materials as well as our language work. I attempted to gather sources in this research cognizant of their imposed scarcity. A reader will notice several sources that appear in all four of the

following chapters, like red sumac harvested from a single plant might appear across an entire collection of baskets. It was of great importance to me that sources like the work of Deborah Miranda and L. Frank Manriquez be treated with the same dignity and respect with which a basketweaver gathers from a sumac plant so that it can continue to grow and be of use to other weavers into the future.

Tupiqtupíqiwun // we weave alongside one another

Tupiqtupíqiwun ends with the suffix -wun, which makes it plural and translates as ‘we, you all, or they (pl.) repeatedly weave tightly.’ This word, when interpreted as intransitive, is written as “Tupiqtupíqaan” has a second meaning: ‘we, you all, or they (pl.) are being close together repeatedly.’¹ Tupiqtupíqaan can refer to both the act of weaving something tightly and also to the act of being nearby one another. Basketweaving, typically something done in intergenerational groups of women, was a practice done in public, among relations. In this dissertation, each essay is woven together in the presence of community. These essays spring from community contexts and thus have also been subject to gossip, gathering, workshops, panels, conferences, or peer review. Members of my immediate family, my tribal community, and my academic community have contributed to and scrutinized these essays and I am eternally grateful for their wisdom. The Indigenous language activists centered in this work are also beholden to communities as they conduct their research and share their collaborations.

In this step of the basketweaving process, the weaver actualizes the image the she has planned to weave, possibly realizing a message she has received in a dream. She shapes and pulls and pokes and prods, all the while keeping in mind the patterns or animal images

¹ Elliott, Eric Bryant (1999), 995.

she is weaving, as well as the purpose of the basket. A researcher, too, combines her sources, weaving them into a 'bigger picture,' keeping in mind the use it might serve for her community. The language reclamation projects offered as examples throughout this dissertation often require the combination of primary source recordings with dictionaries made by third-party university researchers from the 60s, with guidance and insight from an elders' committee, as well as a standardized spelling system. The researcher in this sort of project needs to weave these ingredients carefully, muscling them into the best form to serve the community. Like weaving a basket, this research may be exhausting and take a very, very long time, but it is done with an eye toward the eventual uptake and flourishing of the language. In weaving together these chapters, it was also a struggle to put in conversation several lines of thought which stem from different disciplines, tribal contexts, and political agendas, and I often found myself concerned with the ethical implications of connecting certain voices. The conceptual tools used to organize each chapter were borrowed from different Luiseño teachings and allowed me to fasten different arguments together – e.g. in constellations, as river voyagers – in non-agonistic ways allowing for diverse views to be held in loving tension, like a supportive basket, rather than in opposition or contest.

Túkmal Tavánnish // we gift our baskets

A final step in the basketweaving process is túkmal tavánnish, or a gifting of the basket. The túkmal tavánnish often occurs during ceremonial feasts and involves filling up a basket with food items and leaving it on the land in honor of the ancestors, for spirits and creatures to consume. Even if a basket is not given to someone else as a gift, it is usually the case that the basket is used for the community's benefit – for harvesting and preparing

communal foods, for storing acorns, or for transporting water. The work of the language reclamation activists centered this this dissertation, like basketweaving, may take a long time, and they, knowingly, may never see the results of their work in their lifetimes. But just as a basket can live for many generations as it is gifted from person to person, the hope of the language researcher is that her work long outlives her bodily form.

Just as baskets are not woven in isolation or for the sole purposes of serving an individual, the following chapters offer practical recommendations and are intended to serve communities engaged in language reclamation on the ground as humble gifts. In the Concluding Remarks of this dissertation, I return to the praxis of *túkmal tavánnish* to recap the humble recommendations and contributions I offer in each chapter.

A Note On Basket Designs

Each chapter, in addition to serving as an independent essay that will hopefully be accessible and helpful to community members doing language reclamation work on the ground, is accompanied by a sketch of a winnowing, coil-basket design in the Luiseño style. Chapter 1 is accompanied by a rattlesnake basket, which holds deep significance for the Albañas clan and is a central conceptual framework for the chapter. Chapter 2 is accompanied by a basket featuring a tule canoe, a metaphor I use in the chapter to represent ethical and non-metaphorical ‘world’-traveling. Chapter 3 is accompanied by a triangle pattern representing the Starwomen constellation. Chapter 4 is accompanied by a compass-like design inspired by *turóhayish*//sandpaintings, which give instructions for Luiseño youth’s journey after their puberty ceremonies. It is my hope that as this dissertation transforms into its next lifestage, I will be able to actualize these dreambaskets as well. As a basketweaver and as the descendent of a long line of basketweavers,

employing a basketweaving methodology in this work has been an important commitment to particular ethical protocols that spring from the teachings of my community. Noşúun pilek lóoviq.

Dissertation Chapter Outline

Chapter 1, entitled, “laxwalxwash potamáay súnkaan 'áawq // to be between the blind snake's teeth': Language Reclamation Between The Fangs Of A (Simulated) Dilemma,” takes up Gerald Vizenor's concept of “manifest manners” and “simulations” to argue that settler colonial logics impose what appear to be dilemmas on Indigenous communities. These dilemmas, which take the form of impossible, no-win decisions, affect language reclamation projects across Indian Country. In particular, this chapter focuses on the linguistic sovereignty dilemma. The linguistic sovereignty dilemma, roughly, takes the form of: partner or perish. Settler logics attempt to depict Indigenous communities as forced to choose between forming exogenous partnerships with universities, NGOs, and governmental agencies, or having scarce and inadequate language programing. Both of these options, according to settler logics, result in the compromise of Indigenous communities' control over the creation, maintenance, and interrogation of the materials, written, oral, digital, or analog, pertaining to their ancestral language and the ideologies and philosophies thereof.

After detailing how some of these dilemmas manifest, I argue in this chapter that these dilemmas are not actually dilemmas at all, rather, they are simulations imposed on Indigenous communities by settler colonial structures and rendered to appear as if bad choices are the only choices. Through several counterexamples of radical Indigenous language reclamation projects, this chapter shows that Indigenous language reclamation activists are practicing what Vizenor calls “trickster hermeneutics” in their maneuvering toward reclamation in spite of obstacles imposed by the settler state. There are countless strategic and sometimes clandestine sites of radical resurgence in language reclamation

programs that serve to destabilize the linguistic sovereignty dilemma and expose it as a simulation. Indigenous communities are engaged in language and cultural resurgence that crosses and subverts geopolitical boundaries, that reclaims stolen language resources, that nourishes new language and new sites of archival safe-keeping, that rekindles traditional governance systems, that communicates our gratitude directly to the land, and that empowers youth to gather in embodied, intergenerational visiting and knowledge-sharing spaces. Indigenous communities flourish right under the nose of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma. Settler logics are able to maintain the linguistic sovereignty dilemma in spite of such obvious counterexamples because they operate on culturally powerful concepts like literacy, fluency, purity, and weak sense of 'sovereignty,' and employ trauma and terminal narratives.

In many cases, Indigenous communities also maintain the illusion, or bolster the simulation of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, in order to gain access to otherwise inaccessible resources. Some Indigenous language activists take up rhetorics of fluency, purity, or trauma in order to ultimately subvert it. These re-inscriptions of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, too, are sites of radical Indigenous resurgence. In this chapter, I offer this explanation of the resurgence tactics of Indigenous language activists not to expose our work to the snakes and gatekeepers – I don't really worry about this, because we are unseeable to them – but to expose our work and strategies to one another, to discourage harsh words between us, and to facilitate our flourishing in the face of settler colonialism.

Chapter 2, entitled, "'World'-Traveling By Tule Canoe," argues that language reclamation activists make important contributions to philosophical projects concerning incommensurability. In this essay, I have attempted to outline some key components of Indigenous philosophies of language, with special attention to the relationships between language and knowledge and the implications of these relationships for

incommensurability. I have offered two views of incommensurability expressed in Indigenous philosophies of language, and described the challenges posed by these forms of incommensurability for 'world'-traveling. I conceive of 'world'-traveling throughout the essay by way of an extended metaphor, journeying a river aboard a tule canoe, a method of visiting practiced by my Luiseño and Cupeño ancestors and being reclaimed by my generation – and incommensurability as obstacles in the river. Indigenous communities' views on incommensurability should be of serious importance to feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists concerned with coalition-building, solidarity, and contending with epistemic violence and oppression. In this chapter, it is my aim to show that to take seriously the sentiments of Indigenous language activists and theorists requires a confrontation of the difficulties incommensurability raises for 'world'-traveling. Finally, I offer a few considerations of the important overlap between feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists and the work of Indigenous theorists and gesture toward ways we might 'world'-travel in the rivers between incommensurate worlds without causing harm to one another.

Chapter 3, “‘suşngalum yúunanik tilá'ya; şú'lam pomşúun taványa//And The Starwomen Devised a Strategy...’: Constellating Models of Decolonization, Indigenous Liberation, and Language Reclamation” begins with a conceptual model of decolonial and liberatory strategies as they are enacted by theorists in Indigenous Studies, Queer Studies, Chicano Latino Studies, and other related disciplines. The conceptual model in this chapter is based on a Luiseño teaching regarding the Starwomen constellation (the Little Dipper, in Western cosmologies), in which seven sisters defeat an enemy through ontologically pluralistic strategizing. This chapter serves as a literature review of contemporary

literature on decolonial and liberatory strategizing and also argues that there are several different approaches to Indigenous liberation, and within each approach, there are implications for methodologies, curricula, and ideologies pertaining to language preservation and reclamation. The approaches to Indigenous liberation, each of which is modeled by the starsisters in the Luiseño Starwomen Story, take many forms. Some liberatory projects have a separatist ring to them, some appear more reconciliatory; some privilege the rematriation of land, some negotiate with the state, while others privilege academic spaces. Like the starwomen, the authors of decolonial and liberatory project build and maintain their *tée*, they watch the colonizer carefully, describe his actions, they deliberate, they gather, they form agreements, and they execute plans. As a community faced with dangerous challenges, authors of decolonial and liberatory projects work together to banish Coyote, seeking justice and liberation as a group of advocates with different gifts and approaches. To aid in holding these vastly differing approaches to Indigenous liberation in relation, I offer a conceptual outline, a constellation, of decolonial and liberatory projects. This map is meant to gesture at the relationships between several key decolonial and liberatory projects in Indigenous studies and related fields. As any given constellation in the night sky has many stories that shape, arrange, and rearrange it, the constellation of decolonial and liberatory projects I describe here is not a catchall or definitive picture of these views.

This chapter offers a pluralistic accounting of decolonial and liberatory projects that recognizes the merits of each component of this diverse constellation, and illustrates that addressing the multi-pronged lemmas of settler colonialism requires the work of theorists with many different gifts. The gifts decolonial liberatory projects walk with include: the

gifts of building and maintaining *tée* (homes, nests, community spaces), the gifts of defending and protecting by confronting the colonizer, and gifts of building alliances between Indigenous communities, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and between modes of discourse. The authors of each approach I detail in this constellation have their own insights and implications for language reclamation, which I outline as well. The potential application of different modes of decolonial and liberatory theorizing within language reclamation gesture to in this chapter are somewhat vague, but that insights and recommendations for language reclamation can be gleaned from the diverse array of decolonial and liberatory thinking shows the multifaceted nature of settler colonialism and the critical resistance thereto.

In Chapter 4, “Navigating Sites of Violence in Indigenous Language Archival Engagement,” I detail several sites of potential violence in language activists’ engagement with language archives. I begin by introducing the infrastructure of a theoretical framework, which takes the form of a compass-like structure, organized by the positionality of the researcher as well as the positionality of the host of the archive in question. I provide several examples of archival engagement that clarify the axes of positionality that organize the compass in Figures 5 and 6. The SE quadrant of Figure 6, representing the engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with colonial archives, is a site of violence in the form of contributory injustice, epistemic theft and appropriation, and the imposition of the access dilemma. The NE quadrant, representing the engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with Indigenous archives, is a site of contributory injustice, epistemic theft, and thin conceptions of reciprocity. The SW quadrant, representing the engagement of Indigenous researchers with colonial archives, is a site of violence in the

form of memory work and spirit violence. The NW quadrant, representing the engagement of Indigenous researchers with Indigenous archives, is a site of violence in the form of spectres of colonization and the reproduction of cultural resource disparities.

The sites of potential violence I highlight in this chapter become visible, mappable, and predictable when the positionalities of the researchers and archivists are exposed, as they are in the x and y axes of Figures 5 and 6. What this shows is that these forms of violence do not spring from vacuums or from the hateful whims of individuals, rather, these forms of violence spring from inequities imposed by oppressive power structures like racism and settler colonialism. My hope is that since these forms of violence are visible, mappable, and predictable, the structures that make them possible are also made visible. It is my aim in this chapter to provide a helpful tool for those taking on the important and necessary work of co-creating just language reclamation projects, and send up prayers and good thoughts for their careful navigation around sites of structural violence.

Finally, in the concluding remarks of this dissertation I revisit *túkmal* *tavánish*//basket gifting praxis, and recap how each chapter might serve as a gift and springboard for future projects.

CHAPTER 1: “laxwalxwash potamáay súnkaan 'áawq // to be between the blind snake’s teeth”: Language Reclamation Between The Fangs Of A (Simulated) Dilemma



Figure 1: Rattlesnake basket pattern.

“I made up my mind I was not going to forget my language... I remember they had tall trees at Sherman [the Indian boarding school in Southern California]...my cousin and I would climb up where we couldn’t be seen or heard... we wanted to talk Paiute so badly we would climb up in those trees.”

– Viola Martinez (Bahr 2014, p. 11)

“In terms of resurgence, our Creation Stories tell us that collectively and intellectually we have access to all of the knowledge we need to untangle ourselves from the near destruction we are draped in...”

– Leanne Simpson (2011, p. 44)

“... You are the discoverer in trickster hermeneutics.”

– Gerald Vizenor (1994, p. 20)

Introduction

Settler-colonialism imposes countless dilemmas – scenarios in which Indigenous communities must choose between equally terrible options – on Indigenous communities. Some of these dilemmas pertain to Indigenous language reclamation and manifest in ‘choices’ Indigenous communities must make regarding funding, archival storage, resource sharing, and partnerships with universities, NGOs, and governmental agencies. This sometimes leads to Indigenous communities having to ‘choose’ between ‘selling-out’ to exogenous partnerships or working with scarce and inadequate language reclamation resources – both of these options result in the compromise of linguistic sovereignty, and thus, the options constitute a dilemma. I aim to show that this dilemma is actually a simulation, and that there are strategic and sometimes hidden sites of radical resurgence in language reclamation that spring from both fangs of this imposed dilemma. Careful

Indigenous language activists practicing ‘trickster hermeneutics’ avoid oversimplifying and dismissing the multi-faceted resurgence efforts of Indigenous communities.

The Linguistic Sovereignty Dilemma

In Greek, the word “dilemma” is made up of di, meaning two, and lemma, meaning horn. To be in a dilemma, literally, means to be ‘between the horns’ of a charging two-horned animal – neither horn provides a good option. In the Luiseño title of this essay, I’ve translated the concept of “being in a dilemma” as “being between the fangs” of a striking laxwalxwash, a rattlesnake Indigenous to southern California, known for having bad eyesight.² Just as being between the horns of a charging animal and having to choose between the horns is a difficult and no-win situation, being between the fangs of a striking rattlesnake and forced to choose between the two fangs also provides no positive outcome. Several scholars have detailed different dilemmas imposed on Indigenous communities pertaining to partnering with environmental agencies (Ranco et al 2011; Lee 2011) advocating for women, Two Spirit people, and children (Meissner and Whyte 2018), Indigenous feminisms (Smith 2011, Driskill 2010, Mikaere 1994), and dilemmas pertaining to Indigenous identity (Villazor 2008, Lyons 2010; 2011). Several scholars have also detailed nuanced accounts of agency, autonomy, and self-determination of Indigenous communities faced with colonially imposed dilemmas (Lyons 2010; Vizenor 1999; Barker 2005; Peña 2015). Below, I outline the two fangs of what I am calling the “linguistic sovereignty dilemma” imposed on Indigenous communities on Turtle Island by settler colonialism and nation states like the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

² Snakes do not represent evil in Luiseño cosmologies. They are, however, dangerous messengers who should be respected and avoided.

Linguistic sovereignty, as I am employing the term here, refers to a given Indigenous community's control over the creation, maintenance, and interrogation of the materials, written, oral, digital, or analog, pertaining to their ancestral language and the ideologies and philosophies thereof. The first fang of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma is to enter into relationships regarding financing and research with non-Indigenous-led entities like NGOs, research universities, and government agencies in order to reclaim Indigenous languages. This option results in dependency relationships, which compromise a community's abilities to control their language resources. The second fang of the dilemma is to abstain from entering into the aforementioned relationships and attempt to garner grassroots support for language reclamation; but this option is rarely even possible, and when it is, results in inadequate resources for language reclamation. A community does not have control over their language resources if there are no resources to be had due to linguistic imperialism, so, both of these results, the creation of dependency relationships and propagation of inadequate language resources, are compromises of linguistic sovereignty.

The First Fang: Exogenous Partnerships in Language Reclamation

The first fang of the dilemma is for Indigenous communities to form exogenous partnerships, or to enter into relationships regarding financing and research with non-Indigenous-led entities like NGOs, research universities, and government agencies in order to reclaim Indigenous languages. At first glance, this choice might seem appealing because of increased funding opportunities and access to resources that might otherwise be unattainable. Specifically, the choice to form exogenous partnerships might be justified by increased access to researchers and language experts, access to technology and curriculum

resources, and, of course, access to funding. For example, partnering with an NGO like the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) might take the form of applying for and receiving grant monies to invest in recording equipment. A partnership with a research university might take the form of welcoming a PhD student in linguistics or curriculum design into tribal spaces as an intern seeking fieldwork experience. Another example of an exogenous partnership might take the form of a group of elders agreeing to meet with an independent scholar as she conducts research on a particular Indigenous language for her dissertation research.

While Indigenous communities might engage in exogenous partnerships seeking reciprocal benefits for all parties, it is often the case that these partnerships come with a large price for Indigenous communities. Partnerships with NGOs, research universities, and government agencies often come with stringent evaluation criteria and strings attached, which sometimes include the tacking on of additional partnerships, requiring compliance with literacy standards and curriculum-building, requiring the circulation of any research material or findings, and taking financial resources from the community. For example, language documentation grants from the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) require that Indigenous communities seeking grants already be partnered with an accredited research university and applications are subject to a very strict review process in which the project's methodologies, practicality, urgency, and value are assessed by a committee of academics according to standards generated outside the community.³

³ <http://www.eldp.net/en/our+grants/review+process/>

If the community is awarded an ELDP grant, the resources generated during the grantee's project become public domain because of open access requirements.⁴ ELDP grants not only tack on additional exogenous partnerships, they retain control of Indigenous communities' language materials and share those materials with the public. The Breath of Life Institute, a part of AICLS, also tacks on additional exogenous partnerships, including partnerships with the federal governments, when they establish relationships with tribes and Indigenous language communities, as they are affiliated with the Documenting Endangered Languages Program, the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress, the National Anthropological Archives, and several national museums and archives (Breath of Life, 2018).

Many language reclamation grant applications also require that Indigenous communities provide details regarding their community's 'fluency' levels as well as speculation about causes of language loss, which maintains deficiency and trauma narratives of Indigenous communities in which settler organizations can serve as saviors (Million 2013, Meissner 2018). While some exogenous partnerships provide technology and curriculum resources, they also often come with literacy standards, and pressures to obtain standardized orthographies, which compromise what many Indigenous communities see as the inherent orality of their languages (Morgan 2009, Rappaport 1994). Exogenous curriculum resources also create issues regarding retaining 'authenticity' of worldview, traditional values, grammar, and syntax through language change (Muehlmann 2008, Hinton 1999).

⁴ <http://www.eldp.net/en/our+grants/review+process/>

While many exogenous partnerships center Indigenous language preservation and learning, they do so while centering settler futurity. The Breath of Life Institute at UC Berkeley brings in Indigenous language activists, partners them with Indigenous and non-Indigenous language experts, and trains them to use language technology and to navigate language archives (Hinton 2002). The website reads:

University of California, Berkeley has three major archives which, collectively, house the largest collection of unpublished material on California Indian languages. We give thanks to the foresight of those who shared their knowledge with the linguists, making sure that much was recorded for posterity. Their families can find their language, take it off the dusty shelves of the archives, and turn it back into living speech – giving it the Breath of Life” (Breath of Life, UC Berkeley).⁵ Breath of Life is designed to help Indigenous communities borrow from the university, to temporarily ‘check out’ their own ancestors’ voices, sacred songs, and family stories from the “dusty shelves” of the university basement, but there is no focus on repatriation of these archives or the cultivation of Indigenous-led archives. Breath of Life depicts the information that was “shared” with linguists in the past as public domain, common resources to be shared amongst the academic community, and the occasional California Indian who manages to scrounge up the \$500 necessary to participate in a Breath of Life workshop. Breath of Life, and other university-housed colonial archive projects take for granted that the university is a neutral, open-access storage-facility for language resources, which is false; universities are complicit in the attempted linguisticide of Indigenous languages (Meissner 2018). University-housed colonial archive projects also take for granted that settler institutions like research universities will exist indefinitely into the future (Meissner 2018, Tuck and Yang 2012).

⁵ <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~survey/aicls-breath-of-life/>

As these examples show, exogenous partnerships result in the creation and maintenance of dependency relationships, where non-Indigenous entities make themselves required in the reclamation of Indigenous languages. In cases where the reclamation of Indigenous languages is connected to spiritual, emotional, and physical wellness, these dependency relationships are connected to trauma narratives, in which the healing of Indigenous communities from intergenerational trauma requires non-Indigenous entities, which are the very entities often responsible for causing the trauma that must be healed (Million 2013). Exogenous partnerships also undermine the self-determination of those communities by subjecting them to state control, especially when those partnerships include state or federally imposed curriculum (Lee 2011, Tuck and Yang 2012, Wyman et al 2013). The first fang, that Indigenous communities form exogenous partnerships, results in dependency relationships and a loss of linguistic sovereignty.

The Second Fang: Grassroots Language Reclamations

As detailed above, the first fang of the dilemma, to make exogenous partnerships, results in a compromise of linguistic sovereignty through several means, including the tacking on of additional undesirable partnerships, requiring compliance with literacy standards and curriculum-building, requiring the circulation of any research material or findings, and taking financial resources from the community. The second fang of the dilemma is to abstain from entering into the aforementioned relationships and attempt to garner grassroots support for language reclamation. Garnering grassroots support, or support that is tribally or community generated, with no outside involvement from universities, NGOs, or government agencies, is easier said than done. Language reclamation that is solely grassroots supported is appealing at first glance because it does not require

any relationships that might result in the compromise of a community's control over their own language resources. A community who can build their own language reclamation with no outside help might take extra pride in their programming, and implement it as an intergenerational empowerment process. This programming is likely to be very sustainable because it doesn't require the temporary funding associated with grants or government budgets that are subject to administration changes or reliance on non-Indigenous instructors who community members might not trust. Grassroots language reclamation might take the form of volunteer language classes or "language table" gatherings inside tribal halls, private homes, and community centers. Grassroots language reclamation might also take the form of the independent work of families who choose to transform their homes into immersion spaces and language nests.

While these projects certainly exist, upon closer examination, they appear to be implicated in exogenous partnerships, rather than purely grassroots operations. There are very few language resources that haven't been touched by colonialism, especially for language community's whose languages are marked as 'critically endangered' and subject to decades' worth of academic research. Individuals who learn languages at universities and bring them back to their communities, or who borrow language curriculum from grant-funded archival research arguably bring back with them the strings attached to exogenously partnered language reclamation. Indigenous language archives are collected and maintained by settler researchers who translate our worldviews into their notebooks, impressing upon these translations the casts of Western conceptions of gender, grammar, alphabetization, and animacy (Bastien 2004, Jeffredo-Warden 1999, Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2009). These malformations of our languages are then stored in climate-

controlled basements of universities, and sold back to our people piecemeal in language curricula, archive workshops, dictionaries, workbooks, and university language courses. Those language resources that have made their way back into communities attempting to create grassroots language reclamation constitute exogenous partnerships, and thus, are not grassroots operations.

Exposing these projects as consisting of partially, if not entirely, exogenous partnerships is not meant to shame these forms of language reclamation and the folks doing this important work, rather, it's meant to emphasize that settler colonial language practices, from attempted linguistic genocide in missions and boarding schools to continued contemporary assaults on linguistic sovereignty, have manufactured the scarcity of Indigenous languages. Language scarcity is imposed and maintained by settler institutions like universities who charge exorbitant tuition and cultivate gatekeeping practices around Indigenous language archives. Because of these practices, Indigenous language resources are difficult to access without forming exogenous dependency relationships with universities.

The cases where language reclamation occurs without hidden exogenous partnerships are rare, and likely only occur in languages that are not dormant or near dormant, in communities where there is at least a generation of language speakers willing to teach the language. These reclamation projects also lack substantial funding, so volunteers, oftentimes elders who are uncompensated, do the hard work of teaching. While one of the *prima facie* merits of grassroots language reclamation is that these projects are more sustainable than exogenously-partnered projects because they are not subject to the temporariness and administration-dependency of institutional funding, these projects are

however subject to the energy levels of volunteer labor. Even in the rare cases that a community has language teachers willing to teach in less than ideal circumstances, from language resources that are home-crafted and not borrowed from hidden exogenous partnerships, the vast majority students who pass through these reclamation spaces are not considered 'fluent.' As Wesley Leonard points out, grassroots language reclamation projects often do not stand up to educational and linguistic expectations regarding the generation of fluent speakers (Leonard).

The second fang of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, that Indigenous communities garner grassroots support for language reclamation, also results in the compromise of linguistic sovereignty. In most scenarios, grassroots language reclamation programs have unseen exogenous partnerships that affect the quality of language resources, and thus, are not actually grassroots projects. In the remaining scenarios, grassroots language reclamation has inadequate language resources and do not generate fluent speakers. Because the second fang either results in exogenous partnerships (i.e. dependency relationships) or inadequate language resources, the second fang results in a compromise of linguistic sovereignty.

Subverting the Dilemma

The linguistic sovereignty dilemma appears to force Indigenous communities into making one of two equally terrible choices, both of which result in the loss of linguistic sovereignty. In this section, I aim to show that the linguistic sovereignty dilemma described above is subverted by the often-clandestine practices of actual on-the-ground language reclamation. The practices of language reclamation, both exogenously-partnered and grassroots alike, are sites of radical Indigenous resurgence. Indigenous resurgence, as it is

theorized by Indigenous scholar-activists like Leanne Simpson (2011) and Jeff Corntassel (2012, Snelgrove et al 2014) is a theoretical paradigm of Indigenous studies and adjacent disciplines marked by ‘turning away from’ settler institutions. As Snelgrove et al describe, Indigenous resurgence is oversimplified when it is depicted solely as a rejection of settler society, since Indigenous resurgence also makes “explicit and implicit demands” on “settler society and its dominant values” (Snelgrove et al 2014, p. 18). Scholar-activists in the resurgence paradigm also emphasize the potential for transformation of settlers through resurgence practices, commitment to non-metaphorical decolonization, and repatriation of Indigenous land (Snelgrove et al 2014; Tuck and Yang 2012; Arvin, Tuck, and Morill 2013; Coulthard 2013; Simpson 2008 and 2011; Corntassel 2012). That Indigenous language reclamation projects subvert the linguistic sovereignty dilemma exposes the dilemma as what Gerald Vizenor describes as a ‘simulation’ created and maintained by settler and Indigenous forces for different respective ends.

Exogenously-partnered language reclamation projects, according to the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, have compromised linguistic sovereignty because they are working alongside non-Indigenous entities like research universities, NGOS, and government agencies. These partnerships harm language resources and exert control over language reclamation projects, thus compromising linguistic sovereignty of Indigenous communities reclaiming their languages. Grassroots language reclamation projects also have compromised linguistic sovereignty, according to the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, 1. because grassroots projects rarely work with language resources that have not been collected, archived, and controlled by non-Indigenous entities, and 2. because grassroots language projects largely do not have the adequate resources to generate fluent speakers.

The linguistic sovereignty dilemma, roughly, takes the form of: partner or perish. Though this dilemma seems daunting, I aim to show here by counterexample that it is a false dilemma, or, as Vizenor would say, a simulation.

Some Counterexamples To the Linguistic Sovereignty Dilemma

One example of an exogenously-partnered language reclamation program that subverts the linguistic sovereignty dilemma is the inter-Kumeyaay language and cultural reclamation program at Kumeyaay Community College on the Sycuan reservation. This project is exogenously partnered in that it is sponsored by the Heard Museum. While it is publically faithful to the Native Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the employer of several Indigenous curators and anthropologists, the Heard museum is a non-profit, settler-operated museum that has a sordid history of relationships with Indigenous communities, as most museums do (Watkins 2005). The Kumeyaay language reclamation project is one of many Indigenous-led projects that receives sponsorship from the Heard (Heard Museum 2017). This partnership carries several risks, and likely required the Kumeyaay communities be willing to share their images and knowledges with unknown outsiders. But where the linguistic sovereignty dilemma would cause a reader to expect compromises of linguistic sovereignty in the forms of decentering Indigenous control of language resources, the Kumeyaay communities have sewed the seeds for profound, radical nation building. The Kumeyaay have used the funding from the Heard to unite twelve Kumeyaay communities within San Diego County, California and four in Baja California, Mexico. The communities come together to reclaim their languages, their traditional rush, yucca, and grass gathering and weaving practices. While the Heard bills the gathering as a crafting workshop, the Kumeyaay communities describe the gathering as “nation-building

through language revitalization” (Heard Museum, 1:00).⁶ This project focuses on rebuilding kinship structures that the settler colonial nation states of the U.S. and Mexico try to actively erase with militarized geopolitical borders. The Heard, of course, was likely not initially in-the-know with regards to the radical resurgence practices they have funded.

The language and cultural reclamation occurring in Pu’uhonua camps throughout Hawaii is an example of grassroots language reclamation taking place in spite of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma. One of these camps, Pu’uhonua o Waianae, or the Refuge of Waianae, is led by Twinkle Borge, who describes the space as her home, and has opened it up to approximately two-hundred other people who live communally without paying for property or taxes. The communities are often torn down in ‘sweeps’ by state sheriffs, but many of the Pu’uhonua camp community have nowhere else to go, so another camp forms shortly after each sweep (Schuler, 2018). The Pu’uhonua camps survive off the land, sharing resources, and use and sell donated household items like blankets and tents. Many children have been born in the Pu’uhonua camps and the Kanaka Maoli language is used abundantly by camp members of all generations. In one of the interviews conducted by VICE News (2017), a group of young people speak in the Kanaka Maoli language and walk off camera to go play in the ocean; the group is laughing and are tugging a canoe made of rushes. The Kanaka Maoli language speakers in this Pu’uhonua camp may not ‘count’ as fluent speakers of an Indigenous language and the language reclamation taking place at the camps does not adhere to any curriculum standards. The linguistic sovereignty dilemma depicts these communities as having inadequate language resources in virtue of their non-participation in mainstream economies, but this is not the case. Another camp called

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEXiRer3QSA>

Pu'uhonua o Waimanalo, which entered into a formal lease with the Hawaiian government twenty four years ago after classes with state officials, is currently "working to develop more efficient energy systems; is trying to turn hydroponic fish effluent into a moneymaking business; has its own medical marijuana clinic; and is preparing to launch its own cryptocurrency in Japan called 'Aloha Coin'" (Nakaso 2018). Though the state of Hawaii and wealthy settlers landowners have attempted to push the Kanaka Maoli people out of their own ancestral territories, these communities have turned away from state recognized modes of living and learning. As Leanne Simpson writes, resurgence "requires a radical break from state education systems – systems that are primarily designed to produce communities of individuals willing to uphold settler colonialism." The language reclamation occurring in the Pu'uhonua camps is a site of radical Indigenous resurgence.

The work being undertaken by queer and Two-Spirit scholar activists is another example of defiant grassroots and exogenously partnered language reclamation that subverts the linguistic sovereignty dilemma. Scholar activists like Saylesh Wesley, Deborah Miranda, and L. Frank Manriquez are restoring, reclaiming, and resurging queer and Two-Spirit lifeways by engaging in grassroots practices as well as practices that engage colonial archives. Saylesh Wesley works with her grandmother to co-create new terms in their language for two-spirit identities and to weave a skirt for a mourning ceremony at which Wesley has been asked to dance. Wesley writes, "I have made every effort to locate any precontact stories of the Stó:lō two-spirits, but to no avail so far. In this essay, I endeavor to re-member the past differently, marshal new traditions and language together in ways that create a new vision of the future" (Wesley 2014, p. 339). The collaborative making of new language to accommodate concepts, like Sts'iyóye, meaning Twin-Spirited woman, is a site

of radical Indigenous resurgence that should not be possible, according to the linguistic sovereignty dilemma's depiction of grassroots projects as dilapidated and resource-poor. Wesley and her grandmother are engaging in the co-creation of new cultural resources, and 'dreaming alternate realities' outside the scope of Western conceptions of gender (Simpson 2014)

In order to reclaim Indigenous southern California third genders, Deborah Miranda (2014; 2015) and L. Frank Manriquez (2001) engage in the emotional, spiritually painful work of confronting colonial archives and taking back language resources, attempting to heal those language resources of the imprints left by Spanish colonizers and white anthropologists. Miranda engages with several primary sources concerning the California Mission system, many of which were fieldnotes from the John Peabody Harrington collection, currently being digitized and housed by the Smithsonian (Miranda 2014; 2015). Miranda looks closely at Harrington's fieldnotes pertaining to the term "joya," a derisive term coined by the Spanish colonizers for California Indigenous communities' third gender. In her reclamation work, not only must Miranda gain access to the archives through gatekeepers, she must also encounter the hateful, violent translation of third gender lifeways through the hermeneutics of Spanish colonizers who described them as "joyas" and fed them to dogs, as well as through the layer of translation added by Harrington. This memory work, this decoding, is a violent form of labor Miranda undertakes to reclaim third-gender lifeways. In her engagement with the Harrington papers, Deborah Miranda expressed the weight of memory work. She writes,

The difficulties of using non-Indian archives to tell an Indian story are epic: biases, agendas, cultural pride, notions of Manifest Destiny, and the desire to 'own' history mean that one can never simply read and accept even the most basic non-Native detail without multiple investigations into who collected the information, what their

motivations were, who preserved the information and their motivations, the use of rhetorical devices ... Learning how to 're-read' the archive through the eyes of a mixed-blood California Indian lesbian poet and scholar was an education in and of itself[.] (Miranda 2015, 255)

Miranda expresses the exhaustion of working with colonial archives and explains how approaching these archives as a 'mixed-blood California Indian lesbian poet and scholar' required her to learn a way of engaging with colonial archives that is new and violent. L. Frank Manriquez a Tongva- Acjachemen scholar, artist, and language activist, also depicts the emotional labor of memory work. In her visit to the archives at Musee L'Homme, She writes:

At the Musee de L'Homme, I walked into this room where there were boxes and boxes and boxes of my peoples' lives, and they were like muffled crying coming from these shelves and these boxes, and it was just heart-breaking. It was incredibly awful, just plain awful. So here I am with these French people who speak no English and me who speaks no French, just sobbing. But these pieces and I became friends. I tried to touch as much as I possibly could... We've been gone for so long (Manriquez 2002).

Manriquez's public and emotional reaction to engaging with a colonial archive that contains the stories and objects of her ancestors is a symptom of painful labor she undertakes as a survivor of genocide and simultaneously a scholar.

The linguistic sovereignty dilemma depicts projects like those of Miranda and Manriquez as compromised because the language and cultural resources they use to reclaim third-gender lifeways are borrowed from archives tainted by colonial impositions. However, the painful and emotionally exhausting labor of memory work endured by Miranda and Manriquez reframes and reclaims these stolen language resources. In delving through the hermeneutic layers of colonial archives and retrieving their ancestors' experiences, Miranda and Manriquez spiritually transform these languages resources in a radical act of Indigenous resurgence.

These examples of language reclamation briefly outlined above serve as counterexamples to the linguistic sovereignty dilemmas, but they are representative of much larger resurgence movement within Indian country. Focusing on the resurgence practices in language reclamation projects blurs the binary between exogenously-partnered and grassroots language projects, and transforms it into a spectrum of different modes of community engagement with varying and unique degrees of exogenous partnership. Other examples of flourishing in defiance of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma include the formation of international Indigenous groups and their recommendations to funders of philanthropic projects (IFIP 2014, 2016). These recommendations share ways to subvert dilemmas like the linguistic sovereignty dilemma and could certainly be amended to apply to grants regarding Indigenous language reclamation projects (IFIP 2014, 2016). Indigenous communities are also forming funding networks of their own, an option that the linguistic sovereignty dilemma obscures (Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples 2018).

While several scholars have talked about enhancing Indigenous *participation* in archives and library sciences (Innes 2010, Macri and Sarmento 2010, Thorpe and Galassi 2014), in some circles, the conversation is shifting to one that centers Indigenous *control* of archival processes, and Indigenous communities are slowly but surely reclaiming their language resources (Cushman 2013, Macri and Sarmento 2010, Christen 2008; 2011). Ellen Cushman describes grassroots Cherokee efforts to canonize their traditional stories and teachings in ways that are accessible to tribal members near and far to the Cherokee Nation libraries via password protected digital archives (Cushman 2013). Mukurtu and Nunaliit are examples of Indigenous-led archives, curated and theorized by Indigenous

scholar activists involved in the #datasoverignty movement (Christen 2008; 2011).⁷

Grassroots and exogenously-partnered language projects alike are taking back control of the language resources. Tribal halls have little libraries. My own community has a rogue group of academics and administrators stock-piling language resources. Like Saylesh Wesley, Deborah Miranda, L. Frank Manriquez, and Qwo-Li Driskell are doing important, community-based research regarding gender and language, other scholars are engaged in similar projects in which they restore traditional kinship and governance systems (Jewell, forthcoming 2018, Whyte 2016a), and relationships with the land (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2009, Whyte 2016b). Indigenous scholar activists are also co-creating research methodologies that privilege Indigenous control of research, forming and reinforcing tribal IRBs, and forming intertribal coalitions (Wilson 2008, Absolon 2011, Smith 2012).

If the linguistic sovereignty dilemma were a true dilemma, the examples I have just provided of communities resurging in spite of it, would not be possible. So, it seems that perhaps this dilemma is simply a false dilemma, or, logically, that the dilemma fails to depict alternative options. However, I prefer to conceive of the dilemma as a simulation, for two reasons. First, the linguistic sovereignty dilemma is, for the most part, imposed on Indigenous communities through dominant discourse, or manifest manners. Even though the dilemma is ultimately false, it is made to seem as if it is the only option for Indigenous peoples. This is a dilemma imposed by power structures as a form of psychological manipulation, and is thus, more than a mere hiccup in logic. Second, the dilemma is strategically re-inscribed by Indigenous communities seeking opportunities to clandestinely engage in resurgence practices. Because Indigenous communities routinely

⁷ <http://mukurtu.org/about/> <http://nunaliit.org>

take-up the rhetorics of this dilemma and wield it against their oppressors, a Vizenorian 'simulation' feels like a better description. Below, I will detail the manifest manners upon which the linguistic sovereignty dilemma depends, and then gesture to some of the ways Indigenous communities strategically re-inscribe the dilemma to serve their own resurgence.

The Linguistic Sovereignty Dilemma as Simulation

Gerald Vizenor (1994) calls the practices and dominant logics of Western epistemologies 'manifest manners,' noting that Western epistemologies can only produce mere 'simulations' of Indian identities. These simulations, likened to plastic tomahawks and dollar-store chicken feather regalia, are not real or accurate representations of Indigenous communities, though they are made salient by settler society's consistent circulation of these images. Because settlers' discursive practices pre-construct Indigenous peoples' identities, settlers are epistemically beholden to mere simulations of Indigenous peoples. Manifest manners, or settler logics, create simulations that real, live Indigenous people must navigate in their daily lives. Vizenor calls this navigation, which Indigenous people become very skilled at, "trickster hermeneutics." The linguistic sovereignty dilemma is a simulation because it is produced by manifest manners, or settler logics, without the participation of Indigenous people. When the linguistic sovereignty dilemma is subverted by Indigenous communities, as it is in the counterexamples, these communities are practicing trickster hermeneutics. The linguistic sovereignty dilemma is a simulation because it relies on the following themes, which are manifest manners: literacy and fluency standards, a focus on purity and control, reliance on terminal and trauma narratives, and a promotion of Western philosophy of language over Indigenous philosophies of language.

Fluency Standards as Manifest Manners

The linguistic sovereignty dilemma relies on a conception of literacy and the production of fluent speakers in order to make the second language, grassroots Indigenous language reclamation, seem impossible. The major criticism of grassroots language reclamation is that it does not generate fluent speakers, or, the reliable and spontaneous generators of grammatical sentences, who are raised speaking the language (Leonard 2017). Wesley Leonard writes “the legitimacy, goals, and practices associated with indigenous language efforts are unquestioningly framed in terms of norms for major world languages,” noting that dominant language fluency sets the standard for Indigenous language fluency and focuses on intergenerational transmission of the language within the home (Leonard 2011, p. 139; Hinton 2013). Leonard continues, “transmitted in this way, many quickly assume that its reclamation efforts are unsuccessful, even though languages that have had a period of dormancy can initially be learned only as second languages; intergenerational transmission is a later stage” (Leonard 2011, p. 139). The Western conception of fluency is a questionable measure for the success of Indigenous language reclamation, for reasons that can be seen in the Pu’uhonua camps example above. The communities reclaiming Kanaka Maoli lifeways and languages from the Pu’uhonua camps likely do not meet mainstream curriculum standards because they staunchly reject participating in mainstream commoditization of knowledge. Fluency in the “home” is also not an adequate measure of Indigenous communities’ relationships with their languages, and likely serves to reinscribe settler narratives of heterohomemaking (Rifkin 2010). Rather than compromising the linguistic sovereignty of Kanaka Maoli people, rejecting funding and dominant resources serve in and of itself as a radical act of linguistic

sovereignty. A settler conception of fluency also renders the first fang of the dilemma, making exogenous partnerships, simultaneously violent and the only suitable option for achieving fluency. Because settlers set the standard for fluency, it should be no surprise that their own systems are the only ones that generate it.

Linguistic and Cultural “Purity” as Manifest Manners

Another tricky component of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma is the slippery nature of the notion of “sovereignty” employed in rhetoric that discourages the use of language resources that have been generated by or touched by settler researchers. It is certainly the case that non-Indigenous researchers have a sordid history of relationships with Indigenous communities and languages and have imposed hermeneutic resources that ‘damage’ the language. When settler researchers like Raymond C. White or J.P. Harrington collected California Indian languages, they indeed imprinted on these languages conceptions of gender, sexuality, and normativity that spring from Judeo-Christian value systems. However, Indigenous scholar activists like Saylesh Wesley (2014), Deborah Miranda (2014; 2015), and L. Frank Manriquez (2001) are doing the work to reclaim language resources, meaning it is hard work, but not impossible for Indigenous communities to use the language resources reclaimed and repurposed from colonial archives. The idea that Indigenous language and cultural resources have been touched by colonizers and rendered un-usable by Indigenous communities for their own empowerment is a simulation that acts to conflate ‘sovereignty’ with ‘purity.’ We do not need perfectly pure and untouched language resources; we need control over our language resources.

In addition to being conflated with sovereignty, the standard for purity held by non-Indigenous linguists in regard to Indigenous languages is ad hoc and unattainable. Wesley Leonard points out that when dominant languages change due to contact with other languages, this is an expected feature of language; however, when Indigenous languages change, the integrity, authenticity, and purity of the language is called into question (Leonard 2011). The linguistic sovereignty dilemma as described above relies on the expectation that Indigenous languages must remain pure and authentic. Curriculum designs and archival storage that are at one time touched by settlers, when taken up by Indigenous communities, diminish the 'virginal' status of Indigenous languages. Indigenous communities can and do take up and re-use the tools of settler society, often repurposing them for their own goals of community empowerment and resurgence. Some language reclamation activists are doing this work regarding the internet and social media (Mary Hermes, Megan Bang, Amanda Marin 2012; Scheyvens and Warren 2015).

Terminality and Trauma Narratives as Manifest Manners

The linguistic sovereignty dilemma also relies on notions of terminality and trauma. Exogenous partnerships often require that Indigenous communities maintain trauma narratives, depicting their communities as wounded, which is infused with a larger settler colonial narrative regarding the biological inferiority and inevitable disappearance of Indigenous peoples (Million 2013). Trauma narratives depict language loss as a part of a biological process of extinction that can only be halted by the intervention of Western scientists, linguists, and philanthropy (Meissner 2018). Terminal narratives, or the idea that languages can be lost, go extinct, or die (Evans 2009, Crystal 2000), have been challenged by Wesley Leonard (2008), who offers the terminology of "sleeping" to replace

terminal narratives, since languages can always be reclaimed by the descendants of people who once spoke the language. The requirement of trauma narratives makes the first fang of the dilemma unappealing, since Indigenous communities are often asked to describe the failures of their communities and the need to settler intervention in the grant-seeking process. However, the second fang of the dilemma also employs trauma narratives by depicting Indigenous communities as ultimately beholden to colonial archives and ‘tainted’ language resources. Terminal narratives appear in both fangs of the dilemma as well; the exogenous partnerships of the first fang often employ terminal narratives as impetus for saving Indigenous languages ‘before it’s too late’ and the un-partnered projects of the second fang are depicted as terminated.

Western Philosophy of Language as Manifest Manners

Finally, The linguistic sovereignty dilemma imports a conception of language as an abstract, inanimate, disembodied network of grammar that exists either within the cognitive faculties of an individualized speaker or in a Platonic metaphysical realm of names and predicates to which an individualized speaker has access (e.g. Chomsky 1965, Frege 1960;1948, Searle 2008). This commitment to a Western view of language is revealed in the fluency and learning success criteria privileged by the linguistic sovereignty dilemma: for example, a child is considered fluent in an Indigenous language if that child reliably and spontaneously forms grammatical statements in the language across several domains. An Indigenous language is living if there is constant transmission of that language across generations, such that new generations are reared speaking that language fluently. However, as has been explained by countless Indigenous language activists, language is conceived of by Indigenous communities as a living entity (Wesley, WHO), deeply

connected to the land (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2009, Shaw 2001, Leonard 2017) and to the community (Muehlmann 2008), and to a communal, embodied sense of identity and responsibility (Meek 2010, McCarty et al 2018, Leonard 2008). Each Indigenous community values their language in different ways and ideal reclamation thereof takes different shapes depending on that community's values (McCarty et al 2018). The philosophies of language held by Indigenous communities are ignored or treated as accommodations to be made after-the-fact by Western language reclamation programs rather than as guiding principles in how to structure the paradigm of reclamation. The linguistic sovereignty dilemma relies on a conception of language that undermines Indigenous conceptions of language and thus, centers the reclamation of a mere trivial facet of what is actually valued by Indigenous communities.

Trickster Hermeneutics

Above I have detailed the manifest manners, or the rhetorics manipulated by dominant discourse to construct the linguistic sovereignty dilemma and impose it onto Indigenous communities. The linguistic sovereignty dilemma, constituted by manifest manners like conceptions of purity, trauma and terminality narratives, and language as an individualized abstraction, is a simulation cultivated by settler society to the detriment of Indigenous peoples. These manipulated rhetorics are subverted by Indigenous communities all the time, as is illustrated by the counterexamples offered in the previous section. This simulation and the manifest manners that constitute it are also strategically re-inscribed by Indigenous communities seeking opportunities to clandestinely engage in resurgence practices. These strategic reinscriptions are also forms of trickster hermeneutics that serve as sites of radical Indigenous resurgence.

The lines of reasoning, or manifest manners, that contribute to the formation of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma are ever-present in dominant discourse and Indigenous communities are superbly fluent in navigating them. For example, the idea that there is a binary between ‘pure’ Indigenous identities and those that are mixed or less authentic is a familiar and destructive one for Indigenous people. Blood quantum, the paradox of civilizability – the literal meaning of the “plight of the Indian” – are all manifestations of this same binary. The linguistic sovereignty dilemma imports this binary and uses it as a fulcrum for the two inescapable options – partner or perish. This dilemma rides on the idea that forming exogenous partnerships is the only real solution to language loss, and thus, all language resources are essentially mixed and Indians are all inauthentic versions of their ancestors. This is not a dilemma; it is a story we have all heard before. This story, inaccurate as it is, has cultural capital. Settler institutions, neoliberal conservation entities, research universities, are all privy to this narrative and interested in playing the role of the savior of Indigenous peoples. Because of these emotional investments of settler society in the story of the ‘plight of the Indian’, Indigenous communities can and do use the linguistic sovereignty dilemma to their own advantage, and careful execution thereof can result in radical Indigenous resurgence. We can retell this old story in tricky ways.

When Indigenous communities subvert and then re-inscribe the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, they are practicing trickster hermeneutics. Dian Million writes of Indigenous women’s groups who, in order to promote the health and wellness of their communities, take on trauma narratives and wield them as tools for redistributing Canadian monies (Million 2014). When Indigenous communities like the Kumeyaay Nation take funding from the Heard museum in exchange for taking up the terminal narratives

regarding their cultural practices, but then use that funding to support nation-building projects that build coalitions that undermine colonially imposed borders, they are practicing trickster hermeneutics. Consider also for example the work of Two Spirit and queer scholar activists attempting to reconstruct gender roles and responsibilities that have been forgotten by Indigenous communities. This work is often justified as an academic endeavor by reinscribing notions of 'purity' in the linguistic record, which in turn carves out spaces for Indigenous scholar activists to engage with archives. Once we are allowed into the archives, very little stops us from taking back what is rightfully ours.

The urgency ascribed to language-loss narratives propagated by UNESCO and the National Endowment for the Humanities springs from conceiving of Indigenous peoples as trauma-riddled and doomed for extinction. Indigenous communities often reinscribe these narratives in order to gain access to resources that empower their language reclamation projects. Many exogenously-partnered language reclamation projects are subject to grant-writing processes in which they must describe their communities' as wounded in virtue of their language loss, and then provide a timeline of goals with measurement criteria that will be used to evaluate whether or not these fluency goals are met. In writing these grants, Indigenous communities can and do practice trickster hermeneutics and subvert the linguistic sovereignty dilemma by taking up the language, standards, and assessment criteria required by the grant, but then creatively interpreting these requirements in ways that empower their communities, rather than imposing restrictions (Debenport 2015). Indigenous communities use trickster hermeneutics to create the illusion that compliant Indigenous people are plugging away at grammar lessons, when what we are doing is radically resurging. What radically resurgent language reclamation spaces do is so much

more than creating conditions for grammar lessons, though this may be how we are strategically billing our work to funders. Radically resurgent language reclamation spaces are invested in a larger, often clandestine, project of reclaiming land, rematriating cultural resources, and recovering our traditional governance practices.

Returning finally to the Luiseño translation of “dilemma,” or being between the fangs of the laxwalxwash: recall that the laxwalxwash is known for having bad eyesight. The way around him is to sneak quietly like coyote, to practice trickster hermeneutics. It is my hope that I have offered an alternative mode of engaging with Indigenous language reclamation programs that appear at first glance to compromise values that our own communities hold. We can’t be quick to judge the merits or failures of language reclamation programs who appear unconcerned with linguistic sovereignty, for they might be engaged in a wide range of complicated resistance – strategically taking funding, building scrutinized partnerships, staunchly rejecting relationships, or entering archival spaces well-armed with self-care tactics. We must consider that other communities might be in their own processes of sneaking around the laxwalxwash.

Conclusion

The linguistic sovereignty dilemma, roughly, takes the form of: partner or perish. Settler logics attempt to depict Indigenous communities as forced to choose between forming exogenous partnerships with universities, NGOs, and governmental agencies, or having scarce and inadequate language programming. Both of these options, according to settler logics, result in the compromise of Indigenous communities’ control over the creation, maintenance, and interrogation of the materials, written, oral, digital, or analog,

pertaining to their ancestral language and the ideologies and philosophies thereof.

However, I have attempted to show that this dilemma is a simulation.

There are countless strategic and sometimes clandestine sites of radical resurgence in language reclamation programs that serve to destabilize the linguistic sovereignty dilemma and expose it as a simulation. Indigenous communities are engaged in language and cultural resurgence that crosses and subverts geopolitical boundaries, that reclaims stolen language resources, that nourishes new language and new sites of archival safe-keeping, that rekindles traditional governance systems, that communicates our gratitude directly to the land, and that empowers youth to gather in embodied, intergenerational visiting and knowledge-sharing spaces. Indigenous communities flourish right under the nose of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma. Settler logics are able to maintain the linguistic sovereignty dilemma in spite of such obvious counterexamples because they operate on culturally powerful concepts like literacy, fluency, purity, and weak sense of ‘sovereignty,’ and employ trauma and terminal narratives.

In many cases, Indigenous communities also maintain the illusion, or bolster the simulation of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma in order to gain access to otherwise inaccessible resources. Some Indigenous language activists take up rhetorics of fluency, purity, or trauma in order to ultimately subvert it. These re-inscriptions of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, too, are sites of radical Indigenous resurgence. I offer this explanation of the resurgence tactics of Indigenous language activists not to expose our work to the snakes and gatekeepers – I don’t really worry about this, because we are unseeable to them – but to expose our work and strategies to one another, to discourage harsh words between us, and to facilitate our flourishing in the face of settler colonialism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Absolon, Kathleen E. (2011). *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* (Minogiizhigokwe). Fernwood Publishing.

Bahr, D. M. (2014). *The Students of Sherman Indian School: Education and Native Identity Since 1892*: University of Oklahoma Press.

Bastien, Betty. (2004) *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing*. University of Calgary Press.

Barker, Joanne. (2005). "For Whom Sovereignty Matters" in *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Pp: 1-31.

Battiste, Marie. (2011). "Introduction" and "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society." *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision*. UBC Press.

Burkhart, Brian. (2018). *Indigenizing Philosophy Through The Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Philosophy and Indigenous Futures*, Michigan State University Press: Lansing.

Breath of Life (2018). "url <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~survey/aicls-breath-of-life/>

Chomsky, Noam. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Christen, Kimberly. (2008.) "Archival Challenges and Digital Solutions in Aboriginal Australia." *SAA Archaeological Recorder* 8 (2): 21 -24.

Christen, Kimberly. (2011.) "Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation." *American Archivist* 74: 185-210.

Crystal, David. (2000). *Language Death*, Cambridge University Press: London.

Cushman, Ellen. (2013). "Wampum, Sequoyan, and Story: Decolonizing the Digital Archive ," *College English*, 76(2), 115-135.

Dauenhauer, Nora Marks and Richard Dauenhauer. (1998) "Technical, Emotional, and Ideological Issues in Reversing Language Shift: Examples from Southeast Alaska." *In Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects*. Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley, ed. pp. 57-98. London: Cambridge University Press.

Debenport, Erin. (2015). *Fixing the Books: Secrecy, Literacy, and Perfectibility in Indigenous New Mexico*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research

Driskill, Qwo-Li. (2010). "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 16(1-2).

Evans, Nicholas. (2009). *Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have To Tell Us*, Wiley-Blackwell.

Frege, Gottlob. (1960). *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, trans. J.L. Austin, Harper and Brothers: New York.

Frege, Gottlob. (1948). "On Sense and Reference." *The Philosophical Review* 57(3), 209-230.

Heard Museum. (2017). "Kumeyaay Yucca Sandal Making With Stan Rodriguez," Master Artist Workshop Series, YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEXiRer3QSA>

Hinton, Leanne and Jocelyn Ahlers. (1999). "The Issue of 'Authenticity' in California Language Restoration," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30(1):56-67.

Hinton, Leanne. (1994). *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages*. (Heyday Books: Berkeley, CA).

Hinton, Leanne. (2002). *How To Keep Your Language Alive: A Commonsense Approach to One-On-One Language Learning*. (Heyday Books: Berkeley)

Hinton, Leanne. (2013). *Bringing Our Languages Home: Language Revitalization for Families*, (Heyday Books: Berkeley).

Innes., Pamela. (2010). "Ethical problems in archival research: Beyond accessibility," *Language and Communication*, 30, 198-203.

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP). (2016). "A Call To Action: Insights Into The Status of Funding For Indigenous Women's Groups," <https://internationalfunders.org/a-call-to-action-insights-into-the-status-of-funding-for-indigenous-womens-groups-2/> and on file with author.

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP). (2014). "Grantmaker's Guide: Strengthening International Indigenous Philanthropy," <https://internationalfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Grantmakers-Guide-updated-2014.pdf> and on file with author.

Jeffredo-Warden, Louise V. (1999). "Perceiving, Experiencing, and Expressing the Sacred: An Indigenous Southern California View," in *Over The Edge: Remapping the American West*, eds. Valerie Matsumoto and Black Allmendinger, University of California Press, 329-338.

Jewell, Eva. (Forthcoming, 2018) "Gimaadaasamin (we are accounting for the people): quantitative methods in Deshkan Ziiibiing," presented at NAISA 2018.

Lee, Damien. (2011). "Windigo Faces: Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations

Serving Canadian Colonialism." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 31(2), 133-153.

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2011). "Challenging 'extinction' through modern Miami language practices," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 35(2), 135-160.

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2017). "Producing language reclamation by decolonising 'language,'" *Language Documentation and Description*, eds Wesley Y. Leonard & Haley De Korne, 14, EL Publishing: London, 15-36

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2008). "When Is an 'Extinct Language' Not Extinct?: Miama, A Formerly Sleeping Language," *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity : Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties* , eds. Kendall A. King, Natalie Schilling-Estes, Jia Jackie Lou, Lyn Fogle, Barbara Soukup , Georgetown University Press, 23-33.

Lyons, Scott. (2010). *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

-- (2011). "Actually Existing Indian Nations Modernity, Diversity, and the Future of Native American Studies," *The American Indian Quarterly*, Volume 35(3), 294-312.

McCarty, Teresa L, Sheilah E. Nicholas, Kari A.B. Chew, Natalie G. Diaz, Wesley L. Leonard, and Louellyn White. (2018). "Hear Our Languages, Hear Our Voices: Storywork as Theory and Praxis in Indigenous-Language Reclamation," *Daedalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 147(2), 160-172.

Macri, Martha and James Sarmento. (2010). "Respecting privacy: Ethical and pragmatic considerations," *Language and Communication* 3(30), 192-197.

Manriquez, L. Frank. (2002). "There Are Other Ways of Getting Tradition," *Museum Anthropology* 24, nos. 2/3, 41.

Meek, Barbra A. 2010. *We are our language: An ethnography of language revitalization in a Northern Athabaskan community*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Meissner, Shelbi Nahwilet and Kyle Powys Whyte. (2018). "Theorizing Indigeneity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism," *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Race*, eds. Paul C. Taylor, Linda Martín Alcoff, Luvel Anderson, 152-167.

Meissner, Shelbi Nahwilet. (2018). "The Moral Fabric of Linguicide: Un-weaving Trauma Narratives and Dependency Relationships in Indigenous Language Reclamation," *Journal of Global Ethics*, In Press.

Miranda, Deborah A. (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen Nation, Chumash). 2010. "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16(1-2): 253-84.

- Morgan, Mindy. (2009). *The Bearer of This Letter: Language Ideologies, Literacy Practices, and the Fort Belknap Indian Community*, University of Nebraska Press.
- Muehlmann, Shaylih. (2008). "'Spread Your Ass Cheeks': and Other Things That Should Not Be Said In Indigenous Languages," *American Ethnologist*, 35(1), 34-48.
- Million, Dian. (2013). *Therapeutic Nations*, (University of Arizona Press: Tucson).
- Mikaere, Annie. (1994). "Māori women: Caught in the contradictions of a colonised reality." *Waikato L. Rev.*, 2.
- Nakaso, Dan. (Feb 2018). "Waimanalo land lease offers possible solution for Waianae homeless camp," Honolulu Star Advertiser, <http://www.staradvertiser.com/2018/02/18/hawaii-news/waimanalo-land-lease-offers-possible-solution-for-waianae-homeless-camp/>
- Peña, Gabriel Jiménez. (2015). "Is Development a Form of Neo-Colonialism?," *Dialéctica*, 7, 36-42.
- Ranco, Darren J., Catherine A. O'Neill, et al. (2011). "Environmental Justice, American Indians and the Cultural Dilemma," *Environmental Justice* 4(4), 221-230.
- Rappaport, Joanne. (1994) "Object and Alphabet: An Andean Indian and Documents in the Colonial Period". In: Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo (eds.) *Writing without Words. Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*. London: Duke University Press, pp. 271-292
- Rasmussen, Derek, and Tommy Akulukjuk. (2009). "My Father was Told to Talk to the Environment First Before Anything Else: Arctic Environmental Education in the Language of the Land." In *Fields of Green: Restorying Culture, Environment, and Education*, edited by Marcia McKenzie, Paul Hart, Heesoon Bai and Bob Jickling, 285-298. Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Rifkin, Mark. (2010). *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Schuler, Timothy (2018). "The Future of Honolulu Depends on Its Parks: Public parks have emerged as battlegrounds in the city's response to a changing climate and a growing housing crisis. Could they also hold the solutions?" *Next City*, <https://nextcity.org/features/view/the-future-of-honolulu-depends-on-its-parks>
- Searle, John. (2008). "Proper Names." *Mind* 67, 166-173.
- Shaw, Patricia A. 2001. Language and identity, language and the land. *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly* 131, 39-55.
- Simpson, Leanne. (2011) *Dancing on our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation*,

Resurgence, and a New Emergence. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Press.

Simpson, Leanne. (2013). *Islands of Decolonial Love*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

Simpson, Leanne. (2014). "Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3(3), 1-25.

Smith, Andrea. (2011). "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, Eds. Qwo-Li Driskell, Chris Finley et al, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 43-65.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (2012; 2nd Edition) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books.

Scheyvens, Waitoa and Warren, (2015) "E-Whanaungatanga: The role of social media in Māori political empowerment," *ALTERNative* 11(1), 45-58.

Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples. (2018). "About Us," <http://www.7genfund.org/about-us> and on file with author.

Thorpe, Kirsten and Monica Galassi. (2014). "Rediscovering Indigenous Languages: The Role and Impact of Libraries and Archives in Cultural Revitalisation," *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 45(2), 81-100.

Tuck, Eve and K. Yang. (2012). "Decolonization is Not A Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1).

VICE News. (2017). "Hawaiian Sovereignty," *RISE* S1E7.
https://www.viceland.com/en_us/video/hawaiian-sovereignty/5888c9e9617e8f2d5c71fae3

Villazor, Rose Cuison. (2008). "Blood Quantum Land Laws and the Race versus Political Identity Dilemma," *California Law Review*, 96(3), 801-838.

Vizenor, Gerald. (1994). *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln

Watkins, Joe. (2005). "Through Wary Eyes: Indigenous Perspectives on Archaeology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34. 429-49.

Wilson, Shawn. (2008). *Research is Ceremony*. Fernwood Publishing.

Wyman, Leisy, Teresa McCarty and Sheilah Nicolas. (2013). *Indigenous Youth and Multilingualism Language Identity, Ideology, and Practice in Dynamic Cultural Worlds*, (Routledge: New York.)

Whyte, Kyle. (2013). "On The Role of Traditional Ecological knowledge as a collaborative concept: A philosophical Study," *Ecological Processes*, 2(7).

Whyte, Kyle (2016a). "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do For Indigenous Peoples?" *Keepers of the Green World: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Sustainability*. Edited by M.K. Nelson and D. Shilling. Cambridge University Press

Whyte, Kyle (2016b). "Indigenous Experience, Environmental Justice, and Settler Colonialism," *Nature and Experience: Phenomenology and the Environment*, ed. B. Bannon, Rowman & Littlefield, 157-174.

CHAPTER 2: 'World'-Traveling By Tule Canoe



Figure 2: Tule canoe basket pattern.

Introduction

As a pushing off point, I begin with an example from an epistolary exchange between Derek Rasmussen and his cousin-colleague Tommy Akulukjuk “compiled from their conversations, e-mails and telephone calls over the past 2 years” and published as a book chapter in 2008 (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 279). Akulukjuk explains that when he is asked to translate the weather forecast from the English-language news program for his father, who only speaks Inuktitut, his translation is somewhat possible, but mostly inadequate. The ontoepistemic protocols associated with Inuktitut require that Akulukjuk tag his weather report as coming from the television, “an electronic item, which gives us an impersonal and such a fake feeling for the world” and that the weather is unwelcome by the newscasters, since they “only welcome the weather when it is going to be sunny and warm, and they are usually negative about it when that doesn’t happen” (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 282). These translations into Inuktitut, Rasmussen claims, are not really Inuktitut. These translations are “just a transfer of English into Inuktitut phrases and sounds” (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 283). He asks: “Is it really Inuktitut, do they really capture the language and the feeling of what is being said?” (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 283).

Responding to Akulukjuk, Rasmussen writes: “...it’s funny how governments never seem short of money to translate from English into Inuktitut, to ‘help’ equip Inuktitut conceptually to describe economics and technology—money for translating ‘important’ words from English into Inuktitut—words like *satellite*, *computer*, and *accounting*”

(Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 284). Here, Rasmussen notes that there is a deficiency-model at play in the ways Indigenous languages are approached by Canadian cultural agencies. According to dominant logics, Indigenous languages are missing something that can just be plugged into a formula and output as an Inuktitut concept. But this deficiency-model does not work the other-way around. Rasmussen continues: "...and yet I am not aware of a single government dollar going into translating Inuktitut into English (to try to illustrate/illuminate the beauty and the uniqueness of it), or of a single program to celebrate the breadth and utility of Inuktitut to Inuit and European Canadians" (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 284). Rasmussen depicts the unsurprising imperialistic language practices of English-speaking Canadian agencies, but also implies that translation of Inuktitut into English is not only possible, doing so might be useful to both Inuit and European Canadians communities alike. Akulukjuk and Rasmussen actually appear to be offering very different commitments to incommensurability, or untranslatability, between worlds.

Rasmussen gives words like "kayak" and "igloo" as examples of borrowed word/concepts from Inuktitut in relatively wide circulation in English, but goes on to ask "what other Inuktitut terms and concepts might enrich our understanding of the world, if only we chose to ask?" (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 284). Here, Rasmussen doubles down on the possibility and potential of borrowing terms and translating between worlds, and the usefulness it holds for settler communities. Akulukjuk responds, with a note of what sounds like caution, writing:

Inuktitut captures what the nature has said to Inuit. Even what seems to be a simple word in Inuktitut is so difficult to translate into English. A word like kajjarniq. Kajjarniq means 'to reflect positively about our surroundings.' We usually use that word when we like the weather. And because people like all sorts of weather, we say kajjarniq to refer to different kinds of weather. It can even refer to indoors, when people experience what they remember and have that positive outlook on it. I guess it's like nostalgia. (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 285).

I read Akulukjuk's translation of "kajjarniq" as intentionally vague and self-aware of its inadequacy to capture the meaning of "kajjarniq." He trails off and likens the meaning of the word to a feeling like nostalgia. However, in the print version of Akulukjuk's translation there is a footnote. In the footnote, there is a long note from an elder and community leader named Joanasie Akumalik spliced into the essay, a small excerpt of what the elder writes reads:

I have to disagree with Tommy with his attempt to explain '*Kajjaanaqtuq*.' This word encompasses so many meanings. I agree that it's to reflect positively but it goes beyond that. It touches your inner soul thereby providing serenity to one's self. Have you ever got up in the early morning by yourself and felt serene? The twilight, the slowness of things starting to move, the place you are in, hear the clock . . . I cannot translate it.

This exchange is likely familiar to other Indigenous readers. I myself have had countless identical exchanges: a few youngins (one of which is usually me) start to wax philosophical about our traditional knowledge systems and suddenly an elder pops in to drop some serious wisdom, pops back out just as quickly, and leaves us all swimming in thought. In my experience, these exchanges often take place around the language table, in intergenerational language reclamation spaces, and consist in (usually friendly, but sometimes not) disagreements about whether or not a translation is accurate, or whether or not translation is even possible. What are often at stake in these conversations are the prospects for our communities to build relationships and coalitions with outsiders or to form common goals around projects like climate justice, reconciliation, or how to live together in the world in a good way. As gestured to above in the exchange between Rasmussen and Akulukjuk, there are several views of incommensurability present in Indigenous philosophies of language.

In what follows, I will outline some key components of Indigenous philosophies of language, with special attention to the relationships between language and knowledge and the implications of these relationships for incommensurability. I will outline two views of

incommensurability expressed in Indigenous philosophies of language, and describe the challenges posed by these forms of incommensurability for 'world'-traveling. Indigenous communities' views on incommensurability should be of serious importance to feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists concerned with coalition-building, solidarity, and contending with epistemic violence and oppression.

Some Key Concepts In Indigenous Philosophies of Language

Indigenous theorists and language reclamation activists posit a diverse range of views regarding the connections between Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous languages, many of which I am not able to detail here. The thoughts, worries, and methods of practitioners of Indigenous language work are not mere preferences or language ideologies, they are expressions of Indigenous philosophies regarding the very nature of language and should be treated as such (Leonard 2017, McCarty et al 2018). I have organized the following section around just four lines of thought regarding the sort of hermeneutical resources language functions as in the accounts of knowledge offered by Indigenous theorists and language activists. Each of these lines of thought are interconnected in a way that is betrayed by the separations of section headings, but for ease of explication, I have isolated each into distinct topics to illustrate a range of key concepts.

Indigenous Languages' Link With Land

In Luiseño and Cupeño conceptions of language, it is common to hear that the land is in the language – that if one listens carefully, one can hear the land within each piece of the language. This is a somewhat literal sentiment, since I have heard elders say, for example, that the word for frog “waxáwkila” comes from the sound the frog makes, just like the word for coastal live oak “wi'áaʃal” sounds like the coastal mountain wind rustling through the branches of the oak tree. This sentiment may also hold a slightly less literal meaning, as

Louise V. Jeffredo-Warden implies when she explains that being on the land where her ancestors spoke her language gives a profound 'sense' to her language (Jeffredo-Warden 1999). Rasmussen and Akulukjuk write that "in Nunavut, the land speaks Inuktitut. What I mean is that the land (and sea) evolved a language to communicate with (and *through*) human beings, namely an indigenous language that naturally 'grew' in that area over thousands of years of interaction between the elements and the human and plant and animal beings" (2008, p. 279). Akulukjuk describes the Inuktitut mode of reporting the weather "reading" the land, interpreting the land in the land's language (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 284). In Luiseño and Cupeño cosmologies, animals have their own languages, and some of our songs and prayers are in their languages. In other Indigenous cosmologies, mountains, stones, and rocks have knowledge and languages as well (Deloria 1988, Cajete 2000).

Indigenous Languages Are Infused With Spirituality, Governance-Value, and Communal Responsibilities

Some Indigenous theorists conceive of Indigenous knowledge/language systems themselves as animate, not in a metaphorical sense, but as living, dynamic forces, infused with spirit that must be tended to and cared for (Bastien 2004, Noodin 2014, Leonard 2017). As Whyte (2016) argues, Indigenous knowledges have governance value in Indigenous communities; on views where language and knowledge are closely linked, it stands to reason that Indigenous languages, too, have governance value. Knowledges about gender, clan structures, animacy, and kinship are imbedded in Indigenous languages, all of which factor heavily into governance structures.

Jeffredo-Warden (1999) describes a feature of the Luiseño language, the ceremonial couplet, which refers to two words in our language which always appear together, usually in songs and prayers. Relationality, our responsibilities to one another, are imbedded in

this couplet and we are reminded of it in songs. Jeffredo-Warden (1999) apparently asked our elder what it means if you separate the ceremonial couplets. Mrs. Hyde responded that if you separate them, “you’re not making sense” (Jeffredo-Warden 1999). Jeffredo-Warden takes this profound sense or deep relationality to connect to both the question: “Who before me also stood here to contemplate this place?” and the overwhelming feeling of being home in one’s homeland. Language, knowledge, relationality, and land are connected in these ceremonial couplets. Importantly, humans, alive and walked on, are not the only holders of knowledge in Luiseño cosmology; we learn from the First Ones, the knowers that come before us, the “insects, animals, mountains, hills, valleys, rocks, minerals, plants, trees, sands, soils, and waters” (Jeffredo-Warden 1999). The land is full of knowers and knowledge and has its own languages, the overwhelming sense that fills up those with fluency, those who are at home in their homelands, and responsible to all of creation that surrounds them.

Betty Bastien (2004) describes Blackfoot ways of knowing, noting that Niipaitapiiyssin, the Blackfoot language, contains within it an ethical system that includes the responsibilities of all creation to maintain balance and unity. On Bastien’s account, Blackfoot knowledge contains within it complex networks of governance, kinship, spirit, and responsibility that cannot be accommodated by English. Similarly, Tommy Akulukjuk describes the respect that is imbedded within Inuktitut, writing that the language “commands” him to relate to the land and all living things in a particular way (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, 289). He writes, “Inuktitut made sure that I care for the trees and grass and bees and insects” and that “the respect the language teaches is inseparable from your own personal surroundings” (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, 289).

There Are Protocols For the Proper Exchange of Indigenous Languages

Indigenous language activists often focus on epistemic protocols that are practiced in Indigenous gathering spaces. These protocols protect speakers from being exploited, but also protect listeners, be they children, spirits, or the land, from having knowledge imposed upon them irresponsibly. Hester and Cheney (2001) describe knowledge exchange among Choctaw communities as a process tethered to responsibility and accountability, giving examples of several words that act as ‘tags’ to show how a speaker came upon a particular type of knowledge. These ‘tags’ also occur in Luiseño storytelling. One often begins a Luiseño story by using a kuná tag, which signifies that one is telling a story that was once told to them. It is often translated as “reportedly” or “allegedly,” but I’ve noticed that in English, this translation carries the connotation that one does not fully believe the claim or that the claim is suspicious. In Luiseño, “kuná” does not carry that connotation; rather, it’s part of an epistemic accountability protocol that simply expresses the way the speaker came to be able to tell this story. Other Indigenous cosmologies also have linguistic tags for how one comes to know particular stories and songs, whether or not one is ‘allowed’ to relate a story, and whether or not it is the appropriate season for a particular story (Hester and Cheney 2001, Cushman 2013, Withey 2015).

Because of these sorts of epistemic protocols, many Indigenous communities have expressed apprehension at methods of recording knowledge (Withey 2015, O’Neal 2015, Innes 2012, Thorpe and Galassi 2014). Some Indigenous archivists are concerned about the potential for spirit violence to travel through recordings, since the proper knowledge exchange protocols sometimes cannot be heeded. Pamela Innes (2009) has published on this topic, noting that for the protection of community members who engage with Indigenous language archives, context-rich metadata should be included in any corpus or archive that details knowledge-exchange protocols undertaken in the collection of certain

language resources. Within many Indigenous communities, certain teachings are shared at certain points in a person's life stage ceremonies. When someone has knowledge imposed upon them, or for particular periods of mourning, there are also protocols for un-knowing or forgetting.

Some Indigenous theorists argue that Indigenous languages and knowledges must be protected from outsiders, and have cultivated Indigenous-led archiving spaces (Christen 2008; 2011). Others who believe Indigenous knowledges should not be shared with outsiders insist on practicing oral tradition and only share traditional knowledge in face-to-face exchanges where protocols can be ensured. Debenport (2015) writes about an Indigenous community she has worked with who see such strong relationships between their language and their ceremonial practices, that they do not want their language written down or circulated at all. However, this community does allow, according to Debenport (2015), for linguists to translate some words and concepts from their language into English and for those translated concepts to be circulated.

Language and Knowledge are Interwoven

The connections between language, land, governance, responsibility, and community in Indigenous philosophies illuminate that language and knowledge are interwoven in ways that are difficult if not impossible to separate. Language, very rarely, in Indigenous contexts refers to the morphological abstract entity constituted by phonemes and grammar; rather, language is a complex, socially constituted system of relating to one another that changes radically depending on context. Context here is not simply situational in terms of which speakers and audience members are present and what their relationships are like; language in many communities is a way of relating to the land, and may even come directly from the land; it is infused with protocols and acknowledgments of relationships.

In some Indigenous communities, especially in the context of language reclamation, it is not uncommon to hear sentiments like “when language dies, our knowledge dies with it.” Indigenous language activists like Wesley Leonard (2008, 2011) have posed important challenges to the promotion of terminal narratives like this one, conveying that as long as Indigenous people exist, our languages cannot die, be lost, or disappear, because we cannot preclude the possibility that someday our languages will be awakened and reclaimed by us or those who come after us. In addition to complicating terminal narratives of language loss, Indigenous language activists also discourage the propagation of myths of authenticity or purity that render Indigenous languages and cultures inadequate if ‘mixed’ in any way (Leonard 2008, 2011; Tuck and Yang 2012, Hinton and Ahlers 1999). In some cases, it seems possible that proponents of the sentiment “when language dies, our knowledge dies with it” are challenging Leonard’s condemnation of terminal narratives, or cleverly taking up a terminal narrative in order to fire up urgency in language learners and would-be funders of language reclamation project. In many cases, however, I believe these sentiments are intended to express a different idea altogether.

Language activists like Betty Bastien (2004) and Jeffredo-Warden (1999) sometimes take on what initially sound like terminal narratives to express that Indigenous languages and Indigenous knowledge systems are so intimately interwoven that they cannot be separated from one another nor can they be translated into English. This is a hardcore view of incommensurability between cultural worlds, but it need not imply any loyalty to myths of purity or terminality. Different in important ways from theorists like Bastien and Jeffredo-Warden, some proponents of incommensurability do not seem to believe that it is impossible to translate between languages, rather, they simply refuse to do so (Kirwan and Treuer 2009). And finally, there are several Indigenous theorists who offer views of another sort of incommensurability between worlds in which it is very, very difficult to

translate between worlds, but it is not impossible or unacceptable. There are also likely Indigenous theorists who do not see any sort of incommensurability between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds, but these views are beyond the scope of this essay.

Incommensurability

Indigenous philosophies of language draw very strong connections between language and knowledge, as is detailed in the co-constituted and inseparable network of relations detailed above between language, land, knowledge, governance, and communal responsibility. In addition to drawing very strong connections between language and knowledge, some Indigenous philosophies of language are also committed to the existence of incommensurability between worlds. In the following sections, I will expand upon two types of incommensurability that emerge from Indigenous philosophies of language and their implications for coalition-building; in the penultimate section, I will address useful ways to reframe world-traveling.

A quick note on why and to whom incommensurability matters: Feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists engaged in conversations about epistemic violence, epistemic oppression, and coalitional projects posit multiple-knowledge models of the world that overlap significantly with Indigenous theorists' descriptions of the world. Many feminist epistemologists and women of color⁸ thinkers describe the world as one consisting of multiple knowledge systems that emerge from different communities of knowers (e.g. Lugones 1987; Sullivan and Tuana 2007; Dotson 2013, 2012; Cherrie Moraga 1983; Beverly 1995). The multiple knowledge systems, or 'worlds,' as Maria Lugones refers to them, are affected, constituted, or reformed by power structures like patriarchy, racism,

⁸ A note on "women of color": I myself identify as a woman of color. Some Indigenous people choose not to be identified as such. I interpret the identity-marker "woman of color" to signify a political commitment to intersectional liberation. I draw a distinction in this paper between women of color and Indigenous theorists for explanatory ease, to refer to particular lines of discourse, which often overlook one another to mutual detriment, not because I consider the political commitments of intersectional liberation to be inherently separate project from Indigenous liberation (though some Indigenous theorists do).

and imperialism. Because knowledge systems are so deeply linked with power structures, in detailing their accounts of multiple knowledge systems, these theorists often also offer accounts of epistemic violence, or, when one epistemic community compromises the participation in knowledge creation or maintenance of another (e.g. Dotson 2012;2013, Ortega 2006, Pohlhaus 2012, Bailey 2007). Many of the projects concerned with epistemic violence draw solutions from Maria Lugones' conception of 'world'-traveling (Moraga 2006, Dotson 2013).

Maria Lugones describes knowledge systems that emerge from particular epistemic communities as "worlds" (Lugones 1987). Worlds, for Lugones, are onto-epistemic spaces of perception that demarcate different organizations of life. Some worlds, like those of white Americans, are full of "agon, conquest, and arrogance," and are dismissive of, if not entirely ignorant of, other worlds (Lugones 1987, p. 17). Arrogant perception, a failure to identify with women and people of color, is a dominant mode of perceiving within white American worlds (Lugones 1987). Women of color in the U.S. are participants in multiple worlds, in some of which they feel 'at home', and in some of which they are treated as subjects of arrogant perception. Lugones encourages traveling between worlds playfully, without self-importance, while being open to construction, learning, or being made a fool (1987). The world-traveling described by Lugones is done in a mode that differs greatly from the agonistic, colonial, epistophilic projects of Western epistemology (Townley 2006). World-traveling is not just the superficial, theoretical engagement of reading or citing the work of other women who a world-traveller may want to know; rather, it is an embodied practice that seeks out "actual" "flesh and blood" experiences. (Ortega 2006, p. 69). Ortega writes:

'World'-traveling has to do with actual experience; it requires a tremendous commitment to practice: to actually engage in activities where one will experience what others experience... learn people's language in order to understand them better not to use it against them; to really listen to people's interpretations however different they are from one's own; and to see people as worthy of respect rather

than helpless beings that require help” (Ortega 2006, p. 69).

Dotson (2013) interprets world-traveling to require that we recognize and “appreciate genuine differences, of which alternative hermeneutical resources are an example,” noting that alternative hermeneutical resources are “very difficult to access” (35). Ruíz writes “engaging in advocacy discourses aimed at achieving material benefits for concrete individuals and communities is ... a critical part of feminist liberatory projects and feminist of color theorizing” (Ruíz 422). World traveling requires some degree of commensurability in the accounts of feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists, and as such, it is important to investigate the challenges to world-traveling posed by incommensurability.

*Impassable Incommensurability: Big Water Through A Rock Garden*⁹

Impassable incommensurability is the view that Indigenous worlds, knowledges, and languages are intricately linked to one another and onto-epistemologically distinct from other worlds such that they cannot be translated, transposed, or expressed in other languages or by outsiders. Theorists and activists who express this view often draw very strong connections between language and knowledge systems, and show concern about changes being made to Indigenous languages. When canoeing a river, a rock garden is a part of the river where large, smooth, river-worn boulders obstruct the river. When the water level is very high, or ‘big,’ from flooding, and moving rapidly through a rock garden, the river is impassable. Like big water through a rock garden, this form of incommensurability poses important challenges for the concept of world-traveling.

Some of the Indigenous language activists and theorists above describe total incommensurability between Indigenous worlds/languages and non-Indigenous worlds/languages, specifically English. In the exchange between Rasmussen and Akulukjuk (2008), the elder who enters the conversation in the footnote, Akumalik, expresses a view

⁹ Nosúun lóoviq to my colleague Jared Talley for his help transforming canoe concepts into English-canoe-discourse.

of impassable incommensurability when he corrects Akulukjuk and says that “kajjaanaqtuq” cannot be translated. It’s not just that this particular word doesn’t have a correlate in English, it’s that the very nature of Inuktitut disallows for translation (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008). Akulukjuk, though he does attempt to translate “kajjaanaqtuq,” still offers a view of impassable incommensurability, insinuating that when he tries to translate English to Inuktitut, what is generated is not real Inuktitut (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008). Jeffredo-Warden (199) alludes to the un-expressability of the sacred in English, while attempting to explain the ceremonial couplets of the Luiseño songs, stories, and prayers. Jeffredo-Warden (1999) borrows wording from our elder Mrs. Hyde, expressing in the only way that she can, that one simply fails to “make sense” if one were to separate the ceremonial couplets. Betty Bastien (2004) argues that the ways of knowing connected to English make it impossible for Blackfoot thought to be translated into it. The English language, according to Bastien, is infused with binaries, like the separation of mind and body, and teleological processes that presuppose linearity and narratives of ‘progress.’ Translating Blackfoot thought into English is a violent process that strips Blackfoot thought of meaning. Roger Spielmann, adopting a terminal narrative of Indigenous languages, writes: “If a person loses his or her language, lost also are the ideas and culture-specific ways of relating to each other,” implying that these modes of relating to one another and the land cannot be translated into English (Spielmann 1998, p. 239).

This hardcore form of incommensurability is linked to what is believed about the hermeneutical resources of the English-speaking world. Each of the theorists above describe limitations of the metaphysics associated with colonial language, like hard binaries, absolute divisions between nouns and verbs, and the abstract (disembodied, untethered to land and community) nature of the language. Indigenous philosophers have theorized the limitations of the hermeneutic resources broadly associated with Western

modes of knowing and colonial languages. Cordova (2007) describes the knowledge systems that emerge from communities as 'matrices.' For Cordova, some matrices, like those of her own Indigenous communities, are self-aware and reflexive, acknowledging the knowledge systems of others noncompetitively. Western knowledge matrices, on the other hand, are not self-aware; rather, Cordova conceives of the Western mode of knowing as one that does not acknowledge acceptable alternatives and seeks to subsume or correct forms of life that diverge. Dian Million (2013) describes Western epistemic communities' knowledge systems as 'sociopolitical imaginaries' consisting in embodied practices and discursive content. Like Cordova, Million argues that the sociopolitical imaginaries of Western epistemologies contain discursive stereotypes and felt, affective knowledge that render Indigenous people as mere caricatures. Lee Hester and Jim Cheney (2001) describe Indigenous knowledge systems as 'maps' that correspond to the same terrain as Western 'maps,' but that do so in a different mode. Gerald Vizenor (1994) calls the practices of Western epistemologies 'manifest manners,' noting that Western epistemologies produce mere 'simulations' of Indians.

Proponents of impassable incommensurability describe the hermeneutic resources of Western epistemic communities as inflexible and unaccommodating of Indigenous experiences. Concepts captured in the English language cannot be re-captured in Indigenous languages on these views because they are metaphysically inconsistent. The rock garden of incommensurability in these cases is metaphysically un-traversable. This means that one cannot, no matter how well-intentioned they may be, travel into Indigenous spaces and epistemologies to "understand them better," if the traveller comes sailing with the trappings of dominant discourse.

In addition to the sentiments expressed by theorists like Bastien, Jeffedo-Warden, and Spielmann, there are other proponents of impassable incommensurability that spring

from different motivations. Because of the aforementioned abuses of outsiders and continued attempts of non-Indigenous research institutions to establish and maintain control of Indigenous language archives and reclamation programs, claims of radical incommensurability may serve an agenda of linguistic and epistemic sovereignty. Novelist Treuer says his characters' Ojibwe thoughts cannot be translated into English, but he expands this thought to include that even if the characters' thoughts could be translated, Treuer would refuse to translate them because he wants to defy the tropes of ethnography and the constant calls from settler society for the labor of translation (Treuer and Kirwan 2009). Treuer refuses to translate the Ojibwe language as an act of linguistic sovereignty. As Debenport (2015) describes, some communities exercise similar control over the transmission and translation of their languages by rejecting writing systems altogether. Debenport enacts a nuanced ethnographic methodology in which she does not include any written accounts of a particular Indigenous community's language, but she does give examples of translation into English. Whether or not this in itself is a violation of community knowledge transmitting protocols is up to that community, but Debenport's work certainly offers an example of an attempted strategic assertion of incommensurability that works to undo the expectations set by ethnographic modes.

This form of impassable incommensurability might be better described as *strategic* impassable incommensurability and the definition might differ from that offered to describe commitments about the metaphysics of English. Strategic impassable incommensurability is the view that Indigenous worlds, knowledges, and languages are intricately linked to one another and onto-epistemologically distinct from other worlds such that they *should not* be translated, transposed, or expressed in other languages or by outsiders. Audra Simpson (2007, 2014, 2017), Kim TallBear (2013), and Rachel Flowers (2015) theorize the politics of Indigenous refusal, a concept similar to strategic impassable

incommensurability. Simpson writes, “‘Refusal’ rather than recognition is an option for producing and maintaining alternative structures of thought, politics and traditions away from and in critical relationship to states” (Simpson 2017, p. 19). The refusal to translate or to play the role of a translator or guide is practicing radical departure from recognition-based politics, be they in the form of state-recognition or ethnographic recognition. Indigenous people who refuse to play these roles are producing or maintaining incommensurability as a mechanism for subverting a game in which settler society, in having Indigenous people translate, casts Indigenous people as having consented to their own oppression. Simpson writes that consent “operates as a technique of recognition and simultaneous dispossession” (Simpson 2017, p. 18). In cases of refusal, the rock garden of incommensurability is un-traversable due to the refusal of would-be guides. The notion of a guide leads to another distinct sentiment regarding incommensurability expressed within Indigenous philosophies of language.

Incommensurability With Technical Passages: Heavy Water Through A Rock Garden

Incommensurability with technical passages is the view that Indigenous worlds, knowledges, and languages are intricately linked to one another and onto-epistemologically different from other worlds such that they cannot be easily translated, transposed, or expressed in other languages or by outsiders. With careful navigation, the hermeneutic resources of different worlds can be modified to accommodate Indigenous thought. Theorists who express this view describe flexibility within dominant discursive tools that allows for the accommodation of non-dominant experiences. Sometimes a portion of a river where a rock garden has emerged is navigable in heavy water, but only with expert guidance. The path through the rock garden is called a ‘technical passage,’ and one only knows a technical passage if one has spent a lifetime traveling them or is taught by someone who has. Like heavy water through a rock garden, incommensurability with

technical passages is only navigable with expert guidance. This form of incommensurability poses important challenges for world-traveling in that it requires dangerous labor from marginalized knowers.

This form of incommensurability is expressed by Rasmussen initial exchange where he asks “what other Inuktitut terms and concepts might enrich our understanding of the world, if only we chose to ask?” (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 284). Here, Rasmussen seems to suggest that with careful guidance from Inuktitut speakers, Inuktitut terms and concepts can be introduced into settler worldviews, which could “enrich” their understandings of the world. Rasmussen also views translation from English into Inuktitut as possible and unproblematic, though he expresses frustration with the tendency for Canadian agencies to propagate the idea that Indigenous world views need to be ‘corrected’ by creating concepts for things like “computers and time-clocks” (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 284). Rasmussen is not specific about the types of skills required to produce accurate translations, but maintains that translation is possible in some cases.

Scholars working in Two-Spirit and Indigenous queer discourses are doing the hard work of locating and restoring traditional conceptions of gender, sexuality, and kinship. This process is one of translation that requires patience, skill, and profound connections to communal responsibilities. Deborah Miranda, for example, engages in painful memory work with the Harrington archives in which she must weed through the violent hermeneutical resources of the colonial Spanish era and through Harrington’s notes in order to find fieldnotes pertaining to Southern California third gender lifeways. In reforming the English language to accommodate the concepts Miranda is attempting to translate, she and other Two-Spirit Indians often turn to poetry. Quoting Janice Gould, Miranda writes, “the work that indigenous women poets ... do in grieving, honoring, and writing our historical losses [is] ‘a resurrection of history through writing. . . . This writing, I

would say, amounts almost to an act of exhumation.”” (Miranda 2010, 276).

Nicole Latulippe (2015) provides an outstanding and helpful typology of resource management and environmental sciences literatures pertaining to traditional knowledges (TK), classifying the scholarship into four dynamic categories: ecological, critical, relational, and collaborative. Each of these modes carries with it its own insights as well as risks during collaboration (Latulippe 2015, p. 120). On Latulippe’s model, critical and relational approaches “tend to emphasize fundamental differences between [Western and Indigenous] knowledge systems;” these views also seem to attribute impassable forms of incommensurability between Indigenous epistemologies and non-Indigenous epistemologies (Latulippe 2015, p. 125). Ecological and optimistic approaches, on the other hand, “celebrate [Indigenous and Western epistemologies’] similarities, or at least their potential for symmetry” (Latulippe 2015, p. 125) On Latulippe’s model, ecological and optimistic approaches generate views more akin to incommensurability with technical passages or views that do not see incommensurability at all between Indigenous epistemologies and non-Indigenous epistemologies.

Latulippe offers examples of ecological and optimistic projects like those of Kyle Whyte and Robin Kimmerer, noting that these projects approach the sharing of traditional knowledge as “a means of creating long-term processes to facilitate cross-cultural and cross-situational collaboration” (Latulippe 2015, p. 125; Whyte 2013, Kimmerer 2002). Latulippe writes that these projects, though optimistic, are critical in that they “[focus] on the political, legislative, institutional, and policy transformations needed to facilitate empowered forms of collaboration” (Latulippe 2015, p. 125) Kimmerer and Whyte offer projects that seem to see translation as possible with expert guidance and ideal conditions, some of those ideal conditions being commitments to ontological pluralism and mutual respect from both parties (Latulippe 2015, Whyte 2013, Kimmerer 2002).

Proponents of views of incommensurability with technical passages endorse creativity and optimism, which at first blush might appear to be positive spins on coalition-building, but poetry and optimism are also dangerous labor required from marginalized knowers in the translation process. Technical passages through the rock garden are only known by Indigenous knowers, and in these circumstances, Indigenous knowers, technical passages, and Indigenous worlds are in a position to be exploited by reckless world-travellers.

In the following section, I hope to gesture at some ways of framing respectful world-traveling in light of the incommensurability expressed in Indigenous philosophies of language. Taking incommensurability seriously need not halt the goals of preventing epistemic violence, though it may add important caveats to how we go about seeking those ends.

Some Concluding Thoughts: Navigating Incommensurability

I am the great, great, great, granddaughter of tule canoe builders.
'atáaxum//Luiseño people built tule canoes and used them to engage in a praxis of visiting. Luiseño people visited our cousins throughout the river systems and up and down the coastline of what is now called "California." We made frequent pilgrimages to the sacred islands of Kíimki Haraasa to visit with the kíikatum. While my generation is engaged in the reclamation of this visiting praxis, I often wonder how my ancestors encountered so many different communities with so many different epistemologies and languages and did so in a good way? How can we engage in 'world'-traveling, literal and figurative, with pomsúun lóoviq//good hearts?

Tommy Akulukjuk seems to have answers to very similar question when he writes of traveling the world with his language:

Inuktitut made sure that I care for the trees and grass and bees and insects of the south even though our language is not really made for the southern climate, but the respect the language teaches is inseparable from your own personal surroundings

so I felt I had no choice but love the environment given me. My language is so respectful that I learnt to respect every other race and being on this earth, no matter what they have done. (Rasmussen and Akulukjuk 2008, p. 289)

Akulukjuk writes that his language is intricately connected to a way of being in relation with the world. He treats his land-based language as a guide for how to relate to other communities, even those physically and onto-epistemologically distant from his own, knowing full well there are other ways of being in the world. Akulukjuk's depiction of his language mirror Cordova's depiction of Indigenous matrices, as self-aware and reflexive, acknowledging the knowledge systems of others noncompetitively. Akulukjuk and Cordova's accounts also mirror Lugones' depiction of playful world-traveling, as being conducted without self-importance, open to being constructed, learning, or being made a fool.

Below I have gathered together some concluding thoughts, pulling guidance for responsible world-traveling from Indigenous philosophies of language, feminist epistemologists, and women of color theorists. Taking incommensurability seriously need not halt the goals of preventing epistemic violence, though it may add important caveats to how we go about seeking those ends. Incommensurability and refusal can be generative (Simpson 2007, 2014, 2017; TallBear 2013; Flowers 2015).

We should be cognizant that not all worlds are open

Some Indigenous philosophies of language posit strong views of incommensurability, some of which are tied to dominant discourse's infusion of binaries, like the separation of mind and body, and teleological processes that presuppose linearity and narratives of 'progress' (Bastien 2004). Other Indigenous philosophies of incommensurability spring from a politics of refusal (Audra Simpson 2007, 2014, 2017; Kim TallBear 2013; Rachel Flowers 2015). In both cases, incommensurability should be taken seriously and world-traveling should not be attempted. Acknowledging that not all worlds are open is an important step in being a respectful world-traveller. Flowers writes:

“As Indigenous peoples increasingly take up the politics of refusal, the settler too must demonstrate a willingness to be refused” (Flowers p. 24)

Dotson’s account of world-traveling, or acquiring trans-hermeneutical fluency through third-order changes, requires expertise, consent, and trust. She writes: “One’s motives must be assessed, an epistemic community willing to apprentice the perceiver must be located, and a relationship of trust must be built before one can even begin to learn a set of hermeneutical resources that follow from a given resistant epistemological position” (Dotson 35). Dotson’s account of world-traveling allows for the possibility that marginalized epistemic communities might refuse to translate, or even that translation might not be possible in some cases. Dotson also leaves open the possibility that epistemic exclusion might be warranted.

The prospect of closed worlds causes trouble for projects that see Indigenous languages and knowledge systems as sites of liberatory instruction. These views want to extract from Indigenous world views without centering our sovereignty or respecting our refusals. These views are not quite as obviously destructive as those that see Indigenous knowledges as mere supplements to Western knowledge systems as in Whyte (2013) and Latulippe (2015). Rather, these views often take the form of radical feminisms, queer critiques, anarchisms, and environmental philosophies that denounce Western paradigms. These projects attempt to model their liberatory projects off of instructions that have not been willingly shared by Indigenous communities (Rifkin 2010). Some feminist epistemology projects are committed to views that attribute ‘more objective’ knowledge to marginalized communities; respectful world-travellers acknowledge that not all knowledge, no matter how liberatory, is up for grabs.

Though not all worlds are open to world-travellers, coalitions can still be made with communities who have closed worlds. As Tuck and Yang note, “opportunities for solidarity

lie in what is incommensurable rather than what is common..." (2011, p. 28). Indigenous activists, including those who are from closed worlds, are often skilled at using colonially imposed resources to their own advantages. Marginalized groups, in virtue of their marginalization, often share the hermeneutic resources of the oppressor. Even if the hermeneutic resources of dominant discourse are inflexible, it seems possible that loose coalitions can be formed through dominant discourse. We can get out of our canoes and meet in the colonizer's language to advocate on each other's behalf without ever having visited each other's worlds. We can give each other the benefit of the doubt that we each are knowers and that my world is intact, whole, and beautiful, even if it is inaccessible to you. We can embrace a playful mode without ever going anywhere.

We can work together to re-tool dominant canoes

As Akulukjuk expresses above, some Indigenous philosophies of language posit that there are instructions for how to relate to the world imbedded within the languages we inherit from our communities. Theorists like Bastien describe that inside the English language there are instructions to approach the land as if it is an object over which Man is the master. Whether or not the English language is flexible enough to accommodate new modes of relating remains an open question, but most feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists will attest that there are serious problems with dominant logics. Alison Bailey (2007) describes the world as consisting of many knowledge systems and maintains that the dominant knowledge systems, white logics, must be "retooled." It is not just the case that white logics have built a faulty picture of the world, rather, the actual surveying methodology – the logics – for the construction of the picture is faulty and must be abandoned. If proponents of impassable incommensurability are taken seriously, a solution like Bailey's also requires the abandonment or radical re-tooling of colonial languages. Perhaps we see attempts at this work with the increasing use of 'they' as a gender-neutral

alternative to the binary enforced by “she” and “he” or in the increased use of “Chicanx” and “Latinx” among Spanish speakers. It is not clear that these ultimately small changes are chipping away at an entire hermeneutical network that refuses to see the limits of itself or recognize itself as imposed, but they may be radical sites of re-tooling.

For some proponents of incommensurability with technical passages, Indigenous languages are infused with spirituality, governance value, and connections to the land that makes them ideal vessels for containing Indigenous knowledges and for expressing the sacred (Jeffredo-Warden, Leonard quoting L. Frank Manriquez, 2017). With hard work, the hermeneutical resources of dominant epistemologies and dominant languages can be modified to accommodate concepts and ideas expressed easily in Indigenous languages. Indigenous theorists who utilize poetry and other creative uses of English are reforming language to act as a vessel that can contain their translations (Miranda 2010). Ruíz (2016) describes that language is constructed and maintained by the culturally powerful which manifests “some harms more visible than others,” meaning that those who are not part of the culturally powerful class experience violence that there are not interpretive tools ready-made to express (422). Speakers put into the position of having to make testimony in a space where there are no ready-made, collective interpretative resources to accommodate that testimony, according to Ruíz, are experiencing linguistic alterity. Ruíz emphasizes the agonizing difficulty of being un-interpretable and having no social power to make new interpretive resources salient. Respectful world-travellers, especially those from dominant social positions, can make Indigenous theorists’ reformations of dominant hermeneutical resources salient by reading and citing Indigenous theorists who generate poetry, theory, and tweets.

Tip your guide

As referenced above, the work of translating between worlds, of guiding travellers

through technical passages, can be agonizing and exhausting. Respectful world-travellers traversing heavy water with technical passages will note that the precious paths through the rock gardens are only known by Indigenous guides. Translating between worlds and leading travellers is dangerous, often life-threatening work for the guide. Guides should be listened to, respected, and compensated when possible. Again, respectful world-travellers, especially those from dominant social positions, have the power to make Indigenous theorists' reformations of dominant hermeneutical resources salient by reading and citing Indigenous theorists who generate poetry, theory, and tweets.

"World" and "fluency" are not metaphorical in many Indigenous spaces

Indigenous philosophies of language draw connections between knowledge, language, land, governance, responsibility, and community, and land that are not taken seriously in mainstream discourse. The connections illuminate that language and knowledge are interwoven in ways that are difficult if not impossible to separate. Language, very rarely, in Indigenous contexts refers to the morphological abstract entity constituted by phonemes and grammar; rather, language is a complex, socially constituted system of relating to one another that changes radically depending on context. Context here is not simply situational in terms of which speakers and audience members are present and what their relationships are like; language in many communities is a way of relating to the land and may even come directly from the land; it is infused with protocols and acknowledgments of relationships. Because language plays this important role in Indigenous cosmologies, experiencing fluency in a world is not a metaphor, nor is the sense of feeling 'at home' in one's world. When theorists "world" travel, they are often world-traveling too. This discourse takes place on stolen land, on land who speaks in languages some people are trying to listen to.

In this essay, I have attempted to outline some key components of Indigenous

philosophies of language, with special attention to the relationships between language and knowledge and the implications of these relationships for incommensurability. I have offered two views of incommensurability expressed in Indigenous philosophies of language, and described the challenges posed by these forms of incommensurability for 'world'-traveling. I conceive of 'world'-traveling throughout the essay by way of an extended metaphor, journeying a river aboard a tule canoe, a method of visiting practiced by my Luiseño and Cupeño ancestors and being reclaimed by my generation – and incommensurability as obstacles in the river. Indigenous communities' views on incommensurability should be of serious importance to feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists concerned with coalition-building, solidarity, and contending with epistemic violence and oppression. I hope to have shown that to take seriously the sentiments of Indigenous language activists and theorists requires a confrontation of the difficulties incommensurability raises for 'world'-traveling. Finally, I have offered a few considerations of the important overlap between feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists and the work of Indigenous theorists and gestured toward ways we might 'world'-travel in the rivers between incommensurate worlds without causing harm to one another.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bailey, Alison. (2007). "Strategic ignorance," In *Race and epistemologies of ignorance*, ed. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bastien, Betty. (2004) *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing*. University of Calgary Press.
- Cajete, Gregory. (2000). *Native Science*, Clear Light Publishers: Santa Fe, NM.
- Cushman, Ellen. (2013). "Wampum, Sequoyan, and Story: Decolonizing the Digital Archive," *College English*, 76(2), 115-135.
- Cordova, VF. (2007). *How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V. F. Cordova* Eds. Kathleen Dean Moore, Kurt Peters, Ted Jojola, and Amber Lacey, with a foreword by Linda Hogan. University of Arizona Press.
- Dotson, Kristie. (2012). "A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression," in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 33(1), 24-47.
- Dotson, Kristie. (2011). "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia*, 26(2), 236-257.
- Deloria, Vine. (1988). *Custer Died For Your Sins*, (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman).
- Flowers, Rachel. (2015). "Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women's Love and Rage," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 4(2), 32-49.
- Hester, Lee and Jim Cheney. (2001). "Truth and Native American epistemology," *Social Epistemology*, 15(4), 319-334.
- Hinton, Leanne and Jocelyn Ahlers. (1999). "The Issue of 'Authenticity' in California Language Restoration," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30(1):56-67.
- Innes, Pamela. (2010). "Ethical problems in archival research: Beyond accessibility," *Language and Communication*, 30, 198-203.
- Jeffredo-Warden, Louise V. (1999). "Perceiving, Experiencing, and Expressing the Sacred: An Indigenous Southern California View," in *Over The Edge: Remapping the American West*, eds. Valerie Matsumoto and Black Allmendinger, University of California Press, 329-338.
- Kirwan, Pdraig and David Treuer. (2009). "Language and Signs: An Interview with Ojibwe Novelist David Treuer," *Journal of American Studies*, 43(1), 71-88.

Kimmerer, Robin. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass. Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

Latulippe, Nicole. (2015) "Situating the Work: A Typology of Traditional Knowledge Literature," *Ngā Pae O Te Māramatanga/AlterNative*, 11(2) 118-132.

Lowell, John Bean and Katherine Siva Saubel. (1972). *Temalpakh: Cahuilla Indian Knowledge and Usage of Plants*. Malki Museum Press.

Lugones, Maria. (1987). "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception," *Hypatia* 2, no. 2,3-19.

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2008). "When Is an 'Extinct Language' Not Extinct?: Miama, A Formerly Sleeping Language," *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity : Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties* , eds. Kendall A. King, Natalie Schilling- Estes, Jia Jackie Lou, Lyn Fogle, Barbara Soukup , Georgetown University Press, 23-33.

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2011). "Challenging 'extinction' through modern Miami language practices," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 35(2), 135-160.

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2017). "Producing language reclamation by decolonising 'language,'" *Language Documentation and Description*, eds Wesley Y. Leonard & Haley De Korne, 14, EL Publishing: London, 15-36

Million, Dian. (2013). *Therapeutic Nations*, (University of Arizona Press: Tucson).

Miranda, Deborah A. (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen Nation, Chumash). 2010. "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16(1-2): 253-84.

McCarty, Teresa L, Sheilah E. Nicholas, Kari A.B. Chew, Natalie G. Diaz, Wesley L. Leonard, and Louellyn White. (2018). "Hear Our Languages, Hear Our Voices: Storywork as Theory and Praxis in Indigenous-Language Reclamation," *Daedalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 147(2), 160-172.

Noodin, Margaret. (2014), "Anishinabemowin: The Anishinaabe Language," *Bawaajimo*, Michigan State University Press.

Polhaus, Gaile Jr. (2012). "Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Toward a Theory of Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance," *Hypatia*, 27(4), 715-735.

Rasmussen, Derek, and Tommy Akulukjuk. (2009). "My Father was Told to Talk to the Environment First Before Anything Else: Arctic Environmental Education in the Language of the Land." In *Fields of Green: Restorying Culture, Environment, and Education*, edited by Marcia McKenzie, Paul Hart, Heesoon Bai and Bob Jickling, 285-298. Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

- Spielmann, Roger. (1998). *'You're So Fat!': Exploring Ojibwe Discourse*. University of Toronto Press.
- Sullivan, S., and N. Tuana. (2007). "Introduction." In *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, edited by S. Sullivan and N. Tuana, 1–10. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Thorpe, Kirsten and Monica Galassi. (2014). "Rediscovering Indigenous Languages: The Role and Impact of Libraries and Archives in Cultural Revitalisation," *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 45(2), 81-100.
- Tuck, Eve and K. Yang. (2012). "Decolonization is Not A Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1).
- Vizenor, Gerald. (1994). *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*. (Hanover, CT: Wesleyan UP).
- Ruíz, Elena. (2016). "Linguistic Alterity and the Multiplicitous Self: Critical Phenomenologies in Latina Feminist Thought," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 31(2), 421- 436.
- Simpson, Audra. (2007). "Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship." *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue*, no. 9: 67–80.
- Simpson, Audra. (2014). *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Simpson, Audra. (2017). "The Ruse Of Consent and the Anatomy of 'Refusal': Cases From Indigenous North American and Australia," *Postcolonial Studies* 20(1), 18-33.
- TallBear, Kim. (2013). *(Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Whyte, Kyle. (2013). On the role of traditional ecological knowledge as a collaborative concept: A philosophical study. *Ecological Processes*, 2(7).
- Whyte, Kyle. (2017). "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?" *Keepers of the Green World: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Sustainability*, edited by Melissa K. Nelson and Dan Shilling.

CHAPTER 3: “şuşngalum yúunanik tilá'ya; şú'lam pomşúun taványa//And The Starwomen Devised a Strategy...”: Constellating Models of Decolonization, Indigenous Liberation, and Language Reclamation

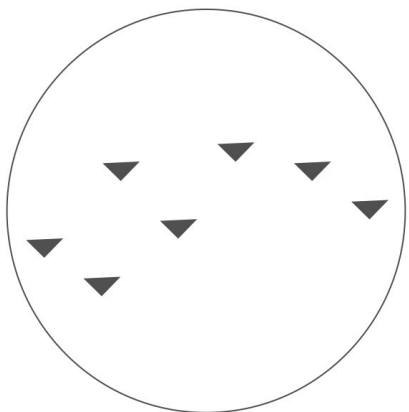


Figure 3: Starwomen basket pattern.

Introduction: Starstories

What are the modes of decolonial and liberatory theorizing, and what are the implications of these modes for Indigenous language reclamation? There are several different approaches to Indigenous liberation, and within each approach, there are implications for methodologies, curricula, and ideologies pertaining to language preservation and reclamation. The approaches to Indigenous liberation take many forms, ranging from separatist to reconciliatory, those that privilege the rematriation of land, those that privilege academic spaces, and those that focus on negotiating with nation states. To aid in holding these vastly differing approaches to Indigenous liberation in relation, I offer here a conceptual outline, a constellation, of decolonial and liberatory projects. This map is meant to gesture at the relationships between several key decolonial and liberatory projects in Indigenous studies and related fields. As any given constellation in the night sky has many stories that shape, arrange, and rearrange it, the constellation of decolonial and liberatory projects I describe here is not a catchall or definitive picture of these views. I am interested in offering a pluralistic accounting of decolonial and liberatory projects that can recognize and respect the merits of each component of this diverse constellation, and illustrate that addressing the multi-pronged lemmas of settler colonialism requires the work of theorists with many different gifts, including but not limited to: gifts of building and maintaining *tée* (homes, nests, community spaces), gifts of defending and protecting by

confronting the colonizer, and gifts of building alliances between Indigenous communities, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and between modes of discourse. The authors of each approach I detail in this constellation has their own insights and implications for language reclamation, which I spend some time detailing as well.

I begin first with a 'atáax, Luiseño, star story. Pí' kúna pá' kúna pó' kúna, I am told:¹⁰ the starwomen are seven sisters who live in the sky world.¹¹ They were married with Wildcat and loved each other very much, all of them living together happily in one home, or téé.¹² Coyote, a jealous and devious person, watched the family from earth and lusted after the sisters. He grew more and more sinister in his plans to interject himself into their lives and decided to kill Wildcat and impersonate him by wearing his skin. One day, Wildcat visited earth by travelling down the wáanawut. While Wildcat was on the earth, Coyote murdered him. Dressed in his wildcat disguise, Coyote climbed up the wáanawut to be with the starwomen. Coyote, one who always thinks highly of himself, was convinced he had fooled the starwomen, but in fact, the youngest starwoman had figured him out immediately. The youngest starwoman had watched Coyote in his wildcat disguise carefully, and described his deceit to her sisters. After the youngest starwoman's report, they knew that Coyote had killed their husband and was attempting to mislead them. They gathered in secret, spoke in hushed whispers, and devised a plan.¹³ The starwomen decided to cut the wáanawut upon Coyote's next visit to earth, but had to proceed with

¹⁰ Here, I practice Luiseño storytelling ethics by situating this story as something I have been told, illustrating that it is something I have come to know by way of others. In Western traditions, I cite my family, as well as Mrs. Villiana Hyde, who has published this story in Luiseño (Hyde and Elliot 1990).

¹¹ sometimes called "The Little Dipper" in English.

¹² For "home," Mrs. Hyde uses the words "pée" bed and "téé" nest. For the remainder of this essay I will use "téé," and expand on this translation choice later.

¹³ When Mrs. Hyde tells this story, she uses the words "şuşngalum yúunanik tilá'ya," meaning, "the women got together and talked" and "pomsúun taványa," literally, their hearts decided.

caution. The next day, Coyote climbed down the wáanawut, and the seven sisters chopped the wáanawut down behind him. Coyote could never return to the sky world and the seven sisters were safe again from his malicious ways.

I have been told this story in quite a few situations, and been expected to draw different instructions each time. One aspect I borrow from it this time is a methodology for gathering, strategizing, and collaborating for the safety and liberation of our communities. The starwomen in this story build and maintain their *tée*, they watch Coyote carefully, describe his actions, they deliberate, they gather, they form an agreement, and they execute a plan. As a community faced with a dangerous challenge, the starwomen act together to banish Coyote, seeking justice and liberation as a group of women with different gifts and approaches. I believe the actions of the starwomen model decolonial and liberatory projects. As each of the sisters in the starwomen's story carry different gifts, I have organized decolonial and liberatory projects into a constellation that highlights particular modes of engagement: *téeivuktum*//nest-builders,¹⁴ *néqpivuktum*//protectors, and *tavánivuktum*//alliance-builders.¹⁵

Constellating Models of Decolonization and Indigenous Liberation

The first mode of decolonial and liberatory engagement, characterized as *téeivuktum*, or, nest-builders, centers inter-community critique and cultivation. The authors of these projects are interested in maintaining *tée* (homes, nests, community spaces). The second mode of decolonial and liberatory engagement, characterized as *néqpivuktum*//protectors, center the defending and protecting of Indigenous communities

¹⁴ I use the double slash “//” to indicate that this is an attempted translation of Luiseño into English, but that translation is a project I am skeptical of. The Luiseño concepts in this organizational schema contain so many meanings I do not have the space or talent to describe them all.

¹⁵ For more on constellating as a methodology, see (Powell 2012, Riley-Mukavetz 2014).

by watching the colonizer, describing carefully the oppressive mechanisms of settler colonialism, and by confronting the representatives of settler colonial systems, either through engagement or refusal. The third mode of decolonial and liberatory engagement, characterized as *tavánivuktum*//alliance-builders, walk with the gifts of building alliances between Indigenous communities, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and between modes of discourse. Some decolonial and liberatory projects engage in a combination of modes; Chris Finley's work, for example, engages in all three modes of decolonial and liberatory projects (Finley 2011). In promoting Native nations' self-critique of nationalism and recovery of a relationship with the Land, Finley authors a *tée* building project; in describing carefully and critiquing the construction of the queer Native body by heterocolonialism, Finley's project is also a *néqpivuktum*//protector project; and finally, in building relationships between Queer Studies and Native Studies, Finley's project is also an alliance-building project (Finley 2011). Most of the literature described in the following section, however, engages with only one approach. Each approach I detail in this constellation has their own insights and implications for language reclamation, which I spend some time detailing in the following section.

1a. téivuktum//nest-builders

As mentioned briefly above, the first mode of decolonial and liberatory engagement, characterized as *téivuktum*, or, nest-builders, center sequestered, inter-community critique and cultivation. The authors of these projects are interested in building and maintaining *tée*, which might translate to something along the lines of *home*, *nest*, or *community space*. One important note on *tée* is that in Luiseño it does not carry a connotation of a nuclear, heteronormative family space; rather, *tée* refers to a 'shared

sleeping space' of a clan or community connected to land and one another through intricate networks of responsibility. Tée carries the connotation of home infused with concepts of nation or clan. Saylesh Wesley offers an example of a tée-building project by looking carefully to her own language, community, and family to bolster a call to Salish grandmothers (as well as the grandmothers of other Indigenous communities) to revitalize and reclaim the community roles of transgender and Two Spirit people (2014). Wesley calls her project one of "internal recognition" and "internal reconciliation" that requires reflection on tradition and language, as well as the communal imagining of new traditions, new words, and new ceremonies. In a similar vein, Qwo-Li Driskill offers a method of Two Spirit Critique, which simultaneously deconstructs capital-N Nationalism as it is imposed by the settler colonial nation state while building Asegi, or Indigenous nationhood (Driskill 2010, Driskill 2011). Driskill cites Jennifer Nez Denedale's work (2009) in challenging the homophobic policies of the Navajo Nation's same-sex marriage ban, as an example of Two Spirit Critique, which is capable of generating internal criticisms of Indigenous communities who are re-inscribing patriarchy in their enforcement of 'tradition,' without compromising the sovereignty and self-government of Indigenous communities. J. Kēhaulani Kauani (2008), too, works in a tée-building mode to describe and fight the silencing of Kanaka Maoli feminist politics. Deborah Miranda (2010) engages in a similar tée-building project by promoting the reclamation of Two Spirit identities in Southern California Indian communities. Unlike Wesley, Miranda has a linguistic record to look to in the reclamation of these identities and community roles, though the linguistic record Miranda must engage is the violent, colonial archive of Spanish missionaries and white

anthropologists. Miranda's decolonial project, like Wesley's and Driskill's, requires the reclamation of Two Spirit roles in contemporary Indigenous communities.

Similar to these *tée*-building projects, Michelle M. Jacob describes several Yakama cultural reclamation projects in which her community is involved (2013). From these projects, Jacob articulates a Yakama decolonizing praxis that "1) understands indigenous bodies as sites of critical pedagogy, 2) centers social justice praxis to build a moral community, and 3) utilizes grassroots indigenous resistance as a mechanism to dismantle colonial logics" (Jacob 2013, p. 107). In each of the cultural reclamation projects Jacob describes, community members engage mindfully in intergenerational dialogues about community values and participate in skillshares that allow them to draw from traditional teachings as well as co-create new methodologies. Jacob also offers a list of recommendations for cultivating and empowering community work, including the support and funding of community members who have connections with educational institutions and having an up-to-date and clearly communicated set of priority needs (Jacob 2013, p. 127).

Tée-building approaches are home-facing, often centering geo-politically connected spaces like particular reservation communities and particular urban centers. There is a strong emphasis in *tée*-building approaches on intergenerational work, where elders and youth are included in program design and implementation (Wesley 2014, Jacobs 2013). In *tée*-building approaches, we see a strong reliance on archives, those that are colonially-collected as well as those that are founded and curated by Indigenous communities (Miranda 2010; Wesley 2014; Christen 2008, 2011). This archival reliance is likely explained by the commitment of many *tée*-building projects to the recovery of precolonial

narratives (Wesley 2014, Denetdale 2009, Miranda 2010). Outside of archival work, however, *tée*-building projects are not largely academic endeavors and may even be non-conducive to academic spaces. *Tée*-building projects are often marked by commitments to privacy, separatism, and skepticism of outsiders. In my personal experiences working with *tée*-building projects, my background as an academic often capsizes my background and credibility as a community member. I have noticed that in *tée*-building projects of my own community terms like “decolonial” and “feminist” do not hold as much weight as they do in academic settings. Jacob, too, notes that though her community members are engaged in work that many would deem decolonial, activist, and/or feminist, these community members show apprehension when asked to label their work “activist” or “feminist” (Jacob 2013). And even though Jacob is a strong advocate for the building of relationships between tribal communities and research universities, many of her community members engaged in Yakama *tée*-building express skepticism about academics and researchers, who they view as “outsiders” (Jacob 2013).

2a. néqpivuktum//protectors

As referenced above, the second mode of decolonial and liberatory engagement, characterized as *néqpivuktum//protectors* offer decolonial and liberatory projects that describe and critique oppressive systems. In the starwomen story I opened with, the youngest sister who observes Coyote carefully, notices his harmful practices, and describes them to her sisters, models the *néqpivuktum//protectors*’ mode of liberatory and decolonial engagement. Audra Simpson’s *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014) offers a *tée*-building project in that it is locally situated and geared toward an audience of Indigenous people, but it serves as *néqpivuktum//protectors* project as well. Simpson focuses on the ‘story

settler colonial nation states tell about themselves,' highlighting the ways Indigenous communities, specifically Mohawk people, are constructed as 'problems' of the past that have been long-settled (Simpson 2014). Simpson (2014) also describes the Mohawk communities she is in relation to via interviews and archives and calls her own project an ethnographic endeavor, knowing full-well the implications of such anthropologized discourse for Indigenous readers. Andrea Smith calls projects in which an Indigenous community must 'prove its humanity' to an audience of settler academics by taking on the rhetorics and logics of colonial institutions like cultural anthropology "ethnographically entrapped" (Smith 2011). Simpson's project, though self-described as 'ethnographic,' departs in important ways from those about which Smith is concerned. Simpson describes her projects and those like hers as participating in a generative politics of refusal in which Indigenous theorists refuse to explain or translate themselves to settler academics on settler academic terms; explaining or translating oneself is engaging in a 'ruse of consent' (Simpson 2007, 2014, 2017). Simpson offers a decolonial project in which she advocates that Indigenous communities author their own counternarratives to dominant discourses pertaining to settler colonial nationhood and Indigenous identities (2014).

In a similar *néqpivuktum*//protectors' project, Snelgrove et al. (2014) describe and critique settler colonialism and the dominant discourses within settler colonial studies. Like Audra Simpson, Snelgrove et al. embrace a methodology of interruption in which they describe carefully the structure of settler colonialism and its influence on settler colonial studies, and then introduce alternative approaches such as relationality and the centering of Indigenous people's voices.

Rhetoricians and literary scholars offer similar *néqpivuktum*//protectors projects

in which they advocate the reappropriation of dominant rhetorics and reinterpretation of dominant discourses by Indigenous peoples (Blackhawk 2006; Lyons 2010; King et al 2015; Stromberg 2006). Ned Blackhawk (2006) attempts to re-read Indigenous histories through a new hermeneutical framework that centers Indigenous pain. Lyons (2010) re-reads the dominant historical narratives of U.S. history, ascribing a nuanced form of agency to Indigenous ancestors who have signed treaties with an 'x-mark.' This nuanced form of agency, or an 'x-mark,' refers to the choices Indigenous people must make in the wake of a dilemma, two or more terrible options imposed by colonial logics (Lyons 2010). Both Blackhawk (2006) and Lyons (2010) make it possible for new readings of dominant narratives to emerge. Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson (2015) and Ernest Stromberg (2006) also attempt to decolonize rhetorical practices and pedagogies through American Indian epistemologies. Though all the aforementioned projects are situated in academic spaces with predominantly settler audiences, they avoid ethnographic entrapment because they are not attempting to justify to a settler audience on settler terms that Indigenous people are knowers; rather, these authors are interested in describing and critiquing the modes through which Indigenous communities are depicted, and then offering radical alternatives in which Indigenous people control the terms of discourse.

Néqpivuktum//protectors projects also spring from queer studies, and Indigenous queer studies. Maria Lugones describes the colonial/modern gender system, citing Indigenous communities' traditional acceptance of nonheteronormative gender expression as a counterexample to the heteronormative world system imposed by colonization (Lugones 2007). Mark Rifkin enacts "self-conscious queer critique" to describe carefully the imperial heterosexual imaginary, focusing largely on captivity narratives and other settler-

authored accounts of Indian people (Rifkin 2010). Challenging accounts like Lugones', Rifkin writes, "the positive valuation of Native practices and lifeways by those resisting compulsory heterosexuality, however, does to equal support for Indigenous self-determination" (Rifkin 2010, p. 8). According to Rifkin, citing queer and Two Spirit Indigenous bodies as mere counterexamples to a hetero world system is violent, just as it is violent to interpret Indigenous communities prior to colonization according to the heterohomemaking logics imposed by colonization. Rifkin also critiques settler scholars' uses of the concept of kinship and advocates reading from the absences, detecting the 'boundaries of permissibility' in stories settler nation states tell about themselves (Rifkin 2010). Deborah Miranda (2010) engages with the violent colonial archive of Spanish missionaries and white anthropologists in order to describe the gendercide imposed on Indigenous southern Californian communities. To borrow from Rifkin, Miranda must find the 'boundaries of permissibility' in Spanish colonial archives to read from the absences and detect the traditional roles of nonheteronormative, Two Spirit, and LGBTQ community members. Miranda's decolonial project requires the reclamation and empowerment of Two Spirit people.

Closely related to and often intersecting with queer studies' and Indigenous queer studies' critiques of settler colonial heteropatriarchy, Indigenous feminist critiques, as well as Indigenous critiques of feminism, also often fall into the form of néq pivuktum//protectors projects. Lisa Kahaleole Hall (2009) puts several 'islands,' or academic fields of discourse, in relation to illustrate the absence of Kanaka Maoli//Native Hawaiian women. Describing the circumstances under which Kanaka Maoli//Native Hawaiian women are made absent from spaces like Native American studies, Asian

American Pacific Islander studies, and mainstream feminist discourse, is an important precondition for combating this erasure (Hall, 2009). After carefully describing similar systematic erasures of Indigenous women from mainstream, or 'whitestream' academic feminist discourse, Sandy Grande distances her liberatory projects from feminism (Grande 2003). These projects engage academic feminisms and discourses, critiquing them according to their own politics of inclusion.

Within education discourse, *néqpivuktum*//protectors projects also abound. Marie Battiste (2011) looks carefully at the cognitive imperialism and cultural racism maintained by the Canadian education system, tracing the history of public schooling and its complicity in genocide. Depicting colonialism as a structure, Battiste maintains that the role of Indigenous studies scholars is to describe colonialism and imagine a decolonial future as an attempt to heal and restore Indigenous communities. Battiste offers a pluralistic approach to mapping and diagnosing colonialism. Anne Calhoun, Mishuana Goeman, and Monica Tsethlikai also describe and critique the mainstream education system in the U.S., emphasizing that the imposition of Western gender and racial categories, the racism of non-Indigenous curricula, and the low expectations of non-Indigenous instructors have detrimental effects on American Indian students (Calhoun et al. 2007).

Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012) offer a strong account of decolonization in "Decolonization Is Not A Metaphor;" they write, "Decolonization brings about the repatriation of land and life" (Tuck and Yang 2012, p. 1). Tuck and Yang (2012) critique the metaphorization of the term "decolonize," noting that when the term is used as a placeholder for 'social-justice' or 'critical engagement' in spaces like higher education, it decenters Indigenous liberation. Devon Abbot Mihesua and Angela Cavender Wilson, and

the several authors within their anthology, offer accounts of how to indigenize the deeply colonial and colonizing academy (Mihesua and Wilson 2004). Though Battiste, and Tuck and Yang, Mihesua and Wilson are situated in education, because the education system is tasked with the production and maintenance of dominant ideologies regarding imperial history, their work serves as larger critiques of colonial and settler colonial world systems.

Néqpivuktum//protectors projects are very conducive to academic spaces because even if the néqpivuktum//protectors project is fundamentally opposed to the mechanisms of Western academic theorizing, the authors of these projects are highly skilled in the hermeneutic resources of the Western academy. These authors often specialize in law, philosophy, political theory, and Western science in addition to whatever their home discipline might be. Because the authors of néqpivuktum//protectors projects often glean their skills and discursive tools from academia, their audience often consists of other academics, many of whom are likely non-Indigenous. Projects engaged in the politics of refusal, though they refuse to explain or translate themselves in settler terms, largely still have an audience of settler academics. In many ways, a project of refusal is one in which settler academics are required to listen quietly without participation. Though néqpivuktum//protectors projects often have an audience that is relatively wealthy in dominant cultural capital, this also means these projects are subject to the hoop-jumping required of academic projects. Authors of néqpivuktum//protectors projects might feel pressure to de-radicalize their work in order to make it palatable, publishable, or respectable for academic audiences. Néqpivuktum//protectors often engage in double-speak and code-switching, requiring their audiences to read between the lines to access decolonial and liberatory goals in order to disguise their tactics from dominant discourse.

Néqpivuktum//protectors often speak from a platform of expertise and have a large audience, but gleaning the abilities to practice multiple fluencies comes with great cost. The authors of these projects are often subject to being treated like outsiders in their own communities, as well as outsiders in the academy. Because néqpivuktum//protectors projects are often highly contextualized in academic spaces, these projects may be unappealing to Indigenous activists and communities skeptical of academia, and thus, may not get uptake by the target audience. Néqpivuktum//protectors are often engaged in the painful labor of existing in colonial spaces like academia while attempting to repossess stolen resources like land, language, and cultural items. Confronted daily with aggression, assault, and attacks on their status as knowers, Indigenous academics also work to create and maintain safer, braver spaces for Indigenous students to flourish. As more space is carved out by Indigenous academics for Indigenous academics, the need for translation, double-speak, and hoop-jumping may dissipate. Indigenous academics' projects can and should be made salient by allies and advocates with more cultural capital, but as Simpson suggests, in order for this to take place, settler allies and advocates must accept refusal and confrontation by listening quietly and discontinuing harmful participation in the dialogue.

3a. tavánivuktum//alliance-builders

Authors of tavánivuktum//alliance-builders projects engage in decolonial and liberatory practices by building alliances between modes of academic and activist discourse, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and between Indigenous communities. Some alliance-builders are interesting in creating intersections for schools of thought. Andrea Smith (2011) describes what Queer Studies can learn from Native Studies and vice versa, and in doing so, describes avenues for building decolonial and liberatory

alliances that can critique heteropatriarchy. Similar to Smith's work, In "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies," Qwo-Li Driskill defines "decolonization" as the "ongoing, radical resistance against colonialism that includes struggles for land redress, self-determination, healing historical trauma, cultural continuance, and reconciliation," and emphasizes that though decolonization is impossible to define broadly for all communities and contexts, that imagining our decolonial futures is the strongest component (Driskill 2010, p. 69). Driskill offers an alliance-building project that mends the rifts between Indigenous studies, which fails Two Spirit and LGBTQ persons, and Queer Studies, which fails Indigenous communities. Driskill's project highlights the role of Two Spirit critique and maintains that decolonial work cannot be done without the voices and consideration of Two-Spirit people, emphasizing that the 'overlapping accountabilities' present in circles of Two Spirit and LGBTQ activism. Sandy Grande (2015) describes and critiques the public education system in the U.S., as well as the dominant modes of inquiry within Indigenous studies, highlighting a failure of both groups to act in the best interests of Indigenous students. Grande offers a *tavánivuktum*//alliance-builders' approach to education policy, drawing together academic modes of discourse and offering a decolonial project invested in building a new critical democracy. Grande also relies on the "decolonial imaginary" and her red pedagogy to serve as a coming-together-point for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities from which they can "work in solidarity to envision a way of life free of exploitation and replete with spirit" (Grande 2015, p. 176).

In addition to working to build the Yakama *tée* as described in an earlier section, Michelle M. Jacob (2013) describes the alliances built between the Yakama people and local

universities in their language reclamation efforts. While Jacob certainly maintains that language reclamation projects must privilege self-determination, she also suggests that non-Indigenous people have a place within and can benefit as ‘moral community’ members from language reclamation and other decolonial projects. Jacob also offers several recommendations for alliance-building with U.S. research universities and NGOs (Jacob 2013, p. 127). Jacob maintains that partnerships between tribes and universities should be formalized, funded, sustainable, and egalitarian (Jacob 2013, p. 127). Several international coalitions of Indigenous communities have also formed and generate recommendations about how potential partnerships ought to be formed (IFIB 2014, 2016). These coalitions offer suggestions regarding funding, empowerment, and joint-action (IFIB 2014, 2016).

Borrowing some tactics from néqpivuktum//protectors projects, many tavánivuktum//alliance-builders projects engage in careful examination and critique of volatile, violent, or incommensurate partnerships between Indigenous communities and other marginalized groups. These projects differ from néqpivuktum//protectors projects because the mode of description and critique employed in these projects serves to generate recommendations about what healthy, reciprocal relationships might look like, while this is not a primary concern of néqpivuktum//protectors projects. For example, Sheila Marie Contreras draws readers’ attentions to the manipulations of Indigeneity and of Indigenous characters that can occur in the identity-building projects of Chicana feminists like del Castillo and Anzaldúa who rely on the production of Indigeneity through the colonial archive (Contreras 2008). Eric Rodriguez and Eve Cuevas engage in a similar alliance-building project in which they detail cites of coalition and incommensurability regarding Chicanx communities and Indigenous communities (Rodriguez and Cuevas 2017). Tuck and

Yang (2012) describe incommensurability between Indigenous liberation movements and Black liberation movements, citing the battle for Black voting rights during the Civil Rights Movement as incommensurate with the goals of Indigenous liberation because it reinscribes and re-naturalizes settler colonial occupation of Indigenous land. Tuck and Yang (2012) emphasize that coalitions can and should be formed across incommensurability.

Similarly, some *tavánivuktum*//alliance-builders projects engage in careful examination and critique of volatile, violent, or incommensurate partnerships between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous entities, generating recommendations regarding healthy, reciprocal partnerships therefrom. For example, Ranco et al (2011) describe the 'cultural dilemma,' in which tribes must publically conform to non-Indigenous methods of environmental resource management in order to be understood by the dominant system, but tribes must also publicly refuse to conform to non-Indigenous methods in order to be justified in their pursuit of self-governance. Ranco et al. have a suggestion for how the first horn of the dilemma might be overcome and for better alliance-building between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous entities. Ranco et al. suggest that non-tribal governments, committees, and oversight boards ought to increase their awareness, understanding, and tolerance for Indigenous methods in resource management. If tribes are able to use their own unique methodologies for environmental resource management, and if they are able to present them to non-tribal entities without having to force them to conform to non-Indigenous methods, then the cultural dilemma is dissolved (Ranco et al. 2011). Kyle Whyte argues that alliance-building between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous entities requires ontological pluralism and mutual

respect, as well as the recognition that Indigenous knowledges are not of supplemental value to Western science, but have governance value for Indigenous peoples in and of themselves (Whyte 2013, 2016).

Regarding projects like those described by Ranco et al, Glen Coulthard (2014) and Dian Million (2014) also critique alliances made between Indigenous communities and the Canadian government warning that language like sustainability, recognition, reconciliation, healing, and diversity can be co-opted by agencies and used to disenfranchise Indigenous communities. Both Coulthard and Million describe tricks like these as defining features of neoliberalism and neocolonialism. Damien Lee (2011) looks carefully at the practices of Canadian environmental NGOs, noting that they often make partnerships with First Nation communities, only to undermine the self-determination of those communities by subjecting them to state control. Describing neocolonial phenomena such as the non-profit industrial complex and pseudophilanthropy, Lee advises that Indigenous communities, if they must make partnerships with settler groups, do so with groups that are not incorporated under federal or provincial legislation (Lee 2011).

Finally, some *tavánivuktum*//alliance-builders projects offer recommendations for alliances between Indigenous communities. Vine Deloria (1988) provides guidelines for building alliances between reservation Indigenous communities and urban Indigenous communities. Deloria emphasizes the importance of Indigenous-led projects that focus on sovereignty, self-determination, and a strong sense of identity and advocates for the creation of inter-tribal councils, infrastructure, and coalitions that enable strong relationships between reservation communities and urban relatives and revive Indigenous social and legal patterns (Deloria 1988).

Tavánivuktum//alliance-builders projects like those described above are very conducive to activist spaces as many of these authors are interested in forming sites of coalition and solidarity across cultural and discursive difference. Tavánivuktum//alliance-builders projects can take place within the academy (Smith 2011, Driskill 2010, Grande 2015), on a policy level (Million 2014; Ranco et al 2014; Lee 2011; Whyte 2013, 2016) or within non-academic Indigenous communities (Jacob 2013, Deloria 1988). These projects seem to embrace umbrella political identifiers like ‘feminist,’ ‘women of color,’ even ‘pan-Indian’ or ‘inter-tribal,’ also likely due to desires for solidarity and coalition. Tavánivuktum//alliance-builders projects come with risks as well; often the authors of these projects position themselves and Indigenous communities as interpreters or translators, which requires much of the same, often dangerous, labor of the néqpivuktum//protectors projects detailed in the previous section.

Language Reclamation

Some of these approaches are more obviously relevant for language reclamation than others. For example, all of the téé-building projects described above explicitly mention the significance of Indigenous language reclamation for their decolonial and liberatory projects. Many of the néqpivuktum//protectors projects detailed above do not explicitly mention language, so their relevance for language reclamation has to be extrapolated. Regardless of explicit concern with Indigenous language reclamation, I aim to show that all of the decolonial and liberatory modes illustrated above indeed have useful and complementary recommendations for language reclamation. Linguistic imperialism is a complicated and multi-faceted system that affects each Indigenous community differently,

thus, resistance to linguistic imperialism requires a multipronged approach inspired by the gifts of a diverse constellation of decolonial and liberatory modes.

1b. téevuktum//nest-builders & language reclamation

As detailed above, the *tée* or nest builders are the authors of decolonial and liberatory projects that face homeward. The audiences of the nest-building projects are Indigenous communities, oftentimes on-reservation communities and close-knit urban Indigenous communities engaged in cultural reclamation and revitalization. The philosophical commitments of these projects, perhaps obviously, have several implications and insights for Indigenous language reclamation, and all of the *tée*-building authors explicitly mention language and cultural reclamation in their work. Below I outline four of the recommendations central to *tée*-building projects and their relevance for Indigenous language reclamation.

Center intergenerational, community-engaged language learning

The *tée*-building projects described above all center intergenerational, community engaged learning, emphasizing the critical importance of involving elders and youth in the creation and maintenance of cultural resources. Some *tée*-building theorists specifically mention language as an intergenerational project (Wesley 2014, Jacobs 2013), while others focus on intergenerational work with respect to other cultural resources (Driskill 2010, 2011; Denetdale 2009). Saylesh Wesley (2014) shows the importance of including her grandmother in the creation of new words in her ancestral language, noting that the participation of elders is central to the propagation of new words and the acceptance of Two-Spirit people. Wesley notes that generating new words, new traditions, new ceremonies is difficult and requires intergenerational engagement and many voices at the

table. Jacobs's work centers the contributions of elders and youth to the Yakama language reclamation efforts (2013). Denetdale's inspection of Diné tradition is also highly intergenerational (2009).

Center the voices of Two-Spirit, trans, and queer community members

As part and parcel of intergenerational, community-based language learning, tée-building theorists also often center the voices of queer and Two-Spirit community members (Miranda 2010, Wesley 2014, Driskill 2010, Denetdale 2009). Indigenous languages play a central role in many Two-Spirit centered critiques, as can be seen in both Wesley's work with her grandmother and Driskill and Miranda's work on gender role reclamation. The careful work of gender role reclamation can likely benefit Indigenous language reclamation as well. Language reclamation programs that reinscribe patriarchy, heteronormativity, and gender binaries would likely be unacceptable to many of the tée building decolonial and liberatory projects profiled here.

Center linguistic sovereignty

Language reclamation can serve as a space for the construction and maintenance of linguistic sovereignty, meaning a given Indigenous community's control over the creation, maintenance, and interrogation of the materials, written, oral, digital, or analog, pertaining to their ancestral language and the ideologies thereof. Theorists like Wesley and Jacob model how Indigenous communities can exert control over their language resources by convening together and co-creating new terms, new mechanisms for recording and implementing language resources, and systems for determining who can access language resources and in what form. This is an important act of resistance against universities'

attempted creation of spiritual dependency relationships between Indigenous communities and Indigenous language archives.

2b. néqpivuktum//protectors & language reclamation

As mentioned above, néqpivuktum//protectors projects pursue liberation and/or decolonization by describing and critiquing oppression. In the starwomen story I opened with, the youngest sister who observes Coyote carefully, notices his harmful practices, and describes them to her sisters, models the néqpivuktum//protectors mode of liberatory and decolonial engagement. Perhaps in virtue of the fact that these projects are engaged in descriptive work, profiling and describing oppressive practices, and geared toward an audience of non-Indigenous academics, they are rather difficult to apply to language reclamation. For example, Battiste (2011) can certainly offer an explanation for how linguistic imperialism occurs, which may be useful in attempting to resist it. It is not clear, however, that protectors projects like Battiste's can offer insights for how to generate reclamation. Some néqpivuktum//protectors projects like that of Lugones (2007) do not seem to be interested in self-determination or reclamation among Indigenous communities, only citing Indigenous languages as an anthropologized counterexample to dominant Western conceptions of gender. Many of these projects are not concerned with making recommendations for how language and cultural reclamation ought to occur; to avoid begging the question against these authors, I use this section to gesture at recommendations that might spring from these projects, but do not attribute specific recommendations to any néqpivuktum//protectors project in particular.

Track, describe, and predict the tactics of linguistic imperialism

Because of néqpivuktum//protectors projects' commitment to the careful

observation and description of oppression, néqpivuktum//protectors projects might recommend the tracing of the influences of settler colonial modes of thought on Indigenous language reclamation. When Deborah Miranda describes her engagement with Spanish colonial archives and the JP Harrington archives searching for information about the *joyas*, or California Indian Two Spirit people, she describes her work as one in which she must learn to “re-read” these archives through a new mode in which she must track the hermeneutic reality of the colonizer as well as inhabiting the embodied reality of being “a mixed-blood California Indian lesbian poet” (Miranda 2010, p. 254). Miranda, in a sense, must learn the language, maneuvers, and logics of Western archival modes while simultaneously trying to see glimpses of Indigenous lifeways captured in the archive. Language activists will find themselves in a similar situation as Miranda every time they engage colonial language archives. Néqpivuktum//protectors projects’ offer tactics for “re-reading” the colonial language archives and predicting their maneuvers.

Name settler-colonial influences on language curricula.

In addition to providing tactics for re-reading colonial language archives, néqpivuktum//protectors projects have insights for creating culturally sustaining language reclamation curricula. Because néqpivuktum//protectors projects are committed to close observation and description of the tactics of oppression, néqpivuktum//protectors projects show how Indigenous language activists might look to the curricula being generated by reclamation projects for undesirable reiterations of settler colonial logics. Drawing from the tactics described by néqpivuktum//protectors, Indigenous language activists can interject counternarratives in dominant discourse and Indigenous pedagogies to combat low standards and racism in mainstream U.S. education (Simpson 2014, Calhoun et al.

2007). Extrapolating tactics from Mark Rifkin, Indigenous language activists can also subvert the heterohomemaking logics in dominant narratives that find their way into Indigenous language curricula (Rifkin 2010). Language activists might also seek out sites of systematic erasure (Hall 2009) and weak or metaphorical commitments to decolonization (Tuck and Yang 2012) within language curricula, working to eliminate imposed narratives of Indigeneity that disempower language learners.

3b. tavánivuktum//alliance-builders & language reclamation

As detailed above, authors of tavánivuktum//alliance-builders projects engage in decolonial and liberatory practices by building alliances between modes of academic-activist discourse, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and between Indigenous communities. Some of these projects mention Indigenous language reclamation explicitly, like Jacob (2013) and Deloria (1988), but the majority of the projects described here do not. Again, because these projects for the most part are not explicitly addressing language reclamation, the recommendations offered below are inspired by and extrapolated from these projects.

Be vigilant regarding toxic partnerships that compromise linguistic sovereignty

Many tavánivuktum//alliance-builders offer cautionary tales about building partnerships with non-Indigenous entities, like NGOs, agencies, and universities (Ranco et al 2011, Million 2013, Coulthard 2014, Lee 2011); while these cautionary tales do not explicitly pertain to language reclamation, they do resonate for language reclamation projects. Many language reclamation projects encounter opportunities for partnerships with NGOs, agencies, and universities, through the United Nations, the Endangered Language Fund, federal and state-funded grants, and countless research universities who

employ linguists, fund and conduct language research, and house language archives. In making these partnerships, Indigenous communities, be they tribal groups, collectives, or student groups, must make decisions regarding what to share, how to share it, and how to ensure the highest degrees of control and epistemic and linguistic sovereignty as possible. The communities in these scenarios can take several pieces of advice from tavánivuktum//alliance-builders about how to approach these partnerships carefully. As mentioned above, linguistic sovereignty, refers to a given Indigenous community's control over the creation, maintenance, and interrogation of the materials, written, oral, digital, or analog, pertaining to their ancestral language and the ideologies thereof. When partnering with universities who house language archives, tavánivuktum//alliance-builders show us that language-based partnerships should avoid reinscribing trauma narratives and dependency (Million 2013, Coulthard 2014, Lee 2011).

Build relations with advocates and allies

In contrast to the defensive focus of the previous accounts, tavánivuktum//alliance-builders also offer positive accounts of relationship-building that can be applied to language reclamation projects. Recommendations regarding partnerships between academic disciplines (e.g. between Indigenous studies and queer studies) can be taken up by language reclamation activists. Language activists working within university systems can make partnerships with other departments like Queer Studies or American Studies to make Indigenous language courses required for majors and minors. Jacob offers several recommendations for alliance-building with U.S. research universities and NGOs that certainly apply to language reclamation efforts.

Jacob explains that partnerships between tribes and universities, including partnerships that include shared language resources, should be formalized, funded, sustainable, and egalitarian (Jacob 2013). Ranco et al's (2011) and Kyle Whyte's (2013) recommendations regarding Indigenous communities' relationships with non-Indigenous entities in resource management contexts could also apply to Indigenous language reclamation partnerships; language activists can seek out partnerships with non-Indigenous entities that are founded in increased understanding, tolerance for Indigenous methods, and commitments to ontological pluralism and mutual respect.

*Center heritage language communities, not federally-recognized, geo-politically
divided communities*

Tavánivuktum//alliance-builders like Deloria also offer recommendations regarding inter and intra-community connections among Indigenous people that can be taken up by language reclamation activists. Though Deloria's alliance-building work does not specifically mention language reclamation, his recommendations discouraging the alienation of urban relations is relevant for tribally-led language reclamation programs. A tribally-led language reclamation program interested in borrowing from Deloria's recommendations might dedicate resources to creating infrastructure that allows urban relatives to participate in language classes and curriculum design, like online learning spaces, carpools, and satellite language courses. Deloria also advocates for the formation of inter-tribal coalitions, committees, or councils, and this too could be applied to language reclamation coalitions as well. Language activists can seek out opportunities to bolster inter-tribal research ethics committees that protect particular shared heritage languages from harmful research practices.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown that there are several different approaches to Indigenous liberation, and within each approach, there are implications for methodologies, curricula, and ideologies pertaining to language preservation and reclamation. The approaches to Indigenous liberation, each of which is modeled by the starsisters in the Luiseño Starwomen Story, take many forms. Some liberatory projects have a separatist ring to them, some appear more reconciliatory; some privilege the rematriation of land, some negotiate with the state, while others privilege academic spaces. Like the starwomen, the authors of decolonial and liberatory projects build and maintain their *tée*, they watch the colonizer carefully, describe his actions, they deliberate, they gather, they form agreements, and they execute plans. As a community faced with dangerous challenges, authors of decolonial and liberatory projects work together to banish Coyote, seeking justice and liberation as a group of advocates with different gifts and approaches. To aid in holding these vastly differing approaches to Indigenous liberation in relation, I have offered a conceptual outline, a constellation, of decolonial and liberatory projects. This map is meant to gesture at the relationships between several key decolonial and liberatory projects in Indigenous studies and related fields. As any given constellation in the night sky has many stories that shape, arrange, and rearrange it, the constellation of decolonial and liberatory projects I describe here is not a catchall or definitive picture of these views.

I have offered a pluralistic accounting of decolonial and liberatory projects that recognizes the merits of each component of this diverse constellation, and illustrated that addressing the multi-pronged lemmas of settler colonialism requires the work of theorists with many different gifts. The gifts decolonial liberatory projects walk with include: the

gifts of building and maintaining *tée* (homes, nests, community spaces), the gifts of defending and protecting by confronting the colonizer, and gifts of building alliances between Indigenous communities, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and between modes of discourse. The authors of each approach I detail in this constellation have their own insights and implications for language reclamation, which I outlined as well. The potential application of different modes of decolonial and liberatory theorizing within language reclamation I've gestured to above are vague, but that insights and recommendations for language reclamation can be gleaned from the diverse array of decolonial and liberatory thinking shows the multifaceted nature of settler colonialism and the critical resistance thereto.

My ultimate hope is that decolonial and liberatory projects can be useful to communities engaged in language reclamation 'on the ground' and that the starmap I have offered can serve as a helpful tool for those continuing the important and necessary work of co-creating just language reclamation projects. Po'éekup.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Battiste, Marie (2011). "Introduction," *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision*. UBC Press.

-- (2011b) "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society." *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision*. UBC Press.

Blackhawk, Ned. (2006). "Introduction: The Indigenous Body in Pain" in *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Brooks-Gillies, M., Fisch-Ferguson, J., Levy, D., Novotny, M., Powell, M., & Riley-Mukavetz, A. (2014). Our Story Begins Here: Constellating Cultural Rhetorics. Enculturation. Retrieved from <http://www.enculturation.net/our-story-begins-here>

Calhoun, A., Goeman, M., & Tsethlikai, M. (2007). "Achieving Gender Equity for American Indians." In *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity through Education*, eds Klein, S., Richardson, B., Grayson, D.A., et al. New York, NY, USA: Routledge, 525-52.

Contreras, Sheila Marie. (2008). "From La Malinche to Coatlicue: Chicana Indigenist Feminism and the Mythic Native Women," *Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature*, (Austin: University of Texas Press).

Coulthard, Glen. (2014). "From Wards of the State to Subjects of Recognition? Marx, Indigenous Peoples, and the Politics of Dispossession in Denendeh" in *Theorizing Native Studies*, eds. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, Duke University Press, 56-98.

Christen, Kimberly. (2008.) "Archival Challenges and Digital Solutions in Aboriginal Australia." *SAA Archaeological Recorder* 8 (2): 21 -24.

Christen, Kimberly. (2011.) "Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation." *American Archivist* 74: 185-210.

Deloria, Vine. (1988). *Custer Died For Your Sins*, (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman).

Denetdale, J. N. (2009). "Securing Navajo national boundaries: War, patriotism, tradition, and the Diné Marriage Act of 2005." *Wicazo Sa Review*, 24(2), 131-148.

Driskill, Qwo-Li. (2010). "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 16(1-2).

-- (2011). "D4Y DβC (Asegi Ayetl): Cherokee Two-Spirit People Reimagining Nation" *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, Eds. Qwo-Li Driskell, Chris Finley et al, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 97-112.

Finley, Chris. (2011). "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke) Bringing 'Sexy Back' and Out of Native Studies' Closet," *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, Eds. Qwo-Li Driskell, Chris Finley et al, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 31-42.

Grande, Sandy. (2003). "Whitestream feminism and the colonialist project: A review of contemporary feminist pedagogy and praxis." *Educational Theory* 53(3): 329-346.

-- (2015). *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Hall, Lisa Kahaleole. (2009). "Navigating Our Own 'Sea of Islands': Remapping a Theoretical Space for Hawaiian Women in Indigenous Feminism," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 24(2), 15-38.

Hyde, Villiana and Eric Elliot. (1994). *Yumáyk Yumáyk: Long Ago*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP). (2016). "A Call To Action: Insights Into The Status of Funding For Indigenous Women's Groups," <https://internationalfunders.org/a-call-to-action-insights-into-the-status-of-funding-for-indigenous-womens-groups-2/> and on file with author.

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP). (2014). "Grantmaker's Guide: Strengthening International Indigenous Philanthropy," <https://internationalfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Grantmakers-Guide-updated-2014.pdf> and on file with author.

Jacob, Michelle M. (2013). *Yakama Rising: Indigenous Cultural Revitalization, Activism, and Healing*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press

King, Lisa, Rose Gubele and Joyce Rain Anderson. (2015). "Careful With The Stories We Tell: Naming Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story," *Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story: Teaching American Indian Rhetorics*, (Utah State University Press: Boulder), 3-16.

Lee, Damien. (2011). "Windigo Faces: Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations Serving Canadian Colonialism." 31(2), 133-153.

Lomawaima, K. Tsianina and Teresa McCarty. (2006). *To Remain and Indian: Lessons in Democracy From a Century of Native American Education*. (Teachers College Press: New York)

Lugones, Maria. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System." 2007.

Hypatia 22(1): 186-209.

Lyons, Scott Richard. (2010). *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent*. University of Minnesota Press.

Mihesua, Devon Abbot and Angela Cavender Wilson. (2004). *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, (University Of Nebraska Press: Lincoln).

Million, Dian. (2013). *Therapeutic Nations*, (University of Arizona Press: Tucson).

Miranda, Deborah A. (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen Nation, Chumash). 2010. "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16(1-2): 253-84.

Powell, Malea. (2012). "Stories Take Place: A Performance in One Act," *CCC* 64(2), 383-406.

Ranco, Darren J., Catherine A. O'Neill, et al. (2011). "Environmental Justice, American Indians and the Cultural Dilemma," *Environmental Justice* 4(4), 221-230.

Rodriguez, Eric and Everardo J. Cuevas. (2017). "Problematizing *Mestizaje*," *Composition Studies* 45(2), 230-233.

Rifkin, Mark. (2010). *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*. London: Oxford University Press.

Riley Mukavetz, Andrea M. (2014). "Towards a cultural rhetorics methodology: Making research matter with multi-generational women from the Little Traverse Bay Band," *Rhetoric, Professional Communication and Globalization* 5(1), 108-125.

Simpson, Audra. (2007). "Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship." *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue*, no. 9: 67-80.

Simpson, Audra. (2014). *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Simpson, Audra. (2017). "The Ruse Of Consent and the Anatomy of 'Refusal': Cases From Indigenous North American and Australia," *Postcolonial Studies* 20(1), 18-33.

Smith, Andrea. (2011). "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, Eds. Qwo-Li Driskell, Chris Finley et al, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 43-65.

Snelgrove, Corey, Rita Dhamoon, Jeff Corntassel. 2014. "Unsettling settler colonialism: The discourse and politics of settlers, and solidarity with Indigenous nations." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3 (2): 1-32.

Stewart-Harawira, Makere. (2013). "Challenging Knowledge Capitalism: Indigenous Research in the 21st Century." *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes* 9(1).

Stromberg, Ernest. (2006) *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic*. (University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh)

Tuck, Eve and K. Yang. (2012). "Decolonization is Not A Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1).

Wesley, Saylesh (2014). "Twin-Spirited Woman: Sts'iyoye Smestiyexw Slha:li."37. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1(3): 338-51.

Vizenor, Gerald. (1994.) *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln

Whyte, Kyle. (2013). "On The Role of Traditional Ecological knowledge as a collaborative concept: A philosophical Study," *Ecological Process*, 2(7).

Whyte, Kyle (2016). "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do For Indigenous Peoples?" *Keepers of the Green World: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Sustainability*. Edited by M.K. Nelson and D. Shilling. Cambridge University Press

CHAPTER 4: Navigating Sites of Violence in Indigenous Language Archival

Engagement

Introduction

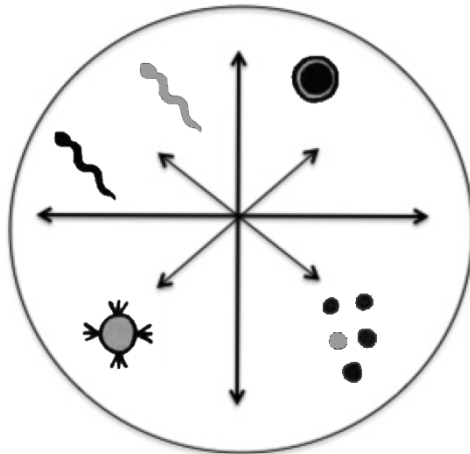


Figure 4: Compass basket pattern.

Indigenous languages are being forced into hibernation at an alarming rate. The oft-cited statistics from UNESCO, the self-appointed “intellectual agency” of the United Nations, indicate that Indigenous languages are “dying” rapidly. Many scholarly and news articles published in a diverse array of venues state something along the lines of: More than half of

the world’s 7,000 languages will be extinct within the century.¹⁶ This statistic is tricky to unpack, considering the number of world languages is difficult to count, and likely much, much higher than 7,000, as well as some of the problematic guidelines for what counts as an endangered or “dead” language. Indigenous language activists are the community members, researchers, linguists, language learners, teachers, grant writers, and archivists who do the important work of building connections between Indigenous communities and their ancestral languages. Indigenous language activists often find themselves digging through dusty boxes of abandoned field notes, painstakingly digitizing handwritten notes from long-dead linguists, and pause-play-pause-playing warbly recordings ad infinitum – this hard work, the work of engaging with an archival process, is sometimes necessary for the goals of language reclamation. Language activists create and maintain archives, as well as spend countless hours interrogating already established archives, in order to connect

¹⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8311000/8311069.stm,
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/18/world/18cnd-language.html?mcubz=3>,

Indigenous communities to their ancestral languages and nurture another generation of language speakers.

Though most Indigenous language activists do the hard work of engaging with archives as a means to an altruistic end, there are countless sites of potential violence in all stages of this engagement. In this paper, I build a theoretical framework based on the positionality of researchers and archivists to illustrate the power dynamics at play in the various modes of engaging with Indigenous language archives. I then utilize this framework to highlight sites of potential violence in Indigenous language archive engagement. For the purposes of this paper, I conceive of violence as any epistemic, emotional, psychological, reputational, physical, or spiritual harm that befalls Indigenous communities. It is my hope that a clear depiction of potential sites of violence might serve as a cautionary tale for

language activists and that this paper serves as a springboard for strategies for mitigating violence in Indigenous language reclamation projects.

The Compass

To illustrate the spectrum of engagement with Indigenous language archives, I have created the compass

in Figure 5.¹⁷ This compass is meant to serve as a theoretical framework

that aids in my articulation of different modes of engagement with the archival process, it is

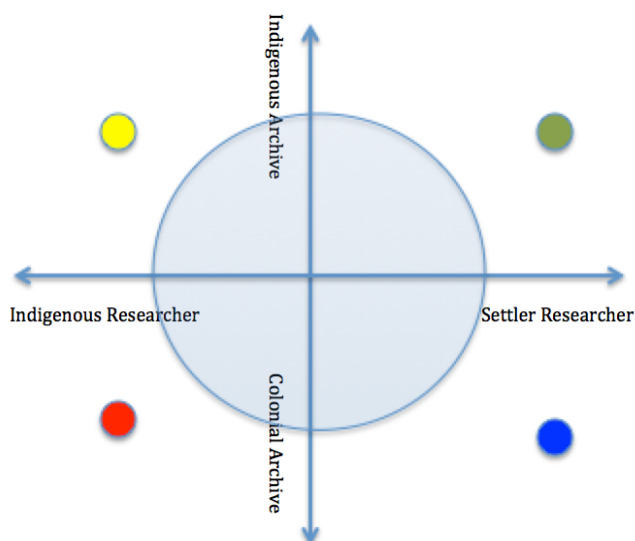


Figure 5: Compass locating example archives according to positionality of Indigenous language researchers and archive hosts.

¹⁷ My original version of this diagram was needlessly complicated, though very colorful. My thanks to Jared Talley for helping me simplify this framework.

not meant to shed any normative insights about identity, research team formation, or definitions of the archive. The x-axis of Figure 5 represents the positionality of the researcher. In this version of the compass, I have chosen to represent the positionality of the researcher as a binary spectrum – Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Though for individual researchers it will be quite clear which end of the spectrum they fall on, research teams working on collaborative language projects may have a harder time locating themselves on the spectrum if they are composed of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. It is my hope that my depiction of potential harms is useful for research teams as well as individual researchers. To determine their location on the x-axis, I suggest that research teams ask themselves these questions: Who is in charge of the language research project? A research project that is given the green light by a tribal IRB is not in and of itself an Indigenous research project; rather, it has passed through just one of the many steps required of ethical, reciprocal research concerning Indigenous communities. Is this research project guided by tribal elders? Is the research methodology being utilized by the project designed by and for the Indigenous language community in question?

As the x-axis of Figure 5 is meant to represent the positionality of the researcher, the y-axis represents the positionality of those tasked with the formal creation and maintenance of the Indigenous language archive in question. I have labeled the ends of the y-axis Indigenous archive and Colonial archive. Ann Stoler and Carolyn Hamilton provide definitions and methodologies for the interpretation of colonial archives. Ann Stoler argues that the colonial archive should be conceived of as a site of knowledge production, not as a site of knowledge-retrieval. Stoler writes, “what constitutes the archive, what form it takes, and what systems of classification and epistemology signal at specific times are (and

reflect) critical features of colonial politics and state power. The archive [is]... a repository of codified beliefs that clustered (and bore witness to) connections between secrecy, the law, and power.”¹⁸ Stoler accounts for the power structures at play in the construction and maintenance of colonial archives in the Dutch East Indies, as well as the ramifications of this accounting for archival interrogation. Carolyn Hamilton provides a trans-disciplinary examination of methodologies of archival engagement, promoting a view of archives as “simultaneously sites of storage and as practices in social life.”¹⁹ On Hamilton’s account of the archive, as with Stoler’s, archives are not mere storage facilities of history, rather, they embody ideologies of knowledge and the production of history, and thus require the most careful of engagement. Hamilton writes, “The more we understand of these conditions of production the more we will understand the limits and possibilities of archives in giving us an understanding of what happened in the past, as well as what it means to have them as inheritances in the present.”²⁰ Hamilton, like Stoler, accounts for the role of power in the creation of archived materials, and offers suggestions for the interpretation of colonial archives.

Like Stoler’s example of the Dutch East Indies archives and Hamilton’s example of the South African national archives, most Indigenous language archives collected in the settler-colonial context of what is now called the “United States,” too, are colonial archives – settler colonial archives. As Eve Tuck and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández put it, “Settler colonialism is the specific formation of colonialism in which the colonizer comes to stay,

¹⁸ Stoler, Laura Ann. (2002). “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,” *Archival Science* 2, 87.

¹⁹ Hamilton, Carolyn. (2013). “Forged and Continually Refashioned in the Crucible of Ongoing Social and Political Life: Archives and Custodial Practices as Subjects of Enquiry,” *South African History Journal* 65:1, 1.

²⁰ Hamilton, 20.

making himself the sovereign, and the arbiter of citizenship, civility, and knowing.”²¹ For the purposes of this paper, I conceive of colonial Indigenous language archives, ala Stoler and Hamilton, as sites of knowledge-production that enact a Western epistemology while simultaneously attempting to purport true facts about Indigenous languages. I will also focus on Indigenous archives, which I approach as sites of knowledge-production that have de-linked from the colonial logics of dominant archival practices.

Locating one’s research project on the y-axis may be more difficult for newer archives. In the case that a researcher has a difficult time determining if the archive in question is an Indigenous archive or a colonial archive, I suggest they ask themselves the following questions: Who designed the archive? Where is the archive hosted? Did the design of the archive require the assistance, consultation, and permissions of tribal communities? Were the voices of Indigenous people integral to the creation and maintenance of the archive in question? Again, it’s important to note that though most Indigenous language archives require the literal voices of Indigenous language speakers, this does not in and of itself make a language archive one that is created by, curated by, or maintained by Indigenous communities.

One might note that the compass in Figure 5 is firmly rooted in the identities of the researchers and archivists. It is very difficult to talk about sovereignty or reciprocity without invoking positionality, subjectivity, and the first-person. The objective, disembodied, and identity-less view-from-nowhere that is employed in much of Western science is what Walter Mignolo calls a “zero-point epistemology.”²² Mignolo links the dawn

²¹ Tuck, Eve and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández., “Curriculum, Replacement, and Settler Futurity,” *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 29:1, 73.

²² This term was initially coined by Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez.

of the zero-point epistemology with the beginning of European “modernity” and calls it the “legitimizing” force of “Europe[an] imperial/coloniality.”²³ Mignolo describes the zero-point epistemology as follows:

Once upon a time scholars assumed that the knowing subject in the disciplines is transparent, disincorporated from the known and untouched by the geo-political configuration of the world in which people are racially ranked and regions are racially configured. From a detached and neutral point of observation ... [the] *hubris of the zero point*... the knowing subject maps the world and its problems, classifies people and projects into what is good for them. Today that assumption is no longer tenable, although there are still many believers.²⁴

Western linguistics and the research methodologies thereof tend to function from a zero-point epistemology; the researcher is often asked to bury and exchange their identity for a first-person, objective view-from-nowhere. As many of us now address in our work, an objective third-person stance in research does not remove bias, rather, it tends to simply inscribe bias into objectivity. Theorists like Mignolo contrast the zero-point epistemology with de-colonial thinking, which “starts from the assumption that imperial epistemology racialized bodies and places: bodies out of rationality and places out of history.”²⁵ De-colonial thinking is in many ways the antithesis to the zero-point epistemology; it is a resistance to an oppressive schema of epistemic racism in which some people (Black women, Indigenous people, non-Christians) are categorized as non-knowers.²⁶ An important component of decolonial thinking is the process of de-linking. Mignolo writes, “De-linking means not to operate under the same assumptions although acknowledging that modern categories of thought are dominant if not hegemonic, and in many, if not in all,

²³ Walter Mignolo, “The Darker Side of the Enlightenment: A De-Colonial Reading of Kant's *Geography*,” *Reading Kant's Geography*, ed. Stuart Elden, 2011, (pp. 324-325).

²⁴ Walter Mignolo, “Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought, and Decolonial Freedom,” *Theory, Culture, & Society* 26 (7-8), 2009, 160.

²⁵ Ibid, 328.

²⁶ Ibid, 326.

of us.”²⁷ While I acknowledge that dominant modes of archival engagement exist and certainly affect the world language speakers, researchers, and activists inhabit, I choose to de-link from these modes by operating under different assumptions that those taken for granted by hegemonic approaches to research. I choose instead to operate under the assumption that the personalities, community memberships, training, lived-realities, privileges, and raced and gendered embodied experiences of researchers and archivists affect the work they produce. As a decolonial attempt to de-link from zero-point-epistemologies, I have chosen to root the organizational tools of this paper in positionality.

Examples Of Indigenous Language Archival Engagement

To make clear the assistance the compass in Figure 5 provides in depicting the spectrum of approaches to Indigenous language archive engagement, here I offer examples that fall in each quadrant of the compass in Figure 5.

Non-Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive

It is fair to assume that most archival work and most engagement therewith falls into the SE quadrant of the compass in Figure 5. The blue dot in the illustration could represent countless archival engagements in the history of anthropological linguistics, but I have chosen to briefly detail just a few. I will focus here on Raymond C. White’s engagement with the Luiseño language archives compiled by Harrington, Kroeber, and DuBois, Peter Nabokov’s engagement with BAE archives in the Smithsonian pertaining to the Acoma pueblo people, and Pamela Innes’ engagement with archived language notes and recordings of Dr. Mary R. Haas housed at the American Philosophical Society.

²⁷ Ibid, 339.

Raymond C. White, a non-Indigenous researcher affiliated with UC Berkeley, engages with the archived materials of John Peabody Harrington, Alfred Kroeber, and Clarence DuBois, as well as produced now-archived field research of his own.²⁸ White's work, most of which is published in the mid-1960s, is a case of a non-Indigenous researcher's engagement with colonial Indigenous language archives. Throughout White's work, there are explicit details of Luiseño ceremonies and he consistently employs Western normative dualisms like man/woman and animate/inanimate to 'make sense' of Luiseño cosmologies. At one point, White writes, "Chief Rejinaldo Pachito of Pauma very generously undertook to teach me the basic concepts of the San Luiseño religion in spite of the difficulties and criticisms he knew to be facing him. In the sense that this paper is technical in vocabulary and treatment, he is disappointed, for few of his people will be able to use it."²⁹ White makes clear that his audience is other non-Indigenous scholars interested in doing research *on* Indigenous communities.

More recent, but just as problematic, is the work of Peter Nabokov. Nabokov engages with archived language and cultural materials of the Acoma Pueblo. These archives, originally housed in the Smithsonian, are reiterated with analysis in several public domain publications, including "Origin Myth of Acoma and Other Records" by Matthew Stirling (1923). Stirling, the head of the Bureau of American Ethnography (BAE) in the 1920s, gathered much of his source material from Edward Proctor Hunt, an Acoma man who had a contentious relationship with his community. Nabokov's engagement with the colonial archive created by Stirling and his BAE associates resulted in a new 2015

²⁸ I do not cite White's work here explicitly because I take serious the potential for spirit violence I see him producing in his work. See the sections of this chapter on spirit violence and spirit care as self-care for more details.

²⁹ Take my word for it.

publication of the “Origin Myth.” Nabokov’s publication has been met with serious condemnation and by Acoma Pueblo leaders. Fred S. Vallo Sr., the governor of the Acoma Pueblo, writes:

Hunt never had the permission of the pueblo to impart any Acoma sacred information to anyone, much less to the Bureau of Ethnology for publication. The pueblo has always considered this publication by the Bureau of Ethnology to be a fundamental breach of trust by the United States. It is a glaring example of the unfortunate and ugly incidents of the late 19th century involving archaeologists and anthropologists [...]³⁰

Vallo and other tribal leaders ask that this book not be purchased, “*The Origin Myth of the Pueblo of Acoma* is the intellectual property of the pueblo, not the property of the United States, and surely not the property of Hunt or Nabokov to reproduce.”³¹ Nabokov’s engagement with the colonial Indigenous language archives of Stirling, the BAE, and the Smithsonian is an example of the type of research represented by the blue dot in the SE quadrant of Figure 5.

Also recent, but not nearly as alarming as the other examples in this section, is Pamela Innes’ “Ethical problems in archival research.” Innes outlines her recommendations for the inclusion of rich, context heavy metadata in colonial linguistic archives, highlighting that this is an ethical concern, rather than a merely practical concern about access.³² Innes works with the Mvskogee language, “currently spoken by about 6000 middle-aged and elderly people of the Muskogee (Creek) and Seminole Nations in Oklahoma and the Seminole Tribe in Florida.”³³ Innes works with already-archived materials consisting in “notes and recordings of Dr. Mary R. Haas. The notes, notebooks, and recordings are

³⁰ Vallo Sr, Fred S. (2015). “New ‘Origin’ Publication is Affront to Acoma,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, URL: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/my_view/new-origin-publication-is-affront-to-acoma/article_7d58156b-7d45-5154-aaec-36a3829b3d30.html#.VgQfkDKc0Wk.facebook

³¹ Vallo (2015).

³² Innes, Pamela. (2010). “Ethical problems in archival research: Beyond accessibility,” *Language and Communication*, 30,, 199.

³³ Innes, 199.

housed at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia and, as such, are within the public domain.”³⁴ Innes’ work is also an example of a non-Indigenous researcher engaging with a colonial Indigenous language archive. Innes not only interrogates an already-established colonial language archive, her work also includes maintaining and updating the archive.

Non-Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive

Though the number of Indigenous-led archives seem small when compared to those led and housed by non-Indigenous entities, I have stumbled across several instances of note-worthy accounts of non-Indigenous researchers’ engagements with Indigenous archives. Pamela Innes, in addition to working with a colonial archive (detailed below), is involved in collaborative projects with Muskogee speakers and learners of Mvskogee to create a new archive of the language. Innes is a non-Indigenous researcher who has suggested several ideas for ethical engagement with Indigenous and colonial archives.³⁵

Another example of work represented by the green dot in the NE quadrant of Figure 5 is the work of Eric Elliot, my beloved language professor, a non-Indigenous linguist, collaborated with Mrs. Vallaina Hyde, a Rincon Luiseño elder, to create several dictionaries and source material on the Luiseño language.³⁶ Dr. Elliot is now partnered with the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians to teach several language classes and to create many new source materials on the language.³⁷ Katherine Spilde writes: “Pechanga leaders estimate that only about 25 of the Tribe’s members are fluent in Luiseño. In order to

³⁴ Innes, 199.

³⁵ Innes, Pamela. (2010). “Ethical problems in archival research: Beyond accessibility,” *Language and Communication*, 30,

³⁶ Hyde, Villiana and Eric Elliot. (1994). *Yumáyk Yumáyk: Long Ago*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

³⁷ Spilde Katherine. (2004). “Cultivating New Opportunities: Tribal Government Gaming on the Pechanga Reservation,” The Harvard Project On American Indian Economic Development. URL: <https://hpaied.org/sites/default/files/publications/NIGACaseStudyPechanga.pdf>

reverse this disturbing language loss among their people, the Pechanga Tribe hired a full-time linguist, Eric Elliott, to teach the Luiseño language on the Reservation. Under a five-year agreement with UCR, the Tribe pays the University, the official employer of Elliott.”³⁸ The Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, and the cultural resources department thereof, exercises control over most of the documents Dr. Elliot produces.³⁹ These projects, those of Innes and Elliot, fall into the NE quadrant of Figure 5.

One final example of non-Indigenous researchers’ engagement with Indigenous archives is the work of Leanne Hinton, one of the most important linguists working on southern California Indigenous languages. Hinton, a non-Indigenous scholar at UCLA, has published several crucial texts regarding language reclamation and works closely with Indigenous communities in California to revitalize their languages. While most of Hinton’s work focuses on the merits of Master-Apprentice programs for Indigenous language speakers and learners, she has also participated in the creation of Indigenous language archives by and for Indigenous communities. She theorizes about the role of Indigenous language archives and about the ethics of collaboration between non-Indigenous linguists and Indigenous language speakers in several places.

Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive

In her research for her 2014 book *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* and her 2015 article “Extermination of the Joyas,” Debora Miranda (Chumash, Esselen, etc) engaged with several primary sources concerning the California Mission system. As she notes, “ colonizers like to take notes....” Many of the notes Miranda studied were fieldnotes from the John Peabody Harrington collection. Harrington was an eccentric linguist who collected “close to a million

³⁸ Ibid., 2004, 35

³⁹ Eric Elliot, personal communication.

pages of notes on more than 90 different languages, as well as numerous recordings and artifacts.”⁴⁰ Leanne Hinton, one of California’s (and California’s people and California’s languages’) most important linguists, describes Harrington as “one of the most important linguists in California history.”⁴¹ Harrington’s fieldnotes and recordings, many of which are still in the process of being digitized, are archived in the Smithsonian. Miranda looks closely at Harrington’s fieldnotes pertaining to the term “joya,” a derisive term coined by the Spanish colonizers for California Indigenous communities’ third gender.

Martha Macri (Cherokee) and James Sarmento (Shasta) detail the policies and procedures in place to protect the privacy of John Peabody Harrington’s language informants, many of whom are the great grandparents of living tribal members.⁴² Macri and Sarmento emphasize the importance of limiting access to the Harrington collection in cases where information in Harrington’s notes contains potentially damaging gossip, hearsay, sacred stories and songs, and the locations of ancestral villages.⁴³ The concerns Macri and Sarmento highlight indicate that they see the ramifications of their work as researchers and archivists to be affecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.

Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive

In the summer of 2017, I participated in a community project that involved revisiting a tribally published document called “The Children’s Luiseño Language Workbook.”⁴⁴ The book features a small dictionary with hand-drawn illustrations, several

⁴⁰ Leanne Hinton. (1994). *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages*. (Heydey Books: Berkeley, CA), 195.

⁴¹ Hinton, 195.

⁴² Macri, Martha and James Sarmento. (2010). “Respecting privacy: Ethical and pragmatic considerations,” *Language and Communication* 3(30)

⁴³ Macri and Sarmento

⁴⁴ My work on this project was generously funded by the Engaged Philosophy Internship Program (EPIP) at Michigan State University.

language activities like crosswords and word scrambles, and a short glossary in the back. Though there is no publication date on the workbook, we believe it was created and printed sometime in the mid 1970s. Almost every family in La Jolla has, or at one point had, a copy of the workbook, nick-named “The Yellow Book” in their homes, and the copies I have seen of the book are usually lovingly scrawled with crayons, though they may be covered in dust. This document is cherished in our community. According to the publication information on the first few pages of the book, The Yellow Book was co-created by a group of La Jolla Indian Education Center staff, a parent committee, and language experts Jim Martinez and Annie Burton. Not recorded in the book, but remembered by several community members, Uncle Jim and Auntie Annie volunteered their time and assistance with the creation of the Yellow Book, and the book was created at their insistence.

The summer of 2017, I interned for Avellaka, a Native Women’s advocacy group co-founded by my cousin Wendy Schlater. Knowing about my passion for our language, it was Wendy’s idea to task me with revisiting The Yellow Book. The goal, she said, was to update the book so our youth could use it and relate to it (and our language) in the same way Wendy’s generation had back in the 70s. At the time of the original Yellow Book’s authorship, the Luiseño language was not alphabetized nor did standardized spellings of Luiseño words exist across the many bands of Luiseño heritage speakers and language learners. Wendy, and my other cousin-colleagues at Avellaka, tasked me with introducing standardized spellings, additional words, and re-worked illustrations into the Yellow Book. I was also asked to teach language classes that summer, and my work with the Yellow Book greatly informed my lesson plans – though my training in the language is in a different

dialect from my direct ancestors, it was important to me that the classes I taught featured the dialect preserved in the Yellow Book.

I very much conceive of my experience re-visiting the Yellow Book as archival engagement. Uncle Jim and Auntie Annie curated an engagement with our language in the form of a published, accessible document. My work with the Yellow Book, I believe, is an example of an Indigenous researcher's engagement with an Indigenous archive, and falls in the northwest corner of the compass in Figure 5.

The Violence: Sites of Violence in Indigenous Language Archival Engagement

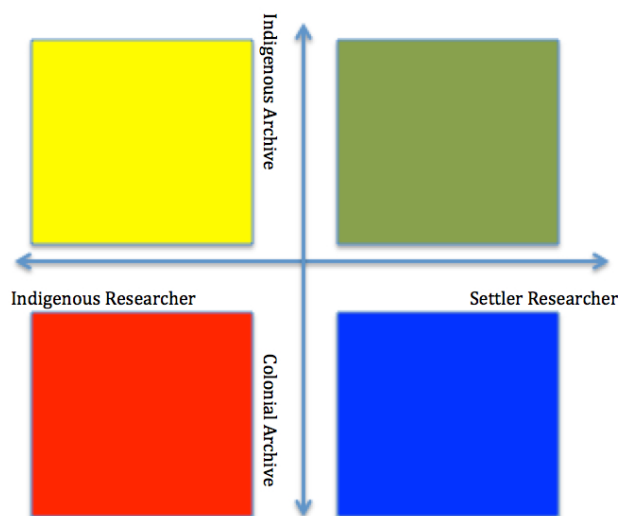


Figure 6: Compass highlighting quadrants according to positionality of Indigenous language researchers and archive hosts.

Violence in the SE Quadrant: Non-Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive

As mentioned in the previous section, the engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with settler colonial archives is very common and likely constitutes the vast majority of canonical anthropological linguistics. As in White's work with colonial Luiseño

language archives, Nobokov's work with colonial archives of Acoma language and cultural materials, and Innes' work on Mvskogee, there are a multitude of sites of potential violence in the engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with colonial archives, many of which I do not have the space to focus on in great detail here. For ease of explication, I will focus on three forms of violence; the non-Indigenous researcher's engagement with colonial

archives carries a risk of enacting harm against Indigenous communities through the epistemic oppression, specifically in the form of contributory injustice, epistemic theft and appropriation, and the imposition of the access dilemma.

Broadly, non-Indigenous researchers' creation and maintenance of colonial archives lends itself to the perpetuation of epistemic oppression. Kristie Dotson describes epistemic oppression as "persistent epistemic exclusion that hinders one's contribution to knowledge production."⁴⁵ Dotson defines epistemic exclusion as "unwarranted infringement on the epistemic agency of knowers."⁴⁶ Epistemic agency is the "ability to utilize persuasively shared epistemic resources within a given community of knowers in order to participate in knowledge production and, if required, the revision of those same resources."⁴⁷ When non-Indigenous researchers create or maintain a colonial archive, they systematically compromise the epistemic agency of Indigenous people, depriving them of the ability to participate in knowledge production. What's more, the knowledge production that Indigenous communities are barred from in this particular form of engagement is knowledge production concerning the very identities and knowledge systems of their own communities.

One particular form of epistemic injustice modeled by the engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with colonial archives is contributory injustice. Contributory injustice occurs, according to Dotson, when an epistemic agent intentionally uses a misplaced or biased hermeneutical schema to interpret another epistemic agent's

⁴⁵ Dotson, Kristie. (2014). "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* 28(2), 115.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 115.

⁴⁷ Dotson, 115.

purported knowledge.⁴⁸ White's work is a paradigm case of contributory injustice. Among other violently imposed hermeneutical schemas, White imports Western conceptions of gender in the form of a man/woman binary as well as an animate/inanimate binary to analyze Luiseño knowledge systems, including our traditional spiritual practices like ceremonial songs, dances, and funeral rituals. Many southern California Indigenous communities, and many Indigenous communities in general, have vastly more complex conceptions of gender than is captured by an inherently oppressive catch-all binary. The languages of southern California Indigenous communities, as well as other Uto-Aztecan languages, accommodate third, fourth, and fifth genders, and well as gender-less cosmologies.⁴⁹ However, White has imported a Western gender binary in his documentation of the Luiseño language, rendering the knowledge of other genders and knowers of other genders silent. White also imports a Western conception of animacy/inanimacy in his analysis of Luiseño nouns, which undermines the unique features of Luiseño language, which does not treat animacy and inanimacy as a binary, and distorts the complex Luiseño cosmology connected to spirit, knowledge, and life. The importing of these Western schemas onto Luiseño language and knowledge systems is not a mere case of innocent 'mistranslation,' rather, it is a form of violence that attributes oppressive relations to Luiseño community structures. Though these oppressive and inaccurate normative dualisms are present in the Harrington archive that White engages with, White further inscribes these mischaracterizations as fact by reiterating and refining

⁴⁸ Dotson, 31.

⁴⁹ âpihtawikosisân. (2012). Language, Culture, and Two-Spirit Identity from URL: <http://apihtawikosisan.com/2012/03/language-culture-and-two-spirit-identity/> ; Briner, Katherin. (Forthcoming). "Hina tan̄ han̄hutui?: What are we going to do?" *Great Plains Journal*, issue 50/51 (2015-2016)

them.

The White example might be too clear-cut as a case of contributory injustice; it is rather obvious that White doesn't conceive of Luiseño people as knowers. (Afterall, he does put "knowledge" in quotation marks throughout his work perhaps to signal that despite what his Luiseño informants purport, what they possess is not actually knowledge proper). But non-Indigenous researchers far more friendly than White can make mistakes just as egregious in their engagement with colonial archives. Contemporary linguists engaging with archives like Harrington's, extract the biases of Harrington and reiterate them in their own research, further stigmatizing Indigenous communities and their lifeways.

Non-Indigenous researchers engaging with colonial archives also run the risk of committing epistemic theft and appropriation. Epistemic theft and appropriation, as concepts, reflect a relationship with knowledge that is not usually on the radar of non-Indigenous academics. In the example I detailed in the previous section regarding Nabokov's engagement with colonial BAE archives collected by Stirling, Acoma leaders charge Nabokov with epistemic theft. Hunt, the informant paid by Stirling, did not follow the traditional Acoma protocols for knowledge sharing, according to tribal leaders.⁵⁰ Fred S. Vallo Sr., the governor of the Acoma Pueblo, writes:

Hunt never had the permission of the pueblo to impart any Acoma sacred information to anyone, much less to the Bureau of Ethnology for publication. The pueblo has always considered this publication by the Bureau of Ethnology to be a fundamental breach of trust by the United States. It is a glaring example of the unfortunate and ugly incidents of the late 19th century involving archaeologists and anthropologists [.]⁵¹

⁵⁰ Vallo Sr, Fred S. (2015). "New 'Origin' Publication is Affront to Acoma," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, URL: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/my_view/new-origin-publication-is-affront-to-acoma/article_7d58156b-7d45-5154-aaec-36a3829b3d30.html#.VgQfkDKc0Wk.facebook

⁵¹ Vallo (2015)

Vallo Sr. goes on to liken Nabokov to Frank Hamilton Cushing, the 19th century anthropologist infamous for setting disciplinary precedent for looting the sacred sites of Indigenous communities. Other Acoma leaders compare Nabokov's work to "grave robbers who sell Native artifacts illegally."⁵² Brian Vallo, the governor's son and a former director of cultural programming, says, "This story belongs to us. It is our intellectual property... I would ask you all to not buy this book."⁵³ These sentiments from Acoma community members show a relationship with knowledge and sacred stories that differs greatly from Western conceptions of knowledge. There are different protocols for sharing and different conceptions of authorship, both of which are affected by considerations of sacredness that are not accommodated by Western modes of knowledge engagement.

When Acoma community members accused Nabokov in-person of epistemic theft, "his lawyers point to the fact the original book, 'The Origin Myth of Acoma Pueblo and Other Records' had been published in 1946 by Matthew B. Stirling and had been in the public domain."⁵⁴ Nabokov's lawyers' reliance on the public domain status of Stirling's archive show clearly the reproducible violence inherent in colonial archives. This violence is structural and easily reproducible. The colonial archive itself is public domain, and now that it's digitized, it's essentially copy-and-pastable, primed for reiteration. There is also very little recourse for victims of epistemic theft and appropriation. Though the Acoma people liken Nabokov's behavior to grave-robbing and intellectual property theft, there are

⁵² Lozada, Lucas Iberico. (2016). "The Professor and the Pueblo: Was the disclosure of Acoma traditions exploitation or scholarship?" Santa Fe Reporter, URL:

<http://www.sfreporter.com/news/coverstories/2016/01/26/the-professor-and-the-pueblo/>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Jacobs, Alex. "Don't Buy This Book! Acoma Pueblo vs Peter Nabokov: When the Sacred is Made Profane," Indian Country Today Media URL: <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/dont-buy-this-book-acoma-pueblo-vs-peter-nabokov-when-the-sacred-is-made-profane/>

no legal avenues for stopping the publication and dissemination of these sacred stories because the Stirling's book and BAE's archive is public domain.

In addition to producing contributory injustice and committing epistemic theft, non-Indigenous linguists partnered with universities who house colonial Indigenous language archives often encounter what I'm calling 'the access dilemma.' This dilemma consists in two bad options: L1. make colonial Indigenous language archives accessible to all or L2. restrict access to colonial Indigenous language archives. The reasoning for L1 takes many forms. Some linguists argue that Indigenous language archives, in their analog form, are inaccessible to Indigenous communities and interested scholars, and that in the interests of language revitalization, access should be opened to all through the use of digitization.⁵⁵ The pitfall of this approach is that sacred songs and stories that are preserved in Indigenous language archives may end up in the hands of people who will not engage with them respectfully.⁵⁶

The second option, to restrict access to Indigenous language archives, is often justified by well-meaning concerns about sharing sacred songs and stories, as well as by concerns about sharing the locations of ancestral villages, since these knowledges can be used to harm Indigenous communities.⁵⁷ The pitfall of restricting access to Indigenous language archives is that this requires the universities and archivists charged with maintaining Indigenous language archives to serve as gatekeepers who have to determine who rightfully deserves access. In serving as a gatekeeper, the archivists in charge of access

⁵⁵ Iseke-Barnes, Judy and Deborah Danard (2007a). "Indigenous Knowledges and Worldview: Representations and the Internet," in *Information Technology and Indigenous People*, eds Laurel Evelyn Dyson, Max Hendriks, and Stephen Grant, IGI Global; Innes, Pamela. (2010). "Ethical problems in archival research: Beyond accessibility," *Language and Communication*, 30, 198-203.

⁵⁶ Recall White, Cushing, and Nabokov.

⁵⁷ Macri and Sarmento (2010), Innes (2010).

to the archived language materials create a spiritual dependency relationship between themselves and the Indigenous communities who desire access to the materials. By spiritual dependency relationship, I mean a relationship in which genocidally-imposed scarcity requires Indigenous peoples to maintain contact with non-Indigenous entities (universities, researchers, agency) in order to access their own cultural means for spiritual well-being.

In encountering the access dilemma, non-Indigenous researchers who maintain colonial archives are positioned to commit structural violence against Indigenous communities no matter which option they choose. L1 results in sharing materials that should not be shared. L2 results in the failure to share materials with people who should rightfully have access to them as well as the fostering of a spiritual dependency relationship.

Violence in the NE Quadrant: Non-Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive

The NE quadrant of Figure 6 represents non-Indigenous researchers' engagement with Indigenous archives. In the examples cases of this quadrant in the previous section, I briefly described the work of Pamela Innes, Eric Elliott, and Leanne Hinton. Though these projects engage with archives that are controlled and maintained by Indigenous communities, it is certainly possible that some of the violences similar to those perpetuated in the SE quadrant (namely contributory injustice, epistemic theft and appropriation) can be perpetuated from this location as well. Indigenous communities pursuing the reclamation of their languages might hire or collaborate with non-Indigenous researchers to aid in documentation or data collection. In scenarios like this, non-Indigenous researchers might still perpetuate contributory injustice by importing the Western

methodologies of their training in formal linguistics. For example, Innes, in her work with the Mvskoke language, writes that she realized early on in her research that community members often insisted that she work with Mvskoke-speaking women. She writes, “Men were receptive and responsive to my questions, but they kept pushing me to speak with their wives whenever I called upon them.”⁵⁸ Innes continues, “Initially, drawing upon my Anglo-American feminist background, I thought this practice reflected a gendered division of labor and knowledge that limited me to working with Muskogee women[.]”⁵⁹ Innes notes here that her first instinct was to assume that she had encountered gendered division of labor, perhaps even sexism. Fortunately, in this case, Innes does not retain her misplaced hermeneutical resources, Anglo-American feminism, for interpreting the knowledge and language systems of the Muskogee collaborators, but this example shows that contributory injustice is possible. It is also, of course, possible that non-Indigenous researchers could be invited to collaborate on projects with an Indigenous community, but then take and share sacred stories without permission.

Contributory injustice and epistemic theft are forms of violence that can be perpetuated in the NE quadrant, as is another form of violence that springs from attempted collaboration: thin sense of reciprocity. A commitment to reciprocity is an expected mode of engagement in many Indigenous-led research projects, but the Western academy has a tendency to encourage a thin sense of this concept. Estrella Torrez writes, “Reciprocity is often forgotten in the research process or is reduced to something along these lines: I (the researcher) have given you (the community) resources (materials, funds, volunteers, etc.)

⁵⁸ Innes, Pamela. (2015). “Gender and its role in shaping my understanding of the Mvskoke linguistic world,” Gender and Linguistic Fieldwork Abstract, URL: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/gender-linguistic-fieldwork/innes.html>

⁵⁹ Innes (2015)

and in return I have gained information to complete my research goals.”⁶⁰ This reduced form of reciprocity is, according to Torrez, built into university-encouraged modes of engagement, which can result in “students [or researchers] conflating community-building engagement with service-learning experiences, where the objective prioritizes student [or researcher] academic needs over those of the community.”⁶¹ This thin conceptions of reciprocity is evident in the way Leanne Hinton talks about the stakes of engagement between non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities in the creation and maintenance of Indigenous archives. When describing the “professional conflicts” between Indigenous communities and the non-Indigenous researchers collaborating with a community on language projects, Hinton writes “It is important that both groups understand each others’ goals and take them into account in their decisions on whether to work together and how to focus that work.”⁶² This recommendation is, of course, important, but Hinton goes on to describe what is at stake for each community; she writes:

New generations of linguists being trained at universities must be taught to understand and respect the needs and goals of the communities in which they will work. And it is also important for the members of the communities who can find use for linguists to understand what it is that linguistics students must accomplish before they can get jobs.⁶³

The deflated sense of reciprocity that Torrez is concerned about is evident in Hinton’s weighing of the stakes. While Hinton is clearly suggesting that linguists need to be instructed and educated about the goals of collaborative projects, she also seems to suggest that Indigenous communities need to be concerned about the career-building potential of linguists. The reciprocal, in a thin sense, trade off here appears to be that the Indigenous

⁶⁰ Torrez, 9. (Forthcoming, 2018). “Responsibility, reciprocity, and respect: Storytelling as a means of university-community engagement. M. Castañeda and J. Krupczynski. *Learning from diverse Latina/o Communities: Social justice approaches to civic engagement*. NY, NY: Columbia University Press.

⁶¹ Torrez, 10.

⁶² Hinton, *Flutes of Fire*, 251.

⁶³ Hinton, *Flutes of Fire*, 251.

communities get some assistance in the maintenance of a language that has been made scarce by genocide, and the linguist gets to make an academic career off of their work on a language that has been made scarce by genocide. This approach to research, which is encouraged by the structures put in place by Western academic standards, treats Indigenous communities and their language reclamation projects like mere stepping stones on a path toward academic fame for the linguist.

Violence in the SW Quadrant: Indigenous Researcher, Colonial Archive

In the preceding descriptions of potential violence in the SE and NE quadrants, I focused on the violence that can be perpetuated by non-Indigenous researchers engaging with colonial and Indigenous archives, respectively. The SW quadrant of the of Figure 6 represents the engagement of an Indigenous researcher with a colonial archive, and here I am interested in detailing encountered violence rather than produced violence. Here, encountered violence simply means the harm that can befall an Indigenous researcher in her engagement with colonial archives. Some of the encountered violences that spring from the SW quadrant of Figure 6 are the labor of memory work and spirit violence.

Speaking from some of my own experiences, engaging with colonial archives in my research has been very painful. In the archives of Edward H. Davis, housed at the San Diego History Center, I found pictures of my great, great, great grandmother, Joaquina Nahwilet, described as an “artifact” and a “sqaw.” In the archives pertaining to the Carlisle Boarding school, I have found records of my family members who died or mysteriously disappeared. I have found the locations of mass graves at the San Luis Rey Mission where many of my ancestors vanished. Seeing my family members stripped of their humanity by the curators who create and maintain these archives has been excruciating, but being subjected to these

pains in my capacity as a researcher who is expected to generate scholarship is emotionally and spiritually exhausting. My experiences with this work are not unique. *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*, Kristin Weld names this painful phenomenon “memory work.” Weld takes great care to emphasize the emotional labor that goes into working closely with an archive that contains information about the researchers’ families. Weld calls this work “memory work,” connoting that while the discovery of a family member’s death might bring emotional closure, great pain, rage, or denial, a researcher’s work with an archive is often also their day job. In this sense, some activists who work with archives have a “double burden” of archival research; in “performing contemporary memory labor,” they are the initial victims of the violence of the state, but are also re-traumatized as they work in the archives.⁶⁴

Indigenous researchers who engage with colonial Indigenous language archives are also subjected to the violence of memory work. In her engagement with the Harrington papers, Deborah Miranda expressed the weight of memory work. She writes,

The difficulties of using non-Indian archives to tell an Indian story are epic: biases, agendas, cultural pride, notions of Manifest Destiny, and the desire to ‘own’ history mean that one can never simply read and accept even the most basic non-Native detail without multiple investigations into who collected the information, what their motivations were, who preserved the information and their motivations, the use of rhetorical devices ... Learning how to ‘re-read’ the archive through the eyes of a mixed-blood California Indian lesbian poet and scholar was an education in and of itself[.]⁶⁵

Miranda expresses the exhaustion of working with colonial archives and explains how approaching these archives as a ‘mixed-blood California Indian lesbian poet and scholar’ required her to learn a way of engaging with colonial archives that is new and violent. L.

⁶⁴ Weld, Kristin. (2014). *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*, Duke University Press, 163.

⁶⁵ Miranda, 255.

Frank Manriquez (Tongva- Acjachemen), a scholar, artist, and language activist, also depicts the emotional labor of memory work. In her visit to the archives at Musee

L'Homme, She writes,

At the Musee de L'Homme, I walked into this room where there were boxes and boxes and boxes of my peoples' lives, and they were like muffled crying coming from these shelves and these boxes, and it was just heart-breaking. It was incredibly awful, just plain awful. So here I am with these French people who speak no English and me who speaks no French, just sobbing. But these pieces and I became friends. I tried to touch as much as I possibly could... We've been gone for so long.⁶⁶

Manriquez's public and emotional reaction to engaging with a colonial archive that contains the stories and objects of her ancestors is a symptom of painful labor she undertakes as a survivor of genocide and simultaneously a scholar. It is not clear that this form of labor is accounted for, or even could be accounted for, in a tenure-review letter or a paycheck.

Connected in many ways to memory work, another form of violence that Indigenous researchers encounter when engaging with colonial Indigenous language archive is spirit violence. Pamela Innes details the potential for spirit violence in engagement with colonial archives. Innes writes that in her work with Mvskoke speakers "to prepare Mvskoke language materials for public access," experiences with community members "brought to light narratives within the corpus that members of the speech community consider to be dangerous to potential audience members."⁶⁷ The danger that the community members made Innes aware of comes from the power of the texts in question, as well as the lack of context around the original recording of the stories. Of the four stories the consultants identifies as "inappropriate for certain audiences," two were "unsuitable for men to hear,

⁶⁶ Manriquez, L.Frank. (2001). "There Are Other Ways of Getting Tradition," *Museum Anthropology* 24, nos. 2/3, 41.

⁶⁷ Innes, 198.

though these were not thought to be dangerous for men if they did come across them” and two were “extremely dangerous for contextually-uninformed men and all women to contact, either through reading or hearing. They became so uncomfortable with these narratives that we ceased work on them immediately.”⁶⁸ Innes goes on to write, that some of the risks of contact with the narratives in question were “emotional troubles, mental illness (specifically dementia), relationship problems, and heart disease[.]”⁶⁹ The potential spirit violence of encountering these narratives should have been taken seriously by the linguist who initially recorded them. Innes’ collaborators speculate that the informant who provided these narratives for the archive either used medicines to keep himself and his audience protected from the spirit violence, or he was unconcerned about afflicting his audience with spirit violence. Of the latter possibility, Innes writes,

...in such a situation, the narrator might have related this narrative without taking any ceremonial safeguards because he either did not think the power of Muskogee ceremonial narratives would apply to non-Muskogees or he did not care whether or not the narratives worked on non-Muskogees. In effect, he might have been intent on unleashing destructive forces on members of the colonizing society. In doing this, the narrator may have been happy with the lack of attention given to Muskogee cultural beliefs by most within the colonizing society, for this insensitivity would lead non- Muskogee readers to have no fear about reciting and reading such texts with some frequency.⁷⁰

Innes collaborators became so uncomfortable that they insisted that the team cease working with the narratives. The team of Muskogee researchers appear to be very aware of the possibility of encountering spirit violence in colonial archives, and Innes recommends that linguists collecting new language samples should include metadata about potential spirit violence and information about whether or not narrators have used ceremonial safeguards. Potentially dangerous archival materials that have already been collected

⁶⁸ Innes, 199.

⁶⁹ Innes, 201.

⁷⁰ Innes, 201

without metadata presumably exist in any or all colonial Indigenous language archives, meaning researchers could stumble across them in any routine archival engagement.

The power of spirit violence in a Mvskoke world-view is exacerbated by written and digitally recorded language archives. Innes writes,

By putting these into writing, their power has become unending. In the Mvskoke world view, every time that someone reads the narrative — thereby ‘saying’ it in her/his head — or says it aloud, it is reawakened and the force contained within it is unleashed. The problem is that the force of language is undirected and, unless used and produced wisely, may cause harm and disease for those who produce it. Because my consultants do not have the means to govern and direct the power of two of these narratives, they thought it best to avoid them entirely, and so we have.⁷¹

To protect against potential spirit violence, many Indigenous language researchers, myself included, engage in cautious research with colonial Indigenous language archives since it is not usually clear what it is that we are about to encounter. This spirit care, which sometimes includes ceremonial safeguards and the use of traditional medicines, is usually not respected or accommodated by non-Indigenous researchers, archivists, and archival venues. Like the Mvskoke community, other Indigenous communities have protocols for sharing knowledge, especially sacred knowledge, that make researchers prone to spirit violence if the archives are engaged in the wrong season or while the researcher is on her moontime, pregnant, or nursing. Because colonial Indigenous language archives are created and maintained by non-Indigenous archivists, the risk of spirit violence for researchers is very high.

Violence in the NW Quadrant: Indigenous Researcher, Indigenous Archive

When an Indigenous researcher creates, maintains, or interrogates an Indigenous archive, it is certainly possible perpetuate violence. In particular, I aim to illustrate two

⁷¹ Innes, 201.

potential forms of potential violence: spectres of colonization and the reproduction of cultural resource disparity.

That a researcher on a given language project is Indigenous, and that an archive is created and controlled by Indigenous communities does not guarantee that their engagement will be immune from producing or reiterating violence. Many Indigenous researchers, myself included, have been trained by the Western academy and have become experts in Western methodologies and practices – tools that were sharpened and refined in the attempted eradication of our ancestors and their knowledge systems. Because colonial logics and violence are pernicious, I offer an example of my own potentially violent engagement with an Indigenous language archive of my own community with the hope that it can be a learning experience for others who find themselves in the NW quadrant of Figure 6. As mentioned in the introductory section, the Yellow Book is a Luiseño language archive I worked on in the summer of 2017. This archive, the Yellow Book, is vibrant⁷² – it is part of our community’s understanding of itself, and infused with the spirit of Uncle Jim and Auntie Annie’s love for our language and culture. When I was tasked with working with the Yellow Book, community members quickly approached me with concerns about what violence I might be doing to The Yellow Book by ‘rewriting it.’ Members of my community were apprehensive about the standardized spellings I was tasked with incorporating into the book, asking important questions like: Which dialect of chamtéela is the model for standardization? From whom did I learn the language and how does that affect my relationship with the ways to pronounce certain words? What about words in the book that

⁷² Here, I pseudo-borrow from new materialist Jane Bennett, though in an important contrast to new materialists, this understanding of vibrancy I am importing is old – ancient even – and not averse to spiritual conceptions of the world.

I had never heard before? How can I include pronunciation guidance without alienating community members who do not have training in formal linguistics? How can I work to preserve and reclaim the dialect that is specific to La Jolla? What do I do in situations where my translation of the words differs from that of Uncle Jim and Auntie Annie?

One instance in particular resonated with me: a word in our beloved Yellow Book, “tóowush” was translated as “devil,” and even included a little hand drawn image of a cartoonish, but very Christianized and (kind of scary), depiction of Satan. This immediately struck me as odd since I had been taught that the word “tóowush” was a very important word to our spiritual practices and meant something like “spirit.” I had even known people to name their children different variants of “Tóowush” – certainly these community members weren’t naming their children “Devil.” Knowing that the purpose of revisiting the Yellow Book was to make it accessible and relevant for the current generation of young language learners, it made me very uncomfortable to think that my language students, or someday, my own children, might learn to associate the term “tóowush” with a Christian demon and Christianized demonization of our traditional spiritual practices. I was uncomfortable with the translation in the book, but even more uncomfortable with the idea of changing it. It became very clear to me that under no circumstances could I take on the responsibilities of changing or maintaining this language archive by myself, but I also shared my community’s apprehensions about collaborating with linguists who were not from my community.

My work with the Yellow Book, though it was an instance of an Indigenous researcher engaging with an Indigenous archive, was not immune from the production of violence. It was possible for me to harm my living community members, their relationship

with our language, and our knowledge systems. Another form of violence that can be perpetuated in the NW quadrant of Figure 6 is the reproduction of cultural resource disparities. Though this issue was only peripheral in my work with the Yellow Book, similar projects in the NW quadrant of Figure 6 will likely stumble across tensions between Indigenous communities who share a heritage language and culture, but are divided up into separate federally recognized tribes. In the creation of a new archive, Indigenous researchers run the risk of privileging tribal sovereignty over linguistic sovereignty. This can result in continued cultural resource disparity.

Conclusion

I have detailed several sites of potential violence in the archival process. I began by introducing the infrastructure of a theoretical framework and provided several examples of archival engagement that clarify the axes of positionality that organize the compass in Figures 5 and 6. The SE quadrant of Figure 6, representing the engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with colonial archives, is a site of violence in the form of contributory injustice, epistemic theft and appropriation, and the imposition of the access dilemma. The NE quadrant, representing the engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with Indigenous archives, is a site of contributory injustice, epistemic theft, and thin conceptions of reciprocity. The SW quadrant, representing the engagement of Indigenous researchers with colonial archives, is a site of violence in the form of memory work and spirit violence. The NW quadrant, representing the engagement of Indigenous researchers with Indigenous archives, is a site of violence in the form of spectres of colonization and the reproduction of cultural resource disparities.

The sites of potential violence I've highlighted in this essay become visible, mappable, and predictable when the positionalities of the researchers and archivists are exposed, as they are in the x and y axes of Figures 5 and 6. What this shows is that these forms of violence do not spring from vacuums or from the hateful whims of individuals, rather, these forms of violence spring from inequities imposed by oppressive power structures like racism and settler colonialism. My hope is that since these forms of violence are visible, mappable, and predictable, the structures that make them possible are also made visible. I hope that I have provided a helpful tool for those taking on the important and necessary work of cocreating just language reclamation projects, and send up prayers and good thoughts for their careful navigation around sites of structural violence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Stoler, Laura Ann. (2002). "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2, 87-109.
- Hamilton, Carolyn. (2013). "Forged and Continually Refashioned in the Crucible of Ongoing Social and Political Life: Archives and Custodial Practices as Subjects of Enquiry," *South African History Journal* 65:1, 1-22.
- Tuck, Eve and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández., "Curriculum, Replacement, and Settler Futurity," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 29:1, 72-89.
- Walter Dignolo. (2011). "The Darker Side of the Enlightenment: A De-Colonial Reading of Kant's *Geography*," *Reading Kant's Geography*, ed. Stuart Elden.
- Walter Dignolo. (2009). "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought, and Decolonial Freedom," *Theory, Culture, & Society* 26 (7-8).
- Vallo Sr, Fred S. (2015). "New 'Origin' Publication is Affront to Acoma," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, URL: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/my_view/new-origin-publication-is-affront-to-acoma/article_7d58156b-7d45-5154-aaec-36a3829b3d30.html#.VgQfkDKc0Wk.facebook
- Innes, Pamela. (2010). "Ethical problems in archival research: Beyond accessibility," *Language and Communication*, 30, 198-203.
- Hyde, Villiana and Eric Elliot. (1994). *Yumáyk Yumáyk: Long Ago*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hyde, Villiana. 1971. *An Introduction to the Luiseño Language*. Banning, CA: Malki Museum Press.
- Elliott, Eric Bryant. 1999. "Dictionary of Rincon Luiseño." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of California, San Diego
- Spilde Katherine. (2004). "Cultivating New Opportunities: Tribal Government Gaming on the Pechanga Reservation," *The Harvard Project On American Indian Economic Development*.
URL: <https://hpaied.org/sites/default/files/publications/NIGACaseStudyPechanga.pdf>
- Leanne Hinton. (1994). *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages*. (Heydey Books: Berkeley, CA).
- Macri, Martha and James Sarmento. (2010). "Respecting privacy: Ethical and pragmatic considerations," *Language and Communication* 3(30), 192-197.

Dotson, Kristie. (2014). "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* 28(2), 115-138.

Briner, Katherin. (Forthcoming). "Hina tanə hani?hutui?: What are we going to do?" *Great Plains Journal*, issue 50/51 (2015-2016)

âpihtawikosisân. (2012). Language, Culture, and Two-Spirit Identity from URL:
<http://apihtawikosisan.com/2012/03/language-culture-and-two-spirit-identity/>

Lozada, Lucas Iberico. (2016). "The Professor and the Pueblo: Was the disclosure of Acoma traditions exploitation or scholarship?" Santa Fe Reporter,
URL: <http://www.sfreporter.com/news/coverstories/2016/01/26/the-professor-and-the-pueblo/>

Jacobs, Alex. "Don't Buy This Book! Acoma Pueblo vs Peter Nabokov: When the Sacred is Made Profane," Indian Country Today Media
URL: <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/dont-buy-this-book-acoma-pueblo-vs-peter-nabokov-when-the-sacred-is-made-profane/>

Iseke-Barnes, Judy and Deborah Danard (2007a). "Indigenous Knowledges and Worldview: Representations and the Internet," in *Information Technology and Indigenous People*, eds Laurel Evelyn Dyson, Max Hendriks, and Stephen Grant, IGI Global.

Innes, Pamela. (2015). "Gender and its role in shaping my understanding of the Mvskoke linguistic world," Gender and Linguistic Fieldwork Abstract,
URL: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/gender-linguistic-fieldwork/innes.html>

Torrez, Estrella. (Forthcoming, 2018). "Responsibility, reciprocity, and respect: Storytelling as a means of university-community engagement. M. Castañeda and J. Krupczynski. Learning from diverse Latina/o Communities: Social justice approaches to civic engagement. NY, NY: Columbia University Press.

Weld, Kristin. (2014). *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*, Duke University Press.

Miranda, Deborah A. (2010), "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16(1-2): 253-

Manriquez, L.Frank. (2001). "There Are Other Ways of Getting Tradition," *Museum Anthropology* 24, nos. 2/3, 41.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: *Túkmal Tavánnish*//We Gift Our Baskets

As was mentioned briefly in the introduction, this dissertation research was conducted and organized according to a methodology that emerges from Luiseño basketweaving protocols. The final step in the methodology is a praxis of *túkmal tavánnish*, or basket-gifting. Just as *túkmal 'atáaxum*//Luiseño baskets are traditionally never woven in isolation or for an individual, the chapters in this dissertation are meant to serve as humble gifts for Indigenous language activists working on the ground, in community. In what follows, I will briefly recap each chapter and highlight the humble gifts offered by each.

Chapter 1 takes up Gerald Vizenor's concept of "manifest manners" and "simulations" to argue that settler colonial logics impose what appear to be dilemmas on Indigenous communities. These dilemmas, which take the form no-win decisions, affect language reclamation projects. In particular, this chapter focuses on the linguistic sovereignty dilemma. After detailing how some of these dilemmas manifest, I argue in this chapter that these dilemmas are not actually dilemmas at all, rather, they are simulations imposed on Indigenous communities by settler colonial structures and rendered to appear as if bad choices are the only choices. Through several counterexamples of radical Indigenous language reclamation projects, this chapter shows that Indigenous language reclamation activists are practicing what Vizenor calls "trickster hermeneutics" in their maneuvering toward reclamation in spite of obstacles imposed by the settler state. In many cases, Indigenous communities also maintain the illusion, or bolster the simulation of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, in order to gain access to otherwise inaccessible resources. Some Indigenous language activists take up rhetorics of fluency, purity, or trauma in order

to ultimately subvert it. These re-inscriptions of the linguistic sovereignty dilemma, too, are sites of radical Indigenous resurgence.

Chapter 1 offers recommendations for practicing trickster hermeneutics to subvert simulated dilemmas that are imposed on Indigenous communities in language reclamation contexts as well as recommendations for coalition building in language reclamation contexts in spite of what appear to be impossible decisions forced upon communities. Importantly, Chapter I shows that looking to Indigenous communities reinscriptions of simulated dilemmas as strategic navigation and “trickster hermeneutics” transforms incommensurate language programming goals into sites of coalition.

Chapter 2 outlines key components of Indigenous philosophies of language, with special attention to the relationships between language and knowledge and the implications of these relationships for incommensurability. I have described two views of incommensurability expressed in Indigenous philosophies of language, and described the challenges posed by these forms of incommensurability for ‘world’-traveling. I conceive of ‘world’-traveling throughout the essay by way of an extended metaphor, journeying a river aboard a tule canoe, a method of visiting practiced by my Luiseño and Cupeño ancestors and being reclaimed by my generation – and incommensurability as obstacles in the river. Indigenous communities’ views on incommensurability should be of serious importance to feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists concerned with coalition-building, solidarity, and contending with epistemic violence and oppression. This chapter shows that to take seriously the sentiments of Indigenous language activists and theorists requires a confrontation of the difficulties incommensurability raises for ‘world’-traveling.

Chapter 2 offers a few considerations of the important overlap between feminist epistemologists and women of color theorists and the work of Indigenous theorists and gestures toward ways we might ‘world’-travel in the rivers between incommensurate worlds without causing harm to one another. The existing and potential alliances between feminist epistemologists, women of color theorists, and Indigenous theorists are and could be assets to each other’s political projects.

Chapter 3 begins with a conceptual model of decolonial and liberatory strategies as they are enacted by theorists in Indigenous Studies, Queer Studies, Chicano Latino Studies, and other related disciplines. The conceptual model in this chapter is based on a Luiseño teaching regarding the Starwomen constellation (the Little Dipper, in Western cosmologies), in which seven sisters defeat an enemy through ontologically pluralistic strategizing. This chapter argues that there are several different approaches to Indigenous liberation, and within each approach, there are implications for methodologies, curricula, and ideologies pertaining to language preservation and reclamation. Some of the liberatory projects detailed in this chapter have a separatist ring to them, some appear more reconciliatory; some privilege the rematriation of land, some negotiate with the state, while others privilege academic spaces. Like the starwomen, the authors of decolonial and liberatory project build and maintain their *tée*, they watch the colonizer carefully, describe his actions, they deliberate, they gather, they form agreements, and they execute plans. As a community faced with dangerous challenges, authors of decolonial and liberatory projects work together seek justice and liberation as a group of advocates with different gifts and approaches.

In an attempt to aid in holding the vastly differing and sometimes incommensurate approaches to Indigenous liberation in relation, Chapter 3 offers a pluralistic accounting of decolonial and liberatory projects that recognizes the merits of each component of this diverse constellation, and illustrates that addressing the multi-pronged lemmas of settler colonialism requires the work of theorists with many different gifts. This map is meant to gesture at the relationships between several key decolonial and liberatory projects in Indigenous studies and related fields and offers an ontologically pluralistic account of decolonial and liberatory strategizing in the hopes that cross-disciplinary scholars can build alliances. The authors of each approach I detail in this constellation have their own insights and implications for language reclamation, which I outline as well.

Chapter 4 details sites of potential violence in language activists' engagement with language archives. This chapter begins with a theoretical framework, which takes the form of a compass-like structure, organized by the positionality of the researcher as well as the positionality of the host of the archive in question, as well as several examples of archival engagement that fall into each quadrant of the compass. The sites of potential violence I highlight in this chapter become visible, mappable, and predictable when the positionalities of the researchers and archivists are exposed. What this shows is that these forms of violence do not spring from vacuums or from the hateful whims of individuals, rather, these forms of violence spring from inequities imposed by oppressive power structures like racism and settler colonialism.

Chapter 4 offers a roadmap of hazards for Indigenous language activists' careful navigation of epistemic violence in reclamation work that requires the use of archives. My hope is that since these forms of violence are visible, mappable, and predictable, the

structures that make them possible are also made visible. It is my aim in this chapter to provide a helpful tool for those taking on the important and necessary work of co-creating just language reclamation projects, and send up prayers and good thoughts for their careful navigation around sites of structural violence.

Each of these projects contain the seedlings of future projects for myself and the next generation of Indigenous language activists. In the future, I hope to make each essay accessible to Indigenous language activists who work within community contexts, often outside of the academy. This may require the co-creation of workshops, roundtables, and language curricula that implements conclusions offered in this dissertation. I hope to be able to aid in the formation of inter-tribal language councils, especially for Indigenous communities who share a heritage language, but are separated by colonial powers into distinct geopolitical units.

I also hope to apply the insights I gleaned in this research regarding archival sovereignty to both university IRB and Tribal IRB processes. This will likely require the formation of an intergenerational research group comprised of language experts whose goals would be 1. to co-theorize a land-based, culturally relevant and revitalizing conception of archival sovereignty pertaining to Indigenous language archives and 2: to co-create guidelines for the repatriation of colonial language archives containing Indigenous language resources for implementation in U.S. research institutions. Such an initiative is crucial as universities and museums (e.g. UC Berkeley, Smithsonian) are struggling to meet the needs of Indigenous communities regarding access to their archives and struggling to fulfill their responsibilities in compliance with best practices regarding repatriation. The development of these proposed initiatives would have lasting impacts including the

fostering of improved, sovereignty-based relationships between research institutions and Indigenous communities. When successfully implemented, the repatriation strategies would also be of use to partner institutions like local museums or cultural centers. This initiative would also promote linguistic sovereignty and serve as a model for other Indigenous communities in the processes of reclaiming their languages and prepare these communities to receive repatriated language resources, aiding in the assessment infrastructural and sociocultural needs alike.

This dissertation's purpose has been to provide theoretical infrastructure based on Indigenous philosophy of language to aid in the just reclamation of Indigenous languages and cultures. By depicting the strategies and trickster hermeneutics employed by Indigenous language activists, by theorizing coalition-building in spite of incommensurability, by constellating a diverse array of decolonial and liberatory strategies offered by Indigenous theorists, and by offering a roadmap of potential hazards in Indigenous language archival engagement, it is my hope that I have offered Indigenous language activists tools they can implement to further the flourishing of their communities. Hamú' táp.