
Since General Canby Died: An Autoethnography of an Indian Family

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I do not remember when I knew that I was Indian. I can think back and clearly remember the sick feeling I had in elementary school when it became time to celebrate Thanksgiving. Earlier than that, I must have known the difference between my mother's brown skin, eyes and hair and the whiteness of my father's sisters, brothers and my cousins. I can see in family pictures taken in the 1960s that she had the same slim dresses, the same smoothly coiffed hair, yet she looks different than the Irish-American women and men sitting on the couch in the informal family portraits. It was not until my mother left my father and moved back to Portland that the difference between white and Indian became an important boundary to understand and for me to find a place within. I remember an intense conversation with my mother when I was in fifth grade. She told me about the Modoc War, and I remember that we both cried. The difference between me and my mother and why she was unquestionably authentically Indian, while I was not, was partly a question of blood quantum; because she has enough documented "Indian blood," she is an enrolled member of the Klamath Tribes, while I am not. Still, I was a part of her and a part of our Indian family. Although we were and continue to be racially diverse, being

Indian was prioritized; I believed that it was our shared Indian identity that made us an Indian family.

I loved to read and looked for answers in books. But books were often about Indians in the “olden days.” For example, I read books by Scott O’Dell, who won a Newberry Award for *Sing Down the Moon* describing a Navajo girl kidnapped away from her family in the 1800s. *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George was my favorite. This book by a white woman is about a modern Inuit girl who lives with a pack of wolves to escape modernity and the breakdown of her family. It was not easy to find a contemporary story about being Indian that did not idealize Indians before contact with Europeans or suggest that Indians would be happier if they were more “traditional.”

In the early 1970s, my mom was involved with Indian activism in Portland, Oregon. She brought my two sisters and me to Indian basketball tournaments and weekly drumming and dancing at the Bow and Arrow Club at St. Andrews Church. The increasingly high profile of Indian social and political activists helped to create what some researchers have called a “cultural renaissance,”¹ and our single-parent, mixed-race Indian family was a part of it.

On the windowsill of our kitchen there was a bright orange bumper sticker someone had bought at a powwow. On it was a famous picture of my ancestor and the words “Captain Jack Lives.” The bumper sticker was a symbol of pride in our family, our ancestors and our survival, but the picture itself is tragic. It is the picture of a strong man, his long hair cut short, wearing prison stripes. He had been convicted of killing General Canby during the Modoc War of 1872-73 and was about to be executed.

I knew I was descended from a famous man, and his picture

looked at me from the kitchen window, but I did not understand what had happened. I wanted to know how I was Indian, who my family was, and what had happened to us. My mother took us to the library often, and she checked out every book she could find about the Modocs. I read the ethnographies and ethnohistories, but the books ended with the Modoc War, and they did not answer my questions about my family and what it meant to be Indian or Modoc. I learned that Modocs lived in earth houses and not tipis; I learned that Modocs were considered warlike and did not want to live on a reservation with the Klamaths. I learned that, "On Good Friday, April 11, 1873, Captain Jack and Ellen's Man George shot General Canby to death while engaged in a Peace Commission session."² Although they were at war, and many Indians had died at the hands of civilians and soldiers, only the shooting of General Canby was judged to be a murder. The books stated the same historical facts in their own words:

A small number of Lost River Modocs, led by Captain Jack, resisted being moved to the Klamath Reservation and fifty-three Modocs were able to resist one thousand army troops, Indian and white volunteers who acted as scouts. Five Modocs died in battle. 165 of the whites died.³

Eventually the Modocs were betrayed, caught, and four of the men were executed. The others were moved to an Oklahoma reservation and not allowed back into Oregon until 1935. But I did not learn anything to help me understand my urban Indian modern day family.

Instead of telling me about my family or even my own place as an Indian, the tone of the books--with their sad assumption that the

“real” Indians were gone--contributed to my sense of displacement and lack of authenticity as an Indian person. I did not see my family or myself represented in these books; there was a death, and then there was an absence. The story of my family and our survival was missing. I am lucky that my mother is a storyteller and funny. I learned most of what I know about myself as an Indian person and member of my family from her. The descriptions of Indians were often stereotypical and racist. I was looking for insight, and I hoped that I would find it. When I became an Ethnic Studies major, I realized that it was up to me to write the story that I wanted to read, and it was possible for me to do the scholarship that would answer my questions that the ethnohistories and ethnographies I had read could not answer, no matter how expert they claimed to be.

The Politics of Autoethnography & the Purpose of the Project

This is not a memoir or an autobiography because those terms are apolitical. An autoethnography takes an ideological position in opposition to ethnographies and makes visible their political impact. In her book, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt describes an ethnography as “a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others.”⁴ Autoethnographies, she writes, are “instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms.” Although an autoethnography is oppositional, it is not telling the truth; it is not the real story; it is a story that is still embedded in ideologies, but for a different political purpose. Jose Estaban Munoz and Stuart Hall take that idea even further:

Autoethnography is not interested in searching

for some lost and essential experience, because it understands the relationship that subjects have with their own pasts as complicated yet necessary fictions. Stuart Hall provides a formulation that addresses this complicated relationship between one's identity and one's past: 'Autoethnography resists essentialism, it isn't the truth, it is disrupting the idea of a truth, of a history that is complete.'⁵

No one can know the whole truth about my family or any other family. Rather, this project is one that seeks to challenge. It is important to have more stories that disrupt the idea that the time of the Modoc people is a "time to remember." The time of the Modocs is now.

Yet experiences similar to my own as a child are repeated today in my son's education and understanding of what it means to be Indian, and Modoc and "part-Indian." My five-year-old son recently went on a field trip to the Natural History Museum at the University of Oregon where different tribes of Oregon are primarily represented through artifacts. The artifacts are interesting, yet it is difficult to discuss what it means to be Modoc today when your son is almost certain he is not really Modoc since what he sees described as "Indian" houses, clothes and tools do not look like our apartment or his grandfather's new potato peeler or the latest Spiderman sandals he wears on his feet. I can and do tell him, "You are Indian, your family is Indian." He says he knows, but there is the contrast between what I say and what is represented to him. The contradictions between rhetoric and reality and the construction of identity within our colonized society are in full swing within the psyche of my five year old son. What my son learns is not just knowledge without racial implications. It is specifically about

Indian people who are represented by twig homes and stone tools and generalized at the same time.

Racialized people are always in dialogue with ethnographic texts that have represented us to others and to ourselves. The ways we have accepted or resisted those texts and their often racist and essentialist ideologies, both as individuals and within our communities, is part of our cultural knowledge. Therefore, it is important to write autoethnographies because they contest the idea of being an expert. I am not telling this story to transmit expertise. I am a scholar, an Indian woman, a mixed-race person, but I am not an expert. When I complete my research, it will not be because there is no more to know, but because I will have written all of the story that I choose to write. I recently read, "History is made by historians."⁶ I do not want to make history; I want to complicate the idea that there can be a complete story or the end of a story. There are so many stories and experiences that are not a part of the discourse of ethnic studies or Native American studies. There are many 20th century experiences that we share with others and that help me to answer questions I have always asked. What is Indian? Who is Indian? Who gets to decide? What is Indian Country and what are the boundaries? Is there something really true and essentially Indian? Can an Indian be part white?

The Ball Family

I have a copy of my family tree that traces my family from Kientpaush's daughter Fanny, who married Joseph Ball, down through my grandfather. We are the Ball Family. That is how I describe myself to people in the Indian community when they want to know what tribe I am, where I am from, whom I know. I can tell

people that I am a Ball, and they will say that they know my cousin, my aunt, my mother or my uncle. My family has lived in Portland since World War Two, when my grandfather and grandmother and their infant daughter moved from Chiloquin, Oregon to Portland. It was a time when many Indian people left rural areas and reservations for cities.

What I can say about my family is incomplete. Historical trauma has affected generations of my family. I know that I am here because my family survived what I call the American Holocaust. My mother survived her abusive and poor childhood. Her father and mother survived boarding schools, racism and the termination of the Klamath Tribes. Their parents survived hard years of Indian boarding schools and abuse that is mostly lost to history except those parts that have been passed down through our family.

When I was growing up, I worried that I was not Indian enough. I thought if I didn't say I was Indian, no one would know. My mother assured me that I did look Indian, and in fact, I looked Modoc. She said that I had "fox eyes," and that everyone in our family has the same shape eyes. My eyes were special and marked me as Modoc and as belonging. I want my son, Leroy, with his brown eyes and blond curls to know that he is indigenous. He is a part of my family, a part of our history and our future, and he is here because we survived. I want my son to know that he is Modoc. He has my eyes.

Urban Indians are Real Indians

In his thesis, *Walk Across the Bridge...an' You'll Find Your People*, Nicolas Rosenthal writes of the movement of Indians to Portland from reservations and their experiences. Rosenthal

connects the travel of Indians at this time to their historic migrations and also writes that the roots they put down during the war years put them into position to take advantage of opportunities in the postwar years. He expresses the idea that urban Indian communities disrupt the reservation identities that have supported our communities culturally, but also limited the diversity of our experiences.⁷

When the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee, my family was politicized and became known in the urban community by working in the different organizations that served our community such as the Urban Indian Council, the first Native American preschool in the country, E-Kosh-Kosh, and the Indian Health Center. My Aunt Evelyn worked for National Indian Child Welfare Association [NICWA] as a fundraiser and grant writer. My mother and father helped the elders in Pi Nee Was with their yearly powwow. I felt lucky to be a Ball because it meant I could not disappear into whiteness. I was proud of my family's participation in the community, even though I was unsure of my own status. As long as I was part of my family, I was Indian.

Red Stars, White Folks and Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue

Indian people are racially documented for reasons tied to their place within the United States. To obtain services as an Indian woman, a low-income single parent, and student, I copy my mother's card that states her belonging to the Klamath Tribes. She is number seventy-five. We belong to tribes through sometimes complicated means. Blood quantum is a means that seems simple. It asks and answers the question, "How much Indian blood can you claim?"

In her book, *Blood Politics*, Circe Sturm describes the federal

government's relationship to the identity politics of Indian peoples through blood quantum:

The federal government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) continues to use blood quantum as both a metaphor and measure of "Indian" identity to manage tribal enrollments and determine eligibility for social services. Native Americans who wish to receive benefits such as health care, housing, and food commodities must meet a biological standard, usually set at one-quarter or more Indian blood, and must also present a certificate degree of Indian blood (CDIB) authenticated by their tribe and the BIA.⁸

Those standards follow Indian people into cities, into their marriages with people of other ethnicities and provide problems of identity with which people of non-Indian ethnicity do not have to cope.

My mother's tribal card states she is one-quarter Klamath; therefore I am one-eighth. This simplicity, however, is complicated by the fact that one can be documented only in one tribe, although many Indian peoples belong to a variety of Indian tribes. My grandmother, Lillian Dunham, was from Oklahoma and was both Cherokee and Seminole according to family lore. She is listed on a federal document as one-quarter Cherokee. The Seminole gets lost in the necessity of belonging only to one tribe. Some folks who are "more Indian" in one tribe have told me that they are able to enroll in a different tribe. They chose to do so based on the tribal "per capita," the amount of money tribal members receive from agreements with the government based on loss of land and other treaty rights. One woman told me that her sister's three children, with the same parents, are enrolled in three separate tribes.

These experiences raise questions. What does this mean to identity and racial formation? How can people effectively prove Indian authenticity when they do not have the required blood quantum in one tribe? What if one's tribe does not have federal recognition? One is simply out of luck from an official perspective, but there are other means of accepting one's self-proclaimed Indianness among Indian peoples. Craig Womack writes that someone is Indian if other Indians accept that person as Indian. A related, but slightly different perspective is captured by a statement attributed to Sherman Alexie that captures a wry truth: "You are Indian if you have ever wished that you were not." There are many reasons for that sentiment also, but they are difficult to outline, and Indian people wish to keep them private. Beyond the negative stereotypes, wanting not to be Indian is a shared experience of Indian peoples because of the way our history has been presented to us in school, through the media, as well as through laws and in courts. Our stories are often sad stories, and there is not widespread recognition of the trauma our ancestors suffered, and we their descendents continue to suffer individually and collectively.

In contrast to those who identify themselves as Indian, some of my family members found it more comfortable to identify as white, which raises other questions. Circe Sturm talks about the specific community of Cherokees who are the subject of her ethnographic research when she asks, "Who is Cherokee, who is Indian, how do we know, and who gets to decide?"⁹ The question depends on how a person is perceived racially, whether the person can pass for white, what relationships they have to their family as well as their communities. Besides blood ancestry, Sturm describes five other ways that Cherokees are identified, but these can be used for

pan-Indian identification as well: "Phenotype, social behavior, language, religious knowledge and participation, and community residence and participation."¹⁰ These ways can also be limiting. Are Indian people who were raised in mostly white communities white? What about discourse around colonization? What of those whose skin color allowed them to pass? How had racism informed the choice people made? What about essentialism in defining what is Indian? If there is a right way to perform indigeneity then what happens to those who perform it badly? In that case, it is best to have constant possession of one's CDIB card.

Russell Thornton's essay "The Demography of Colonialism and 'Old' and 'New' Native Americans" describes the effects of colonization on Native American populations. He writes that the history of genocide and population recovery "continues to have profound effects upon Native Americans and how they define themselves on both the group and the individual level."¹¹ Although groups intermarried before colonization, after the forced removal of tribes to reservations, many tribes were forced to share the land, and those groups intermarried despite being identified by the government as members of one tribe instead of several different tribes. For example, my mother belongs to the Klamath Tribes, which are the Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin tribes, but they are all identified under the tribal name of Klamath.

Because of the movement of Indian peoples to urban areas and the resulting intermarriage with non-Indians, many Indians do not have the requisite blood quantum to be enrolled in tribes. The idea persists that real Indians live on reservations, speak tribal languages, and learn authentic Indian ways at the knees of elders. Thornton writes, "Traditional cultural distinctiveness may be

replaced by mere social membership.”¹² Mere social membership, I think, is what Thornton would consider my urban Indian, pan-Indian upbringing in Portland, Oregon, with our drumming and songs, gifts of turquoise, and dancing with shawls decorated with the patterns of tribes far from the ones to which we belonged, or said we belonged, or to which we officially belonged. I like to think that there is room for social membership that is not “mere social membership” but that is critical to the mental and spiritual health of Indians. By building communities where we are not separated by tribal affiliations and reservations, we have an opportunity to be with one another in ways that are less regimented by cultural expectations of one another and may even help one another with our postcolonial identity formation. It is not a black and white or Indian and non-Indian world; our communities are already multiracial and intertribal.

Indian Nations and Complications of Mixed Race Identity

In many ways, Indian Nations came to be created because of whites and the demands of white supremacy. The concept of tribes has been fixed and accepted by many Indian people as if Indians had been living in clearly marked tribal communities for millennia before contact with Europeans. While there are tribal histories and stories as well as linguistic differences between tribes, contact with Europeans necessitated the development of some form of categorizing Indians in order that the Europeans could control and contain the Indians, deal away their land rights with treaties, and reassure the settlers that the Indians would not be a threat to the settlers’ new homes. The formation of sovereign Indian nations is a layered and messy history in many cases and one that leaves

those Indians without federal recognition in the margins of Indian identity. Which comes first, the requisite blood quantum or a federally recognized tribe?

In her book, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom*, Tiya Miles describes the response of Cherokees to colonization as strengthening the borders of their Cherokee Nation, complete with a constitution and laws, a governing body and, like their white counterparts in the larger Nation, slavery. Yet their mimicking of the larger U.S. nation did not protect them from removal, nor from the ravages of the Dawes Act and subsequent allotment that weakened kinship ties and the wealth of tribal members, while it reinscribed and supported racist hierarchies.

Indians embrace the concept of sovereignty because it gives access to power, the ability to protect treaty rights and mechanisms to fight inequities and oppression in a court of law. Sovereignty holds the promise of self-rule. However, these powers are based on the shaky structure of white supremacy, and Indian dependence on white supremacy is mostly unacknowledged. Lakota writer and scholar Elizabeth Cook-Lynn applauds the United States and its right to be a nation because she asserts the same for herself and her tribe.¹³ In the mimicking of the U.S., there is access to mainstream institutions, and that can mean improved living conditions, better health care and so on for tribal members. However, Indian people such as Cook-Lynn hold up the flag of their sovereign nation, but the rhetoric excludes many Indians—Indian people who are not federally recognized, urban Indians without a land base, and Indians without enough documented blood quantum in one tribe to be counted as a member. Cook-Lynn also promotes an ideology

of tribal sovereignty and nationalism that is dependent on the colonizer's laws and terms, while seeming to resist them. Tribal nations under this ideology remain a subset and dependent on the Nation, whiteness, and racial hierarchies. Embracing a broader view of Indian country, one that accepts tribes and tribal affiliations but avoids looking to the colonizer to make the rules by which we define ourselves, may be a healing act for Indian communities, although one which lies far in our future, if at all.

Mixed Bloods are Mixed Up

In Native American discourse, there is the idea of a continuum of Indianness, measured by blood and by connection to a place, such as a reservation. The more "mixed-blood" one has, the more devious, violent, or "white" traits one displays, rather than the "Indian" ones that are culturally marked. Speaking quietly and being modest in dress and habits are two such traits that come to mind. A less constricting trait is the famous Indian sense of humor. There are also the negative traits, such as alcoholism and laziness.

These so-called "Indian" behaviors are reinforced in literature, film, and academic scholarship. In her book, *Indians in the Making*, historian Alexandra Harmon explores the instability of Indian identity for the varieties of Indians living around Puget Sound. She describes the way whites perceived Indians as competent or incompetent based on their blood quantum. In one example, Harmon writes, "Puyallup superintendent H.H. Johnson, pointing to two 'full-bloods' who were wealthy businessmen, declared that lack of 'white blood' did not make an Indian incompetent."¹⁴ In this example, the superintendent must "declare" that at least two full-blood Indian men could escape their biologically determined

destiny. In many ways, popular culture and Indian peoples have internalized and then perpetuated these racist stereotypes. For example, in the film documentary, *Incident at Oglala*, the “traditionals” resist the violence of the corrupt tribal Chairman Dick Wilson and his thugs, the Goon Squad, who are described as “mixed blood.”¹⁵ The issue of blood quantum is politically charged. To be mixed-blood is to be a part of the violence against “traditional” Indians in this film and be complicit in the corruption and violence associated with colonization and oppression.

In one way, it is important to be able to perform Indianness in recognizable ways so that people can establish themselves inside Indian communities. This is true especially in urban areas where tribal affiliations and relationships are not as important as pan-Indian activities such as powwows and informal gatherings. But the cultural markers are limiting and perpetuate the stereotypes belonging to ideas of Indian blood. My son loves to attend powwows and would like to learn to dance traditionally and wear regalia. There is no reason why he should not do so. His cousin has the same blood quantum, and she has an outfit and dances with her mother at powwows. I worry for him, appearing in regalia, his blond curls bouncing as he dances, and I am ashamed that I have any reticence in providing him with this experience. Yet it is not the same as swim lessons, and I have to find my place in our community before I can help him carve out his own place, which is, like it or not, established because of our shared Indian blood and heritage.

Indian people have been constricted by these ideas of blood quantum and Indian performance. My mother is not “full-blood,” and during her youth she told me people often guessed at her

ethnicity. Once at E-Kosh-Kosh, the Indian preschool she helped start in Portland during the seventies, she was asked to speak at the Portland Women's Club. Several women came by the preschool while my mom was working with kids making medallions. My mother and the children were wearing the medallions, and my mom had her hair braided to keep it out of the paste. However, on the day she was scheduled to speak she arrived without braids or any "Indian" jewelry, and her appearance did not impress the women who expressed their disappointment and asked her, "Where are your braids?" The women finally asked my mom if she would at least carry a basket on to the stage. Finally one of the women who had dressed up especially for their Indian speaker gave up her beaded medallion, and they let my mother speak. Although this incident was humiliating, my mother told me the story to describe the racism of white expectations and how "real Indians" are supposed to look and act.

Indian people internalize the racism they experience, and we cannot know when our Indianness is going to be too evident or not evident enough. Perhaps internalized racism is the reason some Indian people may also perpetuate stereotypes even when they seem to be critiquing them. Devon Mihesuah, a Native American scholar, has observed:

Some of the greatest stressors that Indigenous women face have to do with their appearances and with not knowing their tribe's history and culture and, therefore, their identities as Natives. Identity conflicts among Native females are critical and ongoing psychological problems, especially for multi-heritage women.¹⁶

The assumption Mihesuah makes that one's identity as Native directly relates to the knowledge one has of tribe or culture is

limiting. It fails to address the diversity of Indian identities in Indian country or the effects of colonization on tribes and Indian people whose relationships to those tribes are impacted by geography, racism, political issues and legalities such as federal recognition. The assumption that women who are “multi-heritage” or mixed-race are more susceptible to “ongoing psychological problems” makes non-Indian blood a dangerous threat to a person’s health. This assumption continues to perpetuate the idea that Indianness is constructed through blood and essentialized ideas of cultural identity. No one expects whites to stay fixed historically or culturally, but for Indians to develop a diversity of identities or even embrace modernity is a threat to both indigeneity and mental health.

Pushing the Borders of Indian Country

Issues of diaspora, identity, and trauma are tied together in this autoethnography. There is the story of myself, my family, and my tribe, which is Klamath-Modoc, but I am also Cherokee. My grandmother was from Oklahoma, and her grandfather was Pappy Bengé Oceola. She was one-quarter Cherokee. My mother is one quarter Klamath-Modoc. I have a ragged blood quantum, one that does not allow me tribal membership as a Klamath-Modoc woman or offer it to my child. I balance resentment at not being able to register in the tribe with which I have been taught to identify with anger about being taught of the privilege of the blood quantum from a grandfather who abused and then abandoned his wife and children. However, I have considered applying for tribal membership as a Cherokee. One-sixteenth Cherokee is a respectable blood quantum. The Cherokee only require that you prove you are a descendent.

But I have never been to Oklahoma, and I am not familiar with the land.

Indigeneity is tied to the land. And there lies another problem for this urban Indian woman. I was born in Portland, Oregon. I grew up in North Portland and attended Jefferson High School where pictures of my uncles sat in the trophy case under the words, "School of Champions, School of Pride." However, I remember the first time I visited Chiloquin, Oregon. My uncle had been elected tribal chairman, and we were going down to visit his family. I wanted to move there. I felt at home. The air and the hills all seemed familiar and other family members echoed my feelings. In some way, this was home too, although I had never been there before. In *The Cultural Landscape of the Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin Peoples*,¹⁷ tribal anthropologist John Allison writes of "Urban Maklaks" based in Portland. The book is a reference with interviews with tribal members and pictures of sacred places of which I have no knowledge. It is also an argument for a land base for the Klamath Tribes; they have not had a land base since Termination of the Tribes in 1957. Allison writes, "Most of the Urban Maklaks would prefer to be in their homeland, but the lack of a land base, and the limited economic opportunities make it impossible at this time."¹⁸ I have known only Portland, but I dream of having a reservation, of having a place that I belong to that is managed by the tribe and sacred to us, whether we live there or not, whether our children are born there, or our parents buried there.

I still look to books to help me to understand the ideologies of identity that I have accepted and internalized. As a scholar, I am interested in how "truths" were constructed and how they served and continue to serve Indian people and myself. Even if I do not

find the answers, I think it is possible to do scholarship that will help future scholars and Indian communities sort out the racism, the socially constructed ideologies and perhaps construct ways of identifying as Indian that accepts a diversity of experiences, blood quantum, tribal and non-tribal affiliations. One of the most important issues that needs to be addressed is the trauma that our communities suffer by not having the American Holocaust widely and openly recognized in academia as well as in popular culture. The erasing of Indian experience and trauma perpetuates the trauma and makes it difficult for us in our communities to share healing when we are so concerned as Indians with who gets to be included in that category.

Daily, Indian people are faced with the results of colonization through ethnographic representations as well as ongoing practices of racism. It is difficult to find a balance between acknowledging cultural loss as a result of genocidal practices and colonization and knowing that we are Indian, however that expresses itself in our consciousness. It is a difficult balance, and even in my family, I receive mixed messages. My mother and father reinforce my identity and do not seek to change or question it. I am a queer woman, a single mother, a student and an indigenous person. I feel loved by my immediate family and supported as I am.

My uncles seem to believe that they are more Modoc, more authentic than my mother, her sister, my cousins, and me. Our children are implicated in that contested space. When there is a family gathering there are often tensions or open disagreements about family issues, and it is not always clear who has my uncles' approval and support. It is difficult to accept this dynamic in our family, except it has so often been repeated in my relationships

within Indian country that I almost expect it and believe that much of the tension around identity and the performance of indigeneity in my family is a result of the extreme abuse suffered by my mother and her siblings, as well as their parents and grandparents. My mother has worked hard to heal from the trauma she suffered in her abusive family, and I credit that with her emotional health and ability to nurture and support us.

Although my childhood lacked so-called traditional Klamath-Modoc teachings, I learned what it meant to be Indian in my family, even if that knowledge did not establish an identity that was stable and uncontested. For me being Indian was urban-based and intertribal, a pan-Indian understanding of belonging to a community. I learned a Nez Perce lullaby, Ink Pa Ta, from my Katsah, Violet Allman. I attended ceremonies and powwows that were intertribal. My mother's beautiful star quilts are a Lakota pattern taught to her by one of her oldest friends who is Lakota, and I have since learned is a practice that came out of Indian boarding schools.¹⁹ My family, my aunts and uncles and cousins lived nearby and often one of the aunts or uncles would take all of us out to the park, the movies or swimming. The people with whom my aunts and uncles played softball and basketball on inter-tribal teams became family. We are connected to the land, both in Chiloquin and in Portland.

My sisters and I joke, "You can take the girl out of North Portland, but you can't take North Portland out of the girl." Perhaps it is possible, as Rosenthal claims, to reclaim indigenous land informally. It is more difficult to reclaim areas of authenticity as defined by federal and tribal governments, as well as less formally within Indian communities. Despite issues of authenticity, blood quantum and mixed-race identity, those of us who remain proudly

indigenous live our lives as Indians, as honestly as we can and wherever we are geographically, despite ongoing historical trauma. We who survive and are still here live in Indian Country and know its borders.

Notes

- ¹ Daystar Rosalie Jones, "No Home But the Heart," *Keepers of the Morning Star: An Anthology of Native Women's Theater* Eds. Jaye T. Darby, Stephanie Fitzgerald (Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, 2003). 78.
- ² Frances S. Landrum, *Guardhouse, Gallows and Graves: The Trial and Execution of Indian Prisoners of the Modoc Indian War by the U.S. Army 1873* (Klamath Falls: Klamath County Museum, 1988).
- ³ Walter H. Palmberg, *Copper Paladin: A Modoc Tragedy* (Bryn Mawr: Dorrance & Company, Inc., 1982).
- ⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).
- ⁵ Jose Esteban Munoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). 82.
- ⁶ Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). The quote is from Miles but Hayden White's *Metahistory* outlines the "ideological considerations" involved in "the historian's attempt to explain the historical field and to construct a verbal model of its processes in a narrative." White, Hayden, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). 26.
- ⁷ Rosenthal, 16,17.
- ⁸ Circe Sturm, *Blood Politics: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). 2.
- ⁹ Sturm, 203.
- ¹⁰ Sturm, 140.
- ¹¹ Russell Thornton, "The Demography of Colonialism and 'Old' and 'New' Native Americans," *Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects* Ed. Russell Thornton (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998). 25.
- ¹² Thornton, 31.
- ¹³ Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America: A Voice from Tatekaya's Earth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).
- ¹⁴ Harmon, 164.

- ¹⁵ *Incident at Oglala*, Dir. Michael Apted. Lions Gate Home Entertainment 2004, DVD.
- ¹⁶ Devon Abbott Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003) 81.
- ¹⁷ Allison, *The Cultural Landscape of the Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin Peoples: Spirit, Nature, History* (Chiloquin, The Klamath Tribes, 1994).
- ¹⁸ Allison, 1.
- ¹⁹ Professor Brian Klopotek, History of Native American Education, Lecture, University of Oregon, Winter Term 2005.