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Native Survival and Success in Higher Education

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Native Survival and Success in Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

> If an Indian's alone in the forest, is he still Indian?
> **Jennifer**

To the reader, my name is Daniel Orr. I am an Oklahoma Cherokee, and for nearly four years I've been a student at Swarthmore College. What you're reading is my senior thesis, the academic conclusion of my studies in Native Education. It is also the culmination of my learning with the other Natives on this campus, and an attempt to see that knowledge passed on.

This work was written for many people. It is for those Natives[1] on campus now, for those who have yet to come to the College, and it is also for those who have already graduated. For you all this document was written to bring together our stories, to be able to learn from them and to see what connects us. It was also written for all of our families, who can not know for themselves what this place is. Lastly, it is also for those staff members and faculty who are not Native, but upon whom this small student community relies. In your regards, this paper was written so that you may learn from the many years of experience here, and act upon the suggestions that it puts forth.

This thesis belongs to the field of educational research, a field in which indigenous peoples have almost exclusively been discussed as either 'at risk' or asterisk peoples.

> As 'at risk' peoples, Indigenous students and families are described as on the verge of extinction, culturally and economically bereft, engaged or soon-to-be engaged in self-destructive behaviors which can interrupt their school careers and seamless absorption into the economy.... At the same time, Indigenous communities become the asterisk peoples, meaning they are represented by an asterisk in large and crucial data sets, many of which are conducted to inform public policy that impact our/their lives. (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 22)

This representation of indigenous peoples has direct bearing within institutions of higher education, including, as should become clear in the following pages, Swarthmore College. Within research in particular, because Natives are so often thought of as 'at risk', most studies have focused on causes of academic failure, and to a lesser extent on causes of success, where success is defined as graduation and degree completion.

Given the disparity in the graduation rates of Native students and their peers nationally, there's still work to be done in ensuring that these students are able to obtain their degree (U.S Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], Graduation Rate).

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[1] A note on terminology. Throughout this thesis, *Native* is a personal identity that individuals hold. *Indian*, on the other hand, here reflects the specific racial and legal status defined by the U.S federal government. *Indigenous* is the most inclusive, which I use to refer to all individuals, communities, and political organizations that have a connection to the Americas outside of Western colonial states.

But national averages obscure a great variation in individual institutions across the country. When compared by admissions rate, it's clear that the more exclusive an institution, the higher its rates of graduation. For example, in contrast to the image of crisis portrayed in national figures, Native students at Ivy League universities are graduating at rates similar to their white peers (Brayboy, 1999, 4). Likewise Swarthmore College, which has an acceptance rate of 12% (Swarthmore College, Office of Admissions [SC Admissions], Fact Sheet), and regularly compares itself to Ivy League institutions, has an overall graduation rate of 94% (Swarthmore College, Office of Institutional Research [SC IR], 2015, 4). Unfortunately the College has no data on the graduation rates of Natives - instead we find an asterisk. But given that graduation is an expectation for nearly all students, that metric of success tells us very little about the relationship between Swarthmore College and its Native students, the nature of the education they receive, or its value after graduation.

This research project therefore interjects itself into this tradition, picking up the discussion of success, but directing it towards a new topic: how do Native students define success for themselves? The question considers success as both a product of schooling, as well as the process and lived experience of being a student. This project also questions whether the benefits of academic success are shared by all students equally, and to what extent traditional notions of success, such as social mobility and integration, are appropriate for Natives. Lastly, I've tried to document the ways in which Native students' asterisk status impacts the kind of education they receive and their ability to achieve success.

Looking at notions of success, this research investigates the needs, concerns, aspirations, and expectations that Native Swarthmore students have for their own education. At the same time, it describes the institutional structure which Natives encounter at the College and are forced to navigate in finding success. One of the central themes in this project then, is the complicated relationship between institutional structures and individual agency, how students have to adapt to and at times accommodate the interests of the College, and at other times are capable of resisting and even transforming it. To understand the significance of these experiences, they've been described within the context of national educational history, and Indian Education in particular.

This thesis is qualitative in nature. It has been my intention to give participants the chance to tell their own stories. For that reason, the primary source of data in this research is interviews conducted with current and former Native Swarthmore students. Inspired by narrative-based research and *felt theory* (Million, 2014) this project attempted to capture the diversity of experiences, and multiple definitions of success, within the Native student community. While at the same time, these stories were collected in order to reveal the patterns and relationships shared by all of them. Guided by these two desires, to allow participants to tell their own stories and to find their commonalities, this thesis has incorporated participants at multiple levels of research, in designing and contesting its methodology, in providing data, in interpreting that data, and in constructing an overarching theory of Native student success. This final product that you're reading now is the direct result of their insights throughout the many stages of the research process.

The following pages give an overview of this project, present its findings, and make suggestions for the future based upon those findings. The chapter immediately following this, *Literature Review*, is a summary of previous research on the relationships between indigenous peoples, academia, and higher education, that contextualizes the particular experiences of the

Native students at Swarthmore College. Next are three brief chapters which connect that existing literature to this research project. *On Swarthmore College* introduces the reader to Swarthmore in comparison to select peer schools and to institutions nationally. *Methods and Methodology* then describes the actual research process itself, the methods used to gather and analyze data, and the reasoning behind them. *The Participants* is a composite picture of those current and former Native Swarthmore students who participated in this study, compared to other Swarthmore students and to Native students around the country. The following chapter, *Findings*, presents the data that came out of participants' interviews and a theoretical analysis based on that data. It is in this larger chapter where I make arguments regarding Native student success at the College. Lastly, *Conclusions*, builds from that analysis to present suggestions, to students and to institutional employees, about how to create a system of success at Swarthmore, based upon what has already been found in the literature and participants' own analyses.

In writing these chapters however, I have refused to share or to discuss certain topics that arose in this project. There is knowledge that cannot be written here in this account, because of its both public and academic nature. This project has afforded opportunities for gathering stories, but it also operates within restrictions, specific to the thesis genre, to the discipline of educational studies, and to the field of academic research. Therefore, in order to protect the anonymity of participants, and to fulfill my own responsibilities to the Swarthmore Native community, the information presented in this thesis has been carefully chosen for its appropriateness within an academic work, and does not reflect the entirety of Native student experiences, or even the entirety of the particular experiences of these participants. This thesis is only one component of a larger project for Native students to reflect, to heal, and to learn from each other.

I feel like the mentality of academia is that there really isn't a place for Native intellect.
Psyche

This chapter is a summary of what I have read of the existing literature on Natives and formal education in the United States. Reading through this collection of literature laid out a path for the early stages of this thesis by narrowing down the number of topics for study, and also by offering up examples for how to conduct similar research. This summary should then help the reader understand why I chose to investigate the questions that I did, and how the findings of this project compare to research that has already been done. Before discussing this literature however, I'd like to begin by briefly outlining the theoretical position from which I first began and then carried out this project.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this research, I begin with an understanding that the United States is a colonial nation. In this country we almost exclusively talk about colonialism in terms of the British occupation, and the transformation of those British colonies into the United States of America is seen as the endpoint for colonization. But the colonists who rebelled against the British Crown founded a nation for settlers like themselves, creating a legal and social order with the same logic, worldview, and desires that first brought them to the land. This new nation-state built upon and improved British policies for accumulating and governing territories, not in the interest of founding distant colonies, but in order to expand their own national borders. The United States that we have inherited today as a result of that two century long process, has never had to question its imperial growth, or the beliefs and ideology that this state operates upon.

As a settler state, the United States may employ similar practices and ideas as other colonial powers, but because it was founded upon colonized lands, it is driven by the unique need to redefine its relationship to that land. The late Patrick Wolfe (2006) tells us that a nation-state founded by settlers faces an identity crisis. It needs to create an identity independent of its imperial mother country - in this case, Great Britain - so that it can claim exclusive authority over the land it occupies. This identity crisis leads the state to claim a connection and right to the land, creating a national identity that is somehow indigenous to their territory (c.f Tuck and Yang (2012) on 'settler nativism'). Settler colonialism then can be distinguished from other, more traditionally understood forms of colonialism, for this inescapable need for the settler to become indigenous.

On the one hand settler indigeneity reaffirms that the settler state, and no other colonial power, has exclusive right to the land it occupies. That settler indigeneity is however, fundamentally threatened by the continued presence of actually indigenous peoples. In order to

protect its land claims then, a settler state must attempt to eliminate the peoples who are indigenous to its territories (Wolfe, 2006). This of course, differs from other colonialisms, where indigenous peoples are incorporated when possible into the production of goods and labor.

Wolfe (2006) names the system of ideas and practices that pursue the elimination of indigenous peoples, both as individuals and as political entities, the logic of elimination. Because the need to protect settler indigeneity is so fundamental to the state, that logic becomes the organizing principle of settler society, shaping national institutions and social structures (c.f Rifkin, 2009; Goldstein, 2008; Brayboy, 2006; Deloria, 1988). "[I]t erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base - as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay; invasion is a structure not an event" (Wolfe, 2006, 388). The logic of elimination then, is both destructive and constructive at the same time, creating a settler society in the wake of, and for the purpose of, indigenous genocide.

Education, as a national institution, is unavoidably driven by that logic of elimination. But long before the United States emerged as a settler nation, formal education was an agent and tool of colonization. Western academic inquiry, as it developed over the centuries in Europe, has been less dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and truth, and more about confirming and maintaining Western superiority (Said, 1979). For centuries, scientific theories of the world and its inhabitants depicted non-Western peoples as immoral or degenerate, so that the West could claim to be morally superior. Then, in the era of European exploration and global colonization, scholars adapted these theories to incorporate the new peoples and lands they encountered. In these years, Western knowledge didn't just develop through the process of colonization, but in order to protect and enable it (Smith, 2012).

Formal academic societies later emerged throughout Europe in the era of Enlightenment, becoming highly ritualistic and procedural in their studies (Simpson, 2014; Said, 1979). The organization of these societies, their topics of study, and their purpose solidified around colonial worldviews and interests, while at the same time claiming to be objective and to present a universal description of reality (Smith, 2012). In the process, academic disciplines, scientific practice, and the Western cultural archive[2] became intimately intertwined with colonial ideology and pursuits. Today's institutions of higher education are an outgrowth of these early societies, whose unchallenged assumptions and conclusions remain the foundation of Western intellectualism.

Schooling in the United States then draws upon a longstanding colonial tradition, even before becoming a part of the settler state and its particular mission of indigenous elimination. Under settler colonialism, formal education then becomes a mode of social control, unifying and assimilating disparate peoples in order to "ensure the ascendancy of [the] nation and its white elite" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 5). Assimilation likewise has both constructive and destructive elements. Educational institutions impose worldviews, behaviors, and identities onto students in order to create a common national culture. At the same time, they discredit and excise those elements of students' home cultures, knowledge, and beliefs which conflict with the image of the nation (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002).

Because indigenous peoples continue to pose such a threat to the legitimacy of the settler state, they have been subject to the most explicit and intensive forms of assimilatory education.

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[2] Edward Said (1979) describes a cultural archive as a kind of metaphorical storehouse for particular knowledge, references, attitudes, and feelings, which we rely upon to make sense of the world around us.

These are well known and accounted for in the Indian boarding schools of the 19th century, but assimilation was not confined to those schools or that era. Boarding schools in fact, served as a model for the Common School movement, which adapted their philosophy and practices for use with the larger population of immigrants (Spring, 2007), and led the way for today's public school system. Moreover, Sandy Grande (2015) has detailed at length how these supposedly anachronistic educational practices have persisted and developed over time, in boarding and public schools alike .

Although formal education is a colonial institution designed to assimilate indigenous peoples, it has failed for hundreds of years to do just that, in part because of the ingenuity of indigenous peoples. Educational institutions have a complicated relationship with students, imposing expectations and responsibilities, while at the same time dependent upon those students for their survival (Brayboy, 1999). Native students have learned to take advantage of this relationship, working within, through, and against the institutional structure, to exercise their own agency despite the forces levied against them. These students employ strategies of both resistance and accommodation, which allow them to transform an assimilatory education into one that they can find value in.

Although this is the reality of Indian education today, there are also those scholars who have written about how to create alternative pedagogies and educational possibilities. Paulo Freire (2000) for example, focused much of his attention on the process - which he called conscientização - of bringing students to be able to question the forces that shape their lives. bell hooks (1994), among other things, has written on pedagogical practices of freedom, based upon a mutual recognition in the classroom of students' humanity, histories, and experience. Grande (2015), in addition to charting the development of colonial Indian education, outlines an alternative Red Pedagogy, which responds to the unique needs of indigenous students as members of sovereign tribal nations within the settler state. And Smith spends the second half of *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012) developing the framework for an indigenous research agenda, which transforms the historically exploitative practice of academic research into a tool and resource for the survivance[3] of indigenous communities.

Indigenous needs, whether social, material, or educational, have been determined and addressed by settlers for centuries as the Indian Problem. But indigenous peoples have never needed settlers to solve their problems; they need settlers to stop creating problems. Today, in both academic theory and tribal politics, indigenous agendas most often look towards creating or strengthening tribal sovereignty and self-determination (Grande, 2015; Simpson, 2014; Barker, 2006; Deloria, 1988), although Taiaiake Alfred (2006) and Mark Rifkin (2009) have written on how settler states attempt to use those same ideas to confine tribal nations within narrow spaces of agency.

On the other hand, because the entirety of the settler state is organized upon a logic of elimination, tribal sovereignty can only come alongside the simultaneous decolonization of the land and state. While neither sovereignty nor decolonization are strictly defined, Tuck and Yang (2012) make it clear that decolonization is not a term synonymous with social justice, but is

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[3] Gerald Vizenor (1999) brought the word survivance into the field of Native American studies. It signifies an active presence and way of living for indigenous peoples, moving beyond merely subsistence or survival in what remains of the past, to renouncing colonial domination and victimhood, in order to adapt indigeneity for a thriving future.

specifically directed towards the repatriation of indigenous life and land. From that understanding, to decolonize education requires both displacing and supplanting colonial ideology in the institution, and divorcing that institution from its role in occupying indigenous lands. Then, may it be possible for indigenous peoples to exercise self-determination within their schools and pursue a future as sovereign nations.

These theories are the assumed truths that I bring into this research project; that higher education is a colonial institution designed to assimilate indigenous peoples, but one which Natives are capable of resisting and exploiting for their own purposes. Moreover, there are possibilities for alternative education systems which will not inhibit, but enable Natives as members of sovereign nations. These themes and authors will return throughout this literature review, where they'll get a little bit more of the attention they deserve. But it is this line of reasoning which is central to how this research was undertaken, the conclusions that result, and the suggestions that come at the end of this work.

The remainder of this chapter expands upon and adds to this initial framework. Its contents are organized into four sections. The first, *The Institution and Industry of Education*, charts the development of formal education in the United States, the purposes for which it is intended, the curricula hidden within schools, and their role as a tool of the state. The second, *Indian Education*, provides a short history of the education of American Indians over the years, its assimilatory agenda and practices, and the consequences this education has for Native academic achievement and identity. The third, *Educational Success*, addresses the main research topic for this thesis, identifying prominent theories and factors in academic success, and Native definitions of personal success. Lastly, in *Practices of Freedom*, I bring together some of the educational alternatives identified by bell hooks (1994) and other authors, and their capacity for transforming settler colonial institutions of education.

THE INSTITUTION AND INDUSTRY OF EDUCATION

Formal education in the United States has had nearly four centuries to grow and develop into the collection of schools it is today. The purpose of these schools, the students they serve, and their role in the nation have changed over the years, but this chapter is not going to give a full history of those changes[4]. I'm going to focus in on formal education as a national institution, how it maintains the settler state, and its transformation into an industry under neoliberalism.

Both K-12 and postsecondary education have come to be extremely important in the U.S, in part because they are so closely linked to the state. Educators and policymakers alike have connected schools to the economic, political, social, and moral well being of the country, seeing them as a place for confronting and overcoming challenges to democracy (Giroux, 2010). Under these initiatives, elementary and secondary education have been given the task of preparing students to become responsible citizens, who can continue to learn outside of the classroom, are productively employed (Beaulieu, 2008), and are civically engaged (Spring, 2014). At the same time, postsecondary education under this line of thought has become a means of moving students into employment (Benjamin, Chambers, & Reiterman, 1993), and a place of scholarly research, for the benefit of both private business and national political interests (Tierney, 1992).

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[4] Read Spring (2014) if you're interested.

On the other hand, education has also been imagined as a means of redressing social and economic inequality within the nation. In the nineteenth century, advocates of mass schooling like Horace Mann saw education as a way to both end personal poverty and to increase national wealth (Spring, 2014). Mann's notion of education as the balance wheel of society, sought to provide students with equal opportunities to create wealth for themselves, and in the twentieth century, these concerns started to draw more attention to the health and living conditions of children. Similarly, in the post Civil Rights era, recognition of social systems of inequality has led education to be championed as the primary means of rectifying those racial inequalities that legislation has not been able to. This belief in the ability of students to obtain social and political power through schooling has transformed that institution in the national imaginary into an opportunity for social mobility (Baum, 2013), which continues to lead more and more people into higher education.

This educational mission then, of bringing together many disparate peoples into a unified democratic citizenry, requires both academic and social development (Grande, 2015). That development introduces learned values, beliefs, ideologies, and behaviors (Spring, 2014), most of which are implicit in curriculum and instruction, although they are just as necessary for graduation as formal academic content (Jackson, 1968). This additional, hidden curriculum within schools creates citizens by socializing students into a national culture and identity, which is assumed, made to appear natural, unquestioned, and protected in the classroom (Tierney, 1992). Because schools serve to transform students into professionals and citizens, they are especially influential in students' development, and this socialization can produce incongruities between home and school (Brayboy, 1999). Those incongruities result in part, because the beliefs, values, and practices within hidden curricula, which are assumed to be universal, are actually very specific to Western culture.

Hidden curriculum within schools often goes unnoticed, because it passes on to students ways of thinking and living in the world that we never talk about. These include moral and political values (Spring, 2014), as well as notions of race (Grant, 1995), gender, and sexuality (Pascoe, 2011), and how to behave in public and relate to others (Jackson, 1968). Perhaps less obvious however, is how this hidden curriculum also includes very fundamental perceptions of reality and identity.

Over the centuries of intellectual development in Europe, humanity's relationship to the world came to be defined by an elevation over all other forms of life and existence (Grande, 2015), which entitled and compelled humanity to take control of the natural world and reshape it (Deyhle, 1996). Likewise, with the rise of successive branches of philosophy, theories of individualism separated out individual persons from humanity as whole, setting the rights and interests of individuals into an antagonistic relationship with those of the collective. These two worldviews have isolated people from the world and each other, but Western thinkers like Descartes also separated different aspects of the person, isolating cognition, reason, and the human mind from our physical existence (Smith, 2012). This series of separations from the world demands that individuals partition their experiences of reality into the rational and irrational, the individual and the collective, the human and the subhuman, and even the different identities of an individual (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997).

As a consequence of these separations, Western thought has adopted a very specific understanding of what knowledge is, what can be known, and how to learn. The emphasis that

scholars placed upon the human mind and reasoning for example, led into the twin beliefs of rationalism and positivism, which hold that knowledge of the world can only come from observation and logical reasoning, and that all knowledge can be justified or logically proven (Grande, 2015). These two together lead to an epistemology that views reality, and knowledge, as discrete, definable, and at the same time universally true (Grande, 2015; Spring, 2014).

There are a whole host of consequences for our daily lives that derive from these theories; they drive the impulse to gather and archive information, for example[5]. But perhaps most important for this chapter, is how these epistemological beliefs lead to the creation of a canon of knowledge, a set of facts, histories, and theories that is thought to be the definitive, and exclusive truth (Smith, 2012). That claim to being the only true collection of knowledge, ignores the very specific, and eurocentric, worldviews and values that those ideas are based upon. And yet, because Western thought claims to possess these unquestionable truths, it also claims the right to determine what is and is not true or legitimate (Rifkin, 2009; Simpson, 2007). Indigenous beliefs and practices as a consequence, have been discredited whenever they differ in the inherent assumptions they make about reality and knowledge. Although the contents of the Western canon have changed over time, and even multiplied, the belief in this universal canon has never fully disappeared (Tierney, 1992; Brayboy, 1999), continuing to invalidate indigenous lifeways.

On their own, these beliefs are extremely damaging for indigenous students, discrediting and effectively excluding non-Western culture, knowledge, and histories from the classroom. But these intellectual traditions have done even more harm by validating and catalyzing colonization itself. For centuries Western thought had already attempted to justify its violence by portraying non-Western peoples as morally inferior (Said, 1979). As European powers began to expand and colonize lands all over the globe, they relied upon these new emerging theories of reality to do the same thing. These colonizers measured indigenous practices and beliefs in proportion to their own universal truths, creating a moral hierarchy based upon the degree of difference from that truth, justifying the acts of violence by which they accumulate land, labor, and resources. Just as Western scholars had defined humanity as separate from and superior to all other life, this hierarchy established that the West was distinct from and superior to all other societies, solidifying that superiority around the ideas of civilization and progress, and eventually race (Smith, 2012).

But let's be clear on this one point at least. These academic theories didn't just let Westerners off the hook for colonization, they actively supported and compelled that process forward (Smith, 2012). By defining indigenous peoples as inferior, backward, uncivilized, subhuman, or infantile, Western thinkers made the position of indigenous peoples under the supposed supervision of colonial powers seem natural and reasonable. And, believing that humanity had a responsibility to improve the natural world, these scholars reasoned that they also had a responsibility to improve the lives, minds, and souls of indigenous peoples, to bring them into the march of Progress, whether by (under)developing their national economy, or civilizing and Christianizing their children.

Western values and worldviews, assumed to be universally applicable, then became the means of controlling peoples and reorganizing reality (Smith, 2012; Simpson, 2007). Mishuana Goeman (2014) writes on how colonial powers implement theses principles and practices,

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[5] In other words, this whole literature review.

through what she calls the settler colonial grammar, remaking the landscape, social spaces, genders, and identities in accordance with Western norms, which is exactly what Wolfe (2006) describes as the positive, or constructive element of the logic of elimination: transforming indigenous existence in order to create a new colonial society. At the same time, this grammar sifts out and excludes those aspects of indigenous culture, social structure, polity, cosmology, epistemology, and worldview that conflict with Western knowledge and it considers illegitimate (Rifkin, 2009).

Together this grammar and ideology effectively eliminate possibilities for any other alternative but settler colonialism. Settler occupation becomes an undeniable and unquestionable aspect of reality, as this settler grammar delegitimizes all else. Although the West continues to be fascinated by and to document those things which are foreign, exotic, Other[6], these studies always reaffirm the superiority and normality of the West (Said, 1979). They always find that *the exception proves the rule.*

And this is the real threat that the hidden curriculum poses within American education. The hidden curriculum is that settler colonial grammar, that collection of ideas and practices which are assumed to be universally true, and are naturalized in everyday life. In moving students into a common national culture and identity, it performs the labor of elimination, imposing a colonial reality and delegitimizing indigenous lifeways. But, by also simultaneously foreclosing the possibility of any alternative, this hidden curriculum makes sovereign violence appear necessary, drawing upon the imagery of civilization and progress in order to do so (Rifkin, 2009). Thus, the hidden curriculum within American schools allows settlers to ignore their own complicity in the ongoing occupation and exploitation of indigenous lands.

I guess I've made a number of claims so far about what the hidden curriculum does, without yet explaining how it does that. To begin with, I want to state that's it not necessary for colonial powers to exert overt force, because hegemony maintains authority and dominance for them (Erickson, 1987). Hegemony is a political and cultural power that operates in everyday situations, giving political meaning to actions and sentiments, like standing during the national anthem for example. By connecting day-to-day life to moral and political values, hegemony engrains colonial authority and power into people's lived existence (Fairclough, 1989), coercing individuals to adopt relationships, behaviors, and identities consistent with the settler grammar. In fact, it is these mundane moments which are the primary sites for domination, because they are learned early, become internalized, and are understood by all without needing to be discussed (Silliman, 2001).

Within the classroom, educators and administrators are able to oversee students directly, ensuring that they do adopt these appropriate ways of being and thinking, but schools are also able to exercise a near constant supervision through labor. Labor, for centuries has been a means of exercising colonial control, and is a technology not just for producing materials, but for transforming minds and disciplining bodies (Silliman, 2001). Because labor systems carry with them certain expectations for production, they are able to bring behavior to conform even when not directly present. Schools have been extremely successful at using students' intellectual labor to ensure conformity to appropriate behaviors and worldviews, especially because they have

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[6] A reader interested in learning about the Other, Western identity, and colonialism should see Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), where she expands on bell hooks' discussion of Trading the Other.

integrated social mobility into educational success, leaving students few other possibilities for protecting their personal well being.

The process of democratization that happens in classrooms then, is accomplished through this cultural and political hegemony, passing on to students worldviews, values, and behaviors which are culturally specific to the West, that reaffirm white supremacy, naturalize colonization, and demand conformity. This white cultural hegemony (Tierney, 1992) has not disappeared with time, but been reaffirmed with changes in the economy and national values (Spindler and Spindler, 1998). Students who come into the school already raised in these cultural traditions are rewarded for their ability to behave and perform appropriately, while the culture, knowledge, and histories of other students are stigmatized and criminalized (Erickson, 1987). Succeeding within the institution then, requires both already knowing white culture, and being able to use it (Brayboy, 1999). For those marginalized communities who don't possess white cultural capital, the assumed neutrality of this hidden curriculum is used to justify their academic failure and social oppression.

Schools then, do create a democratic citizenry, but it is not a unified body of peoples. In reproducing the settler state, education reinforces those systems of social inequality which divide peoples along racialized, gendered, and class lines. An explicit purpose of education is to prepare students to move into the labor market. How schools do that has been heavily influenced by theories of the school as a sorting-machine, sorting students into their future occupations and social class (Spring, 2014). Today's system of tracking developed out of this model, determining who goes to college and who gets vocational training. Although education is still thought of as a means of obtaining social mobility, it rationalizes this sorting process as a kind of competition, assuming that certain individuals will inevitably fail (Tierney, 1992). Jean Anyon (1980) has however, spent a significant portion of her career documenting the ways in which this sorting process actively creates student failure. Students are confined to the class position that they entered the institution with, and for marginalized students, pushed towards lower and lower socioeconomic positions, both because success is dependent upon white cultural capital, and because these students are held to racial and class based expectations, receiving differentiated, inferior instruction.

Although academic achievement is clearly divided along racial and socioeconomic lines, educational institutions portray academic failure as personal failures, teaching students to see themselves as the problem (Moten and Harney, 2004). In this capacity, educational institutions operate as a form of social control. Within the hidden curriculum are beliefs in capitalism and the meritocracy, which teach students that both education and the labor market are fair systems and that there are no viable alternatives. Thus, schools teach students to accept the system of inequality that stigmatizes, displaces, and dispossesses them, while also denying students the knowledge and skills that could protect their political and economic interests (Spring, 2014). Moreover, by promoting education as a means of personal mobility, education encourages students to pursue higher social status, directing attention away from overturning the system of collective oppression that is global imperialism, and discouraging worker rebellion (Deyhle, 1998). Essential to education then, is the lie that systemic inequality is an individual problem, by which schools are able to create a compliant workforce that values and aspires to move into white cultural supremacy (Grande, 2015).

In the late twentieth century, educational institutions became particularly influenced by neoliberalism, which has transformed schooling along economic interests, while still maintaining this system of social stratification. Jodi Melamed describes neoliberalism, in its most expansive forms, as a "world-historical configuration of governance and biological and social life, premised on the belief that the market is better than the state at distributing resources and managing human life" (2011, 39). For educational institutions, neoliberal policies have subsumed schooling in the accumulation and expense of capital (Spring, 2014). This marks a change from earlier notions of education as a public good, a place for developing citizens with a sense of justice who can hold national power accountable, into instead a training center for global markets (Giroux, 2010).

Education plays a central role in neoliberal theory, because it imagines the United States as a Learning Society, dependent upon the production and commercialization of knowledge (Spring, 2014). Formal education then, becomes essential to the ability of the national economy to compete in global markets. Giroux (2010) critiques the rise of these neoliberal policies, focusing on how they transform the state into a shareholder democracy, advocating participation through consumerism, rather than responsible civic engagement, and promoting self-pacification through consumption. He also draws attention to how within postsecondary institutions neoliberalism attempts to transform faculty into a disposable body of workers, removing them from administrative decision making, and limiting tenure track and full time positions. Note for example, that the number of full time faculty declined from 80% in 1970 to only 51.3% in 2000 (Baum, 33).

At the same time under neoliberalism, intellectual work has become a marketable commodity, and students themselves are reimagined as investments (Spring, 2014). Schooling has become a process for producing higher quality workers, which will in turn yield profits and reduce poverty. This economically centered educational theory leads to what Giroux (2010) calls a bare pedagogy, based upon market principles, designed to produce intellectual goods and profit. This pedagogy advocates a simple banking-model of education (Freire, 2000), in which educators pass on to students static information and facts in a one-way transaction, transforming teaching from an interaction between teacher and student, into a simple assessment of ability or incompetence (Erickson, 1987). Although scholars have criticized banking-models of education for decades, neoliberal policies have institutionalized that practice by standardizing curricula and instructional methods across schools (Giroux, 2010).

Because neoliberal educational pedagogies are market-oriented, they also promote competition among students, advocating self-reliance and discouraging altruism (Giroux, 2010; Tierney, 1992), which is then enforced through testing. Under No Child Left Behind policy in fact, academic testing makes school funding into a competition. This academic testing is of course rooted in white cultural hegemony, institutionalizing the value of white cultural capital and racial discrimination. But because testing is connected to funding, it creates a vicious cycle in which poor test performance leads to inadequate funding, which rather than addressing academic performance blames students and teachers for school failure (Beaulieu, 2008). Reflecting on these policies, Lomawaima and McCarty (2002) identify the rise of standardized testing as the standardization of inequality. And Spring also notes that in these years the average number of seniors from high-poverty high schools who graduate with a diploma has dropped from 86% in 2000 to only 68% in 2014 (2014, 76).

While neoliberalism is standardizing inequality within secondary education, higher education is becoming more and more necessary for profitable employment (Baum, 2013). We face a reality in which new careers, as well as traditional occupations, require increasingly greater levels of education. This occupational necessity then, along with desegregation and the rise of community colleges, has pushed an increasing number of students into postsecondary education. As a consequence, the kinds of students attending these institutions has changed over the years. In 2013, 42% of students in postsecondary schools were considered nontraditional[7], compared to only 25% in 1970 (Baum, 2013, 20). In addition, more students are attending school only part-time, are in need of financial assistance, received inadequate academic preparation in high school, and there are more students who are not white (NCES, Total Fall enrollment; Baum, 2013).

Although more students of color and who are low income are attending higher education, this doesn't mean that less rich, white students are able to go to college. Enrollment has increased fairly consistently across all social classes (Baum, 2013), and although white students as a percentage of the student body are shrinking, the actual number of white students enrolled has only continued to increase over the years (NCES, Total Fall enrollment). However, because these are the first generations in which large numbers of minority students are attending college, the average academic preparation and income of students is decreasing. Unfortunately for these students, while they are coming into these schools, serving as a vanguard for institutional transformation, schools are often ill-equipped to address the needs that these students bring with them, mainstreaming these students with little to no additional support (Tierney, 1992).

For these marginalized students, postsecondary education is seen as an opportunity for social mobility, and the highly educated have been able to achieve higher incomes, as the earnings of college graduates outpace rising inflation (Baum, 2013). But at the same time the earnings of those without a degree are on the decline, and workers' wages have been dramatically reduced in order to compete in global markets. Higher education has become a dividing point, about which social class is becoming more and more stratified (Spring, 2014). And yet, because education forms this social division, rising income inequality continues to push people into higher education, whether vocational or undergraduate, reinforcing the authority of formal education to determine social class. However, because of this increase in the number of students attending and graduating from higher education, both the economic and social value of academic degrees have depreciated, with the result that students are pushed to obtain higher and more prestigious degrees.

Educational institutions have also responded to this inflation. In order to maintain the image of prestige and the value of their degrees, schools - most especially private schools - have begun offering greater amenities, more complex academic programs, more personalized attention, in order to differentiate themselves from community colleges and even public institutions (Baum, 2013). This has however, created an amenities arms race, which combined within lower state allocations, is raising tuition prices across the nation. On the other hand, community colleges have begun to differentiate themselves from 4-year institutions. Although these schools were mostly liberal arts institutions in the past, designed to move students into 4-year universities and

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[7] Nontraditional student typically refers to postsecondary students who are older, over 24, which then also implies other characteristics which distinguish them from the average student: being employed full or part time, living off campus, enrolled in nondegree or occupational programs, and supporting dependent family members (NCES, Definitions and Data).

colleges, they have instead become vocational programs, with the purpose of moving students directly into jobs (Tierney, 1992). Thus, higher education was able to adapt to the growing demand for postsecondary degrees, and in the process reproduced the social division of labor within its own hierarchy, creating schools for the elite, and schools for the working and managerial classes (Giroux, 2010).

What these transformations underscore is how the real value of an academic education, social prestige (Tierney, 1992), continues to be a privilege of the wealthy (Giroux, 2010). Although a number of financial aid opportunities do exist to break down those barriers to higher education, it should be noted that states have been drastically reducing the funding they allocate for postsecondary education, the majority of state and federal funds available are dedicated to nontraditional students who typically don't or can't attend elite institutions, and educational tax credits really only benefit the middle and upper classes (Baum, 2013). And although institutions claim to provide opportunities to the marginalized, they also avoid enrolling 'risk' students, who could threaten retention and graduation rates (Tierney). For those students who do find a place in these schools and graduate, there is a positive relationship with income (Spring, 2014). When compared across race and gender however, the income of graduates of color and women remain far below those of their white, male peers. The benefits of higher education then, continue to be reserved largely to those who have social status and mobility before ever enrolling.

The growth of higher education and the important role it has come to play in the neoliberal economy is possible because formal education possesses a monopoly on knowledge. This monopoly exists as a result of those early intellectual developments which first established that there was a single, universal canon of knowledge, which academic societies and institutions claimed authority over. The commodification of knowledge under neoliberalism then transformed the institution of education, into an industry that could profit from the production and distribution of knowledge (Giroux, 2010). As the value of academic degrees continues to cheapen however, educational institutions have been forced to multiply the number of academic disciplines, making them more rigid and disparate, so that intellectuals can hyperspecialize and continue to produce more academic works.

Maintaining this monopoly and its authority in the market however, leads academic institutions into stifling change (Tierney, 1992). While education has always been about reproducing the state and social inequality, the neoliberal transformation of education has led to what Moten and Harney (2004) refer to as a critical negligence. This negligence is an ideological disconnect from reality, which pushes students and faculty away from critical engaging with reality, instead refocusing them towards the production of ever more intellectual material. As a force within institutions, this negligence makes civic engagement and altruistic programming something extra, adding an ulterior office or two rather than incorporating those interests into the mission and fundamental structure of the institution (Tierney). And even these small centers are often set against themselves, with limited funding or administrative support, and their activities closely managed (Moten and Harney).

Hyperspecialization within the institution also disrupts those attempts to think about and transform reality. Students and faculty are discouraged in their work from ever theorizing about reality as a whole, or attempting to intervene in the forces they describe (Moten and Harney, 2004). Instead, there is always more research to be done, and more idiosyncrasies to understand

before a decision can be made. Such negligence ensures that social inequality isn't disturbed, and therefore the influential position of the educational industry as a gatekeeper for social mobility.

Critical theorists, including many of the authors cited here, have critiqued educational institutions for this negligence and their relationship to the settler state. But these institutions are extremely adept at as transforming those critiques into their own resources. Moten and Harney (2004) refer to this consumption of critique as the counterinsurgency, in which critique is analyzed, disarmed, and then assimilated into the language of the institution. In this way, schools are able to adopt the appearance of sympathy, reusing the same words and concepts, but without those elements that could challenge how the institution exploits inequality and its control over knowledge. This counterinsurgency transforms critical theory and its agenda into a method for cleaning up excessive and explicit examples of institutional imperialism, ensuring that its negligence is hidden from sight (Moten and Harney; Tierney, 1992).

Decolonization itself has been taken up in the academy as a hollow, metaphorical ideal, allowing the institution to dismiss its role as an agent of the settler state. Tuck and Yang wrote their well-known paper, *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor* (2012) documenting how these metaphorical uses of decolonization are what they call settler moves to innocence, acts which displace settler feelings of guilt. These moves to innocence are rewarded in educational institutions, often privileging the white scholar who is able to unite higher education with the project of decolonization, thereby reaffirming the morality, value, and relevance of the institution. This theoretical reconciliation is always about saving settler futurity however, subsuming indigenous political needs into existing educational liberationist frameworks (Allen, 2012), assuming that decolonization happens simply from recognizing the settler state rather than through taking action to dismantle it (Tuck and Yang).

INDIAN EDUCATION

The education of American Indians is perhaps one of the most conspicuous examples of American imperialism and of the role that education has played in the settler state. Indian education has gone through many evolutions over the centuries, each characterized by different policy initiatives and goals, but they can all be understood as assimilation efforts (Brayboy, 2006; Deyhle, 1996). No matter the era, one cannot escape the state's need for access to indigenous land, labor, and resources (Grande, 2015). Education has been one of the state's most useful tools for acquiring these, incorporating those aspects of indigeneity considered safe, that do not challenge settler authority, and eliminating that which is dangerous (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2002). Even today, the values attached to formal education for promoting integration and as a means to social mobility, presume the absorption of indigenous peoples into the settler state.

Private Indian Colleges have been attended by Natives for centuries. Dartmouth College for example, is the best known for its early American mission of educating Indians. While these institutions were established by colonial powers in order to civilize and Christianize indigenous peoples (Grande, 2015), Natives have always used schools for their own purposes. In these years, the seventeenth to early nineteenth century, indigenous communities often sent children to Indian schools so that their future leaders could become competent in interfacing with settlers and colonial governments (Devens, 2009).

However, after the American Revolution, as the United States began its expansion westward, Indian education took on a new urgency. Ostensibly, it continued to be a mission of

civilization, but Anglo colonists began to openly embrace the idea of Manifest Destiny, that the United States was by the will of God going to expand across the continent, which necessarily carried with it the assumption that indigenous peoples would disappear in the face of Western civilization. The goals of these Indian missionary schools then became entangled with state agendas, moving from a focus on educating individual Indians, to attempting to move entire indigenous communities into settler society so that their lands could also be absorbed by the state (Grande, 2015), thus performing the labor of elimination.

For most of the nineteenth century Indian education continued to be dominated by private, church-operated missionary schools. The federal government even divided up indigenous peoples and lands, placing them under the supervision of different churches (Deloria, 1988). When the federal government began to realize the inefficiency of that missionary system, it implemented its own boarding school system in the late nineteenth century (Grande, 2015). Together, missionary and BIA schools implemented a pedagogy designed to eliminate indigenous peoples entirely, and indigenous women and girls were central to their initiatives. These schools targeted indigenous women because they recognized the role that these women play in sustaining their communities. It was thought that moving indigenous women into settler society would lead the way for the rest of the community to follow (Devens, 2009). Whereas indigenous communities historically saw Western education as an opportunity to train future diplomats, Indian schools moved instead to use these children to break apart tribal nations.

Students in Indian schools were submerged in Western culture, taught to value private property and personal labor, and women in particular were educated in Western domesticity (Devens, 2009). When students failed to adhere to Western social and cultural norms they were subjected to extreme physical abuse, in effect criminalizing indigeneity. To ensure that students would not return to their communities and indigenous lifeways, they were separated from family members, with little to no opportunities for visiting them, and were forced to take on new, white identities. In addition to these official school policies, Indian children were subjected to unhealthy living conditions, lack of medical attention or food, and emotional and sexual violence. The death toll of Indian children at these schools is still largely unknown because so many went unrecorded, or were hidden from their families. While it has become more acceptable in recent years to refer to these policies of assimilation as cultural genocide, Wolfe (2006) makes the clear argument for how this education is just one institution of the structural genocide that is the settler state.

The boarding school experience was lived out by individual students, but its consequences were sustained by entire communities. Although schools were unable to totally assimilate indigenous peoples, families lost their sons and daughters, and tribal nations lost future leaders (Grande, 2015). Rather than being trained in their culture to assume community responsibilities, students were specifically trained to become domestic workers and laborers for whites (Devens, 2009; Lomawaima et al, 2000). This vocational education ultimately threatened the ability of indigenous communities to sustain themselves as generations of young Indians were denied the capacity to serve their nations, and often moved into white towns to find work. Boarding schools and local white communities on the other hand, were able to capitalize on the products of Indian labor, translating this domestic training into profits (Grande).

Following WWII, Indian policy in the United States entered into the termination era, attempting to end the federal government's responsibility to indigenous peoples by dismantling tribal governments and reservations, and moving Indians directly into the mainstream population

(Grande, 2015). Whereas in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries indigenous peoples remained on the outside of settler society and had to be coerced in, by the second world war, they were surrounded by settlers on all sides, and termination policies could forcibly integrate them. For Indian education it meant that a significant number of Natives were no longer attending boarding schools, but had been incorporated into local public school systems.

In these post-war years, the state had also begun to adopt theories of multiculturalism, which gave legitimacy to termination policies in their attempt to integrate Indians into mainstream society (Grande, 2015). Although this multicultural turn did claim to accept and promote cultural difference within the nation, it did not however, recognize the historical and political differences of indigenous sovereignty. What multicultural theory fails to account for in its notions of difference, is that unlike other racial and ethnic minorities, Indians stand to lose their political status and identity as members of sovereign nations through integration (Deyhle, 1996). Thus integration and multiculturalism in this era became tools of elimination, claiming to accept indigenous difference only so as long as it did not challenge the authority of the settler state.

Termination policy officially ended under the Nixon administration, and the federal government has since moved into a period of tribal self-determination, giving tribal nations more control over certain aspects of their lands, governments, and peoples (Grande, 2015). Indian education now stands as a mixture of these successive policies. Native students attend public, charter, magnet, and private schools alongside other non-Indians, although BIA schools still operate in many tribal communities. In some places, tribes have taken up the administration of these schools and have even been able to implement educational programming and pedagogy of their own design[8].

Although Indian education in the past seventy years hasn't adopted the explicit mission of civilizing Indian children, their agendas remain assimilatory. Whether under termination or self-determination policies, formal education is still defined by a hidden curriculum of white cultural hegemony (Tierney, 1992). Despite publicly endorsing multicultural difference, indigenous culture, language, and history are given little to no place in school curricula, are stigmatized and devalued as unintellectual, or in some way inferior to Western knowledge (Deyhle, 1996). As neoliberalism has standardized school curricula it has officially codified this exclusion of indigeneity, while also undermining the ability of those schools which are run by Indians to exercise self-determination (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2002). No Child Left Behind for example, has been specifically designed and implemented in order to remove indigenous culture and language from the classroom, and has consequently led to higher dropout rates (Beaulieu, 2008).

Moreover, the implicit values of competition and independence within schools require behavior in conflict with many indigenous peoples' cultural values. For example, students are expected to participate in an aggressive, debate-like classroom, with specific turn-taking rules and question-answer formats (Brayboy, 1999). In contrast, silent listening and reflection, which is

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[8] If you're interested in reading about tribal self-determination and Indian education, Teresa McCarty and K. Tsianina Lomawaima have written several useful works on those topics. McCarty's book (2002) on the Rough Rock Demonstration School shows how the educational and political processes played out in a tribally-run school. And together Lomawaima and McCarty (2002) analyzed the tensions between between tribal and settler sovereignty within Indian education.

more common in indigenous cultures, is seen as a lack of interest or engagement (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997), and cooperation among peers is discouraged as cheating. In addition, because many Natives are taught to value and seek out relationships with elders, they often expect to form close relational bonds with educators and advisors, only to find that these are considered inappropriate in many schools, especially in higher education (Fryberg and Markus, 2007). Learning these behaviors is however, necessary for academic and social success within formal education, requiring students to adopt a white culture performance.

Failure to take on these behaviors has serious consequences, but not all students have the ability to do so. Some of these behaviors and values are explicitly taught in school at a young age, but most of them are implicit and students are assumed to know them. For those students who don't come into the school already possessing this cultural capital, they are limited in their ability to both participate in the classroom and to reach out for help (Brayboy, 1999). The structure of higher education in particular, disadvantages those who haven't learned this performance. The pressures of obtaining tenure pushes professors to focus more on producing research than on their teaching, leaving them little room to address the pedagogical needs of their students. As a consequence, banking-models of teaching are extremely common, expecting all students to be able to learn and perform in the same manner. Native faculty, who understand these experiences and are often most capable of mentoring students, are then forced to choose between advancing or sustaining their own careers, and providing students the support they need to succeed.

Unable to recognize the cultural performance required in the classroom, or that non-white students aren't prepared for it, educational institutions instead try to reinterpret Native student behavior into types of nonconformity that they can understand (Simpson, 2007). In doing so, schools fall back upon deficit explanations, describing individual students as less intelligent, lazy, rude, or uncooperative, or believe that their families and tribal communities don't promote school values, or that indigenous cultures don't value education (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Deyhle, 1996) These explanations tie student behavior and academic performance to moral judgements about themselves and their peoples, stigmatizing indigeneity (Deyhle, 1998). In this context, being an Indian is framed as the opposite of being a good student (Brayboy, 1999), and although schools may adopt a multicultural policy, these practices create a campus environment that is both alienating and racist (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997).

From this cultural conflict then develops the notion that formal education is an exclusively white institution, incongruous with indigeneity. For centuries this is an idea that the West has circulated, that indigenous peoples are too backward and uncivilized to have intellectual traditions or educational institutions[9] (Smith, 2012). But by punishing students for failing to adhere to white cultural norms, educational institutions build cultural borders between themselves and indigeneity (Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993), reaffirming that schools are indeed a white space.

Boundaries and frontiers exist between all cultural groups, and without them, there could be no concept of a unified cultural identity. However, because educational institutions privilege and integrate white culture into systems of success, while stigmatizing indigenous culture, they in effect police those boundaries, creating strict borders (Deyhle 1998; Erickson, 1987). In order to succeed academically Native students are encouraged to cross over that border and abandon their

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[9] Simpson and Smith directly address and discredit this myth in *Theorizing Native Studies* (2014), and Jack Forbes (1998) discusses the possibility of universities in indigenous cities.

indigenous culture, identity and family which are seen as a hindrance to their personal progress and success (Deyhle, 1996). That pressure to assimilate, naturally leads Native students to see the school as a threat, who then begin policing their own communities in order to maintain their cultural authenticity.

This cultural conflict leads to a progressive differentiation of identities, where indigeneity and whiteness are defined in opposition to each other, and become increasingly more distant over time (Erickson, 1987). Settlers for their part, create these oppositional identities through the deficit images they hold of indigenous communities. Native students in turn reinforce border identities among their peers as a way of rejecting the white cultural performance expected of them (Brayboy, 1999). This process of course, essentializes both white and indigenous cultures, treating them as static, and tries to create uniformity across hundreds of different cultural groups and millions of individuals (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). An unavoidable consequence of this essentialism, is the internalized oppression that Natives enact on each other in policing these cultural borders (Grande, 2015; Garrod and Larrimore, 1997).

Most importantly, because these border identities spring up around the cultural performance expected in schools, they include oppositional behaviors that show a disaffiliation from both the dominant culture and the institution (Erickson, 1987). Because academic success and school participation are linked with abandoning indigenous culture and consenting to assimilation, Natives enter into a regressive relationship with the institution, defined by counter-academic behaviors. Not-learning becomes an act of political resistance (c.f. Valdés). Through this resistance Native students are rejecting multiple things, the assimilatory aims of their schooling, the value and prestige attributed to the educational institution, and its authority to determine their identity and self-worth. Deyhle (1998), who wrote on some of the transformations that Navajo students went through in this process, notes that the response of students' families to this behavior, was to bring them closer into the community and its values, reaffirming the indigenous identity that the school threatens.

Because of these cultural borders then, Native students are forced into a narrow, oversimplified dilemma. They can choose to resist the academic institution, maintain their identity, and stay in the indigenous world, or adopt a white cultural performance, find success in school, and move into Anglo society (Fryberg and Markus, 2007; Brayboy, 1999; Deyhle, 1996). This experience of course, is not universal. Some students do reject academic success entirely, turn outside of the school to find a personal success which reaffirms their indigenous identity. Others however, attempt to find a balance in the performances expected of them by the institution, their peers, and themselves (Deyhle, 1998). The decision students make depends both upon their own personalities, and whether they are able to find opportunities for personal development within the institution, or just the threat of assimilation (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997).

This dilemma of the two worlds however, serves as a kind of gatekeeper within schools, both secondary and higher education. It ensures that those who reject the assimilatory power of American education, or who lack the cultural capital necessary to succeed despite it, are pushed out of the institution and are denied the social prestige and economic opportunity it affords. Although Natives recognize the structural racism of this gatekeeping, and cite it as the most common reason they leave school, Anglo educators and administrators continue to believe that Native students are just complaining and causing problems for the institution (Deyhle, 1996).

The basic premise of this dilemma however, that Native students have a choice between the Anglo and indigenous world, is really just a myth (Deyhle, 1998; 1996). Both these worlds are essentialized images. The ability to completely leave behind one world for the other is impossible. Not only do many students lack the cultural capital necessary to act white, even if a student were to perfectly adopt a white cultural performance and become academically successful, their ability to build a career and move into Anglo society is always limited by the racism that confronts them outside of the classroom[10]. At the same time, colonial hegemony is pervasive in all aspects of society. There is no truly authentic world, free from any trace of Western influence, that Natives can escape into.

By perpetuating this myth however, settler society is able to displace responsibility for assimilation onto Natives themselves (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). Although schools remove Natives from their families, submerge them in white culture, and leave them unequipped to serve their communities, it is supposedly the student who makes the choice to abandon their identity and culture. Likewise, even though Natives are systematically alienated from educational institutions, and excluded from positions of power, they are the ones who decide to fail. Thus this myth conceals the assimilatory, gatekeeping functions of Indian education.

Indian education isn't just a gatekeeper though. The instruction it provides continues to prepare students for dependency, to move them into the lowest socioeconomic classes (Deyhle, 1996). Indian education is hyper-regulated by multiple bureaucratic offices and bodies of legislation, and at the same time under resourced (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2002), meaning that BIA schools often don't have the capacity to prepare students for college. Within mainstream schools on the other hand, because educators and administrators possess deficit-based images of Natives, they regularly push these students into lower educational tracks or vocational programs regardless of their academic performance (Deyhle). As a consequence, the instruction that Natives throughout much of Indian Country receive does not prepare them for the critical thinking that higher education requires (Brayboy, 1999; Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). Those who do choose to continue their education are funneled into community colleges where state spending per student is far less, so that Anglo taxpayers don't have to pay as much for Indian education (Tierney, 1992). And those who make it into 4-year institutions don't even realize the inadequacy of their education until they arrive at the school and find that they haven't received the same instruction as their peers.

The way that educational institutions push out Native students and vocationalize their education, constitutes a system of underdevelopment. Walter Rodney (1972), is talking about the colonization of Africa when he describes underdevelopment, but I think it is appropriate here as well. Underdevelopment as Rodney explains it, is not just the lack of economic development, but is a relative status between societies that is produced through exploitation. Whether African nations or tribal Indian nations, their economies have been integrated into global markets so that they become structurally dependent upon colonial states. And colonial states in turn, not only exploit that dependency, but cultivate it, ensuring that "developing" nations remain a source of colonial revenue. I believe this definition accurately describes the political and economic status of tribal nations generally, the ways in which tribal sovereignty is undermined by globalization and American imperialism. But within schools specifically, it reflects how Native students have been

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[10] In *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014) Glen Coulthard draws upon Frantz Fanon and Jean Paul Sartre to analyze these conflicting forces of assimilation and exclusion within settler society.

submerged in both white American culture and the global market, and yet are systematically denied the social mobility that education promises.

Assimilation and underdevelopment then, have led to an entrenched distrust among Native communities of formal education (Devens, 2009). Fryberg and Markus (2007) who conducted a comparative study of Native, Asian American, and Anglo undergraduates, found that Natives far more than the others, saw the school as an inherently political space, defined by Anglo values. While the Anglo students in the study thought that formal education enabled them, many Natives on the other hand felt subjected to the authority of others (c.f. Tierney, 1992). Deyhle (1996), who was writing about Navajo high school students, says that these communities thought of formal education as an interruption in their children's natural development, and that some students came to resent their schools for denying or distracting them from their culture. Brayboy (1999), describes similar attitudes among Ivy League undergraduates, who lost trust in their institutions because of the racism and cultural insensitivity they encountered.

This distrust didn't just develop because of educational practices however. Western Education is judged in the context of centuries of colonialism, in which a number of institutions have systematically denied indigenous peoples the ability to control their own lives (Grande, 2015; Deyhle, 1998). One of the most serious influences on how Natives view education today, is the job market. For many Native communities, the local job market is dominated by Anglo authority. Deyhle (1996) for example, describes how in Navajo communities the job opportunities for both those with and without college degrees are largely the same. Jobs in these rural areas are few to none to begin with, but they tend to be held exclusively by the local Anglo population, which discriminates against Indians in their hiring practices. Under these circumstances, it's difficult for Native students to find value in an assimilatory, gatekeeping education system, that may not lead to economic opportunity afterwards.

This is not to say that Natives don't value education. On the other hand entirely, while indigenous communities tend to have a negative view of the institution itself, they still push their children into schools, because they recognize that education is essential to the political and economic well being of the community (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Fryberg and Markus, 2007; Deyhle, 1996). In the same manner as tribal nations before them, schooling is seen as an opportunity to gain skills and resources that can be returned to and used by the tribe. This attitude reflects a belief that it is possible to combine indigenous culture, knowledge, and power with Western ideology, to exercise self-determination and survivance through the educational institution (Brayboy, 2006). But the value of this education is still relative to the needs of the community. For example, there is a considerable number of Native students, including those who were very successful in high school, who choose not to go onto higher education, remaining at home in order to support family members or fulfill other community responsibilities (Deyhle, 1996).

While not solely responsible, I do believe this inadequate, vocationalized, and assimilatory education is responsible for the comparatively low levels of Native academic achievement. Young Natives are enrolling in degree-granting programs at the lowest rates in the country.

Table 1.1 Percentage of 18-24 year olds enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in 2012

Total[1]	White	Black	Hispanic/ Latino	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian and Alaska Native	Two or More Races
41.0	42.1	36.4	37.5	59.8	50.3	27.8	39.4

1. Data for this table comes from the National Center for Education Statistics, "Percentage of 18 to 24-year olds"

Of those Natives who do go on to pursue postsecondary education, more often than their white peers they are over 24 and have children, require significant financial aid, are first generation students, lack necessary academic preparation, and are enrolled part time (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Tierney, 1992). These students tend to go to schools near their own community, and like Black, Hispanic, and Latinx students, are enrolling at higher than average rates in community colleges, vocational programs, and 2-year or for-profit institutions (NCES, Total Fall enrollment). Consequently, these demographic groups are obtaining Associate's degrees at high rates, but not degrees beyond that (NCES, Degrees conferred by sex and race).
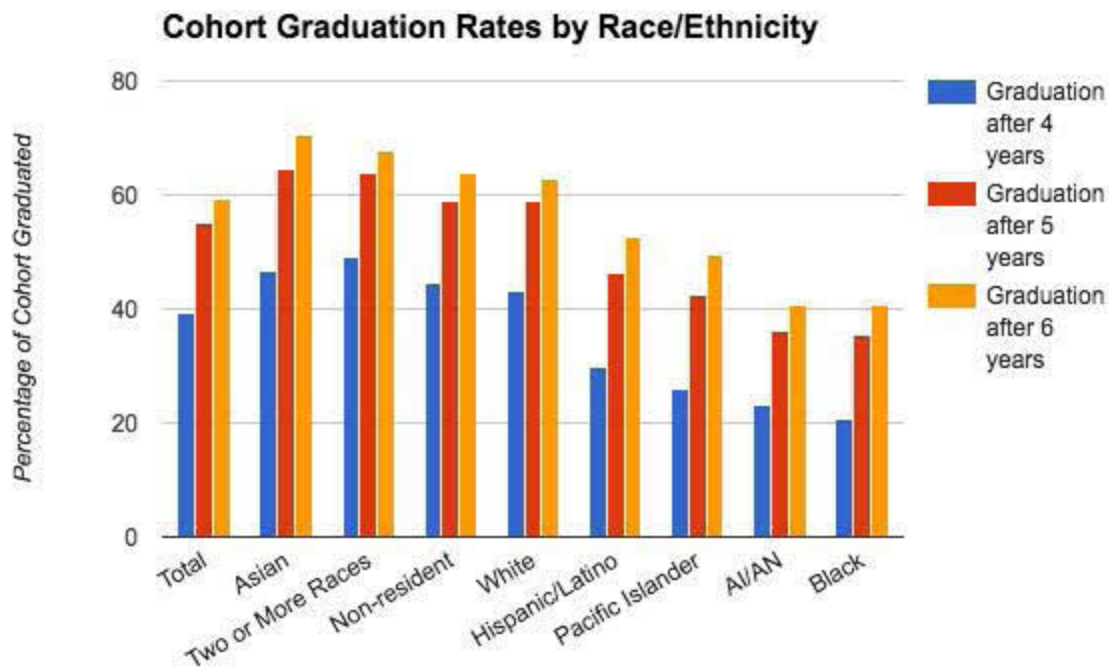
The data for this chart comes from the National Center for Education Statistics, Graduation rate.

In addition to these low enrollment rates, few Natives are graduating from their schools (see the above chart). At 4-year institutions, only 40% of Black and Native undergraduates are graduating within 6 years, some 20% less than the overall average. Those who don't complete their degree, tend to leave the school within their first year, either dropping out of higher education completely, or transferring to 2 year schools (Tierney, 1992). State schools are in part to blame for these figures, recruiting Native students to their campuses, but providing little additional support and mainstreaming them. This helps explain why retention is not a problem at elite schools, like the Ivy League, where the institution actively works to protect its reputation

and ensures that students persist (Brayboy, 1999). Whatever the particular causes however, the simple fact is that Natives have the lowest levels of educational attainment in the country.

Table 1.2 Percentage of 25-29 year olds with an educational degree in 2014.

Degree	Total	White	Black	Hispanic/ Latino	Asian	Pacific[2] islander	American Indian and Alaska Native	Two or More Races
HS	90.8[1]	95.6	91.9	74.7	96.6	95.5	83.9**	96.0
Bachelor's	34.0	40.8	22.4	15.1	63.2	24.7**	5.6**	32.4
Master's	7.6	9.0	3.9	2.9	18.8	#	#	7.1**

1. Data for this table comes from the National Center for Education Statistics, Percentage of persons 25-29.
2. Figures for Pacific Islanders are based on 2013 data.
** Coefficient of variation unreliably high for these figures
# Rounds to zero

Natives going to college then become members of a very small minority group at their schools, often for the first time in their lives (Tierney, 1992). Not only are there few Native students, but because so few Natives graduate, there are even fewer who then go on to become administrators and faculty (Brayboy, 1999). Whereas in secondary schools these Natives tend to encounter an institution that is oppositional to their indigenous identity, at college, they find institutions that are entirely ignorant of indigenous peoples. The pressure to assimilate then comes from living in a bureaucracy that simply doesn't recognize indigenous existence, in effect making Natives invisible on campus. At ethnically diverse schools, this invisibility becomes only more salient, as even among people of color Indians are forgotten (Fryberg and Markus, 2007).

On the other hand, Native students are surrounded by settlers, some of whom have never met an Indian before. Natives are then pressured into becoming representatives of their own tribe and all indigenous peoples. In this respect, Natives are made very visible on campus, but so that they can be tokenized, exotified, and stereotyped (Brayboy, 1999). Some of the attention that Natives attract is also hostile, and explicitly racist, especially when students are drinking. In order to protect their own personal safety and health then, Natives are pressured to blend in, adopt a white cultural performance, and make themselves invisible on the campus. Thus, despite being an entirely different academic environment, schooling remains an assimilative experience.

Together these forces of (in)visibility (Brayboy, 1999) impact a student's academic performance and can make Natives feel like they don't belong at the school, that despite being invited to the campus, they were not welcome there, as if a mistake had been made in admitting them (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). The combination of exotification and hostile racism also makes Natives feel like what the school really wanted was not them but the stereotypical image of an Indian who would act according to the norms and in acceptably different forms, that they would be a "good" Indian. Those who work against these forces have to become educators and activists to try and transform the non-Natives at their schools.

Native students then, continue to face an identity conflict in higher education. School is a place of identity formation for any student, and this process is especially turbulent in college (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). But this identity formation is especially complicated for indigenous students, because Indians don't have the privilege of an unexamined life. Indigenous identity is always located within a crisis of power, caught between the forces of capitalism,

essentialism, and assimilation that seek to homogenize indigenous identity and commodify and appropriate it (Grande, 2015). Moreover, this identity is highly location based and dependent upon the communities of students, but at school they are separated from all that context (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). They are publicly inspected by settlers who try and fit them into specific stereotypes, while privately they are scrutinized by other Natives and themselves, but ultimately this process reinforces their cultural values. The challenges to a student's identity in college and the experience of racism leads them back to their heritage which then becomes a source of strength to persevere.

EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

Because of the low levels of educational attainment among Natives, much of the research on indigenous peoples and higher education has focused on the topic of academic success. Historically, researchers have taken a deficit approach to studying Native academic success, viewing Natives as 'at risk', and looking for the causes of failure. This attitude is so common in fact, there is an expectation of Native failure (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). More recent studies have begun focusing instead on how Natives work to create their academic success (Brayboy, 1999), but the central question still remains, how do we get Native students to graduate? This definition of success is extremely limited however. It tells us nothing about the value of the education Natives are receiving, ignoring the systemic racism that limits the ability of Native students to use their education outside of the school. As Deyhle (1996) noted in writing on Native communities in the Southwest, just because a student graduates, doesn't mean it leads to economic opportunity.

Moreover, while success might on the face of it be simply defined as graduation, it in reality signifies assimilation. Graduation itself as a tool for measuring success, reaffirms that the purpose of higher education isn't necessarily to learn, but to obtain social status in settler society. Neoliberal multiculturalism in particular, values the ability of an educational degree to create social and physical mobility for the individual. These narratives of success however, leave no room for maintaining connections to land and community. In order to succeed in fact, Native students are pressured to abandon their community, culture, and identity (Tierney, 1992). And if a Native student returns to their tribal community after graduation, they are considered a failure by Anglo communities. (Deyhle, 1998; Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993) Even the definition of success then, is contained within the political agenda of elimination (Erickson, 1987).

In order to evaluate Native educational success then, it's necessary to first understand what Native students are looking for in their own education. For many Natives, their notions of educational success are far less concerned with developing a career and becoming independent, than with maintaining commitments to their tribal communities (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). This includes maintaining ties to one's family and indigenous identity (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008), fulfilling community responsibilities (Deyhle, 1996), and being able to use one's education to promote the material and social wellbeing of the community, and sovereignty of the tribe (Fryberg and Markus, 2007; Tierney, 1992). Deyhle (1998) calls this insistence on living as a Native, as a part of an indigenous community, and outside of white cultural hegemony, as cultural nationalism, and it's not just a personal character trait. This tribal life-focus is rooted in centuries of tradition, and is the result of community values which connect the success of the

individual with that of the collective (Grande, 2015; Brayboy, 1999; Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993). Native students then, must balance their own definitions of success with those of the institution, and many would rather sacrifice their education than their identity, culture, or the wellbeing of their family.

So then, what causes success or failure? Many researchers have theorized the factors that contribute to academic success. When looking specifically at higher education, a lack of previous academic preparation, poor study habits, being a first generation student or from a rural background, all correlate with academic failure (Baum, 2013; Brayboy, 1999; Tierney, 1992). On the other hand, students who attend 4-year institutions, live on campus, work part-time, and don't have children are much more likely to graduate with a degree.

Because Natives are typically older than other students, often have children, and are lower income, they require significant support from their institutions, including financial aid and child care (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). All too often however, these non-academic needs go unfulfilled because financial aid packages do not reflect the costs of supporting dependents and the other needs of nontraditional students. In addition, institutional scholarships are often cut or reduced after the first year of enrollment, leaving some students unable to return and complete their degree (Brayboy, 1999). Moreover, because so many Native students are first-generation and/or come from low income schools, they are often unaware of the funding opportunities available to them, a knowledge which many white and middle class students receive in their high schools or from their own college-educated parents.

Contrary to what much research has established for the general population, Native students' academic record is not a reliable predictor of their ability to graduate. Students who in high school performed at the top of their class and received outstanding grades, as well as those who have a high grade point average in college, are just as likely as poor performing students to not graduate (Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993). This is due in part to the cultural capital necessary for success. Even those students who obtain good grades on assignments are often penalized for not appropriately participating in the classroom or otherwise failing to take on a white cultural performance (Brayboy, 1999).

Students' attitude towards and personal commitment to their education are also related to graduation rates (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). Those Native students who decide to go to college for specific purposes, like serving their community, are more likely to graduate. For example, of the students in the study of Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman (1993), all those who persisted and obtained a degree had decided to go to college from a young age. For many others however, college is a path that is chosen for them, or that they're told is necessary, but which they have no personal commitment to. These students are often enticed to institutions by recruiters or other programming. Because they come into the school without a plan or specific intentions however, when faced with the structural racism of higher education, they often are unable to find legitimacy and value in their schooling, a reason for staying, and drop out.

For many students, staying in college and graduating comes down to the ability to balance community and academic responsibilities. Unfortunately, the same responsibilities to community that drive many Natives to higher education in the first place, also pull them away from the school (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). These responsibilities, including caring for family members and taking part in tribal ceremonies for example, often require returning home and even taking time off from school (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Benjamin, Chamber, and Reiterman,

1993). Of course these responsibilities compromise students' ability to complete their academic work, and although it can be a source of frustration, most do not view this obligation as something negative but simply a necessity. Non-Native educators and administrators however, tend view this need to return home as a sign of immaturity, that students have not been able to become independent adults like their peers. In this regard, institutions continue to misinterpret indigenous cultural values and behaviors as deficits. Academic success then, requires that students find a way to effectively balance responsibilities to their community and to the institution.

Perhaps the most reliable factor in Native student success is the presence of a strong social network. Students benefit from the presence of supportive mentors, and a Native or cultural peer-community (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Fryberg and Markus, 2007; Brayboy, 1999; Tierney, 1992). Faculty mentors have the ability to positively impact a student's experience, helping them to both learn the necessary cultural capital and grow academically. Native faculty and staff therefore, are especially important for these students, because they are more aware of students' cultural and educational backgrounds, and the particular obstacles they face. Similarly, the presence of other Native peers on campus helps students transition to the institution and feel less alienated. There must however, be a critical mass of Native students that can sustain a campus community for this process to be consistent (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997).

A culturally based education can also strengthen the associations between a student, the academic curriculum, and the institution, counteracting the cultural borders that have developed between indigenous peoples and education (Beaulieu, 2008). Native and Indigenous Studies programs for example, work to breakdown the stigmatization and exclusion of indigenous culture, history, and knowledge in academia. These programs face their own obstacles, but they can make higher education seem more meaningful to Native students, and help prepare them for professional work with their own communities (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997).

Campus Indian centers facilitate many of these resources. Programming at these centers provides academic advice, instructs students in the social and cultural capital necessary for academic success, and can include counseling, in addition to cultural events and extracurricular activities (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). The staff at these centers serve as both role models and mentors to Native students, and at times advocate on their behalf (Tierney, 1992). Together this programming and administrative support helps Natives through the process of identity formation, to cope with depression, promotes social engagement, and ultimately leads to higher retention and graduation rates (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). These centers are often troubled by inadequate funding however, and at the same time are also mired in tribal politics, having to bring together people from hundreds of different cultural backgrounds to try and create a community, and run the risk of reproducing racism and internalized oppression.

Native students also have a range of supports available to them outside of the academic institution. Chief among these is their own community. Fryberg and Markus (2007) found that unlike Anglo and Asian American students, who connect education to their independent development, Native students very often turn to their families for emotional, spiritual, as well as academic and financial support (c.f. Deyhle, 1996). Moreover, family members can be a source of motivation and confidence for these students, reaffirming their self-worth, indigenous identity, and personal commitment to education (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). While these family and community members do serve as a refuge and resource for Natives, they can also be the source of

immense pressure however, both to perform well academically, and at the same time, to return home. Native students then, can be caught between conflicting community expectations.

Because Native students enter into assimilatory institutions, surrounded by settlers, self-knowledge and critical consciousness are essential factors in academic success (Fryberg and Markus, 2007). Deyhle (1998; 1996) has found that Native students who are secure in their own indigenous cultural identity, and don't believe that the school can threaten that identity, graduate at much higher rates (c.f. Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993). These culturally-rooted students are able to succeed despite the incongruities in school culture, because they can move across cultural borders at their own discretion, without fear of losing their identity (Brayboy, 1999). This success is of course, still dependent upon students possessing the necessary cultural capital to succeed, and also believing that there is value in their education. In addition, students with a developed critical consciousness, who recognize that their experiences within education are not arbitrary but the result of structural racism, graduate more often (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). Understanding the identity conflict they are placed in, and the forces that attempt to push them out of the school, these students are less confused and overwhelmed by their situation, and are able to choose more selectively how they navigate the institution.

There is a mountain of theory attempting to explain the relationship between these factors. One of the older, though still studied educational theories behind academic performance is known as developmental theory. Developmental Theory is most heavily influenced by educational psychology, and bases its claims in the development of human cognition. It assumes that there is a natural process of intellectual growth and that academic success is a accomplished when instruction and curriculum are tailored to the student's stage of intellectual development (Brayboy, 1999). This field of theory tends to conceptualize the widespread failure of Natives, and other racial minorities, as caused by the inadequate academic preparation they received prior to college enrollment. While developmental theory's claims are substantiated by the reality of Indian education, it also has its limits. Most noticeably, developmental theory ignores the diversity of intelligences that exist among people, presumes that the development of cognition precedes upon one normative path, and ignores that each student is working towards a different notion of success.

Other bodies of success theory look at social and cultural relations within the school. College Impact Models for example, theorize that academic success is dependent upon properly integrating students into the campus community (Brayboy, 1999). Integration in this sense refers to an alignment between students' pre-entry attributes, their intentions, goals, and commitments with those of the institution (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Tierney, 1992). These integration models ignore the fact however, that institutions may actively alienate and exclude students, or that those students who are integrated into the institution may still fail (Brabyoy, 1999). Moreover, college impact models reaffirm the normativity of the institutional structure, and place the burden of assimilation on individual students.

On the other hand, Cultural Relativism, a related although distinct body of theory, recognizes that education is not a neutral process, rather a place of cultural contact and conflict, which impacts the ability of students, educators, and administrators to communicate and work with each other (Deyhle, 1996; Erickson, 1987). These theories identify cultural miscommunication as the primary cause of academic failure, either because the student is unable to learn and master a white cultural performance, or because educators and administrators are

unable, or unwilling, to adapt their practices to match those of their students. Those who don't recognize these cultural differences, reach for explanations of academic failure, often attributing them to personal and cultural deficits. As a consequence, student attrition occurs because of the implicit and unconscious push to make them conform to dominant cultural behaviors (Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993).

If the reader remembers, I drew upon theories of cultural relativism heavily in describing Indian education earlier. But these theories also have their limitations. They tend to presume that all students have the same goals and interests for their education, mainly social integration and mobility, ignoring indigenous agendas of cultural nationalism. Moreover, they don't give enough attention or responsibility to the structural oppression that causes miscommunication in the first place, focusing instead on how best to teach students the cultural capital necessary for moving into the mainstream.

In contrast, Labor Market theories do exactly that, connect students' academic performance to structural racism and material inequality. Ogbu, whose theories were especially useful above for describing counter-academic behaviors and cultural borders, is one of the most prominent theorists in the field. According to Ogbu, involuntary[11] racial minorities like Natives and Black Americans recognize the racial stratification of society and subsequently become fatalistic, rejecting formal education because they believe that whatever social mobility might be provided by those institutions, is undermined by the racism that confronts them (Deyhle, 1996). Moreover, because that racial and cultural hierarchy is reproduced within the school, students also come to question the legitimacy of their institution and education as a whole (Erickson, 1987). Although these students are making accurate critiques of their own material conditions, the counter-academic behaviors that result from this fatalism creates a self-sustaining cycle, in which their poor academic performance reinforces and is used to justify their ongoing oppression (Deyhle, 1998).

Labor Market theories are particularly useful for explaining why certain racial minority groups perform differently in schools, and their analysis finds solid truth in ethnographic descriptions of Native students. Compare for example, Deyhle's description of Navajo youth (1998), who in their younger years immersed themselves in hip hop culture, and believed that they could transform the world around them. Over time however, these same students became disillusioned with notions of justice and hope, which they expressed by becoming metalheads. However, Labor Market theories can also place too much personal responsibility upon students for their academic performance, shying away from challenging the structural racism which they identify as the cause of failure in the first place. Moreover, they presume that Natives are working towards integration and inclusion in the settler state, ignoring the fundamental distinction of indigenous peoples as sovereign nations.

Deyhle (1996) unites several of these theories, providing an explanation of academic success that specifically describes Native student performance. For Deyhle, Native academic failure isn't just the byproduct of formal education, but its goal. The inadequate, vocationalized

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[11] Ogbu uses the terms voluntary and involuntary to distinguish between racial minorities in a nation state. A voluntary minority typically refers to immigrants or refugees, and their descendants, who are thought to choose to enter the country. Involuntary on the other hand, refers to indigenous peoples and slave laborers who were forcibly brought into the state. These terms have been criticized for simplifying notions of volition and coercion under imperialism.

instruction Native students receive, along with the cultural barriers to academic success, work together to push students out of school and into the lowest social classes. Deyhle reasons that Natives face an educational system of failure, designed to secure Anglo settler futurity. For Natives then, academic success and failure, are constructed within the racial conflict of settler occupation, requiring Native students not just to perform well academically, or "play the game" and adopt a white cultural performance, but to do so against a stacked deck.

Although these theories tend to portray the institution as an unchangeable, inescapable force, one which is inherently threatening to indigeneity, there are possibilities for resistance and self-assertion within that system. Possibilities exist because educational institutions are malleable and permeable structures, ultimately dependent upon students and their labor (Brayboy, 1999). The relationship between the institution and students is constantly being negotiated as both limit, reproduce, and co-opt each other. While this codependency does not in any way signify an equal or healthy relationship, it does provide opportunities for developing and exercising personal agency.

Students have at their disposal a large number of adaptive strategies, beyond the false dichotomy of assimilation or academic failure, including both forms of resistance and accommodation. Resistance is not just the outright rejection of authority, but a heterogenous collection of counter-hegemonic activities and attitudes, often performed in the day to day where oppression and power operate inconspicuously, and where individuals have the greatest ability to destabilize that system (Silliman, 2001). Such resistance may include performing the same tasks and actions, but with ulterior interests and desires in mind. For example, the intellectual labor expected of students can also be an opportunity to exercise autonomy and self-expression.

Resistance also takes on both active and passive forms (Brayboy, 1999). It can be publicly declared or only personally affirmed. Resistance can even be a subtly disengaged attitude, a rejection of the legitimacy of the institution, that sets students apart from their peers. Deyhle (1998), in writing on Navajo metalheads, describes how the students exercised a kind of collective resistance, defying white cultural expectations through their music and aesthetic, not in order to change what seemed like an unavoidably discriminatory system, but to cope and survive. Most fundamentally, resistance for Native students means surviving the racial conflict of education while still maintaining their cultural integrity.

At the same time, Natives can accommodate and integrate themselves into the institution without assimilating. Native students are capable of adopting new traits and skills in order to succeed, without compromising their own cultural integrity (Deyhle, 1996; Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993). The idea that they would inevitably lose their identity, that assimilation comes hand in hand with academic success, is of course the racist product of an assimilatory education. Accommodation does reproduce the educational institution, but all students have to accommodate to some degree, in part recognizing that this accommodation is only temporary (Brayboy, 1999)

Resistance and accommodation can be partial as well, neither rejecting nor accepting the institution as a whole but specific assimilatory practices (Deyhle, 1996). An individual act can even be both accommodating and resistant at the same time (Brayboy, 1999). For example, some students are able to work within the institutional structure, using its own language and values to try and transform it. Others are able to create an alternative education, pursue their own interests outside of what the institution offers, by building a network of allies in the faculty and

administration. In their daily lives students adjust these strategies to suit the situation at hand and make choices about their participation in the institution.

In his study of Native undergraduates at Ivy League schools, Brayboy (1999), writes at length on one particular student strategy, *(in)visibility*. Native students are positioned into certain identities and behaviors by the institution, made to be invisible and to conform to white cultural practices, or made hyper-visible, singled out and exotified as representatives of all Indians. But at the same time they can also control how they perform these identities, become selectively (in)visible. Silliman (2001) identified similar practices among indigenous peoples centuries earlier, creating public and private identities, agentively positioning themselves for their own well-being.

While Natives do have a large repertoire of adaptation available to them, these response strategies don't always work perfectly. Not only are they always negotiated against institutional pressures, students also make mistakes, which can have lasting effects. Students who adopt bicultural behaviors run the risk of getting cultural performance wrong in both the home and the school (Brayboy, 1999). Being submerged in white settler culture, students can bring it into their homes without them realizing, creating tensions even without assimilation. And although academic success doesn't directly threaten indigenous identity, the prevalence of that myth can harm one's sense of self, and creates a complicated relationship with both students' home communities and the mainstream culture.

PRACTICES OF FREEDOM

If what confronts Native students is a system of failure, then we must create systems of success, where education is the collective responsibility of everyone involved (Tierney, 1992). In order to move beyond an agenda of assimilation however, we have to focus on more than just making it easier for Natives to perform well academically. We have to abandon the eurocentric notions of success that have historically defined education, to reflect indigenous cultural values and political agendas of sovereignty, self-determination, and decolonization. Success in such an educational system becomes a reflexive process, something that both the school and student produce together (Erickson, 1987). In this final section of this literature review, I've brought together the writings of several scholars of educational and indigenous studies to imagine what a system of success might look like, and how it might be transformed from a practice of domination into one of freedom (hooks, 1994).

There is no room for negligence in an educational practice of freedom[12]. Most fundamentally, schools have to recognize the United States as a settler nation, their own role as an institution of the state, and acknowledge that settler colonialism impacts the students within their own classrooms (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Beyond simple recognition however, schools must adopt explicit antiracist and decolonial policies, retraining staff and faculty to adapt their own practices (Tierney, 1992). This includes challenging those assumed cultural values of individualism, anthropocentrism, competition, consumerism, and progress that tie academic success to a white cultural performance (Grande, 2015; Erickson, 1987). Moving beyond assimilation also depends

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[12] Moten and Harney (2004) talk about radical educators waging war on a society that could have war or slavery. Likewise, an indigenous education wages war on a society that could ever colonize.

upon rethinking the epistemology enforced within schools, the forces of rationalism and positivism used to stigmatize indigenous knowledge, history, and theory.

Provided this space for indigeneity, education becomes not about changing a student's social background or cultural identity, but using their perceptions and intellect to facilitate learning (Tierney, 1992). Thus, indigenous peoples must be given the liberty to incorporate tribal philosophies, worldviews, history, and theory into the classroom (Brayboy, 2006). This can't be a patronizing incorporation of traditional knowledge either, treating it as an anthropological curiosity, or even a means to some other educational goal, but a resource for creating a sovereign tribal future (Grande, 2015). Moreover, an indigenous education must move beyond the dichotomous and hierarchical relationship of colonizer and colonized, to refocus indigenous to indigenous relationships (Allen, 2012). Towards these ends, Bryan Brayboy's Tribal Critical Race Theory (2006) is useful for thinking about how to make space for an indigenous intellectualism within education.

Creating Native success also requires making schools into places for ritual empowerment, where students become competent in the social and cultural capital necessary for navigating settler institutions. Note only does academic performance currently require that students possess white cultural capital, but so does practically any state bureaucracy or public institution. To enable students within settler society then, requires intentionally providing students with that cultural capital. Lisa Delpit (1986) provides several examples of how educators can introduce students to the cultural performance expected of them, but without reaffirming white cultural supremacy, framing it instead as a set of skills that students can selectively use for their own purposes.

Empowerment doesn't just work towards success within particular institutions; it's the holistic development of students for the rest of their lives, promoting cultural and social success outside of the system of assimilation (Brayboy, 1999). This requires transforming the classroom into a place of mutual recognition between students and educators (hooks, 1994). Native students in particular, need to have the ability to form relationships with educators, in contrast to the impersonal professionalism of higher education (Fryberg and Markus, 2007). For such relationships to flourish however, institutions need to revalue mentorship as a component of faculty labor (Tierney, 1992). To be truly worthwhile, institutions should also train Native students to work with their communities, so that they can move from just promoting social mobility to tribal sovereignty (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). As a consequence, such a system promotes healthy relationships between not only students, staff, and faculty, but with indigenous communities as well.

Most simply however, we have to provide for students' nonacademic needs. Natives, because so many are low income and nontraditional students, need consistent financial aid as well as comprehensive support services, like family day care and housing (Baum, 2013). Guillory and Wolverton (2008) prioritize hiring administrative staff members for Native students, who can serve as counselors, advisors, advocates, event organizers, and family specialists. Because accessing existing supports often depends upon white cultural capital however, these programs must also be made explicit, especially during the initial transition into the institution. To combat the vocationalization of Indian education and bring more Native students into degree programs, 4-year institutions should develop and standardize transfer programs with 2-year schools, and create recruitment programs with local indigenous communities (Tierney, 1992). But Natives also need

the opportunity to leave. Taking time off and leaving altogether should be institutionalized and normalized, rather than stigmatized as a sign of student failure.

Equality within education, is only possible outside of structural racism and colonial hegemony. An educational practice of freedom therefore, doesn't just transform school routines and symbols, but struggles against all forms of exploitation, domination, and dependency (Erickson, 1987). As a pedagogy, such practices lead students to interrogate and appropriate knowledge for the transformation of their material and social conditions (Tierney, 1992). Rather than a banking-model of education, or the rote memorization of information, students have the opportunity to analyze relationships of power in their own lives. For Native students, conscientização (Freire, 2000) must combine analyses of global capitalism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy, with the particular realities of settler colonialism. Tribal colleges which have already been able to focus on this critical development[13], can serve as a model for other institutions (Tierney). In this process however, students and educators need to use critical theory selectively, because even these radical traditions carry within them many of the same Western values and norms that have been forced onto indigenous peoples[14] (Grande, 2015).

Perhaps the greatest misconception that educators and administrators can have, is that it is possible for them to accomplish this transformation alone. As long as settlers are the ones creating solutions, there will always be an Indian Problem[15]. Educational institutions must open themselves up to greater indigenous control so that Natives can decolonize schools themselves. This includes aspects of curriculum, instruction, assessment, administration, and most importantly, the mission of education. Dartmouth for example, has made comparatively huge strides in recent years by allowing Native students to change the institution, rather than expecting them to simply conform (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). This of course, challenges education's viability as an industry, and the social status it confers, but knowledge can no longer be the exclusive property of an academic elite.

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[13] bell hooks (1994) describes how in her own early education, all-Black schools were able to do just that, to train students to understand anti-Black racism.

[14] Grande (2015) provides an indigenous critical analysis of feminism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, marxism, and anti-imperialist theories.

[15] Teresa McCarty (2006) has written on the importance of what she calls the coactivation of choice and voice. It's not sufficient to merely give indigenous peoples the opportunity to express themselves. For education to be a legitimate institution, students also need real authority to choose the medium, manner, and moment of expression, even when it would challenge the structure established for them.

> And that's the thing. I went to some fancy East Coast school.
> **Oz**

The literature review that precedes this chapter gave a broad description of the relationship between indigenous peoples and formal education, but this research project is very specifically about Swarthmore College. To bridge that literature review to the findings of this research, which appear in the following chapters, I want to first provide some context on what kind of institution Swarthmore is. For that reason, this chapter is an introduction to the College. It includes a comparison to other schools nationally, as well as to select peer institutions.

Swarthmore College was founded by Quakers in 1864 as a coeducational college in what was then Westdale, Pennsylvania (History). The site was chosen because it was removed from the city of Philadelphia by 11 miles, but accessible by a train line which had been built ten years earlier. Today the College remains a private, nonprofit institution, although it has no formal connection to the Religious Society of Friends and is nonsectarian (About: Facts and Figures).

Swarthmore offers a Bachelor of Arts in the Liberal Arts and a Bachelor of Science in Engineering. There are 24 academic departments (Swarthmore College, Office of the Registrar [SC Registrar], Programs of Study), and a number of interdisciplinary programs that span these departments. In addition to this on-campus programming, the College maintains a relationship with Haverford and Bryn Mawr colleges, sharing staff, faculty, and resources through the Tri-College Consortium, and students of all three institutions are able to take courses at the others. The University of Pennsylvania also allows for Swarthmore students to cross-register with their school, offering students the opportunity to study at Penn one course per semester (About: Facts and Figures). Beyond these more standard academic tracks, the College awards academic credit to students enrolled in directed readings, independent study courses, and student-run courses, and provides the option to create a special major (Course Catalog).

A directed reading at Swarthmore is a student's individual study of the material from courses which are already within a department or program's existing listings, but which are not currently offered (Course Catalog). An independent study course on the other hand, requires a student working in collaboration with a faculty advisor to study material or topics not offered at the College at all. Similarly, student-run courses allow students to design, organize, and facilitate courses with their peers on topics of their own choosing. And a special major is designed by a student and one or more faculty advisors around a discipline or subfield that isn't available as a major at Swarthmore. For example, my special major in Native Education combines Educational Studies with courses pulled from a number of departments and programs that fit into the discipline of Native Studies. These opportunities to pursue or create an individualized education is a common appeal of liberal arts colleges generally, and Swarthmore in particular.

Perhaps another more compelling appeal to Swarthmore is its reputation as both a scholarly, and elite academic institution. Although it may not be as universally known as some other schools, Swarthmore cultivates a prestigious reputation, making regular comparisons between itself and the Ivy League, as well as other liberal arts colleges like Amherst or Williams. U.S News ranks the College at #3 in the nation for liberal arts colleges (Swarthmore College), and at approximately $1.8 billion, the College possesses one of the highest per student endowments in the nation (Finance and Investment Office). One of the most marketed aspects of Swarthmore though, is its small size, including the low student to faculty ratio of 8:1 (NCES, Swarthmore College), which is supposed to indicate greater personalized attention for students.

No doubt expectations for Swarthmore are also influenced by its sticker price. For the 2014-2015 academic year the cost of tuition, room and board, and other fees for attending Swarthmore totaled $59,610 (SC IR, 2013, 20), and just a year later, it has risen to $61,400 (SC IR, 2015, 23). That's nearly double the $35,074 average for all private, 4-year institutions of higher education in the country from just a few years earlier in 2012-2013 (NCES, Fast Facts - Tuition). But when compared to elite, private schools like the University of Pennsylvania, at $58,812 (University of Pennsylvania, Office of Institutional Research and Analysis [UPENN IRA], 2015, 19), and Williams College, at $61,070 (Williams College, Office of the Provost [WC Provost], 2014, 17), the cost of attending Swarthmore seems much more standard for the field.

In order to cover those costs, Swarthmore guarantees to match 100% of a student's demonstrated financial need through grants rather than loans, just as Williams and UPenn do. For the 2014-2015 academic year, 50.8% of Swarthmore's students received some degree of financial aid from the institution, and the average grant they received was $41,989 (SC IR, 2014, 26). At UPenn in 2014-2015, 47.2% of undergraduates received financial aid, which was on average $43,542 (UPENN IRA, 2016, 22). Likewise at Williams in that academic year, 49.7% of undergraduates received financial aid, on average of $47,404 (WC Provost, 2015, 20). While these figures make it seem that private schools have very similar aid policies, it should be noted that these three represent a very small subset within higher education. Still looking just at private, 4-year, nonprofit institutions, for the 2012-2013 academic year 80.8% of all full time undergraduates received institutional grants, on average of $16,309, either alone or in concert with other awards (NCES, Full-time, first-time).

Swarthmore has in the most recent years begun making changes to the kinds of students it admits however, including an increase in the number of students requiring financial aid. Within the class of 2019 for example, 57% of students received some amount of financial aid from the College, and the average award was of $47,255 (SC Admissions, Fact Sheet). Below is a table summarizing some of this information.

Table 2.1 The combined cost of tuition, room and board, and school fees for full-time undergraduates, the average financial aid grants awarded by 4-year institutions, and the percentage of undergraduates who received those grants.

Year		All Institutions	Private, nonprofit	UPenn[1]	Williams	Swarthmore
2010-2011	Cost	$19,355[2]	$34,131	$51,944	-	$51,500
	Award	$8,920	$15,319[3]	$37,434	-	$36,571
	% Receiving	35.8%	79.6%	47.4%	-	50.1%

2011-2012	Cost	$19,741	$34,234	-[4]	-	$53,250
	Award	$9,052	$15,672	-	-	$37,964
	% Receiving	37.9%	80.6%	-	-	52.5%
2012-2013	Cost	$20,234	$35,074	$56,106	$56,770	$55,750
	Award	$9,364	$16,309	$41,961	$43,747	$39,255
	% Receiving	39.8%	80.8%	47.5%	53.2%	51.4%
2013-2014	Cost	-	-	$56,106	$58,900	$57,870
	Award	-	-	$42,419	$44,933	$40,340
	% Receiving	-	-	47.8%	52.1%	50.3%
2014-2015	Cost	-	-	$58,812	$61,070	$59,610
	Award	-	-	$43,542	$47,404	$41,989
	% Receiving	-	-	47.2%	49.7%	50.8%
2015-2016	Cost	-	-	-	$63,290	$61,400
	Award	-	-	-	$50,057	$45,907
	% Receiving	-	-	-	48.7%	51.9%

1. Figures for UPenn, Williams, and Swarthmore are taken from the Common Data Sets which are publicly available.
2. Figures for the cost of undergraduate students nationally are taken from the National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Facts - Tuition, and reflect 4 year institutions. Dollar amounts are calculated using constant 2013-2014 values.
3. Figures for the average aid awarded to undergraduates and the percent of those receiving aid come from the National Center for Education Statistics, Full-time, first-time.
4. The University of Pennsylvania has not updated its 2010-2011 Common Data Sets to include information on the annual expenses for 2011-2012. (see the blank page 17)

Being such an elite, and reputable institution, Swarthmore is also able to create a highly exclusive student body. For the academic year of 2015-2016 there were 1,581 undergraduate students enrolled at Swarthmore (SC IR, 2015, 3). The acceptance rate for the freshman class of 2019 was 12% (SC Admissions, Fact Sheet), and for the previous freshman class of 2018, the retention rate was 98%, meaning that 98% of all of the freshman were still enrolled at the College a year later (SC IR, 2015, 4). These two figures, acceptance and retention rate, together indicate that Swarthmore is able to hand pick a very select group of students, which stays mostly consistent over the years.

While the specific characteristics of this student body changes over time and with the different interests of Admissions, there are some features which remain common in the student body. Note for instance, that although the cost of attending Swarthmore is far higher than the average private school, the percentage of students receiving financial aid from the institution is far less, meaning that half of all Swarthmore students and their families are capable of paying $60,000 every year. Note also, that most students come from relatively nearby. 48% of all students come from the Middle Atlantic and New England, followed by the West Coast (15%) and international students (13%), with very few students pulled from the southern and interior states (SC Admissions, Fact Sheet). Moreover, Swarthmore students are remarkably young, even for undergraduates. The average age of Swarthmore students is 19.6, while only 0.1% of students is 25 or older (SC IR, 2015, 14). Within the national body of undergraduate students at private, 4-

year, nonprofit institutions like Swarthmore, 13.9% of all the students are 25 or older (NCES, Total Fall Enrollment...age of students).

Most likely tied in part to the particular characteristics of this student body, Swarthmore also boasts a very high graduation rate. The Fall 2009 Cohort provides Swarthmore's most recent 6-year graduation rates. Within that initial cohort were 394 students. Of those, 343 graduated within 4 years, and after 6 years, 370 had, giving an overall 6-year graduation rate of 93.9% (SC IR, 2015, 4). Compared to the national average of 65.3% for undergraduates at private, 4-year, nonprofit institutions (NCES, Graduation Rate), Swarthmore appears be doing exceptionally well. But it should be noted that the more exclusive an institution, the higher its graduation rates. At private, 4-year, nonprofit institutions with acceptance rates of less than 25%, 6 year graduation rates jump all the way up to 90.6% (NCES, Graduation Rate). Similarly at Williams, which had an acceptance rate of 17.6% for the class of 2019 (WC, 2016, 7) the most recent 6 year graduation rate was 96% (WC, 2016, 5). And at UPenn, where the 2019 acceptance rate was 10.2% (UPENN IRA, 2016, 7), the 6 year graduation rate was 95% for this most recent cohort (UPENN IRA, 2016, 6). Here's another table summarizing this information.

Table 2.2 Acceptance, persistence, and age of full-time undergraduate students at 4-year institutions.

	All Institutions[1]	Private, nonprofit	UPenn[2]	Williams	Swarthmore
Acceptance Rate	<25%	<25%	10.2%	17.6%	12%
Retention Rate	96.3%	96.6%	98%	97%	98%
6-year Graduation	84.8%	90.6%	95%	96%	93.9%
Average Age	-	-	20	20	19.6
Over 25	20.6%	13.9%	0%	0%	0.1%

1. National figures come from the National Center for Education Statistics, Graduation Rate, Total Fall enrollment, and Retention, reflecting data for the Fall of 2013 and the cohort of 2007.
2. Data for UPenn, Williams, and Swarthmore come from Common Data Sets for 2015-2016.

After graduation, 72% of the Class of 2015 planned to immediately seek employment, 10% planned to travel or was undecided, and the remaining 18% planned to immediately enroll in a graduate or professional school. 83% of the entire class planned to pursue graduate or professional degrees within the next five years however (Career Services). The top employment industries for the Class of 2015 were research, business, education, and public service, with 58% of graduates employed in either Philadelphia, Washington, D.C, New York, or Boston.

One of Swarthmore's most discussed priorities is in promoting diversity, and perhaps the first evidence of diversity that they're quick to point out is the students who are admitted to the College. When compared nationally, Swarthmore's student body is comprised of many more Asian American students and international students. At Swarthmore in the Fall of 2013, Asian Americans accounted for 15.4% of the student body (SC IR, 2013, 3), compared to less than 6% at nonprofit, 4-year institutions nationally (NCES, Total Fall enrollment). Likewise international students made up over 8% of Swarthmore's student body (SC IR, 2013, 3) compared to less than 5% nationally (NCES, Total Fall enrollment).

On the other hand, Swarthmore's enrollment of White (42.8%) and Black (5.6%) students (SC IR, 2013, 3) is far lower than the national averages of 63.9% and 12.5% respectively (NCES, Total Fall enrollment). These figures should be taken with a grain of salt however. Beginning in

2010 postsecondary institutions started recording student race and ethnicity differently. Colleges no longer "double dip." If a student identifies themself as more than one race or ethnicity, they are registered as "Two or More Races", a category which although it perhaps reflects notions of multiculturalism, at the same time obscures the full demographics of students. This nondescript category is especially high at Swarthmore (8.2%), but the College also records more than 5% of the student body as "Unknown" (SC IR, 2013, 3). Check out the chart below for a comparison with other institutions.

It's clear that Swarthmore, UPenn, and Williams have similar student bodies, which distinguish them from other private, 4-year, nonprofit institutions. All for instance, enroll far fewer Black students than their counterparts, but larger numbers of students who identify with two or more races. UPenn and Swarthmore have especially similar students bodies. Note how both schools have nearly 20% less white students than national averages, but significantly more Asian American and international students, and students whose race is unknown.

Fall 2013 Undergraduate Enrollment
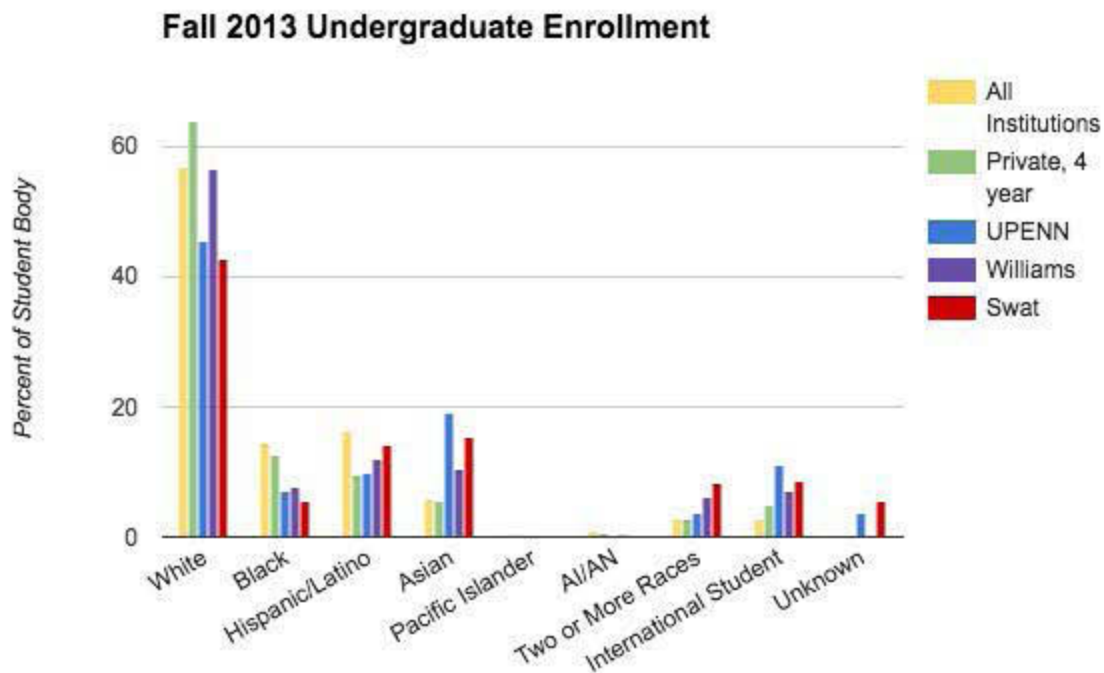
The data for this chart were pulled from Common Data Sets for 2013-2014, and the National Center for Education Statistics, Total Fall enrollment.

Since it's too small to see on the above chart, I'd also like to point out how Native enrollment at these institutions has changed over time. While I don't know exactly why, from the table below, it's clear that the number of individuals identified as American Indian or Alaska Native has been steadily decreasing over the past seven years. This decrease seems to be at least in part tied to the revised policies for recording race and ethnicity. Up until 2010, the enrollment of Native undergraduates had been steadily increasing (NCES, Total fall enrollment...Selected years), and in that year when colleges began marking students as Two or More Races, Native numbers took a sharp drop. Perhaps this revised policy helps filter out the number of students

who falsely claim an indigenous identity. Whether intended or not however, it seems to mirror the practices that Susan Lobo describes as statistical genocide, which like it sounds, pursues the elimination of indigenous peoples from statistical data in order to write us out of existence (Lobo, 2016, 48).

Table 2.3 Fall enrollment of American Indian/Alaska Native undergraduates, 2009-2015

	All Institutions[1]	UPenn[2]	Williams	Swarthmore
Fall 2009	187,600	48	-	11
Fall 2010	179,100	45	-	6
Fall 2011	170,200	32	3	7
Fall 2012	157,500	22	6	4
Fall 2013	147,800	14	6	2
Fall 2014	-	9	2	2
Fall 2015	-	9	4	1

1. Figures for National Institutions are not specific to 4-year, or private institutions. Obtained from the National Center for Educational Statistics, Total Fall enrollment...Selected years
2. Figures for UPenn, Williams, and Swarthmore come from Common Data Sets for these years.

As a last point of comparison, in the most recent years the College has taken to talking about first-generation students in terms of diversity. While there are different definitions for what it means to be first generation, the broader and more popular one refers to students, neither of whose parents received a degree from a postsecondary institution (Center for Student Opportunity [CSO], Frequently Asked Questions). *I'm First* counts 12% of the student body at Swarthmore as first generation (CSO, Swarthmore College), 12% at UPenn (CSO, University of Pennsylvania), and 14% at Williams (CSO, Williams College). At the same time though, just as Swarthmore has begun admitting a larger number of low-income students, it has also begun admitting more first generation students. 23% of those admitted to the class of 2020 are first-gen (Daily Gazette, 2016) although nationally, approximately 32% of all undergraduates are first-generation (Smith, 2).

To finally move on from the students at Swarthmore, for the 2015-2016 academic year the faculty consisted of 180 tenured or tenure track positions, although the count of actual tenured and tenure track faculty members is only 168 (Swarthmore College, Office of the Provost [SC Provost], Faculty). In addition there are 22 temporary faculty, 21 leave replacements, 34 part-time faculty members, as well as instructional staff. The College does not keep records on the race or ethnicity of faculty. Instead Swarthmore indicates that there are 40 diverse faculty members, who occupy 23% of faculty positions. Swarthmore defines these diverse individuals as "all those international and domestic faculty who identify as members of racial and ethnic minority groups." (SC Provost, Faculty). These figures roughly parallel national figures, in which white faculty account for 73% of all full-time positions (NCES, Full-time faculty). Although, it should be noted that the percentage of these diverse faculty members who are tenured (64%) is noticeably lower than the overall average of 78% (SC Provost, Faculty).

Members of the Dean's Office are the closest point of contact for students within the administration. Within that office is one Dean of Students, two Associate Deans, six Assistant Deans, the Registrar, and dozens of additional staff members (Dean's Office). Other notable

offices or centers at Swarthmore include Worth Health Center, which also houses Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS); the security office known as Public Safety; and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, which provides community outreach and service programming, and social entrepreneurship opportunities. Recent additions also include the Center for Innovation and Leadership and the Office of Student Engagement, both of which were established in the last two years. In addition, the College operates two significant scholarship programs for low-income and minority students, the Philip Evans Scholarship and the Richard Rubin Scholar Mentoring Program. Along with Bryn Mawr and Haverford colleges, Swarthmore also operates the Tri-College Summer Multicultural Institute Program for first-year students.

The two institutional structures most specifically dedicated to minority students on campus are the Black Cultural Center and the Intercultural Center. Black student organizing of the 1960's and 1970's is responsible for a number of changes to Swarthmore, including the establishment of the Black Cultural Center (BCC) at the Robinson House, and the Black Studies program (Black Liberation 1969 Archive). Although, the call of these students to raise Black student enrollment has not been answered in the decades since. Similarly, the Intercultural Center (IC) was established in 1992 on student initiative and inhabits the Clothier building (Intercultural Center: Timeline). The Swarthmore Indigenous Students Association (SISA), formerly the Native American Student Association (NASA), which is the on-campus student group for indigenous students, has been formally affiliated with the IC since 2000. Because of low Native enrollment however, the group has gone inactive, at times for years, and was re-chartered in 2014.

Swarthmore has undergone major institutional changes in the past four years. Widespread student protests dominated the campus in 2012-2013, which has since been called the Spring of Discontent (Specters of Discontent, 2015). One of the first major consequences of that time was an external review of the College's mishandling of cases of sexualt assault by Margolis Healy (2014). While the demands of the students who organized those protests remain largely unfulfilled, the aftermath of national scrutiny provoked the College to make demonstrable changes to its organization. Swarthmore developed the Office of Student Engagement to oversee student affairs, incorporating and centralizing several aspects of student life. Staff members were dismissed from the College or moved to other positions, while new staff were brought in, and the entirely new position of Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Development was created.

Although these staffing changes promised much, they continue to be plagued by administrative turnover. Liliana Rodriguez for example, the first Dean of Diversity, left the College after only one year in that role. Her resignation was accompanied by the departure of her husband Roberto Rivas, head of Multicultural Recruitment, and Amer Ahmed, Director of the Intercultural Center and Dean of the Sophomore Class, among others. The Intercultural Center in particular has suffered from the fallout of Spring 2013. Longtime Director Rafael Zapata resigned just previously in 2012. His successor Alina Wong, who quickly developed a connection with students, left the college in Fall 2013 because of tensions with other administrators. Program administrator Brianna Serrano finished out the year with interim director Darryl Smaw, until Ahmed was appointed as Director for the 2014-2015 academic year. The following summer Ahmed announced his resignation, and while searching for a replacement the College appointed Dion Lewis, Director of the BCC, as interim director of the IC as well. This period of turnover is especially egregious and forces us to question why so many administrators are leaving these student-facing roles so quickly. But this period of turnover is not unique either. A similar mass

exodus of staff and faculty occurred just a few years earlier when NYU established their campus at Abu Dhabi.

One of the most notable developments of the past years was the College's establishment of the Summer Scholars Program, a bridge program for first-generation, low-income, and minority students interested in STEM fields (Summer Scholars Program). The program provides academic preparation and mentorship to students, and was spearheaded by Dr. Alison Dorsey. The program itself is not the first of its kind at Swarthmore; another victory of Black student organizers was the creation of a similar program in the 1970's which was however, discontinued. Students from the BCC and IC would call for its reestablishment over the years ("IC/BCC Bridge Program Report"), but it wasn't until the summer of 2015 that it returned to the College.

It is in this context that Native students attend Swarthmore. As it should become clear in later chapters, these elements of the College have a serious impact upon the participants in this study: its reputation, financial burdens, available academic programming, administrative and faculty support, its location, and the extreme marginality of indigenous peoples at this predominantly settler institution.

Participants did choose to come to a fancy, East Coast school, but few if any would understand just what that meant, or how Swarthmore compared to other institutions, until they had been there for several years. In the chapters to come where I describe participants' experiences of the College, I'll try to keep the comparative information from this chapter in mind so that the particulars of what's to come will still have reference to the world of higher education nationally.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Our traumatized self and our healthy selves get to join when we tell our story to people capable of
hearing and understanding.
Vanessa

For this research I interviewed the Natives of Swarthmore. From a purely practical stance, interviews were the most familiar and what seemed easiest method for gathering information on students' experiences and attitudes towards the College. But just as this project was conceived under the influence of indigenous and colonial studies, my research practices were shaped by a number of methodological theories. In this chapter I'm going to describe the methodology behind this project, and the research process that leads to the findings in the following chapters.

METHODOLOGY

As I described above, academic theory has typically been seen - or more exactly, developed - as un-indigenous. In beginning this research however, I was inspired by the introduction to Simpson and Smith's *Theorizing Native Studies* (2014). Together the editors work to make explicit that theory is not the exclusive tool of academic elites, but that all people theorize about the world they live in. Even if Western theory is founded upon an ideologically untenable base for Natives, we - and all of our ancestors before us - are theorists in our own right, with our own ideological traditions. The question is not whether Natives can theorize, but how do we do so in a way that we consider authentic and useful.

Dian Million authors the first chapter in that same volume (Simpson and Smith, 2014) where I encountered her notion of *felt theory*, although an interested reader should also see her full article (2009) on the topic, where she explains the power of narratives as political acts. In both pieces Million locates indigenous theory in our narratives, identifying how stories are themselves works of theory. Million calls this theory felt, because narratives combine not just abstract descriptions but the affect of our lived experiences. This affective component of felt theory is often the basis for discrediting indigenous theory as unobjective, but at the same time that emotional content challenges the supposed objectivity of Western histories and theories. Narratives as felt theory then, are both practically oriented, and a politically potent strategy of indigenous peoples for dealing with settler occupation.

In planning and interpreting the interviews in this project, Million's felt theory guided my actions. It was student narratives which first motivated this research, and felt theory provided me a framework for theorizing from those narratives. Most importantly, because this methodology recognizes the theory already inherent to narratives, and the power of their affective content, I've tried to give participants the space to tell their own stories, and to draw out the explanations they themselves are giving.

At the same time in this process I've been guided by Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012). I've also already discussed Smith, because her book is the premier critique of indigenous exploitation within Western academic research. But the second half of that book is also dedicated to the development of an indigenous research agenda, one that rejects the colonizing norms of research, so that it can become a tool for achieving indigenous needs. As a first time researcher, I think it'd be a lie to say that I even know how to implement that indigenous research agenda. With Smith's words in mind though, what I have done is attempt to give participants as much control as possible over this research.

It's been difficult no doubt to make this possible, to solicit participant input when we're separated by thousands of miles, and all busy with our own lives. But I've tried to maintain consistent communication with participants, give them full access to the information they share with me, my interpretations of that information, and the authority to alter, clarify, or redact that information as they wish. Moreover, I've tried to be transparent about this research process, getting participants opinions on my methods, and my writing, and altering them upon suggestions. While I see these processes as helping to ensure the validity of this research, that participants have consented as fully to the process, and agree with the practices, I've also tried to direct this research towards participants' interests, making sure that this thesis is written about the topics they care about, and towards ends that matter for them, and that this information will be used for purposes they approve of.

Lastly, before I finally describe what my methods actually were, I want to tell you about my loyalties in this research. I can't escape my disdain for academic objectivity. It doesn't exist, let's be clear (c.f. Grande, 2015; Simpson, 2014; Smith, 2012). And no matter what one's intentions are, researchers have to be careful with the academic works they produce. They're tools just as anything else, and if they aren't created with precision, they can be used for purposes we would never approve (Tobin, 1994). Leigh Patel in her recent work *Decolonizing Educational Research* (2016) gives a thorough discussion of some of the responsibilities of researchers in the work that they do. She says that our responsibilities ultimately make us answerable to the process of learning, for our relationship to knowledge, and the context of our research.

Patel's description of answerability is useful to any researcher, but her chapter on the topic was especially useful to me in conjunction with Simpson's piece on ethnographic refusal (2007). Quite simply, Simpson recognizes a responsibility as a researcher to her own community. As I've read Simpson, indigenous researchers are answerable above all to their community, before the pursuit of knowledge, or the education of the academic world. This answerability does not call for the indigenous researcher to compromise their findings, to falsify or conceal, but it does lead to a refusal - the refusal to pursue that which compromises the community's sovereignty. At times in this research I have refused to entertain certain topics commonly discussed among authors, or have withheld information that would compromise the interests of my participants. I don't believe my refusals compromise this research, because all research, all theory, is an incomplete approximation of reality. As a guiding principle, answerability just tells us in what ways we are able to flesh out these approximations, and which spaces must remain clouded.

METHODS

The actual data of this research comes from interviews I conducted between December 2015 and April 2016. Twelve Natives, six current students and six alumna[16], agreed to be interviewed. These interviews were conducted either in person or via an online phone service provided by the College. To find these participants I personally reached out to anyone on campus who identifies as Native or any variation thereof. Because the College is relatively small and there are so few of us, the Natives at Swarthmore keep track of anyone who claims to be Indian. In finding alumna participants as well, I only reached out to those who had a relationship to the on-campus Natives. This was possible because we had just begun building an alumna network the semester before, and held a reunion that November. Of the sixteen people I reached out to, thirteen agreed to participate, but two later were unable to be interviewed. In addition, I myself was interviewed by Edwin Maryorga, the advisor to this thesis project. Thus, all of the twelve participants are personal acquaintances of mine. In fact, most of them are close friends whom I've come to know through SISA.

In these interviews I prepared a set of prompts for participants to answer, which I had sent to them ahead of time to look over. These prompts were largely based upon my literature review, from which I formulated questions regarding participants' demographic information, their motivations for attending Swarthmore and life-focus, their own definitions of success, strategies for succeeding at the College, methods of adaptation and accommodation, social and cultural capital, identity development, mentorship, and social relationships. I also used my own experience with these students and alumna over the years to elicit information about their attitudes toward the college, systems of support, taking time off from the school, and the day to day experience of being a student.

Although I used these prompts to get the interviews started and provide some structure, I also encouraged participants to wander from them and tell full stories in order to bring out students' felt theory and hear what they found most important or significant about their time at Swarthmore. At the same time however, as a participant myself and from my experience with the other participants, it's clear that the information provided in these interviews is extremely limited and only provides a brief glimpse of what they might have to say. As such, in interpreting these interviews I have approached them as distinct narratives, recognizing that they capture at best what the participant was thinking about in that moment. I try to stick closely to that which I can explicitly find in this data, and make descriptions about these narratives rather than claiming a definitive perspective on participants' entire experience.

Throughout the interview process and afterward, participants who had conducted their own research provided me with useful advice on how to collect and record information, how to construct my thesis itself, and the final product you read now is a result of their insights. This is most true of the interpretation to come in the following chapters. After transcribing participants' interviews I shared those documents with participants so that they could correct, clarify, elaborate, and augment their transcriptions as they felt comfortable. Then, as I began organizing

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[16] Traditionally, graduates are referred to as alumni, which is the masculine plural form of the Latin word *alumnus*. The majority of participants in this study do not identify as male however, including most of the graduated students. Luckily, Latin is a language with three genders for nouns, masculine, feminine, and neuter. For the rest of this work I'll be using the neuter plural, *alumna*, in place of alumni.

the total set of data by coding the interviews into separate themes, I shared that coded information from each participant's interview so that they could again give their input on my coding schema and how I was classifying the information from their interviews. During the writing process, I also sent out drafts of individual chapters, and eventually the whole thesis, so that participants could comment on my interpretations and conclusions, and make suggestions for how to edit.

In addition to this personalized communication, I created a private blog through the College's WordPress access. Here I added all participants and other Natives in the Swat community so that they could see the progress of the project and comment upon it. It got very little traffic though so it was actually more useful to me for organizing my thoughts and keeping track of my progress.

Initially when discussing this project with participants, a couple of individuals expressed concern that the research was too individualizing, that although I made mention to the importance of Native communities, they weren't reflected in my research practices. For that purpose I then created an online survey using Qualtrics software. I shared the survey with participants and gave them the liberty to send it to any family member, friend, or community member they felt was influential in their college experience. I also created a printable paper copy version. The survey received too few responses for them to be included in the data however.

The most serious concern of this research has been maintaining participant anonymity. Given the small size of the College, and even smaller Native community, even insignificant pieces of information can potentially identify participants Therefore, throughout this thesis I provide as much information as possible, but often have to present anonymous or aggregate information to protect participants' identities. Moreover, communication has been a difficulty throughout this process, especially with alumna, some of whom live in regions with limited internet or cell connection. One of the greatest personal challenges for me in this research was my simultaneous position as researcher and researched. I had to constantly examine how my own relationships with participants influenced my practices and interpretations, and to what extent my own political interests shaped the research.

THE PARTICIPANTS

> Maybe people would finally respect me as both Native and as a person, as a Native person.
> **Little Bear**

This chapter provides a brief description of the participants in the project. It is intended to familiarize the reader with the participants, and also provide some context for making comparisons between their experiences and those of other Swarthmore students, and with the experiences of Native students across the country. While I would like to give a detailed description of the participants so that the reader can develop a connection with them, that's simply not possible. Too much description would identify them. Instead, the majority of information in this section will describe the participants either as an aggregate group or anonymously. As an introduction, I'll try and summarize the personal aspirations and notions of success participants came into the College with.

Darkfire first came to Swarthmore without specific academic interests, and wanted a liberal arts education in order to explore. More than anything she wanted to use her college experience to travel and build social relationships.

Jennifer saw higher education as the key to stability and prosperity. When she enrolled, educational success meant becoming the best student she could be.

Little Bear came to Swarthmore to become competent in the white world, and use that ability to help her community.

Oz wanted to go to college so that she could travel around the world and then have the ability to return to her community.

Psyche wanted to continue learning, and saw higher education as the way to becoming happy and contributing to the greater good of society.

Raven saw higher education as the means to finding a fulfilling career.

Rozz wanted to gain extensive career/vocational preparation and training, and to develop political and social frameworks for understanding the world.

Simone wanted to develop interpersonal skills and use education to dispel her unintentional ignorance.

Star saw himself as a part of the generation responsible for solving the world's most pressing issues.

Toby came to Swarthmore hoping to expand his understanding of the world and to find solutions to climate change.

Vanessa chose to come to Swarthmore specifically to represent her people and educate others.

Zuko wanted to use his education to find a job that would pay well and let him return home.

Participants' experiences at the College vary greatly, in part because they themselves are very different people, but also because they attended Swarthmore over different time periods. The first participant to enroll at Swarthmore, came to the campus in Fall of 2002, while other participants are in their first year at the College, giving this project vision into a fourteen year span of the College's history.

Most important to note about these participants, is that of those 6 who no longer attend the College, all are graduated alumna. Because I've been referring to them as alumna with the implicit assumption of graduation, this fact might not seem significant. But it is this extremely high graduation rate which places the Natives at elite institutions like Swarthmore in a very different context than other Native undergraduates in the country (c.f. Brayboy, 1999). Successful graduation however, does not mean that these students didn't face obstacles or setbacks. Of those alumna, only two graduated within the standard four year mark. Collectively, the other four alumna took off 8 semesters from Swarthmore, and two had to enroll in a ninth semester in order to graduate, meaning that the average age of the alumna upon graduation was 23.2.

In their interviews participants stated that they either graduated with or continue to pursue majors and/or minors in Art History, Asian Studies, Biology, Black Studies, Classical Studies, Cognitive Science, Dance, Educational Studies, English, Film and Media Studies, Linguistics, Mathematics, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, Spanish, and Studio Art. These twelve participants collectively hold 15 majors, which are almost perfectly distributed between the College's three divisions of Natural Sciences (5), Social Sciences (6), and Humanities (4). In addition, participants hold 7 minors, with two in the Social Sciences, and five in the Humanities.

These participants span a range of indigenous identities. Some participants look obviously "Indian", while others often have to tell people that they're Native. They come from 15 different peoples - at least that's how many they primarily identify with - ranging from the Pacific Northwest, the West Coast, the Southwest, the northern and southern Plains, the Great Lakes, the Southeast, as well as First Nations in Canada. 6 participants grew up on or near their tribal territory, while the other half grew up with their families at a distance from their Native communities.

Bryan Brayboy (1999) developed a continuum with his own participants in order to describe Native identities, using the terms traditional - bicultural - searching - assimilated. While it might be possible to place participants along this continuum, I'm not going to. This is one of my refusals. There would no doubt be useful information to come from classifying students by their degree of indigeneity, Nativeness, or Indianness, but doing so in this public work would not be useful to the Native student community. The only place where I will discuss this variation in indigenous identity is in the *Findings* subsection on Native relationships, where they are unavoidable. For those Native students and alumna reading this, I leave it up to you to determine

to what extent the rest of these findings correlate to different kinds of Native identity. For non-Native educators and administrators, it's just not something you need to know.

Perhaps more relevant however, is the kinds of home communities these participants are coming from. As described above, these participants come from tribal communities across the country - except from the regions around Swarthmore. Although nearly half of all Swarthmore students come from the Mid-Atlantic and New England (SC Admission, Fact Sheet), the majority of participants come from the West. The median distance traveled by these Natives to study at the College, is 1776.2 miles, or roughly the distance from Swarthmore to the shores of Honduras. In this respect, participants also differ from Native undergraduates around the country, who tend to enroll in schools near to their homes (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). This vast physical separation from home has consequences both for the ability of participants to stay connected to family and community, and for how students transition into the College. Moreover, in addition to the physical distance, most participants also come from different social settings. For example, the population density of Swarthmore itself is 4,424 people per square mile. The median population density of participants' home communities on the other hand is only 1,514.5, and four participants come from very rural areas, all clocking in at less than 100 people per square mile.

Participants also span socioeconomic classes, from self-described "dirt poor", with a reported family income of $0.00, to "well-off" in an upper-middle class household. While it's undeniable that there is this range among participants, as a collective group within the larger student body, they are disproportionately of lower income. 11 of the 12 all received some degree of financial aid. In comparison, at Swarthmore only 51% of the total student population receives financial aid (SR IR, 2015). Likewise students come from families with a range of educational experiences. Some students have highly educated parents and family members with multiple degrees, and others are first generation. Although, again, as a group these participants come from less formally educated families. For 5 of the 12 participants, neither of their parents have postsecondary degrees. In Swarthmore's total student body, only 12% are first generation (CSO, Swarthmore College).

These participants also have distinct educational histories and therefore received different kinds and degrees of preparation before coming to Swarthmore. The majority of participants attended public high schools, including one charter school and one magnet; only two attended private schools, while two others attended BIA schools. Those two in private schools described them as college preparatory programs, while three of the participants who attended public schools said that high performing students were prepared for college. On the other hand, one participant described their public school as a dropout factory.

A handful of students actually described their educational experiences in high school as well. One participant, who grew up in an area of great racial tension, talked about the discrimination they received from school staff and faculty, for which reason they spent most of their k-12 education in cultural hiding. That student would go on to do dual enrollment in a local college and graduate top of their class. Several participants were also top of their class, but that too has its own drawbacks. "Students who are at the top of the class sort of get forgotten, because you're trying so hard to help the students that are not at the average level." (Jennifer)

Nearly all participants, except those at BIA schools, described their high schools as being mostly white and/or having few to no other Native students. Take Little Bear's school for example. "I did go to a public high school that was mostly white, not very many Natives, but then

became ever whiter because I took advanced courses." Three participants said that they had few to no friends in high school, and that they hated their social experiences. For Zuko, his negative experiences in k-12 initially discouraged him from applying for college. "I didn't enjoy education, so why would I want to do more of it? I just wanted to stay around home and find work."

Among the participants there is this great variety, of educational, social, and economic backgrounds, as well as identities and aspirations. As a collective however, we do see some trends. In particular, like the majority of Native undergraduates, participants were generally of lower income, had less educational experience, and took longer to graduate than their peers. On the other hand, unlike Natives nationally, most participants attended majority white high schools, where they performed very well academically, and then traveled thousands of miles to come to the College. In the following chapter, as I'm laying out the findings of this research, it's important to keep these distinctions in mind before making comparisons to other students.

FINDINGS

> Basically, I'm in the place, the belly of the beast.
> **Star**

This chapter presents an analysis of my interviews with the participants of this study. I try to stick closely to the narratives that they have created, and to present a comprehensive description without covering up the differences within them. The reader will most likely recognize that some of the experiences of participants in this chapter are shared by racial minorities, low income students, and undergraduates generally. I have however, tried to identify those aspects of participants' narratives that arise because of their indigeneity.

The findings of this chapter are organized into 6 subsections. 1. *Going to College, and Coming to Swarthmore* describes the interests, needs, and pressures that led participants to college, and to enroll at Swarthmore specifically. 2. *Living and Studying at Swarthmore* gives a picture of participants' day to day experiences of the College. 3. *Identity and Performance* analyzes the cultural performance expected of students at the College. 4. *Underdevelopment - A System of Failure* theorizes the ways by which Swarthmore discourages or obstructs Native student success as a system of underdevelopment. 5. *Strategies and Supports* identifies the resources and adaptive strategies that enable participant success at the College. 6. *How We See Swarthmore* is a reflective examination of the College based on students' experiences. In the following *Conclusions* chapter I draw from these descriptions and the previous literature review to offer recommendations for Native students, as well as faculty and staff members, for ways to create a system of Native student success.

GOING TO COLLEGE, AND COMING TO SWARTHMORE

Participants are coming to Swarthmore for a whole host of reasons, but all of them were influenced in their decision by family and community. For nearly all participants there was an expectation that they would attend college, expressed by parents, elders, or even school officials. The motivations differed between each family and community, but most saw higher education as necessary for professional development or as the source of great opportunity. For many participants who come from low income families, education was seen as the potential for escaping poverty, to move out of some of the struggles that other family members faced. For some, like Vanessa, the opportunities of college were expected to be used to benefit the community as a whole. "My mentors had high expectations for what I was gonna do with my life, and also high expectations that I was gonna come home and make a difference."

Despite recognizing the historic and systemic difficulties facing Natives in formal education, participants' home communities pushed them into higher education, because they still valued education. Oz, for example, who was pushed towards college by both her family and

elders in order to get a job, describes how her mother's own experiences with formal education didn't dissuade her from encouraging Oz. "Even though I knew my mom had a rough time with formal education (because racism/sexism/the Seventies), mom was pretty emphatic about how we had to go to school and focus on that." Thus, participants resemble other Natives around the country, who entered into higher education with this historical distrust of the institution, but still found it useful for themselves and their communities (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008).

For some, especially those participants whose parents have degrees themselves, there was an explicit expectation that they obtain at least a bachelor's, and for some students there was even an expectation that they attend a prestigious institution. Darkfire, who attended a high school that placed great value on sending students to college, felt pressured by teachers, administrators and other students at her school to attend Ivy League institutions, but rather than listen to these pressures, she actively rejected them. "Even at 16,17,18 I had a really big thing against Ivy Leagues. I thought they were really elitist. I thought they were overhyped, and I didn't want to contribute to the demand for Ivy Leagues."

However, because of these pressures to attend college, a number of participants felt like going to college wasn't a choice they themselves had made, but something others had decided for them. In fact, despite historical distrust of Western institutions, students had received rather shallow images of higher education itself, as something inherently good, which made the choice to go seem almost natural. After enrolling though, Darkfire noted that because of the pressure of others, the decision and the life plan laid out for her weren't her own. "I went to study abroad and I came back and I lost all interest in my school work, and it didn't seem important to me anymore because it seemed like all of a sudden the things that I was expected to do, weren't things that I had picked for myself - because they weren't." These participants therefore, struggled at times to justify to themselves their presence at the school, similar to the experiences of other Natives brought to higher education without a strong personal commitment (Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993).

Participants were driven to college because of a number of responsibilities to others. Oz, Vanessa, Little Bear, Zuko, Toby, and Jennifer all explicitly talked about needing to use their education to support or better their home communities. In part, that included serving as role models for family and community members (c.f. Garrod and Larrimore, 1997). In fact, Jennifer talked about feeling that the well-being or future of her community depended upon her education. "I remember telling [professor], 'I feel like I'm responsible for the whole community, my whole native community. I feel like if I fail, I fail everybody. I feel like if I don't do these things then I'm not Native.'" Although Jennifer can't point to an exact source of that feeling, for Oz that responsibility was made very explicit by a community member (and distant cousin, of course). "She made this remark that was like, 'We're all watching you,' and then she said something else about her grandkids, like how it will effect them if I don't do well."

Some participants came with more specifically defined responsibilities. Star, who contextualized the majority of his narrative in family history, saw his time in college as a continuation of his family's fight to move out of poverty. Simone and Toby felt a responsibility to use their education to contribute to specific social causes, and Vanessa saw it as a chance to represent both her own people, and indigenous peoples generally, so that others in college who went on to become influential would be more educated about indigenous peoples. Darkfire, after losing interest in her education, persisted out of a recognition that there were other women of

color like her who worked their whole lives for a similar opportunity but hadn't received it. "I know that if they had a chance to go to college, and do that easily, they fucking would do it. So I was like, I better just do it, and even though I don't know where I'm going, and even though I don't know if this is still a good place or not, I just have to finish."

Rather than inherent interests in higher education, participants were also motivated by the prospects of social mobility and the ability to escape their physical and social situations. For Rozz and Psyche, going to college was an opportunity to leave home, to build lives outside of their home towns. For three participants, it was the opportunity to leave behind abuse and/or the danger of their home communities. For several, it was a chance to travel. Oz for example, captures the sentiments of several participants who wanted to study away from home, but return afterwards. "I always wanted to travel, but I was going to come back...I figured I needed college to do that."

For a substantial number of participants however, the decision to go to college was motivated by an uncertainty for the future. Many who had been directed towards college for years continued on because they didn't know what they would do otherwise. Star for example, "So were I to decide something other than college it would have been a job, and that would have been totally new. So I'm like, 'Why the hell?'" On the other hand, some participants, like Oz, who weren't expected to go to college or succeed, did it to prove others wrong. "So I definitely did feel the pressure to graduate on time, and that became a goal mostly out of spite, because there were some people who were expecting me to go and get pregnant and then come home in shame."

When it came to choosing schools participants searched based on a range of different interests. Primary among these were the school's ability to offer financial aid packages and to allow students to travel, including study abroad options. Many participants were total nerds who liked learning, and were looking for an academically rigorous education, one which valued knowledge in itself, and provided opportunities to develop as scholar. Little Bear for example, came looking to study extremely abstract, theoretical topics. "I wanted to think about about philosophy, and math, and things like that."

Looking at particular kinds of educational institutions, the liberal arts was a big draw for a few participants, because of the breadth of study students could engage in, and the ability to become academically well-rounded. Toby and Star also wanted to attend smaller schools where they could get more personalized attention. Rozz in particular, really wanted the opportunity to attend a school that embraced diversity and was dedicated to broadening students' worldviews.

Because nearly all participants come from the West or the South, the East Coast, and in particular the Northeast, was an unfamiliar place and a great attraction in looking for schools, because it was so far away from home. Moreover, for Jennifer, Psyche, and Zuko, the region as a whole held an image of intellectualism above the rest of the country. Raven and Star were motivated to look for prestigious institutions and similarly turned to the East Coast because of that reputation, even if those schools weren't their primary choices.

While some students had parents who knew higher education very well, and others not all, almost everyone was unaware of Swarthmore and had to "discover" the College[17]. For Raven, Vanessa, Psyche, and Zuko, it was school counselors or other educators who introduced them to Swarthmore, thinking that the College would be well suited to them. Jennifer discovered the

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[17] If Columbus can "discover" America all while mistaking it for Asia, Indians can discover an obscure, elite institution in the white suburbs of Philadelphia.

College through U.S News rankings, while others learned of Swarthmore through College Horizons or Questbridge, college preparation programs for Native high schoolers, and low income students respectively.

A good number of participants were personally contacted by the College through some form of outreach. Oz received a promotional DVD after taking standardized tests, and just days before the application deadline Toby received informational materials from Swat. "Swarthmore sends me these pamphlets, that were exactly catered to my interests, which caught my eye immediately...This was the first I felt like a school actually reached out to me, and actually made me feel like my interests were important to them." It was those pamphlets that convinced Toby to apply a few days later despite not knowing anything about the College before then.

Several participants were able to meet with recruiters from the Admissions department while still in high school, and were all impressed by the people the College sent to them. "After I applied they sent [recruiter] out to interview me, and I really wanted to be a part of what school produced her, based on how she carried herself, her intellectual capacity, and her communication skills, plus the fact that she was down to earth and very relatable." (Psyche) Other participants were convinced by the early support they received from the College before matriculating. Star thought Swarthmore was very excited to have him based on his acceptance letter, while Vanessa and Psyche liked that the College paid for them to come and visit the school. Two participants were attracted to the College because they were offered the Evans scholarship, which includes significant aid and a free computer. These recruitment practices parallel other institutions, which often actively seek out Native students (Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993).

While researching and applying to Swarthmore participants were forming images of the institution. For some like Jennifer and Zuko the idea still remained almost fantastical it was so unknown. But for most they saw Swarthmore as extremely liberal or politically and socially progressive, including claiming to be civically engaged and oriented towards social justice. Star for example, was particularly drawn to the College by those claims. "They talked about working to make civic engagement, and working around the world, or becoming a good global citizen, and all those kinds of things."

Participants were also attracted to Swarthmore because of its attention to diversity. Several participants thought that the College's stated commitment to diversity, along with how it promoted civic and social engagement would make it a safe or inviting place for minorities like Natives. Special programming like the Tri-College Summer Multicultural Institute seemed to confirm that. Little Bear in particular thought that Swarthmore would give her place in the institution as a Native that she hadn't found before in formal education. "I ended up here with all these high hopes for what Swarthmore could be, about maybe my voice would finally be heard, maybe people would finally respect me as both Native and as a person, as a Native person."

Given Swarthmore's high national ranking among liberal arts colleges, several participants thought they would find an engaging academic experience. The College promotes itself as a place dedicated to academic development and the pursuit of knowledge, and owns a reputation for being especially nerdy. However, the majority of participants didn't know anything about Swarthmore's reputation. Simone for example, didn't know much about the College's exclusivity or how it compares itself to Ivy League institutions. "I thought it was a safety school."

Swarthmore's financial aid packages ultimately made the decision for several participants, but less material concerns also brought these Natives to Swat. Jennifer was

especially impressed by how she was welcomed as a prospective student and thought the close-knit community she found at the College was more similar to what she had come from. In the complete opposite, Raven and Zuko expected to make no friends and dedicate themselves to work alone. Zuko explains, "When I first got to Swat, I had no intention of making friends with anyone....I just imagined, 'Get my grades, get done, get out of here.'"

Motivated by these different responsibilities and interests in higher education, participants had many different aspirations for themselves. For a few who didn't know what they wanted from their education, they were just looking forward to studying abroad. Others had specific professional goals, becoming a teacher, studying law, and a couple of participants wanted to work with their tribal language programs. Most were motivated by the desire to either help their home communities or work to make the world as a whole better in some way.

As a consequence of these goals, participants had specific definitions of educational success. Rozz and Simone spoke about how important it was to them to develop a sociopolitical framework for understanding the world they live in. Similarly, Toby wanted to learn from the diverse student body about experiences unlike his own. Little Bear, who saw her time at the college as a chance to be a trailblazer for her community, wanted to become proficient in the Western, academic world so that she could lead others through it. "My goal was to graduate and to have a leg up, to be that person that could straddle both worlds, that could fight for Natives, while also understanding the way the white world works."

Because so many students had specific professional goals, most were looking to develop specific skill sets and become prepared for their later professional lives. Rozz talked about needing a Swarthmore education in order to get the qualifications and preparation for access to a job and career with middle-class financial stability. Simone on the other hand, spoke about becoming competent in her areas of study and developing interpersonal skills to be able to work with people after college. Jennifer, who saw graduation as closely linked to financial stability, tied her own success to academic performance. "In the beginning it was all about education, about accolades, about being smart and intellectual and being that person who's on the newspaper. That to me was success, because that was the way the education system made me think."

Everyone came for different reasons, and approached the College in their own unique ways. Once they got there, their experiences and ability to find success all varied. At the same time, everyone's ideas of success would change, or at the least have to adapt to the institution of Swarthmore. Some would have to abandon their ideas of success altogether, while others would redefine it.

LIVING AND STUDYING AT SWARTHMORE

Participants approached Swarthmore in different ways, each envisioning different roles for themselves at the College. There are those who saw themselves as almost entirely disconnected from Swat like Zuko, or Raven who planned to transfer out originally. Most however, chose, or found it required of them, to engage with the campus. When Oz for example, was first researching Swarthmore, she knew that there were very few Natives at the school, and decided that she would raise that number herself by enrolling. Once she got to the College however, she found that meant taking on the role of the 'Lonely Indian.'

Several students took it upon themselves to lead or sustain the campus Native community. Vanessa and Rozz did so because they thought that it was necessary to be a voice for indigenous peoples within the institution. Vanessa, after visiting the College and finding students, staff, and faculty joking about indigenous genocide, decided that her role at Swarthmore was to educate everyone else. "This institution needs people like me to speak the truth, if nobody else is going to. And they need Indians on campus more than I need to enjoy my undergraduate education." Jennifer also found herself being pressured into that position, but felt overwhelmed trying to balance the responsibility with her own academic work. Whether or not participants specifically intended for their role at Swarthmore to be a form of activism however, most became educators in some way. Consequently, the Natives at Swarthmore share many academic, social, and personal experiences during their time here.

Several participants came to Swarthmore because of the unique academic opportunities it offers. As students they were able to study relatively obscure topics, and as both Rozz and Toby attest, were able to broaden their own worldviews, both through their classroom studies and relationships with other students. On the other hand, participants also found that their studies were not meaningfully connected to reality. Rozz, who had wanted to develop a sociopolitical framework, did, but the rest of their studies were abstract and didn't have apparent applications. While originally wanting to be a highschool teacher, Rozz left Educational Studies because the classes and professors focused more on policy than training educators. Similarly, Raven, can't see how her major in the natural sciences would be useful outside of an educational institution. Consequently, several participants assumed the responsibility of adding a critical perspective to curriculum and class discussion, or otherwise working to link their academic studies to the world beyond Swarthmore.

At the same time, although participants had been drawn to Swarthmore because of its commitment to diversity, it wasn't always represented in academics. Darkfire found that in both classroom studies, and more specific multicultural programming, most of the diversity-based work was oriented towards educating white students and not relevant or useful for marginalized peoples. Star also found that Swarthmore academics were thoroughly Western and not useful for developing a critical social consciousness. While the courses were certainly difficult, Star saw people graduating from the College with poor understandings of the world around them. "They're getting A's, but also they're saying things that are not substantiated very well at all. And yet they're getting A's here and stuff like that, which made me concerned. What does it mean that I get this degree, but that guy got that degree? So I have a little bit of a - not impressed. I wouldn't be proud to have it necessarily."

For some, the love of learning they had before enrolling, disappeared after losing interest in their studies. Raven, who assumed that the liberal arts would allow her to explore and find out what her interests are, settled on her major because it was something she wasn't bad at. Likewise Toby, who came into Swarthmore passionate and excited about using his education to better the world, talks about being completely disappointed by the academic mentors and instruction he received. "The department here didn't inspire me like I thought it would. In some ways it's inspired me, but I can not emphasize enough how disappointed I've been with the professors, and how I've never felt like they instill curiosity or passion in students."

Toby isn't alone in this experience either. Several participants talked about disappointing relationships with faculty. Star for example, also mentioned professors who haven't updated their

curriculum in years, in some cases it hasn't had any fundamental changes in decades despite major advancements. Jennifer also described professors who she said had rigid ways of thinking, contrasting them with students whom she generally found more open and self-aware. Participants do find great faculty members, although they generally talk about them as rare exceptions. Toby describes the faculty within his own department like this, "The [department] professors are just god-fucking-awful. I say that with full confidence. They're just the most horrific people I've ever worked with." In contrast he talks about his time with another professor in the Department of Educational Studies with praise. "She was very engaging and her lessons were awesome." In fact, those professors who received the most positive descriptions were in Ed Studies, although they weren't without scrutiny either.

Participants' experience in the classroom and in their studies were mostly negative as well. Zuko and Oz described feelings of discomfort being in classes, made more difficult to bear because they, along with Darkfire, didn't find their studies very useful. Oz notes how a majority of her time at the College felt like a waste of time in comparison to the rest of things going on at home. "Everything about being at Swat felt pointless. Like I said, I had family members dying, and going to the hospital or whatever. And I was at Swat trying to figure out what shape came next in this series, and I was just like, 'What am I doing here?'"

Although participants thought that a liberal arts education encouraged exploring multiple interests, several were unable to find their own reflected in the curriculum. Psyche for example, who wanted to study business, had no options available to him. More commonly, participants wanted to take courses on indigenous peoples, which were very few at Swarthmore, were only offered occasionally, and depended on the personal interest of a faculty member. In comparison, some of the classes participants talked about most highly were taken at the University of Pennsylvania where they were regularly able to find courses on these subjects.

More consistent than any evaluation of Swarthmore's academics, were participants' description of the labor involved. Quite simply, most participants found a culture of work that was overwhelming. "You have so much work that it becomes oppressive, insulting, and annoying, and depressing." (Star) And while that might sound a little dramatic to some, Zuko and Simone describe how the amount of academic work severely limited their ability to maintain social connections. Toby too, found that the idea of a good student at Swarthmore was defined by constantly working, and he felt compelled to live up to those expectations. "I felt like I needed to bolster my work ethic, and show that I'm a passionate worker, and that I can work really hard about all the things that I care about. So I signed up for all the hardest things that I could, just because I wanted that feeling of, 'Yes, I'm a hard worker. Yes I can do this. Yes, I'm at this rigorous school, but I can live up to their standards and run with the best of them.'" In comparison to this culture of work and academic rigor, participants who took courses at other institutions all attested that they were less demanding and that they were able to obtain better grades. One alum who is currently in professional school describes it best. "Even in the most difficult of difficult times in my professional school, I don't feel as overwhelmed as I did in college."

This work culture permeated most of participants' experiences, even undermining the college's liberal arts agenda. Participants in the natural sciences in particular mention being unable to explore other disciplines because of the high number of courses required in their programs. For many Swarthmore students, those requirements aren't so time consuming because

they come into the College with credits that can already count towards their major. However, like Native students generally, who have limited academic preparation prior to matriculation (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008), most participants did not come into Swarthmore with those credits.

While this culture of work had serious consequences for participants' health, and their ability to develop academically and socially, it also had a way of discouraging critical engagement with one's studies. As Star describes, because critical perspectives weren't readily presented in classes, students had to provide, or seek that out themselves, but the large workload students already had hindered their ability to do so. "It does not usually serve you well while you go through the place and try to get good grades at the same time….It definitely does deter critical thinking, right? It deters it because you need the grades."

No matter the workload however, the ability to navigate and succeed at Swarthmore depends upon specific cultural capital, knowledge and skills which many Natives lack being first generation or low income (Tierney, 1992). Several participants knew very little about higher education, or what would be expected of them, both during the application process and later when they had matriculated. Oz for example, who had been one of the best students at her high school, had never had to develop effective studying skills, which became suddenly very necessary her first semester. "One of the many reasons why I did so poorly in my classes was because I had zero idea how to study." Likewise, other students had to develop a number of skills, from academic writing, to learning how to participate in debate or discussion based classes. On a larger scale, participants often struggled in creating a major because they had limited knowledge of academic disciplines.

Learning to interact with faculty and administrative offices was also something participants had to do with no previous experience, learning what was and was not appropriate, in any entirely new social context. Simone here, talks about how she wishes she had known how to access faculty support before matriculating so that she could have performed better academically. "I wish I knew what office hours were, and that you go to office hours even if you don't have a problem. That's all kind of odd to me." Similarly, Rozz found that one's ability to utilize the Office of Career Services and other programs depended upon both already having relevant knowledge of professional fields and having social relationships in those fields. Rather than teach students that relevant knowledge or how to network however, the Office assumes students already possess that social and cultural capital. "They really didn't do much more than what you ask….Coming from a lower-middle class background, you're told that you'll get a good job if you work hard. You aren't told that you'll get a good job if you know the right people." (Rozz) The ability of students to take advantage of Swarthmore's status and find a well-paying job then, was still restricted along class lines (c.f. Spring, 2014; Giroux, 2010). Brayboy (1999) identifies the same kinds of gate-keeping practices at Ivy League institutions.

The most significant aspect of participants' experiences, outside of academics and professional development, were the social relationships they established at the College. For a number of participants, they were able to form strong relationships with their peers, often because of the dorms they were assigned to in the first year. But of course they also drew friends from faith groups, clubs, sports, and because the campus is so small, it's easy to come to know, or at least recognize most everyone. For Oz and Jennifer, they saw the other students as nerds or oddballs, people they could fit right in with, and Raven found that most everyone she met at the College had more or less similar values, making it easy to find friends. Although they're in the

minority, other participants socialized very little or were unable to establish many meaningful relationships.

Several alumna talk about how many of these relationships have lasted beyond graduation. For one alum in particular, those relationships have persisted because they were their only form of consistent support at Swarthmore. However, these relationships were with mostly non-Natives, many of whom were ignorant of indigenous peoples, as well as issues of socioeconomic class. Jennifer still found her relationships with non-Natives extremely valuable and usually welcoming, and Little Bear likewise found friends who genuinely cared and tried to understand her, but those relationships weren't universal or even consistent. Vanessa for example, explains how student ignorance at times delegitimized her own experiences. 'All the other kids who don't have to deal with any of the things you have to deal with, kids that don't think your problems are real, because they're not real to them."

At the same time, participants' relationships with family and community members at home were influenced by their time at the College. For some, it created divisions between participants and their families or communities, culturally, politically, socially. Those divisions grew both because participants were developing their worldviews in a new context, and because of the way their education was viewed at home. "And that's the thing. I went to some fancy East Coast school. And I'm just like, 'Yeah, but I'm still me. Still awkward as all hell. Promise.'" (Oz) These divisions therefore, reflect the cultural borders between indigeneity and formal education, the identity or authenticity of participants challenged because of their participation in the academic institution (Erickson, 1987).

Perhaps more disruptive was the simple physical separation from home. Not only were participants not there to see families and communities growing over the years, they were also unable to support their families and fulfill community responsibilities. Likewise, because of the distance family and community members were limited in their ability to support participants while they were at Swarthmore. Darkfire, Oz, and Vanessa all describe the hurt their family or community members experienced, being unable to help them while they struggled at the College. Vanessa describes how it was necessary to balance leaning on them for support against wanting to protect them. "How much do you want to re-traumatize your family, who wanted only good things for you, and who is so proud of you? You really have to walk a fine line."

Participants' own well being, because it is so seriously affected by the culture of labor at Swarthmore, was a major topic in their narratives. In addition, at least two participants felt unsafe on campus because of drinking. "I was in Willets, and that dorm, is really male-dominated if you ask me. The boys were scary, and people would get really drunk on the weekends, and I didn't drink at all." Brayboy (1999) also identifies campus drinking as a serious threat at Ivy League schools, raising the chances that Native students would become the target of racial violence.

Perhaps the most apparent and common side effects of attending Swarthmore however, are fatigue and degrading mental and emotional health. Everyone loses sleep at Swarthmore. Simone, in her first semester at the college, averaged three hours of sleep a night. Physical consequences are unavoidable. One participant lost significant weight because of the interaction of stress and anxiety with their medical prescriptions, so much weight in fact, that they had to be carried out of their dorm at the end of the semester. And although such a lifestyle is unsustainable, it is a pervasive element of Swarthmore's culture. "People were priding themselves on how much they were suffering over their academic work." (Rozz)

This picture of mental health in participants' narratives is a result not only of the stress from work, but often from the isolation and homesickness they experienced at Swarthmore. One of the most common descriptions of homesickness from participants is wanting to be around other Natives again. Participants talk about being separated from their language, culture, and the support of their communities. Little Bear, Zuko, and Vanessa, tried to make up for it by looking for indigenous peoples in their studies. Although homesickness might be natural for any student traveling thousands of miles from home, or moving into a new cultural space, Native students are especially affected by that distance, because indigenous identities are rooted both in physical places and communities (Grande, 2015). Therefore, being separated from both of those, and entering into a social space where indigenous peoples are practically nonexistent, can't rightly be called just homesickness. In fact, one participant felt so out of place at the College, they developed vertigo during their first semester, which lasted for more than two months.

At the same time as participants were separated from their communities, many were losing community members. Five participants describe losing family members during their time at Swarthmore, and they all mention multiple deaths. For these participants, the passing of family and community members necessitated returning home, but their ability to do so was often compromised by an inability to pay for the ticket, or because the family didn't want them to fall behind in their work.

While coping with these loses, participants also found difficulty being able to mourn properly at Swarthmore. In addition to the unending workload, students were unable to enact traditional funerary rites, separated from both the community grieving practices and from the family members that they themselves would have been supporting. For some, being unable to participate in those funerals left them without much closure. "I forget that they're not around anymore, because the funeral's not in my head. And I never really had that with anybody else, because you can't really ignore the fact when you're helping bury the person. And then I just felt even more isolated."

In trying to deal with this loss at Swarthmore participants found little sympathy or understanding from students, staff, or faculty. For one participant, their peers simply didn't seem to understand their experience, and it felt like they were all waiting for them to return to normal behavior. Another, who went to a Dean for support in managing their academic work while grieving, said they felt disrespected, as if the administrator was only interested in making sure that they stayed enrolled, not in their emotional health. One participant also gave a description of how their grieving made others at the College uncomfortable. "What I experienced in those kinds of interactions was the sense that someone was sitting next to me asking me to snap out of an involuntary break-down for a second so they could say, 'How can I help you quit crying and eat your damn soup so that I can be more comfortable with this situation?'"

Psyche and Darkfire talk about constant feelings of depression and anxiety, usually linked to the campus itself.

> Swarthmore would always eventually, after being there a couple of days, kick the shit out of me and I would just be in a horrible mood all the time. And that was just something that I could count on, feeling bad at Swarthmore, absolutely. (Darkfire)

> It feels like I'm always doing something wrong or behind on something...I'm probably messing something up right now. (Psyche)

Darkfire and Star talk about depression in particular as the result of institutional racism, and both believe that other institutions are either healthier environments or have more support for students dealing with them. "Certain types of depression or anxiety will come up...Other colleges that do better with their administration and stay on top of the current best practices of how to engage with students of color, and students of oppressed or marginalized identities would probably be a better place than here to go. That is what I mean by it's not necessary to be here." (Star)

Some participants said that they became suicidal at Swarthmore, a point which underscored what exactly they meant by having to survive at the College. The College's counseling services - CAPS - was discussed very little however, and was usually not useful or viable for participants. One participant told stories of how the counselors they were with recorded information on their culture and identity, making them feel like a research subject rather than a patient. At another point, when grieving, they were confronted about their indigenous spiritual beliefs. "[The counselor said] 'You would be doing better with this if you were just Christian, like me.' It just really rubbed me wrong, so I walked out of the room and she shouted after me, 'Did I say something wrong?' And at that point the damage had been done." Similarly, another participant stopped going to CAPS because their counselor was ignorant of the collective experience of racial oppression, regularly reinterpreting the participant's responsibilities to other students and their community as an an individual phenomenon. Consequently, the majority of participants reporting a strained mental health rejected the College's available services, because even there they found that they could only be understand through, and were pressured to conform to, white cultural hegemony.

IDENTITY AND PERFORMANCE

So far I've already mentioned how students have to learn new social behaviors for interacting with faculty, staff, and peers, a very specific professional, white cultural performance. But now I want to turn to how this system of behaviors is enforced at the College, and the consequences for both a student's grades and identity. To begin with, students are expected to learn to speak academically, and in practically all social settings, including outside of the classroom. Simone was especially surprised that even among friends people maintain a professional distance, and felt that the College promoted competition among students. Star also felt that this competitive, professional environment stifles the development of social skills and promotes unhealthy lifestyles.

Moreover, the reality for students who live at the College is that there's little opportunity to escape these norms. The College is able to enforce conformity through a diffuse pressure, which although not material, Star describes as a crushing weight. Swarthmore is able to constantly supervise students through its culture of labor, expecting students to always be producing intellectual work (Silliman, 2001). For example, Psyche, who struggled to produce the amount or quality of labor expected, felt a constant need to do more or that he was always behind in work. Toby also felt that he needed to prove that he deserved to be at the College by working harder.

Participants also felt pressured to conform ideologically. One participant describes how their non-Western beliefs impacted their academics.

> Me being so staunchly and strictly traditional, in my worldview and conceptualization of the world, my ideas and ideals aggravated that professor, and it eroded our ability to communicate. There were disciplinary acts and measures. Had I not had other friends in the department, people that were a part of my support network, I don't think that I would have been able to graduate…

While we can't know exactly what happened in that instance, this participant isn't alone. Star also regularly gets pushback for his ideas that are critical of the West, and has become skilled at flying under the radar. "If you're going to disagree with a professor then you're going to have to shut up and do it anyways, or be good enough to be respectable." But avoiding conflict isn't always an option either. One participant describes a time when they were confronted for not investing themselves in their work appropriately.

> I had this professor who accused me of being very smoke and mirrors…he accused me of not revealing very much about myself and being hard to talk to… So I tried to meet him halfway and be like okay, this is what I care about…So I told him the things I told you, like college is a halfway house to reality…And he told me, maybe you shouldn't be in college, which wouldn't really matter if he didn't fail me out of his class, which then derailed my ability to graduate at that time.

Difference is supposedly a valued asset, at least it is when talking about diversity. For these participants however, because the differences they brought challenged the institution of higher education, they were stigmatized and penalized. Similar to the experiences of students in Brayboy's study (1999), that kind of difference in engagement and ideology, fell outside of the appropriate range of thought and behavior.

Star theorizes why the College would need to respond to these differences. "What you're doing in your entire existence is in fact the thing that institutionally, historically and therefore now - because historically institutionalized things have not changed - is designed to stifle those ideas, and to stifle the critical consciousness." Vanessa also gives an explanation for why Natives in particular fall outside of what is considered acceptable in higher education.

> A lot of times our questions aren't even on the radar of the other students, and often times the professors as well. Our worldview and our paradigm as indigenous people is so different, and traditionally Western paradigms prefer environments where there is no competition for resources. This sets Indian students at college up to be the one nail which is sticking out of the side of the barn. What happens to unique nails, or even regular nails which happen to be sticking out of a uniquely warped piece of wood, is they are the ones who get hammered back into place.

Native students are targeted not just because they are different, but because their difference challenges the authority of the settler state, competes for claims to knowledge, primacy, and even indigeneity (Wolfe, 2006), meaning that they inherently deviate from a Western cultural performance.

Because the pressure to make students conform is diffuse, emanating from multiple sources, it often is not easy to recognize in the moment; its values and norms are inherent to the institution, and therefore implicitly known, rather than readily identifiable. As a consequence, indigenous nonconformity is interpreted, or misinterpreted, within those existing norms (Simpson, 2007.) The difficulty of some students to meet the demands of labor for example, rather being recognized as a result of inadequate academic preparation in high school, was seen as a personal problem or character flaw.

> I felt like my other professors had no idea, no idea where I came from, no idea how much of a struggle it was. I felt like they just maybe thought that I was a lazy student or not trying hard enough, when I was giving everything I had despite all of the disadvantages I had. (Jennifer)

Thus, just as Deyhle (1996) found with Native high school students, the inability of these participants to adopt a white cultural performance, and/or match the College's labor expectations, are explained away as a personal deficit, rather than the result of structural inequality.

Perhaps the most distressing aspect of this misrecognition of the causes of participants' academic difficulties, are the consequences of not recognizing the systemic discrimination that they face. When administrators and educators are unable to recognize how institutional practices and norms discriminate against Natives, any problems that arise are seen as caused by the Indians.

> I got in trouble with the Deans a lot. I felt like a trouble student that was on their radar. Don't get me wrong. I never got bad grades, except for that one semester. I've always been academically a good student. But socially, I felt like I was getting in trouble, not just with my peers, but with the administration, and eventually professors...who I learned really quickly weren't my friends at all. (Darkfire)

For those participants who either could not or would not conform to social and ideological expectations, they became labeled as problem students and lost institutional support (c.f. Brayboy, 1999; Deyhle, 1998).

To often there is a belief that discrimination is a conscious, coordinated effort, but almost all discrimination is carried about by people thinking they're being fair. In this case, what isn't acknowledged, is that settler institutions, infused with colonial norms and values, make what is normal and fair inherently discriminatory against indigenous peoples. Thus individuals working within standard practices carry out the work of colonization, without seeing themselves connected to it in any way (Goldstein, 2008; Wolfe, 2006). Vanessa summarizes the point very succinctly. "Us getting penalized for the inappropriateness of others is the definition of institutional racism."

Under these intense pressures to adopt a white cultural performance, participants are forced to try and maintain, or hold onto, their indigenous identity and their own sense of self-worth. For many of these Natives, they felt that success within Swarthmore required sacrificing parts of their identity. This attitude existed among some participants prior to enrollment because they were familiar with education as a tool of assimilation. The personal experience of being different, and then pressured to conform at the College however, subsequently reinforced the belief that their identity was under attack. Half of all participants explicitly mentioned feeling a pressure to fragment their own identity.

Although this phenomenon was very common, Little Bear provides one of the clearest descriptions. On the most basic level, Little Bear felt like she couldn't be seen as both a Native and an intellectual, that to her peers and professors the two were incompatible. Not only was she not understood by others, but the support that she was able to receive didn't recognize how her indigenous identity shaped her experience. The only options that seemed open to her were to discard pieces of her identity.

> I don't know if I could assimilate, but I felt like I would have needed to assimilate. Maybe then the counseling would help, maybe then my classes would go more smoothly. But then I would have to leave home behind. So I said, 'No. I'm not gonna do that.'" (Little Bear)

Even in a liberal, multicultural institution like Swarthmore, participants were confronted by cultural borders to success (Beaulieu, 2008).

Maintaining one's identity in the face of institutional norms however, wasn't the same as what it may have been before in high school. These participants were thousands of miles from home, separated from traditional markers and referents of indigeneity. It was only at Swarthmore that Jennifer began to doubt her identity, because for so long it had been defined by an active membership in her tribal community. Being separated and isolated as an individual at Swarthmore then led her to consider whether a collective indigenous identity could exist on its own. "If an Indian's alone in the forest, is he still Indian?" (Jennifer)

Similar to Garrod and Larrimore's (1997) findings at Dartmouth however, the experience of attending Swarthmore reaffirmed most participants' indigeneity. For Jennifer in particular, her years at the College led her to recognize how her own thinking and way of being came from her indigenous community. Although, that personal affirmation does not counteract the shame and self-doubt a couple of participants mentioned feeling at times for leaving their family and community to attend Swarthmore.

Against all of these, Star stands as a lone example. Star recognized that education was a white institution and that academic success was construed as assimilation. But, because he felt so assured of his own identity, that it could never be threatened by the institution, he didn't go through the same identity crisis as other participants, and Native students generally (Deyhle, 1998). In fact, it was because he didn't have to defend his identity, that Star was able to act as what he calls a double agent - to perform and succeed within institutional norms, while at the same time creating an education he found valuable.

> It's almost like I'm putting down a part of myself to just let it go, and to just turn in a paper that's bullshit, to my mind. That kind of hurts me somewhat, but it's one of those things where, it's possible because of emotional intelligence. (Star)

Star was able to move across cultural borders at the College, because he knew his identity wouldn't disappear because of his academic participation. It's a strategy that took him years to develop, but it now serves him better than constantly fighting the institution. Brayboy (1999) and Deyhle (1996) identify similar students in their studies who are also capable of moving across these borders.

In addition to this crisis of identity, participants felt a need to prove or validate their position at the College through their labor. For several participants this was directly related to feelings of mediocrity in comparison to other students. Of the students who struggled academically, at one point or another nearly all thought that those difficulties were the result of some personal inadequacy. For a time, Zuko and Psyche even thought that they were the Admissions Mistake, that they didn't deserve, or weren't supposed to be admitted to the College, but had been by accident. Jennifer however, was able to overcome those feelings of inadequacy by regularly reaffirming her own worth and intelligence.

There's a common misconception that Native students can get into any college they want. Raven and Darkfire heard it all the time when they were applying to school, where their

intelligence and hard work were written of as racial favoritism. For a number of participants, when they arrived at Swarthmore and sized themselves up against their peers, that myth followed them and led them to doubt their own capabilities and intelligence, wondering if they had been admitted just to fill a quota. Whether or not race was a consideration in their application, JT Duck, Director of Admissions, made it clear in 2014 that the reason Swarthmore admits so few Natives is because most of them aren't qualified. According to admissions, all of these participants come from that very small number of Native students who they think are prepared for a Swarthmore education.

Beyond insecurities about admissions however, participants were still confronted with feelings of insignificance. Toby early on was humbled by a mentor, and found it one of the most influential experiences at the College. "It's just kind of stripped me of some of my ego, which I think is a healthy thing for people, to not feel like you are the best at something." For Vanessa on the other hand, her education was oriented towards surviving and navigating the College, without ever feeling lesser or beneath others, which she felt individuals were pressing on her. Star at first felt like it was out of place for him to challenge or reject the institution, when it was such a highly valued opportunity for so many. However, as he become more self-confident and realized that he had to create his own education, he began to lose that feeling of insignificance.

UNDERDEVELOPMENT - SYSTEMS OF FAILURE

Not only were participants held to a white cultural performance, they were also obstructed or inhibited in their ability to achieve the success they're looking for. Like Deyhle (1996), I identify these practices as a system of failure, and specifically a system of underdevelopment (Rodney, 1972) in which Native students are denied the opportunities, resources, and capacity for creating their own successful education. At Swarthmore, underdevelopment is comprised of three main facets, Negligence, Dehumanization, and Obstruction.

Mentioned above, participants found a detachment from reality at Swarthmore, that their education was abstract and avoided engagement with the world. This disengagement seems to stand at odds with the College's rhetoric of social engagement, although it's not so incomprehensible if we note that most of this engagement is meant to occur outside of the classroom, through special offices and centers. These more tangential programs are entirely optional, while most curriculum - unless faculty make a deliberate effort otherwise - remains theoretical without any explicit intention of being used beyond the classroom.

While this detachment has its own reasonings, and has undergone changes with the advent of neoliberalism and the non-profit industrial complex, Moten and Harney (2012) recognize this stance, in all its forms, as negligence. For Moten and Harney negligence isn't just an ideological stance, but a whole institutional system that operates within higher education in order to prevent radical change and preserve social inequality. Negligence validates institutions for not intervening against systemic oppression, because at a fundamental level these institutions depend upon that oppression, and reproduce it.

> The slogan on the Left, then, *universities, not jails,* marks a choice that may not be possible. In other words, perhaps more universities promote more jails. Perhaps it is necessary finally to see

that the university contains incarceration as the product of its negligence. (Moten and Harney, 2012, 113)

From participants' narratives it's clear that Swarthmore neglects both its responsibilities to overturn systems of oppression broadly, and at the same time neglects its own students, thereby reproducing racial and colonial oppression within its own walls.

For participants, the lack of attention to, or engagement with the political and social interests of indigenous peoples was blatant at Swarthmore. Participants pointed to the lack of consistent course offerings on indigenous peoples, or even attention to Natives in courses about the United States, as well as the absence of event programming, and the lacuna of administrative support for Native students. For example, two participants were invited to the College through separate diversity oriented programs, over the course of which everyone was told to meet with their respective identity groups. These two participants, on two entirely different occasions, at events meant to support and integrate marginalized students into the campus, were both left standing completely alone with nowhere to go. Vanessa, after attending an event on genocide, recognized that the College wasn't just ignoring or forgetting about indigenous peoples, but normalized their invisibility by selectively defining genocide, colonialism, and even who counts as a racial minority in such a way that they couldn't be tied to indigenous peoples and inadvertently implicate U.S imperialism.

One participant who came to the college looking to connect with the local indigenous people found that no one at the school had a relationship with any of the tribes nearby. "Every department told me that the Lenape were extinct, and that there were no tribes around locally, and that there hadn't been for hundreds of years. Like, every single department, every single faculty member." For that student, the experience underscored that the institution and its members willfully accepted their ignorance of indigenous peoples.

Simone, who came to the College in part because of its rhetoric of social justice, also found that events hosted by the indigenous student group, didn't get the same attention and support from their peers or the administration. Because indigenous issues weren't popular or well documented in popular media, students didn't feel a need to turn out. After these events, Simone came to see most of the campus' commitment to social justice as an act, just the presentation of an image.

> I would have less of a problem if they didn't claim to care about humanity as a whole, if they only care about certain people groups, or if they only care about certain demographics, or certain political ideologies. That's just like, don't be a hypocrite. (Simone)

Rather than recognize the institution's negligent stance to indigenous peoples however, the College adopts the appearance of sympathy, displacing its own complicity in settler occupation (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

More than just ignoring indigenous rights and activism, Swarthmore's negligence discourages students from developing their own critical consciousness and engagement with their world. Star found that critical thought was viewed suspiciously at the College, and although there were a select number of faculty and staff who were pushing the institution and students to engage with the local communities, there simply weren't enough to make significant change to Swarthmore. For faculty in particular, prior to achieving tenure, critical theory and scholarship didn't carry much respect within higher education, and supporting Native or marginalized

communities was seen as a distraction from scholarly work (c.f. Giroux, 2010). The burden of labor produces conformity among faculty just as much as among the student body apparently.

For those participants who aspired to make change in the world, this negligence left them unprepared to do that work, lacking either the practical experience of working with communities, people and institutions, or the theoretical understanding of the underlying causes of inequality. The consequence then, was that the College was graduating students with the rhetoric of social justice, providing them with the resources and connections to pursue social justice projects, with little practical or theoretical understanding of what to do or why they should be doing it. "It makes you ill-prepared, and you'll be embarrassed when you try to do good work in the world." (Star)

Although Swarthmore is capable of preparing multiple programs, scholarships, and opportunities for projects around the world, students often find it more difficult getting their own needs fulfilled. One participant spoke about how their friend was denied residential accommodations for their health needs. "The administration can be somewhat nonchalant about it, and it can become dangerous, and becomes very bad." Another participant was asked not to accept a service provided them by the learning disabilities department because it could save the College money. Recently the College has begun to change campus facilities to meet accessibility requirements now that there are students on campus who use wheelchairs. "They're only starting to do that now that it's becoming embarrassing for the college to not have it." Negligence therefore is primarily about the ways in which the College is able to avoid any responsibilities it might have beyond preserving itself (Moten and Harney, 2012; Giroux, 2010), including the rights and needs of its students, and the quality of instruction they receive.

The second main component of underdevelopment is this dehumanization of students, the ways in which they themselves are used, exploited, ignored, excluded, or otherwise treated as an object by the institution. For Native students, this dehumanization derives from both its negligent relationship to indigenous peoples and settler colonialism, and from the pressures it exerts to create cultural conformity. By far the most commonly shared experience of participants is what Vanessa identifies as *alienation*, being marginalized, excluded, or isolated from the rest of the College.

Participants are alienated in minor interactions, and major confrontations, day to day behaviors, and as a result of institutional policy. It begins of course with participants leaving their home, a place where even if they live in a non-Native area, they still have their family. Arriving at Swarthmore however, participants find themselves not only alone without the support of their family and community, but a racial minority of miniscule proportions at the College.

> Since you're this minority person that's forced to be in this place where you don't really belong, a lot of things drop off that are a part of community, mostly relationships. And then you don't have those things all of a sudden, even though you deserve those things and you were meant to have those things. They're somehow taken away. (Darkfire)

These feelings of marginality are compounded by having no Native staff or faculty members, no presence in the curriculum or programming, and no institutional ways of meeting each other.

For Psyche, marginality was especially felt because other racial and cultural minorities were given space on the campus. "There was always some bigger race debate or something else happening amongst the students, and omittance of Native culture from the argument." Being

excluded from the rest of campus and its sociopolitical framework, made several participants feel like the College didn't recognize indigenous peoples at all. "I really feel like Native Americans are treated as a dead population by the students, administration, and faculty at Swarthmore." (Rozz) Fryber and Markus (2007) likewise found that feelings of invisibility among Native students become more salient as other racial and ethnic minorities are explicitly recognized by the institution, but not indigenous peoples.

Participants were alienated not just by acts of negligence, but discrete acts that made them feel personally excluded from their peers or from the College as a whole. Darkfire described daily interactions where she was made to feel unwelcome by other students. "I learned to function in that way where I'm alone a lot. But in hindsight I can't deny that I wasn't treated like a part of the in-group. I was definitely a part of the out-group." This exclusion comes as a result of not adhering to Swarthmore's social and ideological norms. A couple of participants described being excluded by faculty or from student organizations because of spiritual, cultural, and/or political beliefs. And one participant mentioned feeling that they and their family were criminalized by administrators for not adhering to residence hall rules they hadn't been informed of.

Despite feeling alienated as Indians, participants did form strong social relationships. For Jennifer and Little Bear these friendships kept them from feeling lonely. On the other hand, participants found themselves exotified in relationships at the College. Four participants mentioned feeling like they were an oddity, or an attraction for non-Natives. Sometimes it came as result of practicing their culture or language openly, but it didn't really need any occassion to happen. Oz for example, felt exotified by administrators, faculty, and other students. "Even from the Deans. Talking to them was like, 'What's your family life? No way!? You go in a sweat lodge? That's crazy.'" For another participant the attention was so insistent they felt like they were being bullied.

> The day to day stuff. Even I wasn't prepared as a student for perfectly well meaning people to come up to me and touch my braids without asking. Asking questions like, 'Are you a real Indian? I didn't know any of you people still existed!' Or the comments from random Swatties who sit next to you in the dining hall and say, 'I don't believe in Native American genocide. You're here, you people should just get over it.'

Thus, similar to the students in Brayboy's (1999) study, participants were pushed into invisibility within the institution, either written out of existence, or targeted for their nonconformity.

More than an oddity, some participants also felt like they were being used by others. With faculty, administrators, and even CAPS counselors they felt like they were seen as an opportunity to collect data, to compare a living example to the academic studies they had read. With peers Little Bear describes feeling like she was ignored until her words could be used to support someone's viewpoint or social cause. "They use Natives to their advantage whether it's in environmentalist movements, or social movements, or ideas about immigration."

Jennifer, perhaps more than any other, felt the pressure to serve as a representative for all of her people and all indigenous peoples as a whole, turned into a token Indian to judge all the rest by.

> Sometimes that's how it feels to be a Native student when you're by yourself. You feel like everyone's looking at you, everyone is sort of determining your whole entire tribe or people based on how you act or based on how you say things. (Jennifer)

For Vanessa, that responsibility to represent was a pressure created by non-Natives wanting to prove their own racial or cultural superiority, to find faults or mistakes in her personally or a sign of concession that would justify their beliefs about indigenous peoples as a whole.

Participants were expected to fulfill a number of roles on campus because of this identity as the token Indian. For Jennifer and Oz those included being a resource, and informant to educate non-Natives. Participants also felt pressure, either directly or indirectly, to lead the Native student community by reestablishing NASA, and thereby diversify the campus.

> It had died out a few years before I got there, and everyone was like, 'Oh, you can revive it!' And I didn't ever ask them, but I was like, 'With who?' (Oz)

While participants were forced into these highly visible and labor-intensive roles, the alternative was to be made invisible or nonexistent. In the literature review above I've called this *positioning*, being coerced to take on roles or identities within the institution, usually with only a dichotomy of options, visible or invisible.

Because higher education is underwritten by cultural borders, a strict division between academia and indigeneity, this positioning has to be founded upon a dichotomy. If Natives can't be made invisible or to conform, then they are made highly visible, place in roles that serve the interests of the College. Positioning is thus the coercive elements of what Brayboy (1999) identifies as *(in)visibility*. Participants' agentive use of (in)visibility is discussed in the following section on student supports and strategies.

The last major component of underdevelopment at Swarthmore is what I'm calling *obstruction*. Obstruction deals with those students who aren't fitting in or performing up to cultural expectations. While the College exercises a coercive authority in order to bring alterity into conformity, obstruction on the other hand is about controlling and minimizing the presence of those who are critical of the institution, and resist being positioned by it. Most of this obstruction is dedicated to silencing or suppressing critical ideas, discrediting indigenous worldviews and critical frameworks as inappropriate academic subjects. Moreover, it also quiets any disputes or problems that arise from nonconformity. Oz for example, found that non-Natives were annoyed because she wouldn't stop pointing out how few Natives there were on campus. Likewise, Vanessa felt that the expectation was for Natives to not speak out about their experiences if they wanted to succeed. "They expect us to graduate without making any waves, without asking for change in the way that they handle and treat us."

Star sees those feelings of personal deficiency that so many students develop as a tool for ensuring that students don't make waves during their time at the College. By restating participants' experiences as the result of a personal flaw, the institution is able to direct attention away from its practices and avoid critique.

> That's actually what they're getting at. If you're not doing well and stuff, it's probably because you don't have the mental fortitude to do this or something, unlike a white person or something like that who just happens to be doing well. (Star)

If it were coming from one person, participants might be able to dismiss that kind of logic. But as Darkfire explains, because it comes from so many sources, participants start to doubt their own judgement.

It's like, when you're in a place that you suspect that you're being treated badly, and everything's fucked up and you should be treated better and things aren't right. But when everybody tells you you're wrong and you start doubting yourself. (Darkfire)

Vanessa also notes that in this process, Native students are evaluating their experiences in terms of the history of Indian education, particularly the boarding schools. Students have to compare their own schooling to that of their ancestors, which can create feelings of guilt for even making that comparison in the first place. The pressures of assimilation in schools today then, build upon generations of resistance to colonial hegemony, and all its psychological consequences. Ultimately, that history of violence is used to discredit Native students who are critical of the institution, becoming a form of victim shaming which can lead Natives to write off their own experiences of discrimination.

Obstruction also includes a number of smaller practices that inhibit participants ability to get help and resources. It includes getting the run around, endless meetings designed to resolve issues without actually changing situations, never responding to emails, and having to jump through hoops, which although arbitrary, can jeopardize one's ability to graduate. One participant trying to return from a leave of absence for example, wasn't sent a necessary form for re-enrolling in classes. When the deadline then passed for submitting that form they were almost not allowed back into the school. They were however, only thanks to the support of an academic advisor who was able to cover for them with the administration.

When administrators could no longer avoid or ignore their failures, several participants found that rather than accepting these mistakes, administrators made excuses or became defensive. For Rozz, it signaled that ultimately that administrators didn't have real interests in supporting Natives, just preserving the image of themselves as supportive. Similarly when Vanessa found individuals who claimed to understand where she was coming from, even agreeing that the school was discriminatory, they told her to just pull herself up by her bootstraps. "As a Native student, I'm looking around at all these rich entitled kids and they're all living in my boots still." And of course, two participants who persisted despite everything in calling out the institution, felt that individuals in both the administration and their academic departments purposefully tried to have them kicked out the school.

STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS

At Swarthmore Natives encounter a system of underdevelopment that works to push them through the College and assimilate them into Western culture and identity. Surviving that system while still maintaining one's identity, sense of self worth, and achieving success is a serious task. But despite being alienated from other students and the College and even separated from family, Native students do have supports to rely upon. They also have their own adaptive strategies, some that they learned, and some that were taught to them by community members.

To varying degrees participants were able to find mentors and advisors among the faculty, staff, and administration. One participant did have a Native Dean for a period of time, before they left the College. Another participant also had a relationship with a visiting indigenous faculty member, who also left Swarthmore shortly after arriving. For everyone else, there were no Natives in positions of authority. The absence of these role models and supports meant that the burden for sustaining and supporting a Native community fell upon the students themselves.

While most participants did have someone they could claim as a support or resource, two underclassmen stated that they have no strong relationships with any College employee. One of these participants said they couldn't relate to them and consequently they do almost everything at Swarthmore on their own or with peers. That participant clarifies that they've had non-Native elders that they look up to for guidance, but they haven't even been able to find that at the College.

The one group of individuals who appear regularly as a support in participants' narratives are the Deans. The two Evans scholars were introduced to the Deans early on and were able to form more personal relationships because of it. These administrators can be difficult to find times to meet with however, and the support they provide is mostly limited to verbal affirmation. for both Toby and Jennifer however, that verbal support and having someone to speak with were invaluable.

Despite having great support from his own Dean, Psyche reflects the attitude of many participants who didn't feel like administrators were motivated to protect students' well-being, only the school's image. "So they want me to graduate to keep their numbers a float and so high and prestigious, that they'll do anything to help that. I never felt that my own own personal well-being was first. I think that my completion and success at the school was first." At Swarthmore then, underdevelopment is forced to adopt a minimal performance, to provide students with enough support that they stay in school and don't damage the institution's reputation. In this regard, Swarthmore resembles the Ivy League institutions in Brayboy's (1999) study, which avoid student attrition until they become too much of a hassle or threat. This elite institutional system of underdevelopment thus stands apart from those systems of failure documented by Tierney (1992), Deyhle (1998;1996) and other scholars, which are much less concerned with the consequences of pushing Native students out of the school completely.

However, the relationships that participants were able to establish with administrators and faculty members provided them with allies, and helped them learn to navigate institutional bureaucracy. Psyche, Jennifer, and Vanessa for example, all see their ability to make it through Swarthmore as dependent upon the support of specific individuals within the institution. These mentors and advisors helped participants construct their academic path and provided them with advice and the tools to succeed academically.

Toby talked the most of all about mentors, in particular because he had both extremely positive and extremely negative relationships with them. He expressed appreciation for the time and effort of specific faculty members to ensure that he was truly learning. "I was having trouble with a project and he sat with me for three hours trying to identify the problems that I was having. And he just helped me work through the entire list of problems I had...That's exactly why I came to Swat." (Toby) Before finding that mentor however, Toby had to go through the exact opposite experience. "He was my advisor when I came here, but he was the worst advisor I've ever had. And he just told me I couldn't do things because he didn't think that I was ready, but he had no basis to say that and just shut me down, and it just didn't ever feel good." In fact, Toby says that because of the mentors he's encountered he's lost all passion in his studies and become uninspired. Similarly, Jennifer was forced out of her original major when an advisor told her that her passion wouldn't be enough for her to continue on, and after one participant took time off, they returned to find that all of their previous professors and advisors thought they had dropped out for good. They said it felt like their advisors didn't have any faith in them.

Jennifer, Vanessa, and Zuko found strong relationships with mentors and advisors who were either racial minorities themselves or had experience with Natives. Jennifer, who felt like none of her professors understand why she has academic difficulties, talked about how much of a difference it made being able to talk with a Black professor who came from a similar social background and could sympathize with her. Similarly, Vanessa felt less alienated from the institution when with advisors who didn't exotify her.

One of the most disappointing experiences with mentors and advisors however, is the high rate of turnover, both within the administration and faculty. Many of the administrators who interface with students stay at the College for a short time, working on to higher positions. At the Intercultural Center for example, there has been a different Director or Interim Director every year since 2012. And the same is true among the faculty. Many of the most supportive and approachable faculty members are either visiting faculty or untenured, meaning that they'll either be leaving soon, or that they themselves are burdened by the pressure to obtain tenure and can't provide as much support as students might need.

To a lesser extent, participants turned to their friends and peers for support. For Jennifer, Little Bear, and Oz, these social relationships were vital to their survival, although the kind of support they could offer was limited. For Oz, these friends help her get away and maintain a healthy relationship to work and campus. For Jennifer, a close group of friends who all study the same subject together has helped her succeed in her classes. Raven and Little Bear mainly need their friends for a place to complain, and be understood, and Zuko and Star have both found friends who help them study those topics and critical theories ignored or discouraged by their academic departments.

Family and community form an essential support system for participants, but their capacities are also hindered by thousands of miles of separation. For that reason, participants call home very regularly. In addition to just maintaining their connection, these conversations also provide participants an escape from the space of Swarthmore, and an opportunity to share the problems they are experiencing. Family members who haven't ever been to college are limited in their understanding of the situation, but Darkfire and Vanessa both found support from family for interpreting instances of discrimination.

> When I would start explaining my situation to my mom, and I would talk to my mom on a daily basis, so she knows it in many details. She was like, 'Nope, this is what it is being Native in the world.' (Darkfire)

Some participants were even prepared ahead of time for discrimination, based upon community members' previous experiences in formal education. These experiences were shared with participants so that they could learn how to cope, to create strategies for surviving. Take Star's conversations with his father for example. "And so he does apply to when I'm like talking to him on the phone, and say how hard it is here and everything. Part of it is definitely using the strength of the ancestors, and he actually says that."

But no matter how good the technology, participants are still separated by miles and miles of land from their community. For Little Bear, the consequence was that she was suddenly stripped from a comprehensive support system that couldn't be replaced by what the school offered. "There's not enough counseling in the world that can take the place of thousands of years

of adaption to learning how we deal with pain." Some participants stated that the physical and temporal separation ultimately created relational distances between them and their families.

Because there are so few Natives on campus, it makes those relationships between Native participants extremely valuable. Of course, these relationships are a source of friendship, but they also help participants to survive at the College. For Darkfire, these Natives were the community she was looking for but didn't find with the rest of the students at the College. Likewise, having Natives around provided Vanessa a sense of solidarity and strength in working to survive together. Those relationships gave her an outlet for frustrations and feelings that she couldn't express elsewhere. But most importantly, every Native on campus is one less person going to disrespect or exotify you.

Much of the value of these relationships comes from sharing a mutual understanding. Even if students came from radically different communities and have very different identities, they still share many basic experiences that non-Natives don't. For example, none of your Native friends are going to be surprised that Indians still exist. For Zuko, relationships with the other Natives provided a sense of normalcy that he didn't find anywhere else on campus. Vanessa echoes a similar sentiment that derives from simply seeing Indians in such an overwhelmingly non-Native space.

> It was so important just to know there was somebody, of blood, that was on campus. Even if they didn't want to claim being Indian, even if they didn't have a role number, just being able to see their faces and knowing, 'Hey, those chubby-chubby cheeks are chubby-chubby cheeks because they're from this land!' (Vanessa)

But those relationships too are on a schedule. Just like faculty and administration, these students are graduating at a fairly regular pace and the participants who were left behind describe feeling isolated all over again upon losing that relationship. Perhaps these social relationships are so valuable for participants (c.f. Garrod and Larrimore, 1997), in part because Natives feel threatened and alienated by the institution. For example, because the other Natives were radical and critical of the state, Star found space in those relationships to create the critical, self-education he didn't find support for in many other places.

> The Native American Student Association, just in the fact of being Native is going to be more radical - and by more radical I mean fundamentally questioning of the United States, and of theories, and things in general, which is more in line with me than any other thing on this campus. (Star)

The value of these indigenous-to-indigenous relationships was also found with the Native Dean while he was here, and with a Native professor at the University of Pennsylvania. These mentors had an intimate understanding of the experience of being Native in higher education that simply no other figures did at the College.

For some of the less traditional Natives, they were initially nervous about meeting and establishing relationships with the other Natives. These participants were drawing upon previous experiences with indigenous communities where membership has to be closely policed (Grande, 2015), and as a consequence they were worried that they wouldn't be accepted. But most participants found that the other Natives weren't too picky. As Oz explains, because there were so few Natives at Swarthmore, enforcing more standard, essentialized markers of identity would

have only further isolated participants from each other. "At that point I was so lonely I didn't care about tribal affiliation, or whatever, and complicated feelings about the blood quantum in general." In these cases, what seemed to matter most to participants looking for Native friends, was simply someone who had that indigenous identity, and then the other parts were negotiable.

But of course, it's not so simple either. Oz and others when looking for other Natives encountered a number of people who claimed to have distant indigenous ancestors, but didn't identity as Indian, Native, or any of the other. There's also bound to be at least one stickler. A certain participant described how the combination of their indigenous culture and experience of alienation at Swat made them critical of other Natives at first. Below, they describe the first time they met me.

> I was just like, 'This is what passes for Native around here?' I don't know, I guess it was just a time when I got to feel superior to somebody when I never got to feel that way ever at Swarthmore, so it was nice. And then we didn't talk for a little while, and then we did. I don't know, I'm just really glad that I met you and I think that I helped you a lot at Swarthmore.

Although participants were able to form relationships with each other around a fairly broad range of identities, there were still some things that were missing. One traditional student described how their relationships with less cultural Natives made them feel even more isolated.

> It's hard because a lot of the Native students aren't as traditional as I am. And I can grapple with them on some subjects, but I can't go as deep with the spirituality that I'm missing, with the language that I'm missing, with the other levels of things.

On the other hand, this participant found these connections with alumna and speakers who came to campus. In fact, in meeting with Native scholars, this participant realized that those were the relationships they wanted to have with faculty, but couldn't get at Swarthmore.

The last major form of support I want to mention is participants' indigenous identity and culture. Several participants mentioned finding strength and motivation in their ancestors and sense of self. For Jennifer, she initially was forced to reconcile changing notions of her identity at the College, but in the process came to see her identity as fluid and situational, and yet always indigenous. Similarly, learning to connect and return to that indigeneity allowed Darkfire to cope with her experiences at the College.

> It just really puts things in perspective whenever anything went really wrong at Swarthmore. It was like, well, I come from such a bigger background…(Darkfire)

Participants' identity and culture thus reaffirms their self-worth and allows them to resist being defined by their integration, or malintegration, into the institution (c.f. Brayboy, 1999). For Vanessa and Star both, the connection to their family inspired them to live up to the image of their ancestors, and to carry on the work that they had begun. "I come from a long line of ladies who are fighters and they wouldn't have let it (institutional negligence) stand so I felt like I couldn't let it stand either." (Vanessa)

In addition to the support that participants found for themselves, they actively worked to create their own success. Participants employed a range of strategies for engaging with their studies, their peers, and the administration. One of the most basic and at the same time common

of these strategies I'm calling *escape*. This strategy includes two key components - leaving behind a threatening, or unwelcoming space, and the creation of an indigenous space.

For Star, Darkfire, Vanessa, and Oz one of the best ways for coping with the alienating and threatening spaces of Swarthmore was to take their mind out of those spaces, to find distractions. For Darkfire and Vanessa, work allowed them to take their mind of the rest of their experiences, which is a pretty productive strategy. Star, Oz, and Darkfire also regularly escaped into fantasy - especially anime - or other kinds of art. For Star, these escapes became a daily necessity.

> I listen to music for three hours a day just to maintain and stay literally sane in some cases. Not to actually punch somebody in the face. (Star)

Little Bear took the approach of trying to survive incrementally, creating brief pockets of space, temporally confined, where she could be Native, through public events, family visits, and her classes. Others had to find physical spaces to escape to where they could express themselves, in private study spaces, their rooms, etc. For Rozz, escaping required finding spaces that weren't governed by middle class social behaviors, finding spaces outside of the Swarthmore bourgeoisie. Simone on the other hand has attempted to make all of Swarthmore her space, by allowing herself to ignore everything that is threatening and alienating. She's choosing to stay in the matrix, for now at least.

> I can see from the outside that there's this other reality, and I've created my own reality for myself. And I know that's bad to have an out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality, but I guess I'm not ready yet to figure out that that's everywhere and I can't escape from it. (Simone)

For those who are able, leaving campus is the most reliable form of escape. Raven regularly goes into the city or visits nearby family to not be in the space of Swarthmore anymore. Rozz goes to familiar restaurants and stores. Several participants tried to create a separation between their home and the school, either by moving off campus, or by living in one of the more isolated college dorms. Little Bear specifically chose to study abroad so that she could escape the campus for a whole semester. Oz and Zuko at times ditched class or dropped them entirely. I myself, in order to avoid being in academic spaces tried to take as few courses as possible at Swarthmore, loading up on directed readings, student-run courses, and Penn courses instead.

Although not necessarily an escape strategy, five participants have taken a leave of absence. Three of these had to return home for the explicit purpose of taking care of family members (c.f. Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Benjamin, Chamber, and Reiterman, 1993). One person had to take a leave for their physical health. One person dropped out for a semester before returning. Four other participants seriously considered taking a leave of absence, transferring, or dropping out. For most of those who chose not to leave the College, strong social relationships encouraged them to stay. Or in the case of one participant, because their social relationships were the only support they had, they were afraid that taking time off would cause them to lose that as well.

Many participants possessed a skeptical or critical attitude towards Swarthmore. That mental stance itself opened up opportunities for engaging with the College differently, including a wider range of survival and success strategies. This notion of a critical mental stance or position, comes from Star's words. He talks at length about developing a skepticism of one's education,

embracing suspicion rather than complacency. Star calls this attitude a filter, allowing a person to take in what's useful to them without being overwhelmed or losing their values and worldview.

Given this skeptical attitude, a student is able to become a double agent within the institution. As a double agent, a student collects resources, knowledge, and skills from the institution, but always with their own interests in mind. The double agent is able to perform, and perform well in classes, because they come to understand the material thoroughly and appear to accept its values. They therefore don't draw attention to themselves for not fitting the normal behavior of a student. As Star says, such a stance requires an ability to separate oneself from the role they perform.

> I can do that (take on that performance), and not feel too bad about it, because in my mind I'm so established in that this was actually bullshit and I will not give it credence. (Star)

Whether or not one adopts such an intense role, having a critical perspective on higher education in itself becomes a support to students that changes the way they see themselves at the school. Jennifer for example, took courses on education and came to understand how her struggles were the result of material inequalities in our education system. Although that critical awareness made it easier for Jennifer to recognize the causes of her struggles, it of course, didn't eliminate them. As Garrod and Larrimore (1997) found with other Native undergraduates, that awareness just allowed her to make more informed decisions about her situation.

Participants' expectations for the institution were altered as a consequence of this perpetual skepticism. Star, Psyche, and Vanessa all discuss how they never expect anything from the administration. Vanessa in particular talks about the necessity of both becoming desensitized to discrimination, and expecting the worst of any situation. These participants expect that they will always have to fight for and pursue whatever they need or want at the College. This mental stance therefore, demands a great amount of self-reliance. As Star explains however, once he began to recognize that he had to rely on himself, his feelings of personal insignificance began to lessen.

> That counters what I had established before, which is that sense of humbleness, or a sense of 'Who are you to question?' That's something that has dissolved as I've become more resolute in those feelings of, 'I must do this a certain way to become the person that I may be.' (Star)

For Rozz embracing self-worth under such an attitude meant valuing one's own health over the expectations to produce intellectual work. And for Vanessa, she decided that she was going to exploit the institution as much as they were trying to exploit her. Fair's fair.

While Star's double agent strategy is pretty interesting and clever, Vanessa spoke most of all about the importance of networking, a task which carries with it unfortunate neoliberal overtones, but which requires perhaps just as much emotional intelligence as being a double agent. Most simply, Vanessa and other participants worked to create those relationships of support that would allow them to succeed.

Vanessa emphasized how important it is to establish relationships with authority figures. This was primarily a safety precaution so that administrators and faculty would have other experiences with the student, which would make it harder to see them purely as a problem. The payout of this networking strategy is more long term. When a problem does arise, as Vanessa

assures us they're bound to for Natives, those connections will be there to back you up even when someone else is attacking you.

> I focused on creating allies within the faculty, being visible to the Deans, and having relationships with them so that if/when they heard something horrible about me they might pause and think, 'Oh, wait. Well, I've had conversations with this person, and maybe we need to enter a conversation with her regarding this incident.' (Vanessa)

Like being a double agent, networking requires mastering appropriate social norms and behaviors, appearing to be a good, normal student. But Vanessa makes it clear, that you don't have to be friends with everyone or accept everything the school is doing. You just had to win people over to you, and even for the future generations of Native students.

In order to make these relationships last for such a long time however, requires selectively responding to discrimination, learning when you need to address it, and when it's not worth losing a support.

> As Indigenous people we are constantly under attack. Save the axe to use in self-defense when someone is unfairly trying to cut you down at the root...And bring your friends into the conversation. (Vanessa)

Although Vanessa was certainly the most cunning networker, she wasn't the only one. Toby and Zuko both worked to find mentors for themselves, and Oz went around trying to build Native relationships. Jennifer in particular was able to build extensive social relationships and make Swarthmore more comfortable by approaching and trying to befriend most people. Of course, not everyone adopted such practices. Star came to recognize the labor involved in creating any kind of community, which wasn't really possible to sustain alongside the pressures of academic labor. Instead, Star chose to focus on solely developing those relationships or communities that were healthy for him.

Participants were able to exercise this kind of agency over how they participated in the institution, and the relationships they formed there, and to some extent over the institution itself, making their education into something they value. This final student strategy I'm calling *self-education*, creating either the academic content or institutional structures that you need but don't find available. Nearly every participant exercised this strategy in some capacity.

Several participants quite literally created their own instruction, through student-run courses, directed readings, and by designing their own majors to fill the absence of curricular content on indigenous peoples. Others were able to find opportunities to study indigenous peoples within existing courses, through projects and research papers. Vanessa for example, used those courses to study her own people and identity, helping her stay engaged in her studies while away from home, and then worked to get indigenous topics and issues incorporated into the curricula. Similarly, Jennifer sought out social science courses where she could incorporate indigenous intellectualism into her work. Zuko and Oz connected to their families through the academic work, writing so that they could share it with folks at home, and for Little Bear, reading Native scholars served as an alternative to having someone in person who could understand her educational experience. One participant was even able to convince the college to give them academic credit for "studying abroad" in their own home community.

Beyond academics though, Psyche forced administrators to fulfill their duties by threatening to sue them. Vanessa also documented everything in order to write her own history and be able to confirm what did and did not happen when threatened by others. In such a context, she saw achieving academic success as a form of civil disobedience. Star worked with other students to try and bring supportive administrators to the College, although those efforts had limited success because of administrative turnover. Little Bear spent time establishing support structures in connection with multiple offices and centers. All of these strategies require additional labor, and working through or on the institutional structure (c.f. Brayboy, 1999) but they also helped create a sense of self for participants, and an understanding of exactly what it is that they needed, and had to work against, in order to succeed.

HOW WE SEE SWARTHMORE

So far I've written on some of the more specific aspects of participants' experiences at the College. But participants also give a broader evaluation of their education, accounting for both the opportunities and resources Swarthmore provides them, and the costs that come with enrolling. This final section describes how participants have come to view the school, the value of their education and the institution's relationship to them, as well as how their notions of success have changed over time, and how the experiences and knowledge of others influenced them.

To begin with, is the actual phenomenological experience of attending Swarthmore. Those participants who do explicitly talk about experiences of happiness and joy, including Little Bear, Jennifer, Rozz, Psyche, Simone, Raven, and Oz, do so when talking about their relationship with other students, and almost no other aspect of Swarthmore. But even Raven, in whose interview friends were the most significant theme, recognized that these relationships weren't unique to Swarthmore, that she could most likely have forged similarly meaningful friendships at other institutions. "I don't see the enjoyment coming out of anything that the school does though. I think it's just me spending time with my friends, and having college parties, just like the college mindset, I guess. But I don't think any of that is due to Swat."

The most universal of all the elements of attending Swarthmore for participants was their academic studies. Jennifer, Toby, Rozz, and Simone thought that their classes were great opportunities for learning. For Rozz in particular, Swarthmore has provided the rare opportunity to study obscure topics alongside others. Jennifer has been able to develop interpretative and discursive skills, most especially writing, which she picked up from studying the social sciences. For one participant, who has gone on to a professional school, they found that their courses in Educational Studies had the greatest long term value. Despite going into a field based upon their major, they haven't used that curriculum, although their knowledge of educational and social theory continue to be relevant. Similarly, for Toby, being able to learn from the diverse student body at Swarthmore was one of his most valuable experiences, and despite having several disappointing professors, he feels like he's been able to learn and test himself. "Even if I were not to graduate, I would still find this whole experience successful, because I've still learned a lot. I've still pushed myself to my utmost limits."

Multiple participants however, haven't found their academics so inherently useful or worthwhile. One participant is especially critical of their studies, noting that they can't point to any discrete skills or knowledge that they could take from the College. Simone, who primarily defines success as her ability to absorb and retain the knowledge and skills in her classes, has had

difficulty doing that because between her workload, social relationships, and commitments on campus, she hasn't been sleeping. And for a couple of participants, they found the college's diversity didn't benefit them so much, as use them to educate white students. Other participants, like Zuko, Star, and Vanessa, were able to make their education useful through their own initiatives. Star's narrative in fact, centers on his efforts to self-educate and create the critical consciousness he needs for himself.

Given that higher education today is primarily seen as a gateway to financial stability and social mobility, we have to evaluate the value of Swarthmore in part based upon its preparation of students to become professionals or find work. Of the 6 alumna in this research, four are in graduate or professional programs, a fifth, who is currently employed, will be attending graduate school in the Fall of 2016, and the sixth is still looking for employment. For three of the alumna, their decision to enter these educational programs was tied to the inadequacy of their Swarthmore education. One alum decided to pursue another bachelor's degree because they didn't think they took away any useful skills from Swarthmore. For others, they either couldn't find employment, or the only employment available to them was with organizations that they couldn't morally be a part of. In this regard then, it's questionable what the particular value of a Swarthmore education is. Baum (2013) has similarly found that higher education has very limited returns for minority students.

Several participants entered Swarthmore with an expectation that their degree would lead them quickly to a job, with little understanding of what was necessary to make that transition out of the College. Several participants, alumna and current students alike, criticized academic programs for not preparing students to move into a job. Rozz, who wanted to be a highschool teacher, gave up on that aspiration when told that Educational Studies courses wouldn't be preparing students to teach. Moreover, participants quickly found out that the ability to move into a professional field was dependent upon both social connections within and prior knowledge of the job market, meaning that low income and first generation students were often left out in the cold.

The most evident value of a Swarthmore education is that so many of these participants were able to go on to pursue a higher degree or additional training. As one alum has stated however, their ability to get into their program was mostly dependent upon having a bachelor's degree, not anything inherent to their Swarthmore education. "I had to get to a bachelor's to get to a graduate school, but it could have been any bachelor's program."

Other participants recognized that attending Swarthmore gave them the opportunity to learn to navigate bureaucracy, including growing the social skills to work with people from different backgrounds, beliefs, and political agendas. In addition, over the years participants grew to be more competent and self-assured. On the other hand, participants recognize that those personal developments were the result of surviving the institution, not something that it had intentionally enabled.

> To a certain extent if you do well, and do what you have to do, and what it forces you to do, you will hopefully have created that sense of self. Most, a lot of people actually, develop that later in life anyways. It's not like the College helped you with that, you know what I mean? It's not like it's necessary. (Star)

At least five participants wish that they had attended different institutions. Little Bear captures the feeling of most when she says that she would have attended a comparable institution if it existed nearer to her home. Rozz on the other hand, learned of tribal educational programs after enrolling in Swarthmore, and would have seriously considered going to those instead. The one alum who is redoing their undergrad specifically wishes that they had attended an institution designed to give them the skills to obtain a job. Because of the academic challenge of Swarthmore, another participant with learning disabilities realized after a couple years that the College was not appropriate for them. Raven however, who entered the College planning to transfer out, decided to stay because she doesn't think her experience would be appreciably better or worse at any other institution.

Given that alumna haven't found much value in their degrees after graduating, and some current students don't find inherent value in their studies, what value is there to attending Swarthmore? For the one alumna currently unemployed, Swarthmore was a lot of work that hasn't yielded rewards. Little Bear finds the value of the College primarily in the name, or brand, that comes attached to the degree, more than the curriculum or instruction. "If you have brown skin but you can write down, 'I went to Swarthmore College', or 'I went to Harvard', people respect you a little bit more."

For Darkfire, that Swarthmore brand is all that comes with the education. She describes the degree as more a symbol of class status than a certificate of academic or professional preparation. "I feel like I'm participating in this crazy conspiracy where I know that college degrees don't mean shit...but I need it to mean something in the currency of the world." Even if the degree is only a symbol of class status (c.f. Giroux, 2010; Tierney, 1992) however, it doesn't necessarily confer that status upon graduates. For that reason, one alum, who came to Swarthmore looking to move out of poverty and abuse, makes it clear when talking with community members that a degree doesn't automatically change your material reality. Vanessa, who has been able to make her education useful for her own purposes, places the value of that education into perspective with the experience of obtaining it. "The fact that I have faith that good things will come from me having a degree does not counter the negative impact and effects on my life the 'education process' is having on my psychological, spiritual, and emotional self. Long term benefits do not negate that I'm going through hell personally right now."

In addition to reflecting on the overall worth of their education, participants described how they had come to see the school's values and purpose. Most of the participants were brought to Swarthmore by its liberal rhetoric and commitment to social justice, but Simone, Darkfire, Rozz, Little Bear, Star, Vanessa, and Zuko all explicitly expressed disappointment with what they found at the College. Simone was most struck by how superficial students' commitment to social justice is. She found that not only are there sections of the student body who have no concern for social justice, those who do, are usually interested in creating an altruistic image for themselves. She especially found this when students, who claimed to support indigenous peoples, didn't support any of the events or initiatives of Natives on campus. Similarly, Little Bear found that much of the activism or attention given to marginalized peoples on campus was patronizing, or motivated by white saviorism. She found that the support that was offered or imagined at the College was about the ability to solve other people's problems for them. Likewise, Vanessa found that in those rare instances when indigenous peoples were mentioned at the College, students, faculty, and staff either dismissed the violence of colonization or even made jokes out of it.

For Star, negligence is the most defining characteristic of Swarthmore. He sees in the College's reluctance to engage with systems of oppression, or prepare students to do that work, that Swarthmore actively promotes the status quo of exploitation and the production of profit. For Rozz, the administration's dismissal of student activism revealed that the school was motivated by a selfishness that put its own interests above the health and wellbeing of students, a feeling which was echoed by Psyche, who felt the school's support for him was just an attempt to protect Swarthmore's reputation.

Most participants also recognize colonial ideology in their studies. For Vanessa, the discrimination and exploitation of Native students was a by-product of both the school's bureaucracy and that colonial ideology. But for many participants, Swarthmore is a very different kind of discrimination than the racism they encounter outside of the campus. "I realize that it's not quite a utopia as I thought it was. It's still a heck of a lot better than where I came from." (Simone). Although Swarthmore isn't as overtly violent as many of the places participants come from, half of them still don't recognize the legitimacy of the institution, and see the College as an exploitative colonizing force. In fact, multiple participants noted that they were much less well adjusted to the subtle racism at Swarthmore, something that was easily justified or ignored, and therefore much more difficult for participants to adapt to.

The purpose of higher education, most especially under neoliberalism, has been sustaining the American economy. For students themselves, this means gaining access to white collar occupations. But as Darkfire came to realize, the personal benefits of higher education were only attainable at the expense of others.

> When you get older and start having a better understanding of the world, you kind of realize that all of the resources that you start to amasse for yourself, you're stealing from poorer people....at the end of the day, who was I stealing these resources from? I'm stealing them from people who are like me, and it's just a mere coincidence that I'm up here at the good college and able to have all these opportunities and I'm not poor like somewhere else. (Darkfire)

The College's negligent stance towards systemic inequality not only harms their own students, by not recognizing the academic and economic hindrances to succeeding at Swarthmore, but it also distracts attention away from how higher education maintains the division of social classes, and leave students unprepared to change it.

For Native students in particular, because this negligence is so pervasive, there was an expectation that we would appreciate any attention given to indigenous peoples, even when being used as research subjects to advance someone else's career.

> They always thought that I would be really grateful about these white men studying us, but I never was, and I never will be. (Oz)

And yet, as long as formal education remains a system of indigenous underdevelopment, keeping Native scholars outside of the institution, those white men will remain some of the only resources available to Native students.

By discouraging the development of a critical consciousness, the College ensures both that students buy into their education and that they leave with a worldview and ideology that supports higher education. Thus, Swarthmore normalizes itself as an industry by colonizing student minds (Fanon, 2005). Moreover, as Vanessa notes, this institution is able to dismiss

individuals who criticize that process and have rejected it, by discrediting anyone who doesn't have a degree.

Not only do many participants not see the school as a legitimate institution that they can trust, many have come to see it as a threat. Little Bear says she has come to learn how to survive in a place that is not supportive of her, but Vanessa carries that further, believing that the administration actively creates a hostile environment for Native students, which I've tried to document as a system of failure and underdevelopment. Zuko and Star likewise, have come to accept that they are surrounded by an institution that is opposed to their values and is working against their interests. "Here it's so potent the type of world that you're fighting against. Like, basically, I'm in the place, the belly of the beast." (Star)

This perception of Swarthmore as illegitimate and a threat did not develop out of nowhere. It comes both from participants' personal experiences, and from the historic role of formal education in indigenous communities. Many participants connected their own time at Swarthmore to the experiences of their families and of other Natives. Seeing their experiences in the context of this big picture allowed participants to understand how what they saw and felt every day was connected to something larger than them, that it wasn't just all in their head or the result of personal deficiency. Thus a critical consciousness informed by participants' own family history was especially useful to understanding their role at the College, and motivated them to persist (c.f. Garrod and Larrimore, 1997).

As a consequence of sharing and learning from others, participants were able to identify discrimination and structural inequality, especially when talking with older, more experienced sources like elders or faculty members. These individuals were also able to offer participants advice and strategies that they had picked up to help them get through. But perhaps, one of the greatest benefits of this connection to others and to history, was the solidarity that it created, a feeling of not being alone in the fight, and that it was possible to succeed, because others just like you had.

> This is something that you notice that you're kind of an amateur at, because your ancestors were so good at it. (Star)

Because of these connections to history, most participants saw Swarthmore through the division of white and Native worlds, with Swarthmore falling squarely within the white one. For Darkfire and others, academia, that very specific form of education, continues to be an exclusively white institution (c.f. Fryberg and Markus, 2007). Not only are participants separated from their home and culture while at Swarthmore, but the cultural performances demanded of them reinforce that Natives are expected to behave like and take on white identities at the College. Because Swarthmore is such a bubble, and one that is almost always academic even outside of the classroom, participants are almost perpetually forced into these cultural performances.

But at the same time, this experience of coercive assimilation reinforced participants' indigenous identities. As Deyhle (1998) notes in her work, the idea that Native students can either assimilate into the white world or return to their own communities, is a myth. Arguably, all of the participants in this study had some degree of faith in their ability to succeed in this white space - otherwise they wouldn't have made it here in the first place. And yet, despite being separated from the sources of their identity, they found a system of discrimination that prevented them from fully integrating into that white academic space. Although participants never had any intentions

of assimilating at all, being treated as an Other within the school made it clear that they would always be Indians.

> It's like at the end of the day, no matter how hard I tried or how white I grew up, I am like still so Native, and nothing can take that away, for better or for worse, which is nice. But also I realized that I have this permanent marker on me that makes me part of an out-group in the majority white society, which is good or bad. You can take it whichever way you want to. (Darkfire)

Being tokenized, exotified, and essentialized by Swarthmore didn't undermine participants' indigeneity, it reinforced it. Going to college however, did interfere with some participants ability to reintegrate with their communities, just as Brayboy (1999) noted for Ivy League Natives. Deyhle (1998) makes it clear that the divide between white and indigenous worlds isn't about making people choose one or the other, it's about excluding Natives from both, so that indigenous communities will disappear entirely.

Participants came into Swarthmore with all sorts of expectations, aspirations, and dreams for themselves. Over the course of their time at the College these notions of success changed, and in large part as a result of the system of underdevelopment that confronted them. One of the most practical compromises participants had to make after coming to Swarthmore was in their professional aspirations for after graduation. Because the College's curriculum and instruction was so disconnected from life outside of academia, several participants gave up on their initial professional plans. Undergraduate students change their majors all the time, and it's a natural part of going through college. But for Zuko, Rozz, Jennifer, Darkfire, Psyche, and Toby, the educational path they ended up on was a direct result of the discouragement or inadequacy of Swarthmore's academic programs. The school either didn't offer the academic programs participants were interested in, or those programs were abstracted and didn't prepare students to enter into the related fields, or faculty had discouraged participants' interests.

In response to this inadequacy or discouragement, several participants took it upon themselves to create their own education. Success then became developing their own capacity to educate, train, and sustain themselves.

> To be able to create that type of knowledge, those types of skills, those types of tools, that I need to go into the world and do what I feel I need to do. That would not be given to me simply by graduating. (Star)

Among these participants as well, recognizing the inadequacy and illegitimacy of their institution changed their reasons for attending the College, how they related to the institution, how they were going to use their education, and how they were going to obtain success. Participants therefore began to create their own success from within a system that was working against them, learning to navigate colonial bureaucracies and to achieve their goals despite discrimination. One alum for example,

> I think I had a really successful education at Swarthmore, and a huge part of that is I bothered to graduate despite my feelings I had about the trials I went through and the systematic alienation of everything I thought was important about myself at the school.

Although participants were able to create their own success in some regards, almost everyone had to make compromises or accommodate to their reality at the College. Toby, like others,

reevaluated his notion of personal, educational success. He found no support for using his education to help others and solve global problems, but rather, found that his educational experience was about being obligated to produce academic work. As a result, his idea of success has shifted more towards creating his own happiness, the longer that he has put aside his own well being for the work of the institution.

Because of the system of underdevelopment at Swarthmore, even if participants had specific aspirations for after graduation, survival became a central component of success. The word survival might sound dramatic, as if I or other participants are overreacting, but I ask the reader to remember earlier passages on the physical, mental, and emotional experiences of attending Swarthmore. Participants lost significant amounts of sleep and weight, two took time off to recover their health, and a few participants became suicidal.

> I like using that word [survival], because not only does it explain it best, but it shows really clearly the desperation of the situation sometimes. (Darkfire)

Participants refer to more than just their physical condition when talking about survival. Because participants found themselves so often working against an institution that either ignored or discredited their own experiences and worldviews, participants were forced into serious mental and emotional conflict. Zuko and Star both talk about feeling on the brink of losing their sanity. Similarly, almost all participants express the difficulty of trying to succeed academically at the College without losing their own sense of identity or morality.

Successful survival then is not only that a participant continues to breath, it is a holistic measurement of whether a student leaves the College intact. Graduation, the typical marker of educational success, describes only the most basic element of survival for students, their ability to pass classes and not get kicked out or drop out themselves. It says nothing about the holistic condition of students upon graduation, how much they have developed over the course of their studies, and whether or not it has been useful for reaching their personal and professional goals.

Swarthmore has threatened multiple aspects of participants' survival, and for many, obstructed their pursuit of educational success. As a consequence some learned to work against unsupportive and hostile institutions, but others did not, and it's unclear, even for those who have taken control over their own education what the benefits were of attending Swarthmore.

> That's the kind of thing where people say, 'You know, if you come here and you go through hell, you'll learn something about yourself, and it could be positive.' I wouldn't say that's always true, because it can leave people scarred. And it leaves people scarred. (Star)

Participants' final decisions about their success then, ultimately do not come down to whether or not they graduated, or even if they became self-educators. For some, it was a success because they survived despite everything working against them. For others, it was a failure because all they could manage was to survive. Some succeeded despite not reaching their initial goals. It's something that each participant determines for themself. One alum, who returned home after graduating, found that their personal success could only be evaluated by whether or not it enabled them as a community member. In that respect, the distance Swarthmore creates between participants and their communities has directly obstructed the ability of some to integrate back into their own home. But for this alum, returning to their community was the culmination of their success, one which healed the scars of Swarthmore.

I reconnected with what it means to be from that area, and it was powerful. That's what healed me, was understanding for me, my success as a person was how I treated others and how I was humble, and all these things that were really important in my community, that I had to be.

> My succeeding at Swarthmore was just surviving. I realized really soon that I was never going to be whole and happy and flourishing. I was never going to flourish. I was only going to survive.
>
> **Darkfire**

Native Swarthmore students are graduating, and in that respect the participants in this study have been successful. However, the education participants received in the process of graduating does not necessarily promote intellectual growth, professional development, or even the capacity for civic engagement. Moreover, alumna's ability to translate their academic success into social mobility has been largely confined to other educational institutions. In fact, nearly half of all participants didn't find inherent value in their education. Instead, participants had to work against a system of failure to make their education a success.

Swarthmore College, like all institutions of higher education, is inescapably embedded in the settler occupation of indigenous lands. The instruction it provides to Native students is assimilatory, relying upon white, middle class cultural capital, demanding a white cultural performance, and at the same time criminalizing indigenous difference. Moreover, the instruction it provides is inadequate, failing to prepare students to enter into professional careers, or to create sociopolitical change. Thus, participants face an educational institution that inhibits their personal pursuit of success, and simultaneously reproduces white cultural hegemony and the settler state.

Swarthmore, like other elite institutions, cultivates a prestigious reputation and its income depends upon it. It therefore exercises a specific system of failure, underdevelopment, which ensures that nearly all students graduate, but actively underdevelops Native students by denying them the opportunities, resources, and capacity for achieving success. Social mobility within settler society is limited to these students because they lack the necessary social and cultural capital, or because they are unwilling or unable to adopt a white cultural performance. On the other hand, participants are impeded in the pursuit of their own notions of success by a collection of practices that neglect, dehumanize, and obstruct Native students.

Thus, participants' notions of success were transformed as a result of the pressures of assimilation and underdevelopment. They had to accommodate the illegitimate education they were receiving, and defend against threats to their health and identity. Consequently, success became intimately linked to participants' survival as students, as Natives, and as holistic beings. In order to survive and create a meaningful education for themselves, participants adopted a range of strategies that would allow them to succeed academically and personally.

Transforming Swarthmore from this system of failure into a system of success requires fundamental changes to its infrastructure and ideology. Generally, educational institutions must adopt antiracist policies so that they don't continue to reproduce white supremacy, disentangling academic achievement from a white cultural performance (Erickson, 1987). For indigenous peoples specifically, the College must recognize that settler society is organized upon the principle of indigenous elimination (Tuck and Yang, 2012; Wolfe, 2006), and challenge

normative notions of success as integration and mobility within the settler state (Grande, 2015). Rather, Swarthmore must enable Native students to pursue their own notions of success, including the sovereignty and well being of their peoples.

A legitimate commitment to Native student success is impossible as long as the school retains its current negligent stance, both towards its own students and global social inequality. It is this negligence which is primarily responsible for making Swarthmore into a place that Natives must survive and which leaves them with an education of little value. Redressing negligence requires a complete transformation in institutional values, rewriting the College's mission, incorporating ulterior civic programming into the interior offices of the administration and academic departments, and ending the school's commitment to growing the endowment in exchange for a commitment to collective emancipation and decolonization. Quite simply however, a non-negligent system of success is a holistic education (hooks, 1994; Tierney, 1992) which makes it easier for Native students to persist at the College and to find value in their studies.

A system of success then, provides comprehensive support, addressing all of students' needs. Perhaps most pressing for Native students, is explicit training and socialization into the culture of power. In order to succeed within the institution, all marginalized students need to first be transitioned into the social and cultural capital that it runs on (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). The Summer Scholars program, as well as the Evans and Richard Rubin scholarship programs are useful starting points, but even these are extremely limited. Moreover, this instruction needs to accompany students throughout their academic development, with faculty continuing to introduce students to the particular language, work, and behavior expected in their disciplines (c.f. Delpit, 1986), and alongside staff, build students' connections to professional fields.

In order to do so, faculty need to be given the capacity for that instruction. Neoliberal educational policies have been especially damaging to educators within higher education, reducing their role to the production of intellectual labor (Giroux, 2010). To provide the support, both within and beyond the classroom, that marginalized students need to succeed, faculty need to be rewarded for sustaining relationships with students so that being a teacher, advisor, and mentor doesn't get in the way of tenure. At the same time, faculty need to learn how to become teachers. One of the greatest mysteries of higher education, is how institutions supposedly dedicated to learning, let people teach who have never learned how to teach.

However, staff and faculty at Swarthmore regularly alienate Native students from the institution. If they are to be effective and worthwhile supports to these students, they need to be explicitly trained to recognize the colonial ideology and norms within their own practices that currently exotify, tokenize, discredit, and obstruct Natives (Tierney, 1992). Perhaps the best place to begin in this process is by hiring Native staff and faculty members. As it is, Native students have the responsibility for educating the campus on indigenous peoples and working to change an institution that barely recognizes them. Several participants identify hiring Native staff and faculty members as their greatest priority in changing this situation. In particular, they emphasize a cluster hire so that if someone is hired, they don't feel entirely isolated and are more willing to stay at the College. Guillory and Wolverton (2008) also note the importance of having an administrator specifically dedicated to Native students and indigenous communities, who can serve as a counselor, advisor, advocate, event organizer, and do the work of educating the rest of campus that students are currently taking on. One alum who has attended other institutions had

such an administrator at all of them, and noted how valuable it was to have that consistent support and not be held responsible for the Native community at those schools.

Like Native students around the country, the participants in this study had responsibilities to their families and communities in addition to those at Swarthmore, and had to try and find a compromise between the two (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008; Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman, 1993). At Swarthmore, prospective students are brought to visit the College for free, but after that students must cover all travel expenses themselves, even those who are receiving significant financial aid. Returning home then, is one of the largest unaccounted and unaided expenses at the College, which falls especially hard on Native students because they tend to live farther away and to be of lower income. Multiple participants were unable to attend funerals or be present for other family and community events because of the cost of travel. Although all low income students face this inconvenience, Natives are affected in particular because of the essential roles they play in supporting family members and the community. One alum for example, who received a very large aid award from the College still had to take out tens of thousands of dollars in loans in order to be able to return home every break and fulfill their responsibilities. Therefore, comprehensive support includes enabling Native students to return home, both by providing financial assistance and by making academic accommodations for these responsibilities, whether they need to return for a funeral, ceremony, or other community event.

In addition, like other Native undergraduates, several participants had to take time off from the College (Tierney, 1992). Most did so because of their community responsibilities, while others did so for their own health and wellbeing. In the process however, participants described resistance from the administration, individuals who hindered their return to the College, and others who assumed that they wouldn't be able to return, that their leave was a sign of failure. There were several more participants who seriously considered leaving but chose not to, either because they wanted to prove that they could succeed at the College, or because they weren't assisted by administrators in taking time off, or because they were afraid to lose the only support system they did have at the College, their friends. By a number of means therefore, Swarthmore discourages interruptions in students' studies and even stigmatizes those students who do take time off. Swarthmore is an unhealthy place though, and staying at the College is not always in students' best interests. Rather, this process should become normalized, made explicit and transparent so that those students who do need to leave the school know how to and feel comfortable in doing so. Perhaps the most beneficial compromise Swarthmore could make in this respect is to institutionalize "studying abroad" in Indian Country so that Natives can continue their studies while also fulfilling their responsibilities at home.

At the same time, Swarthmore needs to address those elements that make it an unhealthy environment. Most glaring is the culture of labor that pervades all aspects of campus. The College is very proud of the rigor of its academic programming. Participants however, attested that the workload they face compromised not only their mental, physical, emotional, and social health, but inhibited the process of learning. On the other hand, they found courses at other institutions, including those in the Tri-College consortium, and at their graduate and professional schools, were much more manageable. Likewise, these labor demands are the main obstacles faculty have to overcome in supporting students. As it is, this culture of labor doesn't seem to enhance the learning process at Swarthmore, only make students more accustomed to immense workloads, limit possibilities for critical reflection, isolate students and faculty from each other, and ensure

conformity. Although the College's current policy for relieving student stress, insomnia, and anxiety is to host study breaks with sugar and caffeine, if it were truly committed to providing for the holistic development of students, it would curtail its expectations for producing exorbitant amounts of intellectual labor.

Such a move however, requires that the College overcome its own criminal negligence, to value the wellbeing of students more than its reputation and endowment. Although Swarthmore, like other private institutions, is caught in a race to provide more and more amenities (Baum, 2013), it continues to neglect the needs of its own students. Multiple participants described instances in which they were only able to obtain the support they needed, whether that was financial support, advising, or legally mandated services, if they threatened to sue the College, dropout, or otherwise potentially damage its reputation. In part, this negligence derives from the submersion of higher education within neoliberalism, which promotes competition, individuality, and profit above all else (Giroux, 2010). But alternatives do exist, in which student success is intimately tied to their well being. Tierney (1992) has documented holistic educational development at tribal colleges, which institutions like Swarthmore can model themselves after.

A non-negligent education at the same time ensures that students will not only be able to capitalize on their schooling, but return to and protect the wellbeing of their communities. Again, for such a critical education to be possible faculty need to be rewarded for incorporating critical scholarship and social engagement into both their classes and intellectual labor (Moten and Harney, 2004). In itself, such a turn would confront academia's eurocentrism and colonial ideology, which currently discredit indigenous knowledge and theory (Grande, 2015; Smith, 2012), thereby helping the College to create space for indigenous intellectualism (Brayboy, 2006), and enable students to redirect their studies towards the purposes of sovereignty and survivance. Practically, Swarthmore can also adapt and expand the ulterior programming and resources currently available through offices like the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, so that students can learn to implement this critical education and develop the professional skills necessary for working with their own communities (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). In this regard, both Native scholars (Garrod and Larrimore, 1997) and participants enthusiastically endorse some sort of Native or Indigenous studies program, which can coordinate both intellectual and professional development with an engagement in indigenous communities.

In the meantime however, what Native students need and can more immediately achieve is the presence of a Native campus community. In the past two years Swarthmore's Native student enrollment has grown significantly thanks to a relationship between Roberto Rivas in Admissions and the Swarthmore Indigenous Students Association. But he has since left the College and as in previous years, it's unclear if any Natives at all will be in this new class of 2020. In order to move beyond the extreme marginality that Natives currently experience at Swarthmore, the institution has to adopt a commitment to consistently admitting Natives. 1.2% of the national population identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native alone (U.S Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Quick Facts). If Swarthmore were to proportionally recruit Natives to their campus it would mean approximately 15 students in the student body, as opposed to the 1 they have now.

For Native students however, our job is to teach each other, to learn from the experiences of those who came before, learn how the school works, and pass on those strategies we've developed during our time here to those who come after us. Making any of these institutional

changes happen will most likely be our responsibility, but before that's even possible we have to work together, so that we can one day collectively move beyond survival to success. Take care of each other.

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