

Ma Tallepo 'Opu Ma 'Akkala Kennetto /We Are Waking Up Our Story Together:

Arts-Based Indigenous Methodology

by

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A Culminating Project and Dissertation

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Arts-Based Indigenous Methodology

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Abstract

Ma Tallepo 'Opu Ma 'Akkala Kennetto / We Are Waking Up Our Story Together:

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This dissertation documents an inquiry into an arts-based methodology to support knowledge construction with Indigenous worldviews, experiences, beliefs, values, and practices at the center. The author engaged in a research journey that co-constructed story, imagery, and her personal Native language with the collective knowledge of her community, resulting in a cultural reclamation process. The research purpose was to interrupt silence about the past and question the subordinate position Indigenous people often find themselves in today. This knowledge construction process critically examines, deconstructs, and responds to the legacy of historical, systematic efforts to eradicate Native identity in the United States. The author also addresses the need to decolonize historical mental health systems, research, theory, and practices through an American Indian perspective.

Two main objectives for determining appropriate methodology were: (a) to reflexively consider the ethical relationship of this inquiry with the researcher's Tribal community, and (b) to explore the process of respect within a continuous narrative that integrates collective knowledge. Through the inquiry the author came to understand how identity formation efforts involve trauma processing when one is linked with historical trauma exposure. A key outcome was that the author shared stories and artwork with all of her relations, including her ancestors and children, to continue "story loops" that honor and build relationships within her Native cultural meaning-making process.

Keywords: American Indian, appropriation, art therapy, collective knowledge, colonial amnesia, cultural genocide, cultural reclamation, ethics, historical trauma, Indigenous methodology, Native, silence, sovereignty, story

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Ka molis to all of *our* ancestors, first people, land, singing tree, and spirit that continues everywhere.

Wuṣkipa / Dedication

I dedicate this work to my children,

‘Awaaki he ‘Upukṣu (Toles he Tonchi).

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CHAPTER 1: *HOYTOTI* / INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance of the Problem

This art therapy dissertation is motivated by my aim to find an ethical and culturally centering approach to strengthen my identity formation process as a woman of mixed race from two sides of a story of genocide; I have ancestral lines connecting me with the Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo peoples in what is now called California and I have ancestral lines connecting me with the first Pilgrims who landed in what is now called Massachusetts. My hope is that my learning about identity formation from this inquiry can be felt as a contribution in my community and for my children, as well as to my profession. Of significance is how much my Native communities' story of genocide has been silenced—not just in my personal life, but also systematically in society at large. Therefore, to know my own story about the silencing of my past, and to know my communities' story, I needed to learn how to break open and deconstruct what has been offered on the surface. Even more painful, at times, is how I have found my story and work to only be understood or received on a surface level and then taken, disregarded, or distorted. Therefore, a problem I address in my research is how to explore and construct knowledge beyond the written word, frameworks, and dominant narratives in academia and in my profession of art therapy, while also constructing a sustainable, ethical, and culturally congruent path to dive deeper into forming identity amidst a legacy of erasure.

Given the challenges to experience cultural congruency and the ethics entailed, I have focused my inquiry on my self-experience as a matter of necessity before considering this inquiry as a process in which to include others. Yet as my sensibility increased, I recognized that this process is never just about me; I am not at the center; and

that everyone from my family, community, and all those connected with *our* collective knowledge is actually already involved and potentially impacted. This is a kind of responsibility and power that I am still learning about. Although I initiated my research as a personal self-reflective case study, my ability to impact and do harm as well as good redirected me to consider that I am not working alone; this is essentially a community-based approach rather than a personal inquiry only. Indigenous methodology, then, continuously insists that maintaining a culturally centered approach results in developing stronger, more loving, deeply respectful and enriched relationships.

To explore silence required engaging in a preverbal inquiry involving a spiritual quest with imagination and symbolization. Arts-based Indigenous methodology (which intersects with art therapy principles, arts-based research, and action research) supported this approach and was a fit with my own nature and art-making practice. Art making is my gateway to access and process my intuition, meanings, and fragmented embodiment of a story. However, for years I struggled to access my cultural center with my Indigenous identity and in relationship with my Tribal communities' collective knowledge. Applying Indigenous methodology with arts-based exploration is how I found guidance to access my Indigenous roots and personhood, ethically and cumulatively. I also came to understand in this exploration that identity formation efforts involve trauma processing when someone like myself is linked with historical and intergenerational trauma exposure. Herein lies also an exploration about what interrupts (and how to support) identity formation in a context of systematic efforts toward annihilation of that identity.

To create this dissertation I have traveled a significant distance and have joined with others as a reparative response to ruptured relationships. For example, I moved from painting an *'awwuk*/abalone shell as the heart of my grandmother who lived five generations before me to painting trees as *our* center holding *our* stories to merging together with my grandmothers in a painting that was about recognizing my body as what is while also holding all of *our* memories across the generations. This was followed by waking up with a large *'awwuk*/abalone shell as my skeleton painfully stretching my skin. Bear, deer, hawks, ravens, woodpeckers, turkey vultures, abalone, acorns, clamshell beads, the ocean, the rolling hills, poppies, ancestors, and trees—all these beings have been my “co-researchers” as I dropped into *our* continuous and collective spirit.

I have read the books, journals, engraved plaques, and monuments that silence the story I refer to as *our story* while I simultaneously feel the breath and singing of *our* stories in my body, in the trees, in the air, in the rhythms all around me. This is so confusing and chaotic; making art has been helpful in accessing the less raucous and less developed narratives so that I can break open the silences that are left everywhere like acorns dropping and rolling from *our* oak trees.

In learning about and practicing arts-based Indigenous methodology I committed to traveling with *our* stories and all the ways they disrupt me. I am traveling in many spaces, worldviews, and times. My relationships changed as I traveled; both with myself and in my openness with others. This dissertation is my story of traveling in between different worlds, of how I build relationships, of what I learn in this traveling, and of how I try to share what I’ve learned with my children. Because at the center, this is all about

love and my responsibility to my children and their children, to all the children, and to *our* land.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker is one of the artists, co-researchers, and social activists I found most influential regarding my research framework. By excavating up to 5,000 holes in one tree trunk and then fitting one acorn into each hole, the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker creates a functional granary system to store its food collectively. *Panakko* / Acorn Woodpeckers sometimes create spaces big enough to live inside this same tree as well. *Panakko* work together to fend off their predators, like squirrels, and reposition acorns into new holes if they change size after drying out.

Modeled after the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker, then, my research practice involves taking the time to create space and collect and position each acorn—each painting, each story, each relationship—together into the proper context, centered in *our* cultural worldview. I work collectively to best understand how to protect *our* cultural center and I've settled into this space as my way of coming home. I call this co-constructed space that holds all of these acorns and collective knowledge the *Koyanni* 'Alwas / Singing Tree.

As a woman of mixed race conducting an inquiry within a framework of arts-based Indigenous methodology, I considered ways to highlight an ethical cross-cultural engagement with several languages, voices, and positions in society. From my Indigenous worldview I am engaging in Native language learning, reacquisition, and spiritually informed communication. Through academic Western English language learning I also engage with conceptual frameworks of U.S.-based educational systems

(e.g., American Psychological Association–style arts-based research, social action scholarship, and standards and requirements for a doctoral dissertation).

Author Location/Positioning

In the spirit and ethics of authenticity I openly disclose my bias, experience, and perspectives as I locate myself in this discussion and to contextualize visual symbolization. I was born and grew up in Central California. I spent formative time at the ocean on the Central Coast and further inland exploring the oak trees in *our* grassy, rolling hills. I did not know the extent and depth of my American Indian heritage as a child. I did not have any cultural or traditional symbols, stories, or photos to suggest American Indian identity in my home. In my family there have been generations of silence about any American Indian ancestry. I believe this was a survival strategy in response to racism against American Indians and my family in particular. For me to identify in any way as Native is to break the silence held within my family for at least two generations.

Currently, I am the only member in my immediate family who is a Tribal citizen with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR). I became connected with my Tribe as an adult, and only then learned *our* history, stories, and one of *our* languages (*Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok), and began meeting other Tribal members. I don't consider the quantum composition of my blood inheritance to define my identity. I notice that much about my worldview and identity has been influenced by the relationships and political landscape between the American Indian people and the non–American Indian people in my family. For generations, we have intermixed such that the distinction between the two is too complex to clarify with any consistency. To this point, I've found

that government documentation is not consistent about the same people. I see this inconsistent documentation as a way that my family members may have strategized whether to hide or make visible their identity when engaging with colonizing systems as a form of protection. In addition, sometimes I believe there were errors made on the part of the documenting authorities when language literacy and systems were not shared with my family members during earlier points of contact (e.g., mission systems, Mexican government, Spanish government, U.S. government).

I trained to be an art therapist in the late 1990s, in a psychodynamically oriented program at Marylhurst University in Oregon. I then trained to be a trauma specialist, learned about the neurobiology of trauma, and integrated the expressive arts and body-based approaches in my treatment approach. In parallel with my interest in supporting my clients with intergenerational and historical trauma, I also worked to support my own intergenerational and historical trauma processing. It is within my understanding of my family's historical and intergenerational trauma that I view my personal trauma history.

Notes on Language and Frame of Reference

The Use of *Us*, *We*, and *Our*

It's important for me to share a point of clarification about the use of *us*, *we*, and *our* in this writing. Although this is a personal self-study, I am not engaged as an individual, separate and alone, nor is this only my knowledge, where I am the only one engaging in the process. Therefore, as I write I cannot ethically speak as if these are my individual findings or considerations. I also am aware that I do not speak for anyone but myself. I am not claiming to be a voice for all of my Tribe, all of my ancestors, all Indigenous peoples, and so forth. Although I'm aware that I am not really alone in this

inquiry, I cannot ethically represent any voice beyond my own either. Therefore, I am acknowledging that many insights were shared with me through an ongoing relationship of mutual intention and guidance from thousands of years of collective inquiry. My writing often speaks of *we*, *us*, and *our* knowledge for this reason, and I italicize these words in order to reference this intention. Although this may cause some confusion about how I am not only speaking from my personal point of view and experience, it is an ethical intention to acknowledge how much of this inquiry is not solely coming from my individual insights and knowledge.

Group Identifiers

American Indian, Native American, Native American Indian, Indian, First Nation, Indigenous, Native, Aboriginal, and First People are all terms to identify the population I focus on for an Indigenous methodology. The preferred terminology is usually determined by the context for each particular person or community. To respect the autonomy of each person and community, I use the terminology interchangeably, based on the context and/or how the author I am referring to indicated or self-identified. When discussing the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR), of which I am a citizen, I use the terms *American Indian* and *Tribe* in recognition of how *we* currently identify *our* community.

***Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok Language**

Tamal Machchaw / Coast Miwok language has been highly documented by two linguists, Catherine Callaghan and Richard Applegate (2017), who worked primarily with my great-aunt Sarah Ballard to create the *Integrated Coast Miwok Dictionary: Bodega Miwok Dictionary and Normalized Coast Miwok Dictionary*. Currently, there may be

approximately 50 people actively learning *Tamal Machchaw*, none whom, I understand, consider themselves fluent. Although I am not a linguist nor a fluent speaker of *Tamal Machchaw*, I treat *Tamal Machchaw* as a living language and have constructed new phrasings for the purposes of this dialogue. I offer apologies for any grammatical errors that may have occurred with my struggle to communicate via *Tamal Machchaw* with beginner competency. My use of the language to communicate complex *pichasnako*/concepts is a subjective meaning-making process, and it may not be possible to confirm that my use of the words is what has been referenced by earlier documented sources.

Summary of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2 I provide a review of the literature that prioritizes Indigenous worldviews, language, perspectives, and concerns so that Indigenous knowledge is positioned to be at the center of this inquiry. For example, I incorporate *Tamal Machchaw* as a primary source, which continues throughout this dissertation. When selecting and reviewing literature I again prioritize Native voice and focus on sources that highlight Native traditional and collective knowledge (i.e., walking *our* original land and listening deeply to singing and prayer). I then deconstruct historical art therapy theory and practices from an American Indian perspective as a way of decolonizing the literature I reviewed. This approach also supports the justification for the use of Indigenous methodology in the art therapy profession. After briefly defining what Indigenous methodology is, I introduce a personal Indigenous methodology as co-constructed with the use of *Tamal Machchaw*, selected literature, collective knowledge shared with me, and my art.

In Chapter 3, I revisit my research problem and questions, identify Indigenous methodology as my research paradigm, and discuss my design and methods. In my design and methods discussion I detail the ways in which I translate my understanding of “participants” in my inquiry within a worldview that prioritizes collective knowledge and “informants” when engaging in spiritual relationships. In describing my informed consent procedure and ethical protections I introduce my Tribal community members and how they are directing the process so that I am respectful and collaborative in my research approach. In detailing the data collection process I share two flowcharts of method to reflect the two worldviews involved in this inquiry and integrate art and story. In outlining my data analysis process, I share how my personal Indigenous methodology *pichasnako*/concepts were used to maintain the validity and ethical considerations of my cultural worldview. Finally, in reviewing risks and benefits, I highlight my concerns when working in the context of historical trauma.

The purpose of this inquiry is to explore ethics and application of an arts-based Indigenous methodology. It is with great care that I write a dissertation on what I have learned and can share, when I am only at the initial stages of knowing about *our* culture and practices after they have been actively silenced for generations. Given the complexity of cross-cultural exploration in this context, I constructed my data and results into two chapters. Chapter 4 is a series of three embedded stories (visual and written), which I believe is the most authentic representation of the data and results of this inquiry. Chapter 5 represents a translation of my findings about the ethics and application of an arts-based Indigenous methodology. This translation is for the purpose of engaging in a larger

dialogue in the art therapy profession about the ethical considerations and application of Indigenous methodology.

In the final chapter I share the application of my findings from the literature review and inquiry process through story about four key moments of insights that are culminating into a celebration of *our* community. In this way, I hope to bring you, as a reader and witness, closer to my worldview and invite you to join with me in understanding how I am continuing in my arts-based Indigenous methodology.

CHAPTER 2: *PICHASNA* / LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

My research purpose was to engage in an arts-based methodology (which may intersect with principles of art therapy practice, arts-based research, and action research) to support knowledge construction with Indigenous worldviews, experiences, beliefs, values, and practices at the center. As a Tribal citizen of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria in California, I engaged in a personal research journey that built story, imagery, and language with collective knowledge of my community. My project is important when considering a culturally appropriate approach to work with American Indian communities, given the context of racism, colonialism, and genocide that surrounds this population.

My research purpose also was to interrupt silence about the past and question the subordinate position Indigenous people often find ourselves in today. This knowledge construction process critically examines, deconstructs, and responds to the legacy of historical, systematic efforts to eradicate Native identity in the United States. Two of my objectives were to articulate the ethics of working with my Tribal community and to explore the process of respect within a continuous narrative that integrates collective knowledge. This exploration can be called an arts-based Indigenous methodology. A definition of Indigenous methodology will be discussed below. Further discussion of arts-based practice in this research paradigm will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Description of the Problem

Native people of today are the most medically underserved racial group in the United States (Indian Health Services, 2017; Warson, Taukchiray, & Barbour, 2013).

This population also is noted to have higher than average rates of poverty, violence, poor social and living conditions, substance misuse, suicide, and depression (Indian Health Services, 2017; National Congress of American Indians, 2015; Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2004; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Indian Health Service, & National Indian Health Board, 2016; Woods, 2012). From an ethical and emancipatory perspective, research focused on addressing American Indian mental health needs is important because of the alarming disparity in the U.S. mental health system in terms of meeting the needs of the American Indian population.

One of the reasons American Indian people are underserved is because of cultural distinctions (Basto, Warson, & Barbour, 2012). Generally, and historically, literature about American Indians has not been written by American Indians, which has resulted in misrepresentation and harm for American Indian people (Dufrene, Coleman, & Gainor, 1992; L. T. Smith, 1999, 2008, 2012; S. Wilson, 2008). In the art therapy literature one significant problem is the scant knowledge of American Indians (Warson, 2012a). Knowledgeable art therapists publishing on American Indians over the last 20 years are limited to Warson (2003, 2012a, 2012b; Warson et al., 2013), Lu and Yuen (2012), and Gerity (2000). This limited discourse on art therapy specifically considering American Indian people suggests that there is much more to learn about culturally sensitive art therapy practices with American Indian people. Moreover, there also is limited expertise regarding arts-based methodologies when working with an Indigenous-centered approach. For example, the authors of the *Handbook of Critical Indigenous Methodologies* “were unable to locate persons who could write chapters on . . . arts-based

methodologies” (Denzin, Lincoln, & L. T. Smith, 2008, p. xii), despite their applicability to culturally appropriate research.

Western-based research involving American Indian communities has caused harm due to essentialism, cultural appropriation, and subjugation of the knowledge of American Indian culture and practices (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin et al., 2008; Grande, 2015; Gray, Coates, & Yellow Bird, 2008; L. T. Smith, 2012; S. Wilson, 2008). In response, my research explored how to create a space and ethical process for knowledge construction with Indigenous worldviews that is centered on experience, beliefs, values, and practices. With this purpose in mind, this literature review will present the conceptual context for the following: (a) culturally responsive research approaches that have been endorsed by American Indian communities; (b) the need to decolonize historical mental health systems, research, theory, and practices through an American Indian perspective; (c) ways to design research for American Indian cultural recentering in the context of colonization; and (d) application of Indigenous methodology within my own cultural worldview as a California Indian Tribal member of mixed race.

Scope for This Literature Review

In this literature review I prioritize the voice of Native people as the most credible source for discussion regarding Indigenous perspectives. Regarding the source for knowledge construction of a personal Indigenous methodology I prioritize my Central California Indian Tribe, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. Regarding art therapy literature, I narrow the focus to art therapy practices, theory, and training standards within the United States as advanced by the American Art Therapy Association and Art Therapy Credentials Board, because this is where I locate the discussion on the

decolonization of art therapy practice. Although there are art therapy principles that may fit within Indigenous methodology—such as engaging in the creative process with mind, body, and spirit and inviting alternative modes of receptive and expressive communication (American Art Therapy Association, 2013)—the discussion here is limited to those areas that require deconstruction.

Indigenous methodology intrinsically involves art making, art performance, and organizing to address social issues. I prioritized literature by and about Indigenous people engaged in art making and art performance to strengthen and benefit their communities. Although there are aspects of Indigenous methodology that may intersect with principles of arts-based research and action research, I center the literature review on the research paradigm of Indigenous methodology.

Culturally Responsive Practice With American Indian Communities

Culturally responsive practice with Native community may occur when a Native community has the sovereignty to determine the design and implementation of the research such that it serves the community's needs (Dufrene et al., 1992; National Congress of American Indians, 2015; L. T. Smith, 2012; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration et al., 2016; Warson, 2012a; S. Wilson, 2008). Implied in this statement is the belief that the people who design the tools and systems hold the real power over others (L. T. Smith, 1999). Historically, after Indigenous peoples experienced subjugation, abuses, and death under the design of external systems, *we* learned that *we* are better off designing *our* own methodologies and systems. The challenge is not just about racism, but also “about the nature of truth and reality” (Ladson-Billings, as cited in Kovach, 2009, p. 28). An Indigenous methodology creates a space for Indigenous views

on truth and reality to inform academic institutions, mental health services, and policy discussions. Indigenous values and beliefs can thus inform a reflexive cycle of evolving, growing, and updating our own knowledge base (Henry & Penne, as cited in Cram, 2009).

Research is a human construct that is not only a morality-based search for knowledge but also reproduces human behavior and bias in the process (L. T. Smith, 2008). Healing within American Indian communities requires a shift in relationships so that the community is repositioned from having a passive role to having an active role when negotiating the boundaries and power dynamics in a system (L. T. Smith, 2008). For American Indian peoples, maintaining sovereignty in research designs is about preserving *our* humanity, existence, and future survival.

Madley (2016), in his book *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*, documented the systematic efforts of the U.S. government to eradicate California Indian people and cultural identity. According to Lemkin (1944), genocide has two phases: first, the destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed (Indigenous) group, and second, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor (p. 79). Indigenous methodology is an approach that has the potential to countervail the impact of these two phases of genocide. Indigenous methodology points to two reparative steps: first, the recreation and centering of the cultural pattern of the Indigenous group, and second, the critical deconstruction of the national pattern imposed by the oppressor onto the Indigenous group.

This critical deconstruction of the pattern that has been imposed by an oppressor may be approached in several ways. Gray, Coates, and Yellow Bird (2008) referred to

decolonization as “the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and land” that “is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation” (p. 2). L. T. Smith (1999) defined decolonization as a process of “centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspective and for our own purposes” (p. 39). Rather than being separate phases, as implied with the definition of genocide, the two corrective approaches to genocide in Indigenous methodology function in a reciprocal and generative relationship. Each situation insists on critical reflection to deconstruct colonial influences while simultaneously reconstructing and centering community patterns.

Decolonizing Historical Art Therapy Theory and Practices From an American Indian Perspective

In my review of the art therapy literature, references to U.S.-based American Indians range from 1979 to the present. As is the case in the fields of both art therapy and psychology, the literature reflects the prevailing sociocultural-economic contexts and political events of the time. In this section I will discuss: (a) Modernism and research-based colonialism; (b) colonization of American Indian spirituality and worldviews; and (c) cultural genocide and colonial amnesia.

Modernism and Research-Based Colonialism

The first mentions of American Indians in art therapy in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Geraghty, 1985; Lofgren, 1981; McNiff, 1979, 1981, 1988) correspond with the final years of modernism. Spanning most of the 20th century, modernism is the historical

movement that contributed to repositioning psychology as a science instead of a philosophy, with a concerted move away from spirituality and religion. Modernists draw from positivistic scientific principles to determine what is reality; categorization and structuring of observations create what is perceived to be a linear, predictable identification of a truth across time and place (Chilisa, 2012; Demas & Saavedra, 2004). By the mid-20th century, which corresponded to the emergence of art therapy as a profession in the United States, there was a shift from positivism to post-positivism. Both orientations conceive of a reality independent of human thought that can be studied using scientific methodology; however, post-positivists recognize that all observation is fallible and that theory is revisable (Chilisa, 2012).

This move toward positioning psychology as a science also rested on the concept of universalism,¹ “which implies that it is possible to apply generalized norms, values, or concepts to all people and cultures, regardless of the contexts in which they are located” (Kohfeldt & Grabe, 2014, p. 2036). Such generalizable norms might include biological and psychological needs, rights, and processes. However, the complexity of human psychology and culture likely requires distinction beyond biological considerations. As a concept, universalism does not seem to make this differentiation. Kohfeldt and Grabe (2014) asserted that although it may be common to consider universal laws in the physical sciences, this does not translate appropriately to the social sciences. They wrote that because “individuals and groups can only be understood in relation to their cultural context, then universal theories concerning human psychology are not scientifically valid” (p. 2038).

¹ To clarify, in this context *universalism* refers to the philosophical principle in the social sciences, and is not related to the Christian theology of Universalism.

Universalism tends to exert a homogenizing emphasis on similarity when it collapses potentially meaningful within-group differences. For example, placing all Indigenous peoples into one category would erase the rich complexity of languages, history, practices, stories, perspectives, and cultural differences of this group. As an illustration of this reality, in California alone there are 109 federally recognized Tribes, with another 78 in the process of petitioning for recognition (Judicial Council of California, n.d.), and as many as 90 California Native languages originally spoken (Regents of the University of California, n.d.). The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs has listed 566 federally recognized Tribes in the United States (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016). There are approximately 370 million Indigenous people worldwide in 90 countries, belonging to 5,000 different groups and speaking over 4,000 languages (Cultural Survival, 2017).

Among the many motives of scholars who argue from the position of universalism is the declaration that all humans, regardless of culture or nationality, have the same civil rights and should have equal access to protection under the law (Kohfeldt & Grabe, 2014). Universalism can thus serve to rationalize the protection of all humans, as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) adopted by the United Nations, from discrimination, slavery, and arbitrary detention or arrest. Although the construct of universalism potentially provides a sound basis for increasing human rights benefits to people of all cultures and races, the same premise can be used to support the opposite argument. For example, adherence to universalism allows a theoretical rationale to identify normative development and psychological assessment standards of normative behavior, as well as labeling behavior outside this normative standard as a clinical

deviation. Warson (2003) gave an example of this in the case of an American Indian child who was assessed as “too slow” because the client’s pace in talking was slower than the norm determined by the practitioner. This client was assigned to a school program for her “slower” abilities as a result. Fortunately, Warson recognized the pacing of the child’s speech as related to her American Indian cultural rhythms and intervened to prevent this outcome. In another example, Lofgren (1981) cited comments on the part of a psychiatrist who did not understand a dozen or so Indians and their silence and therefore diagnosed them with catatonic schizophrenia. A collective agreement of norms based on criteria from within dominant society has been used in these and other situations, such as assessing when and how a child would benefit from interventions, promotion of certain parenting approaches, clinical diagnosis, and treatment planning.

Universalism as a construct offers a good example of how abstract or assumed theory can be used as a way of organizing, justifying, and determining action (L. T. Smith, 2012). Within the colonial context, universalism has made it possible for those in power to go so far as to determine what is knowledge and reality (DiAngelo, 2011) and anyone outside of what is determined to be normal or developmentally on par with the mainstream society is at risk of being labeled as abnormal. American Indians were and are at risk for failing to meet these norms for many reasons: We may hold spiritual and cultural worldviews that are outside the mainstream and we may present with disengagement and resistant behaviors during clinical assessment and interventions as a result of learned distrust in dominant systems. Moreover, it may go unrecognized that our behavior may be a result of exposure to severe abuses from generations of genocidal

practices, along with poverty, hunger, and subpar and harmful public policies and forms of education, health care, and living conditions.

It is important to remember that throughout the modernism period, American Indians in the United States continued to be colonized and were not consistently allowed the basic human rights identified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) to practice their religion, to speak their language, to maintain rights to their land, and to have the sovereignty to identify as American Indian. The recognition that all human beings have certain universal needs has the potential to be a corrective response to this appalling history, one that argues a universal basis for improving the rights of all ethnic groups, races, and cultures, including American Indians. However, in practice in the United States such a theory simultaneously further empowered the dominant worldview and authorized scientists to determine the parameters of normal development and the dictates of universal standards (DiAngelo, 2011; Hocoy, 2002; Kohfeldt & Grabe, 2014; L. T. Smith, 2012; White & Wang, 1995). European theoretical constructs have continued to colonize Indigenous peoples. “In this context, knowledge was as much a part of imperialism as raw materials and military strength” (Demas & Saavedra, 2004, p. 216).

When viewed within this historical context, the positivist perspective on research is freighted with more than a scientific search for knowledge. L. T. Smith (2012) wrote:

From an indigenous perspective Western research is more than just research that is located in a positivist tradition, it is research which brings to bear, on any study of indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization for such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and

competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power. (p. 44)

Positivist and post-positivist research has not located its axiology, ethics, or moral position within a relational framework with research subjects. Positivist axiology that does not prioritize relational accountability can be problematic when working with research subjects who exist within a cultural framing that values knowledge as collective and believes that knowledge does not exist apart from community, nor stands alone for its own sake (LaFrance & Crazy Bull, 2009). For example, the axiology of early positivists was that the pursuit of knowledge in itself was the ideal goal of research; thus, methods that would today be considered unethical could be justified in the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake (S. Wilson, 2008). Further examples here include the collecting of Indigenous artifacts, skulls, and stories without reliable informed consent from the collective Native community or shared authorship and benefit from the knowledge accrued. Sacred Indigenous content frequently has been housed in research centers and museums and then labeled by external experts, often distorting the original context and Native community worldview (Denzin et al., 2008; Platt, 2011). These practices stand in sharp contrast to an Indigenous perspective, wherein research practice must use relational accountability and be connected to or a part of a community; that is, as a set of relationships (S. Wilson, 2008).

In the construction of modernist definitions of humanity, human development, and psychology, there had to be an erasure and silencing of the American Indian voice and perspective in order to uphold the prevailing authority. This act of subjugating American Indian knowledge involves disqualifying American Indian perspectives and

practice as inadequate because they are determined to be insufficiently elaborated, naïve, or lower on the hierarchy of scientificity (Foucault, 1980). For example, Brave Heart (2000) expressed concern should only a European lens determine a “normal grief process” for Lakota people. Brave Heart (Hunkpapa, Oglala Lakota) suggested that there are at least three ways in which the Lakota people need to be understood and interpreted from a Lakota point of view and not clustered with non-Lakota individuals for a diagnostic study or assessment. Brave Heart identified that the degree of attachment to others appears deeper for the Lakota than some other groups due to the degree of involvement in extended kinship networks and collective living. Therefore, the depth and extent of the grief represented by a Lakota person after the loss of an extended family member may be viewed as abnormal by those who consider attachment behavior from a lens that is less collective or inclusive of extended kinships in primary attachment relationships. The Lakota grief practice may involve making connection with the ancestor spirits and invocation of the spirits in ceremonies, as a culturally healthy response (Brave Heart, 2000). Therefore, Lakota people may engage in practices that include communicating with spirits and with those who are dead, which may be viewed in a European framework as abnormal behavior. The Lakota have experienced massive group trauma for generations, leaving Lakota people with a grief beyond typical exposure (Brave Heart, 2000). Reflecting on the Lakota experience, one needs to contextualize the Lakota losses regarding people, land, and sovereignty as having an impact that goes beyond a European lens on a “normal” grief response.

This potential subjugation of Native frameworks in order to center Eurocentric frameworks needs to be problematized and deconstructed, especially when European and

Eurocentric systems have dehumanized and persecuted Native peoples. *Subjugated knowledge* can be defined as knowledge that has been buried, disguised, and/or distorted to be interpreted in another meaning-making system (Foucault, 1980). When Lakota knowledge and practices regarding healthy grieving practices are buried, disguised, or distorted, the Lakota people are at risk of being pathologized and interpreted as abnormal when practicing their culturally grounded grieving response to cumulative traumatic loss (Brave Heart, 2000).

Faced with the harsh reality of the decimation of the American Indian population, many scientists and researchers during the modernist era (e.g., Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, Ales Hrdlieka, and Samuel George Morton) recognized the causal impact of colonizing public policies and practices and worked to collect American Indian knowledge, culture, artifacts, and language. Thus, during the time of modernism, American Indian people became research subjects whose bodies, belief systems, and worldviews were collected before they became extinct. Patrons of this collecting and research trend included George Gustav Heye, who acquired 800,000 items for his own National Museum of the American Indian (Platt, 2011); Collis Huntington, who funded the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber in collecting 270 artifacts for the American Museum of Natural History; and Phoebe Hearst, who also funded Kroeber for the creation of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (Platt, 2011). Through the Native Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990 and the process that resulted, more than 180,000 Native human remains (not artifacts, but physical body remains) were identified in the possession of museums and federal agencies, with another 18,000 inventoried at the Smithsonian Institute (Trope, 2013).

Within Western and U.S. dominant society, modernism maintained its position of authority over nondominant groups. This dynamic, termed *superior positioning*, describes the strategic position by the dominant culture over another cultural group as an act of power (L. T. Smith, 1999). Referencing Hall's (1992) work on cultural dominance, L. T. Smith (2012) explained:

Hall suggests that the concepts of the West functions in ways which 1) allow "us" to characterize and classify societies into categories, 2) condense complex images of other societies through a system of representation, 3) provide a standard model of comparison and, 4) provide a criteria of evaluation. (pp. 44–45)

The work of Alfred Kroeber is a strong example of Hall's (1992) reference regarding practices of superior positioning and cultural dominance. Kroeber became a famous scientist as a result of collecting, classifying, representing, comparing, and evaluating the bones, artifacts, languages, artwork, practices, and beliefs of the California Indians. Kroeber (1925/1976) wrote in the *Handbook of the Indians of California*:

The vast bulk of even the significant happenings in the lives of uncivilized tribes are irrecoverable. For the past century our knowledge is slight; previous to that there is complete obscurity. Nor do the careers of savages afford many incidents of sufficient intrinsic importance to make their chronicling worthwhile. . . . A broader typical treatment of phases of native culture seems theoretically more desirable, especially in the case of a remote and unimportant people. (p. v)

It is important to note that although Kroeber's published work between 1896–1961 may seem outdated, his 1925 *Handbook of the Indians of California* was republished in 1976. Also, the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, which has a

long history of systematic collection of California Indian items under the direction of Kroeber, celebrated Kroeber's effort on its website in 2017 as follows:

The Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology's general excellence in the documentation of California Indian cultures is due to museum curator Alfred L. Kroeber and his interest in the Americanist mission of cultural mapping. . . . [Kroeber] set out to amass the largest and most comprehensive reference collection from the region, . . . [with] about 1 million objects. . . . Because of its publication in Alfred Kroeber's 1925 *Handbook of California Indians* as well as innumerable other publications, *the Hearst's California collection has served as the classic description of what California Indian culture is* [emphasis added].
(Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, n.d.)

Many scientists and anthropologists such as Kroeber, Stuart, and Waterman who collected artifacts and human remains from Indian graves in California (Platt, 2011) appeared to justify their actions by way of the claim that their research intended to save Indigenous knowledge before further disappearance, as with any endangered species (L. T. Smith, 1999; Trope, 2013). For example, Kroeber was able to claim guardianship over a Yahi man, whom he publicized as "the last aboriginal savage of America" ("Ishi," 1911, 4). Kroeber gave this Native man the name "Ishi"; facilitated him being on exhibit at the Hearst Museum of Anthropology; and, upon the death of "Ishi," dispatched his brain to the scientist Ales Hrdlička for his racial brain collection at the Smithsonian Institution (Platt, 2011).

Colonization of American Indian Spirituality and Worldviews

Western research also became directed at “the intangibles: the belief systems and ideas about healing, about the universe, about relationships and ways of organizing, and the practices and rituals which go alongside such beliefs” (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 26).

Kroeber is again a primary example of someone who captured at least 67 published accounts of Native belief systems, relationships, practices, rituals, and culture between 1876–1960. Kroeber, a “recipient of five honorary degrees (Yale, California, Harvard, Columbia, Chicago), two gold medals, and honorary membership in 16 scientific societies” (Steward, 1961) who was credited with providing the “classic description of what California Indian culture is” (Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, n.d.) observed in a 1909 speech to the Commonwealth Club of California that the “California Indian is docile, peaceful, friendly, sluggish, unimaginative, not easily stirred, low-keyed in emotion, almost apathetic” (Platt, 2011). In “Religion of the Indians of California” Kroeber (1907) defined shamanism as follows:

The supposed individual control of the supernatural through a personally acquired power of communication with the spirit world, rests upon much the same basis in California as elsewhere in North America. In general, among uncivilized tribes the simpler the stage of culture the more important the shaman. (p. 327)

Kroeber (1907) went on to determine that “fundamentally, the religion of the Indians of California was very similar to that of savage and uncivilized races the world over” (p. 319).

One unfortunate result of museum collections is that the practices used by researchers and curators have reinforced a collective memory of imperialism “through the

ways in which knowledge about Indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized” (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 1). Once Western researchers published their research, gained tenure, gave talks, and became the recognized experts on American Indians, these experts, much like Kroeber, then became the sources to which people in dominant society, such as psychologists and other mental health providers, came to understand and treat American Indian people.

A related trend was the explicit agenda to use the knowledge gathered by scientists about American Indians for the benefit of others—a trend that was predicated on the dominant society’s perception that American Indians were extinct or nearly so. Specifically, a new trend arose in the mid- to late 20th century that looked to move forward by reaching back into the wisdom of Indigenous peoples worldwide. One leader at this time is the anthropologist Carlos Castaneda, who researched Yaqui Shamanism. Castaneda was author of 15 books, translated into 17 languages, that have sold at least 8 million copies worldwide and “helped define the 1960’s and usher in the New Age movement” (Simon & Schuster, n.d.). What is striking about Castaneda, a non-Native, is both his influence in teaching U.S. society about shamanism and that he was later debunked as a fiction writer rather than researcher on shamanism (Bataille & Silet, 1980; Boyer, 1994; Chavers, 2011; Fikes, 1993).

“American Indian spiritualism” or “the New Age movement,” which started around 1980, was influenced by anthropological research about American Indian spiritual practices by those such as Castaneda. Aldred (2000) wrote about *plastic shamans* and *shake-and-bake shamans*, terms that describe people, typically Euro-Americans, who

claimed training with an authentic shaman and then went on to earn a great deal of money from their workshops and best-selling books on Native American spirituality. Boyer (1994), reflecting on the U.S. perception of American Indians in the wake of Castaneda, wrote:

Not long ago they were portrayed as blood-thirsty savages. Castaneda helped remold them into all-knowing gurus. The first image was grossly untrue; the second is an impossible ideal. But in both cases they tell a lot about America's own needs and desires and very little about Native Americans. (para. 21)

It is within this context that the concept of “art therapist as shaman” was introduced in the art therapy literature by McNiff (1979, 1981, 1988). McNiff is a thought leader and international influence in founding and defining the field of expressive arts therapy (Shambhala Publications, n.d.). He has authored 15 books, more than 50 book chapters, and more than 150 essays and reviews; has been a college professor for over 40 years; has delivered hundreds of lectures and keynotes throughout the world; received citations in 2009 from the House of Representatives and Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for founding Expressive Arts Therapy; and received the Honorary Life Member Award of the American Art Therapy Association in 1997 (McNiff, n.d.). McNiff actively differentiated his theories from those of scientists and psychologists. Beginning in 1981, he called for the art therapy profession to move back toward spirituality, rather than away from it as was common in the modernist shift to science. McNiff (1981) encouraged art therapists to tap into Indigenous roots and arts practices to facilitate healing, as a response to “the previous one-sidedness and closed mindedness of religious belief systems” that had constructed “an equally one-sided denial

of spiritual realities within the dogma of empiricism” (p. 7). McNiff, thus, sought to indigenize art therapy using a complex theoretical concept of the shamanic archetype. He viewed the contemporary expressive arts therapist as one who initiates “a search for the lost soul of the individual and the collective soul of society just as the ancient shaman went on a journey to other worldly spheres to bring back the soul of a possessed person” (McNiff, 1981, p. 6).

One can argue that to engage in the arts as a process for healing is as old as time. To mine Indigenous knowledge regarding healing is to tap into a treasured wisdom for those we treat in the mental health profession. However, there are inherent problems in the process of how art therapists were named as having a function of the shaman, and who benefited and who was harmed in this process. To “situate knowledge” is to contextualize the knowledge formation process and to identify the process in which the truth or reality is being identified (White & Wang, 1995). From my reading, McNiff appeared to situate the “shaman” as a concept that is frozen in the past, as a universal archetype, and/or as a metaphor.

First, let us look at how McNiff positioned the “shaman” as a healer who is situated in the past. In his early writings on the subject, McNiff (1981) referenced Shamanic healing practices as if they were located solely in the past, outside the possibility of an ongoing, dynamic, living cultural practice and knowledge that was actively continuing in the mid–20th century. Examples of McNiff (1981) relating the shaman (as past healer) to the expressive arts therapist (as contemporary healer) include (emphasis added in italics): “psychotherapists are harking *back* to the most ancient and time-validated methods of healing” (vii); “today’s expressive therapist parallels the

methods of *ancient* predecessors” (ix); “we must go *back* to and restore the early art-life integration of the first artists and healers” (xi); “through the restoration of the multifaceted art experience, we will begin *to revive* the expressive dexterity of the shaman” (p. 27); “expressive art therapists who are *reviving* the role of the shaman in contemporary society” (p. 4); “*we are* artistic alchemists and *twentieth century shamans*” (p. 224). In regard to the last two quotes, it is additionally implied that expressive arts therapists are joining collectively to become the shaman of the 20th century, or—worse—expressive therapists are stepping into the wake left by the shaman who no longer exists.

In McNiff’s (1981) *The Arts and Psychotherapy*, there are several chapters about the arts and psychotherapy that follow from the first, entitled, “The Enduring Shaman.” McNiff referenced his study of shamans with the works of Harner’s (1980) popular *The Way of the Shaman* and Larsen’s (1976) *The Shaman’s Doorway*. In his writing, McNiff positioned himself as an expert based on his study of these Western authors, who in turn positioned themselves as experts on shamanism. Moreover, there are no direct quotes or evidence from interviews or personal communications with any Native people in these texts. In contrast, McNiff discussed several art forms in a manner that credits each (non-Native) author, the author’s work, and the author’s expertise, which reveals both a strong bias and erasure of Native existence when presenting expertise. The omission of any referenced relationship with an actual Native person in a book that discusses Native healing practices perpetuates a sense that Native people cannot represent themselves, are all dead, and/or do not exist as contemporary people.

One explanation as to why Native people did not step forward to represent themselves in Western academic discourse may relate to the fact that it was illegal for Native people in the United States to practice their religion before 1978 (American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1978). At the time of McNiff's and other popular writings, many Native people were engaged in survival strategies, such as going into hiding or refusing to share their knowledge outside their community due to learned distrust. Others shared some knowledge, albeit incomplete or creatively edited, out of a desperate need for food and money. In stark contrast, non-Native trained shamans, such as Lynn Andrews (also known as "the Beverly Hills Shaman") were making a great deal of money while American Indian spiritual leaders found themselves in conditions of poverty on reservations and in urban ghettos and worried about being dehumanized for their non-Christian beliefs (Aldred, 2000; Bataille & Silet, 1980).

As a personal, historic example, Isabelle Kelly, a 1932 graduate student in anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, shared in personal letters about the distrust and tension experienced by my great-great-grandfather, William Smith, as discussed with my great-great-uncle, Tom Smith. In my community, Tom Smith was considered to be a healer. To contextualize, in 1932, many in *our* Tribal community were struggling with hunger and poverty. Kelly (as cited in Collier & Thalman, 1996) wrote:

The half-brother [William Smith] refuses to work [with me, he is age 89]. And with good reason as the farm chores keep him more than trotting. However, he proves of no particular moral assistance and has warned the old chap [Tom Smith] against telling too much. "It won't look good and it won't sound good to have too much about doctoring and poisoning; it won't help us people any." (p. xix)

In my review of the reference citations found in McNiff's (1981) text, I studied all that would be most closely related to my Tribe in California in order to understand how shamanism came to be represented in McNiff's research, as well as to compare it to my own understanding. One of McNiff's citations was a 1938 study by Park entitled "Shamanism in Western North America: A Study in Cultural Relationships." The abstract stated that the source was "written by a professional anthropologist" and presents "an exhaustive study of Paviotso Shamans and Shamanism, collected by the author during three summers of ethnographic field investigations in 1933-1935" (Human Relations Area Files, n.d.). Aside from questioning whether Park could exhaustively study his subject matter in three summers, what needs to be recognized here is the rupture in the continuity of respect for the researched individuals and for their knowledge, their traditions, and the contexts in which their knowledge was shared. To not remain in relationship with the informants of knowledge (the researched) and to construct their knowledge as a universal knowledge is to disregard the actual people, as well as to decontextualize their ideas, knowledge, and practices. Without continuous relationship and credit-sharing with the original providers of the knowledge, without reciprocity, one side of the relationship may gain power and authority at the expense of the other (S. Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous knowledge has been shared and evolving within a specific cultural practice and context for thousands of years. This Indigenous knowledge sharing comes with an understanding of respectful ways to name relationships and where one is getting one's information from (W. Wilson, 2008). In contrast, the concept of the shaman and how influential authors and educators such as McNiff utilized it as an archetype, as

separate from the actual relationships and cultural practices of Indigenous communities, needs critical analysis and deconstruction. In his book *Art Heals: How Creativity Cures the Soul* McNiff (2004) wrote:

I see the shaman as an archetypal figure, a universal aspect for art and healing that helps to deepen and expand the image of the creative arts therapist. Shaman has become a cross-cultural term that gives a common name to indigenous healers throughout the world. (p. 200)

In the above assertion McNiff (2004) has exemplified Hall's (1992) concern in which the cultural dominance of the West allows it to take a superior position as it subjugates knowledge of nondominant cultures. First, we see that McNiff (2004) has characterized and classified all traditional Indigenous healing knowledge into a universal category, the shamanic archetype. Second, he has condensed the complex images of Indigenous traditional healing knowledge to be used on behalf of a creative arts therapist. As defined earlier, the notion of scientific colonization (i.e., "the imposition of the colonizers' ways of knowing—and control of all of the knowledge produced"; Chilisa, 2012, p. 9) is relevant here. According to Nobles (as cited in Cram, 2009), a researcher or academic participates in colonization when the person:

1. Removes wealth by exporting raw materials from the community for the purpose of "processing" it into manufactured goods (i.e., books, articles, data, wealth);
2. Assumes unlimited right of access and claim to any data source and any information belonging to the subject population; and

3. Asserts an external power base in that the center of knowledge and information about a people or community is located outside of the community or people themselves. (p. 311)

It is important to understand this critique by situating McNiff within his historical context and in view of cumulative acts of cultural appropriation and disrespect for American Indians and their knowledge that were widespread in academia at the time of his early writing. Cultural appropriation refers to “someone [who] comes and uses . . . knowledge out of its context, out of the special relationships that went into forming it” (L. T. Smith, 1999). In reality, traditional Native healers or shamans draw upon a vast body of knowledge passed down through the centuries. These images and other information are stored in the memories of traditional healers and transmitted from generation to generation (Dufrene, 1988). Native people understand this Indigenous knowledge to be sacred while also of benefit to Western medicine and the mental health field (Warson et al., 2013). However, Native people have been hurt by sharing their knowledge. As S. Wilson (2008) explained:

Intergenerational knowledge or guardianship have built up the relationship for generations with the knowledge that they are entitled to. . . . For someone else to come along and use this knowledge in an inappropriate manner is like raping the relationship. . . . Sexual exploitation and total denigration of our humanity was a big part of colonialism. Now that is taking place with our ideas and knowledge. Our knowledge is being stripped of its relationships and being used without accountability. (p. 114)

To fully understand the harm of cultural appropriation, it must be recognized that

in the United States, until the passage of the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Americans Indians not only were considered federal criminals if they practiced their spiritual beliefs but were also beaten, punished, and removed from their families as a strategy for social control (Gray et al., 2008; Silliman, 2004). Therefore, knowledge sharing among themselves actually could be prosecuted as a criminal activity. This reality stands in sharp contrast with Western experts who, when they studied Indigenous practices, gained publication credit and academic status. Moreover, they incorporated this very knowledge into a universal construct of healing, thereby making it their own knowledge (Dufrene, 1991). Consider McNiff's (2004) statement:

The shaman is a universal figure, interpreted in endlessly varied ways by the different cultures of the world. Emphasis on cultural differences sometimes obscures the common qualities of human experience. . . . In the postindustrial West, we overlook the fact that we still have complete access to the native world of soul and nature. (p. 197)

Consider as well this example from McNiff (2004):

The archetypal perspective is poetic, metaphoric, and often imaginary. . . .

Searching for the shaman can become a metaphor for traveling into the realm of imagination and discovering what is native to the self. (p. 194–195)

During the modernist period, Western-trained scientists frequently framed Indigenous beliefs, stories, and practices as metaphor or myth. A prominent example was Merriam (1910), an American who trained as a zoologist, mammalogist, ornithologist, and entomologist and who initiated the evolving process of subjugating the knowledge of the Miwok people. He documented oral traditional knowledge of Miwok people in his

1910 book *The Dawn of the World: Myths and Weird Tales Told by the Mewan (Miwok) Indians of California*. In the title, Merriam constructed Miwok oral traditional knowledge and beliefs to be positioned into the categories of myths and/or weird tales.

Also of relevance are psychologists who developed theory based on myth and metaphor. Hillman, for example, wrote that “the primary rhetoric of archetypal psychology is myth . . . these myths are themselves metaphors . . . so that by relying on myths as its primary rhetoric archetypal psychology grounds itself in a fantasy that cannot be taken historically, physically, literally” (McLean, 2015, p. 325). This perspective contributes to theory construction when located in a dominant discourse of Western psychology. However, when positioned as making universal knowledge claims, it can decontextualize and subjugate traditional Native spiritual worldviews and practices. To be clear, the relocation of any Native belief, practice, or personal experience to the position of “metaphor” risks changing the true nature of the experience, as well as to subjugate, distance, and detach the original meaning, relationship, and worldview (Bishop, 2008; Fine, Tuck, & Zeller-Berkman, 2008). Hocoy (2006) offers a poignant reflection about his pain of living in continual metaphor versus settling into a known resonance of his cultural existence:

One early realization in childhood was that certain things just did not translate, and that the nature of my existence was one of living in the margins, a place of continual metaphor, where things were “like” or “as” other things, but not exactly so. (p. 132)

One can further deconstruct how positioning traditional Indigenous practices and worldviews as metaphorical can be another form of subjugating knowledge in examples

from the arts. Although some may consider that an art product expresses metaphorical meaning, this assumption may not always hold for a client with Indigenous beliefs and worldview. Many American Indian artists have spoken about the way art offers a direct relationship with their spiritual connections, not a metaphorical one. Brian Tripp, a California Indian artist, spoke about his art as a connector with ancestors. He said, “I am these people and I have done all those things before” (LaPena & Hills, 2004b). Frank Day, another California Indian artist, spoke about the direct relationship art has with his spiritual life: “I talk my paintings, say them, sing them, and then paint them” (as cited in Dobkins, Caldwell, & LaPena, 1997, p. 58). Day also spoke of the way art is an act that maintains continuity with tradition and his culture. “[Once] in a while I take up color and paint a little bit because if I do not do this, all things will be forgotten” (as cited in Dobkins et al., 1997, pp. 14–15).

In regard to the art process, art products, symbolism, and meaning making, cultural worldviews inform knowledge construction and subjective truth (Warson, 2012b). For example, it is problematic to view the art of an American Indian artist as a lens into the artist’s individual psyche in the same way this practice has been constructed in Western psychology assessment protocols (Dufrene, 1990). One cannot assume that “the individual” is what is represented by American Indian artists. Their art may be self-representative but it may also be a collective story or ancestors’ knowledge. Although the notion of universality intends to normalize and humanize all clients for treatment considerations, considering all of art as a universal language without culturally responsive self-assessment can (even unintentionally) promote cultural oppression (Warson, 2012a).

Just as art is not the great equalizer of cultures, we art therapists need to critically analyze our worldview and the way we position the concept of “metaphor” for knowledge construction before applying it as a framework in another cultural context. As Hocoy (2006) wrote, some concepts just don’t translate. Just as there is no known word in an American Indian language that comes close to the Western definition of “art” (Dufrene, 1990; Hammond, Lippard, Quick-to-See Smith, & Younger, 1985), I wonder whether the same may be said of Western definitions of “metaphor.” Art therapists need to critically analyze the way Western constructions and concepts are translated into other cultural worldviews. The use of metaphor holds an important place in many cultures, but in the cultural context and meaning of an Indigenous community, using this construct may be a form of distancing and relocating Indigenous knowledge into a subjugated position.

Fortunately, creative arts therapists have begun to problematize the assertion that “the expressive therapist appears unequivocally as the resurrected shaman” (McNiff, 1981, p. 21) and question whether to situate the “shaman” as a concept that is frozen in the past, as a universal archetype, and/or as a metaphor. For example, Sajnani (2012) wrote that “the idea that [art] therapists may have considered themselves to be ‘shamans’ reveals the degree to which theorists and practitioners in this field had permitted themselves to appropriate the language and rituals of others for their own advancement” (p. 187). Dufrene (1988, 1990, 1991; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Dufrene et al., 1992; Coleman & Farris-Dufrene, 1996; Farris-Dufrene & Garrett, 1999) and Warson (2003, 2009, 2012a, 2012b; Warson et al., 2013), American Indian art therapists, also have contributed to the discourse on art therapy practices that respect American Indian

peoples. Contemporary arts therapists continue to have an important corrective role to play by critically deconstructing the sociopolitical climate of the modernist era and generations of colonization in the United States (Hamrick & Byma, 2017; Karcher, 2017). This role includes deconstructing essentialism, cultural appropriation, and the subjugation of American Indian knowledge, culture, and practices. To decolonize mental health practices one also needs to understand the impact of cultural and spiritual genocide and colonial amnesia.

Cultural and Spiritual Genocide and Colonial Amnesia

Some of the same U.S.-based systems that enacted policies of genocide and systematic practices of oppression on American Indian peoples also have provided the mental health services and governance for the American Indian peoples for decades (Dufrene et al., 1992; Hamrick & Byma, 2017; Karcher, 2017; Warson, 2012a). There still exists today concern about external systems serving as providers for American Indian people, given that “tribes know best the needs of their communities [whereas] funders may not regularly consult with tribes about their programs and may thus develop program requirements, design evaluations, and require reporting using solely a Western lens” (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration et al., 2016, p. 62). To disregard the power and healing of American Indian communities’ cultural practices and their need for sovereignty is problematic and harmful.

It is important to consider the ongoing potential for a form of genocide that is not limited to killing the physical human body but manifests in another form of annihilation. Because current U.S. law agrees that killing Native people is criminal, awareness has come forward regarding the matter of cultural and spiritual genocide as well. Cultural and

spiritual genocide involves the oppressive belief that a culture is inferior, thus justifying the right to erase that cultural identity and destroy customary social and cultural processes that work to “unite hearts and establish order” of that cultural group (Atkinson, 2002, p. 69). Cultural genocide eradicates a sense of worth and well-being, interrupts relational connections, and leaves a person or group feeling divided, devalued, and lost (Atkinson, 2002; Grande, 2000).

Cultural genocide involves a collective silence or conspiracy of silence that is maintained by the dominant society and interrupts not only the cultural identity of the nondominant person or group but also their ability to have an authentic self-identity (Fivush, 2010; Kurtis, Adams, & Yellow Bird, 2010). “When silence is imposed, by self or by others, it can lead to a loss of memory and a loss of part of the self” (Fivush, 2010, p. 92). Research has found that adolescents living in Tribes without a shared narrative of their own history have substantially higher suicide rates than adolescents living in Tribes that have maintained their own history in resistance to the culturally dominant narrative (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998, 2008; Doerfler, Sinclair, & Stark, 2013; Fivush, 2010). Collective sharing of stories and narrative thus appears to build cultural identity and resiliency in a community.

Collective forgetting causes harm and is more commonly done by groups that have harmed other groups (Kurtis et al., 2010). DiAngelo (2012) goes further to write that the role of silence is critical to protecting one’s dominance, because dominance depends, in part, on the silence of others. Colonial amnesia is “the inability (or unwillingness) of the colonizer to recall the past oppression that they have perpetuated on the colonized” (Gray et al., 2008, p. 282). Research has linked traumatic historical events,

silence, and psychological consequences (Cole, 2004; Kurtis et al., 2010; Liem, 2007; van der Kolk, 2014). In the United States, regarding the example of the national Thanksgiving holiday, research tentatively suggests that genocide silencing undermines reparative action (Kurtis et al., 2010). Van der Kolk (2014) wrote: “Trauma almost invariably involves not being seen, not being mirrored, and not being taken into account” (p. 59).

Also problematic in the erasure of one’s identity and history is what then comes in to replace the silenced narrative. Scheurich and Young (as cited in Rigney, 1999) argue that once one group is sufficiently silenced and fragmented, the dominant culture becomes what is internalized as what is right or natural “rather than as historically evolved social constructions” (p. 7). Warson (2012a), Duran and Duran (1995), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration et al. (2016) have identified concern regarding any Western mental health service that contributes to the erasure of American Indian identity and sovereignty by replacing Native practices with external systems and practices.

What Is Indigenous Methodology?

Strategic practices of Indigenous knowledge construction have been employed for thousands of years. *Indigenous methodology* is a contemporary term that signals the continuity of the generational passing down of Indigenous seeing, knowing, and thinking and ongoing systems of inquiry, situated equally alongside Western-based research paradigms. According to a diary kept by Francis Fletcher, a priest aboard Sir Francis Drake’s ship during his circumnavigation of the world from 1577 to 1580, 1579 is the earliest recorded account of the Coast Miwok people made by Europeans (FIGR, n.d.-b).

Based on oral history shared in my Tribe, Coast Miwok ways of knowing, seeing, and thinking were engaged in strategic practices of knowledge construction before 1579, when colonizing systems were introduced to *our* Indigenous community. For the purposes of this dissertation I am looking to make visible the continuous flow of Indigenous knowledge construction that predates colonization and the introduction of Western science to the Americas. However, Indigenous methodology is now being realized as a form of cultural reclamation in the context of generations of colonization with a mix of innovation and culturally bound systems.

It is important to contextualize Indigenous methodology as an early system of research that predates colonial contact and needs to be considered within its own right as well as within current colonial systems that historically disregarded Indigenous forms of knowledge construction or research methodology as invalid. U.S. federal law defines research as “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” (Protection of Human Subjects, 2009, §46.102[b]). Chilisa (2012) defined research as the systematic “adoption of a strategy or a set of principles to study an issue of interest” (p. 6). The term *methodology* can be defined as a way of examining reality (S. Wilson, 2008). This dissertation is not an argument for or against the superior positioning of specific methodologies, research, or science intrinsically. However, when discussing generalizable systems of knowledge construction, it is dangerous if Indigenous communities and academics do not problematize the way in which science has been constructed to promote the reification of Western thought as the only reality (G. H. Smith, 2000; L. T. Smith, 2012). In this paper, Indigenous methodology is situated

alongside Western research methodologies as a valid strategy and set of principles that studies issues in our world, examines reality, and contributes to generalizable knowledge.

Indigenous methodology constructs an equal position for Indigenous thought, vision, and ways of thinking when we find ourselves as academics and practitioners navigating historical colonial systems and working alongside non-Native allies.

Indigenous methodology exists as a strategy to employ sovereignty, which is defined as “the power of a people to control their own destiny” (W. A. Wilson & Yellow Bird, 2005, p. 108). Contemporary dialogue about Indigenous methodology is located within the context of the American Genocide (Madley, 2016) and the worldwide colonization and systematic efforts to eradicate Indigenous peoples. Early steps in an Indigenous methodology involve the deconstruction of colonial systems that provide terminology and a view on reality that may erase or regard Indigenous worldviews and meaning making as less valid. Indigenous methodology holds the emancipatory intent to interrupt silence about the past and question the subordinate position Indigenous peoples often find ourselves in today (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; L. T. Smith, 2008; S. Wilson, 2008). This path includes compassionately reflecting on the lives of our ancestors during the colonial process and genocide and critically analyzing the power dynamics that instituted what we currently encounter.

Indigenous methodology aims to re-story *our* history from a Native point of view and experience. Indigenous methodology employs a paradigm that challenges Western positivist/post-positivist assumptions in terms of what constitutes knowledge construction. As an art therapist and California Indian Tribal member, I find resonance with Indigenous methodology due to its potential to integrate areas of knowledge so that

research is both spiritual and aesthetic (S. Wilson, 2008). LaFrance and Crazy Bull (2009) identified three categories of knowledge construction in particular: (a) *traditional knowledge*, knowledge that reinforces values and beliefs, which is handed down from generation to generation, includes the stories about creation, origins of clans, encounters between ancestors, and the spirit world, and is based on stories and experiences; (b) *empirical knowledge*, which is gained through careful observation from multiple vantage points over an extended period of time; and (c) *revealed knowledge*, which is knowledge acquired through dreams, visions, and spiritual protocol.

When working with an Indigenous population it is important to operationalize the ability for *traditional knowledge* and *revealed knowledge* to emerge in our relationships and be integrated into the knowledge construction process. Indigenous methodology privileges Indigenous ways of seeing reality, ways of knowing, value systems that shape approaches, and meaning-making systems (Chilisa, 2012, p. 13). For example, Indigenous methodology prioritizes relationality and respect above data collection and knowledge for knowledge's sake (S. Wilson, 2008). Real life, people, and relationships determine the process, not any one researcher. Indigenous methodology, which includes operationalizing the ability for traditional and revealed knowledge to emerge, involves the ethical stance of being respectful, reciprocal, and responsible in one's relationality (Chilisa, 2012; Ellis & Early, 2006; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; S. Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous methodology also makes room for respectful collaborations and approaches that do not polarize Indigenous methodology and Western academic research (G. H. Smith, 2000). However, this principle presents challenges and requires an investment in expansive skill sets and relationality. For example, to negotiate the many

layers and boundary traveling among the living processes of culture and language in more than one cultural system requires sophistication with multilogical approaches (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). “Living through and integrating the thinking, visioning, talking, intuiting and/or writing of these layers (for some people and some sections using two languages) is the form of rigor demanded by the present forms of Indigenous scholarship” (Weber-Pillwax, 1999, p. 39).

Indigenous methodology is a paradigm that can be considered and applied at three levels. First, in parallel to the predominant positioning of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in a cultural and sociopolitical context of Western science, Indigenous methodology is rooted in an Indigenous cultural and sociopolitical context and worldview. Indigenous methodology, much like quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, can be considered an umbrella term for a strategic set of principles informed by Indigenous worldviews that provides knowledge to various institutions, as well as a system of approaches to knowledge construction. Second, the term is not general, but is rather applied and distinguishes the specific worldview and set of principles of one Indigenous community or individual. Third, there is an application of how to operationalize all of the principles of Indigenous methodology to a specific research project.

These three levels of scope often overlap. In this paper, I will be discussing all three levels of Indigenous methodology as they are applied in my knowledge construction process. In the present section, I will discuss the general or umbrella set of principles as well as some knowledge construction design considerations. Then, in the next section, I will specifically discuss how I personalized Indigenous methodology to be applied with

my own Tribe's collective knowledge and beliefs. Finally, in Chapter 3, I will apply Indigenous methodology in my current knowledge construction research, designed as arts-based Indigenous methodology, to meet my specific project goals.

In Indigenous methodology, we regard the past and current generations of collective effort to survive genocide as what marks the ground upon which we are walking today. Although it may seem obvious and even distressing to name, survival is still a necessary consideration for many Indigenous people. Unfortunately, in some parts of the world it is still unsafe to be Indigenous. For example, the number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada is disproportionately higher than any other race (Native Women's Association of Canada, 2015). For this reason, Indigenous methodology must consider designs for knowledge construction that promote survival and the ongoing existence of Indigenous cultures and communities.

One general principle of Indigenous methodology includes strategies that promote inclusivity, respect, and aboriginal rights and transform historical inequality in power relationships. Indigenous methodology works to transform relations and positions of power (Chilisa, 2012; Laenui, 2000; L. T. Smith, 1999, 2008). Indigenous notions of power include being rooted in Indigenous concepts of respect, balance, reciprocity, and peaceful coexistence (Grande, 2015, p. 78). These action strategies often work within an emergent design that allows an Indigenous community to respond within its specific context and with its local needs considered.

Indigenous people want self-determination with reciprocity in research and research design (Chilisa, 2012; L. T. Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2008). Indigenous methodology is a knowledge construction process with the purpose of benefitting the

community that is being researched (Weber-Pillwax, 2001). In Indigenous methodology, self-determination manifests as authentically generating a reciprocal relationship between “the researcher” and the community involved in the research project. The community not only determines the research process, outcomes, and benefits from the findings and experience, but the researcher also is changed in a parallel process of learning and growth during this community-run process (S. Wilson, 2008). The Indigenous community is not acted upon as a recipient of knowledge or as the passive audience in the research process. Rather, the Native community has sovereignty to determine the genre, writes the script, directs the theater, and plays the core actors.

To not have a space to exist as a culture or a community, without embodied memory, practice, or story, is a form of annihilation. Indigenous methodology creates a safe space for Indigenous people to exist; to communicate in *our* languages, to continue symbolizing, to dream, to express authentic identity, to tell stories, to live in *our* sense of rhythm and time. Indigenous methodology (re)creates a space, after it has been interrupted, intruded upon, and torn down for generations, that is big enough to invite energy and focus, invoke spirit, and contribute to community (Diaz Soto, 2004; L. T. Smith, 1999).

To revisit the past is a difficult yet critical path in a decolonization practice. Therefore, it is necessary that there be a practice for mourning in this process (Laenui, 2000). It is impossible to reach back, rediscover, unmask, contextualize, and reconnect relationally without the heart breaking from witnessing the extensive dehumanization of *our* people. Mourning is a culturally informed response to interrupt the numbing and silence about the grim centuries of devastation for Indigenous peoples (Peters, 1997). To

mourn *our* history is to honor those before *us* who did not survive physically but survive in spirit, in story, and in what they passed on. It is an involved process to remain collectively embodied and congruent in affect with collective story and spirit. To mourn is a path to remaining authentic; to not dissociate or be silenced, which can lead to soul loss. These imperatives can be named and supported when designing a research study.

In Indigenous methodology one positions the Indigenous people involved at the center of the inquiry with sovereignty to direct their own identity formation process, principles, and self-representation. It is important to note that as soon as one tries to define a methodology as Indigenous, one risks essentialism, thus conflicting with the way in which the researcher needs to learn and build relationships and knowledge with the community involved. Essentialism is “the belief that a set of unchanging properties (essences) delineate the construction of a particular category” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 142), such as a too-rigid definition of what is Indigenous when regarding the concept of Indigenous methodology. Therefore, Indigenous methodology insists that the living community involved must inform and drive any inquiry process so that the concept of Indigenousness does not become fixed and unchanging, kept in the past as a historic artifact (Chilisa, 2012; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use Chilisa’s (2012) definition of Indigenous: “a cultural group’s way of perceiving reality, ways of knowing, and the value systems that inform research processes” (p. 13). What makes a methodology Indigenous, according to Chilisa, is when “ways of seeing reality, ways of knowing, and values systems are informed by [one’s] indigenous knowledge systems and shaped by the struggle to resist and survive the assault on [one’s] culture” (2012, p. 13).

It is important to consider that there will be different notions of time and space when situated in autonomous cultural worldviews and meaning-making systems. With this in mind, Indigenous methodology creates a space for Indigenous community-determined views and positioning of time and space; different systems of language for making space and time; and different notions of past and present, of place, and of relationships to the land (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 57). Indigenous methodology involves an emergent, fluid process that is of its own rhythm of time and repeats, endlessly self-organizing, over a lifetime and for generations (S. Wilson, 2008). Indigenous methodology requires a lifelong commitment as the researcher becomes part of the research process ecosystem in reciprocal relationship with the community (S. Wilson, 2008). This emergent process will not necessarily be consistent or predictable. *Spiral discourse* is another phrase to describe Indigenous methodology in practice, where meanings are continually negotiated and co-constructed within the cultural frameworks (Bishop, 2008).

Indigenous methodology is infused with core cultural sensibility and spiritual connections to reclaim purpose, community, and health through cultural grounding (Kovach, 2009). As an impetus in the design of a research project, cultural grounding is “the way that culture nourishes the researcher’s spirit during the inquiry, and how it nourishes the research itself” (Kovach, 2009, p. 115). This cultural grounding involves celebrations, rituals, and practices of *our* knowledge, language, ancestral spirit, cosmos, the spirit of the land/environment, stories, thinking patterns, worldview, beliefs, values, lifestyles, techniques, and collective memory—all of which may serve as a means for engaging people in the construction of their own knowledge. When considering how to

apply Indigenous methodology in a research design, it can include poetry, drama, storytelling, and critical personal narratives that represent and make Indigenous life visible (Denzin et al., 2008).

Application of Indigenous Methodology: *Ka Tamalko Pichas̱nako*

This section applies Indigenous methodology principles to my specific research focus. I chose to use *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok language as the source language when applying concepts found in the literature to the goal of social action. That is, writing about theory and concepts of Indigenous methodology while maintaining the discourse in English actually would have interrupted my core intentions for my research project. To meet this challenge, I sought to establish an equal position and prioritizing of knowledge construction in *Tamal Machchaw* and Native voices alongside all other literature. I will identify in this section embodied *pichas̱nako*/concepts as I first encountered them in *Tamal Machchaw*. *Tamal Machchaw* is then translated to English as a bridge to academic discourse, thereby making the process accessible beyond my own personal process. These are borderlands that I travel and some meaning is lost in this translation process. However, I hope that the art included here will illuminate some of the complexity and meaning that is not possible to translate through words alone.

Figure 1 symbolizes my construct of a personal Indigenous methodology. The composition shows the *pichas̱nako*/concepts coming together in equal relationship to create and inform a central space for knowledge construction. The *pichas̱nako*/concepts that are holding the center, and will be discussed further below, are:

- *Wus̱kipa*/respect (with humility)
- *Metakmi*/remember

- *Machchaw*/language
- *'Akkalako*/stories
- *'Allupu 'is wuski* / listening to the heart
- *Molis, 'ayuk, he yomunnaka* / gratitude, hope, and beauty
- *Hunaa maako towis hinak* / so that we do good
- *Wuskipa muk'am 'inniiko* / respecting all relations
- *Na'uuti muk'am kennetto* / returning all together
- *Tulum* / questioning and critical analysis
- *Koyanni Sunu: hinak yomi* / Singing Nest: making a home space
- *Maako 'opu 'allupu wakaati toktoola 'Alwan Koyanni* / we listen deeply to the Elderberry Tree singing
- *Pichchan 'api 'uni weyatto* / student in many worlds
- *'Issa, 'issa, 'issa* / commitment
- *Wuskin poole* / grieving

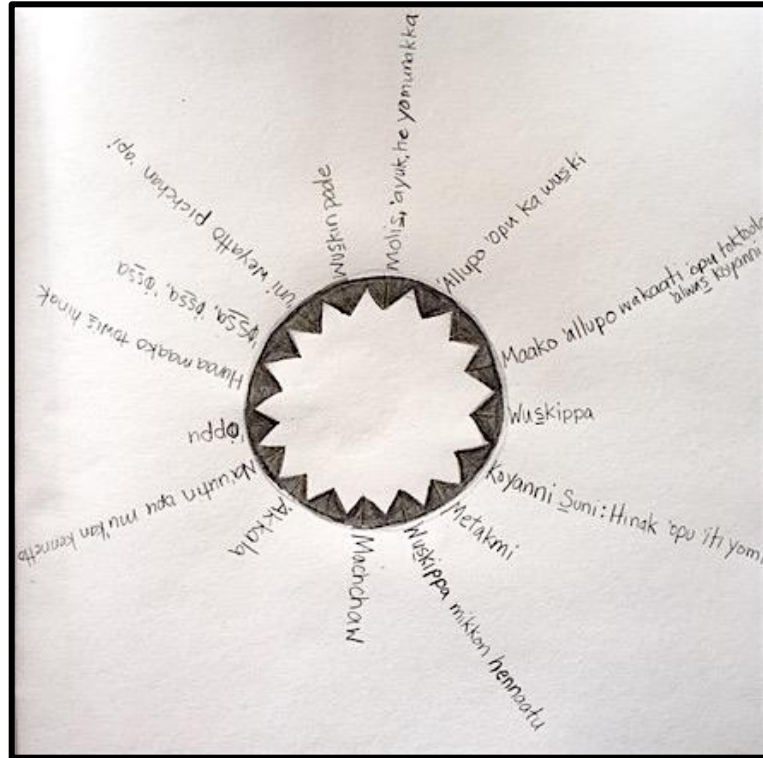


Figure 1. Personal Concept Map Informed by *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok Language

***Hinak Pichasnatu 'Opu Wuskipa* / To Make Knowledge With Respect**

All language, concepts, and ideas are culturally bound (Chilisa, 2012; L. T. Smith, 1999). *Pichasna* can be translated from *Tamal Machchaw* into English to mean “knowledge.” However, in this context, *pichasna* prioritizes the methods of traditional and revealed knowledge (LaFrance & Crazy Bull, 2009) that equally conceive dreams, stories, spiritual practice, encounters between ancestors and the spirit world, visions, embodied experience, and other Indigenous-informed relationships that illuminate knowledge construction in *our* worldviews.



Figure 2. *Kennetto / Together*

To find and analyze the literature bound with the culture of my Tribe, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, I searched a variety of sources. Chilisa (2012) defined “literature” in a postcolonial Indigenous research methodology to include: “[Native] language[s], cultural artifacts, legends, stories, practices, songs, rituals, poems, dances, tattoos, lived experiences . . . personal stories, [and] community stories.” (p. 60). My search for core *pichasna*/concepts for a personal Indigenous methodology included the following literature or data: the FIGR Tribal website; the FIGR Tribal constitution; videos on *our* Elders; Tribal citizen writing (published and manuscripts); the FIGR Tribal newsletter; interviews with Elders; FIGR Tribal posters and language materials; Coast

Miwok language; FIGR Tribal blessings; published anthropological notes and books on my Tribe; American Indian artist exhibit catalogues, websites, and published books with retrospectives; poems by Californian Indians; walking the FIGR Tribal aboriginal land; engaging in a practice of connection and deep listening; and painting in my studio.

Overall Core *Pichasna*: *Wuskipa* / Respect

Fundamentally, the core and comprehensive *pichasna*/concept in my personal Indigenous methodology is *wuskipa*/respect. All other *pichasnako*/concepts are to be considered within the context of *wuskipa*/respect. Here it is important to define *wuskipa* in an Indigenous worldview. In his book *Research Is Ceremony*, S. Wilson (2008) insisted that the researcher engage with respect, which means practicing reciprocity and relational responsibility. He elaborates that the researcher is in a role to bridge to sacred space; to make and strengthen connections. Knowledge transfer is about continuing relationships (S. Wilson, 2008). This is an epistemology that views “knowledge as something that is socially constructed by embedded, embodied people who are in relation with each other” (Thayer-Bacon as cited in Bishop, 2008, p. 157). If researchers are not personally changed by the research process, then they are doing something wrong (S. Wilson, 2008). To engage in Indigenous methodology is to be in an emergent process that is intuitive, cyclical, personal/subjective, inclusive, and integrates compassion and action for the soul purpose of contributing to the lives of the co-researchers, which for my purposes are the American Indian participants and their community (S. Wilson, 2008; Weber-Pillwax, 2001). Kapitan (2015) wrote that in respectful cross-cultural art therapy approaches, art therapists must “commit to people—not to a cause” (p. 110). S. Wilson would go further and require a commitment to all relations (e.g., cosmos, ancestors,

animals, plants, non-living things, the environment, and spirit[s]). In this regard, a pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake is not ethical and does not show respect from an Indigenous epistemology (S. Wilson, 2008).



Figure 3. *Ma 'Inniiko / My Tribe*

With my personal Indigenous methodology construction process as an example, I work to maintain a respectful relationship with my Tribal community. I look to practice Indigenous methodology by initiating my search for and naming of *pichasnako* using *Tamal Machchaw*. This process of starting with *Tamal Machchaw* and then translating these *pichasnako* back to English provides insight into the cultural center of my Tribe. In this spirit of holding the cultural language and knowledge of *our* Coast Miwok (and Southern Pomo) worldview at the center, I hope to create space and strengthen connection with all “informants.” Here “informants” are not necessarily only people, but include all that is connected with spirit and story. In creating a space of deep listening, I

allow all “informants” to arrive and inform me. As my Tribal Chairman, Greg Sarris (personal communication, August 12, 2016), advised when I spoke of my new experience of having spiritual and noncognitive information arriving in the studio, “Just listen!” This is how one shows respect in research with Indigenous methodology.

Pichasna: Metakmi / Remember

Metakmi/remember is a core *pichasna* for staying connected and living with respect as a member of my community. *Metakmi* goes beyond just memory and a thought process; it includes a deeper connection with all that has gone on before and implies a commitment and identification with all that is known in *our* bones, in *our* hearts, and in *our* worldview. *Matakmi* is a practice, even more than it is a *pichasna*/concept. *Metakmi* allows *us* to survive, to have a moral path, to live with integrity, to not be lost, to keep *our* soul. *Metakmi* is to exist.



Figure 4. *Koya Tsupu / Tsupu's Song*

“In the old roundhouse above the Russian River, Grandpa Tom often spoke of this all-encompassing notion of sacredness and place. Gesturing with his hand to the earth and heavens, he admonished us: Remember” (Sarris, 2015, p. 4). Grandpa Tom (Tom Smith, aka Tomás Comchetal, my great-great-great-uncle) was considered a medicine man in *our* Tribe. His mother was Tsupu, who has been identified as one of the few survivors of the American Genocide (Madley, 2016) from whom *our* contemporary living Tribal citizens descend. When he speaks, he connects *us* with the past and traditional ways of knowing:

Our family, our relatives, are not only those around us, they are also those who have gone before us. They are our history. They gave us our ways and we are to be the teachers of our tradition. If we lose our ways, our history, we will be lost and there will be no one to tell us where to go. That's why those Indian things and doing are so important; they are our eyes and our children's eyes. The Father commanded this be said to all of you here. (Tom Smith [Tomás Comchetal], Bodega Miwok, 1898, as cited in FIGR, n.d.-a)

As previously described, Kelly was an anthropology graduate student who worked with Tom Smith as an informant for her research on the Miwok people of California in the 1930s. In her correspondence, she provided insight into Tom Smith's commitment to the practice of remembering at a time when much was being lost and forgotten. To sing was a way for Tom Smith to remember.

My informant is one of the world's nicer people and we are on excellent terms with each other. The poor old chap (94) works about as hard as I do. . . . He spends his evenings singing, so that he may remember things to tell me the following day. (Kelly, as cited in Collier & Thalman, 1996, p. xvi)

Julia Parker is a Tribal Elder in *our* Tribe who is committed to teaching about basket weaving and other traditional practices. She has said: "Think about where you came from—to learn respect. . . . Don't forget. . . . Our roots are alive, if we approach in the right spiritual way, with respect" (Murray & Campbell, 2005). Greg Sarris is the FIGR Tribal Chairman, a relation of Tom Smith, and has published extensively about *our* Tribe's history, people, stories, and culture. He writes about the power of respect and remembering: "Respect becomes the only guarantee of survival. This respect is

predicated on remembering that, even with unique power, you are not alone, absolute”
(Sarris, 2011, p. 6).

Pichasna: Machchaw / Language

Machchaw/language is a primary *pichasna* to consider in my personal Indigenous methodology because it is a symbolization of *our* culture. “Languages are the key to worldview and the embodiment of Indigenous cultures, their loss would threaten all that makes Indigenous societies culturally distinct” (W. A. Wilson & Yellow Bird, 2005, p 5). I consider here that *machchaw*/language is more than just words and grammar, but includes breath, sounds, rhythms, melody, patterns, pacing, symbols, metaphors, spirit, and all of the arts. “Use of symbolism or metaphor . . . can’t be separated from the rest of the relationships. A symbol is just as ‘real’ as what it stands for” (S. Wilson, 2008, p. 123). As Quick-to-See Smith said, “Dying cultures do not make art” (Hammond et al., 1985, Double Vision, para. 6). To continue symbolizing, via art and other forms of language, is to continue the breath and life of the culture. I personally feel that when I speak *Tamal Machchaw* I am growing and connecting with a collective soul that is older than I am and that holds the heart of *our* culture. This experience is so profound and authentic that I am often moved to tears. *Tamal Machchaw* reaches places inside of me that I cannot access in any other way or language.

Machchaw/language is a method of naming absolute meaning in one’s own terms. “I determine myself by using terms I choose” (W. A. Wilson & Yellow Bird, 2005, p.157). An Indigenous methodology puts Indigenous culture at the center; therefore, the original *machchaw*/language of the culture needs to be at the center. When Tom Smith said, “My language is *Olom*. My people are *Olomko*” (Collier & Thalman, 1996, p. 81),

he was illustrating the connection between the language and the identity of *our* people. To call *us* something other than *our* name is to distance *us* from who *we* are in *our* own relationship with *ourselves*, *our* relationships to each other, and in *our* cultural paradigm interfacing with other cultures.



Figure 5. *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok Language

“As far as we know, no ‘pure-blooded’ Coast Miwok people are alive today and only a few claim even partial knowledge of the language” (Collier & Thalman, 1996, p. xxx). That my Tribe is struggling to hold onto *our machchaw*/language indicates the need for a process that creates/recreates a space to symbolize *our* cultural relationships. To practice *wuskipa*/respect and *metakmi*/remembering is to continue prioritizing the use of

machchaw/language as well. To erase *machchaw* is to erase the center of *our* people, insights into the social organization of the people, and cultural memory (Kovach, 2009). “Linguicide” is a term coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (as cited in Mutua & Swadener, 2004) to emphasize the way the English language has killed off other cultures; an approach that uses dominance to push others out of the center (p. 14).

Language is a means of identity as much as it is a tool for empowerment and representation. Not only is language central to how knowledge is constructed, authorized, and the purposes it fulfills, it is essential in “working the hyphens” (Fine, 1994, p. 72) that separates and at the same times shapes the relationships, experiences and interactions of the colonizers and the colonized (Fine, 1994; Thiongo’o, 1986, 1993). (Mutua & Swadener, 2004, p. 15)

Language maintains power differences and bias is embedded in language (Spaniol & Cattaneo, 1994). To use English instead of *Tamal Machchaw* is to lose many contextual meanings of my Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo culture. To translate between languages is often akin to providing a black and white copy of a color picture, a “place of continual metaphor” (Hocoy, 2006, p. 132) that never really lands on the exact meaning or expression. Given the historical context that, when colonized, Americans Indians were beaten and punished for speaking their Native language, the re-creation of space for *Tamal Machchaw* is a reparative act as well as a meaningful practice of cultural connection. Speaking *Tamal Machchaw* is a reparative act that confronts and responds to violence. As Adrienne Rich wrote, “Where language and naming are power, silence is oppression, is violence” (as cited in Diaz Soto, 2004, p. x).

Pichasna: ‘Akkalako / Stories

Tulpa ‘opu ma ‘akkalako he ma ‘akkalako ‘untu ‘oppoy ‘enakto / share our stories and our stories will travel far (Denzin et al., 2008). “Stories are true—they are never JUST stories” (Sarris, 2017, part 5, para. 3). ‘Akkala is a culturally embedded term for “story.” To consider the pichasna of ‘akkalako, one is talking of old times and oral tradition as well as the “contemporary legends” (Longfish, Medicine, Randall, & Tremblay, 1987, p. 33) we are now weaving in our speaking, artwork, and expressions. ‘Akkala is a gift that one carries around, a friend for a journey in life to process meaning in a culturally informed relationship. Sarris (1997), in his essay, “The Truth Will Rise”, wrote, “I say no, a story is not something you figure out the meaning of, but something you carry with you the rest of your life to talk back and forth with” (p. 229). To engage with ‘akkalako is a way of life, a context, a practice of meaning making.



Figure 6. *‘Inniiko ‘Akkala Huuli / Tribe Story Quilt*

To embrace *'akkalako*, one is given a personal puzzle to complete over and over again with a different approach constructed for each round. Mabel McKay, a Native Elder and medicine woman, said, “Don’t ask me what the story means” (as cited in Sarris, 1997, p. 229). She insisted that she can’t say what the story means to anyone else, but only what the story is saying to her in that moment—and when the moment shifts, so does the *'akkala*, and what it holds. And yet, *'akkala* holds a context for the cultural community to share and build relationships in the way right for each of *us*.

And the clappers . . . them clappers, sounding loud, echoing in these hills, echoing everywhere so the people would know. . . . These places and the stories associated with them anchor us no matter how far we travel. (Sarris, 1994, p. x)

Pichasna: 'Allupu 'is Wuski / Listening to the Heart

And I say no, I’m coming into the field with what my people taught me, what I know in my heart. I’m using my Native point of view to inform and talk back and forth with your theories, rather than your theories telling me what I am. (Sarris, 1997, p. 230)

As Sarris says above and as Weber-Pillwax is quoted in S. Wilson (2008) as saying, “checking your heart” is a critical element in the research process (p. 60). An Indigenous methodology prioritizes what is taught from the heart rather than the intellect. This is because in an Indigenous worldview, what one’s heart shares is how to relate with respect (S. Wilson, 2008; Dufrene, 1990).

In the story “Coyote Throws His Sons Into the Sky”, the Council of Wise Women Governors, who determine the headman of the community, insist: “...what is most important is what lies in a person’s heart” (Sarris, 2017, para. 17). Indigenous

methodology follows the recommendations of the Council of Wise Women Governors, just like Coyote did to become ready to be headman of his community.



Figure 7. *Ka Wuski Weete / My Heart Opens*

A Cree word, *Miskâsowin*, means to go to the center of yourself to find your own belonging (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, as cited in Kovach, 2009, p. 49). Inward reflection, although not new to research, is an essential knowledge of meeting your own heart in Indigenous methodology. Inward knowledge, or listening to your heart, can include dreams, ceremony, prayer, and experiences walking the land. This path to center *ourselves* with *our* heart is not optional. Through staying open to teachings from *our* inward heart knowledge and then giving time to integrate this knowledge into *our* findings, researchers in Indigenous methodology are accessing *revealed knowledge* (Kovach, 2009).

Pichasna: Moliṣ, ‘Ayuk, he Yomunnaka / Gratitude, Hope, and Beauty

As Gladys Gonzales, a Pomo woman, stated, “Gratitude . . . is close to the heart of Indian religion” (as cited in Margolin, 1981, p. 210). To show gratitude is a form of respect and hope for all that is in *our* world. As Grande (2015) wrote, “What distinguishes Red pedagogy is hope . . . a hope that lives in contingency with the past—one that trusts the beliefs and understandings of our ancestors as well as the power of traditional knowledge” (p. 32). Approaching life with gratitude is ritually built into daily traditional practices. It is important to put out food and say a blessing with gratitude for each meal (Sarris, 2017); to thank the willows and sedge before taking them for a basket (Murray & Campbell, 2005). Before each FIGR community gathering *we* say the *Wee’a*/Blessing. The *Wee’a* starts out with “‘Ow, ‘Ununni Michcha / Oh, Great One, *ma moliṣ* ‘opu *suk hii* / we are grateful for this day.”



Figure 8. *Suyyu Tuppe / Hawk Rises*

In the way Elders speak, in listening to blessings, in my experiences in the art studio, *molis*/gratitude appears interconnected with an energy of hope and honors the beauty in all that is connected. For example, in a collective exhibit of 30 Native American women artists, a common focus was to create beauty, which in turn brings hope. Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, one of the artists, wrote:

When all else in our lives has failed, our ability to produce beautiful work has been the sustenance that carries us through. That process takes us to an inner world, uplifts our spirit and nurtures our soul. (Hammond et al., 1985, *Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage*, para. 4).

Pichasna: Hunaa Maako Towis Hinak / So That We Do Good

One of the most important roles of the FIGR is to be “Keepers of the Land” (FIGR, n.d.-d). A large amount of resources from the FIGR Tribe is dedicated to provide stewardship to the environment. *Our* Tribe’s worldview and ethics insist that *we* do good in this world. For example, *our Wee’a/Blessing*, which *we* recite before each community gathering, asks the Great One to please give *us* good hearts so that *we* can “do good in this world”:

‘Ow, ‘Ununni Michcha / Oh, Great One

Ma molis ‘opu suk hii / We are grateful for this day

Muk’am kennetto / All together

Waya maako towis wuski / Give us good hearts

Hunaa maako towis hinak suk weyyatto / So that we do good in this world

Sutammi maakooni / Be with us.

‘Ow / Oh.



Figure 9. *Hunaa Maako Towis Hinak Suk Weyyatto* / So That We Do Good in This World

A core aspect of Indigenous methodology is to contribute; the research purpose is to do good in the world (S. Wilson, 2008). As Foley (1997) said, “Seeking more and more for oneself is a sign of pathology” (p. 144). *We* do not stop at just expressing *our* gratitude; *we* also take social action to create what *we* consider to be good.

***Pichasna: Wuskipa Muk’am ‘Inniiko* / Respecting All Relations**

Although the overall core *pichasna* of respect already has been identified, it is important to clarify that all relations are respected equally in an Indigenous methodology. As Bishop (2008) wrote, “the process of colonization developed an alienated and alienating mode of consciousness, and thus, has tried to take a fundamental principle of life away from Maori people—that we do not objectify nature, nor do we subjectify

nature” (p. 173). It is important in Indigenous epistemology to consider non-human spirit to be equally respected and included in knowledge construction. FIGR Tribal Elder

Kathleen Rose Smith, an advocate for the environment, stated:

We must not be self-centered. The world doesn’t begin and end with us. We must not over-gather. . . . We must contribute by giving something back for what we take. By managing the land—burning it, pruning it, and digging it properly—we enhance the growth of the plants that sustain us, and the animals upon which we rely. (FIGR, n.d.-a)



Figure 10. ‘Awwuk Ewiḡ / Abalone Basket

In addition to clarifying that *we* respect all relations, and that this *pichasna* goes beyond just human relations, it is also important to clarify the way in which human relations are considered: as community oriented and identified within a community (not as individuals). Samson Grant, a Pomo of California, said:

So deep did the sense of family go that the Pomo, in common with other Native Californians, tended not to view the individual as a complete, self-sufficient

entity. Family was seen as the basic unit of humanity, individuals as mere components. A person isolated from family was grotesque, frightening, pitiful, and ultimately unable to survive—like a finger severed from a hand. Individuals were incomplete, transitory beings; only family persisted, only family had meaning and authority, only family could bestow complete personhood. (as cited in Margolis, 1981, p. 20)

With this worldview of relationship as a part of the larger community, researchers need to position themselves as a part of the larger community. As a researcher:

The (re)positioning is part of participation. The researcher cannot “position” himself or herself or “empower” the other. Instead, through entering a participatory mode of consciousness, the individual agent of the “I” of the researcher is released in order to enter a consciousness larger than the self. (Bishop, 2008, p. 160)

Pichasna: Na’uuti Muk’am Kennetto / Returning All Together

A core *pichasna* in any methodology regarding Indigenous communities, and mine in particular, must be about *na’uuti* and *mu’kam kennetto*. *Na’uuti* can be translated into English to mean “return” and *mu’kam kennetto* can be translated to mean “all together.” To return to be all together is to actively strengthen connections in relationship—whether the relationship is spiritual, between people, with the cosmos, with ancestors, with the environment, with plants, or with animals—over time and into the future. FIGR Chairman Greg Sarris (2015) wrote about the connections and relationships around us:

There would be so many places and connecting lines, in fact, that the map would finally look like a tightly woven, intricately designed Miwok basket. The patterns would circle around, endless, beautiful, so that the map would, in the end, designate the territory in its entirety as sacred. Each place, each person, you and me, the earth, water, and sky, inseparable, fully connected. We would begin to see what the old timers called the everlasting: our unwavering connection to all things, and, hence, to God. We'd also be able to see where there are breaks in the pattern, illnesses; or, at least, the potential for illness and disease. (p. 3)



Figure 11. *Sutammi Maakooni / Be With Us*

Na'uuti mu'kam kennetto / Returning all together insists that we prioritize creating and practicing ways to stay connected; to work together to strengthen all relations. Artist Larry Beck spoke of connection as the core purpose in his work, where he maintains his culture at the center. Beck (as cited in Longfish et al., 1987) stated:

I want this work to have a certain magic or power. The Eskimos of my heritage call this power *tunghat*. When my art is working, I believe I have connected with this *tunghat* or powerful spirit through the shade of the particular piece. Finding and refining this connection is the essence of my work. (p. 25)

Na'uuti, “to return” is a *pichasna*/concept that is about more than just “connection,” as it requires an ongoing action that is a daily practice; to return, and return, and return. This action is for the purpose of staying related and building *our* strength; to do otherwise is to become *tiil*/sick. *Mu'kam kennetto*, found in *our* FIGR *Wee'a*/Blessing, is also part of this *pichasna*/concept about what *we* continue returning to: to be all together—to connect with all that is here and before *us* and after *us*. There is an intention of inclusion and regard for all that is among *us*; not in a hierarchy.

As Tribal Elder Julia Parker said, “We try to focus the story of the basket in a gentle way. We take from the earth with a please, and give to the earth with a thank you” (FIGR, n.d.-a). When woven into a traditional basket, willow branches are not disregarded or considered to be just a commodity. During harvest, the willow branches are asked respectfully to join the basket; they are then joined with the singing of the basket and they are thanked over and over again for giving so much to the community. The willow branches continue in relationship to the willow, where it came from, and to where it travels as a basket. The willow branches tell their story within the context of the basket; they join the spiritual power of the basket that is then part of the community in this new form, this new story. *We* return and return and return so that *we* continue to come together and continue to build *our* relationships. Visually, this could be symbolized like an ever-evolving spiral, or a traditionally woven Miwok or Pomo basket, much like

Sarris described above. This *pichasna*/concept means *we* are part of an organic ecosystem of relationships that needs to be regarded and actively nurtured in all actions so that *we* stay healthy and strong. This is the power of Indigenous peoples. To not incorporate this *pichasna*/concept as a practice is to become *tiil*/sick and to lose *our* power.

Pichasna: Tulum / Questioning and Critical Analysis

In 1985, James Luna, a Luiseno Indian and artist, expressed his critical analysis and voiced a response to the treatment of American Indian artists:

Dear American Indian Art Patrons:

American Indian life and arts are rich with diversity, purpose and heritages.

Indian arts go well beyond the images of the stoic brave atop a snarling pony,
plume and beads of many colors . . .

F**k you sincerely,

J. L. (Sarris, 1994, p. 38)

Tulum, which means “questioning,” means that *we* ask questions and apply critical analysis as part of an Indigenous methodology. *We* can ask questions such as: Does this approach distance me from my sense of cultural authenticity? Am I in a role or relationship that respects my relations and connections in my worldview? Does this contribute to my community? *Tulum* / critical analysis and asking questions helps *us* to deconstruct oppressive ideology, strategies, and practices with the goal to restore community identity and meaning making impacted by systematic subjugation and genocide.



Figure 12. *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker

George Longfish, an artist and Californian Indian, spoke of his art practice as a response to the historical treatment of his community, where it's important to question the “many images of Native American life [that] have been distorted and documented with prejudice” (LaPena & Hills, 2004a). Rick Bartow, an artist and Californian Indian, spoke of his need as an artist to question authorities external to his community and determined he would not “use some pseudo-knowledge of shamanism or ceremonial rites culled from some anthropology book” (Dobkins, 2002, p. 22). *Tulum* / critical analysis is a path that constructs a reflective space and inserts a process for breaking away from authorities that may direct a Native community away from their own culturally informed performance of respect and relationship.

Pichasna: Koyanni Sunu: Hinak Yomi / Singing Nest: Making a Home Space

Koyanni Sunu: hinak yomi can be translated directly from *Tamal Machchaw* to English to mean “Singing Nest: to make a home/village.” This *pichasna* asserts that *we* construct a safe/protected space as an important step in an Indigenous methodology that constructs for *us* an ability to dream, to reflect, to symbolize, to exist. For example, as part of an Indigenous methodology, I walk the land, where birds are showing up, and I listen deeply to what is being shared in these relationships. In the *Koyanni Sunu / Singing Nest* (art studio), I am symbolizing birds. *Suyyu*, the hawk, is an example of a bird that seems to fly above me more often than usual since I have started a practice of deep listening. In my heart, this relationship offers hope. And so my deep listening process has been about making more connections with hope, which is strengthened when *suyyu* flies above me, sits in a tree near me, or settles down to eat outside my window. I create a space of belief and acceptance of *suyyu* and contemplate what is shared in this relationship. I paint as I listen deeply, moved to continue expressing myself with faith that what I am learning is important and belongs in this world. If I do not create a space for this process and this hope, these paintings, reflections, and communications will not be in *our* world. There will be less culturally informed symbolization from my studio or sharing with my community. To make a safe singing nest/studio/home, to create a protected space for this process, is a step in Indigenous methodology that insists *we* make room to focus on *our* culture, *our* knowledge, *our* worldview, *our* community, *our* history, *our* relations, *our* language, and *our* sense of respect. As Sarris (1991) wrote, art is a way to generate “respect for the unknown while illuminating the borders of the

known” (p. 33). In Indigenous methodology *we* hold a space for the mystery to arrive and teach *us*.



Figure 13. *Koyanni 'Alwas/ Singing Tree*

Chilisa (2012) wrote that Indigenous methodology needs to involve:

Envisag[ing] a space where those who suffered European colonial rule and slavery . . . can reclaim their languages, cultures, and “see with their own eyes” the history of colonization, imperialism, and globalization, and create new research methodologies that take into account the past and the present as a continuum of the future. (p. 12)

This space is not just a *pichasna*/concept but is also a practical application to create a space to work in connection with—and envision what belongs at—the center. Whether it involves just the space in *our* minds and hearts or can extend to a physical art studio, *hinak yomi* / to make a home/village is to replace colonizing forces with *our* own cultural

center. Decolonization involves a process of creating space to exist, to have identity that is self-determined and authentic. This decolonized space allows for healing from oppression (Diaz Soto, 2004). Indigenous methodology then takes this space and, while listening deeply, hears the rhythms emerging and becoming stronger, more fluent, more present, palpable, and embodied. The rhythms are becoming stronger and influence personal and collective knowledge about *our* identity and way of being.

Pichasna: Maako 'Opu 'Allupu Wakaati Toktoola 'Alwan Koyanni / We Listen Deeply to the Elderberry Tree Singing

In *Tamal Machchaw*, *maako 'opu 'allupu wakaati toktoola 'Alwan Koyanni* can be translated directly as “we listen deeply to the Elderberry Tree singing.” In Merriam’s (1910) book *The Dawn of the World: Myths and Weird Tales Told by the Mewan (Miwok) Indians of California*, there is a story about the origins of the Miwok people. It is written that the Elderberry Tree sings when the wind blows through its branches. The tradition is to use the Elderberry Tree branches to make musical instruments such as flutes or clappers. In the story *'Oye/Coyote* is directed to take sticks from the original *Toktoola 'Alwas* / Elderberry Tree and first plant these sticks in the places where he would then create Miwok people. What I learned from this story is that *we* need to prepare *our* spaces by first installing *our* original rhythms at the center. These rhythms, this self-organizing system, will guide *us*. Listening deeply to these rhythms, *we* will not be lost or lose *our* way. *We* will have original knowledge of *ourselves*.

To listen deeply involves a culturally embedded process. In this context, to listen deeply does not just imply listening with one’s ears (Atkinson, as cited in S. Wilson, 2008, p. 59). It signifies a spiritual opening to receive with all of *our* senses, *our* psyche,

our heart, and *our* gut, and in a practice of believing in a specific way. Frank LaPena (2004), a California Indian artist and scholar, wrote about this practice of deep listening in his poem “There Are Secret Places”:

There are secret places

known by dreams

Sometimes we find

them or they find us

Sometimes this happens

in a prayer

or with a song

it’s important

when this happens

Secrets, and dreams,

and songs make ceremony

for the body and soul

and new generations

Remembering

those songs

could be the

difference between

life or death

Not the death

that deals with body

but the quiet one

that deals with soul

(p. 2)



Figure 14. Toktoola 'Alwan Koyanni / Elderberry Tree Singing

This cultural process of deep listening to *our* rhythms includes a spiritual connection and songs, ceremony, dance, art making, basket weaving, prayer, and dreams. This worldview includes a continuity of communication between ancestors and *our* lives now. As William Oandasan, a member of the Tano'm branch of the Yuki in Northern California, shares in his poem "Round Valley Songs I," there is a connection and ongoing

communication with animals, the first people or ancestors, in *our* dances and dreams:

“Long ago black bears / sang around our lodge fires / tonight they dance / alive through our dreams” (Sarris, 1994, p. 53).

Maako ‘opu ‘allupu wakaati toktoola ‘alwan koyanni, or the practice of deep listening to *our* original rhythms, provides core knowledge that can be completely missed, disregarded, or misunderstood outside this cultural context. Foley (1997) said, “A spiritual warning could be some event, such as a bird, or an animal in the house. This is viewed as being more than just a coincidence to the person” (p. 144). Much like with *‘akkala*/story, each heart, soul, and spiritual connection will receive what is important for it to know; a personal knowledge in the context of the person’s worldview and relationship to what is being shared.

Deep listening to *our* rhythms often involves making art. As mentioned previously, Frank Day, a Californian Indian and artist, said of his practice, “I talk my paintings, say them, sing them, and then paint them” (as cited in Dobkins et al., 1997, p. 58). This is a subjective process of finding knowledge and does not show up empirically or in other research methodologies. Yet this knowledge construction process is considered a traditional practice for many Indigenous people.

Pichasna: Pichchan ‘Api ‘Uni Weyatto / Student in Many Worlds

A contemporary Indigenous methodology must create a path for continuity from the past into the future. Native people often need to learn and study in at least two cultural worlds. From a 1996 FIGR archive interview, Elder Grant Smith (1906–2007) was quoted as saying:

We can't change, we can't go back. When we put a Native to go back, we have nothing to go back to. We go on . . . to change. We must mingle in with the change, or we're lost. We can't afford that. We have young peoples that are coming up, they have to come in with the change and they are, we are thankful. They are getting education. They are finding work. They are helping families, their families, and that is something to be grateful for and I am grateful for that.

(FIGR, 2015, p. 6)

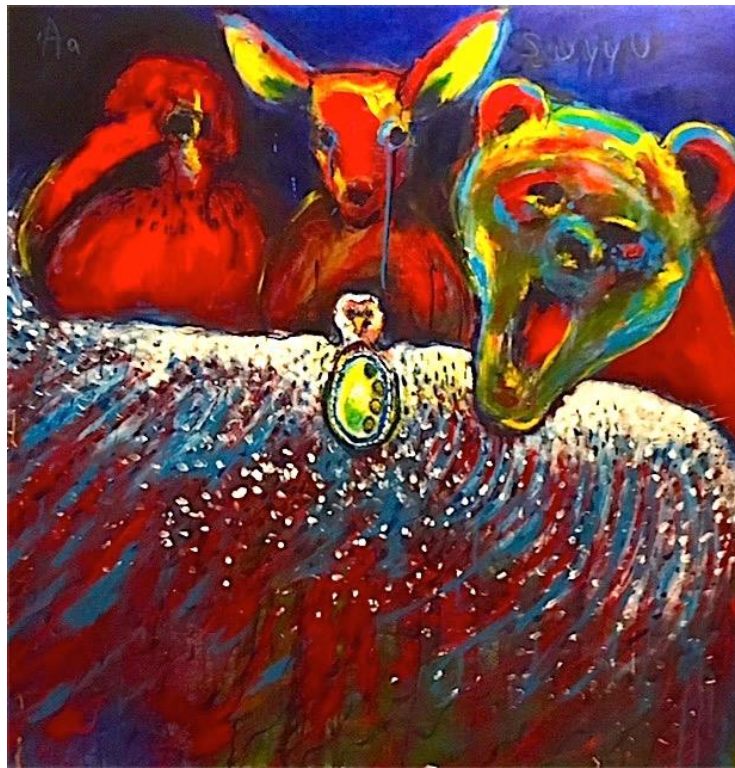


Figure 15. *Huya / Four*

Luther Standing Bear (1933–1978), Lakota, recommended that American Indians be “doubly educated” so that they learn “to appreciate both their traditional life and modern life” (W. A. Wilson & Yellow Bird, 2005, p. 130). To be “doubly educated” is to be learning in at least two cultural worlds. There is a complexity here too that needs context. Due to the quick death and suppression of many people and related loss of

cultural knowledge, current generations of American Indian peoples are sometimes required to learn about their Indigenous cultures from outside their families and communities. For example, at FIGR *we* learned *Tamal Machchaw* for a couple of decades from linguists who worked to preserve the language before the death of *our* Elder Sarah Ballard. Now *we* are working with current technology to provide online language classes. So to be a student of my American Indian culture is to find what exists, to weave it together, and to see how a fluid story is forming. In parallel process with learning about American Indian culture, it is strategic to respond with competency in the dominant society of the United States in order to be successful as a student in the U.S. educational systems and other dominant society institutions. To honor and learn from both worlds and create a path of continuity is to be a student in a “double education.”

Indeed, to only learn in one culture often does not reflect personal reality, for many Indigenous people have more than one culture or tradition in their family, identity, and upbringing. In her poem “I Tell You Now,” Wendy Rose, Miwok/Hopi, speaks to living in two worlds: “The colonizer and colonized meet in my blood. It is so much more complex than just White and just Indian. I will pray about this, too” (as cited in Dubin, 2002, p. xii). An Indigenous methodology needs to honor the complexity that *we* are not “purely” Indian or “purely” White or other blood combinations. *Our* culture is not about complicated math, with fractions and blood quantum. Indigenous methodology is about creating a path of knowledge that allows all aspects of who *we* are to exist. *We* cannot disown parts of *ourselves* and ignore some aspects of *our* history. *We* need to take an active approach to identifying, learning about, and understanding all of *our* stories and how they relate together in *our* bodies, *our* character, *our* ancestors, *our* story.

‘Uni weyatto pichchan ‘api / to be a student in many worlds is a safeguard so that one of the worldviews does not oppress, distort, negate, or dismantle the integrity of any other (which has a historical precedence). Lucero (1997), from the Luiseño Tribe in Southern California, said, “We need an education so that we can keep them [‘white man’s society’] at arm’s reach and say, ‘That’s as far as you are taking us’” (p. 160). Given the context of the genocide and ongoing disparities for Indigenous peoples in the United States, there is a need to be a student in the dominant systems of education to learn strategies for decolonizing situations to prevent further loss of Indigenous culture. It is a dangerous tension, however, as the two worlds have been in conflict, both internally for many people as well as in their communities. As artist Fritz Scholder painted about and stated, “the Indian of reality is a paradox—a monster to himself and a non-person to society” (as cited in Lukavic, 2015, p. 17).

It is strategic to consider “many worlds” and envisage something other than a reductive, essentializing approach. Indigenous methodology works to deconstruct a binary approach, one that has historically reinforced a misconception of two opposing forces. A binary construction matches old patterns that are exploitive and creates dangerous dichotomies (Mutua & Swadener, 2004). Indigenous people are more complex than binary identities. An Indigenous methodology considers the *pichasna* of identity formation as inclusive, emergent, and intersectional. This means that although individuals are connected to an identity with their community, their individual identity formation also allows all aspects of their identity to exist and be welcomed as part of their relationships: their gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, age, religion, mix of ethnic and Tribal identities, and so forth (Talwar, 2010). As Sherman Alexie (2017), a Spokane/Coeur

d'Alene Indian, wrote in his memoir, "I am greatly amused by the white folks who believe that being Indian means you automatically fit like a puzzle piece into the jigsaw of your family and tribe. I'm even more amused by the Indians who believe that, too" (p. 63).

Pichasna: 'Issa, 'Issa, 'Issa / Commitment

In *Tamal Machchaw*, '*issa* means "to continue, keep going" (Callaghan & Applegate, 2017, p. 109). In my construction here, '*issa*, '*issa*, '*issa* means maintaining a commitment by "continuing" three times over. In an Indigenous methodology, researchers must make a commitment to the community they are working with (Chilisa, 2012; Laenui, 2000)—a personal commitment as much as a professional commitment. In my case, I am embedded in my Tribal community, my family, and I am making a commitment to learn *Tamal Machchaw* within a community approach, learning about a culturally centered methodology appropriate to *our* worldview and ethics based on sharing and dialogue with the community. This approach involves committing to lifelong relationships that are not to be interrupted or considered from a short-term planning approach. "Sharing knowledge is a long term commitment" (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 16).

To work from an Indigenous methodology is to take personal responsibility for the way *our* research process benefits or impacts the community (S. Wilson, 2008) throughout *our* lifetime and to plan for beyond *our* lifetime. Indigenous methodology is a ceremony (S. Wilson, 2008) that cycles again and again over the years, strengthening connections and fostering cultural vitality that grows and changes over time. Because culture is a process, a living set of social relations (Talwar, Iyer, & Doby-Copeland, 2004), *our* methodology continues over time through the cycles of life. There is no

stopping, disconnecting, giving up, or giving in. Commitment is required to support continuity and connection; this is part of *our* ethic as American Indian people.



Figure 16. *'Unu Kule / Mother Bear*

Integrated into this *pichasna* of '*issa*, '*issa*, '*issa* / commitment is also the need for courage and perseverance; to truly believe in *our* process and not be derailed by oppressive impositions, subjugation, or disregard. As P. Y. Minthorn, Nez Perce and Cayuse, stated:

One must begin to sense the courage and the sheer determination in “having to believe” that what we do as Native American artists is very, very real . . . for at every moment there is the persistent challenge of doubt, disbelief and ignorance

surrounding us from all sides. (Longfish et al., 1987, p. 39)

'Issa, *'issa*, *'issa* is to commit to Indigenous communities and *our* relationships to the cosmos, environment, cultural traditions, stories, songs, spirit, and more. It requires dedication to work without knowing how things will turn out seven generations beyond *our* own. As Hutchison (1997), Cherokee, said, “I don’t know if the earth can be saved. But we must keep trying. We might not make it, but we are not Indian unless we try” (p. 130).

Pichasna: Wuskin Poole / Grieving

In creating an Indigenous methodology, *we* have the context of the American Genocide (Madley, 2016) challenging *us*. All of the *pichasnako* written above, such as *metakmi*/remember, *allupu 'is wuski* / listening to the heart, and *wuskipa muk'am inniiko* / respecting all relations, task *us* with staying connected to *our* history and thus the experience of the American Genocide (Madley, 2016). This reality includes the dehumanization, the killing, the raping, the punishment for speaking *our* language, the separation from *our* lands and families, the humiliation, the distortion and erasure of *our* culture, the subjugation of pride and identity, and the list goes on. How does a people do this?

As was described earlier, if *tiil*/illness is related to breaks in connection or continuity (Sarris, 2015) then to regain health and strength is to stay connected to all of the collective experiences of *our* people, ancestors, spirits, animals, plants, and so forth. This suggests much that could feel overwhelming. Christopher Peters, Yurok, Karok, Hupa, and Tolowa (in Northern California), spoke of an Indigenous approach to health

and healing that involves *wuskin poole* / grieving held as a cultural practice. Peters (1997) said:

To heal sickness, the medicine people would experience where the person is emotionally and feel their sorrow—sorrow to a point where they are helping the sick person feel . . . get to the point of understanding deep sorrow. . . . Our strong medicine people visited sorrow or loneliness often . . . we need to visit that sad place and work with it for long periods of time. It is not empty mourning. It is a discipline. We must visit with the Great Spirit where she is and express our emotion. We must bind with her and help her “feel” in a spiritual sense. It will take thousands and thousands of people, massive numbers, to begin a part of the healing process. (p. 239)



Figure 17. *El Feo, Tiil / The Ugly (Spanish), Sick (Coast Miwok)*

Laenui (2000) outlined that decolonization includes mourning, which is defined as a process of lamenting the social realities. If mourning interrupts genocide and oppression, then mourning is an action that holds healing power. Mourning allows *us* to know *our* reality and learn from what has happened. Sarris (2017) wrote the story “Ant Uncovers a Plot” in *How a Mountain Was Made*, with the message that *we* cannot forget pain and the lessons to be learned from it. To avoid or not remember all of what is in *our* history (including honoring what *we* survived); all of *our* relations (including the colonial family members in *our* blood); all the memories (including the sadness and horror); all the systems still in place that oppress *us* (including current government) is to interrupt *our* realities from being fully recognized and understood. To grieve, then, is another process of learning, responding, and healing.

For example, without this *pichasna*/concept of *wuskin poole* / grieving, I disrespect the context in which my great-great-great-grandmother Tsupu lived; her stories, experiences, learning, and efforts. At one point in my literature review process I became emotionally overwhelmed by stories about the treatment of Tsupu. I froze up and constricted, ready to walk away feeling empty. My impulse was to stop paying attention and to disconnect. Then, I created a memorial for her, called *Koya Tsupu* / Tsupu’s Song (Figure 4). In this process of reflecting and relating to Tsupu, strong feelings surfaced and I grieved. What also surfaced for me was a felt sense of Tsupu’s strength, and my pride in *our* connection. I now feel connected to what she went through, as it is part of my story too. I am not alone in my journey and struggle, and she is not left behind or forgotten. *We* are therefore not interrupted or overwhelmed by the past; *we* are actively engaging in the connections and gaining important knowledge—a power.

***Ka Tamalko Pichasna*: Concept Map**

Figure 18 is a *pichasna*/concept map for my personal Indigenous methodology. At the center is the same space that was indicated at the beginning of this section, but now it is shaped into the 'awwuk/abalone, which in my art making and meaning making process is the heart of *our* culture. Each triangle is again holding a *pichasna*/concept at the center and the space is constructed to hold a space for the heart of *our* culture at the center.

Wuskipa/respect is also naming this central space. There are lines drawn that extend out from the center and inform the rest of the image, a spiral that symbolizes the coiling of the 'ewis/basket and the connections that all of *our* stories hold. There is *Tamal Machchaw* at the center of the image and then there is English that tells the story of colonization. Finally, at the outer rim, is again *Tamal Machchaw*, which tells of *our* traditional times. Looking at this image I see all at once *our* story, connection, heart, and continuity.

CHAPTER 3: *KANNI 'OPU PANAK* / I AM THE ACORN WOODPECKER: RESEARCH METHODS

“Art generating respect for the unknown while illuminating the borders of the known.”

(Sarris, 1991, p. 33)

Introduction

My research explored how arts-based methodology can be ethically used to support knowledge construction with Indigenous worldviews, experiences, beliefs, values, and practices at the center. As a Tribal citizen of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, I engaged in a research journey that co-constructed story, imagery, and language with collective knowledge of my community, resulting in a cultural reclamation process. The research problem and significance of this project are grounded in the need for culturally appropriate approaches to research with American Indian communities, given the context of racism, colonialism, and genocide that surrounds this population. My research questions were:

- What are culturally responsive research approaches that have been endorsed by American Indian communities?
- Why is there a need to decolonize historical mental health systems, research, theory, and practices through an American Indian perspective?
- What are ways to design research for American Indian cultural recentering in the context of colonization?
- How can I apply Indigenous methodology within my own cultural worldview as a California Indian Tribal member of mixed race?

My research methods involved actively interrupting silence about the past and questioning the subordinate position Indigenous peoples often find ourselves in today. Such a knowledge construction process seeks to critically examine, deconstruct, and respond to the legacy of systematic efforts to eradicate Native identity in the United States. Two main objectives for determining appropriate methodology were: (a) to reflexively consider the ethical relationship of my inquiry with my Tribal community and (b) to explore the process of respect within a continuous narrative that integrates collective knowledge. As a result of these considerations, I designed and carried out arts-based Indigenous methodology. The research involved creating a space and an ethical process for knowledge construction informed by Indigenous worldviews, experiences, beliefs, values, and practices. My intention was, and continues to be, one of contributing to and further legitimizing a particular research approach that originates from an Indigenous worldview and process, and of addressing the gap in the discourse and literature on art therapy research with American Indian people. To carry out these intentions, I self-reflexively examined my worldview and identity, which is informed by the collective knowledge of my Native history, stories, land, ancestors, relationships, spirit, and language, while engaging in an art-making inquiry process.

Research Methodology

As discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2, Indigenous methodology is a contemporary term that signals the continuity of the generational passing down of Indigenous seeing, knowing, and thinking and ongoing systems of inquiry that position at the center the cultural worldview of the community engaged in a knowledge construction process (Chilisa, 2012; S. Wilson, 2008). This Indigenous methodology research process

is conducted in ways that capacitate the sovereignty of the community engaged in the research. The community, by design and as an ethical construct, determines the research protocol for their own purposes. Indigenous methodology was therefore indicated for my research approach because my focus involves cultural reclamation in relation to my Tribal community and *our* collective knowledge.

I am using the term *arts-based Indigenous methodology* to emphasize arts-based engagement within the paradigm of Indigenous methodology. I chose to utilize an arts-based methodology in my inquiry because my cultural identity primarily has been expressed through my art-making practice. The scope of this research project included the paintings, drawings, and two quilts I have worked on over the course of the past 20 years. The purpose of curating these 65+ artworks was to symbolize and integrate cultural material and insights into my meaning-making process about my reclaimed cultural identity and worldview.

Design and Methods

Participants

N of 1: self-inquiry. As a Tribal member, historian, researcher, artist, and author of *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts*, Sarris (1991) discussed how academics can approach American Indian stories and writing. He recommended that we “collapse the dichotomy between personal narrative and scholarly argument . . . [because] in understanding another person and culture you must simultaneously understand yourself” (p. 6). In this way we change “the story” through our own ability and inability to relate to it and how we are informed through our own history about what is being told. I discussed this approach with Dr. Sarris, who is also the

FIGR Tribal Chairman, when determining whether and how to participate in this study. He recommended, “Present what is your experience. . . . Your experience is your power” (G. Sarris, personal communication, June 2, 2016).

I agreed with the logic of learning this sort of methodology through personal experience first, so that I could then approach my Native community (as well as other Native communities) with greater insight and respect for the complexity of the approach. Additionally, I had concern regarding the intensity of engagement with historical trauma material and the ethical considerations of engaging with Indigenous collective knowledge. Therefore, I am grateful that I initiated learning about arts-based Indigenous methodology on a personal level so that I am now more informed and prepared as I plan next steps to engage others.

Tribal and other participants. Although my study is framed as a personal artistic research journey with an *N* of 1, I nevertheless engaged in a process of collecting and analyzing data within a relational context with Native and non-Native individuals, the FIGR government, and FIGR staff. I also incorporated collective knowledge that involved both ancestral and nonhuman relationships. Therefore, I deliberately took a broad view of the concept of research participants to include *our* ancestors, land, stories, spirit, and language as actively participating in the study, as well as the FIGR community, staff, and governing bodies, who contributed in formal and informal advisory roles.

Because Indigenous methodology necessitates making visible *our* relationships and developing further connections, I recognize the engagement of additional participants other than those from my Tribal community in California: my children, my dissertation

committee, my doctoral cohort, my friends, and my family also informed my understanding of my identity and relationships during this inquiry process. For example, my older son was the first reader of my data and results story and he was indeed one of the informants in that story. My older son's feedback and questioning regarding my role as researcher and in response to my art taught me more about the needs of the next generation and ways to design my inquiry to be to their benefit. Important, too, are the "participants" that provoked a sense of disregard for my Native worldview so that I learned ways to deconstruct their positioning and develop steps as a response.

Selection criteria were determined through a process of discovery and a deepening of relationships to understand and accept collective knowledge and what/who belongs at the center of *our* community, *our* story, and *our* identity. Immersing progressively into this inquiry process I gained more access with collective knowledge because I was listening more deeply and accepting more of the knowledge being shared; thus more was "selected" to be included in the story and the art. Additionally, those around me entered more openly into dialogue regarding *our* identity and story because of the trust *we* developed and the spaces *we* created for this sharing.

Recruitment involved praying for support, staying open while walking the land and deeply listening to all that arrived, inviting spirit into the studio and inquiry process, and open informal invitations to Tribal community members when engaged socially at community events and in community spaces. I also recruited beyond my Tribal community to include all Native people and allies and spirit that arrived during this inquiry process. For example, I consider the chair of my doctoral committee, Dr. Kapitan, who does not identify as Native, to be in relationship with all of this inquiry process

about how to engage in Indigenous knowledge construction. Although I did not plan this, in reflection, I believe that when Dr. Kapitan created space on campus to protect my first painting of the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker, she was “recruited” as a “participant” in this inquiry. Likewise, when Dr. Cedric Woods and Dr. Paula Sherman (who both identify as Native) were recruited as experts on my doctoral committee due to their academic positions of authority within the Western academic worldview, they were also “recruited” as “participants” in this inquiry process within the ethical considerations of Indigenous methodology.

Dr. Kapitan, Dr. Woods, and Dr. Sherman, who hold the role of “authorities” in the academic worldview and thus a certain distance in this regard, are deconstructed and reconstructed through Indigenous methodology into “recruits” that became “participants” and more engaged at the center of my inquiry (which still honors their authority). Each worldview held a different lens on the positioning of relationship, expectations, and ethics. I intended for my methods to respect all worldviews and all “recruits” and “participants” in this dissertation. As a researcher in Indigenous methodology, I have a responsibility to engage in all ethical considerations so that I respect the multiple positioning of roles and relationships that are created when academic and Indigenous worldviews come together in one space.

Informed Consent Procedures and Ethical Protections

Given the history of cultural appropriation in the United States, it was essential that the research design acknowledge all relationships and procedures with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Community and meet their guidelines for respect and approval. I worked with Tribal staff and leadership to identify the ethics of informed

consent, particularly regarding my dual role as both FIGR Tribal citizen and researcher. The FIGR leadership and staff identified for me the following components for their oversight and feedback during my dissertation research:

1. I would consult with the FIGR Language Advisory Group Committee (LAGC) via monthly meetings prior to and during the project, which would provide feedback about the use of *our* Native language and the research project in general.
2. I would obtain FIGR Tribal Council approval for FIGR staff resource support and the advisory role of the LAGC, which I received prior to beginning the project.
3. I would consult with the FIGR Tribal Chairman and/or Tribal Council as recommended by the FIGR LAGC or staff.

In addition to these procedures, the study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Mount Mary University.

Data Collection

I collected data from several sources. First, I read and listened to stories, history, and other materials related to my Tribe (Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo). These materials came from the FIGR library, my personal collection, family and Tribal members, the public domain, museum collections and historical sites, and from walking our land—which is “our bible . . . the text” (G. Sarris, personal communication, June 2, 2016).

Second, I engaged in *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok language, which became a primary source of information for the study. My reasoning was that *our* language is

embedded with collective cultural knowledge. Therefore, when I read, wrote, and spoke *Tamal Machchaw*, I was gaining insight and connection directly with my traditions, stories, and ancestors. Language learning occurred from listening to *Tamal Machchaw* recordings of my great-aunt Sarah Ballard (ca. 1960), my great-great-uncle Tom Smith (singing), and FIGR linguists Catherine Callaghan and Richard Applegate. I also read in *our* language, participated in language-learning forums, and communicated directly with *Tamal Machchaw* teachers and speakers. Throughout the study, I practiced *Tamal Machchaw* by integrating the language into my art-making process, conceptual frameworks, and academic writing. I also had the benefit of consultation with FIGR Tribal Linguist Dr. Applegate.

A third source of information was art making, which I engaged in interactively with collective knowledge and relationships. I focused my artistic work on making visible the webbing/connections of my relationships. The symbols, colors, textures, and composition show what is connected and therefore I am able to honor them; they exist, which is thus a meaning-making process for inquiry. I have been making art as a way to process and connect with my Native heritage for the past 20 years. Twenty years of art has become my nest for memory as well as raw data for further analysis. Each *hochcha*/painting is a *koya*/song. As soon as I make one connection, another connection becomes visible; thus, there is a generative quality to how these data may be interpreted.

Finally, I wrote the story for each piece of artwork in *Tamal Machchaw*. I also wrote the story about each artwork in English (which language came first depended on the art piece and when it was created). These stories were not translations of each other; rather, each language fostered a different relationship and thus a distinct story with the

art. However, to make these data more accessible, I translated the *Tamal Machchaw* stories into English.

I documented the data collection and the entire inquiry process through four forms: (a) a written log on the actual steps and procedures completed; (b) an organization of artwork and corresponding stories into one chronological timeline (presented in a Microsoft PowerPoint slideshow); (c) a written timeline to contextualize U.S. Federal Indian Policy, *our* Tribe's history, and my family members' history; and (d) participation in a group art exhibit about cultural reclamation titled *Native American Resilience Through Art*.

Contact Zone Between Two Worldviews

To describe the sequencing of Indigenous methodology that was particular to this study, I needed to create a flowchart. However, in so doing, I arrived at a crossroads of cultural interpretation and worldviews. Much like in storying the art, I discovered two different interpretations of the flow of method depending on which language was my starting point. To start in English, and to represent an arts-based approach, I came up with the Flowchart of Method I. To start in *Tamal Machchaw*, which integrated the conversations with the FIGR Language Advisory Group Committee in addition to the arts-based approach, I came up with the Flowchart of Method II. Both flowcharts reflect distinct aspects of the research methods, but I found that the Flowchart of Method II most closely represented the integrity of staying in the forms I was working to make visible; that is, the storying, *Tamal Machchaw*, and art as authentic forms from which to build connection with collective knowledge. In contrast, the Flowchart of Method I showed the interruption of my cultural center to engage in academic research analysis. As of this

writing, I am still exploring how to maintain both worldviews when engaging in academic forums.

Inquiring further into these two distinct experiences, I found that three spaces were necessary in order to be able to respectfully engage within more than one cultural worldview. One was “*toktoola* space,” where I initially accessed collective knowledge in *Tamal Machchaw* and spirit. Another was a sort of academic space where I used English to legitimize the “*toktoola* space” in dominant discourse. Both of these spaces have their own worldview and ways of engaging with power and relationship. The third space, or middle space between the two worldviews, may be called the *contact zone* (C. Woods, personal communication, October 31, 2017; Pratt, 1999). In the contact zone I am able to access both worldviews while also holding them together in a relationship; that is, a living conversation. The primary language in the contact zone is neither pure *Tamal Machchaw* nor academic English; it is the artwork.

The two culturally different spaces influence what becomes interrupted and what is made visible, and thus influence my identity formation process. These are important data when considering the historical power position of the dominant space that systematically erased and distorted the Indigenous cultural worldview of the first or original space. Therefore, by locating the contact zone, I may purposefully negotiate the tension and conflicts between my two worldviews that provide different relationships with and perspectives on power dynamics. Deconstruction of the historic distorting and subjugating approaches of the contact between these spaces is an aspect of Indigenous methodology. Creating artwork in all spaces permitted me to deconstruct old patterns that potentially silenced or interrupted my cultural center.

In the middle space, or contact zone, it became possible both to deconstruct historical precedent and reimagine potential relationships. The purposeful, dialogic method for this space allowed new words, art, energy, and relationships to be possible with respect and connection rather than annihilation or silence. As part of an identity formation process, a dialogue started internally and, over the course of symbolizing my experience externally (through art making and storying), progressively developed and resulted in an ability to share publicly. As a result, I could construct a framework to contemplate and negotiate a cross-cultural relationship intrapersonally, with my communities, and in society at large. Arts-based Indigenous methodology provided ethical considerations for how to recognize and utilize the contact zone, its purpose, and the framework for dialogue and relationship.

Flowchart of Method I

I drew a landscape to represent the progression of steps taken in my research process (Figure 19). Although I depict it as a flowchart, the landscape symbolizes the study methods as an interdependent ecosystem rather than a linear process of steps in chronological time. The creation of a generative space was central to strengthening community connection; each step wakes up and informs another step. Therefore, both data collection and analysis resulted in a social action of deepening and connecting relationships. Each step represents how I progressively immersed myself in a process of greater depth of listening and access into an Indigenous-informed inquiry process.



Figure 19. Flowchart of Method I

There were seven steps in my first flowchart:

1. Start with arts-based Indigenous methodology as the framework for research involving my Native community.
2. Create the space to invite in the spirit, singing, language, practices, and stories of *our* culture.

3. Deconstruct and decolonize narrative, information, and power dynamics to create and protect the culturally informed center for *our* collective knowledge construction process.
4. Engage in art-making to symbolize and weave together *our* story fragments and imagine/reimagine *ourselves* as whole, connected, and continuous—because *we* are.
5. Don't stop; stay committed to accessing *our* Native language, community, story, songs, and spirit, as well as walking the land with an open heart to stay culturally centered.
6. Integrate the storying process, with respect for all who are connected to the story, into *our* daily life.
7. Insist on and consistently revisit how to maintain a collectively ethical practice, engaging from *our* heart, with the intention to benefit all relationships and build community connection.

Flowchart of Method II

After making Flowchart of Method I, which was my attempt at an academic explanation of data collection methods I had intended to deploy, I participated in the FIGR Language Advisory Group Committee monthly meeting. We discussed plans to foster *Tamal Machchaw* language learning by hosting story times for families in the FIGR library. One objective involved producing children's books with *Tamal Machchaw* language, art, and *our* stories. I was asked if I had any materials to share. As I looked at the *Tamal Machchaw* learning books I created with my own children years ago, I recognized that my arts-based Indigenous methodology flowchart was actually a

storybook. Although I started out thinking, “I need to create a flowchart to explain my methods,” when discussing *Tamal Machchaw* with *our* community, this thought translated to, “I need to share this story.” With further translation, I recognized that I needed to rethink my academic model as an illustrated storybook that would not only serve my study aims but, more importantly, would promote *Tamal Machchaw* language learning as a response to benefit *our* community.

I imagined and then created Flowchart of Method II as my story about knowledge construction, in *our* own language, with art, to share with *our* community. Here again, the inquiry process involved the creation of a generative space, art, and story to strengthen community connection. Creating a new “flowchart of method” translated to an Indigenous methodology and practice. The current version of the resulting illustrated storybook (which includes Figures 20–28) follows as the next 10 pages.²

² I recognize that dominant style guides dictate that material like this flowchart/storybook should be presented in an appendix rather than inserted in text; however, my Indigenous methodology requires that this storybook be (quite literally) centered, rather than pushed to the margins of this dissertation.

Kenne 'Umpa
Ossa 'Umpa
Teleeka 'Umpa
Ma Pichan 'Akkala

One Acorn
 Two Acorns
 Three Acorns
 Our Story of Learning

Flowchart of arts-based Indigenous methodology
 in *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok language
 (with heavy consultation regarding language with
 Tribal Linguist Dr. Applegate)

This story is a collaborative effort with Michelle Napoli, the Language Advisory Group Committee of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and collective knowledge of the Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo people.



Figure 20. *Kanni 'Opu Panak*

Kanni 'opu panak
Ka chooche 'akkalako
Kanni 'ayuk meyye
Ka na'uuti, na'uuti, na'uuti

I am the acorn woodpecker
 I collect stories
 I am a bird of hope
 I return, return, return

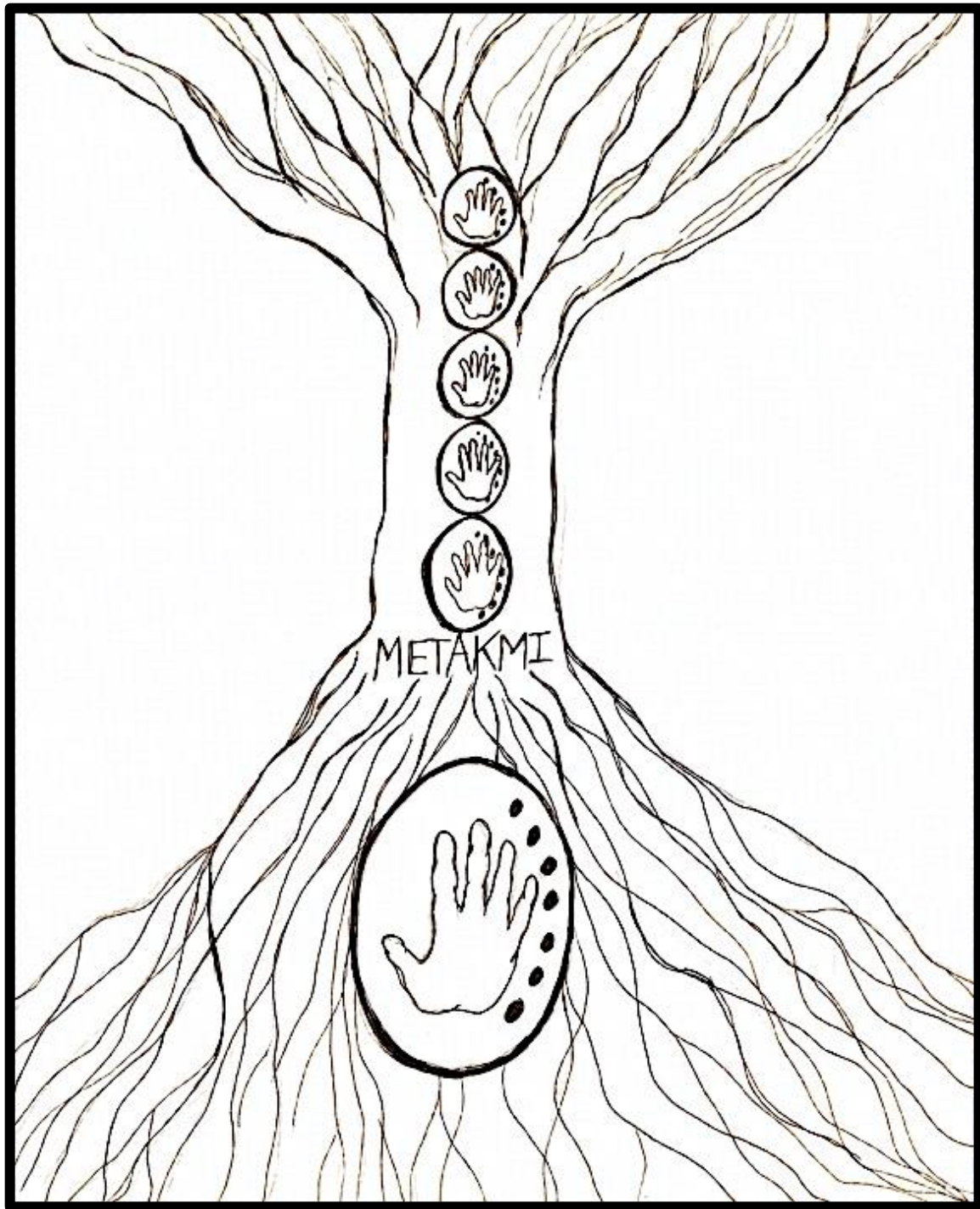


Figure 21. *Metakmi*

Ka moliṣ 'opu 'alwaṣko hintin tu'e maako

I am grateful for the trees that
feed us

Ka liimaaṭi 'opu ma 'alwaṣ

I look for our tree

Ka kenneppo ma koyanni 'alwaṣ

I join our singing tree

Ka na'uuṭi, na'uuṭi, na'uuṭi

I return, return, return

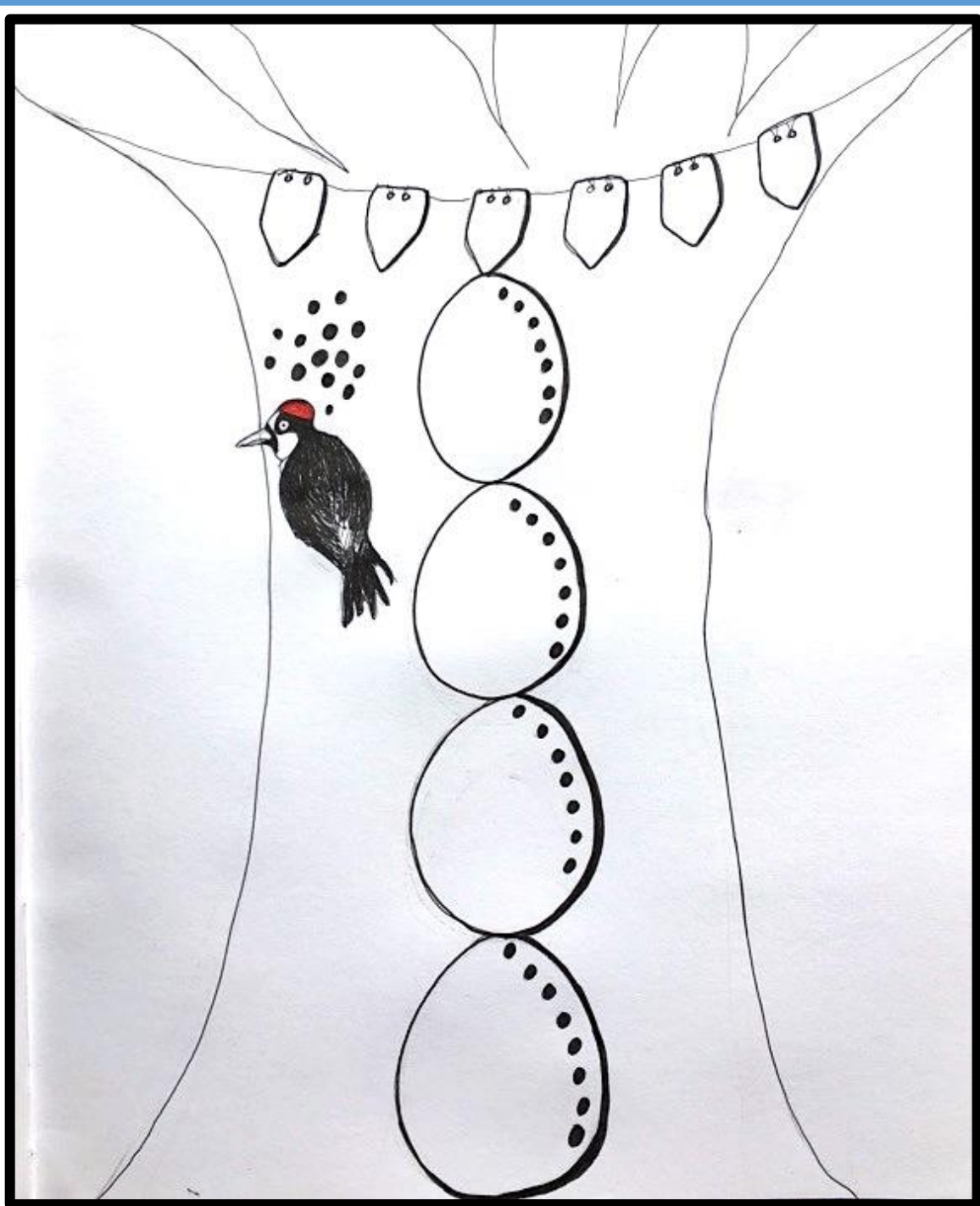


Figure 22. *Ka Suppu Holluko Ma 'Umpa Hinnetto*

Ka suppu holluko ma 'umpan hinnetto
Ka 'ochcha ma tuu
Ka hinak yomi ma 'akkalakon hinnetto
Ka na'uuti, na'uuti, na'uuti

I drill holes for our acorns
 I store our food
 I make a home for our stories
 I return, return, return



Figure 23. *Ka Chooche 'Opu Ma 'Umpa*

Ka chooche 'opu ma 'umpa
Ka chooche 'opu ma tuu
Ka tulpa 'opu ma 'akkalako
Ka na'uut̃i, na'uut̃i, na'uut̃i

I collect our acorns
 I gather our food
 I share our stories
 I return, return, return

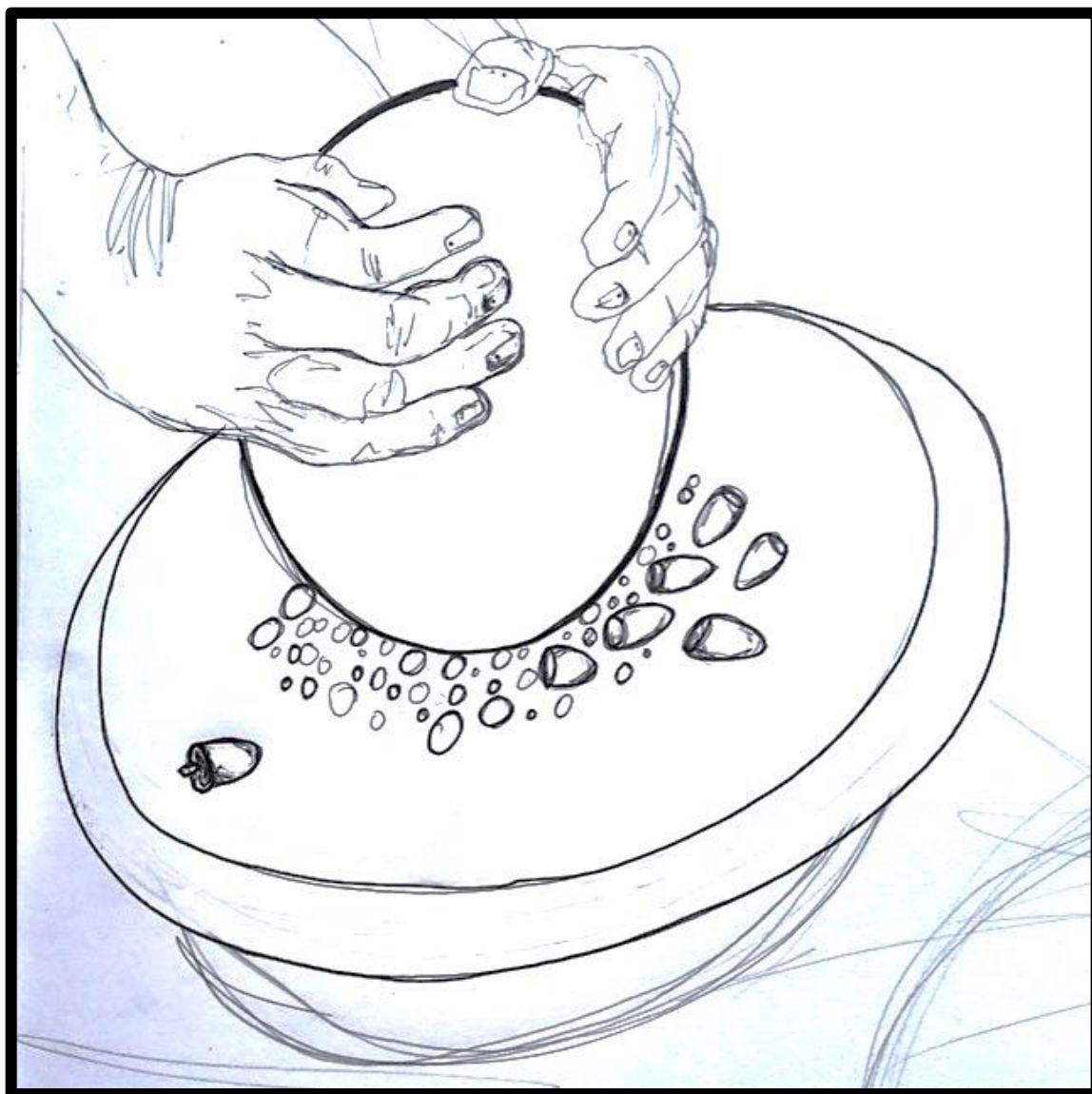


Figure 24. *Kenne, 'Ossa, Teleeka 'Umpa*

Kenne 'umpa
'Ossa 'umpa
Teleeka 'umpa

One acorn
 Two acorns
 Three acorns

Kenne 'akkala
'Ossa 'akkala
Teleeka 'akkala

One story
 Two stories
 Three stories

Ka na'uuti, na'uuti, na'uuti

I return, return, return

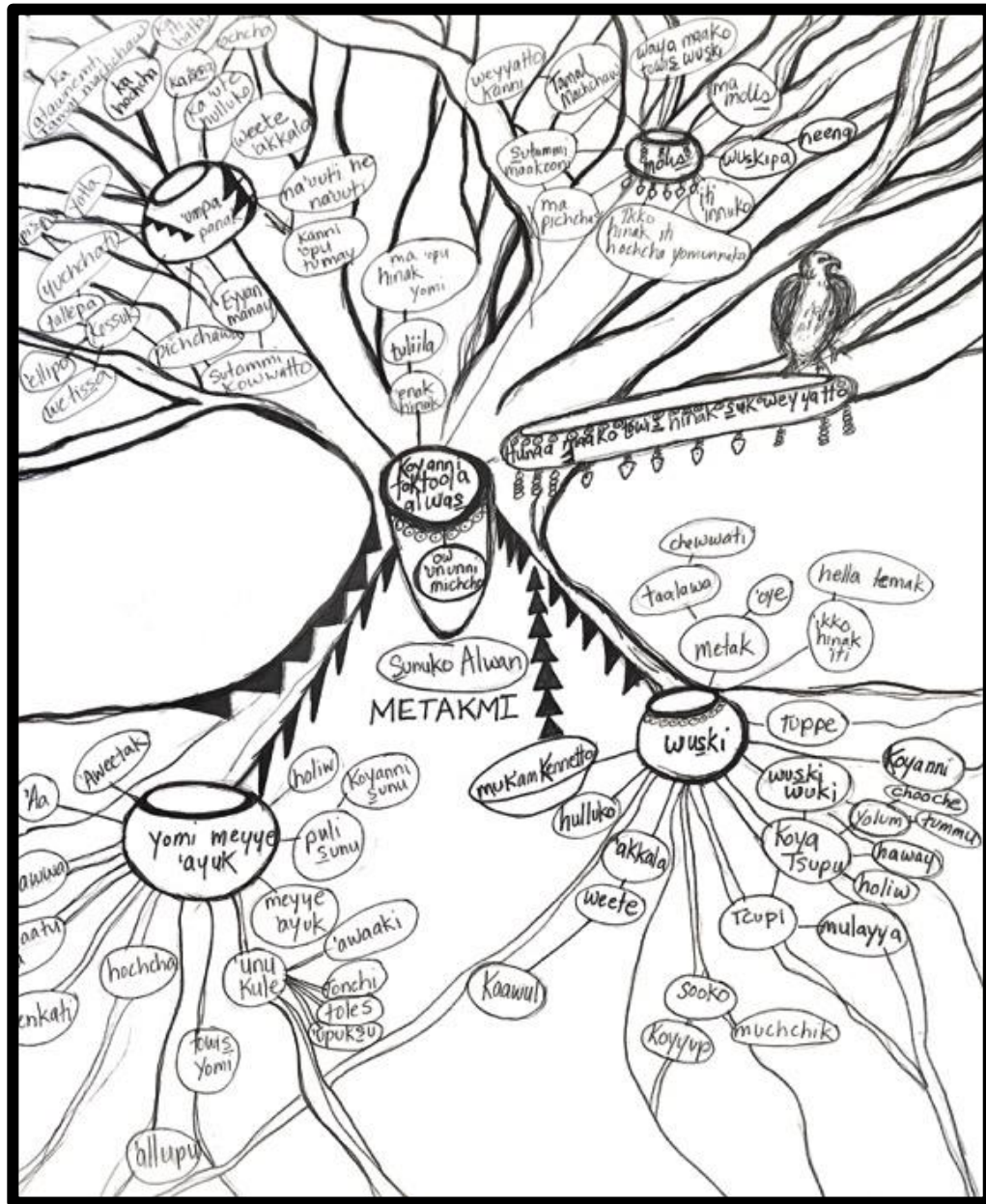


Figure 25. Ka 'Ute 'Opu Ma Tamal Machchaw Tallepo

Ka hinak yomi ma 'alwan weyyatto
Ka 'ute 'opu ma tamal mahchaw tallepo

I make a home in our tree
 I see our Coast Miwok
 language waking up
 I am this tree
 I am this language
 I am this story
 I return, return, return³

Kanni 'opu niṣ 'alwas
Kanni 'opu niṣ machchaw
Kanni 'opu niṣ 'akkala
Ka na'uuti, na'uuti, na'uuti

³ Please note that I made some grammatical errors in this effort to engage with *Tamal Machchaw*. Therefore, this image is not recommended to be used for learning *Tamal Machchaw* grammar.

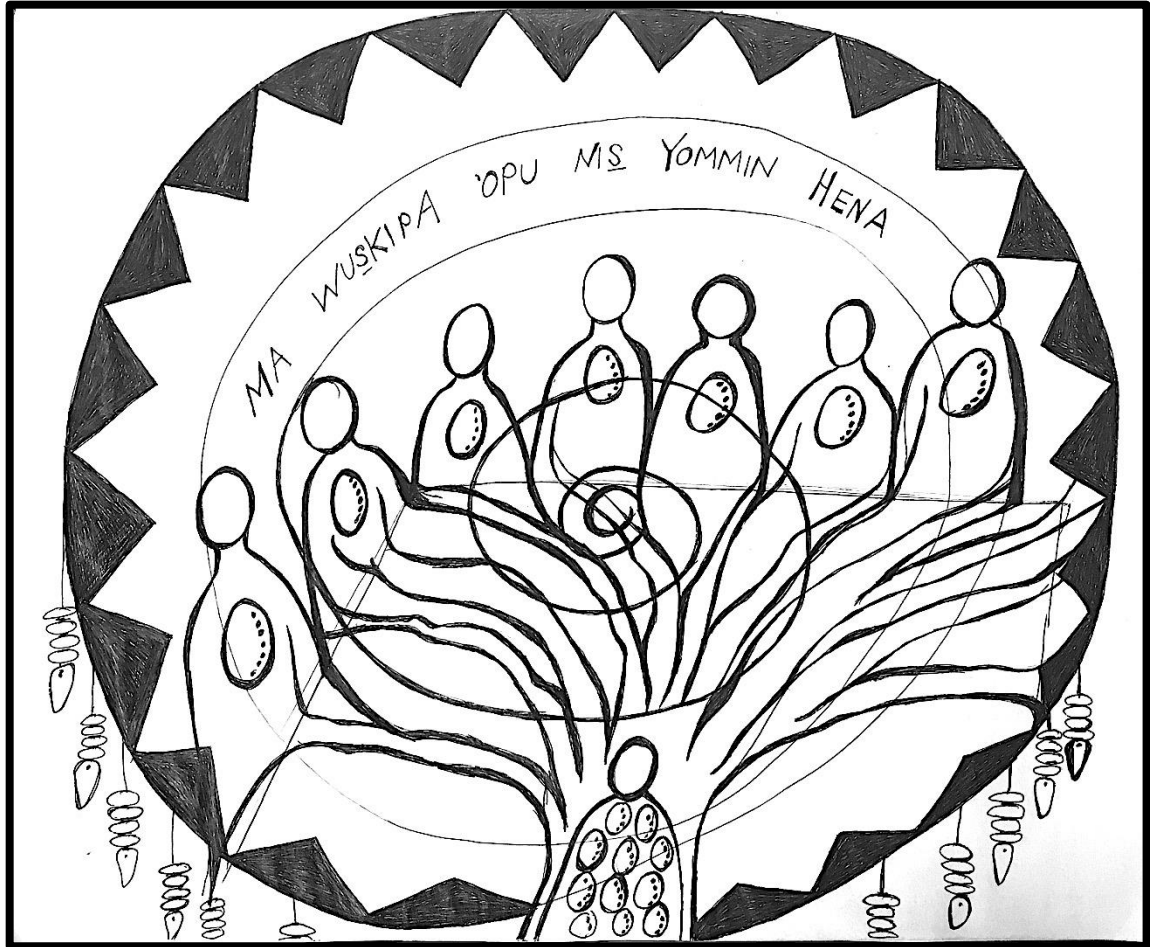


Figure 26. *Ma Wuskipa 'Opu Nis Yommin Hena*

Maako 'opu panakko
Maako 'opu pichaatak meyyeko
Maako 'opu 'ayuk meyyeko

We are the acorn woodpeckers
 We are the birds of wisdom
 We are the birds of hope

Ma na'uuti, na'uuti, na'uuti

We return, return, return

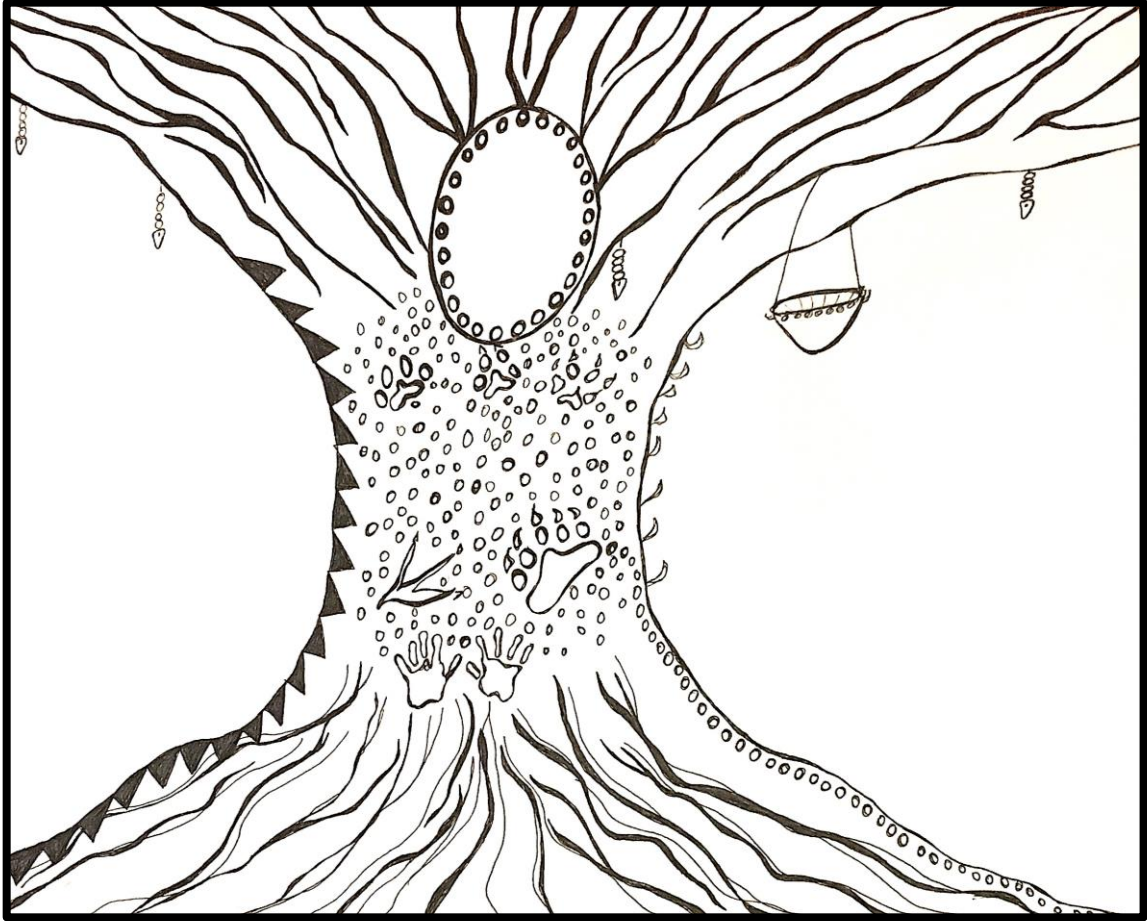


Figure 27. *Ma Yomik 'Opu Ma Koyanni 'Alwasto*

Ma 'ooketi 'opu ma 'alwasko
Ma yomik 'opu ma koyanni 'alwasto
Ma molis 'opu 'alwasko hintin tu'e maako

We care for our trees
 We live in our singing tree
 We are grateful for the trees
 that feed us



Figure 28. *Ma 'Inniiko 'Akkala Huuli*

Ma na'uutj, na'uutj, na'uutj
Maako na'uutj ma koyanni 'alwasto
Maako na'uutj towis wuskitto

We return, return, return
 We return to our singing tree
 We return to our good heart

Data Analysis Process

Data analysis was arts-based and involved reflection on the narratives I had created via writing and art making, which allowed hidden and tacit knowledge to emerge. Because I was intent on maintaining my cultural center with arts-based material, for data analysis I sought ways to prioritize and apply ethical and respectful considerations from Indigenous methodology.

To analyze the data collected I engaged in the following steps:

1. As a form of data reduction for the large scope of inquiry from 20 years of art making, I curated the art into a chronological timeline with corresponding stories created for each one. After a subjective process of critical thinking and evaluation, I copied the captions from each slide that I had written in both *Tamal Machchaw* and English into a separate 30-page document. I had determined how to caption the slides by reviewing the *pichasnako*/concepts from my personal Indigenous methodology to determine “most important writing” (see list of questions under “Validity and Ethical Considerations” below).
2. Next, I reduced the data further by conducting a second round of subjective evaluation by highlighting the most important statements, insights, and themes from the 30-page document. In addition to guidance from the *pichasnako*/concepts, I coded the document based on my intuitive sense, heartfelt attachment, and attention to whether and how the writing made visible any insights I had not seen clearly before.
3. As a third step, I copied and pasted only the coded data into a new document. Where material was repeated, I combined and collated the themes, which resulted

in 22 phrases that incorporated both *Tamal Machchaw* and English. I also identified 15 statements that elaborated on the *pichasna*ko/concepts regarding the central cultural value of respect.

4. I then attempted to organize these insights into categories, but determined that this method was problematic because it became an overly reductive process that decontextualized the material to the point of meaninglessness. Therefore, to further contextualize and recontextualize the material, I selected artwork from the PowerPoint slides that illustrated these 22 phrases.
5. Then, to explicate the themes through a narrative form, I journaled and added stories to each. Upon reflection, however, I recognized that this material read much like my earlier writing produced from the tensions of the contact zone and did not maintain a voice from my cultural center. Therefore, upon further reflection and consultation with my advisors, I immersed myself in a process of storying for authentic access in my culturally centered voice. This storying narrative appears as Chapter 4.
6. Finally, I wrote statements to translate insights from personal experience into an ethical consideration regarding the application and role of the researcher in arts-based Indigenous methodology. In this process I included an explanation of my statement, contextualized and highlighted with examples of how each insight and ethical consideration came from the inquiry process. This appears as Chapter 5.

Validity and Ethical Considerations

Incorporating the *pichasna*ko/concepts from my personal Indigenous methodology construction (as identified and discussed in Chapter 2), I engaged in

ongoing self-reflexive assessment that questioned and examined all internal validity and ethical considerations based on whether I had achieved the following in the affirmative:

- Have I shown respect in all choices and actions?
- Have I held the center for *our* cultural worldview?
- Have I remembered *our* history, people, stories, and culture from *our* worldview?
- Have I brought in *our Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok language to the center?
- Have I listened to *our* stories?
- Have I listened to my heart?
- Have I applied critical analysis to decolonize frameworks that erase *our* identity and perspective?
- Have I maintained gratitude, hope, and beauty?
- Am I doing good in this world through this research process?
- Have I respected all relations?
- Have I returned to build *our* relationships?
- Have I constructed a safe/protected space for *us* to dream, to reflect, to symbolize, to exist?
- Have I listened deeply for original rhythms?
- Have I been a student in and learned from many worldviews?
- Have I remained fully committed in this process?
- Have I allowed room for grieving?
- Have I released creative forces of energy to imagine/reimagine and further humanize/contextualize my community (L. T. Smith, 2012)?

In further consideration of the ethics and validity of my research design and conduct, it is important to contextualize the material I am sharing when presented as data and results. My story is not a sacred story of my Tribe and I am not the Tribal expert on *our* stories. Rather, my stories presented here, as the result of engaging in Indigenous methodology, are my way of joining in relationship with the mysteries of spirit and with my kinship ties, and are reflections from my changing perceptions about my identity. My story and art come from a vital, generative space that is informing my life and connecting me with other life as well. I do not assume to know how this work will play out with my community or to know whether it will be received as beneficial; only time will tell. Although I am gaining insights about arts-based Indigenous methodology, I also accept with humility and respect what I don't know, what I cannot control, and that I am not at the center—I am not an expert on or spokesperson for my Tribe, *our* stories, history, or language.

Risks and Benefits

I acknowledge that there may be risk that some people in my Tribal community will feel an emotional response to seeing their collective knowledge represented in my art and writing. Given the context of colonialism, racism, and genocide, it is possible that expressing these themes will elicit some cause for grief. Due to the history of cultural appropriation, it is also possible that some people will feel vulnerable to having *our* collective knowledge represented publicly in this dissertation; I certainly feel this vulnerability. Although I have designed my entire research project to proactively examine and address this potential harm, there is still a possibility that there may be subjective reactions to my findings and presentation of data that could elicit some emotional pain.

This inquiry involved a process of knowledge construction through art. As such, it can provide an example about how arts-based engagement can support communities in examining, deconstructing, and responding to the legacy of historical, systematic efforts to eradicate Native identity in the United States. However, I did not correctly predict nor plan for the intensity of emotions I experienced in this inquiry process. The grieving I went through when encountering stories of dehumanization and genocide of my relatives, dropping into the “*toktoola* space” only to be interrupted, was painful. This process, for me at least, involved an ongoing immersion into historical and intergenerational trauma processing. To listen deeply, to hear *our* stories, to paint and connect with my ancestors’ voices and experiences, was at times overwhelming; both from being touched by the beauty and love as well as by the acute losses, violence, ruptures, and distortions. For this reason, I recommend further inquiry into how arts-based Indigenous methodology can be designed to support those, like myself, who encounter historical trauma exposure alongside access with collective knowledge.

As a response to my distress, and as part of the research design, I worked to identify and develop supports to process material, build relationships, and respond with imagery and stories to the silences that felt oppressive. For example, I sought more Native community engagement, prioritized a regular spiritual practice, invited more spiritual presence in my art process, developed a storying response to silence, and co-curated my artwork for a public space. I am also aware that resources that support resiliency may not be available to some Indigenous people given the extent of loss and ruptures in their community; this was certainly part of the dilemma in my case.

Summary

In this chapter I shared the steps that allowed for a progressive immersion into my “*toktoola* space,” where I applied Indigenous methodology authentically in relationship with collective knowledge. To remain authentic and culturally centered involved a spiritually engaged process that was informed by art making and co-researcher relationships. The research design also was co-constructed with recommendations and ongoing consultation with my Tribal community. Indigenous methodology required that I negotiate different spaces, including the contact zone, to deconstruct any colonial framing or influences outside my cultural center. This step was essential to maintain the integrity of staying in the forms I was working to make visible; that is, the storying, *Tamal Machchaw*, and art. In the next chapter, I share my data and results through these forms.

CHAPTER 4: 'AKKALAKO / STORIES: DATA AND RESULTS, PART I

Introduction

As Doerfler et al. (2013) stated, “we create ourselves with stories” (p. xx).

'*Akkala*/story awakens spaces for *our* cultural community to share about who *we* are and build relationships within *our* own traditions and worldview. In my personal Indigenous methodology, I include the *pichasna*/concept of '*akkala*/story because with stories *we* speak from *our* collective knowledge and engage in conversations with *our* ancestors as *we* confront challenges. Doerfler et al. (2013) center story in Indigenous methodology and studies because stories provide a way to self-determine one's cultural identity and direction, develop community in new ways while also deepening relationships with ancestors, and teach us how to imagine and survive change.

The stories below make visible both the legacy of *our* cultural erasure and cultural continuity through a self-determined narrative emerging post-genocide. The artwork seen below comes from my engagement with embodied story fragments, spirit, and relationships while joining with *our* collective story. These paintings at times represent parts of *our* collective story waking up and what *our* story is telling me, and at times represent latent connections with parts of my own identity coming to voice. From these paintings I have written stories to strengthen these voices and connect with more stories; a kind of weaving into *our* cultural fabric.

All of these story pieces are waking up together with the artwork, through this inquiry process, and now with the benefit of your witnessing. You may experience some disorientation moving from the visual to the written stories as they hold different layers, time, and moments of experiencing and coming into a relationship with the whole story.

However, I chose to offer this juxtaposition as a way to map out how this story-building process did not come together or make a resolved story all at once; likely it never will. Ethically, I hold each medium, language, sensibility, and relationship as separate as well as together, so that I don't lose or prioritize one voice from the story when it is coming into contact with another voice. These stories I offer in gratitude to my community as my most authentic exploration (to date) into my identity through arts-based Indigenous methodology. *Ka wuski 'opu weete / my heart keeps opening.*

Story I: *Soli* / Dreamscape

In "Story I" I share my dreamscape about journeying into an increasing connection with a worldview of collective identity and spirit. Most of this is experienced without words and at such a deep level of mysterious rhythm and story that it is only able to be known, seen, and listened to at this dreamscape level. I am Hochcha 'Alwaṣko in these stories. "Hochcha 'Alwaṣko" can be translated from Tamal Machchaw to English as "Paints Trees."

Hochcha 'Alwaṣko was born six generations after Tcupi Yomi; five generations after Tsupu and Carmel KomShaTal; four generations after Walla Walla, Rosalie Charles Smith, and Carmelita DeMelia; three generations after Katherine Frescia Smith and Sarah Ballard; two generations after Evelyn Smith. As this story begins, this woman, Hochcha 'Alwaṣko, does not know these grandmothers, their stories, or their songs.

Although these grandmothers' stories and songs are strong and beautiful, give life, and offer a way of being in a grateful heart, Hochcha 'Alwaṣko only knows silence (Figure 29). Worse than silence, sometimes, Hochcha 'Alwaṣko is interrupted by screams coming to her in whispers. These whispers seep into her bones and leave her frozen in the



Figure 29. Ghosts and the Void

dirt. So cold, cold, cold, she takes in a chill at her chest from these whispers. In these moments it's dark everywhere and Hochcha 'Alwas̱ko feels confused and alone. She wonders, "Why am I deserving of so much coldness and left so alone?" She feels more like a child than a woman during these times. This is a time of *cold* and *numb* and *alone* for Hochcha 'Alwas̱ko.

One day, Hochcha 'Alwas̱ko is traveling through the Rocky Mountains, far away from her home. She is driving away from the pow wow where she witnessed cyanide leach mining of the sacred mountains of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. As she travels, she is feeling more sickened, becoming numb again. It is in this moment that Hochcha 'Alwas̱ko meets a new experience. A Grandmother's hand reaches beyond her numbness and holds her in her core (Figure 30).



Figure 30. Grandmother's Hands

Being held in this way, finally not alone, Hochcha 'Alwaſko looks up into the sky and sees the stars, not just darkness. This is the time of *accompaniment*, while she is also *confused* and *sickened* (Figure 31). Hochcha 'Alwaſko learns that Tcupi, in *Tamal Machchaw*, means a small creature that lives underground in the roots of the oak trees. Tcupi is also the name of Hochcha 'Alwaſko's grandmother six generations before her. She wonders about being this creature living under the oak trees. Hochcha 'Alwaſko is imagining herself to be this creature that lives in the cold ground—not frozen, but walking among the roots, knowing the mud, joining what lives under the surface. Hochcha 'Alwaſko is walking among the trees and imagining herself this way, finding a home under the ground, in these deeper, quieter rhythms. She starts painting what she

learns. She is listening and painting. She feels something other than just cold or numb or alone. Now she feels a great weight and begins her crying. This is Hochcha 'Alwaſko's time for *color, rhythm, texture, and crying*.



Figure 31. Being Touched in Two Worlds

Hochcha 'Alwaſko learns that Tsupu, in *Tamal Machchaw*, means Wild Cucumber. This plant, Native to *our* land, grows from a weighty 100-pound root. With heart-shaped leaves, star-shaped flowers, and fruit in a protected gourd, she is among the first to reseed after a fire. She shoots up to the surface and blossoms during the winter. Her juices can cure boils. Tsupu is the name of Hochcha 'Alwaſko's grandmother five generations before her. Hochcha 'Alwaſko imagines connecting with the weighty 100-pound root. She imagines herself reseeding after fire and blossoming in the winter. She collects *Tamal Machchaw* words and creates places for them in her paintings. She feels herself waking up to something alive inside her core and inside her heart. Hochcha

‘Alwasko is starting to feel a sense of joy, a growing sense of company, but also a rage. This is the time of *naming*, and *feeling*, and making a web of *presence above the surface*.

Hochcha ‘Alwasko is handed recordings of Sarah Ballard singing about love and spirit. Sarah shares stories and the *Tamal Machchaw* language. Sarah is Hochcha ‘Alwasko’s aunt from three generations before her. Hochcha ‘Alwasko is studying these songs, stories, and words. Listening to these songs, walking among the trees, imagining her 100-pound root, she finds that she is dropping into a space that belongs in the sky, under the roots, and at her core all at once. From this space, Hochcha ‘Alwasko hears from the trees and first people. *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker and *Toktoola* ‘Alwas /



Figure 32. *Ka Wuski Weete* / My Heart Opens

Elderberry Tree are teaching her how to drop back into this sacred space, this nest, each time she falls out. This is a time of *slowing down, listening deeper, walking longer, and opening her heart* (Figure 32).

Evelyn Smith carefully tends to her roses and geraniums, makes strawberry shortcake to celebrate her sons' home runs, and she is often silent. Evelyn Smith is Hochcha 'Alwasko's grandmother. When Hochcha 'Alwasko is 4 years old, Grandmother Smith passes away. This is a time of Grandmother Smith teaching Hochcha 'Alwasko about the *silence*.

Story II: 'Oppoy 'Opu Yomi / Walking the Land

In "Story II," I am walking the land and trying to make sense of what is emerging out of the silence in often uncomfortable and yet very direct ways. Different from "Story I: Dreamscape," which maintained a primarily internal engagement, most of this knowledge is shared with me through my experiences walking in the world while listening deeply.

In this story, Hochcha 'Alwasko does not yet know her Grandmothers, but she does know silence. By now, Hochcha 'Alwasko has learned that there are many forms of silence and many ways of knowing it. Grandmother Smith's silence is a warning to stop walking the land as a way to survive.

As a child, Hochcha 'Alwasko heeds the Grandmother's warning, and stays away from knowing beyond the silence or asking questions of the silence. And yet, like one should never turn one's back on the ocean, for one could be pulled into its tide; to join in silence is also to be swept away. In the silence Hochcha 'Alwasko has been watching people traveling farther and farther out to sea.

Now, no longer a child, Hochcha 'Alwasko chooses to walk the land and know her heart. She is more afraid of being swept away with the others than she is afraid of the silence. She is more committed to knowing her heart than having to survive. On the new path, she learns that the *Toktoola* 'Alwas / Elderberry Tree sings *our* original rhythms. The Elderberry Tree is powerful. Hochcha 'Alwasko learns that the clapperstick, made of elderberry wood, is the very instrument her great-great-uncle Tom used to create the beat for his songs to heal *our* people. She wonders about this: elderberry clapper beat and the singing on the one side; on the other, silence.

Hochcha 'Alwasko paints an Elderberry Tree as a way to listen into the space of the clapperstick and the singing. And she walks the land. One day, she is walking in the foothills of Sonoma and listening into the morning mist. She sees an old wooden fence with barbed wire. On each wooden post sits a Turkey Vulture. A rhythm now of Turkey Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Turkey Vulture. They are each sitting there, perched on a fence post, looking straight ahead. Hochcha 'Alwasko is chilled, haunted, and her body echoes their frozen position on the posts. Ah, it dawns on her: so this is what Grandmother was warning about, this is what can happen when I listen into the silence.

Determined, and tapping her hand over her heart, she listens beyond the silence to the story of "the Death March." She listens as the U.S. military forces *our* people to leave *our* home of Bodega Bay and walk for 147 miles through these same Sonoma hills. Hochcha 'Alwasko looks down at her feet and feels the steps of her great-great-grandfather, William Smith, marching with *our* family, starving and exhausted, for 147 miles. Nearby, his wife, Walla Walla, joins these hills, as she falls forever from

marching. As Hochcha ‘Alwasko enters this silence further, her heart connects to the running barbed wire fence, the wooden posts, the rhythm of *our* people marching for 147 miles, and the rhythm of Turkey Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Turkey Vulture, one after another after another.

Not knowing what else to do, she keeps painting the Elderberry Tree, adding layers and layers of paint again and again, putting down circles for all of *our* people marching, putting down circles for all of *our* songs no longer silent and buried in these hills. But as she paints, the *Toktoola* ‘Alwas / Elderberry Tree is not singing. Hochcha ‘Alwasko stops and listens into this new silence long enough to sense another rhythm. She grabs a palette knife and starts scratching and scraping away at the canvas to uncover this rhythm coming from the layers underneath. It is: Turkey Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Turkey Vulture on the yellowing hills, with red beaks (Figure 33).



Figure 33. 'Ekeeya Tulawwa 'Oppoy / Vulture Death March

Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko is walking the land and comes to a standstill in the tule reeds near Bodega Bay. Instinctively, she turns her head up to the sky, and is surprised by a wave of ravens, their dark wings clamoring. The ravens fly about her head, and she has to strain her ears to hear anything. As she listens, an emphatic rhythm is dotting the sky. It talks about the time when Tsupu, one of Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko’s grandmothers, is taken by the Spanish soldiers. The story comes in fits and starts, among the ruckus of the raven beaks and claws, tearing into the silence about this time of Tsupu at 14 years old. The ravens are flocking, and gathering into a tree, so loud that Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko can barely follow the story—the Native women and girls are taken, and taken, and taken by the soldiers. This is the *raping* time. An epidemic follows, of syphilis for those not already taken by small pox, taken as slaves, taken as neophytes to serve in the mission system. While *our* people were starving, not safe to remain in *our* villages, unprotected.

Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko paints the ravens, in the raven tree, and feels a sickness; a poison (Figure 34). She wants to protect *our* Native women, to protect *our* heart, and cover *our* breasts. She wraps her arms around her chest, no longer safe to be so open and exposed as before when *we* walked freely on the land. The chill in her chest, a feeling frozen in the dirt, takes hold again. She covers her mouth and joins this hushed rhythm for a time. “*Mulesmi! 'Eyyan hinak holi.* / Be quiet! Don’t make any noise.” *We* all hide silent in the reeds during the raping time.

Listening into this silence, Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko hears running footsteps, bare feet slapping the dirt, mile after mile, quick but desperate. Tsupu is now escaping the soldiers; shooting up to the surface, blossoming, and making her way in the winter, on foot for 50

miles north of her home. She is running in the cold night, running and dragging her 100-pound root.



Figure 34. *Kakaaliko 'Alwas / Raven Tree*

Hochcha 'Alwasko travels in summer to the place of Tsupu's escape. It is Fort Ross in Jenner, California. She starts her listening at the State Historic Park's bookstore. She sees rows of coloring books about the Spanish and the Russian colonists, alongside the do-it-yourself basketry kits and an exhibit about *our* Native people of this area. Hochcha 'Alwasko watches an upbeat video celebrating the Fort Ross community, with little mention of how the original Russian colonists overhunted the sea otter population and then left. Unsettled by the bright tone of the story, she approaches the young lady at the desk and asks if there is a discount for Coast Miwok people. Confused (the answer is

no), the young lady at the desk quickly directs Hochcha ‘Alwasko to walk the path to the right—there she will see where the Native people lived.

The path is one big loop. So, Hochcha ‘Alwasko walks away from the Fort and comes to a bluff overlooking the ocean. She scans the area: a bluff, a cliff, an ocean. Retracing her steps back toward the Fort, she finds a plaque. The plaque says that this is the place where *our* people lived, outside of the Fort walls.

A burly *kakaali*/raven sidles over and eyes Hochcha ‘Alwasko directly (Figure 35). Instinctively, she backs away slowly and, at a few paces off the path, stands still for a few beats. She looks to the bluff at the right, looks back at the Fort walls to the left, and cautiously acknowledges the burly raven sitting squarely on the path. She listens into the ocean breeze 50 miles north of Tsupu’s home.

“Well, shit,” *Kule*/Bear swears. She is stretching up on her hind legs, sniffing the air (Figure 36).



Figure 36. *Kakaali Wuṭi* / Raven Ghost



Figure 36. *Kule* / Bear

This silence stinks. Hochcha ‘Alwasko and *Kule* nod at each other in understanding. The young lady at the desk failed to mention that in contrast to well-kept Fort walls, restored bell tower, and orderly bunk house, *nothing* is preserved of *our* Native life.

Hochcha ‘Alwasko keeps walking—now up the hill to the Fort Ross cemetery to sit in the afternoon heat, on the dry weeds and crusted dirt that cover over the dead. She is sitting among the rows upon rows of wooden crosses. They are nailed together and painted white, and a sob escapes her. Surprised by the depth and echo of it, she opens herself up to it. The sob escapes again—now a deep chested heaving, and heaving, and heaving. Heaving up from the 100-pound root, with little breath between each contraction. This is the time of the *sobbing* that interrupts the state-imposed silence. This is how Hochcha ‘Alwasko shows her *wuskipa*/respect and honors her Grandmothers.

The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker is knocking on *our* Singing Tree, drilling holes to make room to store her primary food source, the acorn (Figure 37). With her beak, the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker knocks out a quick rhythm: *Kenne ‘umpa*, ‘*ossa ‘umpa*, ‘*teleeka ‘umpa* / one acorn, two acorns, three acorns. The Russian colonists left Fort Ross and so, too, did Tsupu and her husband, Tintic Comtechal, and their son, Tom. Tsupu’s stories are scattering, ripe fruit dropping from *our* tree, acorns rolling to the side. First, it appears in the newsletter of the California Historical Society, telling of *our* Tsupu as a favorite mistress to Captain Stephen Smith; it’s a love story. *Kenne ‘umpa* / one acorn. Then, there come the questioning stories: were Tsupu and Captain Smith married? ‘*Ossa ‘umpa* / two acorns. One Elder, sitting in the Tribal office lobby, takes a *mulayya* or knocking-down-acorns-stick to that story: It was rape. *Teleeka ‘umpa* / three acorns.

More acorns pile up, about Tsupu living on the Smith Ranch and bearing her master two children. William Smith is one of these children.



Figure 37. *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker

Hochcha ‘Alwasko, now hollow from her sobbing, picks up a basket and starts collecting these ‘*umpa*/acorns from among the weeds, as they lie on the crusted earth from where they rolled next to the wooden crosses. She knows that each acorn, each story, must make its way back to *our* tree. She is finding them everywhere she looks. She finds acorns in the library, in the museums, in the Tribal newsletter, in fragile wax cylinder recordings, in the missions, in art exhibits, in anthropologists’ books, and archeologists’ books, and ethnographers’ books, and linguists’ books, and books and books and books. She is diligent, scouring the ground, searching under the rocks. She is putting them in her pockets, in the cup holder in her car, in her mug at work, in a vase on

the kitchen table, in her dissertation. Her back is tired from bending over and her feet are sore from walking. The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker has been known to drill 5,000 holes into one tree.



Figure 38. *Koyanni* 'Alwas / Singing Tree

Hochcha 'Alwasko remembers, so different from the silence that surrounded Tsupu, the many stories told to her as a child about Captain Stephen Smith, who sailed around the Horn from Massachusetts to California, founded the first California sawmill, brought the first pianos to California, and founded Smith Ranch. More acorns roll out; Captain Smith's great-great-great-great-great-uncle is the Mayflower Pilgrim John Howland. The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker is drilling more holes to make room for all of these stories. Hochcha 'Alwasko traces the line: Captain Smith, a Quaker, married into Peruvian royalty, thus earning him a Spanish land grant to claim Tsupu's home in 1843. The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker collects each story in her beak, and flies with it back to

our tree (Figure 38). Not only land rights; Smith is granted possession of all who are living on *our* land. Tsupu is the property of Captain Smith. Tsupu, married to Tintic; their son who heals with his clapperstick and songs. Now she is Captain Smith's house servant and mistress. Their child William Smith is born; Tom is his older step-brother. The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker stores all of the collected stories, once again, in *our* tree. This is how the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker shows *wuskippa*/respect and honors the Grandmothers too.

Hochcha 'Alwasko is bemused by all that she hears; elderberry wood clapping, ravens *caa*-ing, silence, the woodpecker knocking, the ocean breeze, the Elder's *mulayya* / knocking-down-acorns-stick. She paints to honor Tsupu and listen for her singing (Figure 39). A love song enters the studio, with a tenderness and strength that is mysterious. In painting Tsupu, Hochcha 'Alwasko feels the vibrations of the timeless love from her ancestor, the cycles of the day, the hand that holds her at her core. She paints the tree that is a granary and a full circle, holding the '*umpa*/acorns at her trunk and baskets in her limbs. To walk with Grandmother is possible, but Hochcha 'Alwasko needed to reach back five generations. Tsupu must have been ready to speak first. Or maybe this is the Grandmothers' way to honor their Elders. To create a space for their Grandmother Tsupu, so that she begins the stories and singing again each winter.



Figure 39. *Koya Tsupu* / Tsupu's Song

Story III: *Tallepo* / Waking Up

In “Story III,” I am hearing a cacophony of voices from different worldviews and moments in time. Amidst this confusion, I am coming to know how I belong in our story and how to speak back to history with my own voice.

Hochcha ‘Alwaſko rarely remembers her dreams, but there are two memories from her childhood that rupture her silence and the darkness of her sleeping. They are both coming to her now in the studio as she paints to honor Tsupu. In one early memory she is looking out of a car window and sees the singing and laughing of *our* poppies, splashing around their bright orange circles on *our* hills. She reaches up and puts her hand against the smooth glass of the passenger side window, leaving a moist handprint, yearning to be on the other side. The poppies shout out to her from *our* beautiful sloping hills, “We’ll sing to you, until you learn how to sing back.”⁴ *Yomunnaka*/beautiful. But the car drives on for miles.

The other childhood memory is full of shadows and whispers, but points Hochcha ‘Alwaſko to a bridge between her waking and sleeping worlds; her day and her night, her childhood and her womanhood, her time and the time of her Grandmothers. At Dennis-the-Menace Park in Monterey, California, she is racing alone through the hedge maze, which looms above her head and extends beyond the borders of her mind. Her heart is racing too, as she feels lost and alone, her small sneakers slapping against the crusty dirt. Her feet are slipping as she turns the corners into the narrow passageways in this game of hide-and-seek. *Wute muku* / path of the dead.

⁴ This is a modification of a quote found in Simpson’s (2017) book, *This Accident of Being Lost: Songs and Stories*. Her quote is: “I’ll sing to you, until you sing back” (p. 42).

Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko is sitting with Sylvia Thalman on the backyard patio of Sylvia’s home in *our* California hills. Sylvia’s hand is gentle as she reaches out and pushes a big blue book across the smooth glass of her table. Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko looks at the photographs in the book and for the first time comes face-to-face with Tom and William Smith. They are looking directly at her from the pages, somber, wearing Western clothes. Tom has interviewed with an anthropology graduate student from University of California, Berkeley, for one dollar a day. The year is 1932.

Turning the page, she meets her great-great-grandmother, Rosalie Charles Smith. She is wearing 5,000 *pispi*/clamshell beads around her neck (Figure 40). Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko picks up the book and holds it in her hands. She feels the heft of it. This book is her first relationship with her ancestors and it weighs 100 pounds.



Figure 40. *Ka 'Inniiko / My Tribe*

Sylvia hands Hochcha 'Alwasko two documents. One is a form to become a Tribal Member. The other is a genealogy chart proving that she is eligible to be a Tribal member. The Tribal community needs robust numbers for the federal recognition application.

Kakaali/Raven and *Kule*/Bear start the conversation. *Kakaali*/Raven says, "I am a 'European mutt,' but mainly Italian." *Kule*/Bear asks: "Who are these people?! Where have they been hiding?" *Kakaali*/Raven steps forward and pecks at the pages, looking for something shiny. *Kule*/Bear ambles over to *our* tree, and rubs up against it, scratching her back in the process.

Back at home, Hochcha 'Alwasko touches the pages that Sylvia gave her, tracing her fingers over the names. She looks in the mirror, then back to the papers. She leafs through the photos in the book again and again. She puzzles over her genealogy chart, throws her hands up in the air, and walks out of the room. She walks down the corridor to her studio and begins painting a self-portrait (Figure 41). She paints herself somber, looking straight ahead, and asks, "How Indian am I?"

Hochcha 'Alwasko is restless, moving in and out between a waking state and sleep. Something is pulling her back into a dream, where she is taking her children for swim lessons at the neighborhood YMCA. But the pool is gone and instead there is barbed wire fencing along a sparse, elevated bluff. She feels a sense of vertigo as her whole world teeters back and forth, up and down, like a seesaw. Instinctively, she gets down on her hands and knees to regain a sense of balance. She feels both terrified and compelled to see what is beyond the barbed wire fencing on the edge of the bluff. The air is thick in a silent mist, but she senses the waves crashing near her. From her crouching

Hochcha ‘Alwasko wakes up abruptly from her dream, her heart hammering in her chest, and an acorn rolls out from under her bed. *Kule/Bear* tells the *Kakaali/Raven*, “William Smith started the fishing industry in Bodega Bay. He was the first Native business owner. He had land, a small fleet, and a wharf.” Ah yes, she remembers, and her heartbeat slows down a bit. Tom Smith speaks: “*Metakmi*/remember: We have boats.”

Following the instructions on the Tribal membership form Sylvia gave her, Hochcha ‘Alwasko writes down the names of all the Indians. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, she already has an Indian census role number. And so it goes; for years, and years, and years, she submits forms to the federal government. *Kakaali/Raven* tells *Kule/Bear*, “Because that, my friend, is how you really get to be Indian.”

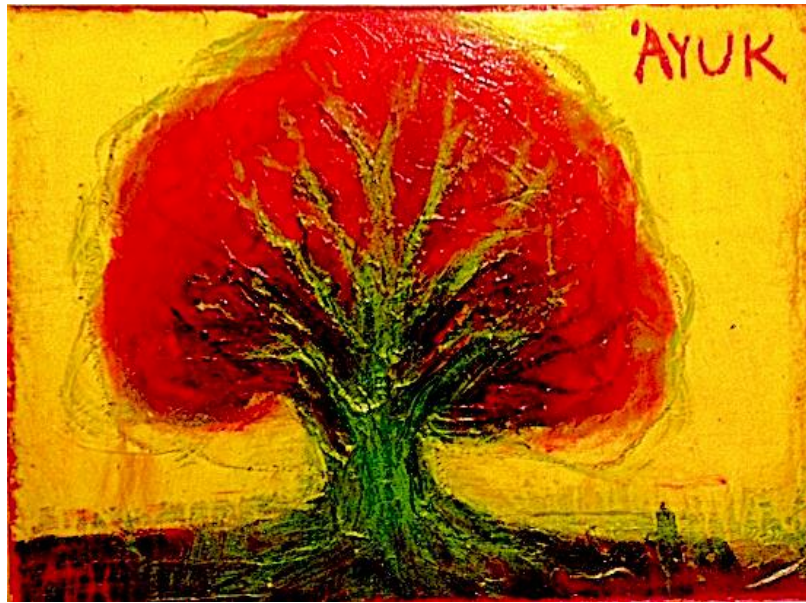


Figure 42. ‘*Ayuk* ‘*Alwas* / Tree of Hope

Saata / Oak Tree is strong and vast, standing up on the hill behind the house. *Saata*’s arms reach down to the ground, always welcoming Hochcha ‘Alwasko back to her winter fort, her personal escape, and home. In her studio, Hochcha ‘Alwasko is painting *Saata* / Oak Tree (Figure 42). She photocopies the Indian faces from Sylvia’s

book and pastes them onto the canvas. Working the paint, she watches as once again the circles emerge. *Kule*/Bear tells *Kakaali*/Raven, “Always the circles, and always the tree.” This time, two birds step in between the branches. One of them is *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker, who immediately gets to work knocking on the tree, drilling.

With the birth of Hochcha ‘Alwas̄ko’s second child, she grows a second heart and stretches her body into a *Saata* / Oak Tree to hold her two sons in a collective womb. The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker has been drumming on the tree for days, making two large cavities into the tree, nests for the children. Listening into the circles, Hochcha ‘Alwas̄ko discovers a community heart in the abalone at the center of it all (Figure 43).



Figure 43. *Ma Yomi*: ‘*Awwuk Wus̄ki* / *Our Home: Abalone Heart*

Hochcha 'Alwaſko's language teacher Isabelle hands her the *Wee'a*/Blessing in *Tamal Machchaw*. This is the prayer that is spoken at the beginning of all Tribal events. Hochcha 'Alwaſko imagines this *Wee'a* spoken by her grandmothers back seven generations, the whole community gathered, speaking out loud these words together. She paints the *Wee'a* and feels a certain pride, memorizing each word, how it is written, the rhythm of it, rolling it around on her tongue (Figure 44). This is where her commitment to *our* rhythm takes hold. Sitting together at the dinner table, the younger son says something incomprehensible. When asked to speak again, the son points to the painting, and says the *Wee'a* words out loud. *Kule*/Bear tells *Kaakali*/Raven, "You see, it is at this time that she knows to keep painting *Tamal Machchaw* so that it continues living on the family walls."

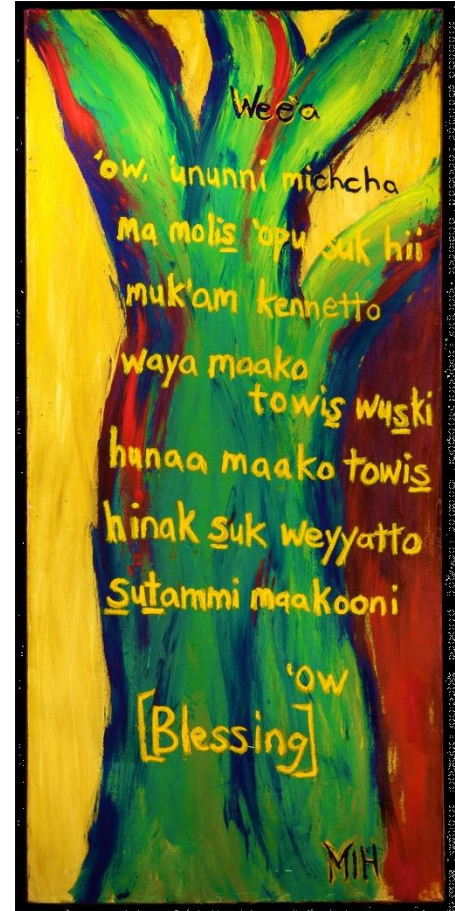


Figure 44. *Wee'a* / Blessing

Hochcha 'Alwaſko is having an anxiety dream. She is walking hurriedly down the corridors. She has so much to do and there is no way she can do it all! The walls are cold and clammy, the halls go on and on, and she is about to run. Abruptly she is waking up with a heavy, wool blanket covering her, *Tamal Machchaw* is a comforting presence surrounding her. *Kule*/Bear tells *Kaakali*/Raven, "You see, *Tamal Machchaw* is her wool blanket in the cold night."

Hochcha ‘Alwasko drives to the Tribal office and parks her car, when she hears a story; the *Wee’a*/Blessing was written during a language class a few years ago, with the help of the linguist. Hochcha ‘Alwasko feels a deep thud in her gut, and *Choyyekke*/Deer steps out of her meadow, next to the car, with her ears perked up. Desperately, Hochcha ‘Alwasko slams open her car door and hurries out, grabbing at the ghosts of her treasured imagining, chasing the *Wee’a* words scattering across the parking lot, watching them go with the tide out to sea. Slowly the Grandmothers are vanishing into ribbons, no longer speaking the *Wee’a* in their *kota*/home, pounding ‘*umpa*/acorns for ‘*ulki* / acorn mush. Hochcha ‘Alwasko is angry and feels tricked. She laments, “But I thought these words were handed down from our ancestors! I thought this was what survived!” *Choyyekke*/Deer and Hochcha ‘Alwasko just stand there silently in the sea of empty asphalt. *Kakaali*/Raven whispers to *Kule*/Bear, “You see, this is pretty common with dead languages.”

Hochcha ‘Alwasko’s sons are growing up, and Isabelle is teaching them all *Tamal Machchaw* through Skype. The older son illustrates “How Coyote Stole Fire” and writes the dialogue in *Tamal Machchaw*; he also studies the ways of *our* trickster. The older son chooses ‘*Awaaki*/Fox for his own Coast Miwok name. He likes to be clever and he likes his tricks. Hochcha ‘Alwasko is looking at her son and the illustration he created of ‘*Oye*/Coyote dancing in the story before he steals the fire (Figure 45). She also studies the dance regalia of the Native men of *our* Tribe; the seed pod rattle, the flicker headband, and watches YouTube videos of them dancing at pow wows. ‘*Oye*/Coyote is a trickster, a creator, a leader. The older son’s Jewish name (his father’s family is Jewish) is Moshe/Moses. The story of Moses is that he parted the Red Sea and helped his people

escape slavery in Egypt; another trickster. Hochcha 'Alwasko drops her head in her hands; the older son is growing up too quickly for her to know his path. She wonders, "What will he do with all of this? How does a young man bring this all together?"



Figure 45. 'Oye / Coyote

Hochcha 'Alwasko is separating from the boys' father, and divorce negotiations last over 2 years. She is worried about how to help her sons become men at a time like this. In addition, her older son is training to make the high school varsity basketball team. He is over 6 feet tall, but cannot yet dunk the ball. The older son doesn't like talking much with his mother anymore. She finds that, if anything, he will discuss his training; but there is only silence about the divorce or manhood or the meaning of Moses and

‘Awaaki/Fox. She begins painting *‘Awaaki*/Fox leaping high into the sky above the basketball hoop and listening into this silence.

Hochcha *‘Alwa*sko is walking along the Bodega Bay Headlands; bluffs with high cliffs overlooking the ocean far below. She feels *our* family history present in everything. Standing alone on the bluff, she contemplates bringing her sons here in the hopes that they feel the family history here too. She knows she has not been a good teacher for her sons about their family history and has not been able to tell them stories. She is worrying again, and peers down at the ocean over the side of the cliff. These worry thoughts collect in the *Kakaaliko ‘Alwa* / Raven Tree: Her older son is afraid of heights and would not want to walk this bluff. Her mind flashes to a scenario of her son falling down onto the rocks. The woman is gripped with a stark terror at her core and a sharp loss in her heart, as if her son really just fell below. Bewildered at herself for creating such a clamor, she becomes disoriented and scoots onto a tree branch next to *Kakaali*/Raven on the Raven Tree.

*Su*yyu/Hawk comes swooping along the headlands and grabs her attention back from the *Kakaaliko ‘Alwa* / Raven Tree. Watching the hawk with a confident stretch of her wings, navigating the air currents, Hochcha *‘Alwa*sko simultaneously beholds her son taking flight. This boy from her womb isn’t falling, he is not down on the rocks; he is taking flight! Hochcha *‘Alwa*sko is watching the hawk hunting and swooping and gliding over the cliffs; she feels elated for her son. *Su*yyu/Hawk hovers immediately above her so she can memorize the lines of her wings and complete the painting of her son flying, so he can dunk the basketball. She is crying as she joins with *Su*yyu/Hawk in this flight.

At home, Hochcha ‘Alwasko completes the painting of *Suyyuko he ‘Awaaki* / Hawks and Fox (Figure 46). She is looking to the sky and praying with *Suyyu*/Hawk whenever she worries about the cliff and drop to the icy ocean below. *Suyyu*/Hawk is teaching her to trust in her sons and to take more steps on the bluff. *Kakaali*/Raven finds a comfortable spot in the Raven Tree, rolls her eyes, and shouts down to *Kule*/Bear, caaing, “Yeah, right! Meanwhile, the boys are making jokes about their mom who cries whenever she sees a hawk!”



Figure 46. *Suyyuko he ‘Awaaki* / Hawks and Fox

Sylvia Thalman introduces Hochcha ‘Alwasko to an organization that teaches Native skills such as flint knapping, clamshell bead drilling, and basketry. She is eager to take a class on basket weaving at Kule Loklo, the simulated Coast Miwok village at Point Reyes National Seashore. She has often visited Miwok and Pomo baskets in museums, yearning to touch the handiwork of her Grandmothers, as they sit on the other side of the smooth glass. There are renowned Miwok and Pomo basket collections in Russia, New

York, and at UC Berkeley. Yearning to know something more about her traditions, Hochcha 'Alwasko registers for a basketry class and pays her fees on the Internet.

The red bud and willow are lean and strong as sinew. When soaked in water, they are more flexible. Hochcha 'Alwasko watches the basket weaver crack the bark off the willow, off the red bud, and give thanks. The local Indian teacher weaves with fingers that can fly. But when Hochcha 'Alwasko peers down at her hands, they can't do it. The patience, knowledge, and skill to make a basket is overwhelming her. Hochcha 'Alwasko is filling up with frustration and shame. Nothing about being Indian is easy! The anger grows. "How am I supposed to learn all these Native ways when nobody ever bothered to show me?!" A sense of betrayal, once deeply buried, is starting to surface. There is the language (two languages, actually), the stories, the world-f**king-renowned baskets, the dancing, the singing, the cooking, the medicine and healing . . . and all she gets in the deal is shame and anger and grief. Hochcha 'Alwasko is rigid and curt in her handling of the willow, huffing in frustration and impatience with the red bud. The basketry teacher watches her without saying a word and a silence grows between them. She spends two days under the oak trees on the site of her ancestors, in a simulated Miwok village, learning from a real live Indian basket weaver, and all she brings home is a clump of knotted roots (Figure 47).



Figure 47. 'Ewis / Basket

Still determined, Hochcha 'Alwaṣko reads several anthropology books by the renowned anthropologist Dr. Alfred Kroeber about California Indians and starts another project to learn about her Native culture. The project is a painting of three images: An elderberry flute, a tule reed boat, and a basket woven to catch birds (Figure 48). For 7 years she paints and repaints the background and the sides, adding texture, changing the shading, and adding new colors. But each year she feels she is painting into a void and she is left feeling unsatisfied, empty, and uncertain. *Kule*/Bear tells *Kakaali*/Raven, “This is where the ancestors help her learn how to paint with *our* spirit.”



Figure 48. Elderberry Flute, Tule Boat, and Bird-Catcher

One day, after giving a talk about historical trauma and Native perspectives on mental health at her place of work in Massachusetts, Hochcha ‘Alwaŋko is feeling vulnerable and out of sorts. She wants to crawl into a hole under her *Saata* / Oak Tree and cover herself with dirt. She feels like she shared too much of herself and is now too raw and exposed in front of her work world. In the presentation Hochcha ‘Alwaŋko spoke the *Wee’a*/Blessing out loud and thus invited her ancestors into the room. Speaking *Tamal Machchaw* out loud to the room full of faculty and doctoral students, she broke down crying. She also shared with the work people an image she cut and pasted from the Internet of skeleton ghosts, looming and vanishing into white ribbons. This image had called out to her when she was creating her PowerPoint slideshow about the historical trauma of *our* Tribe. Now she feels naked and exposed, unsatisfied with the questions and comments at the end of her talk. They just don’t get it. She covers her face with her hands, thinking, “Why can’t I just go back to living with my *Saata* / Oak Tree? That is where I really belong. Why do I even try?”

Not knowing what else to do, Hochcha ‘Alwasko walks to the studio, takes a large brush and slaps down the paint in angry strokes; white ribbons branch out all over the canvas. The elderberry flute, the tule reed boat, and the basket to catch birds all vanish beneath the paint. She can only hear the *Kakaaliko*/Ravens clamoring in her head; their beaks and claws are attacking the canvas, scraping the paint. Stepping back, she takes a long look at the Ghost Tree and feels a thud in her gut. *Choyyekke*/Deer steps from her meadow into the studio, her ears perked up, and watches as Hochcha ‘Alwasko is consumed with self-hatred. Looking at her painting, she sees that she just erased her 7-year struggle to depict her cultural history. This is the time when Hochcha ‘Alwasko is introduced to the *Wute* ‘Alwasko / Ghost Tree (Figure 49).



Figure 49. Progression of the Painting of the Ghost Tree

The Ghost Tree is looming on the canvas, aggressive and rigid; not the vast and beautiful *Saata* / Oak Tree she knows and loves. The Ghost Tree is reaching out to grab and is taking over everything. Hochcha ‘Alwasko’s anger surfaces again: “What the hell is it with this f**king painting?!” She rushes out the door of her studio, bare feet slapping the crusted dirt, and she slips as she tries to escape down the corridor to hide.

Hochcha ‘Alwasko drives to the Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park and walks up the hill to where General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo built and ran his 100-square-mile ranch from 1836–1846. A shiver runs down her back. *Kule*/Bear gruffs and growls:

“I don’t like it here.” *Kule*/Bear tells *Kakaali*/Raven, “Vallejo was the highest military commander of *our* land: He wasn’t on the side of the Indians.” *Kakaali*/Raven snickers and adds, “Yep, as Director of Colonization, General Vallejo bought one of the pianos your great-great-great-grandfather Captain Smith brought from Massachusetts. As I understand it, they had a grand ol’ picnic together out at your grandpa’s Rancho.”

Walking around the Rancho, Hochcha ‘Alwasko can’t shake an eerie sense of discord. The whole place is constructed from local lumber; Captain Smith brought the first sawmill to the area. Corridors and walkways are marshalled together from hundreds of planks of wood laid down in rows and nailed to the floor. She breathes in the death of the trees (Figure 50). The soundtrack would be like something from a black and white horror flick, just before the murderer jumps out and stabs the unsuspecting woman 100 times. Hochcha ‘Alwasko reads the plaques; they impart quotes from religious men, ranchers, and traders. There is only a silence from *our* Native people. “But wait, there is so much written about the Indians!” laughs *Kakaali*/Raven and directs Hochcha ‘Alwasko to look at the plaques describing the “civilized Indians” and the “gentile Indians.” She reads on: “The Indians are of medium stature but tall individuals are found among them; they are rather well proportioned . . . —Petr Stepanovich Kostromitonov, 1839.”



Figure 50. *Hoykaṭi* / Rest for a Moment
(Another Ghost Tree)

Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko stops to peer into the darkened room for the laborers. Ravens are flocking and filling up their tree, bustling and raucous. *Kakaali*/Raven, becoming drunk on the growing energy of the tree, slurs her words as she is shouting down at *Kule*/Bear, “‘Laborers,’ yeah, that is just another name we have for the Indians!” Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko is weighing the raucous clamor of the Raven Tree against the eerie silence knocking around in her bones, sliding down her spine. The horror movie music is growing louder as she approaches the plaque in the laborers’ room. She first reads the left side of the plaque: “Bear in mind that the rooms have no doors and the room we ate in had its floors covered with sleeping Indians, male and female. —James C. Ward, 1878.” She turns her head, takes a disheartened breath, and reads the other side of the plaque. It is an 1846 poem by Rev. Colton with the title, “O Happy Flea of California!”

Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko feels the pounding from the stabbing knives in her chest, from the religious men, the ranchers, the traders; they are taking up a rhythm, stabbing over and over again. She runs out the door, her boots slapping the wood, matching the pounding of her heart, as she is stepping on hundreds of sawed planks—the hundreds of sleeping Indians, male and female, on the floor—all the way to the park ranger’s office.

The ranger says she is new and doesn’t know much about the “O Happy Flea” poem. “Things take a long time to change around here,” she explains. Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko looks at her watch; it is 2017. The new ranger offers to look into the meaning of the poem and says she will send a postcard with the explanation. The ranger writes down Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko’s postal address on a yellow sticky note and explains that they are kind of old-fashioned, and this is how things are done around here.

Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko is at the Breath of Life Conference in Berkeley, California, learning to breathe life into *Tamal Machchaw* with other California Native language learners. They take a field trip to Mission Dolores with Vince and his uncle who work at the Mission; they are Ohlone and teachers about the Mission history. *Dolores* is a Spanish word for “pain.” They take the group to see the Mission registry book, which records the names of all the Indians who were Christianized there and when they died. They take the group outside where there are traditional structures of the Native way of life. They take the group into the Church and Vince points up to the ceiling. Hochcha ‘Alwaṣko looks up and is greeted by a Native basketry design; a rhythm of deep reds and yellows march above her head, in triangles, singing. She breathes in the life of the painting on the ceiling. It is both powerful and *yomunnaka*/beautiful. She feels proud and

strong looking at this ceiling; the painting says *we* still exist. The ceiling is speaking directly to her.

In her studio she paints the design of the Mission Dolores ceiling. She works on the painting for 2 years. She is listening into the design, trying to get it right, trying to learn the song there, but the painting is silent.

Hochcha 'Alwasko drives to the Sonoma Mission and parks at the Sonoma Plaza. As she walks to the Mission she passes by General Vallejo's House (his other one). *Kule*/Bear tells *Kakaali*/Raven, "There are stories of a natural spring on *our* land around here and so the people named the land Chiucuyem, or Crying Mountain." Hochcha 'Alwasko keeps walking and passes by the soldiers' barracks. *Kakaali*/Raven tells *Kule*/Bear, "Well, now we call this place Lachryma Montis. That is Latin for Mountain Tear" (Sonoma Petaluma Parks, n.d.).

She enters the Sonoma Mission and goes up to the desk to pay her entry fee to the ranger. As they make eye contact, there is a dawning of recognition. Well, damn, it's the same new ranger from Rancho Petaluma Adobe! The new ranger looks away briefly with a shuttered flash in her eyes, but manages a friendly, albeit hasty, gesture of greeting. Hochcha 'Alwasko takes a self-guided tour around the Mission grounds and, walking up to the church entryway, is delighted to find Native designs painted on the stucco walls. In her heart she is remembering the ceiling of Mission Dolores and can feel an assembling choir where these two designs are joining together, singing. She stands next to the work, basking in the power of it, breathing in *our* spirit from every triangle and every color. The plaque nearby reads: "The interior of the chapel is . . . decorated by Christianized Indians . . . with primitive charm. . . ."

Hochcha 'Alwasko is walking the loop along the corridors of the Mission. Standing before each plaque, the breath of *our* ancestors is raising the hairs on the back of her neck; her hands are clenching the emptiness. She and the new ranger come face to face again. Hochcha 'Alwasko looks squarely at the new ranger and says, "Is there really nothing here that represents the Native point of view?" The new ranger looks surprised, and leads Hochcha 'Alwasko back into the corridors, pointing out text here and there, then pulling her hand back in consideration, saying, "Well, actually, that's not a good example either." The new ranger reads the text more closely and is now mirroring the dismay on Hochcha 'Alwasko's face. They walk together to the ranger desk and talk to the other, more veteran ranger working there. "Yes, well," the veteran ranger sighs, "We just had another meeting about this. It just takes a long time to make changes here." The new ranger looks at Hochcha 'Alwasko hopefully and asks, "Did you see the memorial plaque?"

Hochcha 'Alwasko feels like a child as she looks up and meets the smile in the new ranger's eyes. "No, where is that?" The new ranger directs her to go out the door, past the Mission gate, and take a right. She follows the new ranger's directions and finds herself outside the Mission walls, standing alone in the street. *Choyyekke*/Deer steps out of her meadow and silently steps into the street next to Hochcha 'Alwasko. There is a collective tear falling down the side of *our* face. *Kule*/Bear solemnly tells *Kakaali*/Raven, "This memorial plaque holds the Christian names of nearly 900 Native people who died within the year after the Mission was founded."

Hochcha 'Alwasko walks back to her studio, and listens closely to the painting of the Mission Dolores ceiling. She starts writing into the design, 'Ow 'Ununni Michcha /

Oh, Great One, the opening words in *our Wee'a/Blessing*. She paints the words, becoming text, becoming primary literature, joining the interpretive center, penetrating the walls of the Missions, the walls of the Fort, over and over again, nearly 900 times (Figure 51). Angry at a god, angry at man, she is repeating these words again and again, in the rhythm of *our* language, in *our* voice. *Kule/Bear* tells *Kakaali/Raven*, “Now, this is the way to engrave an interpretive plaque with primitive charm.” Hochcha ‘Alwasko gifts the painting as an offering of gratitude to Vince.



Figure 51. 'Ow, 'Ununni Michcha / Oh, Great One

There is a White supremacy rally in Massachusetts in 2017, at the Boston Common. Hochcha 'Alwasko is afraid. She knows there is a counter-rally, but she feels a whispering down deep that tells her not to go. She doesn't want to see any more of this; she is already full. She feels silent and self-condemning. Slowly she walks to her studio,

bare feet slapping the crusted dirt; she cannot hide from the Ghost Tree any longer. So she sets up a new canvas on the wall and prints out the text she photographed from the interpretive plaques at Fort Ross, General Vallejo's Rancho Petaluma Adobe, and the Sonoma Mission, along with pages from the anthropology book by Kroeber, who catalogued the elderberry flute, the tule reed boat, and the basket, along with the pages from the book about how Kroeber sold Native skulls to the Smithsonian Museum. She listens to the Ghost Tree in her failed painting of 7 years, now with its vanishing arms and tattered ribbons. She draws a silhouette of a giant Ghost Tree on the new canvas, cuts up the white sheets of photocopied text, and fills up the Tree. Next, she takes up an ink dropper, rolls it around in her fingers, then, squeezing tightly, releases the colors to drip onto the text—yellows, blues, fuchsia, red, and black. Hochcha 'Alwasko hears the marching from *our* rolling hills, the marching from nearly 900 Christianized names, and paints the 5,000 *pispi*/clamshell beads that hang around her Grandmother's neck. The Ghost Tree is filling up with history and speaks back to it. The studio is filling with ribbons and rhythm, there is knocking on the walls, with whispering and haunting, until Hochcha 'Alwasko notices that something is wrong. Something needs to be repaired. A story needs to be told. *Kule*/Bear tells *Kakaali*/Raven, "Hochcha 'Alwasko realizes that the Ghost Tree is the work of the ancestors. The Ghost Tree has been speaking to her in the silence and the gap" (Figure 52).



Figure 52. 'Wute 'Alwas / Ghost Tree

Months later Hochcha 'Alwaṣko receives a postcard from the new ranger at the Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park. It reads:

Sorry for the delayed response, but we have gotten an answer to your question regarding the choosing and significance of “O Happy Flea of California” poem at the Petaluma Adobe S.H.P. According to our Museum Curator . . . both quote and poem attest to the prevalence of fleas throughout the Ranchos of California despite having attractive, well-cared for bedlinens. We hope we have answered your question!

Thank you!

Petaluma Adobe Staff

Kakaali/Raven gibes at *Kule*/Bear, “You see, our state park system is more keen on the happiness of the flea than any quotes from a civilized Indian.”

Hochcha 'Alwasko is walking with her younger son around her favorite local pond in Massachusetts, where they have lived for over 13 years. With the winter coming, they find that the birds' nests are easier to spot in the trees. The birds' nests remind her of *our* baskets. Her younger son is growing up even faster now, already within an inch of her in height; he will soon be one of the "tall individuals among them." At the younger son's bar mitzvah (remember the father is Jewish), he chose a bright red color for the yarmulkes, the traditional skullcap to cover the top of one's head. As they walk together, Hochcha 'Alwasko considers four things about her younger son's ceremony of becoming a man. First, that as she walked into the synagogue full of red-capped people, she saw a community of *Panakko* / Acorn Woodpeckers come to honor her son. Second, that her younger son thoughtfully changed his name from *Toles* / Wild Cat to '*Upuksu* / Mountain Lion (Figure 53). Third, that he now owns an elderberry clapperstick, a gift from Isabelle, our Coast Miwok teacher. Fourth, that she and her older son spoke a *Tamal Machchaw* blessing out loud together as part of the ceremony.



Figure 53. *Toles* / Wild Cat

Together they are walking a slow paced rhythm in a loop, counting every birds' nest they can find on their 2-mile hike. The younger son stops still for a minute, listens to the leaves rattling in the breeze, looks at Hochcha 'Alwasko, and says, "*koyanni*/singing." As they come to the end of their loop, they have counted 100 nests. She pauses to contemplate whether these collective steps are how *we* bring this all together.

Hochcha 'Alwasko is in her studio painting a double tree (Figure 54). This tree stands beyond the idea of above and below ground. She can hear *our* stories in the silences now, and they will not let her chose which ones to keep telling and which ones to hide. But the old contempt and betrayals coil around her with their disruptions and loss; the tide is pulling all the way back to Tsupu and Tcupi. She is no longer peering over the cliff, crouching down and holding tight. She is slowing down and dropping all the way in, listening as all of this washes over her in waves. She has painted the Ghost Tree and now she makes herself ready to paint this icy storm while standing among the rocks and bones.



Figure 54. Double Tree (Early Version)

She drops both of her hands into the paint; her heart is speaking, saying, “I don’t want to be a double tree anymore. I love all *our* relations as I walk *our* land, with all of my body, all above ground and together with all of *our* roots. I am dizzy at the edge of this cliff and called to go out with the tide. But I don’t want to keep slipping in cold, endless corridors.”

Her hands reach out to touch the wood canvas stretchers and she slowly rotates the double tree 180 degrees. Now the bottom tree is at the top and likewise the tree above ground is down at the roots. Her whole world has flipped. Her hands paint the Tree as a woman’s body; the tree is Tsupu, she is Hochcha ‘Alwas̱ko too. The middle of the painting is now her core being held by her grandmother of five generations before her. *Suyyu*/Hawk flies through the middle of *our* storm, interrupting the chill and generating hope and trust.

Hochcha ‘Alwas̱ko paints her body as *our* Native women amidst generations of secrets and slippery identities. She comes face to face with *Raven*/Kakaali and looks *us* all directly in *our* eye. To be a woman in *our* Tribe means you are raped, you fall dead in the hills, you are running into the night, you are taken and become the property of another, you are silenced, and all this while you take care of everyone around you, laboring. So this is what *Choyyekke*/Deer is silently holding while standing next to her granddaughter.

Hochcha ‘Alwas̱ko knows that her next step is to complete the flipped double tree painting. She is worried, though, because to create this image is to expose herself, to be so vulnerable, naked, easily targeted and misunderstood. An acorn rolls across the floor and touches her bare foot. It holds the strong sensory memory of her experience as a child

with joy, laughing with *our* hills covered in bright orange poppies. Remembering the poppies, her heart connects to the hills, where the Grandmothers once walked freely and did not cover their breasts. In the painting, Tsupu and Hochcha 'Alwaſko emerge together as two trees with the same roots (Figure 55). Their roots touch, holding hands in the mud. Tsupu continues holding Hochcha 'Alwaſko's story at her core; has been holding it for a long time. And Hochcha 'Alwaſko has listened when there weren't any words, until these silences broke open. The painting is waking up their collective story together.



Figure 55. *Tsupu Tuppe* / Tsupu Emerges

Hochcha 'Alwaſko walks to the Bodega Bay Headlands and stands at the top of the bluff overlooking the ocean, holding the acorn in her hand. She rolls the acorn along her palm with her thumb and feels the solid, smooth sides, the sharp point at the tip. Her

eyes scan past the cliff to take in the whole landscape: the vast ocean, the sky, and the rocks below. She tosses the acorn over the edge in an offering and says, “*Ka molis* / I am grateful.” A rhythm is echoing back from the bottom. She listens into it. *Kule*/Bear roars, “Slam dunk!”



Figure 57. *Sutammi Maakooni* / Be With Us



Figure 57. *Kennetto* / Together

CHAPTER 5: INSIGHTS: DATA AND RESULTS, PART II

Introduction: Frame of Reference

This chapter is my attempt to translate my personal experience applying arts-based Indigenous methodology into ethical considerations and insights for a larger academic discussion within the art therapy profession. Its writing represents a grappling with the complex layering of worldviews; a cross-cultural conversation. With the intention of honoring the shifting of positioning and voice, I will purposefully describe the context from which insights have been written. This languaging is inherently imperfect and can only partially represent the multiple layering and negotiations of these positions; it is a juxtaposition. My hope is that this juxtaposition of languaging may at least illuminate further considerations when approaching a dialogue regarding arts-based Indigenous methodology.

Below are four parts to each of 14 sections labeled with a roman numeral. First I will provide a statement to translate an insight from my personal experience into an ethical and/or application consideration regarding the role of the researcher in arts-based Indigenous methodology. Next I will provide an explanation about this statement of insight. Then I will provide a contextual example from the inquiry process. Finally I will provide one or more images as art example(s) to further contextualize how the insight came from the inquiry process.

Continuous Immersion With Respect and Humility

Statement to Translate Insight

I found that the depth and richness of learning increased as I was able to stay continuously immersed in inquiry about living with respect and humility—which is determined from *our* culturally centered, collective position.

Explanation

I found that to only live sometimes with culturally centered respect, to interrupt the engagement in respectful living with humility, was to interrupt the inquiry process. My daily living practice—the development of my relationships and my ability to practice culturally centered respect—is, itself, my inquiry process. I came to recognize that I am never really outside of or separate from connections to knowledge, memory, respectful practice, and engaging with spirit. This inquiry process is about my entire identity—not just while in the act of “researching” but as a person, all of who I am and how I am in relationship in the world. My inquiry comes down to asking questions such as, “What is respect?” or “How do I act with respect here?” or “How do I stay in the relationship with self-respect and respect for all others?” Then I need to continue unpacking and listening for answers in each situation. I often found that showing respect is to commit to and develop the connections that come to me while I am welcoming input from this culturally centered space. I believe, and have been taught, that this inquiry into respectful connections is the ethical way to engage in Indigenous methodology. It is also something I understand to be an aspect of how to identify as Indigenous.

Contextual and Art Examples

At the start of this inquiry, I didn’t know enough about my Native roots to feel confident in my ability to respect my community and ancestors from *our* worldview. Therefore, I studied Indigenous methodology from books, and I tried to outline a personalized Indigenous methodology for my Tribal culture using sources from *our* collective culture. My sense of humility became greater as I realized how little I understood. I actually started from a place of shame, then eventually that developed into a

place of humbleness, and then I became comfortable with humility as a way of engaging in this process with respect.

I found in this process that I needed to reconstruct and open up my scope and sense of relationship and relating. For example, I developed more relationship connections and in many new junctures: with the land, with ancestor voice in prayer, with spirit in the studio. As these (beyond human) relationships developed, I found that I also was able to open my heart more with Tribal citizens as well. This seemed to develop a reciprocal trust and relationship in my human relationships, such that sharing and knowledge construction were cumulative and included many dimensions. For example, at the start of this inquiry I did not fully engage in deep listening with spirit or know how to show respect by giving an offering with gratitude as part of my inquiry process. At first, I heard several Tribal Elders speak of their experiences of giving an offering before doing work. I continued hearing about this practice several times before I eventually considered this practice of respect in my inquiry process. However, I felt stuck, because I did not know how to engage in these practices authentically, from my own center of relationship. Then, in full humility, I acknowledged that I didn't know what to do and prayed and asked for help to know what I could offer and how this could work in my inquiry process.

The answer came to me by way of a voice in my head, one I recognize now to be distinct from a mere thought, and more of an answer from spirit and/or ancestor. Different than my previous responses, this time I didn't ignore, criticize, or ridicule the voice, but listened and reflected on it. I then tried it out and continued listening for what else happened in my world. For example, I began offering an *'ump*a/acorn with an intention of gratitude before each writing session on my laptop at the café where I

regularly worked on my dissertation. It is when I began this process of offering an '*ump*a/acorn that my writing became more honest, more connected, and the storying was opened up beyond my usual experience of writing. I also felt more confident, informed, and clear about what I was writing. I believe that integrating this act of respect, this intentional offering of an '*ump*a/acorn, into all aspects of my work deepened and strengthened the inquiry process.

Figure 58 also symbolizes this process of opening up and integrating my inquiry with culturally centered understandings of respect, in continuous relationship. The progression of images starts with one initial image that I reworked several times while I was trying to understand my heart in relationship. In the first image, one can see where I started as a separate tree (me) entwining with another tree (other than me) in the beginning. Then I progressively deconstructed and reconstructed the composition to show



Figure 58. *Ka Wuskin Weete / My Heart Opening*
(Progression of Inquiry With One Image)

my heart in a more open landscape that includes the larger looping spiral of the basketry design found in my other artwork.

Creating a Space to Exist In / Imagine In / Create In

Statement to Translate Insight

I continue the practice of creating a space to exist in/imagine in/create in as part of my cultural identity formation process and therefore also in my role as researcher in arts-based Indigenous methodology.

Explanation

Throughout this inquiry process, I found myself traveling in and out of different levels of ability to listen into and reflect from *our* culturally centered worldview, such as with connection with *our* ancestors' voices. Depending on my self-awareness and connection to stories, I could drop into what I now call the "*toktoola* space." The *toktoola* space is the language I am currently using to name a place where I feel it is possible to connect with *our* cultural rhythms as a people connected with all living spirit. *Toktoola* means elderberry in *Tamal Machchaw*, and I am using this word to refer to the story about how 'Oye/Coyote used a branch from the *Toktoola* 'Alwas / Elderberry Tree, because it held *our* original singing, as a way to prepare the land for the creation of people.

Because I felt myself dropping deeper and deeper into this *toktoola* space and then, at other times, falling out of it, an aspect of this inquiry process involved asking: (a) "How do I drop into this *toktoola* space?" and (b) "How do I intentionally stay within the *toktoola* space when engaging in other systems that can interrupt *our* cultural worldview, rather than fall out of the *toktoola* space?" To explore these questions I reflected on my

practice of existing in this *toktoola* space, imagined and painted this space, and tried to work from this space. I am still working to create a practice that involves aligning respect and sensibility to drop into the *toktoola* space and how to stay there when in a cross-cultural situation. Ultimately, I am looking to create a space—literally—that holds *our* cultural singing in the context of the colonial legacy. I am dropping into the *toktoola* space; accepting all that comes with it.

Contextual and Art Examples

The below storying narrative describes my progression of opening up to *our* cultural worldview via the *toktoola* space:

I. There are the embodied experiences

I've felt throughout my life, from my family within the silence and gaps.

Before I heard their stories, I felt them in every bone and fiber.

As a child of many generations of dehumanization

I have learned some of what it feels like

Before I knew the context of this larger history.

My heart opens

II. I felt that my ancestors reached out to me one day after I drove for days

Through the plains and into the Rocky Mountains, and back.

I was a student starting to work with the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in
Montana.

I witnessed cyanide leach mining of their sacred mountains during their pow wow
and

I was deeply sickened.

In this moment, I was held tightly at my gut and there was a

Reaching up to the sky with images in my mind.

I honor what I felt then.

I pay attention to it, and this moment is still teaching me.

I've since learned that this knowledge never starts with words,

But with images and a physical sense of opening up to awe and mystery.

My heart opens wider

III. I don't really know what ghosts are, but . . .

I find that I am not alone in my studio, as I walk the land, encountering an
animal . . .

This communication is embedded in *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok language.

I travel far when I speak *Tamal Machchaw* out loud from my heart.

I feel there are old rhythms speaking back.

This and painting is how I pray.

My heart keeps opening

The progression of the painting *Toktoola 'Alwas* / Elderberry Tree (Figure 59)
makes visible the way I've explored the quiet knowledge of the *toktoola* space.



Figure 59. Toktoola 'Always / Elderberry Tree
(Progression of Imagining the Toktoola Space)

Recognizing and Reorganizing My Relationship With Destructive Energies

Statement to Translate Insight

Creating a space to exist in/imagine in/create in involves recognizing and reorganizing my relationship with the destructive dynamics and energies that are entangled in *our* songs, stories, and bodies.

Explanation

As I researched stories and listened deeply in an embodied way, there came an untold mix of energies, moments of void, and emotions from a myriad of sources. At times I became confused and even disorganized by what I was experiencing. I needed to sort out and organize the energy and sources as a way to better understand, listen, and honor what was happening. (I struggle with the correct terminology here, but I am saying “destructive” energies and aspects until I know of better terminology to use.) As part of this inquiry process, then, I became more aware of my relationship with destructive forces during my engagement in *our* stories, songs, and breath. I soon realized that I needed to learn skills and a practice to recognize the destructive aspects that emerged, if only as a self-protective response to contain and reduce the distress that these energies created for me. I came to understand that I was building a relationship with the inside

workings of annihilation, and that I was looking to find the strength and skills to deconstruct it and reconstruct the relationship dynamics involved. This relates to my writing earlier in Chapter 3 about the different spaces and the contact zone that I am progressively organizing; this is ongoing as part of the process of decolonization and rebuilding respectful relationships from *our* cultural perspective. This dynamic is also a result of direct engagement with historical and intergenerational trauma; *our* legacy of genocide and colonization.

With so many generations of survival strategies employed in the context of systematic genocide enacted on my family, I've had trouble distinguishing between *our* culture and *our* community response to threats of annihilation. What are *our* ancestors' stories and what are purposeful distortions of *our* stories so that *we* protect *our* actual stories from appropriation? Is Tom Smith singing *our* "Grass Song" on the wax cylinder recording or is he fooling the anthropology graduate student in order to get another dollar so that he can buy food and still protect *our* rhythms? I see my great-great-grandmother in Western clothing with a traditional cradleboard strapped to her back. Was this her preferred dress as a contemporary woman of her time, or is this what she chose to wear to decrease unwanted attention when targeted as a Native woman?

We have significant trauma narratives in *our* stories, and I must listen to these stories as well as all the others. I feel an ethic to listen to and honor the entirety of *our* stories, not just the entertaining or less painful ones. I have learned that when someone starts a story I should prepare myself, and hold my heart because it may be painful and upsetting. I was directed to speak with an Elder, a close family member who knew my great-grandfather and great-grandmother; people I had no stories about. As I listened to

their stories I sensed how important it was for them to share their stories of pain, alongside their nostalgia for the memories and relationships of their childhood. I still feel their pain and nostalgia as I honor them and their stories. I am still processing what they shared because I struggle to digest all that their stories hold; violence and violation was right there alongside culture, community, and resilience. I am working on an art piece that I want to gift this Elder as a response, to witness and honor his stories and all that they are holding.

Contextual and Art Examples

The first time I read a version of *our* stories from a book, my body went cold from the disturbing undertones of misogyny. I couldn't read any of *our* stories again for years and I felt a nagging ambivalence about affiliating with my Tribal community. I later learned the context of the gathering of those stories, and how they are not necessarily the only or most authentic versions of *our* stories. I am continually working to distinguish the colonial-based interruptions from the culture of *our* community. I am identifying *our* culture from what gets created in the relationship between *our* culture and the culture of annihilation that we've been subjugated by for generations.

I learned about how I have engaged with the destructive sources, which I carried with me in this system of intergenerational trauma but could not address before this inquiry process. I can now identify an entangled shaming self-perception, one I've carried around in my body for years, as not who I am, but as part of the intergenerational legacy that I am learning to re-story, or extend in continuous story.

I found these destructive energies to be insidious and subtle and traveling into all corners and crannies of *our* stories. At first, I observed that the destructive energies

entered the sphere whenever my intended focus or connection was interrupted or misdirected. I used a great deal of my training as a trauma therapist to practice self-witnessing in order to observe this interruption and came to see this interruption as a form of trauma response. Sometimes I have to carefully say repeatedly in my mind: “No, this is not mine,” reminding myself that the energy belongs to another time, another practice, another worldview. If I don’t say “no” to the destructive energy, then it will take the center of my focus and keep me busy in trying to engage with it as the primary power in the relationship. In this way I found that intergenerational and historical trauma could chase me away from a culturally centered focus and into a protective or reactive focus. When successful, this destructive energy made me want to run away from *our* stories, from *our* ancestors, from learning *our* history. With repeated time in these relationships, I observed that the destructive energy has a place in my story and in *our* worldview and needs to walk right next to me on the same journey. As we walk on this path together, I need to make offerings to this companion and say either “no,” “I don’t know,” or “this is not mine.” I am learning to make preparations and offerings for these destructive energies that are frequently present, but not agree or accept that they take a position at the center of my story or focus. The destructive energies do have a place in the story, but I am negotiating the power relationship they hold in each scenario.

When I hear audio-recorded songs from Elders who are no longer alive and therefore are not able to give me their permission to sing their songs, I have to carefully repeat: “No, this is not mine.” I will not practice something I don’t know or understand yet. I will not sing their songs without their permission, without their teaching, because I may unwittingly introduce the destructive energies in this action. In these moments I

accept “I don’t know” and I pray that I find other ways to honor *our* people and ways to sing from my heart. I know I have a lot more to learn about these destructive energies, especially as I am hearing stories about poisoning with singing, and sucking doctors who can heal. I know this is all beyond my ability to practice or understand. Approaching these mysteries with humility is my way of acting with respect for my ancestors and *our* spiritual world.

Kakaali Wute

Raven Ghost

'Ikko kaa 'oken ma 'inniiko

They killed *our* people

Halik 'aa 'opu

Please be careful

Taawuk 'aa 'opu

Please be aware

Muchchik 'aa 'opu

Please be strong

'Ekette ma 'allupu 'opu 'iti Kakaali Wute

When *we* listen to this Raven Ghost



Figure 59. *Kakaali Wute* / Raven Spirit

Below is a story I wrote and curated for an exhibit titled *Native American Resiliency Through Art*⁵ about an experience with destructive energy during this inquiry. Figure 60 came out of this experience.

I park my car at a restaurant at Bodega Bay near Smith Brothers Road. It is late, I am hungry, and I cannot find a place for the night. So many tourists! I sit and eat alone at a table, looking out at the fishing boats moored to the wharf. I draw in my sketchbook.

As I walk back to my car, there are two huge, burly *kakaaliko*/ravens in my path. I stop abruptly in my tracks. They eye me directly. I am afraid to approach them. Their eyes are dark and predatory. Instinctively, I back away from them slowly.

Later, I ask Isabelle, my Coast Miwok teacher, if we have any stories about *Kakaali*/Raven. She knows only of the one called “*Kakaali* Brothers Killed.” In the story it says:

Those *Kakaaliko*/Ravens
have killed people
from all these Rancherias
(Collier & Thalman, 1996, p. 447)

Sharing Stories

Statement to Translate Insight

Story sharing is how *our* knowledge construction process works. *Ma tallepo ‘opu ma ‘akkala kennetto* / we are waking up *our* story together.

⁵ This group art exhibit is sponsored by the New England Institute of Native American Studies and is being shown at the Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston, January–August 2018.

Explanation

Our story and spirit exist before I name or symbolize them in my arts-based inquiry process. I am recognizing how arts-based Indigenous methodology is collective work and requires a larger scope of practice, ethics, and responsibility in terms of respect for collective knowledge and joining in a collective storying process. Art, story, *our* sense of time, meaning making, and songs are emerging together in this inquiry. None of the learning is done in isolation; it's all connected and I am not alone. I am not at the center of my research inquiry.

I found that knowledge construction in this context is a spiritual act—a practice of prayer for connection to spirit and an act of love, as well as sharing narrative; storying. When I emphasize an arts-based approach to Indigenous methodology I emphasize the creative connection along with the spiritual practice that involves love and respect.

Contextual and Art Examples

With my great-great-great-grandmother, Tsupu, I find that I am reaching back to story threads five generations before me and weaving these threads into the future as art, story, and song; *our* collective knowledge is continued in this story process. This art, story, and song is holding *our* knowledge, rhythms, energy, and spirit of *our* origins. With Tsupu, I feel her sharing her story with me directly and I listen to her and represent what I learn from her in my art. This is how I honor her story and thus *our* story, my story. Then also, I am praying and asking for permission in a practice of deep listening so that I am learning how to be respectful when I am sharing her story and story threads in *our* collective story and in my art.

Figure 61 is a conversation with Tsupu at a time when I was struggling to listen to all of *our* stories, specifically stories about dishonoring treatment of women in my family. This conversation began because I felt unsure about how to identify as a Native woman artist.



Figure 60. *Tsupu Tuppe / Tsupu Emerges*

Tsupu lived in what is now called Central California. She was taken by Spanish soldiers during the “raping time,” then escaped to Fort Ross, a Russian colony, to work in their serf-labor system, where she met her husband. Then Captain Stephen Smith from Massachusetts, whose family line can be traced to the Mayflower Pilgrims, gained rights to the property where Tsupu lived and made Tsupu his property and his mistress. I descend from the child of Tsupu and Stephen Smith.

Painting this image, I became unsettled. While creating this image I felt that I was becoming overexposed—vulnerable, naked, easily targeted, and misunderstood. In an effort to find support, I asked my Grandmothers to please teach me their songs and

painted this request in *Tamal Machchaw* onto the canvas. In response I recalled a strong sensory joyful memory as a child, looking at the California hills carpeted in bright orange poppies. Remembering the poppies, I felt my heart connect to the rolling hills, where my Grandmothers once walked freely and did not have to cover their breasts.

In this painting, Tsupu and I emerge together. I feel that this painting is waking up *our* collective story together. In this conversation Tsupu tells me, “I will keep singing until you learn how to sing back” (see Footnote 4).

Waking Up Reparative Justice

Statement to Translate Insight

Our storying,⁶ which in this context is a collective culturally centered process, is waking up reparative justice.

Explanation

To contextualize, the legacy of genocide is what needs to be addressed with reparative justice. In this inquiry process I have come to believe that storying is a way to respond to the loss of generations of *our* people, *our* stories, and *our* cultural practices. I have come to believe that acts of storying influence the course of history, because storying involves reaching back into the past and integrating old story threads with what becomes visible and included in contemporary narratives. Storying also involves the power of asserting how and who gets to name what is truth and reality. I found in this inquiry process that my truth and sense of reality had shifted because I had engaged in *our* collective stories and knowledge construction process. *Our* stories now influence the course of history for me and my children, those I am in relationship with, because the nature and context for understanding peoples’ behaviors and all relationships is being

⁶ For a discussion about storying, please refer to the *pichasna*/concept of ‘*akkalako*/stories in Chapter 2.

reconstructed in this storying process. For example, with my relatives, I initially felt rejected, ashamed, and suspicious of their silence and disconnection with *our* history and for not sharing with me about their lives and Native identity. I found that learning some of my relatives' stories humanized them and thus opened up more ways to imagine relating to and connecting with my relatives. Therefore, storying opened me up to more ways of connecting and relating with my own story and identity, as well as sharing this connection with others I am in relationship with, too. To honor and share the stories of my relatives, which involves witnessing their lives with compassion, grief, and pride, while integrating *our* Native context and worldview, is to respond to how their stories were erased, silenced, or distorted. Storying holds the power to name the acts of dehumanization in *our* history and make visible the survival and strength of my relatives. This storying process shifted me from passively relating to my family with a mysterious sense of shame and unnamed terror to actively engaging, connecting, and contributing in the development of my family relationships.

My process of storying with *our* history and collective knowledge included reaching back into a time of subjugation and annihilation, making visible what was erased (from conversations during my childhood) and bringing forward a voice (spirit and energy) that was left in a frozen state of awareness (at least for me, subjectively). So *we* are traveling back and forth between the old stories and into the current life sphere—waking up, releasing, and renegotiating what has been silenced, frozen, hidden, and distorted. I believe that waking up some of my families' stories involved waking up the awareness that was ensnared, frozen, numbed, or dissociated from in the disorganizing and overwhelming trauma experiences.

I have heard Native people talking about how *we* already have *our* collective knowledge, such as *our* Native language, in *our* DNA, and *we* just need to access or reaccess it to continue *our* relationships with this knowledge. Therefore, this means that storying is not necessarily about learning a story for the first time but rather is about reengaging with what is already inside of *us*, to access *our* own selves more deeply. Each aspect of this collective storying process opens me up to imagine more of what is already in my history and collective knowledge; I am waking up. This process is continual and generative. I don't want to allow any further interruptions in this way that *our* culture lives inside me. So, to respect myself and my ancestors and to responsibly engage in my role as a researcher and a parent, I am joining with the collective storying circle that has been silenced, thus making visible *our* culture in a contemporary context. I believe this to be reparative justice.

Ethically, I feel that if I don't paint from my access to *our* collective knowledge, then I am contributing to the loss and destruction of *our* stories and dishonoring *our* ancestors and my children. I feel that in making art about *our* story I am continuing and joining with the completion of another extended story circle in the way/voice that I can contribute most authentically.

Given the brutality of reentering the lingering impacts of a collective trauma narrative, one implication for future inquiry is that I am interested in learning steps for engaging in a more spiritual nest of comfort and support for continuing this process.

Contextual and Art Examples

I have been stepping into *our* stories fairly slowly for years. I am usually sickened at a certain point and then I need to stop and figure out how to process the experience. I

am still avoiding a great deal of written material about *our* history that has been recommended because I am not yet ready to witness it. I now know that I do not have a strong filter, because I don't just engage with the stories cognitively or intellectually but rather with a very open heart, and I often feel connected through my body with the people involved in the stories. There are many, many examples of me engaging with *our* stories, so I will just name a few below to contextualize my insight within my inquiry process.

I now think of storying about *our* Death March as a process that has extended over several stages of engagements and still continues. I don't honestly know where or when the storying process began, but I recall several significant moments: talking with an Elder about engaging with spirit and ghosts on *our* land on a visit to *our* Tribal office, walking around Bodega Bay, driving through the Sonoma hills, encountering haunting dynamics with birds on *our* land, reading a quote from the same Elder in a book about the Death March, working on a painting (Figure 62) in my studio for months, telling the story of my painting for an event at work, telling the story of my painting to my older son, telling the story of my painting to a committee of Tribal members.

Reflecting back, I am struck by how the story came to me in so many different forms before I could put it all together in a verbal story narrative. This experience of storying *our* Death March has been an early anchor in my ability to continue storying in other ways, building on recognition about the legacy of *our* genocide and how connected *we* are to the land; how *our* stories are actually living in the landscape, speaking. I don't think of this storying as just me speaking words to other people; rather, this storying involves me connecting my heart and body to *our* land in this conversation, with *our* ancestors, with first people—honoring all of them in my paintings and finding the *Tamal*

Machchaw words to speak the rhythms of what happened. I shared my painting about *our* Death March (Figure 62) with a group of Tribal members, and listened to their stories in response; thus I connected even more with *our* history. These stories and sharing and connections are waking me up to how to continue honoring those on *our* Death March with a new depth of sensibility. I believe that it is the holding and sharing of this depth of sensibility that is a primary intention in this storying process: to join with *our* community at the center of *our toktoola* space.



Figure 61. 'Ekeeya Tulawwa 'Oppoy / Vulture Death March

I Am These Stories

Statement to Translate Insight

"I am these stories."

Explanation

I heard myself saying the other day, "When *we* were on the Death March." I am now including myself in this history, as *our* story, because it is my story too. I have

grieved over this Death March; I am changed by this story; I am viscerally connected, no longer neutral, numb, or distanced from the story or experiences of generations of *our* community and *our* land. I can no longer separate myself and my identity from the stories of my family. “I am these stories.” As I honor all that is *our* story and all aspects of *our* survival I am joining *our* continuous relationships and stories. With the impact of genocide and systematic efforts to erase the existence, identity, culture, and human rights of my family, there have been gaps and silences in my family narrative. I have been confused and needed to ask, “What is my story?” and “What is my identity?” “I am these stories” is my answer to these questions about my story and my identity. “I am these stories” is a spiritually-informed statement, a statement rooted in love, a statement of insight, a statement about my cultural worldview and identity. I am co-constructing knowledge from this position of being a part of the story. As *our* story grows and changes, so do I.

Contextual and Art Examples

I have family from both the Native and colonial positions in *our* history; the reality is that we have been blending together for generations. Figure 63 symbolizes my identity, reflecting my disparate ancestors and *our* relationships with power and each other. I feel the tensions and conflicts of the colonial and Native positions playing out inside of me as well as in relationships in my daily life. I have struggled to recalibrate the balance of my story and coalesce perspectives, because the Native stories were kept silent for half of my life. As a child I was made to feel proud of Captain Smith with stories about how he brought the first pianos to California and set up the first sawmill at his ranch. Now I need to reconsider my story and relationship with him, because along with

the land and other products he claimed in order to build his industry were the Native people who lived there.

With more stories, I recognize complexities about the character and struggles of Captain Smith as well as how he relates to my own identity and character. For example, I learned that Captain Smith was a Quaker, and people in his family in Massachusetts were imprisoned for not being Puritans (by the Pilgrims who demanded religious freedom). He was considered one of the “nicer masters” as compared to, say, General Vallejo, who lived nearby and was given the role of Director of Colonization. Native people actually chose to take “Smith” as their own last name for protection, so that other settlers could not claim them as their property or exploit them as easily. All of these stories make me thoughtful about ways to exercise power and live within a colonial system without being exploitive or exploited.

As stories continue with more facets I recognize that I cannot disown any part of my story and how it points back to myself. I am not just a person of Native identity. I am not just a person who holds an ancestral line from the Mayflower and subsequent waves of colonialism. I am a direct descendant of the relationship between the two. This larger history is my story, and my identity. I identify with the contact zone—where *we* have always been meeting.

Even though I am afraid of *Kakaali*/Raven (see Figure 63), I recognize that I am also *Kakaali*/Raven. I first saw *Kakaali*/Raven as the colonist that enacted human rights abuses against my Native family members; as representation for all that hurts, shames, and takes. *Kakaali*/Raven is Captain Smith and General Vallejo. Yet, as I try to recalibrate my personal history, the two sides are never just one or the other, bad or good.

I recognize that polarizing the two sides as clear opposites does not match the stories. For example, I have gained valuable skills and support from a colonial place; I have Native family members who have been disrespectful and hurtful. I am painting and praying so that I will not avoid or elevate the position of *Kakaali*/Raven in my identity, but rather listen carefully to *Kakaali*/Raven and what she teaches me. Stories of *Kakaali*/Raven remind me to be careful to deconstruct what may be going on in a system or relationship and to question and critically analyze each time I feel that I am being disregarded. I also need to self-check if I have an impulse, like *Kakaali*/Raven, where I am grabbing power or disregarding another. I listen into the stories of disregard and hurt and see where I might belong in them each time.

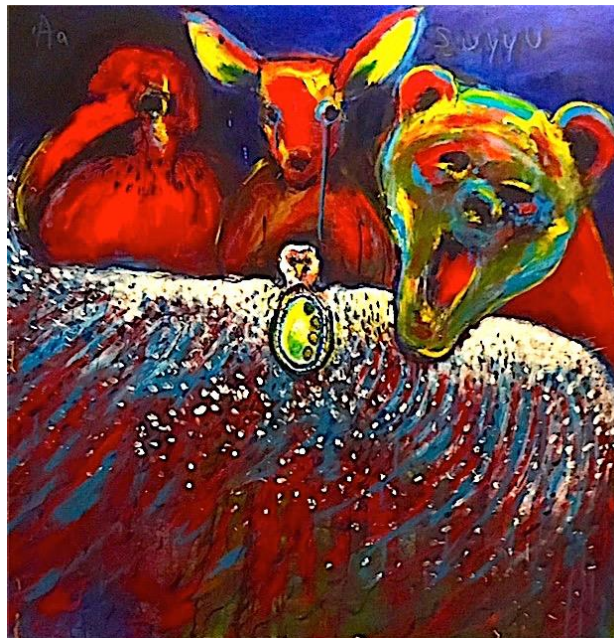


Figure 62. *Huya* / Four

I see *Choyyekke*/Deer (see Figure 63) as the artist who witnesses, celebrates, and grieves all that is truth; *our* reality. As *Choyyekke*/Deer, I seek brutal honesty and a sense of integrity, in my art and my storying. I draw a sense of power from *Choyyekke*/Deer,

who is alert and listening but also peaceful when she is in the dreamscape meadow grazing. She is not a predator but she teaches me about power and relationship as well. She may not talk in a verbal expression, but she communicates her presence as witness through spiritually informed art.

Kule/Bear is a fierce protector. I value the stubborn, determined, dedicated, and raw power of *Kule*/Bear. I've heard stories of secret night gatherings of *our* Tribal women as *Kuleko*/Bears, as protectors. In these stories, with examples of this power, I internalize strength and consider how to be a protector of *our* culture and my children through storying and art.

As *Suuyu*/Hawk, I learn about *our* spiritual connections and sensibilities. In *our* stories *Suuyu*/Hawk is a spiritually wise support to 'Oye/Coyote, one of *our* leaders. The *huya*/four together are lived tensions in me and yet symbolize more of a partnership than ever before. These are the bones of my character, what most defines me right now. I have come to recognize myself by learning about these aspects from *our* stories, because I am these stories.

Accessing *Our* Worldview Through *Our* Language

Statement to Translate Insight

With *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok language I can see/access *our* ghost/spirit/story/worldview.

Hoykati 'opu he 'ute ma wute

Take a rest and see *our* ghost

'Iti wute

This ghost

'Us kaa haypati hawento

She was waiting nearby

'Iti wute

This ghost

<i>'Us kaa 'aawiti 'akkalako</i>	She was carrying stories
<i>Hoykati 'opu he 'allupu 'iti wute</i>	Take a rest and listen to this ghost
<i>Ma 'allupu 'us koyan Tamal Machchaw</i>	We listen to her Coast Miwok songs

Explanation

There is a particular kind of loneliness I've experienced in this inquiry process. I believe I am not alone in experiencing this aspect of loneliness during a cultural reclamation process. I believe the loneliness comes from the separation from *our* stories, language, history, community, and ancestors. To travel toward this center involved feeling painful emotions, a distrust in the world, and a concern about whether I would be able to find a center at all. At times I've felt this was a personal deficit. Then I came to recognize that this is what is so difficult about the nature of cultural reclamation for those of *us* estranged from *our* land, language, and stories. *We* feel lonely because indeed *we* have been torn away from *our* own fabric and are more likely to float around without context or a sense of *our* original pattern or place in the world. When there is no place to land, voice to speak, or worldview to resonate with, I found it difficult to invest or connect honestly with myself or others.

As I gained more immersion into *our Tamal Machchaw*, I found a place that held me steady, like a framework, certainly a voice, and I trusted it when it pointed me toward a community, a worldview, and back to *our* land. When I am immersed in the *Tamal Machchaw* language there becomes a connection to my identity in a context of belonging; even though I cannot live on *our* land right now, I am still coming home. What feels most authentic about me as a Native-identified person of mixed race/ethnicities is *our* language. This surprises me, and came as an insight later in my process. I know I belong

to *Tamal Machchaw* because when I hear Sarah Ballard speaking it, and Tom Smith singing it, I feel welcomed into it and I feel a longing for more of it; like in an early attachment when the infant is learning to nurse. These *Tamal Machchaw* sounds are powerful because I feel them imprinted inside of me; finally, something resonates inside me clearly without shame or terror interrupting me. The *Tamal Machchaw* comes from a place before me and meets inside of me. It's like threads coming from different places finally finding each other and quickly reweaving back into their original design or pattern and I feel a sense of relief and rightness in my world; I feel like I am finally given the chance to know a whole cloth. I even had a dream once where I felt that *Tamal Machchaw* was a heavy wool blanket that covered me while I was having an anxiety dream. This is not just a metaphor; with *Tamal Machchaw* I feel supported with an internal structure of attachment to place and sensibility, and I feel whole with an organizing rhythm. Now that *Tamal Machchaw* has "locked in" as part of my original pattern, I find that it is a trustworthy companion that travels with me, offering guidance and witnessing as I travel in between cultural worlds and systems of meaning. I am learning how to come back to this center because I can speak and read and hear the voice of *Tamal Machchaw*; something tangible finally exists consistently.

Once I recognized the depth of this internal organization and pattern or worldview, this whispering voice inside of me, I was able to engage in more conversations with *our* collective spirit while walking the land, painting in my studio, or writing my dissertation. By "conversations" I mean more than just talking verbally; I mean a sharing of meaning, emotion, and experience. At times, when I felt blank or stuck, I recognized it was usually because I had not taken the steps to shift fully into the

Tamal Machchaw language, which helps me to shift into the *toktoola* space. From this *toktoola* space my depth of insight and sensibility supports my inquiry, as it is a way of convening with *our* collective spirit. When I am not immersed in and coming from this perspective, I am not open enough to recognize all that is being communicated.

An example of seeing what has always been there includes the presence of spirit and my ancestors. In my process of gaining internal access with *our* language, I also found a gateway to other ways of connecting with voice and more “conversations” opened up. When I connect with this voice and speak *Tamal Machchaw* I tend to cry, despite efforts otherwise, because I am so deeply and directly touched, like from a gentle loving kiss. I am also profoundly relieved, grateful, and vulnerable in this connection where my heart opens up, and my tears just flow. In these moments I am also convening, with a shared heart and spirit, with those before me and all around me. I am not lonely; I am not alone, either. This is when I opened up a gateway to the confusing experience of ancestor voice and the voice of other spirit that I didn’t understand at first and found frightening. My next steps now are to try and build relationships within this depth of sensibility and know how to honor these relationships and voices without becoming overwhelmed by the mystery or fear of the unknown. This also relates to my work regarding destructive energies (discussed above) and my need to organize the many energies that influence the “conversations,” my focus, and my body-based reactions, while trying to maintain a culturally informed center. These “conversations,” as I will continue calling them (at the growing risk of being perceived—from a psychology-based worldview—as though I’m schizophrenic or having a psychotic break), came in my studio through the *Wute ‘Alwas* / Ghost Tree.

Contextual and Art Examples

I have already written about the experience with the Ghost Tree in the previous chapter, but I will review the process again here about how the Ghost Tree has been an emerging informant at the core of my inquiry process. I need to be careful here, though, as ethically I am aware that translating or interpreting a story is not a respectful act within the intention of storying. So I am going to be straightforward about describing my personal meaning-making process about the Ghost Tree versus translating or interpreting directly from the previous storying.

As described in Chapter 2, Dr. Alfred Kroeber, who lived from 1876–1960, was an American cultural anthropologist famous for his research on California Indians. He gained much recognition for his publications, for his collections of California Indian artifacts, and for furnishing the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology with his take on California Indian culture. Kroeber also went so far as to put an actual living Native man in his museum exhibit and sold the skulls and bones of California Indians to the Smithsonian Museum on the East Coast. When I was first learning about my own culture, some of my primary resources included anthropology, archeology, and ethnography books about California Indians. I specifically used Kroeber's (1976/1925) *Handbook of the Indians of California* in learning about my culture. Not knowing the background story yet, I was excited to have such a thorough documentation of the Tribes in my region and looked through the pictures of artifacts in order to start painting about my culture. This early painting started with the elderberry flute, tule reed boat, and a basket trap for catching birds. I worked to complete this painting for about 7 years, but never felt satisfied that it was resolved (Figure 64). It wasn't until I painted the Ghost Tree directly onto the canvas, and recognized that the painting was haunted with a Ghost Tree, that I

questioned whether I had started from the wrong source. I feel that the ancestors came into the studio and shared with me that I needed to break open this painting and start over and paint about *our* collective heart and spirit from *our* perspective, not from artifacts catalogued within colonial systems that facilitated *our* genocide. I think that I was open to hearing this conversation with the ancestors because at this point I was immersing with *Tamal Machchaw* in my paintings more consistently and had welcomed *Tamal Machchaw* into my studio conversations generally as well.



Figure 63. Progression of One Painting: From a Colonial-Informed Perspective of *Our* Culture (Far Left), to an Early Ghost Tree, to *Our* Collective Heart (Far rRight)

I now recognize that when I've tried to understand the past but hit a gap or silence, and I was relying on the wrong source—such as an anthropology text, a story that is out of context, or a story that is not holding the voice of *our* perspective—that is when the painting would take a turn to be covered up with a white tree. Seeing this *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree appear a couple of times, I realized it was trying to tell me something and I needed to create a space and listen more carefully to what it was telling me by painting it. Therefore, I learned in this inquiry that I can see, honor, and make visible *our* language and voice. I finally took the steps of specifically painting the *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree and listened further.

What I learned while painting *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree (Figure 65) is that something is wrong when the *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree appears. I am hurting and

disregarding, misunderstanding and continuing harm, when the *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree appears. Something needs to be repaired. A story needs to be told. Therefore, I need to paint the *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree and honor it properly in order to truly hear the story that I am missing. I now believe that the *wuteko*/ghosts are *our* ancestors who were mistreated and continue to come back and share with me what they know, with energy and story they carry that can teach me about respect and what needs to be repaired. As a step in my arts-based Indigenous methodology, I invite the *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree into my studio and honor her properly.



Figure 64. *Wute 'Alwas* / Ghost Tree

Maintaining the Center

Statement to Translate Insight

I maintain Tamal Machchaw/Coast Miwok language visible and at the center of my paintings, stories and written dissertation to maintain the central spirit, worldview, and purpose of this research.

Explanation

I found that I needed *Tamal Machchaw* language as the source language in my knowledge construction process in order to design a personal Indigenous methodology. That is, to write about theory and concepts of Indigenous methodology while maintaining the discourse in English actually interrupted my ability to engage in the inquiry. To meet this challenge, I sought to establish an equal position and prioritized knowledge construction in *Tamal Machchaw*. Sometimes I couldn't find the *Tamal Machchaw* vocabulary to articulate an insight or experience, so I started to construct new words and phrases in *Tamal Machchaw*. These new *Tamal Machchaw* terms are in a temporary holding place, at times in my artwork, until the FIGR Language Advisory Group Committee determines their place in *our* official Tribal lexicon.

Contextual and Art Examples

In my doctoral program we were taught to make a concept map to help organize and think through the scholarly logic that accompanies inquiry. I started this map when I was still thinking about my research purpose as a clinical art therapy response to historical trauma. Then I started reading about Indigenous methodology and decolonization and how to deconstruct a framework to make room for one's own cultural point of view. With this goal in mind I decided to make a concept map with *Tamal Machchaw* to identify concepts from my Native community's point of view. In this process I also shifted from a cognitive focus to an artist's visual-, gut-, and heart-focused process. In imagining this concept map, I started drawing my beloved *Saata* / Oak Tree to symbolize *our* cultural knowledge. I remember feeling like I had broken through a thick wall of separation between my worlds while making this map of *pichasnako*/ concepts.

me that I am on the right path in this cultural reclamation process and that *Tamal Machchaw* language needs to be maintained visibly at the center.

Gathering Fragments

Statement to Translate Insight

Creating art enables me to gather fragments of images, story, body memory, rhythms, and other information from preverbal sources in an emerging symbolism-based inquiry process.

Explanation

My paintings have been my primary witnessing relationship while I have vulnerable conversations about who I am, before I even know what I think or feel. My paintings present a mirror to me for self-witnessing and collective witnessing. By collective witnessing I mean a way to share in a conversation with all who are connected with *our* collective story and heart. Because I was engaging with my ancestry from only fragments of language and stories, the art became an important safety bubble and holding template to practice and imagine myself without outside interruptions. When I paint I primarily engage kinesthetically, sensorily, affectively, symbolically, and spiritually. Painting in my studio is my way of praying and listening deeply to what is not being spoken, but is communicated in a preverbal way. I am often surprised by how something that I didn't really notice or process in my thoughts can arrive in a painting. Often it is during the painting process that a necessary awareness, meaning, or voice became visible in this inquiry process.

Contextual and Art Examples

Figure 67 is my first painting of my ancestor Tsupu, which I made about 20 years ago. I didn't have any pictures or descriptions of her, so I used a photo of Tsupu's

granddaughter from a book to imagine how her face might have looked. I also wore a clamshell bead necklace and, looking in the mirror, I began a conversation with Tsupu in the studio. I painted an abalone shell right at the center of the portrait, where *our* heart beats. In painting this abalone heart, I became aware of *our* shared heart in *our* culture. I started then to accept that I have a collective spirit and culture and I began to feel a sense of belonging in this way. This was a conversation before I learned *Tamal Machchaw* or spoke with living Elders about *our* culture. Art making thus provided me with a holding space to exist in relationship with Tsupu, when *Tamal Machchaw* and English weren't available. This abalone heart continues to emerge in many paintings ever since, insisting on and making visible that *we* are connected in *our* hearts.

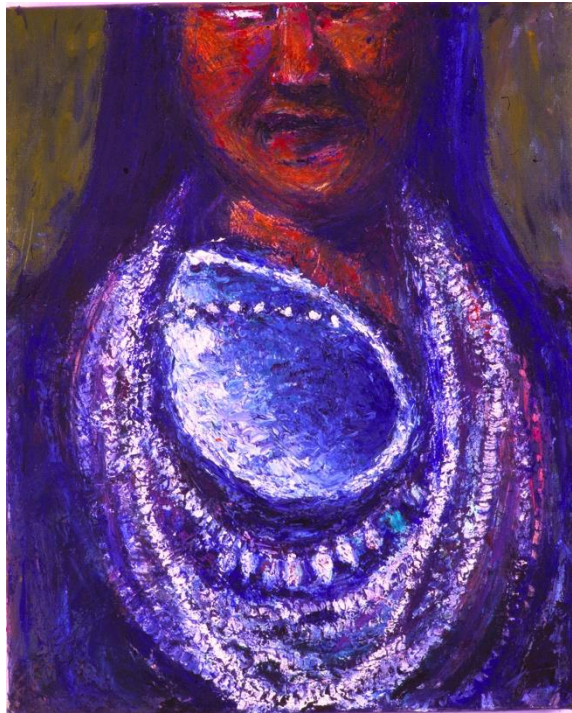


Figure 66. Tsupu: What My Great-Great-Great-Grandmother Told Me

Gifting My Art to Those Who Continue *Our* Story

Statement to Translate Insight

In my framework as a researcher I sometimes gift my art to those I believe will join *us* in strengthening and continuing *our* story.

Explanation

I have started giving away my paintings that incorporate *our* language and spirit, as a way of engaging in early dialogue while *we* are still learning/relearning how to speak *Tamal Machchaw* out loud. Gifting my art is another way of storying *our* legacy with love and with continuity of *our* worldview. My paintings with *Tamal Machchaw* really belong not to me, but to *our* collective community. Painting *our* language is how I am joining the conversation with my most authentic voice. These paintings are my way of creating connections between the stories, my ancestors, *our* collective heart, and those I share them with. These paintings hold the space for *us* to exist in these relationships. I believe that these paintings hold a collective voice, *our* ancestral knowledge. Therefore, I feel that these paintings belong to those who can help *our* language wake up and sing. So, when I see that there is someone who is on *our* journey and is part of *our* story, I will sometimes give them a painting that I believe can support the way they are singing and waking up in *our* story.

Contextual and Art Examples

In Figure 68 I returned to the basket image as a symbol of *our* Tribal community. The circles are *koyanni*/singing with an energy that connects and is ordered in the willow patterns of the basket; spiraling inward or outward. The circles are *pispi*/clamshell beads, too. I am aware of and paint lines of energy that come from the center and radiate out.

The *pispi*/clamshell beads are sewn in a circle to hold *our* center. The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker offers her beautiful red feathers to *our* basket. The acorns are there for the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker to put into *our Koyanni* 'Alwas / Singing Tree for storage. These acorns are *our* food, for they each hold a story of *our* collective knowledge. When I painted this basket image, I was just starting to learn *Tamal Machchaw*, so I wrote important words I wanted to start learning, such as 'ewis/basket and *Ma 'inniiko* / *Our* Tribe. I named what I am painting in *our* language. This felt right.

At certain points, I just come to understand that a painting belongs to someone or in some place, so that *our* conversation is strengthened. I have come to trust my gut when I get a sense that a painting is ready to be gifted. I gifted this painting, *Ma 'inniiko* / *Our* Tribe, to my Tribe, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. *Ma 'inniiko* (Figure 68) now hangs in *our* Tribal library. It feels right that the energy and intention of this painting is singing at the Tribal office.



Figure 67. *Ma 'inniiko* / *Our* Tribe

Being Informed by All *Our* Relations

Statement to Translate Insight

My framework as a researcher is informed by all of *our* relations, including all that are connected with *our* land, such as the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker.

Explanation

Before I figured out how to name myself or identify as a researcher, I found myself discouraged, becoming dispirited and quickly exhausted, because I could not find the right framework to represent my values and purpose. I felt as if I were working in a void or vacuum, where each step kept eroding and disappearing. Through studying *Tamal Machchaw*, looking to *our* land, painting, and listening to *our* stories, I was eventually able to trust and clarify my role as a researcher. This was significant, because taking on the identity of a “researcher” could easily associate me with those who have done harm to *our* community. In this case, I found that the first people, the animals, came forward to inform my inquiry process. Naming myself and modeling my approach after the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker contextualized my work within my cultural identity to co-create with *our* community and collective knowledge.

Contextual and Art Examples

The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker (Figure 69) is one of my favorite artists and researchers. By pecking out hundreds of holes throughout a tree trunk and then fitting one acorn into each hole, the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker creates a beautiful functional art installation in Central California. I knew when I first saw this early granary system that I had received a teaching about a strong presence of spirit and collective organizing. I felt compelled to recreate this artful approach. Later, when I was in my first semester in my

doctoral program, I painted the *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker as my identity as a researcher. The *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker works hard and collectively with other *panakko* to make a space for each acorn. The *panakko* often live in the tree where they work and several *panakko* work together to protect their acorns from being taken by predators, such as squirrels.

I make a place for each acorn, each story, and put them all into the one tree *kennetto*/together. I call this imagined tree that holds all these acorns/stories the *Koyanni* 'Alwas / Singing Tree (Figure 70). This process of collecting *our* stories together into *our* *Koyanni* 'Alwas / Singing Tree is my framework as a researcher.



Figure 68. *Panak* / Acorn Woodpecker



Figure 70. *Koyanni* 'Alwas / Singing Tree

Honoring *Our* Ancestors and Collective Knowledge

Statement to Translate Insight

My primary purpose in this research process is to honor *our* ancestors and *our* collective knowledge.

Explanation

The central focus of this inquiry process has shifted. I have to admit that when I started this personal case study of cultural reclamation I thought of myself as being at the center. Now, I recognize that I don't belong at the center. The center of this process involves *our* ancestors and the continuance of *our* story. Therefore, a central part of my inquiry process involves learning to pray as a way of honoring and listening to what the ancestors are teaching me.

Contextual and Art Examples

It has taken me a while to engage in a spiritual practice with prayer. I started out with a lot of confusion and anger regarding an idea of god/God, because Christianizing efforts were a big part of the efforts to eradicate *our* culture and spirituality—a big part of *our* genocide story. I especially distanced myself from anything that praised god/God as a king, master, or ruler. In *our Wee'a/Blessing in Tamal Machchaw*, we say “Ow, ‘Ununni Michcha,” which means “Oh, Great One.” Even in *our Wee'a*, I was uncomfortable with the idea of a god/God or “Great One.” To praise a god/God was triggering me into feeling duped by missionaries teaching *us* how to be civilized and worthy. I was raised Catholic and on Sundays I joined my family to attend Mass at the Carmel Mission. I still vividly remember kneeling in prayer while looking at the gilded altar at the front of the sanctuary, saying the “Our Father” prayer, smelling the incense.

Several years ago I visited Mission Dolores in San Francisco, where Miwok people were slaves. One purpose of the visit was to see the ceiling painted in a Native design by *our* ancestors when they were Mission slaves or “Christianized Natives.” I felt pride when Vince, an Ohlone (California Native) man who worked there, described the

ceiling as a Native collective act of resistance during the Mission period. Looking at the ceiling I felt like *we* still exist and *we* persevered. I was inspired to paint this ceiling and begin a conversation with these ancestors. This painting took me years to complete. I think it took so long because I struggled with old ideas about Catholic prayer and wanted to find a way to communicate with my ancestors in *our* language and worldview. At a certain point, I wrote “‘Ow ‘Ununni Michcha / Oh, Great One” over and over again throughout the painting (Figure 72). This painting and these repeated words became like a song, voicing *our* beliefs, in *our* language, in resistance to the Mission’s Christianizing experience of subjugation and often death.



Figure 71. ‘Ow, ‘Ununni Michcha /
Oh, Great One

I gifted this painting to Vince, as a thank-you for his work and generosity. He hung it up in the Mission Dolores annex as part of their exhibit for a while. It now hangs in his home. In this way, I feel like *our* Wee’a/Blessing reached *our* ancestors at the mission through this circling back with story, art, and language. Knowing this is possible

helps me stay engaged in prayer as an action of connecting with and learning from *our* ancestors; not reinforcing a colonial idea of research or prayer.

Protecting *Our Wuski* / Heart

Statement to Translate Insight

I feel a great responsibility—like a protector—as I join in *our* storying process.

Ka mosseetak 'opu ma wuski / I protect *our* heart.

Explanation

As I gain a clearer voice and sense of my Native identity, I find that I see more clearly too when I am stepping into contact zones. By contact zones, I mean spaces where I need to make visible *our* worldview that could otherwise be missed, misunderstood, or misrepresented because it is in relationship with another worldview. I have found that identifying as Native has brought with it exposure to racism and disregard. As a result, I am angry more often and expend a lot of energy and focus to learn how to most ethically and responsibly represent *our* worldview to those who have not welcomed it and do not know how to honor it. I can be in a room and feel like I am the only one who sees the blind spots and missed connections regarding a Native worldview. For example, I had a difficult discussion in my work environment, trying to explain that although I am the only Native faculty member on campus, I am still trying to learn how to speak responsibly with a Native perspective. I explained that I invest a lot of time and effort to remain respectful with my Tribal community while in this leadership position in a work environment that is not Native-informed, other than through me. I outlined examples of how I needed to consult with an Elder in my Tribe about whether it was respectful that I share *our* Tribe's *Wee'a*/Blessing to start a conference, how I check in monthly with my Tribe's Language Advisory Group Committee to guide me in my dissertation process,

how I redirect programming and marketing efforts that don't feel respectful, and how I pray when I don't know what to do to ask for guidance—then wait for an undetermined period of time to listen for what is right. Whenever I start a conversation, I don't know at what point of overlap or agreement those involved are starting from—will this conversation require one meeting or one year's worth of meetings to make my position visible and respected? In taking on this identity as a researcher using Indigenous methodology, I also am taking on a position as a translator regarding *our* worldview to other worldviews.

I also need to take responsibility regarding how and what I make visible about *our* worldview. I am not “the expert” of *our* collective knowledge and in this collective knowledge inquiry process I need to consult with others. To invest in the collective knowledge consultation process takes longer than some other consulting processes. I have come to learn that when something doesn't feel right or respectful it's usually because I am rushing, and that I need to slow down to allow more input and collective spirit to be at the center of the process. At work or when dealing with academic deadlines, slowing things down can be interpreted as irresponsible or unprofessional behavior.

There is also the very real concern about *our* language or cultural knowledge being appropriated. There are many examples of this already (e.g., see my discussion of McNiff and Kroeber in Chapter 2). I made several safe spaces during my inquiry process to protect collective knowledge from being exposed out of context or taken for purposes other than to benefit my Tribe. I don't want my work of making visible *our* collective story to become another experience of appropriation, disrespect, or harm to *our* community. I feel a great deal of responsibility to instead contribute to a reparative

experience of extending and strengthening *our* collective knowledge. I also feel responsible for doing this inquiry process well enough so that *our* worldview will not be disregarded in the context of research and academia.

Contextual and Art Examples

Figure 72 is a painting of *Kule/Bear*, which I originally painted as a protector of my family and hung on the wall in my children's bedroom. Then I gifted this painting to FIGR's Tribal Wellness and Justice Department so that clients being seen in counseling could benefit from *Kule/Bear*, the protector. I then painted a second *Kule/Bear* for my children's bedroom. I feel that with each painting, I am taking on more responsibility as a researcher using Indigenous methodology—to protect the collective knowledge *we* are co-constructing. I also know that to be responsible I must continue this process and not allow myself to be interrupted. As *our Wee'a/Blessing* says, I pray for a *towis wuski* / good heart to continue this work in the right way.



Figure 72. *Kule / Bear*

Gaining Strength Through *Wuṣkin Poole* / Grieving

Statement to Translate Insight

Wuṣkin poole / grieving is a process that provides me with strength, health, and an ability to stay connected with *our* spirit.

Explanation

In this inquiry process, connecting with my Native identity involved connecting with *our* legacy of genocide and intergenerational trauma. I have cried just about every day this last year while working on this dissertation—some days more than once. Some days, I cried so hard that I felt short of breath and my stomach cramped up. My heart has been opening up and in doing so, I engaged with *our* deep grieving process. Connecting with *our* collective heart, soul, and embodiment has been painful. Yet I've come to realize that crying is not all about sadness and loss. In this inquiry process my idea of what this crying is about has opened up to a larger understanding. Sometimes crying is the only way that I am able to access or drop into my *toktoola* space. I trust myself more when I have started crying, which involves my body opening up and connecting in an deeply authentic and physical way. I am surprised by all of this.

Contextual and Art Examples

The painting in Figure 73 was one of my first times dripping paint onto the canvas. Upon reflection, I noted that much of my life I had a practice of blocking out a lot of connection to the singing and feelings from inside that I did not understand or found overwhelmingly intense. In these last 3 years, I have been accessing this singing and collective knowledge. Part of expressing this intensity involved dripping ink on the canvas. I used ink droppers and let the ink and paints just drip and flow. This dripping

process feels related to the crying and release of old pent-up affect, breaking down the old barriers—like an ocean wave or a swollen river carving into and flooding the riverbanks. It feels right to just let the colors and lines drip and flow, making their existence and path visible for further reflection and honoring.



Figure 73. *El Feo, Tiil / The Ugly (Spanish), Sick (Coast Miwok)*

Figure 73 started with a map of the original Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo lands. Looking at it, thinking about lives and land taken, I reacted to the ugliness and sickness of humanity. The intense reaction inside of me was scary; it felt like poison. I wished for distance from the map, from history, from all of it. In my thoughts I considered this “poison” inside of me: Wouldn’t people distance themselves—as I was wishing for—if they met this rage in me? Should I hold myself distant to protect my children from this rage?

At about the midpoint of working on this piece, I felt a shift toward compassion and respect, alongside the rage and grieving. I felt all of this in response to the dehumanizing acts against my community. I often cry when I paint.

Painting *El Feo, Tiil / The Ugly, Sick*, I discovered a new kind of power. My heart can be on fire as I connect strongly to *our* stories, and this can be a source of power as long as I also remember *our Wee'a*/Blessing. As *our Wee'a* says, with good hearts, *we* can do good in the world when *we* stay connected with *our* community. *We* are not the sickness or the ugly itself.

While working on this painting, I felt an increasing entanglement growing inside me. I was no longer able to distance myself from generations of *our* stories. I made a commitment, albeit with some dread, to wandering in this mystery of my identity that is connected with a larger story that is both harsh and soulful.

CHAPTER 6: *CHOYYEKKE ‘OPU KAAWULTI* / DEER IS DANCING: CONTINUING STORY LOOPS

Storying Back to You: Continuing Story Loops

This final chapter places the results of my study into context by sharing the application of my findings from the literature and inquiry process through story in four key moments of insights that are culminating in actions that culturally center my ongoing research. These stories emerging from arts-based Indigenous methodology ask more pointed research-based questions and offer a lens on ways to further decolonize research approaches for culturally responsive work with American Indian communities.

A key outcome of the research was the nonlinear process of sharing stories and artwork with all of my relations, including my ancestors and children, to continue “story loops” that honor and build relationships within my cultural meaning-making process. Figures 74, 75, and 76 reflect an early dreamscape understanding of story loops emerging in the inquiry process. By “story loops” I mean a process of engaging with a story or story thread, followed by weaving in additional story thread(s) generated from arts-based Indigenous methodology, and then sharing the story as a response to join with the



Figure 74. *Pichasna*
‘Ewis / Knowledge
Basket



Figure 75. *‘Awwuk ‘Ewis* /
Abalone Basket



Figure 76. *Kanni*
‘Opu Panak / I Am the
Acorn Woodpecker

original story or story thread; a weaving together of *our Pichasna 'Ewis* / Knowledge Basket (see Figure 74). Thus, the research process became a living conversation that speaks directly to *our* history and holds both *our* past and present while *we* navigate changes and challenges to support *our* community and next generations.

As depicted in the previous chapters, my worldview and sense of ethics is informed by my dreamscapes, my immersion in cultural spaces with spirit (the “*toktoola* space”), my art-making process, my storying process, walking the land, learning *Tamal Machchaw* / Coast Miwok language, and deeply listening to what is communicated in all of these relationships. In this sense, I no longer think of myself as living in two worlds; rather, I feel that I am deeply listening and walking in many worlds/dimensions simultaneously. It is no surprise to discover that I am walking slower and coming to insights more slowly as a result. It takes time for all spirit to sync together and arrive into an integrated understanding and action.

To frame the reader’s understanding of the stories and discussion that follow, I will describe my collaboration with Dr. Cedric Woods and the Institute for New England Native American Studies in an exhibit titled *Native American Resilience Through Art*, which served as a dissemination venue for my research. For this group exhibit with two other Native women, Kristen Wyman and Nia Holley, I shared 14 paintings (with corresponding stories) about my identity formation process. These paintings were selected from the 65+ art pieces I created over the past 20 years that informed my arts-based Indigenous methodology. There was a reception at the exhibit opening where I presented Tsupu’s story and spoke *our Wee’a*/Blessing.

In the stories below, I move in and out of different times, landscapes, relationships, and positions in my worlds, which you may find a little disorienting. In this way I hope to bring you, as a reader, closer to my worldview to join with me in understanding how I am continuing in my arts-based Indigenous methodology and therefore witness some of the challenges and richness of this process. The artwork I share in this chapter symbolize the dreamscape spaces from where these stories took root.

Story I: *Choyyekke ‘Opu Kaawultji / Deer Is Dancing*

Before I introduce *Yomunnaka Choyyekke / Beautiful Deer* (Figure 77), I will share some context. It was only after several forced writing attempts on this final chapter, which inspired further frustration and a distancing from my cultural center, that *Yomunnaka Choyyekke / Beautiful Deer* stepped out of her dreamscape meadow to help me recenter myself in my arts-based Indigenous methodology. I had started writing this chapter while reacting to a devaluing experience in my work life, where I became interrupted from my *toktoola* space—my culturally informed and spiritually connected center. This was painfully ironic, given the purpose here. I now recognize that each time I am exposed to dynamics that potentiate disempowerment and disregard I must, as a practice, check in and self-reflect on whether my cultural center has been interrupted. Once I recognized that I had fallen outside of my cultural center, I took several steps to reengage with my *toktoola* space. This transition involved grieving to let go of the outside influences that I found devaluing and rupturing. I also paused in my dissertation writing and focused instead on gathering spirit and dropping back into my *toktoola* space with an open-hearted intention to listen for guidance on next steps. This intentional listening is how I gather resources to further inform this *toktoola* space.

When I was intentionally praying and felt myself slowly dropping into my *toktoola* space I suddenly was visited with the image of *Choyyekke*/Deer dancing in a dreamscape meadow in my mind. I laughed out loud in surprise, as I watched *Choyyekke*/Deer dancing a high knee step in a very spritely, high-energy rhythm while looking directly at me. I delighted in her joyful presence that was interrupting my sense of loss and disoriented state of numbness.



Figure 77. *Yomunnaka Choyyekke* / Beautiful Deer

I considered how to honor and develop my relationship with this spirit of *Choyyekke*/Deer. Maintaining a welcoming openness with her as I watched her dancing in the dreamscape meadow in my mind, I simultaneously searched on my laptop for music to match her dancing and spirit. Watching *Choyyekke*/Deer in her dreamscape meadow I also saw/remembered in my mind an unfinished painting hanging on my studio wall, entitled *Yomunnaka Choyyekke* / Beautiful Deer (Figure 77). So I actively listened

into her dancing with an open heart and wondered about how she might inform the painting of *Yomunnaka Choyyekke* / Beautiful Deer.

In her dancing, *Yomunnaka Choyyekke* / Beautiful Deer cleared a space in her dreamscape meadow and appeared to be celebrating. I sensed that she was celebrating *our* research accomplishments so far, and that she was literally showing me next steps, with her dance steps, as she cleared space in her meadow—a space that I perceived was created to begin the next level of research work. The song that arrived in my search to match her dancing was “Gamba Adisa,” which I’d never heard of before my *choyyekke*/deer-directed music search. I looked up the story of this song; fittingly, it was described as “part invocation, part call to action, part celebration”; the name “Gamba Adisa” is the name Audre Lorde took late in life and means “Warrior: She who makes her meaning clear” (Szymko, n.d.).

I spent the next two days collecting images, music, *Tamal Machchaw* words, ‘*umpa*’/acorns, ‘*akkala*’/stories, ‘*awwuk*’/abalone, and *pispi*/clamshell beads, while reaching out to friends and speaking the *Wee’a*/Blessing and welcoming spirit. What I understood to be my next steps from the *toktoola* space included creating *wayanna*/artwork as gifts (see Figure 78) with gratitude for people who collaborated in the exhibit. I also knew I would create regalia for my sons and me to wear at the exhibit reception—all in preparation for *our* celebration.

Thus did my heart open up further to show gratitude and celebrate *our* spirit with community. *We* are sharing *muchchik*/strength, *towis wuski wuki* / good heart fire (resilience), *yomunnaka*/beauty and *yomu*/love right now as I write this chapter. This is power. Creating gifts of love and appreciation and celebrating with community in the

spirit of gratitude, respect, and honor is the application of arts-based Indigenous methodology.



Figure 78. *Wayanna / Gifts*

Story II: Tsupu's Story Is Looping Back to Her Master's Homeland

Tsupu (see Figures 79, 80, and 81), my grandmother from five generations back, is also one of my primary “co-researchers in spirit.” Reading essays and following genealogy notes about Tsupu, listening in for Tsupu’s spirit while painting, listening to Elders share their stories about Tsupu, and piecing together body-based memory fragments and conversations with the land into my own storying process has been one phase of this research. Making art about and telling Tsupu’s story as my own story was another phase.

In *Tsupu Tuppe / Tsupu Emerges* (Figure 81), Tsupu and I are emerging together; me in my identity as a Native woman artist and Tsupu as a resilient ancestor still singing and honored in *our* Native community. I feel that this painting is waking up *our* collective story together because when I prayed for her support to know how to maintain my cultural center, I heard Tsupu telling me, “I will keep singing until you learn how to

sing back” (see Footnote 4). After what felt like a leap of faith, I completed the painting *Tsupu Tuppe / Tsupu Emerges*, and put her/our image as an open-hearted, Native woman in a public space as part of the exhibit *Native American Resilience Through Art*. As I hung this painting in the room to join with all of the other paintings telling *our* story, I realized that I have joined with her and that *we* are now singing together.

At the art reception, I shared Tsupu’s story and my belief that telling her story in Massachusetts was completing an important story loop: I was continuing to honor her spirit in Massachusetts while also knowing that her master, who had claimed her land and



Figure 79. Tsupu: What My Great-Great-Great-Grandmother Told Me

Figure 80. *Koya Tsupu / Tsupu's Song*

Figure 81. *Tsupu Tuppe / Tsupu Emerges*

her own personhood as his property, was born and raised in Massachusetts. Coming from a worldview where the land holds memory and spirit, telling *our* story while standing in a certain place matters. I believe that in telling *our* story *we* are reawakening *our* sovereignty and spirit and insisting that *our* experience still be valued and responded to in ongoing relationships rather than being disregarded or silenced. By telling Tsupu's story to this audience, I was inviting those at the exhibit to engage in respectful relationship with Tsupu by joining me in honoring her story. I believe this action of telling Tsupu's story may wake up further awareness and respectful responses on the part of the story witnesses.

Present at the event were many Native people—including those who identified as Wampanoag and Nipmuc—who are Indigenous to what is now called Massachusetts. These people also have been impacted by my great-great-great-great-grandfather Stephen Smith's family line, extending back to the Mayflower and the first Pilgrims. Originally, I felt that my role and purpose was simply to respect and honor Tsupu's spirit and life. Upon further reflection, I now sense that I have been short-sighted about my story loop. By allowing *our* story circle to extend and ripple further, I can intentionally honor and respect all of the Native people who have been impacted by my family through the Pilgrim/colonial line.

As a result of this research, I am grappling today with my unique position to acknowledge and to story the many ways that my family has been in this world creating and impacting relationships. I do not take responsibility for what my colonial-aligned family members did in the past, but I do wonder about how their spirits may inform my reparative steps to make visible the whole story and shift away from painful silencing and

disregard of Native experience. This is just another aspect of what I am breaking open and reflecting on as a result of my research process; there are so many connections to consider.

I believe the next phase of arts-based Indigenous methodology will involve presenting my artwork and personal story connection with Tsupu to the public and “listening in” for a response. By listening in for a response, I mean that I will listen for the way Tsupu and other spirit communicate to me during art making in my studio, in my walking the land, in my dreams, and in my relationships with those connected with spirit in the same way. I want to know what is waking up, what connections become woven together, and how this step of arts-based Indigenous methodology informs or “speaks to” my artwork, storying, and relationships, thus directing me in further steps to complete more story loops.

Story III: ‘Inniiko ‘Akkala Huuli / Tribe Story Quilt Is Looping Back to Me as Arts-Based Indigenous Methodology

In 2006 I worked on the *‘Inniiko ‘Akkala Huuli / Tribe Story Quilt* (Figure 82) with a group of women in my Tribe for about a year. The *‘Inniiko ‘Akkala Huuli / Tribe Story Quilt* was a collective storying process about *our* Tribal identity and faith, and was part of the larger Faith Quilt Project exhibit that honored all faiths as a response to 9/11. Now each time I visit the FIGR Tribal office in California, on the opposite coast from where I live in Massachusetts, I also go to visit *‘Inniiko ‘Akkala Huuli*. This quilt is a home base for me. With my visits I reengage in the story, with the artists, and the *Tamal Machchaw*, and I connect further with *our* Tribal community. Since 2006 we’ve added more *Tamal Machchaw* to the artist statement, have embroidered the *Wee’a/Blessing*

onto the quilt, and have also sewed in new *'awwuk* / abalone shells because some had broken or come off. Many Tribal citizens donated their personal abalone for this very purpose. We moved the placement of the quilt to protect it, and we regularly involve the quilt in trainings about *our* Tribal history with *our* youth and staff. This quilt is a living conversation about strengthening *our* community.



Figure 82. *'Inniiko 'Akkala Huuli / Tribe Story Quilt*

My relationship with this quilt is one of my favorite examples of arts-based Indigenous methodology. Reflecting on the quilt from the perspective of today, I realize with some irony that I had been practicing an authentic arts-based Indigenous methodology for over 10 years before I learned the terminology or framework that this doctoral study provided. After having read the theories of arts-based research and Indigenous methodology, I reflected with new understanding and knowledge on my relationships with the women in the quilting process and with the quilt. As a result of this collaboration, to take one example, I better understand *our* Native practice of respectful

inquiry and knowledge construction. Now I am able to forever think of this quilt as *our* co-creation, with *our* collective knowledge, for *our* community. I will always be respectful of all intentions with this quilt and watch the way *our* community continues to make this quilt a part of *our* larger story; it is an ongoing relationship made visible for all in *our* community to join.

This quilt and this collective process together have informed my understanding of how arts-based Indigenous methodology works. I return, return, return to this creation and I continue to learn from it about how to connect relationally to people, stories, and spirit. Ever since I have felt this quilt as becoming a spiritual home for me, my sense of place and belonging at the Tribal office has deepened. When I approach the quilt, I feel rooted and accepted because I have traveled in this way with *our* community. As L. T. Smith (2012) wrote, sometimes it will take more time to know whether *our* efforts sustain and actually grow over generations. *We* recently celebrated 10 years of making this story visible with the *Inniiko 'Akkala Huuli/* Tribe Story Quilt and its story, as reported in our Tribal newsletter. It has been suggested that I make another collective story quilt with *our* Tribe, and I do think that engaging in another collective story quilt could be a next step in *our* arts-based Indigenous methodology.

Story IV: Dream of 'Awwuk / Abalone on My Face

I had a powerful dream the morning before the art reception. In my dream I have an *'awwuk*/abalone attached to my face. It is a big abalone shell, with large holes in an arc along one edge. It is smooth on the inside, rough on the outside, and attached just below my cheekbone. In the dream I am trying to make sense of what is on my face, but I can't see it. I am confused by this big object so close to me that I can't look down at it

directly. The big shell on my face changes the way I can see things because a part of it is always entering my line of sight and peripheral vision. Then, in the dream, the *'awwuk* detaches from my face and I hold it briefly in my hands. However, the holes from the shell leave marks, like a tattoo of circles in an arc, along my cheek. At first I think I have acne, and I feel disgusted and want to clean it up and get rid of it, to make it disappear. Reflecting back on the dream from the perspective of today, I think it is a beautiful design and recall that I have painted this same arc of circles on many of my canvases. I also consider the many moles that actually line this same cheek of mine and I remember how as a girl I thought these moles marked me as ugly. My mom said they were beauty marks and that I was lucky because I had so many of them. But my sister, looking at her own face and her own freckles in the mirror, grumbled that her marks looked like “fly shit.” Then I felt ugly again. I ponder now about what *we* define as beauty and how *we* make meaning about how *we* look as it relates to *our* identities.

When working on *Tsupu Tuppe* / Tsupu Emerging, I painted a tattoo of three lines at her chin that appears to be much like the tattoos I’ve seen on women depicted in *our* Tribe from generations ago. I had a strong sense that this was how she needed to be represented. I think I was looking for a way to make visible that she (and I) belong to *our* Tribe. There are still times when I yearn for a certain sense that I belong. In an earlier painting I had put an *'awwuk*/abalone at Tsupu’s heart. I sense that all of this symbolism regarding the *'awwuk*/abalone and my identity is related and significant.

Returning to a description of my dream, I recall that the abalone came off of my cheek, like a suction cup falls off of a wall, but I still had the circles on my face from the abalone holes. Time and reality are suspended in a specific space/dimension: As the

‘*awwuk*/abalone comes off of my face in my dream, I wake and sit up in my bed in real life—my whole body now filled with a large abalone shell. The size of the shell has grown bigger and it barely fits inside of me. The top edge of the shell is pushing up against the inside wall of my back, causing me pain. No longer dreaming, I am sitting in pain with an ‘*awwuk* as my new skeleton, my bones. In *Tamal Machchaw*, *muchchik* means strength. I had read in the linguist’s notes that *muchchik* comes from the word for bone. I feel disoriented and try to listen into the distinct pain and exhaustion from waking with an ‘*awwuk*/abalone at my center.

Weary and moving slowly, I begin my morning routine and get out of bed to wake up my older son for school. I am muttering grumpily at the system that makes teenagers go to school so early, making the whole family suffer. It is difficult to wake him up; he is tired from basketball practice and staying up late to complete his homework the night before. He finally wakes up enough to roll over, and asks me to massage his back, which is sore from his team workout. As my hands push at his knotted back muscles, I recognize that I have often felt a somatic connection with this son; *our* back pain is shared in this moment. I turn to look at the necklace I made for him, now hanging on the wall next to his bed, with a large abalone pendent and *pispi*/clamshell beads. I had made this necklace for him a few days before to wear at the art reception, which is one way he agreed to make visible his Native identity. The necklace is now hanging next to the two paintings of *Suyyu*/Hawk (figures 83 and 84) and I feel the *koyanni*/singing in the room. Still sluggish and slow to wake up, I reflect on how these dreams and stories are connecting with the next generation. These connections are weaving in continuous spirit and meaning and action. This is arts-based Indigenous methodology.



Figure 83. *Suyyo Tuppe / Hawk Emerges*



Figure 84. *Suyyuko he 'Awaaki / Hawks and Fox*

Future Research: 'Eyyan Manay Maako / Don't Forget Us

You have now read about many aspects of my journey to co-construct story and imagery with collective knowledge of *our* community. *We* are celebrating renewed and strengthened relationships, language, story loops, and art. I continue more committed to learning how to walk the land with a heightened sense of hope, gratitude, love, and beauty. Also, I do not walk alone, as I value a more collective identity. Additionally, through this inquiry, I gained a greater sense of humility for how identity formation efforts involve trauma processing when one is linked with historical trauma exposure.

When considering the brutality of a collective trauma, I recommend further inquiry into how arts-based Indigenous methodology can be designed to support those, like myself, who encounter historical trauma exposure alongside access with collective knowledge. This is especially complicated when one considers that the protective factors such as community support, Indigenous language, cultural practice, and traditions are often fragmented or only remotely accessible due to the impacts of genocide. This means

that to try and engage with one's own story and culture is also to engage with a deep collective grief.

The ethic and core value of arts-based Indigenous methodology is to potentiate the sovereignty of the Native community involved so that they benefit on their own terms. As a Tribal member, further inquiry is necessary to learn how my Tribe can benefit from an arts-based engagement. I am cautious about how arts-based Indigenous methodology, which involves nonverbal, embodied access with collective knowledge, also holds the power to tap into core and silenced experiences; that which lies below the surface. How do *we* maintain *our* community protections and strength when coming up against so many silenced narratives that hold pain as well as *our* singing? The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria already are committed to being stewards of the land and language reacquisition. This research further recognizes the value of continuing *our* efforts to engage in *our* language and symbolic reclamation.

Final Comments: *Chamma 'Opu Towis̓ Wus̓ki. 'Eyyan Chama. /*

Bring a Good Heart. Don't Take.

Commitment to respect is an ethic of arts-based Indigenous methodology. One cannot ethically borrow or take from another person's story, worldview, or collective knowledge. One can, however, engage in a respectful, reciprocal, honest dialogue. When working with Indigenous communities in a cross-cultural engagement and/or those with trauma exposure, I propose, as an ethical practice, to remain committed to one's personal identity formation work first and foremost—to fully know and honor the full extent of one's own story. As a woman of mixed race from two sides of a story of genocide I am slowly understanding how to respect all of myself and my story. For example, I have

lived with White privilege and power and I have felt the terror of annihilation and shame of my own Native identity. While listening carefully from within different parts of my identity and story, I gain new awareness about how to respect and honor different worldviews; this lends me more awareness and ability to respect others as well.

Here is my greatest fear: A professional reads my dissertation and decides that she likes arts-based Indigenous methodology and wants to become an expert. In response, I ask the art therapy profession, “Are we ready to take responsibility for our field’s historical positioning that tended to subjugate, essentialize, and appropriate from other cultures?” When the Ghost Tree emerges to sing us back to the home tree of our art therapy profession, will we as art therapy professionals be able to listen closely enough to our own story and recognize our roots? From an ethical perspective, I ask that we all remember to slow down and pay attention to what arrives for us when we meet with others on the borders of worldviews and cross-cultural understanding.

In *our* Coast Miwok dictionary, I read that *chama* translated into English means “to take” or “take away” and *chamma* means “to bring” (Callaghan & Applegate, 2017, p. 43). With just the difference of an extra “m,” *chama* versus *chamma*, one is able to shift the whole dynamic and meaning. I think this illuminates an ethical perspective on pacing, awareness, and intentions in cross-cultural engagements and cultural reclamation efforts. A quick sound of “m” in *chama* is to take something away. When thinking about this dissertation, I ask that the reader not just read quickly and take the surface points. Instead, spend twice as long, and longer, in making the “m” into *chamma* / to bring. Now, I hope, you are dwelling in a culturally centering inquiry of your own. What is your story? Now we can build a reciprocal relationship as we walk a parallel path that brings

us closer to an authentic understanding of our centers and meet in a contact zone where we negotiate with open hearts the power and terms of respect in our relationship with each other.

EPILOGUE: MA TALLEPO 'OPU MA 'AKKALA KENNETTO /

WE ARE WAKING UP OUR STORY TOGETHER

<i>Ka muchchis̲ pichas̲ 'opu</i>	My bones know
<i>Ka wus̲ki pichas̲ 'opu</i>	My heart knows
<i>Ka pichas̲tu 'opu ka hena</i>	I know with my breath
<i>Hinti katun hine 'enak 'untu ka 'oowit?</i>	How far will I travel?
<i>Ka 'oowit 'untu pichas̲ 'iti hochcha</i>	I will travel to know this painting
<i>Ka 'opu na'uuti 'iti yomunnaka</i>	I return to this beauty
<i>Ka 'opu na'uuti he na'uuti he na'uuti</i>	I return and return and return
<i>Ka 'opu na'uuti s̲iliita tuu, ka na'uuti s̲iwiita,</i>	I return green, I return yellow,
<i>ka na'uuti luchuuta, ka na'uuti 'awa</i>	I return blue, I return red
<i>Ka 'opu na'uuti 'awa he 'awa he 'awa</i>	I return red and red and red paint
<i>Ka 'opu na'uuti 'allupo</i>	I return to listen
<i>Ka 'opu na'uuti koyanni</i>	I return singing
<i>Hinti katun hine 'enak 'untu ma 'oowit?</i>	How far will we travel?
<i>Yomi 'opu weyyatto maako</i>	Home is inside of us
<i>'Iti 'opu ma 'akkala</i>	Our story lives here
<i>Weyatto ma muchchis̲</i>	In our bones
<i>Weyatto ma wus̲kiko</i>	In our hearts
<i>Weyatto ma hena</i>	In our breath
<i>Ma tallepo 'opu ma 'akkala kennetto</i>	We are waking up our story together

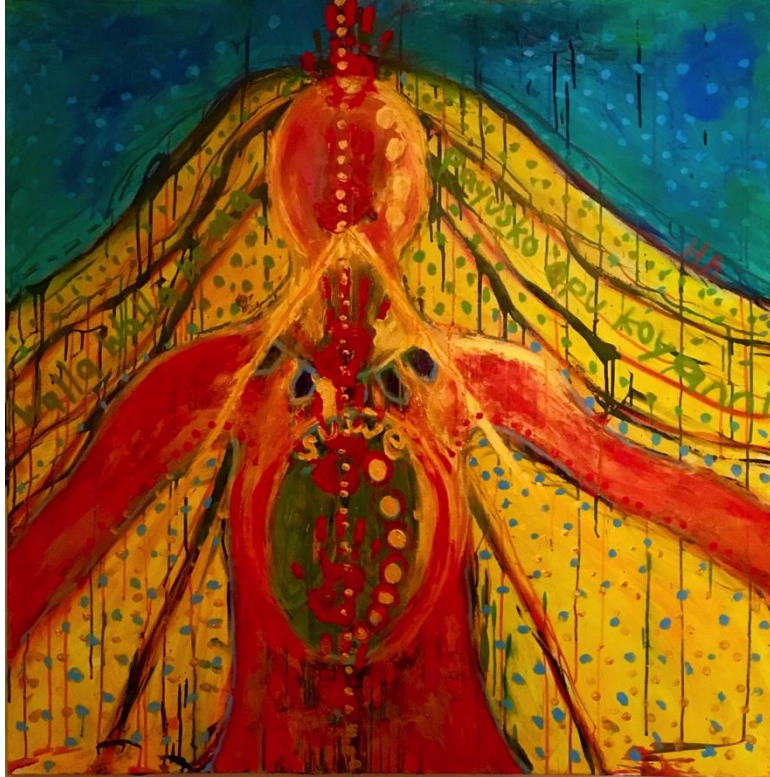


Figure 85. *Suwe: Walla Walla he Ma Payusko 'Opu Koyanni /*
Love Song: Walla Walla and Our Hills Are Singing

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