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Lora Lynn Mendenhall

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MITAKUYE OYASIN AND SERVICE-LEARNING:
A NARRATIVE PLAN FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE,
JASPER COUNTY, INDIANA

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Lora Lynn Mendenhall
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
May 2019

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Lora Lynn Mendenhall

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Gian S. Pagnucci, Ph.D.
Distinguished University Professor,
Advisor

Gloria Park, Ph.D.
Professor of English

Curtis Porter, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English

Ronald Janke, Ph.D.
Professor of Geography, Retired
Valparaiso University

ACCEPTED

Randy L. Martin, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: *Mitakuye Oyasin*¹ and Service-Learning: A Narrative Plan for Ecological Restorative Justice², Jasper County, Indiana

Author: Lora Lynn Mendenhall

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Gian S. Pagnucci

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Gloria Park
Dr. Curtis Porter
Dr. Ronald Janke

In this narrative study, I explore the use of a traditional Lakota Sioux tribal prayer, philosophy, and worldview, *Mitakuye Oyasin*, as the theme for the development of an ecocomposition course syllabus comprised of a series of integrated, locally-related, ecological restorative justice, service-learning components and corresponding narrative based writing assignments at Purdue University Northwest (PNW). The university is just north of Jasper County, Indiana. PNW and Jasper County are both located in Northwest Indiana, just to the southeast of the city of Chicago, Illinois.

The research questions I answer are: How can the Lakota Sioux Nation's concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin* be integrated into a locally-based, service-learning, ecocomposition course syllabus in a way that facilitates our university's visions for expanded local service-learning and locally-engaged student writing? At the same time: How can this comprehensive course plan further transfer ecological restorative habits and practice in students across a greater sense of place, such

¹ Translates as "All My Relatives" or "We Are All Related/Connected." Traditionally, this term is a Lakota worldview in acknowledging Pangaeon theory: when all continents connected.

² I use this term to describe the concept of examining the history of incidences of ecological wrongs, or injustices, in order to move forward in correcting them for present and future ecological justice, in both local contexts and beyond. In the case of this dissertation, the Lakota concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin* will be the theme applied for these efforts. It is my view that restoration is necessary prior to sustainability.

as the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota, bringing our local history full circle from the boarding school era, balancing both Native American and U.S. settlers' teachings, which should have been equally valued from the first wave of immigrant footsteps on North American land?

Purdue University Northwest currently offers semester-long international experiential learning trips. We also offer limited, short-term, local, service-learning opportunities, such as students delivering meals for Meals on Wheels. However, there is a gap in our local area for themed service-learning involving ecological restorative justice and writing-related advocacy. This gap in locally-themed, university-driven, ecological restorative writing, based on service-learning, is not uncommon as service-learning “tends to neglect important community and institutional impacts” at the local level (Jacoby 15). From an ecological standpoint, localized service-learning gets students meaningfully involved in the environment surrounding their campus. A themed, local, ecocomposition class based on service-learning experience highlights the value of thinking locally, where one resides, a concept that can then transfer to a greater connection with land and place across a greater territory. The proposed curriculum and pedagogy coincides with our campus vision for expanded local service-learning and our composition program's goal for locally-engaged student writing, while simultaneously creating ecological restorative practices in our community via student “hands-on” field work. In essence, students will be following in the footsteps of what is my written narrative in this work via course

assignments, including keeping a journal³ of their own narrative. While PNW does currently offer a standard research-writing class, my particular alternate class plan (also offered as a course elective) can prove a draw for students interested in unique learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom.

³ I will also keep an additional journal of the students' journaling for future scholarly endeavors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
ONE	INTRODUCTION	1
	Rationale (Why This Study Matters)	3
	Research Purposes and Context	7
	Related/Connected Context and Locale	9
	The Structural Format of This Dissertation	12
	A Course Plan Methodology:	
	Narrative, Ceremony, and Knowing	14
	A Continuing Lifetime of Learning as Connective Methodology	18
	Researcher Positionality Narrative:	
	The Story of This Dissertation.....	21
	Overview of Chapters	31
TWO	TWO RELATED NARRATIVES	37
	Dual Opposing Discourses	37
	Dichotomous Relations/Dual Discourses:	
	While St. Joe's Was Underway	58
	<i>Mitakuye Oyasin</i> Defined and Experienced	68
	<i>Mitakuye Oyasin</i> in the Narrative Lakota Language	81
	My Narrative of Learning Lakota as <i>Mitakuye Oyasin</i>	93
	As Above/So Below: Another Version of <i>Mitakuye Oyasin</i>	99
	As Within/So Without: Land and Survival.....	105
	Back at Rosebud with the St. Joseph's Connection.....	108
	Back Home Again in Indiana.....	110
	<i>Mitakuye Oyasin</i> and Ecological Service-Learning:	
	Dual Similar Discourses: Establishing our Sense of Place	112
THREE	ESTABLISHING A NARRATIVE IN RELATION/CONNECTION WITH CULTURE, LAND, AND EARTH.....	141
	Narrative Got Us into this Mess and Narrative Can Get Us Out:	
	Narrative as Research	144
	Narrative in the Ecocomposition Classroom	
	Based on Service-Learning.....	152
	Narrative and Storytelling as Healing and Restorative Justice.....	163

Chapter	Page
FOUR A NARRATIVE PLAN OF ACTION LOCALLY AND BEYOND	172
Moving Forward While Moving Backward	172
FIVE ECOLOGICAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FULL CIRCLE.....	189
Restorative Justice as a New Frontier	197
Walking Two Circular Narratives into the Future.....	199
All Our Relatives in Restorative Justice:	
Healing Earth and People	208
<i>Toksa Ake</i>	210
A Note on Future Scholarship	214
WORKS CITED	219
APPENDICES	254
<i>Mitakuye Oyasin</i> and Balance:	
Appendix A - Student Learning Outcomes and Course Goals	254
Appendix B - Course Syllabus, Assignments, and Course Schedule	259
Appendix C - General Syllabus Narrative	285
Appendix D - Course Writing Assignments Narrative	291

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 As Above/So Below Initial Structure, Simplified	13
2 The Stone Grotto.....	39
3 Photo Dated Feb. 2002.....	41
4 Photo Dated Feb. 2002.....	42
5 Remodeled School	44
6 Highway Marker	44
7 Dakota Territory	49
8 St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Courtyard	49
9 Father Francis Schalk and Two of His Pupils	55
10 St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Photo, Yr. Unknown	55
11 Leonid Tepee.....	60
12 Marsh Map.....	64
13 <i>Mitakuye Oyasin</i> Symbol	70
14 St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Classroom	73
15 St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Article	73
16 St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Floor Drain	74
17 Rosebud Sweat Lodge <i>Ceremony</i>	77
18 Ghost Dance Chief	87
19 Celtic Crosses.....	90
20 As Above/So Below	99
21 As Above/So Below, Illustrated.....	100

Figure	Page
22 Rosebud Mural	101
23 Treaty Flags.....	103
24 (Half Circle Window)	104
25 As Within/So Without	108
26 Chapel at St. Francis, SD	109
27 John Hodson and My Students.....	113
28 Leonardo da Vinci's Notebook	147
29 A Lakota Thunder Being on Horseback depicted by Black Elk	184
30 Scorched Lightning	187
31 "A Human Skeleton".....	192
32 Carlisle Train Route	196
33 <i>Wanbli</i> (The Eagle)	201
34 <i>Wanbli</i> on a Branch	202
35 The Eagle Nest.....	203
36 Chairs Awaiting Young Lakota Spirits.....	212

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Everything’s a circle. We’re each responsible for our own actions. It will come back” (Laverdure qtd. in Exley).

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of a traditional Lakota Sioux tribal prayer, philosophy, and worldview, *Mitakuye Oyasin*, as the theme for the development of an ecocomposition course syllabus. The syllabus is comprised of a series of integrated, locally-related, ecological restorative justice, service-learning components, and corresponding narrative, place-based writing assignments at Purdue University Northwest (PNW). The university is just north of Jasper County, Indiana.

The research questions I seek to answer are: How can the Lakota Sioux Nation’s concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin* be integrated into a locally-based, service-learning, ecocomposition course syllabus in a way that facilitates our university’s visions for expanded local service-learning and locally-engaged student writing? At the same time: How can this comprehensive course plan further transfer ecological restorative habits and practice in students across a greater sense of place, such as the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota, bringing our local history full circle from the boarding school era, balancing both Native American and U.S. settlers’ teachings, which should have been equally valued from the first wave of immigrant footsteps on North American land?

PNW currently offers semester-long, international, experiential learning trips. We also offer limited, short-term, local, service-learning opportunities, such

as students delivering meals locally for Meals on Wheels. However, there is a gap in our local area for themed service-learning involving ecological restorative justice and writing-related advocacy. From an ecological standpoint, localized service-learning can get students meaningfully involved in the environment surrounding their campus. A themed, local, ecocomposition class based on service-learning, which then expands from Northwest Indiana, to a broader, connected area of South Dakota, highlights the value of thinking locally, where one resides, then nationally, and ultimately, globally.

The following proposed curriculum and pedagogy coincides with my campus vision for expanded local service-learning, and the PNW composition program's goal for locally-engaged student writing via community engagement, while simultaneously creating ecological restorative practices in our community, and beyond, via student hands-on fieldwork. While PNW does currently offer a standard research writing class, this proposed, alternate, explorative-natured class can prove a draw for students interested in learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting. In addition, offered as an elective, the course may also interest students from other disciplines, such as health sciences, biology, and STEM.

Rationale (Why This Study Matters)

As Native American ways of life have undergone and continue to undergo cultural genocide, the potential cultural destruction of our relatives becomes the destruction of us all. The millennia-old concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin*⁴ (as well as a reverence for Lakota people, their culture, and history) needs to be brought to light, as it provides us all with a sacred template for ecological balance. Yet, one simple term, and the meaning within, is ecologically profound. It is, in essence, a worldview shared with most all Native American tribes. If non-Native American society had taken, or would now take, the time to study and understand this term, and put it into active practice, the U.S. would be a very different country today. We would also likely live in a very different world—one of sacred ecological balance, rather than one on the verge of ecological collapse.

It is not too late, in fact it is crucial, to integrate the Lakota worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin* into an ecocomposition course plan with a service-learning component to not only seek to raise students' awareness to their connections and responsibilities to the Earth and all creation, but also to enable them to write and communicate in ways that do the same and help restore the balance necessary for the survival of all living things. This study brings together the Lakota *Mitakuye Oyasin* concept of caring for the Earth with an ecocomposition class based upon service-learning in our area of, and immediately surrounding, Jasper County. The course plan includes a proposed extended spring break, week long, service-learning trip to the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation under

⁴ *Mitakuye Oyasin* is just one term from one Native American language: Lakota.

the guidance and instruction of Sicangu⁵ Lakota tribal members I have established connections with, along with myself, and continues in related/connected service-learning via targeted ecological and community building sites in similar need of help and advocacy at Rosebud. Northwest Indiana's connection to the Rosebud Reservation stems from St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, a boarding school in Jasper County⁶, which is described in detail in Chapter Two. This study is valuable to the field of composition because it fills a present gap, and area of need, in scholarship between a traditional Native American culture and worldview (cultural diversity), service-learning (action), and writing (cultural diversity and action narratively put into practice to make a difference in a community, a country, and ultimately, the world for both people and our ecology—for we are all related).

Using Lakota teachings (some expressed in the Lakota language) makes students more aware of diverse and valuable ecological teachings, while “Changing the locus of power in rhetoric and composition permits the inclusion of a greater number of historically underrepresented groups than previously” (R. Crane Bizzaro, “Making Places” 489). This study adds a decolonizing element to ecocomposition via the use of Native American texts, Lakota elders, as well as the outdoor environment as a teacher, with which students actively engage, forming their own ways of knowing expressed via narrative, place-based writing.

The study concurrently brings an element of necessary revitalization to ecocomposition, as it utilizes culturally-specific innovative practices (albeit those

⁵ The Sicangu are also known as the Brule and the Burnt Thigh Nation.

⁶ Not to be confused with St. Joseph Indian School in Chamberlain, SD.

often overlooked and/or repressed by Western society) to address our current global ecological distress. “There is little work on Native Americans being done in our discipline and much of it suffers from the burdens of a colonial mindset and a general lack of understanding about the diversity of American Indian cultures and histories on this continent” (Powell, “Rhetorics of Survivance” 397). By presenting Native American-themed ecocomposition based on service-learning, the general lack of understanding in our discipline can begin to change, in teachers at least being better informed, while simultaneously approaching our environment from a more authentic vantage point of interaction and restorative action. As early as 1996 Donald McAndrew, in CCC, drew attention to teaching ecocomposition in “Ecofeminism and the Teaching of Literacy.” From there, a SIG began at the Chicago CCCC in 1999 when:

[A] single roundtable specifically addressed issues of importance to ecocomposition (although a few others used the term “ecology” in their titles). “Ecology and Composition: Toward a Dialogics of Place” both initiated a public conversation directed toward ecocomposition and called for the formation of ASLE-CCCC, a special interest group supported by the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. The following year, ASLE-CCCC held its first meeting, at which a large number of composition scholars and teachers voiced their enthusiasm for the development of ecocomposition. At the 2000 CCCC, more than half a dozen ecocomposition-related panels appeared on the program.

(Dobrin and Weisser, “Breaking Ground” 260)

Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser are arguably the two most-published names of ecocomposition. If necessity is the mother of invention, the ecological state of our planet is the obvious reason why the school formed. When ecocomposition first formalized at CCCC in 1999, interest in it and publications flourished, especially in the early part of the new millennium. Since then, the momentum is dwindling, perhaps due to the psychological impact upon some due to the sheer magnitude of our planetary distress. Others may simply be more interested in capital gain. I believe a resurgence in ecocomposition involving themed service-learning is imperative to remind us that writing is “one of the activities by which we locate ourselves in the enmeshed systems that make up the social world. It is not simply a way of thinking but more fundamentally a way of acting” (Cooper 373). With *Mitakuye Oyasin* as the course theme, and students active in hands-on, ecological service-learning while engaging with Native rhetorics in and out of the classroom, such practice “holds out opportunities to make students better writers, but it also carries the potential to make us better teachers and scholars in the field” (Cole 142).

As far back as the year 2000, Scott Lyons stated that unless something changes, “I suspect all talk on rhetorical sovereignty will likely happen away from the university” (“Rhetorical Sovereignty” 466). In the case of my dissertation course plan, talk regarding rhetorical sovereignty does indeed take place away from the university, while paradoxically taking place within it, via the places of the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, the PNW campus, and the surrounding Northwest Indiana territories. With students “acting” as Cooper states, within places with

which they may not be familiar, under cultural concepts that may be contrary to what they know in today's society, they can come to a new realization of what constitutes knowledge, truth, and balance, as can perhaps, many of us teaching composition (Bizzell 2). Further, Cooper's "acting" as hands-on service-learning within a community via students, further raises general public awareness, and perhaps further action for ecological restoration. This awareness, in turn, fulfills an earlier hope that Dobrin and Weisser had for the future of composition, which "might work toward theories and pedagogies that incorporate the interests of diverse members of our local and global ecosystems—including other intellectuals, other peoples, even other organisms" ("Breaking Ground" 584).

Research Purposes and Context

My study is valuable to the field of composition because it moves in a series of recursive circles: starting locally and moving globally. Practice becomes writing, and writing becomes practice that directly impacts individuals, then our region, our country, and finally our world, through hands-on service-learning which fosters active research and subsequent writing, resulting in efforts for ecological and cultural restorative justice and healing.

This study is important in individual lives because it also fills a current void in multiple ways that makes a difference in students, the Earth, and our future existence for generations. The study makes us mindful of what has been all but lost from a U.S. colonial standpoint; a Native American ancient worldview perspective regarding responsibility to the Earth and to ourselves. The course plan seeks to restore what has been repressed/oppressed via centuries of

cultural genocide through the proposal of *Mitakuye Oyasin*-themed active service-learning practice. Students engaged in the course plan can realize they are part of the Northwest Indiana region, as well as the rest of the Earth by connecting with it physically via hands-on field work. At the same time, students can connect with the greater U.S. landscape metaphysically in a sense, traveling counterclockwise⁷ of what was once traveled by young Lakota boys to our area of Indiana (as explained in Chapter Two), while learning to value the Lakota worldview at Rosebud. These actions and practices facilitate authentic writing about environmental issues first-hand, via field notes and related writing assignments, with a pervading and connecting theme and philosophy which has care for the Earth and ecological, as well as cultural, restoration at its core, rather than just sustainability. If we simply sustain the Earth in its present condition, we face the same problems we have today, and ecological balance is still not “as it should be” as the Lakota say. We must seek to move our ultimate goal closer to that ideal balance.

While our university currently offers semester-long international service-learning trips and national spring break service-learning trips, some may argue that neither gets students meaningfully involved in the local area surrounding their campus, thus highlighting the value of thinking locally, where one resides, and then later expanding globally, a concept that should become a lifetime practice. Embedding a series of local service-learning trips into a themed

⁷ Albeit the timeclock was introduced to Lakota culture with settler colonialism. In the case of this particular usage, I refer to a counterclockwise (or opposite) pattern of circular travel, as well as traveling in the reverse of historical and archival records.

ecocomposition class enables students who enroll in the class to not only study ecological texts and other materials with a connective philosophy base and regionality, but to immediately become participants in what Cherokee composition and civic sustainability scholar Dr. Ellen Cushman calls “beliefs in action” (“The Public” 329).

The blending of a Lakota worldview, an ecocomposition class, and local and locally-related opportunities for service-learning processed via writing assignments, helps students not only become more aware of their ecological surroundings, but exactly how those ecological surroundings are uniquely valued in context. Thus, students also have the benefit of points of view in collaboration with “community partners who often inhabit subject positions different from those of the students” (Deans 9). A targeted geographic area of study can ingrain in students the importance of how one small ecological region is related and connected to the larger whole of all the Earth, thus reiterating the Lakota theme *Mitakuye Oyasin*, or “All My Relatives”: we are all connected—human, animal, and all Earthly elements, however small, even by community.

Related/Connected Context and Locale

The spring break proposed service-learning trip to the Rosebud Sioux Reservation within the course plan provides a context for not only more culturally specific learning through service, but also the hearing of traditional Lakota narratives, storytelling, language, and practices, from those tribal members teaching on site. (Tailored context is detailed in Chapter Four and Appendices.) This trip allows students in the course to write their own place-based narratives

from their experiences interacting with the Lakota people and worldview, in tandem with a knowledge of the local ecology in South Dakota. A new lens of perspective for students can then transfer full circle back to Jasper County, and surrounding Northwest Indiana, for a fuller breadth of Lakota ecological knowledge that can be applied to restorative efforts at home.

Albeit the absorption of Lakota ecological knowledge imbedded in the Lakota language is extensively miniscule for students visiting Rosebud from PNW due to time constraints; the brief exposure to it can give them at least an idea of how much knowledge loss is at stake with the intended genocide of a single language and culture, in this case, Lakota, and in just one term's case, *Mitakuye Oyasin*. I have begun studying the Lakota language as an enrolled student at the tribal college, Sinte Gleska University, and there is a rhythm to the language that reflects the rhythms of nature, as I explain in more detail in Chapter Two. Most of the word sounds in Lakota, along with their meanings, originated from sounds and meaning in nature. "Land, culture, and community are inseparable in Indian country" (Lyons, "Rhetorical Sovereignty" 458). Further, the worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin* is a concept most Indigenous tribes in North America recognize, and it is this connection with the natural world that drives the Lakota language. Thus, Lakota language usage is also a reflection of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, or connectedness with nature via the sounds which reflect nature's rhythmic character.

Indigenous knowledges have a fluidity and motion that is manifested in the distinctive structure of tribal languages. They resist the culturally imbued

constructs of the English language, and from this perspective alone Western research and Indigenous inquiry can walk together only so far. This is a significant difficulty for all those, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who do not speak a tribal language yet are inquiring into the nature of tribal knowledges. (Kovach 30)

What Kovach describes here is often difficult for native (and unilingual) speakers of English, and non-Native American English language speaking populations to grasp. Yet at the same time, ideally, just the smallest bit of language understanding could help in some small way to allow students to view valuable Indigenous knowledge from a more authentic point of view. Providing a fresh lens of perspective, along with relationships built on the Rosebud Reservation, can impart a greater depth of the Lakota ecological understanding. “Ecological thinking relies upon interrelationships rather than rigid boundaries” (Dobrin and Weisser, “Breaking Ground” 569). This worldview is true of the relationships between people, and between all of creation. These intricate relationships also serve as a catalyst for student narrative journaling of dual (and very often opposing) discourses (Lakota compared to Westernized or home cultures) within the course assignments. Furthermore, with Native American lands constantly under ecological threat of contamination, endless pipeline developments, and a myriad of other ongoing treaty violations, as Keith H. Basso states, “new forms of ‘environmental awareness’ are being more radically charted and urgently advocated than ever in the past” (105). Operating from, and delving in-depth into, what Basso calls “contrasted ways of living in the world” are

essential to experience the organic connection and relationship between human beings and all of creation. Once explored, these new and vital contrasts not only allow students to change their writing, but also their sense of identity and place within the world.

The Structural Format of This Dissertation

This dissertation is formatted following the symbolic Lakota concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, which moves in a circle. The work reflects past injustices, and then serves as a compass for eventual restorative justice. Finally, it operates as the story of two opposing narratives, eventually creating two new restorative narratives as the course plan is utilized. The text is also a collective “narrative of a narrative” because this dissertation does, at times, serve as my own narrative theory via lived experience set to story. “One personal narrative may emphasize the narrative more than reflection or analysis” (Ross 200). Thus, the running thread through this dissertation is my narrative—telling the story of this dissertation. The more academic prose within this work is interspersed with my own narrative, as in keeping with future described writing assignments.

The four elemental structures (represented by the outer “four points” or “corners”) of this dissertation’s structural format plan are most accurately portrayed in the traditional Lakota visual images of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, which are discussed in Chapter Two, as well as the traditional Lakota symbol of the concepts of “as above/so below” (and later, “as without/so within”) reflected with my corresponding image hence (see fig. 1 below):

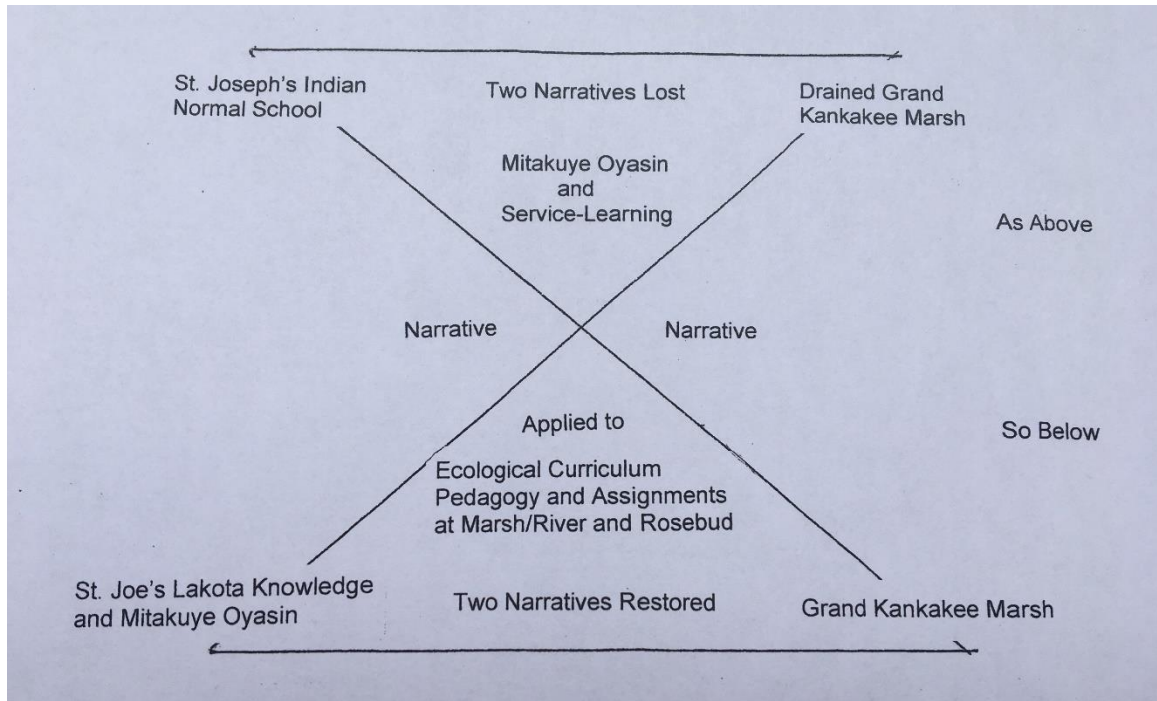


Fig. 1. *As Above/So Below Initial Structure, Simplified.*

In the case of this writing, a traditional Lakota symbolic drawing best represents my intended structure, due to the centuries-old meaning imbedded within it (described in Chapter Two), as well as the sacredness of the number four. The structure itself reflects the practice of Lakota research, as well as culture and ceremony. Shawn Wilson, a Cree First Nations scholar reflects:

The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships to bridge the distance between the cosmos and us. The research we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world. Through going forward together with open minds and good hearts we have uncovered the nature of ceremony. (137)

The Lakota as above/so below design is also the best structural methodology for this piece, for it is a relational ontology focusing on relations with people, land and the environment, as well as the cosmos and spirituality (Chilisa 113-14). The structure of this dissertation necessarily follows the representation of the Lakota symbolic worldview in order to effectively express the value and integrity of the Lakota belief as above/so below, as well as *Mitakuye Oyasin*—both reciprocal and circular relationships, which are wholly related to one another, as well as to the concurrent related concept of as without/so within, which is subsequently addressed in Chapter Two. I realize this approach may seem atypical (and unusual, until further explained in the next chapter), yet it is in keeping with an emergent trend of valuing Indigenous circles of knowledge and structures too long overlooked (See S. Wilson, Powell, Lyons, Deloria).

A Course Plan Methodology:

Narrative, Ceremony, and Knowing

This dissertation serves as an initiative for culturally specific restorative practices that seek to unravel the ills imposed on the valuable ecosystem of the Grand Kankakee Marsh from 1888-1896, in concurrence with genocidal ills imposed on Native American people brought to the same area, during the same time period, as presented in Chapter Two. Echoing *Mitakuye Oyasin*, my methodology is about these relationships, in context. “Interpretation of the context of knowledge is necessary for that knowledge to become lived, become part of our collective experience or part of our web of relationships. So we contextualize everything that we do, and we do that contextualization in a

conscious way” (S. Wilson 102-03). Learning must be relational, and the relation must be in context to be understood and produce true restorative change, both for our ecological world, and the human world. “If research doesn’t change you as a person, then you haven’t done it right” (S. Wilson 135). As students form their own multi-perspective narratives within the course (much like mine, which appears within this dissertation), the purpose of ceremonies (one of which is indeed writing), and ways of knowing are apparent as part of the designed methodology and practice.

Thick description is encouraged to capture nuanced, personal, interactions and perspectives. I realize this methodology, from today’s academic and societal perspectives, may again seem atypical. This approach is again necessary due to the Lakota worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, which encompasses multiple levels of knowledge, including Indigenous ways of knowing, often of an individualized personal and spiritual nature. Until we become acquainted with Native American ways of knowing, we cannot truly begin to acquire even just the smallest glimpse into a culture which possesses immense knowledge; knowledge often repressed, past and present, for the sake of land ownership and greed. This possessive mindset came at the price of true knowledge of authentic relationships, with all people, as well as with land and all living things.

Ultimately, Lakota knowledge has a value much greater than money. In a sense, this methodology, springing from two historic, concurrent, and opposing narratives, also moves both in a circle forward, for personal and ecological restorative justice progress, and in a circle backward, revisiting the knowledge of

Indigenous peoples, in this case the Lakota, whom all Americans should have been learning from and valuing all along. With this methodological approach, students may have to train their minds to think differently. My curriculum, pedagogy, and practices in and out of the classroom help with the process. This targeted change of mindset focus is explained in greater detail in Chapter Four and Appendices.

Historically, Indigenous peoples are certainly not unfamiliar with having to operate beyond the boundaries of their own knowledge base and practices/worldviews, and ceremonies with which they are familiar. “Because so much indigenous ways of knowing is internalized, personal, and experiential, creating one standardized, externalized framework for indigenous research is nearly impossible, and inevitably heartbreaking for indigenous peoples” (sic; Kovach 43). In essence, therefore, authentic Indigenous research requires sustained, reciprocal relationships. In my case, the reciprocal relationship is with the Lakota.

Ya, so studies conducted by some researcher on an Indigenous topic may successfully meet the criteria by which dominant system research is judged; such as validity and reliability, or the researcher may accurately describe a “fact.” But if the researcher is separated from the research and it is taken away from its relationships, it will not be accepted within an Indigenous paradigm. The research will not show respect for the relationship between the research participants and topic. (sic; S. Wilson 101)

Since March of 2015, I have returned to the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation many times, including attending summer Lakota language and culture classes at Sinte Gleska University in 2016 and 2017, aware of the necessity to position myself within the community in order to effectively learn (Cushman, *The Struggle* 27). My student status at Sinte Gleska University has allowed me access to a myriad of resources otherwise unavailable, including the university archives. At the same time, much of the knowledge I have acquired has been from members of (and in) the surrounding areas, and/or community members who freely visit the Sinte Gleska classrooms. I have made many dear friends, and it is likely I will continue to visit this place and learn for the rest of my life, as well as welcoming my Lakota friends into my home in Indiana. We keep in touch at least weekly in the interims, sharing knowledge, recipes, events, stories, life. These reciprocal relationships are shaping who I am as both a scholar and a person. This relational ideology, which may be viewed by some in academic circles as unusual, is exactly the point of my methodology and this dissertation, which is a narrative of people, relationships, and an essential worldview.

Emotionless, passionless, abstract, intellectual, academic research is a goddamn lie, it does not exist. It is a lie to ourselves and a lie to other people. Humans—feeling, living, breathing, thinking humans—do research. When we try to cut ourselves off at the neck and pretend an objectivity that does not exist in the human world, we become dangerous, to ourselves first, and then to the people around us. (Hampton 52)

The danger Hampton refers to in this passage, is of the same ideology from which genocidal mindsets of the past (and present) were hatched. As in true friendship, “It’s a matter of forming a relationship that goes beyond the informant-researcher duality to becoming co-learners” (S. Wilson 113). All knowledge is good knowledge, and that knowledge is reciprocal. The methods by which this dissertation, course plan, and curriculum are formed are in consultation with Lakota tribal members as indicated. Ultimately, this dissertation is a qualitative, archival, and narrative inquiry, based on reciprocal relationships—or in Native American ideology, “reality” (S. Wilson 13).

A Continuing Lifetime of Learning as Connective Methodology

Kovach states “Indigenous inquiry is holistically demanding, and knowing purpose in what can be emotionally challenging work matters when spirits are low” (109). Researching the history of the boarding school era and St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School has often been nothing less than horrific/heartbreaking. At the same time, it makes me stand in awe of the fortitude, resilience, and survivance of those who underwent the experience, and/or continue to deal with its effects even years later. Visiting the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation has opened my eyes to the blatant racism just beyond the reservation boundaries, and sometimes the hegemony within (much due to the Dawes Act of 1887⁸), against the Lakota. Further, for me, there is a fine line to be walked in adjusting to, and comprehending, a new cultural setting, bridging the line between

⁸ White settlers were given access to reservation land situated close to water, which is scarce.

traditional Lakota practices and current Lakota challenges not only in survival, but in resisting Western culture, while simultaneously recognizing the tribe seeks to revitalize traditional Lakota culture within the Rosebud community in a way that is modern, progressive, and beneficial over time (in other words, sustainable for the long haul). Therefore, due to the course of ever-fluidly altering relationships and experiences, my narrative and storytelling is the best way to express meaning here, and I am indeed, still learning. Amy Robillard states, “narrative provides shape, order, coherence to events beyond our control. Narrative is more than a simple chronological rendering of events. Narratives give ‘shape to the forward movement of time, suggesting reasons why things happen, showing their consequences’” (76). Narrative also continues to be the best way to interpret and express ways of knowing as advocacy for cultural and ecological restorative justice, as well as continued learning and self-awareness. “We support it because we know, intuitively, experientially, logically, theoretically, that narrative and argument interanimate each other” (Robillard 82). The ultimate value of narrative, and narrative-infused writing is further highlighted and reiterated in Chapter Three.

Ways of knowing must be experienced to be understood, just as I did not know much of my family history well, but solely through stories, until I advanced enough in age to make necessary connections, as is addressed later in this work. In a sense, for some time, my life was held (and is still held, in some ways) in “suspended judgement” (Deloria, “American Indian” 6). Stories become part of you. You have a relationship with them.

The way I experienced storytelling as a young child, I sensed that people—the people you know or loved, your grandma or uncle or neighbor—as they were telling you a story, you could watch them and you could see that they were concentrating very intently on something. What I thought they were concentrating on was they were trying to put themselves in that place and dramatize it. (sic; Silko, *Conversations with* 54)

I can certainly relate to Silko's experience with narrative storytelling, emanating from a place. Stories are part of who I am and who I will become. Stories are something we all collect and possess, whether we realize it or not.

There are those in academia who would ask me to lay claim to storytelling, and to its centrality in my work, as a manifestation of "Native American" cultural practices. And while I don't deny the importance of storytelling to the Native peoples of the Eastern Woodlands community of which I am a part, neither would I want to overlook the way storytelling works in both the rural Midwestern farm community in which I was raised, the "postmodern" academic communities in which I participate, and the dominant narratives used to create and imagine "America." In other words, storytelling isn't just an "Indian" thing for me; it is essential in the creation of all human realities. (Powell, "Rhetorics of Survivance" 429)

Powell's quote reflects my own experience with oral family storytelling, from both one side of my father's family related to farming and land development, and the other side of my father's family more related to Native American-based

stories and beliefs of a connective worldview. This dual enmeshment is also part of my identity.

As non-Indigenous researchers begin to decolonize their methodologies and methods and venture into Indigenous research spaces formerly marginalized, they begin to see these methodologies and methods as “normal.” In these cases, these spaces, formerly Indigenous, now seem less so because white scholars come to inhabit them physically, intellectually, and as such *claim them*. (sic; Walter and Anderson 57)

My process of learning the Lakota worldview is a never-ending journey. In addition, “the natural world is a venue of sound and shadows, and the outcome of the oral tradition is not the silence of discourse, dominance, and written narratives” (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners* 72). The Lakota worldview, while foundationally ancient and solid, is also continually in flux in a sense, as it is shaped by Lakota continuing stories of survivance. For me, learning the Lakota worldview requires a lifetime of sustained and maintained relationships. The same may likely be true for, with, and among, my students, whether at Rosebud and/or in Indiana.

Researcher Positionality Narrative:

The Story of This Dissertation

My earliest recollection of being connected to Jasper County, in Northwest Indiana, began when I was about four years old. As my parents drove south for the weekend from our home on the south side of Chicago along Rt. 231 in Indiana to visit all our relatives “out in the country,” I remember seeing what

looked like houses built on water at the northmost end of the county. The doors to the weathered-looking houses were just above the water line. The road was raised up above the houses a bit, so our car could continue on through to the town of DeMotte. Upon seeing someone in a rowboat paddling to the door of what was probably his home, I asked my dad, "Why do these people live in water?" He replied, "Because the Kankakee seeks its own ground when we get a lot of rain." I remember my dad making the river sound as though it was a person in pursuit of something. I did not find that unusual. I did not realize at the time that I was living somewhat of a physical and spiritual dichotomy along with the city and the country, the river and the land, and a generations-old interpretation of the world.

For as long as I can remember, my understanding of a worldview has been that all people, species, resources, elements, languages, operate integrally together in a way that is intentionally and purposefully created to sustain the Earth and everything in it. If that balance is disturbed and/or exploited, disrespected, oppressed, and otherwise neglected, there will be repercussions. My worldview is what I was taught by my parents and part of my extended family with a Native American background. Generations back in our family records, it indicates my paternal great, great, great, grandfather was raised by a Native American nation until he reached the age of 20, but he then left. As of yet, I do not know what tribe raised him. Additionally, on my paternal grandmother's side (for whom I was named), a medicine man came each autumn from afar to bring natural herbal supplies for "medicines" due to "who my Great-Grandma George's

mother was" (*History of Jasper County*). My ninety-four year old Uncle Dave remembers these visits and recalled, "I believe he came from Kansas, and he had been there before Kansas became a state." When my grandmother's first daughter, my Aunt Nona, was born, tribal members came to perform a baby blessing and naming ceremony (Gifford). I do know the name "Nona" is short for "*Winona*," or "First Born Daughter" in Lakota.

Still, the connections remain mysterious. My family tells me I have Indian blood, but there is no elaboration beyond that statement. My father identifies as being of Native American ancestry, and he and I have many of the same "experiences" which I address later in Chapter Two. My Grandma, Lora Gifford, often walked forest and field with me explaining botany and what was good to be used as various remedies for ailments, quoting, "The Earth will take care of you as long as you take care of it." When I was very young, I remember walking through some woods with my sister, directly behind our grandmother, as she gathered wild blackberries into her apron and fed them to us as she went along. She would often cite, "In order to know where you are going, you must know where you came from."

On weekends when my immediate family could not leave the city of Chicago to visit Indiana, my parents would take my sister and me (my brother came along later) to walk the shores of Lake Michigan, talking about the water, the waves, the trees, the atmosphere, and how they all work intentionally together. Yet, they would also talk about how we do them a disservice—how we are "living beneath ourselves." This phrase is from my father's side of the family

and is always used for not living up to one's responsibility as a human being. In other words, we have not cared for the Earth as it has cared for us.

Just as water, plants, animals, and our biosphere work together, we also work together with them as humans. We are part of the circle. "All organisms—but especially human beings—are not simply the results but are also the causes of their own environments" (Lewontin *et al.* 275). We are all related and we are all connected. The Lakota Sioux tribe's term for this ever-reciprocal connection is *Mitakuye Oyasin*. I recognize this Lakota worldview and prayer as being similar to the worldview I was taught.

Jasper County is very intricately linked to Chicago. One aspect of this link is a natural and intentional gift from the Creator via a connected, contiguous, original marshy landscape. However, a reverse aspect of this link is the direct result of human behavior and ecological injustice for the sake of profit, with the vast marsh of one area in Indiana, drained and used to build the so-called "City of the Century": Chicago. It wasn't until I was an adolescent that I found out my berry-picking grandmother, when she was a young girl, worked as a maid in the household of a family who owned a railroad. This family opened up much of the Northwest Indiana territory to commerce via Jasper County to supply food to the rapidly growing city of Chicago. However, they also had a part in draining and dredging the Grand Kankakee Marsh in order to do so, destroying much of the natural wetlands and wildlife habitat (Prince 214). While my grandmother worked for the family of the "Chicago and Wabash Valley Railroad" (known locally as "Gifford Railroad"—my maiden name), their son fell in love with her. My

grandmother thought he was very cocky and did not like him at first. However, as she stated, “He was persistent,” so here I am today, the granddaughter of their marriage, which was much protested by my grandfather’s family. My grandmother was a huge environmental advocate and much of the work I present in this dissertation is in honor of her and her teachings about the Earth. I revisit her life story again briefly in Chapter Two.

In 1888, just as the Grand Kankakee Marsh began to be drained, dredged, and straightened into a much shorter and narrower river, on the southern end of Jasper County, a Native American boarding school called St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School opened its doors. It was located within a mile of the home where my grandmother worked as a maid. The school (one of many boarding schools in the U.S.) was built with money donated by wealthy Philadelphia heiress Katharine Drexel, who was later canonized in the year 2000 due to her work in funded ministry to African Americans and Native Americans. St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School was subsequently funded by the U.S. government in order to “civilize the Indians” (Gerlach). The residents of St. Joseph’s were purposefully brought there via recruitment and other means to be “assimilated” or “normalized” into the dominant, colonized culture far from their homes, with many coming from the Rosebud Lakota Sioux tribe, as well as other Sioux tribes of the Dakota territories. According to the archival educational requirements for the school, one of the things students studied there was American History. Ironically, the students there *were part of* American history and the history of the land. Native Americans kept the land pristine, which is why it was so valuable to land developers.

The U.S. government's philosophy of the time was that the nation's "Indian problem" could be solved by separating children a great distance from their family, home culture, and language and by making them white. Native American children until this time acquired their education from their communities and their elders whom they watched and emulated, as well as from the world around them: the stars, plants, animals, soil, atmosphere, etc. (Standing Bear, *My Indian* vi). They learned by experience, out in the natural world, establishing their place in it as part of a greater whole. Hence, the term *Mitakuye Oyasín* holds a special and an organic meaning, "We Are All Related."

Inside St. Joseph's, using Native American languages, including Lakota, was forbidden, along with any semblance of oral culture and/or traditional practices. The purpose was not simply to assimilate Native Americans into colonized culture. The simultaneous, albeit unstated, purpose was to sever the Native American connection to land and the Earth in order to claim it as property for profit. In Jasper County, where St. Joseph's stood (and still stands as office space), the new English language, and a rhetoric of land development and ecological destruction ruled. The eight years that St. Joseph's was in operation from 1888-1896 are the same years the marshland territory surrounding the school concurrently underwent major detrimental alterations in the name of so-called progress. Those eight years were a pivotal part of Jasper County history, and a part my family history. I cannot help but feel a sense of responsibility to correct those eight years. Those particular years are also part of my future, and another reason for this work—to seek restoration of some of Jasper County's

original marsh/wetlands via the exploration of a reverse pedagogy for students in our area of Northwest Indiana, learning from the historic worldview of one of the four⁹ tribes represented at St. Joseph's Indian Normal School: The Lakota Sioux. In this sense, the targeted restoration is two-fold, both culturally and ecologically, with students today learning of Lakota practices oppressed, as well as outlawed, in the past.

I actually never knew of the true existence of St. Joseph's Indian Normal School until recently. However, when I was four years old, on the same trip that my immediate family made from Chicago to Jasper County to visit our country relatives, and I asked my dad why people seemed to live in water along the river, my Indiana cousins took me exploring outside on the campus of St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer at dusk. From there, years later, I was drawn to a very isolated and derelict, abandoned building across the road, set far back in the trees. I address this experience and the related narrative in greater detail in Chapter Two.

Several years ago, around 2011, when I was driving past the abandoned building from the south along Rt. 231, I discovered it had been an Indian boarding school, and saw that it had been structurally restored. A historic plaque was raised stating "St. Joseph's Indian Normal School." I did a study in 2013 on its original curriculum for an Indiana University of Pennsylvania EGO conference but had no idea at the time that some of its students came from the Rosebud

⁹ The Sioux, Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Menominee attended St. Joseph's Indian Normal School. The Sioux are comprised of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota.

Lakota Sioux Reservation (Mendenhall, “Self-Plagiarism”). This fact I discovered in 2015, when I was chosen as the faculty lead for a service-learning trip to the Rosebud Reservation with a group of twelve undergraduate students from Valparaiso University. On a later trip back to Rosebud, I discovered there had once been a sister school to St. Joseph’s by the name of St. Francis Indian School in St. Francis, SD, on the reservation, and a school, church, and mission is still in operation there. On the reservation, I also encountered *Mitakuye Oyasin*, the worldview with which I have been familiar since childhood.

Ironically, my first 2015 trip to Rosebud with the VU students was the result of asking Dr. Resa Crane Bizzaro, one of my IUP doctoral program professors, what I could do to balance my career experience on my curriculum vitae. Her reply was, “Have you done any service-learning?” I had done some experiential learning, and teaching, but had never really considered service-learning, with its hands-on element. Thus, I signed up for a potential spring break trip as faculty at VU and was assigned to Rosebud. It is also ironic that I recall Dr. Claude Hurlbert, one of my other IUP doctoral professors, asking me during my first year of study, “What are you burning to tell the world?” My reply was, “What the world has been telling me since I have been here.” I didn’t know exactly what I meant by my reply at that time, but I do now. I also remember telling Hurlbert in reply, that I didn’t quite fully understand the need for ecocomposition’s “sustainability” in my local area just yet, but in my home territory, I understood the crucial need for “restoration” first. Additionally, I recall telling him I had some concern over difficulty in separating my personal writing from my academic

writing. His response was, “Don’t try. They are not mutually exclusive. They should be combined. That’s what makes it good.”

This train of thought was reiterated in a recent conversation I had with Dr. Victor Douville, a Lakota elder and scholar at Sinte Gleska University, who informed me I should not seek to make that which is spiritual conform to scientific methods. Indeed, I am seeing more and more calls for proposals as of late discussing how life writing has great potential to drive pedagogical practice, so it should therefore, be encouraged. My topic for this dissertation is as old as I am, yet in some ways, it is about my history in reverse—revisiting previous generations and the worldview I acquired from them, in order to restore some of what was culturally and ecologically lost.

While Jasper County is historically home to the Potawatomi and Miami, the Sioux also inhabited it at one time (Holderfield). Using the term *Mitakuye Oyasin*, and Lakota teachings regarding care of the Earth, are a natural platform for ecological, hands-on, service-learning outside a traditional classroom. This worldview is particularly meaningful and applicable in an area in need of ecological restoration, such as Jasper County.

I now currently reside in Northwest Indiana, and my relationship to this topic is regionally connected in the sense that I have a history and a bond with the land where I live, and where part of my extended family lives, and has lived, for generations. It is also the land where I teach, and I know much of its past, not only via local narrative and stories, but I know it geographically and typographically from oral history via family storytelling over a long period of time. I

know its vast flatlands, sandy soil, peat bogs, and where swamp once existed; vital wetlands destroyed by what was once called progress. I know Jasper County well, and I know many of its current ecological needs due to my past and current exploration of and involvement with it. As Rachel C. Jackson stated, “My heart, culture, my history, and my identity reside here in this landscape” (497). Jasper County is a “place” where the earth and I are connected.

With the history of St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School in mind, the environmental knowledge of the Lakota Sioux we did not heed or value during the boarding school era would have been invaluable in keeping ecological balance at the turn of the century. It is still crucial today; it is not too late. Since the onset of much of Jasper County’s environmental demise took place at the time the school was in operation, and since the overall course theme of *Mitakuye Oyasin* and resulting land practices of the Lakota are applied to our studies and restorative efforts, an ecologically restorative spring break service-learning trip for the course takes place via connections and relationships I have formed on the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation. This trip can help students realize the vast amount of knowledge available in learning with just one Native American nation, just one Native American phrase (*Mitakuye Oyasin*), in one Native American language, which draws attention to the vast amount of knowledge from all Native American nations oppressed and repressed by U.S. government policies and practices over time. With hundreds of Native American languages, concepts, customs, ceremonies and practices, the targets of cultural genocide, the subsequent effect on all people, as well as our environment via cultural

ecological knowledge loss, has been devastating, and may ultimately devastate us all.

Thus, it is my goal that the focus of my work bring back, however small, some of the balanced ecological habitat locally, and beyond, which was lost in the late 1800s—where part of my ancestors' ecologically detrimental history coincided with the boarding school era. In presenting ecological restorative justice efforts themed in a Native American framework based on service-learning, my family history, as well as my life, goes full circle. My own narrative story, teaching, writing, and service to others, is utilized to restore, then to sustain traditional Indigenous ecological teachings and practices, from the vantage point of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, the worldview thread which has been passed down, and has remained with me, from childhood.

Overview of Chapters

The progression of this study is as follows. Chapter Two of my dissertation is my literature review which begins by exploring two stories of Jasper County history with dual and opposing discourses, taken from local research, archival records, and family stories. This information is followed by a thorough exploration of the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin* in Lakota culture and language, and the dual and similar (rather than opposing), discourse of service-learning, expressed in place-based narrative writing. Thus, this collective research explains the connection between the term *Mitakuye Oyasin* and Service-Learning as a writing course theme for ecological restorative justice. I experienced that connection on the Rosebud Reservation while doing service work and simultaneously learning

about Lakota culture in which it is believed we are all connected, whether human, animal, mineral, or any other earthly element, however small, right down to the nanoscale cellular and molecular level. The connection between Lakota philosophy and ecological restorative area need follow with the hands-on practice of local service-learning, connecting students to our local environment. I believe this connection is vital not only for the sake of our local environment and the Earth, but it is also an essential human need. This connection between all things in existence is part of the human narrative, and in turn, we are the “voice” and caretakers of the Earth. As relatives, like family, we bear a responsibility for the care of the greater whole, in the case of this dissertation course plan, the Earth at our local level, then beyond.

Engaging students in ecological restoration locally in environmental service-learning “has been recognized as a key element in cultivating a potentially life-long disposition of care for the environment” (Hacking and Barratt). While Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser argue ecological perspectives are essential to the continued growth of the field of composition, I argue this growth is solidified by being put into active practice via service-learning (“Breaking Ground” 567). In other words, the only way to understand, truly value, connect with, and advocate for our ecological environment is to be out in it.

Chapter Three of my dissertation focuses on how students, establishing a sense of their place in the world via *Mitakuye Oyasin* and ecological service-learning, form their own narrative in connection with the land and Earth. That narrative takes many writing assignment forms, some not traditionally expected in

a standard composition or research writing course. In spending much time on the Rosebud Reservation, I have researched and inquired into the best way to integrate Lakota cultural teachings into this course plan, pedagogy, and assignments, while serving as my own forerunner in a sense, for the context of this dissertation. This context is part of the overall student experience. In actively working with environmental issues under the groundwork of a Lakota theme, the course relies to a more limited extent on academic foundational texts in composition and ecocomposition, yet balances them with Lakota and other Native American texts by Native American authors. This departure is due to the altering of the framework of the class experience with not only service-learning, but with a glimpse into another cultural point of view(s), reflected in writing outcomes. The use of dual discourse journals facilitates the connection between students and the Earth. Presenting PowerPoint research studies and potentially assisting in writing grant proposals to restore marshlands in Jasper County (for example) engages students in the intrinsic value of an ecosystem.

Through exposure to just a fragment of another culture, such as Lakota, and the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin*, this course offers to open the eyes of students to not only looking at the Earth through another lens, as described, but looking at themselves through another lens, that of being fully human as a part of the Earth via their sense of place within it and upon it. Thus, the definition of what was once narrative for students may change because their worldview and identity may change as they engage with their connected natural surroundings. These changes provide a fundamental context for students to meaningfully advocate for

ecological, as well as cultural, restorative justice. These changes are also necessary, as currently “Emancipatory projects in composition studies fall short of their social justice goals because they critique a content or place of practice without revealing and altering their own structuring tenets” (Cushman, “Translingual and Decolonial” 239). The only way to live outside your own culture, is to operate beyond its boundaries, and that includes boundaries in composition.

Chapter Four of my dissertation (with the corresponding Appendices) includes a continued narrative, syllabus, and an overview of the projects for the course¹⁰. Lakota and other related Native American films, texts, teachings, and practices, are integrated into my course syllabus in connection with films, texts, and teaching about local ecological restorative need. While the semester begins at the local level examining the history of St. Joseph’s Indian School, the syllabus moves forward from there through Jasper County history and related research with service-learning projects and advocacy writings. A few examples of sites in need of ecological restoration are the Grand Kankakee Marsh, where students can help re-establish wetlands, the Jasper-Pulaski Game Preserve, where native species of trees can be planted, and the nearby Nature Conservancy’s Northwest Indiana Kankakee Sands Bison Project where bison are being reintroduced to the area.

Through my connections with the Sicangu Lakota Nation on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, a service-learning trip for the course takes place over several

¹⁰ Similar to the IUP dissertation by Cope, which includes practical pedagogy. However, the syllabus format is tailored to PNW guidelines.

days during spring break at a Lakota cultural advocacy youth camp in Herrick, SD. At the camp, students not only have an opportunity to learn first-hand of Lakota culture and the value of land/ecology, but to assist in its restoration among young people there through whatever service the camp board members decide is needed to maintain and run the camp. One example of a potential project we have discussed is using GPS to identify sacred Lakota land sites nearby, recording their perimeters while providing documented printed narrative material to the public, as well as to the Lakota community, illustrating their cultural value to all of us. While nothing can ever amend for the oppression of sacred, ecological, cultural knowledge (much less the horrific trauma) of Native Americans during the boarding school era, this dissertation is an impetus for awareness and for change.

Chapter Five of my dissertation defines how the course plan overall fosters ecological restorative justice in Jasper County, retrospectively from the year 1888 to present. With our local ecology in decline, and service and writing-related advocacy necessary, this course plan provides a new narrative perspective for students and the field of composition. It also provides a necessary connection between people and land. "Where the indigenous people of North America are concerned, times of trouble also lead to the reaffirmation of the connection they have to the natural environment" (Marshall, *To You We Shall* 87). Chapter Five also identifies further areas of future related research which, for me, includes a subsequent and expanded graduate class course plan, a collection of Rosebud Sioux tribal member narratives reflecting "who they are

today”, (meaning a collection of shared, modern-day lives) as well as efforts to correct U.S. textbooks addressing Native American history. A formal U.S. government apology to the Native American people of this land is also in order.

A future exploration of the other tribes represented at St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School is also in order: the Chippewa, the Menominee, the Potawatomi. We have much to learn. We have much to restore. And it is going to take generations, so we must begin now to learn the value of the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin*.

CHAPTER TWO

TWO RELATED NARRATIVES

Dual Opposing Discourses

“[L]isten to the whispers of those continental ghosts. To feel their shadows skim along the surface of your skin. To write our bodies into text and reinvent our writings in another voice, another language. To use history and family to remember the land upon which we play” (Powell, “Listening to Ghosts” 21).

It’s about the language. Because the language is about the land. The previous two sentences embody the essence of the following two narratives/opposing dual discourses as the foundational basis for this chapter, using narrative discourse as historic research, both personal and archival. Immediately thereafter, definitions and beneficial connections via similar (rather than opposing) dual discourses between *Mitakuye Oyasmin* and service-learning are established via ecocomposition, place-based writing, and subsequently (and circularly), narrative:

If you travel south of Chicago on a warm summer day on the Dan Ryan Expressway, over to the Calumet, then take Route 80 onto Interstate 65, an hour and a half later, along Rt. 231—just south of DeMotte, you come to Rensselaer, Indiana, amidst the flatlands and cornfields. It is one of several small towns in Jasper County. Even today, going there is like being thrown back in time.

As a “city kid,” I traveled this route with my parents and sister (and later, my brother) many weekends, with an ultimate arrival that always left me feeling bewildered by the contrast I beheld: swaying weeping willows, cedar trees, and

lightning bugs, rather than buses, taxis, and blinking neon signs during the week in Chicago. You could breathe here. There was a lot of space, and it was green. I was always instantly enveloped by cousins who threw a sweatshirt on me and wanted me to go places with them: fishing ponds, horse stables, water towers, abandoned barns.... The narrated, inquisitive explorations were endless with these older and more knowledgeable child cousins of mine, bent on making a “country girl” of this young Chicagoan.

Nights always proved to be the most interesting, intriguing, and mysterious. One of my earliest memories of my cousins’ initiations for me into young country womanhood was a long walk I was taken on down a gravel road, and through a forest, before cutting through a cornfield to a college campus (before I even knew what a “college” was. I had no idea it was a school, or I may not have so willingly followed during my much-needed break from the toil of kindergarten). Beneath a humid, boggy, pollen-smelling, dimly lit evening sky, I was taken to the old stone grotto. I stuck close to my older sister, yet knew I would be chastised by everyone for any inkling of fear.

I remember walking into the grotto and being in awe of the statues contained therein. There was a large white statue of Jesus in there. A small opening in the circular dome-shaped structure’s roof let in just enough quickly fading outside light to illuminate the statue in a comforting iridescent glow. I knew Jesus from my children’s Bible and I was really glad to see Him (Kyles). My cousins told me to be very quiet as we continued. We then viewed statues of Mary and angels that were just beautiful. I wondered not only where the statues

came from, but who built such a structure of round stones that housed them in such inspiring sacredness—this circular dome (see fig. 2 below).



Fig. 2. The Stone Grotto (Rensselaer Adventures).

As the starry sky began to overtake the last bit of nightfall, the dome suddenly grew very dark inside, and I couldn't see my cousins or Jesus anymore. I knew I was alone. I fearfully started feeling along the stone walls with my hands to try to find my way out. The small stones which made up the walls were cold. Although I couldn't see, I remember getting the distinct feeling that suddenly, someone was there with me, helping me find my way out. It took my breath away. As I emerged from the grotto, viewing my sister and cousins standing outside in the starlight, I was visibly shaken. I told them that someone else had been inside with me. I also remember feeling very sad at the same time, wanting to stay, yet knowing I should go. What was that? Or...*who* was that? One of my older cousins went back into the grotto and found no one there.

Remembering this situation today (I haven't been to the dome since), and seeking information about the grotto at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer,

I found it was originally built in 1889 from stone collected from what are now farm fields on the college grounds prior to the college being built (St. Joseph's College History). I wonder if perhaps like Scottish stonemasons of an ancient past, the builders may have left their subliminally imbedded marks, symbols, or identity (who they were) somewhere in the dome. I shall have to go back to the grotto someday, now later in life, once again due to my family instinctual trait of relentless curiosity where questions must absolutely be answered. But I know I cannot return there just yet...not until I know what I need to...full circle...for closure....

And so I continue my story from there. By the time I was fourteen, my immediate family left Chicago and joined extended family members living in rural Jasper County. I passed St. Joe's College nearly each morning of summer break during my high school years as I rode on an old bus out to Remington (just south of Rensselaer) to detassle corn to earn some extra money. We had to pass the campus of St. Joe's on Rt. 231 to get to the fields. I always looked out the bus window at the campus toward the circular stone dome, but then I was always immediately drawn to an old, large, red brick and stone building directly across the highway from it. The pull was overwhelming (which is still true today). Each morning, and then each evening on the return trip, I couldn't stop looking at it until it was out of sight. The building was set quite a way back off the road in the trees, although you could see the top of it from miles away. It looked very forlorn. I felt compassion, yet I was somewhat fearful of it.

About a year or so later when I got my driver's license, I convinced my best friend Diane that we should go look at this building because I didn't know what it was. So, one afternoon, off we went down the long, secluded driveway across the highway from St. Joseph's College, and this is what we found (see fig. 3 below):



Fig. 3. Photo Dated Feb. 2002 (St. Joseph's Indian Normal).

In a late fall afternoon, much as pictured in the photo, we explored the grounds. Although in the photo all the windows and doors on the first floor of the building are boarded up, when we were there, a couple of windows were not, so we climbed in somewhere on the north side. I was surprised to see there was a courtyard in the center of the building because it is not visible from the outside. I then crept carefully through the dilapidated hallway a little farther toward the back. I came to an open doorway of a small isolated room and looked inside. There was also a door (and three small windows) on the other side of the room that were boarded up to the outside on the back of the building just as shown in

the photo which follows (see fig. 4 below). From the time I peered into that room, I immediately knew that a young man had been there...three windows away from the back door...and that he had been left there to die. His spirit remained.



Fig. 4. Photo Dated Feb. 2002 (St. Joseph's Indian Normal).

This experience made it difficult to breathe, so I left the building to go looking for Diane. She had since been bored with her explored area of the building and headed back outside to check out an abandoned barn and stables at the rear of the large property. I joined her looking at old horse stalls and felt that somehow the young man I had encountered was in some way connected to horses. I never told Diane exactly what happened, and we left not long thereafter. I never forgot that experience.

Nearly thirty-five years later (around 2011), I went to visit some relatives in Rensselaer, as I often do, and I was approaching town from the south instead of

the north, which is my usual route. Thus, I had to pass St. Joe's, and the old building I had explored at sixteen. Even approaching from a distance, I could feel I was once again drawn to it. However, this time, it looked different. I decided to once again head down the long, foreboding driveway, and to my surprise, found the same building had been restored to a much newer looking state (see fig. 5). Although no one was around, I could see through the new windows that offices were now on the first floor, albeit the building was locked up. I walked to the back of the building, and again, was immediately struck (emotionally blindsided, in fact) by the feeling that someone had died in the exact same place where I had experienced the same feeling thirty-five years earlier, three windows from the door at the back, which is very odd for me as I tend to be pretty stoic, pragmatic, whatever you want to call it. For some reason, I felt an almost overwhelming need to walk a complete clockwise circle around the building, yet feared to do so. I started, yet stopped part of the way around, unsure of the circular direction in which I was going.



Fig. 5. Remodeled School (St. Joseph's Indian Normal).

I decided to leave and headed back up the long driveway toward the highway. As I did, off to the side, I saw this new highway marker (see fig. 6 below):

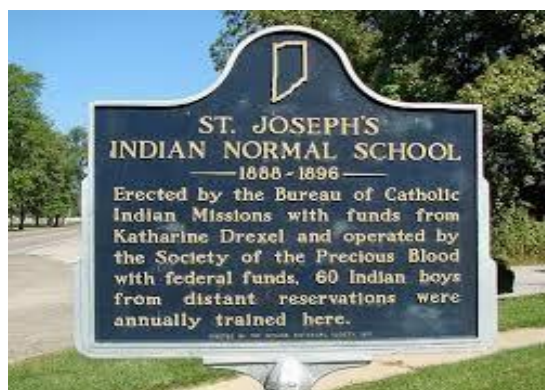


Fig. 6. Highway Marker (St. Joseph's Indian Normal).

When I got home about an hour later (I live in Crown Point, Indiana, to the north), I immediately headed for my computer to do some internet searching. While I had limited knowledge of something called "Indian Boarding Schools"

(mainly Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania), I had no idea this building had been one of them. I have not always had what might be considered a “formalized” education in Native American studies. However, from my father’s side of the family, I had lots of what might be called “informal” education. This was via stories and connected studies in the sense that they had been passed down from my elders and relatives. I perused the internet for some time, and this is what I found about this particular school of the boarding school era, as well as how it affected a people:

As the highway marker states, St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School was built in 1888 and operated for just eight years, until 1896. The school was the vision of Father Joseph Stephan, who had served in the Civil War, appointed by President Lincoln as an Army chaplain. Stephan also served for ten years as an Indian agent in the Dakota Territories of the Sioux, including the Dakota, the Nakota, and the Lakota. In 1884, he had been appointed as Director of the Bureau of Catholic Missions for the United States. Saint Joseph’s Indian Normal School in Rensselaer was modeled “as a sort of Catholic counterpart to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School” (Prucha 226). It was to be a noble experiment, and operated under the same premise of Colonel Richard Henry Pratt’s culturally genocidal philosophy of “Kill the Indian, Save the Man.” The school (one of many) was financed by a wealthy Philadelphia heiress, Katharine Drexel, daughter of Francis Anthony Drexel, partner to J.P. Morgan. Father Stephan, accompanied by Bishop Martin Marty, also from the Dakota Territories, took the heiress on a

tour of the Dakota territories just prior to the construction of the school to view the “pitiful conditions under which these Indians were forced to live” (Gerlach).

The subjugation and planned genocide of the Sioux in these territories, as well as the near extinction of the buffalo, their food source, had much to do with these pitiful conditions. While the Sioux first had contact with European settlers in the 1700s via the French fur-trading routes, the likely first contact in conflict was between the Lakota and U.S. soldiers in 1854 over a supposedly stolen cow, known as the Grattan Fight¹¹ (Beck 39). Over the next two decades, many bloody battles ensued such as the Fetterman Fight, leading to the Treaty of Fort Laramie, where many Lakota simply signed the treaty with an “X” or a suggested mark due to not yet possessing a written language or the ability to read English. “The “X” mark is a coerced sign of consent made under conditions that are not of one’s making” (Lyons, *X-Marks* 2-3). This treaty was followed by the Battle of the Little Bighorn (known as the Battle of the Greasy Grass to the Lakota) and other wars continuing on through 1890 amidst broken treaties and the forming of the Great Sioux Reservation.

The war against Indians had now entered a new phase. Conquering a continent and its aboriginal peoples had been a bloody business, and for a Christian people, not without moral discomfort. Now the war against savagism would be waged in a gentler fashion. The next Indian war would

¹¹ Also known as the Grattan Massacre—a hasty confrontation brought on by a young and imprudent West Point graduate, along with an inaccurate language interpreter.

be ideological and psychological, and it would be waged against children.

(Adams 27)

The new war against Native Americans in order to acquire land would take place by assimilating their children to white ways inside boarding schools on and off reservations, removing “ties to their heritage and culture, psychologically debilitating individuals and nations” (R. Crane Bizzaro, “Shooting Our Last Arrow” 62). Drexel (who was later canonized in the year 2000), did provide the funds needed to build St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School, and the U.S. Government further funded its operation on a per-student contracted basis. The school was “designed to train Catholic Native American boys to become farmers, blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, and role models back on their reservations” (Gerlach). St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School was built three years prior to the existence of St. Joseph’s College, which was built in 1891. Several million dollars were additionally donated by Katharine Drexel to found many boarding schools in the Dakota territories (Reyhner and Eder 85). Two sister schools to St. Joseph’s in Rensselaer were founded on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations, also funded by Drexel.

Children were rounded up by reservation police for transport to these schools. A small number, which included some later runaways, went to the Catholic contract school of St. Joseph’s Normal School in Rensselaer, Indiana, and there were reports that orphans were among the youngsters sent to Flandreau Boarding School in South Dakota. (Holt 236)

The term “orphan” is used loosely here. According to Sitting Bull (*Tatanka*

lyotake in Lakota), the Sioux had no orphans. “In the time of Tatanka lyotake, the Lakota people did not ignore children. Sometimes the whole village would care for them. Children were considered as ‘something sacred is growing,’ and they were provided with the best care possible” (LaPointe 40). This care was provided even in the absence of biological parents. The educational teaching of Sioux children was viewed as the responsibility of not only the family, but of the entire community.

From birth, children were considered a sacred gift. The whole tribe protected and preserved their safety and welfare. Children were given freedom to roam, play, and discover within the confines of the camp.

Everyone watched over them. As they grew, they learned through caring and loving treatment that they had value. (Littlemoon 4)

Red Bird (*Zitkala Ša*¹² in Lakota. Later, Gertrude Bonnin in English) recalled her life as a young girl: “When the spirit swells my breast I love to roam leisurely among the green hills; Or sometimes, sitting on the brink of the murmuring Missouri, I marvel at the great blue overhead” (101). These memories are quite the contrast to the confines of St. Joe’s courtyard. How difficult it must have been for students recruited by Father Stephan to St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School to go from a close community in the Dakota territories in what had historically been a vast atmosphere of land (see fig. 7) to the sometime

¹² Ša attended White’s Manual Labor Institute in Wabash, IN, just to the southeast of St. Joseph Indian Normal School in Rensselaer. She was the granddaughter of Sitting Bull.

confinement of the center courtyard of the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School (see fig. 8).



Fig. 7. Dakota Territory (Grabill Photo).



Fig. 8. *St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Courtyard* (Mendenhall).

Where the Sioux exhibited tenderness toward children and their education, and encouraged individualized inquisitiveness and exploration, the boarding schools used a tightly planned curriculum (ironically including U.S. history) in a confined space, in the English language. Further solitary confinement was often the punishment for speaking one's tribal language. In a report to Father Stephan in 1890, B. Florian Hahn, superintendent of the school

wrote, "Indications are that the discipline imposed on the Indian pupils was mild. In his report to the commissioner of Indian Affairs, James A. Cooper, an Indian Affairs special agent, used the words 'mild' and 'persuasive'" (Gerlach). Other methods of keeping students inside the school were also noted:

At times the doors and shutters were locked, and recreation was limited to the confines of the school's tiny interior courtyard. An easier method of barring escape occurred to Hahn when he decided to check the issuance of clothing, especially overcoats, more carefully. If the coats had to be turned in each night, the boys would not dare venture out so easily, especially in winter. During the second year two teachers were detailed to stay in the pupils' dormitory at nights to prevent escape. Running away was surely a daring undertaking so many miles away from home. One poor lad lost his life when he fell under the wheels of a train. At other times running home proved difficult for the Indian boys, and they returned to the school scared and hungry. (Gerlach)

Initially, the school had intended to educate only older male scholars in their later teens. Students were supposed to be under the age of 18, but many students were recruited older, sometimes up to age 25, to keep enrollment up for funding. The thought was older students were also less likely to run away, having gained more independence. However, Father Hahn at the school "was opposed to older pupils because he found them difficult to handle" (Gerlach). By 1893, many of the students were just six or seven years old because pupils were often added by missionaries to continue to keep enrollment up and the number of

runaways increased to just below 50% (Gerlach). This is an extremely sad testimony of the school, as for the Sioux from a young age it is “a cardinal principle to be brave, but to be a coward was unforgiveable” (Standing Bear, *My Indian 2*). The number of students wishing to escape speaks volumes of the school’s treatment of them. Furthermore, the Second Amendment “entitled settlers, as individuals and families, the right to combat Native Americans on their own” (Dunbar-Ortiz 53).

For years (with repeated appeals), I was denied any access to the old archival rolls and records of St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School in order to research its history. On several attempts, I was also denied access to any related records at the University of Notre Dame archives, as well as records kept at St. Augustine Church in Rensselaer. Most people living in Rensselaer, and the surrounding area, know little or nothing about the school. “Many of the names of those connected with the school have been lost” (Gerlach). I was finally given access to the St. Joseph’s College archives¹³ for the Indian Normal School in the fall of 2016.

The school is an emotionally difficult topic and experience to study. I cannot imagine having lived it. Similar practices of student mistreatment occurred at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, and Chief Spotted Tail (*Sinte Gleska* in Lakota) from the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation spoke with Col. Pratt on a visit to Carlisle, objecting to the practice of confining students to a

¹³ G.A. Smith identified local, cultural and historical phenomena as a guide at the onset of place-based writing.

“guard house” as a form of punishment for disobeying (Ostler 155). I have personally been to The Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, and viewed the guard house with its very thick, concrete, windowless walls. It is a building that had been used as a gunpowder storage vault in the Revolutionary War. “That small dark prison holds the blood and memory of those who could not or would not do what was demanded of them. DNA is in the cold stones of the walls and floor; bones and spirits were broken there” (S. Harjo). Luther Standing Bear, who had attended Carlisle, expressed these words:

How lonesome I felt for my father and mother! I stayed upstairs all by myself, thinking of the good times I might be having if only I were back home, where I could ride my ponies, go wherever I wanted to and do as I pleased, and, when it came night, could lie down and sleep well. Right then and there I learned no matter how humble your home is, it is your home. (*My People* 139)

To place Native American children at that time locked inside a building, much less a very small confine, was not only psychologically damaging, but spiritually genocidal. Further Testimony from Standing Bear indicates:

When I went East to Carlisle School, I thought I was going there to die....I could think of white people wanting little Lakota children for no other reason than to kill them, but I thought here is my chance to prove that I can die bravely. So I went East to show my father and my people that I was brave and willing to die for them. (sic; *Land of* 124)

He remembers the older boys singing brave songs in Lakota, so they could all meet their death in the way of the Lakota—fearlessly (Standing Bear, *Land of 217*). From my own drive there through Pennsylvania, I can only imagine the young boys looking up to the steep hilltops on either side of their long railway journey to Carlisle seeking a rescuer, much like Lakota warriors who would appear for battle raids on the horizon of the Great Plains.

Government food rations, clothing, and other necessities were often withheld from families if parents did not send their children to boarding schools. Some of the Hopi parents were sent to Alcatraz military prison in 1894 for refusing (“Hopi Prisoners on the Rock”). It was not until 1904 that parental consent was even required. Children were often simply kidnapped by church representatives and government agents and taken away (Barker 53-54). Abduction often occurred without warning.

Many children tried either successfully or unsuccessfully to escape.

Parents of runaways had mixed feelings about their children’s desertions. When runaways came home, they were almost always made welcome by families, happy to see their long-absent children. However, when students deserted school and their whereabouts were unknown, parents agonized until they learned their children were safe. (Child 89)

In addition to the psychological, emotional, and spiritual trauma of being taken from their homes, numerous sicknesses and diseases were very prevalent in boarding schools. “Disease organisms, most of them apparently from the Old World, took a heavy toll among Amerindians” (Crosby 140). Tuberculosis and

trachoma were virulent in Indian schools. Tuberculosis, a bacterial infection of the lungs was much higher in boarding schools than the general public, often due to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. Trachoma, a severe eye infection, was often disfiguring and could result in total blindness (Adams 132).

Teachers were not prepared to teach Indian children and began to doubt this system. For example, one teacher, Betty Brown wrote: "I entered the Service believing implicitly in the Bureau's wise and honorable claims. Disillusionment came slowly....I saw sick, hungry, and overworked children. And I did nothing. I was cowardly and acquiescent" (sic; Adams 93). Many teachers were new immigrants to the U.S. themselves looking for work and did not speak the English language well, yet they were still hired to teach it to the Native American students. In the case of St. Joe's, many had better German language skills, or still held a heavy German accent, which was later reflected in the speaking skills of the Native American students learning English from them (Gerlach).

The photos below show an organized effort to operate the school, but belie the sickness, intense physical labor, family separation anxiety, psychological, and other implicitly documented injustices for much of which the affects¹⁴ still likely continue today via post intergenerational trauma in descendants (see fig. 9 and fig. 10).

¹⁴ See Duran.



Fig. 9. Father Francis Schalk and Two of His Pupils (Gerlach).



Fig. 10. St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Photo, Yr. Unknown (Gerlach).

Native American students at boarding schools, often unknowingly caught in a whirlwind of cultural genocide, were also often unknowingly caught in the crosshairs of battles over religious and financial gains to be reaped between both Catholics and Protestants. Like Carlisle, residents of St. Joseph's were purposefully brought to the small town of Rensselaer via recruitment and other means, to be assimilated or normalized into the dominant culture, far from their homes, with the Rosebud Lakota Sioux and other Sioux tribes, such as those at Standing Rock in North and South Dakota. Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Menominee students also attended the school. Potawatomi and Miami tribes originally inhabited the geographic area surrounding the school, along with the Chippewa, at times, from approximately 1650-1800, due to trading with the French living in the marshes. Historically, some of these tribes were enemies with the Sioux. However, the Lakota also lived in the area prior to that time, from about 1450-1600¹⁵.

St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, unlike other boarding schools was referred to as a "Normal" school at the time rather than an assimilation school, albeit the goal was the same; to "normalize" Native Americans into colonial society. Speaking Native languages was forbidden, and students were punished for doing so. Cultural practices, narrative history and storytelling, and all other Native ceremonies and expressions of knowledge and spirituality were banned. In the case of the Lakota, the oral language was forbidden before it was even fully documented, which occurred when missionaries later documented it for

¹⁵ See The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents.

Biblical teachings (Omniglot). (Although, history-recording winter counts were painted on deerskin by the Lakota prior to U.S. settler contact.) As with the loss of any language, the heart of a people's identity is stricken, and a detrimental impact on their culture follows. Prior to immigrant settlement, many Native American tribes spoke each other's languages. "It was not uncommon for an individual to be multilingual. We see this today in Europe. One of the advantages of speaking more than one language is having more than one perspective on the world" (McKay 160).

Although the students at St. Joseph's Indian Normal School may not have fully known the inner workings of U.S. war, politics, or the makings of their school's eventual demise, much less the battles that took place between Catholic and Protestant boarding school factions and finances, the school closed in 1896. The building was then used as a mission house for priests and brothers, followed by being renamed "Drexel Hall" when it was listed as a men's dorm for students of St. Joseph's College until 1978, with years of abandonment and neglect thereafter. The building was restored in 2003 with grants and private funds and is considered of one the oldest surviving boarding schools east of the Mississippi (Cullen).

We will never know the full repercussions of the boarding school era. St. Joseph's Indian Normal School is just one example of Native American genocidal efforts carried out by the U.S. government. The practice of forced assimilation continued as recently as 1958 to 1967 when Native American children were then

taken from their homes and placed with white families as adopted (Condon 40). Tragically, some of these practices continue today for various reasons.

Within the walls of the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, I am sure there are many stories. I am sure there are also narratives just beyond the walls of St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, perhaps in a circular stone dome grotto across the road that looks much like a Native American sweat lodge. These narratives impact many lives for those who survived the experience and found a way out...and perhaps for those who did not...spirits still seeking peace.

Dichotomous Relations/Dual Discourses:

While St. Joe's Was Underway

"You don't have anything if you don't have the stories" (Silko and McMurty 2).

This is a related narrative about language and land.

Historically, many white settlers touted Father Joseph Stephan's benevolence to the Indians via St. Joseph's Indian Normal School. However, he also had been engaged in several other endeavors in Jasper County, as well as in South Dakota. For instance, prior to helping found the school in Jasper County, in the same county, Father Stephan "was surveying land for whites to get their titles in 1858" (Abing). In South Dakota, at one point, Father Stephan received permission from the Secretary of the Interior to put Sitting Bull on "display" at a church fair as long as Sitting Bull readily consented. Sitting Bull said he had other plans (Moses 26). Additionally, despite the declining enrollment, financial, and other problems at St. Joseph's Indian Normal School,

St. Joseph's was granted a moment of glory when the Bureau of Indian Affairs invited the school to be on display at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Gietl [the superintendent] took along thirty pupils with several staff members and from June 13 to 30 displayed to curious crowds how much "civilization" his pupils had achieved in contrast to their elders. (Gerlach)

Some elders related to students at St. Joseph's Indian School brought tepees to Chicago and camped outside the grounds of the Exposition. One such tepee, known as the Leonid Tepee, from the Rosebud Reservation appeared there, but was supposedly later destroyed in a fire. It is the only known tepee which also served as a "winter count," the narrative symbolized story of what occurred in a year of the Lakota (see fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Leonid Tepee (Brule Winter Count: Lakota/Dakota).

The Columbian Exposition¹⁶, or the Chicago World's Fair, where the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School students were put on display, was just one indication of the burgeoning growth of the city of Chicago at the end of the 1800s. The Columbian Exposition grounds were a part of the newly founded University of Chicago campus. Ironically, during this same period of time, John Dewey was in the process of founding his famed "laboratory school" at the University of Chicago, focused on experiential learning (Miller 401).

Following the Great Chicago Fire, and subsequent rebuilding, Chicago was growing with extreme speed. "[I]t was far easier for young men—or women—to rise to positions of influence in Chicago in the 1880s and 1890s than

¹⁶ Named in honor of Christopher Columbus' voyage to America 400 years earlier.

in New York, Philadelphia, or Boston” (Miller 189). Part of the reason for the speed and remarkably inspiring resurgence of the city from its ashes, was the plentiful building materials and other valuable resources gleaned from the concurrently rapid land development of nearby Jasper County, just to the south. What was once known as the Grand Kankakee Marsh, began to become known as “Chicago’s Food Pantry” (Wisniewski). Thus, in 1888, just as the St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School opened its doors at the southern end of Jasper County, ecological destruction of the surrounding territory in the name of progress there began.

The Grand Kankakee Marsh was the largest marsh in North America. The word *Kankakee* is a Miami derivative meaning “swampy country,” although other tribes have variants of the spelling. The marsh worked in tandem with Florida’s Everglades as an annual migratory bird route. This great “lake” of marshland flowed west from Indiana into Illinois, where it then narrowed and became the Kankakee River. The Kankakee Marsh “was a hunter’s paradise with abundant wildlife, especially waterfowl, which often blackened the skies” (G. Wilson 98). It was a natural nesting ground for bald eagles, which the Lakota believe are special messengers to the spirit world because they fly the closest to Heaven. The marsh area was so spongy and marshy, and the land was so unstable that, “There are many places near the shores where the weight of a man will shake the marshes for acres together” (G. Wilson 98). Initially, the draw to the marsh toward the turn of the century was for sport hunters. Hunting clubs sprung up seemingly overnight and many came from around the world to experience the

Grand Kankakee Marsh. Among the noted dignitaries were President Grover Cleveland and Civil War General Lew Wallace, author of *Ben Hur*, who supposedly wrote this work out on the marsh (Wisniewski). Within the hunt clubs, bars and gambling practices were prevalent, which could lead people to connections with the wealthy—reaping both influence and money. Individuals who profited from the marsh's natural resources became wealthy very quickly. The money of the newly rich further utilized the resources of the marsh by bringing in the railroad. Timber from the marsh was utilized for railroad ties and train stations. At first, "Railroads thus opened up the once-secluded frontier empire of 'fur, fowl, and fin' to the sportsmen of distant cities as well as of communities nearby" (sic; Meyer, *The Kankakee* 374).

Sadly, once the ultra-abundant wildlife began to be depleted by overhunting, the next related enterprise was to drain the marsh into a narrow river via dredging boats, so the territory could subsequently be converted into agricultural land with resulting land titles for white people.

Railroads, which were constructed across the swamp and marshes as early as the 'fifties and the 'sixties merely to connect the older and more settled and better developed Hoosier communities downstate with the coming metropolis of Chicago now actually figured in the Kankakee development along agricultural and recreations lines. (Meyer, *The Kankakee* 374)

Agriculture eventually overtook the hunting trade as wildlife diminished via exploitation. New railroads profited from the transport of the greatly abundant

crops into the city of Chicago from the rich, newly drained land, as well as lumber via felled trees¹⁷, and livestock that now grazed on grass growing on the lost marsh. Chicago grew rapidly, but it was also built on marshland, hence the name, *Chicago*, which is a Miami and Potawatomi word which translates to, “onion field” due to the marsh onions that grew in abundance there. “By the 1840s, before any railroad had yet reached Chicago, its merchants were doing a good business with the expanding farm communities of northern Illinois and Indiana. But the difficulty of moving agricultural produce across the landscape discouraged a wider trade and limited the city’s growth” (Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis* 57). Many resources from outside the city could not be readily attained due to a lack of reliable transportation. “Even when roads were in decent condition, the only vehicles that could use them were horse-drawn wagons, which had limited capacity and became uneconomical for moving agricultural produce over any great distance” (Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis* 59).

Indian tribes in North America had known of the Grand Kankakee Marsh. “The marsh had been a hiding place for many tribes” (Hodson). It was concurrently being destroyed right alongside the Native American population’s way of life via the boarding school era. “Chicago grew as a city on American Indian lands and with resources acquired from American Indian tribes both from and around Lake Michigan and from the prairies. American Indians had lived in the area for thousands of years and remained a presence throughout” (LaPier

¹⁷ Northern forests were also being cleared for lumber as Native Americans were driven from their land and into reservations.

and Beck 2). Below is a rendering of the original borders of the Grand Kankakee Marsh in Northwest Indiana, compared to the narrower river that now exists (see fig. 12 below). The dark brown area illustrates the original marsh borders. The thin blue line running through it shows the dredged marsh that became the Kankakee River. When the marsh was dredged, 20% of the North American migratory bird population ceased to exist (Wisniewski).



Fig. 12. Marsh Map (Wisniewski).

Dredging the marsh on the Indiana side, also caused many problems on the Illinois side of the river, with vast amounts of sand and other materials washed over from the increased velocity of the water flow. The largest lake in the state of Indiana at the time, Beaver Lake, shown above in the bottom left corner

of the old marsh, was also drained to make room for cattle. Beaver Lake, and another large lake, English Lake, further to the Northeast in the marsh, where the river is now wider, no longer exist due to dredging and land development. The natural landscape was forever changed by the so-called progress of the time. "Between 1776 and the present, the United States seized some 1.5 billion acres from North America's native peoples, an area 25 times the size of the United Kingdom" (Saunt). As a result, on both a human and ecological level, "the discovery of America was the occasion of the greatest outburst of reckless cruelty and greed known to history" (Conrad). Alfred H. Meyer, a geography professor at Valparaiso University, began drawing attention to the need for restoration of the Grand Kankakee Marsh as far back as the 1930s. Meyer stated, "if man individually and collectively is to enjoy the richest fruits of his labors, there must be the closest and most effective adjustment of his activities to environmental conditions; in other words, a harmonious integration of the forms of the human occupancy and the forms of the natural environment" ("Auto-planetablism" 160). Meyer's words, often unheeded, are now being recognized for their ecological wisdom in this generation.

And still I remember when I was very young, traveling from Chicago to my paternal grandma's house "out in the country," in Rensselaer, and hearing tales among all my relatives of someone called "Uncle Ben." The stories had something to do with a railroad. I found out later in life who he had been. "Mr. B.J. Gifford had much to do with draining the Kankakee marsh" (Ball qtd. in Kiracof 53). He founded the Gifford Railroad in Northwest Indiana. Family stories recall

that Uncle Ben used to take wealthy people out to English Lake to hunt, drink, and play poker. He learned to play poker as a soldier in the Civil War, serving under General Grant. Having been wounded at Vicksburg and sent home, he gathered a citizen's militia and continued to serve until the Confederate surrender. Uncle Ben ended up being quite a good gambler and would later only accept payment for a loss in either gold or land. His notorious gambling helped fund the railroad and accepting payment in this way kept area railroad rivals, such as Jay Gould, from seeking to undermine his efforts because he had no debt. Uncle Ben and Jay Gould had an earlier skirmish over a railroad Uncle Ben founded (one of many) in Illinois called the Havana, Rantoul, and Eastern. Gould wanted to control the railways and charge high freight rates in Illinois and saw Uncle Ben as a threat, as Uncle Ben wanted freight rates to be economical for farmers, so they could make a decent living. Gould looked into Uncle Ben's previous investors, bought them out, and acquired the Havana, Rantoul, and Eastern, which later came under Gould's ownership as Illinois Central (Kemp). As Uncle Ben later developed the Gifford Railroad in Indiana, oil was also discovered quite by accident, on land Uncle Ben had "acquired" (won playing poker) in Indiana, which helped further fund the railroad through Jasper County.

While on one hand, now fully knowing Uncle Ben's story (his father came to the U.S. of Scottish descent as an indentured servant and Ben grew up dirt-poor, as a farmer), I have come to admire his determined entrepreneurial spirit in eventually becoming a lawyer and railroad owner. On the other hand, I realize that although he did help open up an Indiana territory to commerce and

development, that came with a huge ecological price for the marsh, and a great (albeit by no means isolated) coinciding physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and genocidal price for Native American people. Many Native American tribes including the Lakota, Miami, Iroquois, Chippewa, and Pottawatomi utilized the marsh and its resources throughout various points in history. The stories are connected. “Ultimately, it is land—and a people’s relationship to land—that is at issue in indigenous sovereignty struggles” (sic; d’Errico 253). I cannot forget that, and I cannot forget the spirit of St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School that reminds me of the fact. Some of the boys brought to St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School in Rensselaer may have arrived via one of the Gifford Railway branches.

My same Grandma Lora Gifford, of Native American descent, who fed me berries in the woods when I was a child, married my Grandpa Gerald Gifford and they settled in Rensselaer. As a child, alongside stories of Uncle Ben (my grandpa’s uncle), I also heard stories of the Native American medicine man who came to the households of my Grandma Lora Gifford and my Great-Grandma, Marjorie George before I was born.

These narrative stories which are still told at family gatherings bring together two aspects of history for me—that of railroads, and that of marshes, encompassed within a simultaneous Native American worldview. Ironically, when I first traveled to Rosebud, I recognized some of the stories and practices, perhaps threads that carried through from the past to my family today, such as my father referring to elements of nature with a sense of their identity, or my

grandmother stressing the power of flat cedar. My family history is two stories of dichotomous connections to land and ecology.

It was in this place called Northwest Indiana, Jasper County, in the towns of DeMotte and Rensselaer, that my immediate family traveled from the city of Chicago on weekends when I was young. It was on this journey when I was four years old that my dad drove down Rt. 231 and we crossed the Kankakee River, flooded over again and, in his words, “seeking its own ground.” It was also on the same journey, further down Rt. 231 in Rensselaer, where I was always instantly enveloped by older and wiser child cousins who threw a sweatshirt on me and wanted me to go exploring places with them—fishing ponds, horse stables, water towers, abandoned barns...and to a circular stone dome across the highway from a particular building that I have been drawn to ever since. Indeed, I have not forgotten.

***Mitakuye Oyasin* Defined and Experienced**

“You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle. That is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round” (Black Elk 155).

This is the story of *Mitakuye Oyasin*. It moves in a circle. It is one part of Lakota Sioux culture, yet it expresses all of it. It is a worldview. It is also an action in motion, sometimes with a quality of spiritual presence all its own for those who know it at work.

Once I discovered in 2011, the abandoned building on Rt. 231 in Rensselaer that I explored as a teenager had been an Indian boarding school, I

presented a conference session at Indiana University of Pennsylvania's English Graduate Organization Conference in 2013 regarding its original curriculum, having obtained a copy of it from the administrative office of St. Joseph's College (Mendenhall, "Self-Plagiarism"). At that time, this was the only information I was allowed to have from them about the school. For the session, I filmed a very brief video of walking up the driveway to the school in the winter, to show what the school might have looked like to the Native American students arriving there at the end of the 1800s. In some of the original unedited video footage, back toward the abandoned stables at the rear of the property, deer suddenly appeared leaping, then running like horses¹⁸.

Later, in the fall 2014, I applied to lead a spring-break service-learning trip with students at Valparaiso University in Northwest Indiana, where I served as faculty. I was assigned to the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation with the Tree of Life Ministry relief agency in Mission, SD. Therefore, in the spring of 2015, I began preparing the twelve students who were going on the VU Rosebud trip for the context of where we would be working. I started researching the Sicangu band of Lakota Sioux, the tribe at Rosebud. Prior to our trip, I held several "pizza or chicken" meetings as I called them. I would bring either pizza or chicken and students would gather for an hour to learn a bit about Lakota culture. I showed video clips, told stories of Lakota history, provided copies of the book *Lakota Way* by Joseph Marshall III, and we discussed our curiosity about Lakota culture. I

¹⁸ This horse phenomenon became meaningful to me later. It is addressed in more detail later in this chapter and in Chapter Four.

share more, in greater and finer detail, about the pre-trip studies and activities I planned in the related service-learning section of this chapter. One of the themes that quickly emerged from the mini-curriculum I formed was the Lakota Sioux term, prayer, and worldview, *Mitakuye Oyasin*, or “All My Relations” expressing the interconnectedness of all things—living and elemental—that nothing lives in isolation (*Mitakuye Oyasin*). The symbol for *Mitakuye Oyasin* encompasses four quadrants of a circle (see fig. 13 below):



Fig. 13. *Mitakuye Oyasin* Symbol (*Mitakuye Oyasin*).

These four quadrants represent the four winds and the four directions: north, south, east and west. They also represent the four peoples of the earth: black, red, yellow, and white. There are also four chambers in the human heart, as well as the heart of mammals. The quadrants also express what the Lakota view as the most valued aspects of human character: wisdom, bravery, generosity, and fortitude, or in Lakota: *woksape*, *woohitika*, *wacantognaka*, and, *wowacintanka*. These are represented within the circle to express interconnectedness. “With that simple phrase we connect and align ourselves with all things on and of the Earth” (Marshall, *The Lakota Way* 227). All people, animals, and Earth elements are valued equally in Lakota culture and for

thousands of years this practice has been part of daily life. It reminds me much of the quote from my own grandmother, “The Earth will take care of you, as long as you take care of it” and of how my father states we are “living beneath ourselves” as human beings in not taking responsibility for the care of the Earth. This is indeed a circle, by practiced action. It is a reflection of nature, and therefore, intentional grand design.

In considering some of the circular meaning encompassed in the worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasmin*, I couldn’t help but think of the experiences I had previously at the circular stone dome when I was four years old, and the spirit of the young man I encountered at the old St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School in Rensselaer across the road when I was a teen. In doing some further research, I found some of the students who attended the school in the late 1800s, had indeed been brought there from the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation. Although I had not visited the outside of the restored St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School for a few years and had not been inside it since I was a teenager when it was abandoned, I decided to make the forty-minute drive south there alone the day before our group left for Rosebud on our spring break service-learning trip.

On an early March morning, I once again followed the long, lonely, driveway to the building. It was freezing cold, snowing, and very windy. Although previously whenever I had been at the building it was vacant, on this occasion there was a pickup truck outside the old school. As I walked to one side of the building looking around, a custodian poked his head out the front door and said, “It’s freezing out there! You can come on in if you want. Valerie and I are just

working in here.” Had it not been for the extreme cold, I do not know if I would have ventured inside considering the profoundly haunting feeling I generally get from the place. However, cold overcame reason. Plus, my sister’s name is Valerie, so I thought maybe this was a sign I should take him up on his offer. And I must admit, I was still curious. Upon entering the building, I felt a sense of purpose. As it turned out, at that time, Valerie was an instructor, and St. Joseph’s College was offering GED classes held on the first floor of the building. They had a new and brighter vision for this historic place. Although classes were not in session at the time I was there, Valerie was catching up on some paperwork. The custodian was just cleaning up and told me I could look around the first floor if I wanted. He said the upper floors were still in their original unrestored state due to a current lack of further funds, so I should not go up there, as it is not safe. I told him I was sort of “researching” and he told me “research away.”

I wondered if there were any remnants of Sioux history anywhere in the building, or perhaps fragments of memories of the Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Menominee who had also once attended the school. I headed to the first empty classroom with two things in mind: the term *Mitakuye Oyasin*, and the thought that our service-learning group, via our university’s first trip to Rosebud, would be going in a counterclockwise “full circle” in a sad sense—because many Native American students had come to this building over a century earlier from Rosebud along the same route. As I entered the classroom, cell phone camera in hand, on the dry erase board I found this drawing from one of the GED instructors, much

mirroring the symbol for *Mitakuye Oyasin*, the Lakota worldview (see fig. 14 below):

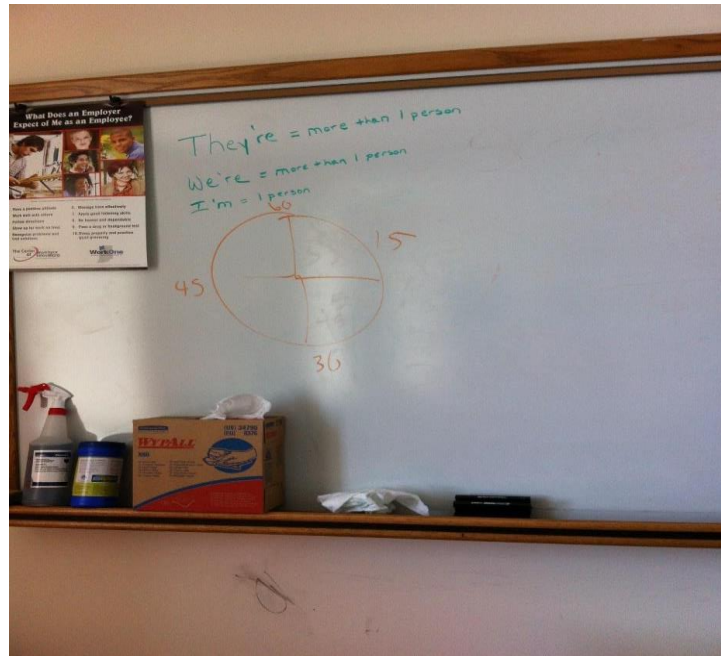


Fig. 14. *St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Classroom* (Mendenhall).

Leaving the room and continuing down the hall, there was an article about the building displayed on a window ledge (see fig. 15 below):



Fig. 15. *St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Article* (Mendenhall).

I continued to the area in the back of the building where decades ago I knew the spirit of someone who had been left there to die. I had the same instinct, but the isolated room I entered as a teenager now had a door on it that was locked, so I did not venture further.

I stopped in the ladies' room just before I decided to leave the building, a little bewildered by the things I was encountering. I stepped into the center stall. As I went to leave the stall, a small patch of sun suddenly came shining through the bathroom window and reflected light on the floor drain, catching my attention (see fig. 16 below):



Fig. 16. *St. Joseph's Indian Normal School Floor Drain* (Mendenhall).

I found the brand name on the drain the ultimate irony, all things considered—the honored title of “Sioux Chief” on a manufactured piece of metal tileage, in a place where Sioux students were once not allowed to speak their language. I then knew I was meant to go to Rosebud. I wondered if I might meet someone there considered a Sioux Chief or elder at Rosebud.

Our group left the next day. I felt as if many spirits were traveling along with us, although I did not tell the students. I felt an almost compass-like magnetic pull north as I drove us along Highway 29 into South Dakota. Since it was March, huge flocks of geese, cranes, and other migrating birds were in vast masses overhead. The sweeping formations were one of the most beautiful things I have seen in my lifetime. They somberly reminded me of the percentage of the migrating bird population that was lost with the draining of the Grand Kankakee Marsh at home, just to the north of the Indian Normal School, when it was in operation.

The trip to the Rosebud Sicangu Lakota Sioux Reservation was an amazing experience for all of us. We worked with Tree of Life Ministry, a relief agency sponsored by the Methodist Church. This agency had just hired Steve Tamayo, a Lakota cultural specialist and artist who taught us an amazing wealth of information about traditional Lakota culture. Tamayo's mother had attended a boarding school, taken screaming by force from her family by church and government agents when she was four years old. She made bricks at the school. She never made it back home before her parents died. On the reservation, we also met a spiritual elder, Duane Hollow Horn Bear, a Professor at Sinte Gleska University, grandson of the Lakota Sioux Chief Hollow Horn Bear of the Fetterman Fight and a descendant of the Battle of Little Big Horn. Duane Hollow Horn Bear also taught us much of Lakota culture, art, history, a bit of the Sicangu Lakota language, and stories.

Through Tree of Life, we worked with members of the tribal community doing construction and home repairs, working in a warehouse, distributing packaged food and hot meals in a welcome center, and helping run a thrift shop for community members to buy reasonably priced clothing. Despite the lack of material wealth for many living on the reservation, the people there taught us many profound lessons about community, about humility, and about strength. We often heard the proud phrase “We are still here.” Our VU group, comprised of students from three countries¹⁹, developed a deep respect for the profound bond between the Lakota people at Rosebud.

One of the things Tamayo and Duane Hollow Horn Bear talked about during our time at Tree of Life was the formation of Lakota Youth Camps that seek to restore to Lakota young people today the culture which was lost during the boarding school era. At the camps, young Lakota people experience traditional Lakota teachings and live in the traditional Lakota way, often in tepees. We helped construct a traditional tepee for one of the camps. We were very honored that Tamayo and Duane Hollow Horn Bear also invited us all to a sweat lodge ceremony. Within the performed ceremony, we repeatedly heard the term *Mitakuye Oyasin* (see fig. 17):

¹⁹ India, China, and the U.S. Our home frames of reference made for good cross-cultural discussion and learning.



Fig. 17. *Rosebud Sweat Lodge Ceremony* (Mendenhall).

The circular sweat lodge dome immediately made me think of the circular stone dome grotto on the St. Joseph's College campus back home in Indiana, where I had found myself alone (yet not so alone) at age four. Since the college did not exist when the grotto was built, and since stones were gathered from the fields around the Indian Normal School as land was cleared by school residents, it may very well have been built by some of the students who attended there. Curious as I am, I will have to look into that possibility further. It may have been one of their spirits that found me inside at age four and lead me out. Perhaps it is part of his story. Perhaps it is a further story that will move in a circle.

No one I spoke with at Rosebud on our service-learning trip had heard of St. Joseph's Indian Normal School in Rensselaer. I did not mention the spirit I encountered there to anyone. Most people on the reservation, like Tamayo, had stories of other boarding school experiences from on-reservation boarding

schools, area boarding schools, far-away boarding schools, and/or Carlisle.

When our student group eventually returned to Valparaiso University in Indiana after our fourteen-hour trip, it was late afternoon. All the students caught their rides home or settled back into their dorms, so I decided to drive back to the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School.

By the time I arrived, it was evening, and no one was around. I drove up the long driveway and got out of my vehicle. I started thinking of the cultural significance of some of the practices we learned of at Rosebud, so I decided to walk around the back of the building and look at it from the east, facing the setting sun in the west, like the doorway of a sweat lodge. As I faced the back of the building from the east to west, I experienced the presence of the same spirit I knew as a teen. The presence was overwhelming. I felt very strongly that I was being watched. I stood very still. Once more, breathing became difficult. Again, I had the urge to walk a clockwise circle around the building, but did not. I decided to leave, and as I neared the front door, I knew that other spirits were also present. I was unsure of what to do, but knew I needed to find out more about the school's history. As I began to drive away, I thought about the men and boys who had been students there and were punished for speaking their language. Their languages and stories were about their identity, their culture, and about their land.

Thus, my narrated experience considered, I began some further research into St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, Lakota culture, and *Mitakuye Oyasin*, as everything seemed to be moving in circles. I researched everything I could get

my hands on about the school. I visited the St. Joseph's College library multiple times studying area history, how the school was founded, and much of what you read earlier in this chapter. Along with any other patrons, I was barred from the downstairs archives that I was told existed for the school. In the library, I found some of my family history recorded in books, which reiterated the narrative family stories I grew up hearing about a railroad and a medicine man (*History of Jasper County*). This documentation kind of surprised me, because since my childhood, I wasn't entirely sure if the family stories I grew up hearing were accurate! I simultaneously began a more in-depth study of the worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin* and its meaning. I must admit, I am still today daunted by this task. Tamayo, Marshall, and others with whom I have become friends at Rosebud assure me that overall, it is a simple philosophy. It is indeed, yet at the same time, I believe it is particularly difficult for those of non-Native American descent to fully understand. Additionally, the impact of the potential loss of one phrase, *Mitakuye Oyasin*, in the Lakota language, has huge environmental repercussions. Theoretically, those who are unfamiliar with it are unknowingly already living that loss environmentally, as well as within their related/connected humanity, in their very personhood; there is no vital, spiritual, personal, connection to the environment. What I first thought of as a worldview in regard to ecological and environmental issues of balance, I have also gradually come to understand as something much grander and deeper. It encompasses everything.

I returned to the Rosebud Lakota Reservation for the second time in the fall of 2015 with two friends to try to understand more of Lakota culture and

Mitakuye Oyasin, via some book research on-site at the Sinte Gleska University tribal college library, and in a cultural center and some bookstores in Rapid City, SD. I also visited some sites of cultural significance nearby, including Bear Butte, which is sacred to the Lakota. Just before I left for that trip, Dr. Ronald Janke, Professor of Geography and Native American Studies at Valparaiso University gave me a walking stick to hike the butte. I had been auditing one of his evening classes in Native American studies at VU, and Riley Vancelette (one of the students from the service-learning trip) and I gave a presentation of our trip to Rosebud in his class upon our return. When he presented me with the walking stick, he mentioned that he knew I was meant to be at Rosebud. The walking stick came from a Lakota elder years earlier when Janke traveled out west with a group of students and hiked Bear Butte. The Lakota man coming down off the mountain gave it to Janke to pass along. At first sight of the walking stick, I was struck by its familiar appearance. I recalled my father's oldest brother, Darold, who passed away in 2009, had one just like it. I have it at my house. They are virtual twins.

I did indeed hike Bear Butte that fall with a student friend who went on our original service-learning trip, Brad Brown. Once I got to the top, I had the feeling I would be able to accomplish what I needed to, whatever that might end up being. Brad and I left prayer ties there, little bundles to send prayers to the spirit world. I took the walking stick along with me, which came in handy on the really steep trip down. From there, I put the walking stick in the back of my SUV. About a week later, on the reservation, Tamayo saw it in the back of my vehicle and asked

where I got it. I told him Janke gave it to me via a Lakota elder who came down off of Bear Butte years earlier. The walking stick remained in the back of my SUV for the next two years.

Just before our trip back to Indiana that fall, in researching, I came across some information about a building at Rosebud called the old St. Francis Boarding School. St. Francis, also a Catholic government contract boarding school, was located in the town of St. Francis on the reservation. It was founded by Katharine Drexel and was a sister school to St. Joseph's Indian Normal School in Rensselaer, as stated in my introduction. It was named for Katharine Drexel's father, Francis, a wealthy financier from Philadelphia. Since I had to return to Indiana to teach, I ran out of time to visit this school, but vowed to return in the summer of 2016 if I could find the funds. In the late fall of 2015, I applied for, and was granted, a Valparaiso University Faculty Development Grant to continue my research. In the summer of 2016, I did indeed head back to Rosebud once again.

***Mitakuye Oyasin* in the Narrative Lakota Language**

"[W]hen we teach a language to a student, we should develop in that student another heart and another mind" (White Hat Sr., Reading and Writing 7).

Spending a couple of months on the Rosebud Reservation at the tribal university, Sinte Gleska, allowed me to get just the tiniest window into the Lakota way of life. I used my grant funds to register for a Lakota 101 language class taught by tribal members/professors Tina Spotted Calf-Martinez and Sam High Crane with the sole purpose of getting a better grasp of the concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin* embedded in the context of the language in a culturally authentic setting.

I was immediately struck by the very strong sense of community at the university, as well as in the surrounding area. “In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation, and so long as the hoop was unbroken, the people flourished” (Black Elk 155). In the Lakota Sioux language, *Mitakuye Oyasin* translates as “All my relatives.” It also means we are all connected—all living things. The Lakota frequently repeat this phrase as a prayer and during ritual ceremonies “to remind them that they are related to all that exists, including all people and animals, air, water, rock, and everything green” (Black Elk and Lyon 4). In Lakota culture, everything on Earth has meaning and purpose, intended by the Creator, therefore all things are to be revered and respected. One simple term encompasses much. *Mitakuye Oyasin*, more importantly, is prayer put into active practice through a philosophy of caring for the Earth as a relative.

“Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down in a circle” (Black Elk 155). The Lakota language is circular in spoken practice in a sense, the words interacting with the Earth. High Crane, my Lakota language professor, told me the Lakota language came from sounds in nature: the birds, prairie dogs, water, wind, and other Earth forces. Many of the sounds of words used to describe things come from the sounds they make. For sample, *mni*, the word for water, comes from the sound water makes as it flows over objects, such as

rocks. The Lakota see Mother Earth as a living, breathing being. For example, Wind Cave in the Black Hills²⁰, a sacred site for the Lakota, is known as *Washun Wiconiya*, or “the Breathing Hole of Mother Earth” (LaDuke 96). The Lakota belief is that the Earth is our mother, *Inya*, and the sky, or heavens, is our grandfather, *Tunkasila*, or the Creator. The Creator is also referred to as *Wakan Tanka*, or the Great Mystery.

In the records of St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School in Rensselaer, priests had lamented: “Most of the indian boys brought to St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School had little or no religion. They had a vague idea of a supernatural being whom they called the Great Spirit” (sic; George). In the same passage, it was also noted the boys were superstitious and believed in ghosts. While esteemed as an inferior belief system by the priests and teachers at the Normal School, this concept is not at all unusual in Sioux culture and spirituality: “Life is not separate from death. It only looks that way” (Zona 95). Strangely enough, it does not seem to have crossed the minds of those in charge of the school that this belief in the spirit world in some ways mirrors the Christian belief of life after death.

Central to the Lakota understanding of the cosmos is the concept of *Wakan Tanka* (the great mystery, or the great unknowable). Christian Lakota would use this term in reference to God, but in traditional spirituality, it is the cumulative life force of the universe—all that is incomprehensible to mere humans. Other aspects of the universe (thunder, lightning, earth, rock, water, and so forth) are described in terms

²⁰ Now sadly a popular commercialized tourist attraction.

of personified forces. These forces, however, cannot be reduced to the simplistic idea of god of thunder, or god of wind, as has sometimes been described. Personifying these forces is simply a way to speak of them easily, for metaphor is more readily understood than abstraction. These forces were observed to have an energy that is long lasting. Energy can move between different realms, and human individuals can tap into these energy forces and channel them: that is the function of much art and all ceremony. Terms of human relationship are often used to name these forces (*Tunkasila*, the grandfathers, for example) or to indicate the deep kinship among humans, animals, and the forces of nature (which in the Western tradition are divided between animate and inanimate, a meaningless distinction in Lakota thought), Color, numerical, and directional symbolism are important as well, as will become evident in the discussion of individual drawings. Events and objects often occur in multiples of four, in honor of the four directions (*italics added*). (Berlo 8)

The Lakota metaphoric personification of Earth's forces reminds me much of my dad's talking about the Kankakee River as if it was a person "seeking its own ground." The idea of viewing the river as a relative (or fellow person or relative) typifies *Mitakuye Oyasin*.

The Lakota's religion and philosophical ideas were an inseparable part of him – as much as the blood that vitalized his being. His very thoughts were drawn from the land he called native, and the winds that blew over its soil, the rivers that ran through it, and the mountain peaks that drew his

gaze upward all colored his consciousness with their subtle influence. And no more can the Indian be robbed of his intangible color than he can be robbed of the color of his eyes or skin, for Nature is more powerful than man. Thus the inanity and cruelty of trying to force the separation of man and his religion and, whatever else it does, it brings disarrangement and discomfort and reflects upon the mental and spiritual status of the enforcer. Every man has a right to his Great Mystery, but no man ever explained Mystery. And what man can? (sic; Standing Bear, *Land of 212-13*)

Forced assimilation via the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, along with the forced practice of a certain religion would have been confusing to the students brought there, especially in a small, square, confined space. All the Earth is their panoramic "cathedral," expanding in a circle up into the heavens and beyond. Everything created is sacred, with sacred sites holding particular cultural significance. The Lakota will tell you they have spirituality, which is separate from religion, although the two can certainly co-exist. Most of the people at Rosebud attend a Christian church. Yet, at times, organized religion is not always conducive to the compatible belief systems that the Lakota understand. In other words, the concept of a spirit world and spirituality are not always welcomed in organized Christian circles, much as they were considered "superstitious" at St. Joe's.

Today the word *sacred* is often used in describing our rituals and ceremonies. I have problems with this term. The church tried to compare

and relate our [sacred] sites to their seven sacraments. If you do that and you're not careful, you'll make our spirituality into a religion. Sacred to me, is perfection. No evil, nothing bad or negative, just perfection. One interpretation I learned in the church is that you have to be in a state of grace to talk to God, to worship God. The idea of worship is really stressed in the church. You bow or kneel to a higher power, and in that way it becomes a mystery. I think this is a way of controlling people. The whole thing has become something mysterious, beyond the reach of ordinary people. (White Hat, *Life's Journey-Zuya* 75-76)

One has to question the forced belief in an organized religion when fear is used as motivation. Furthermore, when the forced practice of it nullifies culture, identity, and related practice, the outcome can be devastating:

Of greater impact, than the loss of control and shame of trauma, is when the perpetrators get you to betray your own sense of moral correctness. Self-betrayal causes a person's spirit to become broken. The boarding school experiences attempted to get the children to betray their culture, their sense of morality and their relationship with the Creator, with nature, and everything they understood to be human. The children in boarding schools were led to betray themselves. That's why so many came out broken. (Shorin qtd. in Littlemoon ix)

This initial passage in the foreword of the narrative book *They Called Me Uncivilized* written by Walter Littlemoon, a boarding school survivor, was added by Jayme Shorin, L.I.C.S.W., Associate Clinical Director, Victims of Violence

Program, Cambridge Hospital, Harvard Medical School. She is an expert in psychological trauma and helped Littlemoon process his traumatic boarding school experiences. Shorin also points out “the Lakota word ‘*sica*’ (meaning ‘bad’) expresses the feeling of out of balance” (qtd. in Littlemoon xii). In Lakota culture, for a person to be at peace, he or she must possess a sense of balance with all living things. A piece of artwork hanging on the wall of the Tree of Life Ministry on the Rosebud Reservation when I was there, well-represented how the Lakota see themselves (and humans) as part of the circle of living beings on the earth (see fig. 18 below):



Fig. 18. *Ghost Dance Chief (Eagle Horse)*.

The Lakota (and other Native American tribes) see themselves placed within the circle of all creation, on the same plane as an eagle, a buffalo, a waterbird, and the rest of creation. Each species is defined as its own nation, or

“Oyate.” For example, members of the horse community are known as the “Horse Nation” (White Hat, *Life’s Journey-Zuya* 78). There is no need for a formal cathedral where one species has authority over another. The Lakota have no word for authority, since all on Earth are equally important. There is no word for environmentalism in the Lakota language, it is just something you do because you are part of the environment just like all other living things. Even Lakota sundancers dance in order to be on an equal level (or plane) with an ant as part of creation (Abel-Russell). In so dancing, with an awareness to one’s place within the whole of all creation, the Sundance symbolizes a sacrifice for, and responsibility to, all others as part of creation. The only true thing a person can fully sacrifice is their self, via the physical body.

This is not in every way vastly different than the Biblical Christian teachings which were being forced upon the students at St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School. In fact, the same four quadrant circle of *Mitakuye Oyasin* shows up in the ancient Celtic cross. “While the Celtic cross is certainly a Christian symbol, it has its roots in ancient pagan beliefs at the same time” (Nicholas). It dates back to Pangaea theory, the hypothesis that all the continents were at one time connected. The Lakota people very much value Pangaeian theory and see everyone on the earth as a long-lost relative from when the continents were collectively one. This same concept shows up in other parts of the world. The stone circle at Calanais, on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland, is formed in a rough circle, with an even-armed cross within it. It is over 5,000 years old and predates England’s Stonehenge (“Calanais Standing Stones”). The ancient site “is

believed to be a sun symbol to the creators of the stone circle, which became a sacred shape to the Celts. St. Patrick is said to have taken this ancient sun symbol and extended one of the lengths to form a melding of the Christian Cross and the sun symbol, thus the birth of the Celtic Cross” (Nicholas). The Celtic Cross has various cross-cultural interpretations.

The even-armed cross within a circle has been ascribed many meanings by many groups and cultures. One such meaning is that of the stages of the day: morning, noon, evening, midnight. Another possibility includes the meeting places of the divine energy, of self, nature, wisdom and divinity. Of course, obvious relations such as east, north, south and west; or earth, air, water and fire can also be derived from the shape. Even the Native Americans used this as a symbol for their Medicine Wheel. The sun wheel has also been called Odin’s Cross, a symbol in Norse Mythology.

(Nicholas)

The medicine wheel is thought to be over 10,000 years old. One cannot help but notice the similarity between the symbols for *Mitakuye Oyasmin*, the Celtic crosses illustrated, and Pangaea theory (see fig. 19).

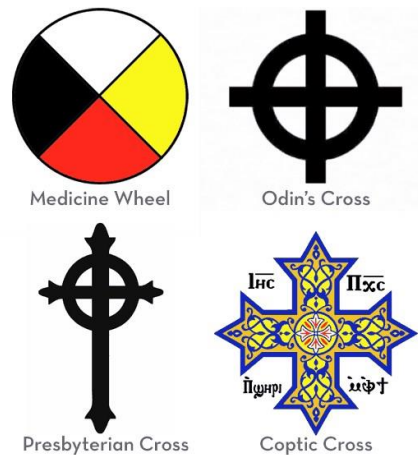


Fig. 19. Celtic Crosses (Nicholas).

This is a reflection of Pangaeian theory—that all humankind is connected, and all creation is connected, just as the continents were all connected. Apparently, the Celts (who also practiced sweat lodges²¹), like the Native Americans, did not forget these connections, whereas others did. Of further connected irony, in the Highlands of Scotland, as well as in Indian country, there are communities “that bear the marks of past policies of removal and relocation, protest the continued exploitation and export of their resources, resent decisions being made for them by a distant government, and struggle to maintain their community, culture, language, and identity amid the pressures of the modern world” (Calloway 258-59). Indigenous peoples of Africa, Australia, and lands around the world have undergone practices of genocide, and the common thread of their forced colonization was, and is, the possession of land. With this sense of ownership, comes the exploitation of land.

²¹ For more information, see Beres.
Also see “Irish Sweat Houses: Celtic and Druid Archives.”

From a Christian or colonizer perspective in the acquisition of Indigenous lands in North America, “Manifest Destiny” was a term lauded as the right of colonizing forces to claim territories as their own. It was first coined in a speech to the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts targeted against the British, highlighting the right to land of those settling in North America as, “our best and strongest title—one so clear, so pre-eminent, and so indisputable, that if Great Britain had all our titles in addition to her own, they would weigh nothing against it. The right of our manifest destiny!” (Pratt 275) The acquisition of land and the forced assimilation of Native American children to colonial ways became the result of Manifest Destiny’s mantra.

With Christian conversion and education the advertised goal of St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School, and the beliefs of the Sioux, Chippewa, Menominee, and Potawatomi in place upon the arrival of settlers, New Testament parallels would have been easy to draw to perhaps establish some common ground. Jesus often taught in God’s creation: out in the wilderness, in fishing boats, on mountaintops, near the sea—more often than in the temple, valuing our connection to the environment. More than 50% of Jesus’ teachings occurred outdoors (Denton). The Native American people, better than most anyone, understand this connection. Yet, for non-Native people, something greater than reciprocal learning and/or crucial connections was at stake: land. Because land was money. In the case of the Lakota, land could not be bought, it was their mother. The land is ingrained in them, and their language, and *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Because the language is about the land. Earth takes care of

people, as people take care of her. “The indigenous peoples of this continent tried to teach us the value of land, but unfortunately, we could not understand them, blinded as we were by our dream of manifest destiny” (T. Berry 18).

Everyone and everything in all roles is equally valued for contributions to society, even elements of the earth, like soil, minerals, marsh...land. To therefore see land as part of the circle of all things, with human-like characteristics, is not unusual.

Biblically, in Leviticus 25: 3-7, the Lord tells Moses to tell the people of Israel to let the land rest from producing a harvest on the seventh year (*New Revised Standard Bible*). It needs rest, just like a person. It also speaks to us, just like a person, by what it does, and by how it reacts. This effect was illustrated when 20% of the migratory bird population of the Grand Kankakee Marsh disappeared when it was dredged. Most North American tribal nations have similar beliefs. The Lakota are not the only tribe to hold this connective worldview. An Okanagan woman, Jeannette C. Armstrong quotes, “All my elders say that it is land that holds all knowledge of life and death and is a constant teacher. It is said in Okanagan that the land constantly speaks. It is constantly communicating. Not to learn its language is to die” (176). The Lakota say, “The earth is our mother.” She is our educator. Land speaks. It shows up in text, it shows up in languages, it shows up in nature, and it shows up in people. Language and land are inseparably connected.

My Narrative of Learning Lakota as *Mitakuye Oyasin*

“A postoccidental intellectual [is] able to think at the intersection of the colonial languages of scholarship and the myriad of languages subalternized and banned from cultures of scholarship through five hundred years of colonialism” (Mignolo 140).

The people called Sioux “are comprised of three major language groupings—Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota—who formed an alliance known as the *Oceti Sakowin* (Seven Council Fires). The Lakota further diversified into seven more bands” (Treuer 10). The band on the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation is known as the Sicangu, or “Burnt Thigh Nation²²” due to a historic prairie fire which left many Sicangu Lakota people scarred by burns as they sought to escape. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe is often abbreviated as “RST.” There are fewer than 2,000 fluent first-language Lakota speakers left. Most speakers are over 65 years old, so there is a great need for Lakota revitalization (“Lakota Language Consortium”). The dialect of the Lakota language I learned at Sinte Gleska University is Sicangu Lakota. There are six other dialects, one for each of the Lakota bands.

Professor Spotted Calf-Martinez taught the first half of the Lakota 101 class I attended. Lakota is her first language. She approached teaching the class first from a language structure point of view, diagramming sentences. In some ways, Lakota resembles Spanish, my second language, in syntax. We also

²² The other Lakota bands are known as the Hunkpapa, Itazipo, Sihasapa, Oglala, Mniconjou, and Oohenunpa.

practiced the Lakota pronunciation of words. The class atmosphere was very relaxed, even related to the class hours. “Indian time” is a term used for things happening at the time they should (the Lakota often say “as it should be”), meaning when the time is right. Therefore, exacting time frames are seldom expected or held. People would stop in class to say hello, share stories, sell *timpsila* (prairie turnips) and beadwork, or share a smudge ceremony²³ with sage. (The man who did the smudge ceremony later became my subsequent Professor High Crane). A smudge ceremony is performed to drive away bad spirits and negativity. Everything in the class was done in a family-type atmosphere, what the Lakota call *tiospaye*, with lots of collaboration—the members of the community that stopped in were an integral part of the class.

As I started learning and speaking the language, I found I had to picture what I was saying like a story in my mind. I told Spotted Calf-Martinez this and she said, “Yes! You are learning the Lakota way!” She said this habit is part of “being” Lakota. Her statement made me think of all the centuries of winter counts where pictures told a narrative prior to Lakota being a written language. As I continued learning and speaking with proper pronunciation, I remember remarking to Spotted Calf-Martinez and High Crane that the intonation and rhythm of speaking Lakota seemed much like a heartbeat. This is another connection to *Mitakuye Oyasin* in a sense, because the heartbeat sound in the language is a connection to the heartbeat in people and the heartbeat in all of

²³ A smudge ceremony is comprised of herbs burned in an abalone shell to release the smoke and powers of the substance used—mostly sage, cedar, and sweetgrass. The smoke is then fanned over the person being blessed, and often, throughout the room or location.

nature. Just like there is a breathing rhythm for Wind Cave in Lakota culture as the breathing hole of Mother Earth (much like a whale), this heartbeat rhythm, which is also expressed in drums, is the same rhythm expressed in nature. It is the rhythm of all living things. In essence, the rhythm is a reflection of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, and “of what it means to be a human being” (Lambe 308).

In the case of the term *Mitakuye Oyasin* in the Lakota language, existence as a human being is not only a Lakota worldview—it is a human worldview. It includes all people, cultures, and societies. Seminal scholars in composition and education echo similarly related thoughts: “Language, then, is social; insofar as it is social, it is also ideological, carrying various worldviews; and insofar as it is social and ideological, it is also historical” (Villanueva 85-86). Furthermore, “[t]hought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them” (Vygotsky 307). Therefore, our reality is shaped by our thoughts put to words through a reciprocal exchange with the world around us. Lakota Language Professor Albert White Hat Sr. relayed, “In addition to emotions and feelings, language reflects environment. It expresses philosophy. It affirms spirituality. It supports music, dances, good times, sad times. All those feelings are held within it. It is the life-force of the culture” (*Reading and Writing* 6). The Lakota language must be lived to be understood. Spotted Calf-Martinez and High Crane, who were wonderful teachers, integrated me into the sense of community at Sinte Gleska University and on the reservation. They had to get to know me, and establish a relationship with me, as a fellow human being, in order to teach me the language, and cause me to truly begin to understand its meaning.

The resources of a language, together with the varieties of action facilitated by their use, acquire meaning and force from the sociocultural contexts in which they are imbedded, and therefore, as every linguist knows, the discourse of any speech community exhibits a fundamental character—a genius, a spirit, an underlying personality—that is very much its own. (sic; Basso 103)

In a sense, I had to “experience” the Lakota language in order to speak it. I had to put the language into practice and put that practice into my actions. In getting to know me better through the class, Spotted Calf-Martinez told me she knew I was meant to be at Rosebud. I shared some of my experiences at St. Joe’s with her and she was able to explain these occurrences in the context of Lakota culture on a spiritual level, which made them much easier for me to comprehend. I told Spotted Calf-Martinez that I do not go looking for spirits. She said that some people have more of a connection with the spirit world.

As High Crane later taught part of the class, he told us many stories about his life and of Lakota stories in history. Some were very happy, some were very funny, and some were sad, about his boarding school days or days in Vietnam. At the same time, the stories he told always moved in a circle. The end eventually came back to the beginning. One story in particular stood out. When High Crane was very young, he was sent outdoors for some amount of time with a pony with a rope tied around its neck. He was told to hold on to the rope, and the pony would teach him what he needed to know about life. He spent a lot of time with this pony. Later in life, when he came back from Vietnam, after what

had been an earlier time with traumatic experiences in an area boarding school, High Crane came back to the horse to reconnect with the foundation of his early cultural beliefs, and to re-establish a peaceful sense of balance. He now works with an equine therapy group at Sinte Gleska University. The Lakota are known as a “Horse Nation” and share a very special relationship with the horse, or *Sunka Wakan*, the Great Dog, or Giant Dog. The Lakota believe the horse brings its healing powers to them through this relationship connection²⁴. This may explain why I saw deer leaping, and then running like horses, at St. Joe’s—due to a need for healing²⁵.

It is amazing how many things go full circle in Lakota: language, culture, and stories. Even language revitalization is beginning to take the Lakota language full circle. Albert White Hat, Sr., who passed away in 2013, was undoubtedly the premiere authority on the Lakota language. In *Reading and Writing the Lakota Language*, White Hat expressed:

Teaching the Lakota language frees me from the concepts and uses of my language that were imposed on my people. Our language was invaded, [by immigrating settlers] just as our lands were. We need to bring back our language with the strength of its spiritual values and the power of its moral force, just as we fight to reclaim the Black Hills and other sacred sites within our domain. Our language is *wakan*. It is our bloodline. (11)

²⁴ See Braveheart and Cortez.

²⁵ Utilization of this healing connection is further addressed in the curriculum for this dissertation course plan in Chapter Four (and Appendices), as well as in Chapter Five.

As far as me seeking to learn the Lakota language at Sinte Gleska University, apparently, I am not alone:

Today, more and more teachers, scholars, students, artists, church workers, tourists, and federal employees are trying to meet this challenge of learning Lakota. More and more people are recognizing that it is impractical, imprudent, and immoral to assume that the Indian must do all of the accommodating, all of the learning in contacts between Indians and others. People are now recognizing the need to respect the Lakota culture in their contacts with the Lakota peoples. (Karol vii)

Although this may be a fairly recent trend, “In 1912, Edward Sapir made the point in general terms, saying that Indian vocabularies provided valuable insight into native conceptions of the natural world and much that was held to be significant within it” (Basso 43). Concurrently, with new global knowledge and technological knowledge in general, Lakota elders and medicine men and women are still very much consulted as to how to “bestow names on newly introduced technologies and institutions that have encroached on the traditional way of life” (Powers 5). For example, the internet is called *Tate* or “the wind” in Lakota because wireless internet appears from nowhere. Lakota language revitalization efforts are also underway in reservation high schools, as well as with younger Lakota children, via a program themed in a user-friendly Berenstain Bears theme which is spearheaded by Ben Black Bear of Rosebud.

Yet, colonized civilization still has much to learn. Lakota is just one of many endangered languages “finely tuned to their local ecologies and amassing

a rich fund of knowledge about them. Much of this ecological knowledge has been carried forward in Native American languages. Many aspects of traditional knowledge are still unknown to western science” (Evans 20). I discuss more of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge in relation to the assignments outlined in my course plan and syllabus in Chapter Four and the Appendices of this dissertation.

As Above/So Below: Another Version of *Mitakuye Oyasin*

“I try to get the student to know that connection between what’s here and what’s above,” he says, referring to the stars. “What we do down here impacts above, and what happens up there impacts down here. I want them to know that” (Douville, “Lakota Ethnocosmology”).



Fig. 20. As Above/So Below.

The above symbol for as above/so below is also part of the Lakota worldview (see fig. 20). It is integrally connected to *Mitakuye Oyasin*. It connects the stars and heavens to Earth. The bottom half of the symbol represents the tepee, with its circular bottom touching Earth, just as those inside dwell against the Earth. At the point where the tepee top touches the inverted triangle, this represents the top of a tepee’s lodge poles expanding in a heavenly triangle,

where Earth begins to touch the stars and heavens. Therefore, what you do on Earth, will also be in Heaven. Again, this philosophy is not so very different than a Biblical philosophy. The bottom of the symbol represents the temporary, here on Earth. The top of the symbol represents the eternal, because the stars and heavens go on forever. I like to call the center, the point where temperance and infinity meet. The Lakota call it “the twist or wrap” or *Kapemni*. It represents a warp, or vortex, into the spirit world. *Kapemni* follows the spiral of the Milky Way. Therefore, the symbol (as rendered in my drawing below) of as above/so below is a representation of the afterlife (see fig. 21).



Fig. 21. *As Above/So Below, Illustrated* (Mendenhall).

Along with the Lakota being known as a horse culture, and the Sicangu Lakota, or Brule, also known as the Burnt Thigh Nation, they are further known as the Star People. The Lakota believe when you die, your spirit ascends, and

you become a star. This explains why they say their ancestors are stars in the heavens. The stars make their way to the Milky Way galaxy where they gather in the spiral to make their spiritual journey to Heaven. They will eventually fall back down to Earth to be reborn. The Lakota believe spirits are reincarnated. One such occurrence of rebirth, illustrated on many winter counts, is the Leonid Meteor Shower of 1833. (This is illustrated as a spiral symbol of stars on the Leonid Meteor Tepee that was encamped at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in figure 11 of this dissertation.) Spiritual renewal is another dimension of as above/so below, and reinforces, from another vantage point—that all things are related and connected—*Mitakuye Oyasin*. It transcends Heaven and Earth. As above/so below appears often in Lakota art as illustrated in the mural below from the town of Mission, SD on the Rosebud Reservation (see fig. 22).



Fig. 22. *Rosebud Mural* (Mendenhall).

Although as above/so below is a symbol within itself, it also represents the same circular worldview as *Mitakuye Oyasin*, even encompassing the cosmos. This circular exchange is also true of the Earth and the brightest star we see: the

sun. As a circular shape, the sun is sacred to the Lakota, as it brings life through the gift of growing things. The sun, or *Wi* in Lakota, is a portion of the embodiment of *Wakan Tanka*, or the Great Mystery.

Mitakuye Oyasin and as above/so below are both about relatives and connections. They are also about balance, a fundamental part of Lakota culture. Part of that balance is reciprocation. With the worldviews of *Mitakuye Oyasin* and as above/so below so interwoven, and so much the life force of Lakota culture, European and other settlers' ideas of a land-owning worldview would, of course, not have historically made sense to the Lakota (and most other tribes for that matter). For the most part, they are diametrically opposed, contrasting discourses. Below is an image from a treaty between the U.S. Government and Native American people (see fig. 23 below).

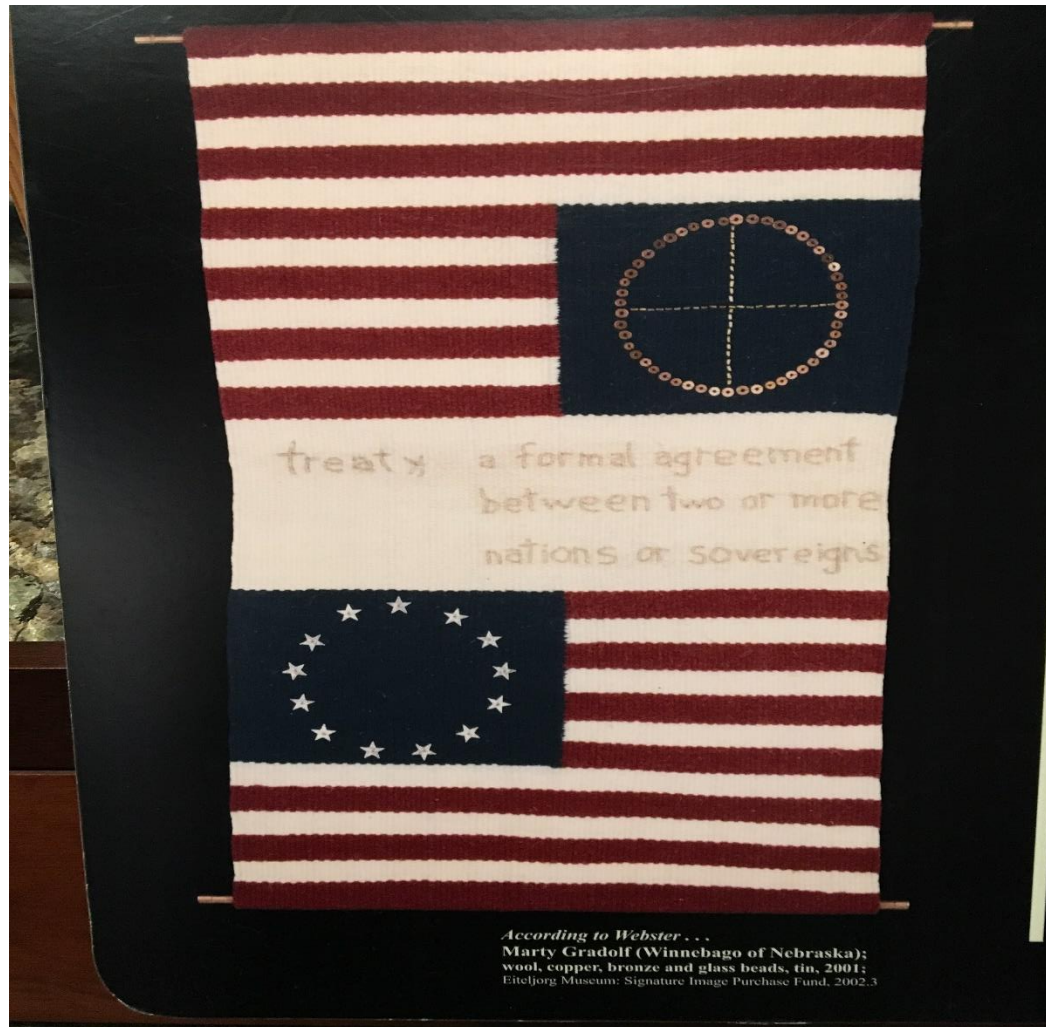


Fig. 23. Treaty Flags (Gradolf).

To the Native American people, this image could have potentially represented a mutual understanding of *Mitakuye Oyasin* and as above/so below, however, the images are not evenly balanced and they do not intersect. The *Mitakuye Oyasin* quadrant circle on the top half of the image is not directly mirrored by the thirteen-starred circle on the bottom of the image, with the thirteen stars an intentional design of land ownership and “civilized” colonial division expressed via the U.S. Government. These opposing ideologies made such documents nothing more than warrants of injustice against the Native

American people. Where one thirteen-starred circle conquered, the other quadrant circle became the focus of cultural genocide via the acquisition of land and the concurrent banishment of Native languages. Some of the largest numbers of victims of genocide were children of the boarding school era, such as those at St. Joseph's Indian Normal School. Most all boarding schools had an arched doorway, gate, or window over their entrances (see fig. 24 below).



Fig. 24. (Half Circle Window).

To those who sought to civilize the Indian population, this arch was viewed as nobly offering a new, hopeful, assimilated horizon to the students brought to the schools. To the Native American young people, it simply represented a broken circle, something many did not survive. The boarding school era was a battle fought by children, a battle of melded innocence and incredible strength. It was, perhaps, the bravest war ever fought²⁶.

²⁶ Perhaps if their unified spirits could speak today, they would tell us of their battle for the love of this land: "How we fought for our country is written in blood" (Duwamish qtd. in Zona 96).

As Within/So Without: Land and Survival

“The center of the universe is everywhere” (Black Elk).

Originally, the Lakota had an entirely different view of the world than those new to North America.

It was a view that gave us a sense of belonging and connection to all things. To the Lakota the earth is sacred and mysterious. All life comes from it. Each part has its own special reason for being, its own power that is considered sacred. Every person, every animal, every blade of grass has a spirit that is positive and can be of help to others. Our ancestors knew too, that even the sun, the moon, and all the stars were made the same way, by a great and mysterious power—one that created it and keeps all things going. They realized this power provided everything they needed, and they were grateful to belong to the brotherhood of life here on earth. Our ancestors depended on each other to share what food they found in order to survive. It wasn't a land of great plenty, it was a land of enough. Because they traveled frequently over the countryside, hunting for meat, gathering the foods that grew naturally, they had few possessions. (Littlemoon 3)

Historically, prior to European contact, the Lakota sought to own less than could be carried by a horse. This lifestyle was prudent, for the tribe was often on the move, following migrating buffalo herds, and foraging where seasonal plants and harvests of wild foods were plentiful. They were thankful to the Creator for all they had. Survival depended upon our “relatives,” the connected life forces of

the Earth. Greed was not a mindset, it was contrary to survival. Land and other resources were not to be exploited.

The Lakota are by no means the only tribe to view all living substances as having a spirit, or an essence of “being” with metaphoric human characteristics. Many rock formations are sacred sites to Indigenous people. “Eagle Rock,” or “Home of the White Wolf” is a revered sacred site on the Keewenaw Peninsula to the Ojibwe of Michigan. “Underneath the rock, in a world below, is Miskwaabik Aabinoojiins, or the Copper Child” (LaDuke 93). This is the same view which has been in existence for thousands of years, and it is the exact same view held by the Sioux water protectors which gathered at the Sacred Stone Dakota Access Pipeline resistance camp in North Dakota in the winter of 2016-17. The protectors sought to preserve our water because water is life. Water ensures the existence of everything. It is part of the circle. This concept is, for some reason, often difficult for non-Native people to understand. On a very elemental level, in academic circles of composition, we might even seek understanding of it as an analogy to a deep level of natural, organic, elemental collaboration with all beings. Within *Mitakuye Oyasin*, we, as humans, are just part of the circle of all creation. We interact with the Earth and Heavens, and everything in them interacts with us. This multi-faceted exchange is our story of existence and survival, worldwide.

With universities globally seeking diversity and inclusion, we need to remember our collective role as human beings. We are all related. We are all

connected. Historically, anciently, are we not all Indigenous²⁷? In the U.S., there is not one university in existence that is not built on what was once Indian land. In retrospection of our past injustice, it is important to recognize that learning from Indigenous populations now is necessary for survival. Douville shares:

Lakota world view prepared the people to live a well-balanced life and this balanced lifestyle was reflected in how the land was cared for, the land was in pristine order when the *wasicun*²⁸ acquired it. Today, the land and the environment is nearing the tolerance point because it is overworked, depleted and in a great need to be revitalized. This is being realized by the *wasicun* and they are looking for alternatives to save the land and the environment. They are finally realizing that their alternatives rest on the foundations of what the Lakota and other indigenous believed in and how they viewed the thought and philosophy process that brought harmony to the world order. (sic; *Thought and Philosophy* 37)

We, as people, require an active connection with the earth. We are meant to care for the Earth as it cares for us. If people do not collaboratively examine how we perceive our planet and all of creation on and within it, and seek to treat all things with respect, ultimately, it will not just affect the Lakota, it will not just affect the Sioux, it will affect all of us, everywhere. As we treat the land, so the land will treat us—as within/so without. This concept is another, horizontal aspect of *Mitakuye Oyasin* (see fig. 25 below). It is echoed by Chief Seattle's "What we

²⁷ See D. Jacobs (Four Arrows).

²⁸ This Lakota word typically refers to non-Indian people, although it has numerous other meanings.

do to the earth, we do to ourselves.” At the same time, it is important to remember humans (and their discourse) are not necessary for Earth’s existence, while Earth is necessary for human existence. While Dobrin and Weisser note the earth’s biosphere and the human semiosphere of discourse are “mutually dependent upon each other,” I disagree that discourse shapes earth, for ultimately, we are at the mercy of Mother Nature (“Breaking Ground” 577). With that fact, comes a healthy amount of respect in assuring her care.

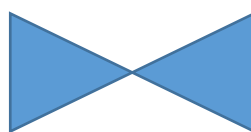


Fig. 25. As Within/So Without.

The vital connection between humans and land is explained later in this chapter as it relates to service-learning.

Back at Rosebud with the St. Joseph’s Connection

“I do not believe the Great Spirit Chief gave one kind of men the right to tell another kind of men what they must do” (Chief Joseph).

I did make my way over to the town of St. Francis within the Rosebud Reservation in the summer of 2016. This location is where there had been a sister school to St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School called St. Francis Indian School. Although the school has since burned down (spirits were reported to appear in the flames), and a new one built, the old chapel, which has been relocated, is still there. (The chapel itself had originally been part of the community at Parmalee.) Although I was not allowed to take photos inside the

chapel, there was a picture of its benefactor, Katharine Drexel inside (see fig. 26 below). I was allowed to take pictures of the outside of the building.



Fig. 26. *Chapel at St. Francis, SD (Mendenhall).*

When I entered the chapel at St. Francis, I cannot explain why, but I had the same feeling I experienced that spirits were present when I entered St. Joseph's Indian Normal School in Rensselaer, just before I made my first trip to Rosebud. I felt a peaceful sense of purpose; I came to the right place.

A few days later, I spoke with Douville at Sinte Gleska University regarding the experiences I was having at St. Joseph's Indian Normal School back home. I told him that within a book I had just purchased, *Education for Extinction* by David Wallace Adams, I astonishingly saw a picture of five boys who reminded me of my earlier experience near the front door of St. Joseph's Indian Normal School months before. Douville looked at the photo and remarked, "Those are the grandsons of Spotted Tail." Spotted Tail translates into *Sinte Gleska*, the namesake of the university where we were seated. Indeed, I think I came to the

right place. The five boys in the photo had gone to Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, which made me wonder about possible connections between Carlisle and St. Joe's. I continue to research these connections.

Back Home Again in Indiana

"After all the great religions have been preached and expounded, man is still confronted by the Great Mystery" (Standing Bear, "AZ Quotes").

When I returned from the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation at the end of July of 2016 following my Lakota language classes, I went back to the St. Joseph's College library in Rensselaer to inquire yet again about access to the Indian school archives. No luck. However, I happened to also stop again at St. Augustine Church in Rensselaer, and an elderly gardener, working outside, who just so happened to know my Uncle Wayne before he passed away, allowed me partial access to some related church records located in a safe there that I was previously not allowed to see.

Just before I headed to Pennsylvania to do some writing and meet with my dissertation chair, unsure of exactly what to do regarding the college archive records for St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, I went to the school on the morning I began my drive over to Pennsylvania. I took 4 flat cedar fronds from my yard and four stalks of ceremonial sage I had brought back from South Dakota. Since these plants and the number 4 are sacred to the Lakota, I thought perhaps they would be good to take with me. I did not feel I should walk the circle around the building yet, but stood about twenty feet or so from the back door and let the

wind carry the four cedar fronds from my hands to the ground. I stood about twenty feet from the front door and let the wind do the same with the sage. I drove away. Two weeks later, in Pennsylvania, I received an e-mail granting me partial access by appointment to the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School archives, along with some visual archive samples of records. I had been trying to get access to the records since 2011.

I set up an appointment to spend a day researching the archives when I returned in September. It was necessary for that research day to be two weeks after I returned from Pennsylvania because I had to start teaching back at Purdue Northwest and I had already committed to helping on my first weekend home as a volunteer with the *Aukiki* (another tribal name for Kankakee) River Festival, raising funds for marsh restoration efforts. Continuing to work with marsh restoration efforts is an integral part of understanding the connection between its renewal, *Mitakuye Oyasin*, and reversing the past for restorative justice in regard to both land and people.

The evening before I went to view and research the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School archival records for the first time, I met with Janke, now one of my dissertation readers. I told Janke the entire story of my experiences with the St. Joseph's Indian Normal School since age four in the circular stone grotto dome. "You know, it's odd," he told me, "at the beginning of summer break, I received an e-mail from the Potawatomi Tribal Historical Preservation Officer, Jason Wesaw, offering assistance from the tribe if I should need it. I do not currently have need of their assistance, so maybe the e-mail was meant for you." He

printed me a copy. Janke had received the e-mail on the day I had left for the Rosebud Reservation a few months earlier. Janke said, "I'll bet you \$100 the name 'Wesaw' shows up in the archival records you see at St. Joseph's College." The next day it did: Three students by the last name of Wesaw were listed. I contacted Jason Wesaw regarding these names. Another surname, Warren, also showed up on the rolls—the same surname of a Potawatomi man who had visited one of Janke's classes I audited. Janke will see if he is a relation to the Warren at the school, who was also Potawatomi. Janke told me at an earlier time that perhaps a tobacco ceremony at the school might be necessary.

Although I did not go down the driveway toward the school on the day I was granted access to the archives, as I drove past it, set back in the trees, I was reminded again, "It's about the language because the language is about the land."

***Mitakuye Oyasin* and Ecological Service-Learning:**

Dual Similar Discourses: Establishing our Sense of Place

"The Earth and I are of one mind" (Chief Joseph).

Decades after my dome grotto experience, I volunteered for the second year at the late August 2016 *Aukiki* River Festival to raise awareness of the necessity for marsh restoration. John and Mary Hodson, who live along the river, founded the Kankakee Valley Historical Society and spearhead efforts to bring back some of the original, natural landscape. The Hodsons know of my family connection to the Gifford Railroad and the dredging of the marsh at the turn of

the century, along with the story of the medicine man who made his visits to the other half of the family.

I have been meeting with the Hodsons and formulating ways for my future students to get involved in interacting with this site, such as replanting native grasses in the re-expanding wetlands. The Hodsons and I are also discussing planting a medicinal garden, with a correspondingly appropriate sister garden at Rosebud. Wildlife in the marsh area is slowly showing signs of an increase. The students often record sighting birds and animals in their writings, especially since I teach them of the area's ecological history prior to our visit. Some of our work has been featured in the Northwest Indiana *Post-Tribune/Chicago Tribune* newspaper (Manes). (See fig. 27.)



Fig. 27. *John Hodson and My Students (Mendenhall).*

A related podcast feature was published on-line with the *Northwest Indiana Times* (Butler). Related writings, and other narrative research writing assignments for this dissertation course plan related to service-learning are explained in detail in Chapter Four and the corresponding Appendices. Through our activities, we are raising awareness of this unique ecological wonder.

The Grand Kankakee Marsh was home to the Potawatomi tribe, albeit the Lakota Sioux, Chippewa, and Menominee tribes that were once at St. Joseph's Indian Normal School occupied the territory at one point or another in history, either seasonally, in migration, or in time of conflict. Many entities, including the University of Notre Dame have done archeological digs along the Kankakee River in Kouts, Indiana, at an old trading campsite there called Collier Lodge²⁹ often unearthing artifacts from Indigenous tribes, including the Lakota, which are up to 11,000 years old. Hence, working with marsh restoration here, and applying the mindset of *Mitakuye Oyasmin* to ways in which students and I can serve in restoration efforts is a natural fit and brings history full circle. Applying a Native American worldview to our work helps establish a vital connection between people and the environment.

Traditional indigenous scholars, and living indigenous philosophies, come in small doses to the western academic world. Such ideas, whether about pharmaceutical herbs, emotional healing ceremony, or communal ways of being, have been shared thus far only in small circles. These circles have

²⁹ See Lavalley.
Also see Schurr.

begun to expand, as Gregory Cajete tells us, since our students have taken up the task of drawing together, for example, western and indigenous science. Circles of knowledge sharing among indigenous scholars however, have generally not been accessible to the academe, much less the general population. And perhaps the time has come to change this, and make some efforts to share those things that individual indigenous communities would like to share with others. (Norton-Smith xii)

These sentiments reiterate those mentioned by Douville. To the respectful extent which Indigenous communities are willing to share, the rest of us must come to know and value their knowledge and ways of life. Hopefully, this dissertation course plan is some small element of the encouragement of that learning, through the valued input of Indigenous scholars who are ecologically more knowledgeable. A decolonizing approach to composition is important because, “In the next century, the intellectual must be willing to take more risks by choosing exile from confining institutional, theoretical, and discursive formations” (Kritzman 1124 qtd. in Cushman, “The Public”).

Breaking out of what has been intellectual conformity is now a matter of Earth’s survival. In fact, reversing history, and seeking to restore the traditional Indigenous beliefs of how to care for our planet begins a circular backtrend in restorative justice culturally and ecologically. This reversal has the potential to begin to correct past wrongs initiated by non-Native American settlers. “When we first arrived on the shores of this continent, we had a unique opportunity to adjust ourselves, and the entire course of Western civilization, to a more integral

presence to this continent” (T. Berry 18). Instead of doing that, much of colonial America looked to the past philosophically upon entering a new land, rather than focusing on the future.

[W]e followed the advice of the Enlightenment philosophers, who urged the control of nature: Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who saw human labor as the only way to give value to land; Rene Descartes (1596-1650) and John Locke (1632-1704), who promoted the separation of the conscious self from the world of matter. In 1776, when we proclaimed our Declaration of Independence, we took the advice of Adam Smith’s (1723-1790) *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, a book of enormous influence in the world of economics from then until now. Our political independence provided an ideal context for economic dominance over the natural world. As heirs to the biblical tradition, we believed that the planet belonged to us. We never understood that this continent had its own laws that needed to be obeyed and its own revelatory experience that needed to be understood. We have only recently considered the great community of life here. We still do not feel that we should obey the primordial laws governing this continent, that we should revere every living creature—from the lowliest insect to the great eagle in the sky. We fail to recognize our obligation to bow before the majesty of the mountains and rivers, the forests, the grasslands, the deserts, the coastlands. (sic; T. Berry 18)

The worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasín* is naturally and organically eco-restorative, we just have to recognize that the dominant society should have

heeded the ways of Native American people. Hence, now we face an even greater need to further re-foster it among all people due to the current state of our environment, and recognize *Mitakuye Oyasin*, as a worldview, should have been valued by immigrating peoples from the first steps on North American soil. *Way Quah Gishig* (Chief Snow Cloud, or John Rogers in English), a young Chippewa boy, lamented of his boarding school days, “I must learn about the birds and the rocks and the trees from books instead of daily interaction with them. This is what the white man says I must do—and I have no choice but to obey” (sic; qtd. in Meier 182). Service-learning and *Mitakuye Oyasin* are not new concepts—they are ancient concepts. In Lakota culture, as well as many Native American cultures, they are just something you do.

The use of place-based narrative to advocate for Earth’s care is a natural step that also produces authentic learning. “Indeed, most of our knowledge about human knowledge-getting and reality-constructing is drawn from studies of how people come to know the natural or physical world rather than the human or symbolic world” (Bruner 4). Even John Dewey, in “The Experiential Theory of Knowledge”, highlights that through hands-on learning, experiences from without end up within a learner as knowledge (79). Dewey’s text in 1910—what was still the U.S. boarding school era—was no breakthrough for Native American people, whose knowledge construction and relational reality has always been connected to a sense of place.³⁰ In fact, if the Lakota had a written language at that time, the

³⁰ See Basso.

concept would already have been recorded in text. Perhaps unknown to Dewey, he was reflecting a latent worldview of as within/so without.

Dewey wrote “experience [outside the school] has its geographical aspect, its artistic and its literary, its scientific and its historical sides. All studies arise from aspects of one earth and one life lived upon it” (sic; *The School* 106). In the writing of this dissertation, I use some of my own place-based narrative(s) as a way to acquire, and then express, knowledge. While I do use some hometown authors via texts and local film, I also use my own exploration of Jasper County history and archival records as resources. My students can do the same, establishing more authenticity in their subject matter via lived experience.

Growing out of text-based cultural studies and ethnographic research practices, some composition classrooms take on issues of public concern by asking students to write about and understand places where they live.

A rise in interest in “place-based” writing is occurring, with more work being published in ecocomposition and sustainability. (Mathieu 4)

A sense of place via personal, place-based writing via ecocomposition and ecological restoration, shapes our interpretation of the world. “Place plays an indelible role in the way we perceive and come to understand the world around us. Whether at home or at school, sitting in a quiet coffee shop, or on a busy street corner, our lives are shaped by the places we inhabit and the communities therein” (Esposito 70). Just as my life is shaped by the city of Chicago and Jasper County, I continue to be shaped (and educated) by the place of the Rosebud Reservation. Place is part of who we are and who we are not.

“[A]ll education is environmental education. By what is included or excluded, students are taught they are part of or apart from the natural world” (Orr 12).

Place-based writing does not just exist in the present and in the present generation. Just as oral history and the Lakota language speaks volumes about land and ecological practice, place-based writing narratives endure on paper, as well as within people and families as part of their stories.

Place-based language arts might also be called community-oriented schooling, place-conscious education, bioregional education, sense-of-place education, and ecoliteracy. While my emphasis is primarily on the ecological end of the spectrum, place-based education involves all aspects of a particular locale, including its stories of people past and present. (Lundahl 44)

One could argue that with the explosion of technological devices over the past few decades, we are continuing to lose the richness of our stories as people due to our disconnection from our natural outdoor environment and our interactive relationship with it. I am concerned for the loss of narrative stories told over generations: who we are—based on where we came from, where we are, and where we are going. Daniel Wildcat addresses this issue in “Understanding the Crisis in American Education”:

You see and hear things by being in a forest, on a river, or at an ocean coastline; you gain real experiential knowledge that you cannot see by looking at the beings that live in those environments under a microscope

or in a laboratory experiment. You experience places and learn, if attentive about processes and relationships in those places. (36)

By losing our sense of place, we are not only losing our sense of environmental and ecological importance, we are losing our sense of self.

American Indians have a long history of rejecting abstract theologies and metaphysical systems in place of experiential systems properly called indigenous—indigenous in the sense that people historically and culturally connected to places can and do draw on power located in those places.

Stated simply, *indigenous* means “to be of a place.” (Wildcat, “Understanding the Crisis” 31)

While our natural world is in a state of crucial collapse via one ecological disaster after another due to climate change and our own human irreverence for the interrelated elements of earth, today’s scientists often believe more technology, not less, is the answer to our problems. The thought is if we develop more equipment (which requires even more earth resources) we will be in better ecological shape, not worse. Yet, technology (and its profits) too often keep us unaware of the environment which sustains us. We should seek to investigate what is taking place in our environment with a connected responsibility to it as an interconnected natural network of “all our relations.” Unfortunately, much of the time, we are escaping from our environment into a world exclusively based on digital, technological, and industrialized machinery. “Western science has no moral basis and is entirely incapable of resolving human problems except by the device of making humans act more and more like machines” (Deloria qtd. in

Wildcat “Indigenizing Education” 14). We are ever-changing technology trapped—in our very own new—yet old, “machine in the garden” (Marx 9). As Earth heats up, we are creating our own private hell.

Reestablishing our sense of place in the world via the theme of *Mitakuye Oyasin* allows us to begin a reflective discussion of what colonial America missed in their quest to assimilate the Native inhabitants of this land. Wildcat suggests, “There is much work to be done and need for serious dialogue in comparing what is described as the Western metaphysics of space, time and energy to the American Indian metaphysics of place and power. A true dialogue is long overdue” (“Indigenizing Education” 9). I agree, and that dialogue is called simply seeking understanding of what the Lakota population has known all along.

It is not only students who suffer from their disconnection from place. Professors and researchers also suffer from a sense of displacement. Derek Owens laments the placelessness of academic discourse filled with articles, monographs, and papers as “disembodied entities detached from any specific locale. How might it affect our reading of such texts if we could see photographs of the scholars' homes or videotapes of their neighborhoods, or if we had insight into their feelings about where they lived?” (36) Owens then goes on to narrate in detail the location from where he is writing, the territory and its history. He follows this personal insight with where his students are writing from, their territories and histories, establishing for both, a sense of place. It is these places, not just educational institutions, which shape our writing and our sense of self.

Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school. (Sobel)

Thus, the school can benefit as well from the locational appeal of an ecologically-enhanced environmentally-based pedagogy and curriculum, which may prove a draw for college-seeking high school seniors and their families.

“Place-based writing is grounded in reflection, observation, and personal histories. In this way, place-based writing is similar to environmental literature; it requires a balance between narrative and landscape—the story and the space share the spotlight” (E. Jacobs 50). In what I view as a therapeutic exercise in self-awareness and being “fully alive” in the world, “place-based writing affords students an opportunity to write meaningfully about themselves, grounded in a place they know. Place-based writing is versatile and can be addictive—taking just a week or two within a semester of different projects—is transformative, if positioned as the theme for the entire course” (E. Jacobs 50). Imagine what

impact such a course can have in one individual over a lifetime. Humanities classrooms go beyond reading and writing. Humanities help bridge the gap between students and places. Biologist Stephen Jay Gould states we cannot advocate for the natural world without “forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well—for we will not fight to save what we do not love” (9).

A love and respect for the relationship between all living things is the hallmark of *Mitakuye Oyasin*. It is the love of this land and planet. When the U.S. Government seeks to separate Native American people from land, and their relationship with it, the utilization of writing is at the core. This process takes place through a myriad of broken written treaties and documents. At the same time, there is a disregard for the value of oral history via place-based narrative and stories.

[T]he duplicitous interrelationships between writing, violence, and colonization developed during the nineteenth-century—not only in the boarding schools but at the signings of hundreds of treaties, most of which were dishonored by the whites—would set into motion a persistent distrust of the written word in English, one that resonates in homes and schools and courts of law still today. If our respect for the Word remains resolute, our faith in the written word is compromised at best. (Lyons, “Rhetorical Sovereignty” 449)

The absence of faith in the written word is still quite palpable, and expressed, at Rosebud today. Faith and trust given tends to stem from one’s

follow-through with spoken words, and demonstrated behavior in one's actions, rather than one's written word. And yet, from my perspective, I have never experienced a greater, more intense, sense of place and community anywhere. "Rhetorical sovereignty is an attempt to revive not our past, but our possibilities. Rhetorical sovereignty is the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse" (Lyons, "Rhetorical Sovereignty" 449-50, emphasis in original). This is why I am working with Marla Bull Bear, Tamayo, Marshall, and others at Rosebud to seek the best ways for the rest of society, starting with my students, to learn from them about relationships—with land, with people, and with language—through writing. As without/so within. As within/so without.

At the same time, from my own perspective of very much being a planner, I am slowly learning to let some circumstances develop naturally or "as they should be" in the educational realm of each individual. I am more loosely accepting that one cannot always "take the risk out of nature and natural reason" as I have so often been trained to do in my more formalized education settings, especially in regard to curricular and pedagogical preparations (Vizenor, *Survivance* 11). Thus, an authentic Lakota way of learning is a fine balance of planning and chance.

Lakota culture is about balance, and the teaching of balance begins at an early age. Even *in utero* babies are taught oral culture and history, and engage in ceremonies (Douville, "Lakota Ethnocosmology"). Service-learning (and then

resultant writing) is an active manifestation of as without/so within and the other elements of *Mitakuye Oyasin* via the reciprocal interaction with nature and the “cycle that permeates all of life” sustaining us (Brown and Cousins 84). Students are part of nature, rather than simply consumers of it.

McAndrew stresses the ideal that composition should broaden its circle to address environmental concerns in tandem with race, class, and gender (380). One way to accomplish McAndrew’s ideal is through hands-on, collaborative service-learning in multiple contexts, with diverse communities, engaged in environmental restoration. Beyond just volunteerism, service-learning is distinguished “by its emphasis on reflection as well as action [which] combines community work with classroom instruction” (sic; Schutz and Ruggles Gere 129). Service-learning’s significance lies in its potential to connect students to communities, particularly communities in need of advocacy and/or restoration. Donald Murray states, “writing to testify” is one motive for literacy (7). Using place-based writing as a testimonial for the condition and need for advocacy of the sites where we work is certainly applicable. Service-learning experiences allow students and all participants to work with the skills they “come to the table with” and build on experience from there. “Service-learning experiences must be accessible to, and appropriate for, students of all races, ethnicities, social classes, ability levels, religions, ages, sexual orientations, life situations, political views, and learning styles” (Jacoby 225-26). Accessibility also includes all disciplines and areas of study.

It is also essential to recognize the strengths, assets, and challenges of students who are generally underrepresented in service-learning. For example, STEM students are often heavily engaged in research but may not be aware of the opportunities that service-learning offers them or how desirable their knowledge and skills may be to community partners.

(Jacoby 227)

Further, some of their more mechanically or technology-focused studies can be used to help them, and others, engage with the natural world in a way that is beneficial to both people and ecology. These are highly sought skills in today's sustainability centered corporations. I agree with Chase Bollig who argues, "composition curricula attuned to the needs of citizen-workers offer an effective response to the question of 'is college worth it?'" (152). While Bollig focuses on a positive response to the worth of a college education, service-learning also offers a quality education, thus also positively impacting the reputation of the school itself. When this positive reputation is known, and put into action as per Cushman, some of the deeply rooted "sociological distances" between the community and university scholars can begin to diminish ("The Rhetorician" 8). As community members involved in farming (who may be opposed to marsh or wetland restoration) see students show active concern for the areas surrounding where these people make their living, they too may be more apt to engage in such practices, especially when students are advocating for them in written informational materials for the greater good.

The efforts to reach into the composition class with a curriculum aimed at democracy and social justice is an attempt to make schools function...as radically democratic institutions, with the goal of not only making individual students more successful, but also making better citizens, citizens in the strongest sense of those who take responsibility for communal welfare.

(Herzberg 317)

Moreover, as students get to know people involved in ecological restoration locally, and beyond, they can start building connections in all locales for the greater good of the communities individually, as well as collectively.

When public intellectuals not only reach outside the university, but actually interact with the public beyond its walls, they overcome the ivory tower isolation that marks so much current intellectual work. They create knowledge with those whom the knowledge serves. Dovetailing the traditionally separate duties of research, teaching, and service, public intellectuals can use the privilege of their positions to forward the goals of both students and local community members. (Cushman, "The Public" 330)

One of the drawbacks cited for service-learning can be student "perceptions of themselves as impacting to the poor and undereducated their greater knowledge and skills" (Cushman, "The Public" 332). Since my dissertation course plan (which is outlined in Chapter Four and Appendices at the end of this dissertation) operates in tandem with seasoned, ecologically savvy community partners locally, and Lakota tribal members and worldview experts in

South Dakota, the danger of students viewing themselves as “emancipators” via their knowledge base is likely slim, if not a moot point. Few students will have familiarity with ecological restorative efforts in both Northwest Indiana and South Dakota. In the case of this course plan, as addressed in greater detail in Chapter Four and the Appendices, it is focused on the students serving being emancipated from their (likely) lack of perspective due to a long history of area ecological disrespect and Native knowledge suppression courtesy of the U.S. government. Furthermore, professors having what could be viewed as an “emancipatory” attitude in such courses as applied to their students is also a moot point, because the professors and the students are being together educated via the service-learning work outside the classroom initiated by much more context knowledgeable educators. These educators have already been involved in ecological work for quite some time, often a lifetime, with and/or without university credentials to back it up. Often a lifetime of experience usurps a lifetime of formal education. “When we fail to consider the perspectives of people outside the academy, we overlook valuable contributions to our theory building” (Cushman, “The Rhetorician” 23).

With this additional level of reciprocity between students and teachers, “service-learning courses can better sustain these initiatives when they view the community as a place where their research, teaching, and service contribute to community needs and students’ ‘learning’” (Cushman, “Sustainable Service” 41). Moreover, to the extent that students, professors, and community members in all contexts collaboratively decide upon actions, goals, and outcomes for all

involved, the better end result(s) are satisfactory across the board. “If reciprocity requires that both the researcher and participants know and agree on what to give and what to take in the relationship, dialogue, in the Frierian sense of the word, insured the research relationship is mutually beneficial to everyone involved” (sic; Cushman, *The Struggle* 31).

Through this beneficial collaborative effort, students can gain writing experience in the world.

One of the underlying goals of service-learning is to allow students to engage the communities in hopes that they will both (1) develop as citizens by working with (not for) community members and (2) understand how writing occurs in the “real world.” While service-learning in writing programs has many approaches and applications, other approaches can help our students develop through working with the community and learning about real-world writing. (Amare and Grettano 71-72)

While classroom time is a part of this dissertation’s course plan in Chapter Four and the Appendices, the balance of hands-on fieldwork gives us environments, ecosystems, and people with which to interact. Interaction and relationships give us something to write about, changing not only the world, but ourselves.

“The fact is that we can’t teach academic discourse because there is no such thing to teach” (Elbow 138). Students need to write from experience within a community in order to relate to it fully. Paul Heilker notes, “In like manner, the elaborated discipline-specific discourses that do exist in the academy are too

esoteric and too ephemeral to teach in first-year writing courses” (72). While Heilker takes an “all or nothing” approach, I believe time inside the traditional classroom, balanced with service-learning outside the classroom provides an ideal situation for students to write with a well-rounded knowledge base. With the proliferation of technology which has burgeoned over the past few decades, students know more about the world than ever before. Yet, due to the immense availability of perceiving the world through technology, students are out of touch with it more than ever before. That distance needs to change, and students need to also become aware of just how much they are part of their environment(s) and the world, with and/or without the assistance of technology.

Dobrin and Weisser state, “we might arrive at a more fruitful understanding of selfhood if we envision ourselves as ecological selves” and “Ecological selves perceive their interconnection with others and comprehend the degree to which their own identities are inseparable from the nonhuman world—a recognition that the material world ‘out there’ is part of our identity ‘in here’” (*Natural Discourse* 86). Dobrin and Weisser, like Dewey, are reminiscent of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, as above/so below, and as without/so within—our actions become part of who we are. Again, we need to be living “reciprocity in action,” taking care of the Earth (as well as the resultant cosmos), just as it takes care of us.

The best way I can envision getting students to view “their own identities as inseparable from the nonhuman world,” is to get them in the world outside the classroom via components of a class that take place outside. This is not to say

that the classroom itself is not an environment or place (and space), because it truly is, but students need to see themselves in relation to a larger sphere. “It is often claimed by eco-philosophers and green political theorists that liberalism, the dominant tradition of western political philosophy, is too focused on the interests of human individuals to give due weight to the environment for its own sake” (Hailwood). It has been my experience that eco-based education works when students can directly relate to it. Service-learning themed in *Mitakuye Oyasín* makes the relation real.

Resa Crane Bizzaro tells us including underrepresented groups in our teachings changes “the locus of power in rhetoric and composition” (“Making Places” 489). I advocate that the practice of service-learning based on *Mitakuye Oyasín* not only changes that locus, but with its connective and relational meaning, which includes all people, groups, and, in fact, all of creation, serves to level the playing field so all created beings are equally valued. Thus, *Mitakuye Oyasín* put into action via service-learning, then expressed via narrative place-based writing, becomes its own rhetoric for change—although, historically, *Mitakuye Oyasín* has never changed. To qualify as a rhetoric of its own, Lloyd Bitzer offers:

Rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. The rhetor alters reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience,

in thought and action, is so engaged that it becomes mediator of change.

In this sense rhetoric is always persuasive. (4)

Mitakuye Oyasin as a worldview, and as an action, holds immense rhetorical power for restorative change for our ecology, ourselves, and our world. The use of this worldview applied to service-learning based ecological restorative justice in the college classroom (and outside it), holds immense potential in political arenas, where more than ever, our survival is at stake. Hurlbert states “the need for political staying power seems acute in a world approaching ecological crises of tragic proportions with resulting political turmoil. (And who cannot at least imagine the possibility of repressive forms of political arrangements developing in a world enduring one ecological crisis after another?)” (62). While survival is certainly at stake, the quality of human survival (as well as all other life forms) is also at stake.

In *Active Hope*, Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone state, “Recent research gives strong support to something we know from our own experience: contact with the natural environment can be powerfully restorative to well-being” (210). They go on to state, “While the Haudenosaunee and other indigenous peoples recognize that our very survival depends on the healthy function of the natural world, it is only recently that we’ve gained a scientific understanding of how true this really is” (211). In just over the few centuries since the North American continent was colonized, it has gone from pristine wilderness to what it is today. Our entire globe is in the same state, and worse. A heavily polluted, toxic planet does indeed have an impact on the physical, as well as mental,

health of all beings. Those in the medical and mental health professions have countless resources to back this up, and countless businesses are now on-board in seeking healthier alternatives to the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and other practices that are detrimental to our natural ecology.

Working together with partners via local areas of ecological need in and just surrounding Jasper County, as well as with the Lakota Youth Development camp, brings together academic experience, as well as life experience, which is crucial in today's competitive job market. Furthermore, in the job market, community involvement is now an expectation for one's life, building not only better workplaces, but better communities for those workplaces, along with overall healthier, more balanced lives.

Social and "soft skills" are also acquired through ecological service-learning, such as collaborative teamwork, on-site problem-solving, plan implementation adjustments, and other issues that may unexpectedly arise. A former student of mine, Austin Reese, in a recently publicized podcast regarding my service-learning focused ecocomposition class stated, "Like, in what other classes am I hands-on in? I mean people [in the job market] want experience, and this is the best way to get experience. It's free, it's fun, and you're learning" (qtd. in Butler). These are skills which can be useful later in life.

[S]tudents are facing new challenges in terms of what they must know in work and civic life. They often think they are looking for vocational training, but they must be prepared for much more complicated demands than job preparation. They must learn abilities that will sustain them through

multiple career changes, new roles in marriage and community life, and forbidding political crises in the environment, economy, and social justice. (Parks and Goldblatt 586)

Not only can students and the world-at-large benefit from service-learning based upon the Lakota worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin*. “Composition’s ‘service ethic’ means composition programs must be responsive to university missions, and students’ performance in composition is often taken as a marker of whether they belong in college” (Bollig 158). The engaging element of active, outside-the-classroom, hands-on service-learning may very well be the element that keeps students in college. Ironically, by getting out the classroom, they may be staying in the classroom—it is just a classroom that Native Americans knew, and still know, which was taken away from them for a supposed better way of learning. We must learn to “re-construe our curriculum to focus on knowledge-in-action rather than knowledge-out-of-context” (Applebee 1-2). The service-learning component “of reflection, in particular, can become an uncritical, narrow invention or project management tool” (Scott). In the long-term, this future implemented course plan may help us make changes or adjustments to the university vision in order to make it more successful through continued student engagement and higher student retention. Ultimately, this course plan can also serve as a means of examining the level of impact service-learning has on related student writing. “Service-learning has gained greater institutional acceptance over the years through scholarship that has touted its success” (Mathieu 4).

This does not mean service-learning based writing assignments are not without the need for continual development and refinement. “Of the dozen or so teachers I’ve known who have experimented with community-based writing assignments, not one has found that these assignments fit easily into her course the first time around” (sic; Bacon 52). As I have developed place-based narrative writing assignments based on service-learning over time, I have certainly had to “tweak” certain elements of the assignments based upon the conditions and/or obstacles the work and sites have presented. For example, when my students used journals at the Tree of Life site in 2015, our time was very limited each day due to the amount of work we needed to get accomplished for the community members in a given amount of time. Basically, we did not have much time for journal entries until late at night. We did, however, meet each night around nine o’clock to discuss our day and then journal while engaged in dialogue via a large talking circle, which worked well in helping all of us process our thoughts.

Our journals and field notes were a wealth of information, both practical and cultural, filled with references to land, nature, and people. Many of the students came to the realization that the Lakota literally see the animal kingdom, the winged, and the four-leggeds, as relatives, while part of a particular *oyate* or nation, such as the horse nation. Some of these observations helped me add elements to my course curriculum, such as showing the film *Dakota 38*³¹,

³¹ See Haggerty. I may also utilize the film *More Than Bows and Arrows* by Warriner and Engelstad, recommended by Janke. *Dakota 38* revisits history in a counterclockwise fashion, similar to this dissertation, for restorative justice.

involving the relation of horses in Lakota culture. I also added some film footage I took of the surrounding territory to my collection of presentations to get future students familiar with the landscapes with which they interact. These visual images help raise possibilities for students to incorporate film into some of their assignments, and make them more personal, with personal connections to place and self.

Multimodal knowledge production could allow scholars to craft meaning more accessible to publics outside of academe because it uses the semiotic systems used regularly in homes, communities, and workplaces to shape meaning and representations. English scholars might position themselves better to acknowledge and appreciate multimodal communication strategies already taking place if they themselves were producing multimodal compositions and teaching others to do so in these ways. (Cushman, "New Media" 77)

One of the projects Bull Bear and I also talked about is using GPS to have students locate sacred sites, record their perimeters, and then write informational materials about them, stressing their significance and special value in Lakota culture, making such sites understandable to non-Native Americans. We also considered that a filming of the entire process could also be occurring simultaneously (a media project within another media project, or a filming of the methods used) in order to make a record of what took place, viewed at a later time, also for the sake of learning. Cushman is an advocate for such methods of

building meaning, along with journaled fieldnotes, whether on paper, or via technological means.

As participant observers, students take fieldnotes that reflect on their experiences with community members and how these experiences relate to the set of readings chosen by the professor. These fieldnotes serve a twofold purpose. First, they offer students a ready supply of examples to analyze in their essays, and second, they become potential source material for the professor. The professors' own notes, video and audio tape recordings, evaluation from the public service organization or area residents, and other literacy artifacts constitute a rich set of materials for knowledge-making. Since the professors also volunteer, teach, and administer the service-learning course, they have first-hand familiarity with the important social issues and programmatic needs at the local level, and they tailor the curriculum to fit these. Thus, when activist methods are employed, knowledge-making in outreach courses happens *with* the individuals served. (Cushman, "The Public" 331, emphasis in original)

Mitakuye Oyasin is the perfect worldview for building a unified collaborative mindset within the college classroom, as well as within an outdoor service-learning setting. "Employing *relatedness as a world-ordering principle*, Natives construct a moral universe that is interconnected and dynamic, a world in whose creation human beings participate through their thoughts, actions, and ceremonies" (Norton-Smith 75). Utilizing *Mitakuye Oyasin* as an action engages students in another cultural, unified, worldview through hands-on, productive

service-learning. Not only does this practice provide a culturally diverse educational window for most, but it can form a unity among people of all races, backgrounds, incomes, and various other vantage points. A multicultural education encompasses opportunity for students from various racial, ethnic, class, and cultural groups. It should seek to “help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with peoples from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good” (Banks and Banks xi).

Within the typical college composition classroom, students can only interact with the outside world through perhaps a window, at best, if the room has one. This setting does not engage students in their environment, allowing them to view themselves as part of it. “Bored, detached, and isolated, a curriculum that mirrors the kind I suggest above breeds apathetic students; and apathetic students grow up to be apathetic citizens” (Bateman). What the world needs is actively engaged, empathetic citizens to care for the earth—its life forms, people, and resources—for a lifetime.

Heilker states, “Writing teachers need to relocate the *where* of composition instruction outside the academic classroom because the classroom does not and cannot offer students real rhetorical situations in which to understand writing as a social action” (71). For students who enjoy the outdoors, and perhaps even more importantly for those students who do not take time to consider the outdoor environment at all (despite the fact it provides for their very

existence), it is imperative they learn to see themselves as a very real part of it. "Composition students have suffered for too long in courses and classrooms that are palpably *unreal* rhetorical situations" (Heilker 71). Our lives are rhetorical situations; we depend on nature. It is difficult to ignore the natural world, and your place in it, when you are enmeshed within it, especially when you then have to go about writing for both of your reciprocal survivals—for we are all connected. My dissertation's course plan and pedagogy also very actively puts Freire's problem posing model to use as students work and learn reciprocally along with their instructor (72). For true development to take place through experience, knowledge should not be garnered "in terms of explaining to, but rather dialoguing with the people about their actions" (Freire 53). Hence, students cannot simply see their instructor as "rootless" or simply belonging to "the boundless world of books and ideas" or as one who owes "no allegiance to geographical territory" (Zencey 15). I am already "rooted" to Jasper County and Northwest Indiana, while in the process of establishing some preliminary roots in South Dakota via my engagement there.

It is important to remember that ecological service-learning and related writing is not just about service—it's about people—and it's about land. They are connected within this class because the writing produced, and the language used, is about land and our connection to it. This melding leads to a changed narrative way of teaching composition based on relations and connections. It is Mother Earth that is telling us her story; a narrative long known by many Native American people. That narrative is *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Earth can heal herself, it is

the human part of all related and connected things that does not let her. We need to change our narrative to recognize this fact by being part of her, within the ecological world we share, doing our part to restore healing for both people and ecology—reversing history, full circle, to what we should have learned long ago...the story that we are all related and we are all connected. Whether we realize it or not, it is our own narrative.

CHAPTER THREE
ESTABLISHING A NARRATIVE IN RELATION/CONNECTION
WITH CULTURE, LAND, AND EARTH

“Story is the most powerful force in the world—in our world, maybe in all worlds. Story is culture” (Miranda xvi).

In the summer of 2016, I took a drive from the Rosebud Reservation into Rapid City, SD, with a Lakota friend. On our trip, she told me many stories of her life and stories of Lakota history and culture. She warned me not to walk late in the night under a full moon, as it is bad luck. That was her way of looking out for me. On our way back to Rosebud, driving alongside the South Dakota Badlands, we passed a dead white owl on the highway shoulder. I pretended to ignore it, since I know owls can be bad omens in many Native American cultures, including Lakota. After a minute or so, my friend said, “There was a dead owl back there.” I replied, “I know,” not wanting to alarm her. She explained that seeing owls, dead or alive can be a bad thing in Lakota culture—an omen of things to come. I told her not to worry, within a few miles, we would see a bald eagle somewhere, either live, or as an image. This always happens to me. I told her to watch the sky and along the highway. Within about two miles, we approached a billboard with a giant glittering bald eagle on it. We both felt relieved, as eagles are known as sacred messengers from the Creator. I told her this would hopefully take care of our owl viewing and everything should be alright.

Similarly, I was once walking through O'Hare Airport in Chicago, about to take a flight to a CCCC conference with another friend, when on the way to our

gate, we saw a plane with a huge owl painted on the tail. I explained to my friend that since I had seen this owl, within a short amount of time, I would see a bald eagle somewhere. When we reached our gate, she suggested looking at a magazine together that someone had left on a seat. The first page she opened in the magazine to had a giant bald eagle across it. I seem to have a relationship with eagles. I address them further later in this chapter, as well as in Chapter Five.

These unusual things happen to me. I was again reminded of my owl and eagle phenomenon when I heard an owl in the night at home later in 2016. The next day, I had scheduled a boat tour/meeting with David Zack, District President of the Kankakee River Conservancy on the Illinois side of the Kankakee River. Zack and other members of the group are reestablishing marshlands along the river in Illinois, just as is happening with the Hodsons in Indiana. His group is also seeking to bring back native animal species to the area, such as river otter, certain fish and plant species, and the bald eagle. I met Zack at the *Aukiki* River Festival in August and he wanted to show me the effects draining the Grand Kankakee Marsh in Indiana had on the Kankakee River in Illinois. We both agreed that taking students out on such a boat trip, which Zack certainly has the capability to do with a large pontoon boat and a series of canoes, could further illustrate to them the reverberating effects of draining the Grand Kankakee Marsh across the state line in Indiana. Where the Illinois side of the river once had a rock bottom, it is now all sand, which changed the ecology, driving away some flora, fauna, and wildlife that once existed there. As the Kankakee River

Conservancy group seeks to change the landscape back to some of its original habitat, more of the wildlife that had diminished or disappeared has begun to return, including mallards, the blue-winged teal, box turtles, as well as golden and bald eagles. As Zack quietly boated down the river, telling me its historic narrative story, a bald eagle swooped down over us. This eagle was followed by two others which followed us down the river for some time, their signature white bald eagle tail feathers illumined by the sun. I told Zack the eagle is very significant in Lakota culture, called *Wanbli*—messengers to and from God, spirits flying closest to Heaven.

This dissertation is, of course, two narrative stories, as stated in Chapter One. It is also a dual discourse, one oral in a sense, and the other written. Both of them are about people and land, both of which speak in various ways. Just as the Lakota believe in as above/so below—or what is done on earth will also be so in the spirit world, in writing this work, I have come to realize that at this axis between Heaven and Earth, *Kapemni*, is where our stories dwell. Our narratives are eternal and coexist as part of our spirit, carried through generations. As long as they are told, they never die. “The universe is made of stories, not of atoms” (Rukeyser 115). In other words: our stories continue even when we physically do not. Therefore, in order for the human story and all others to continue, we must change our narrative.

Earth is telling us a story. It is a story we must listen to for our reciprocal survival. We must protect the earth and advocate for our continued existence through personal, related, connected, narrative research. Narrative can indeed

effectively express research. You are reading it. The Lakota have a connective narrative to Heaven and Earth, and all living beings via *Mitakuye Oyasin*. It is part of who they are. It is also embedded in their language. However, it is not dependent upon the Lakota language. “If language is destroyed, as many Native American languages have been, that does not decimate culture. Culture is immediately lost when we stop telling the stories of who we are, where we have been, how we arrived there, what we once knew. Culture is lost when we forget the power and craft of storytelling” (Miranda xiv). However, one wonders how many stories may have been lost with the suppression of language during the boarding school era. Stories wield power. Storytellers weave history and can change the future.

Narrative Got Us Into This Mess and Narrative Can Get Us Out:

Narrative as Research

“The true storyteller teaches the cultural values [and] passes on knowledge and the beliefs within the stories to the next generation...The true role of the storyteller is to pass on the lessons from the beginning of time” (P. McLeod).

Narrative storytellers hold tremendous influence. Europeans wove tales of wild and dangerous pagan savages in North America prior to the onset of colonial civilization. With colonization, Native American oral history and narratives were then subjugated and a new “American History” was written by the U.S. Government at boarding schools, such as St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School. The new North American narrative became, as Jean O’Brien told us, four

supposed “truths”: Europeans were the first North American inhabitants, Europeans were the discoverers of North America and owners of the land, Indians disappeared, then Indians ceased to exist (113). By replacing Native American stories with the narrative of colonized progress, even aside from the forbidding of Native languages in boarding schools and elsewhere, the loss of story has a profound impact on Native American people:

Those of us who are Indian understand that it is the telling of stories, our very breath, that brings forth tribal identity and defines purpose. In our oral tradition, which is both ceremonially sacred and ritualized through the use of language, is also living thought. The elder women of my family nourished themselves through the telling and retelling of stories. Their stories brought them merciful shelter through the spoken transformation of time and place. (Lucci-Cooper 8)

Forced relocation of Native American tribes from their homelands via the Trail of Death, the Trail of Tears, and other multiple genocidal removals, along with the atrocities of the boarding school era sought to tear apart the relationship and connection Native peoples have to land. These practices were put in place for the new, colonial U.S. population to claim ownership of vast and rich Native lands replete with gold, oil, and other resources. And yet, it is through oral narrative tradition, prayer, and immense fortitude, that stories, and the concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, continues to remain.

The stories cannot be separated from geographical locations, from actual physical places within the land...And the stories are such a part of these

places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose the stories because there are so many imposing geological elements you cannot live in that land without asking or looking at or noticing a boulder or rock. And there's always a story. (Silko, "Language and Literature" 69)

Still, there are some who may not realize the value of narrative and storytelling as forms of credible research and expression of that research. "Narratives, then, express a Truth about the universality of human experience and show how the author fits into that larger universal" (Peterson 173). At the same time, critics may concurrently be willing to justify the historic journals of Lewis and Clark as a valid research account of discovery and research. "The journals of the early American explorers Lewis and Clark grew from an assignment and were part of the requirements for a specific job" (Ross 19). When Lewis and Clark led the Corps of Discovery, encounters with various tribal cultures were inevitable. Sadly, the ways in which tribal cultures were represented in writing during encounters with Discovery, contributed to the "literature of dominance" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners* 3).

Narrative as research has been esteemed and utilized for centuries. Like all research scientists, Leonardo DiVinci, kept a narrative account of his work (see fig. 28).



Fig. 28. *Leonardo da Vinci's Notebook* (da Vinci).

In my dissertation course plan, a dual discourse journal, with today's dominant cultural perspectives (or a student's home cultural perspectives) and concurrent Lakota points of view via LYD is instrumental in helping students record their perceptions of narrative influenced by two cultures. Ultimately, the recording, observation, and reflection of such individually written (and later shared) journals can provide insight into how ecological balance and cultural understanding can best be attained. In their journals, students may be able to reflect upon cultures and find common ground—or, at least, see the world from a new vantage point. Just as da Vinci also incorporated drawing and symbols within his journals, such practices can be useful in narrative, place-based writing, particularly when expressing the symbolic Lakota worldview. These journals can instill narrative empowerment in writers, “giving interpretive agency to all students, regardless of their background” (P. Bizzaro, “Mutuality in the Teaching” 57). These journals can then become part of students' life narratives, and a

connective thread to their identity and acquired worldview. I kept a similar journal while studying abroad in Spain, and explain more about that process, and how it applies, in the attached Appendices.

Native people's narrative stories have immense knowledge within them. "That the researcher does not see subaltern stories as sophisticated theory probably says more about her/him, and what s/he constructs and values as 'theory' and 'story' than about the subaltern" (Kapoor 634). Additionally, narrative accounts of history in Native American communities were revered, meticulously guarded, and checked by multiple witnesses/participants for intergenerational accuracy. "Stories as 'data' are important, and one key to collecting these data is 'hearing' the stories" (Brayboy 438). Stories are eternal. "We should, of course, always strive to write the most reliable, valid, thorough, coherent, and fair-minded narratives we can, but no one narrative can ever, or should ever, shut down the narrative enterprise. There are too many interesting perspectives for that to be desirable" (Connors 34). Stories hold a special quality of validating the identity and existence of their tellers. This has been philosophical truth in Indigenous communities throughout history, with oral narratives and stories passed down prior to language written in script. "Because that is what history is: the telling of stories about the tribe that make the tribe real. That is why the recovery of composition history after it had been lost for 150 years is so important. Finally, we are telling stories of our fathers and our mothers, and we are legitimating ourselves through legitimating them" (Connors 33).

Our stories dictate our future when we know our past. Whether good or bad pasts, they help us plot a course for our future. They help us know who we are and who we might become. Our identities and “who we are” are revealed in our stories, as uniquely as our individual fingerprints. ‘It is not surprising that psychoanalysts now recognize that personhood implicates narrative, ‘neurosis’ being a reflection of either an insufficient, incomplete, or inappropriate story about oneself” (Geertz, “Thick Description” 193). Yet, stories are always in flux. “For any given ‘narrative’ or ‘well-known story,’ different versions may exist, some of which may be more valued. In the telling and retelling of narratives, the narrator claims his or her distinctive style of narrative authority as well as the strategy for narration” (Klein 168). Narrative storytelling is most certainly an individualized craft, honed by time and experience(s).

Historians over the last twenty years have debated the value of narrative historiography over non-narrative approaches. Ethnographers are now confronted with similar value judgments between narrative and non-narrative approaches to writing about the individuals, societies, or cultures they study. And literary critics have developed a rather sophisticated understanding of how data—utterances, actions, events, and happenings—are incorporated into structures of meaning and are then transformed into narrative form. (Klein 168-69)

Stories are indeed active data³². “Because of the ways most non-Indians learn about Native American oral narratives, they tend to associate them with

³² See Bailey and P. Bizzaro.

'quaint' or 'primitive' fairy tales, folklore, or superstitions" (Roemer 39). These same people may also hold the same associations of the same narratives in printed form, while forgetting these Native American narratives are thousands of years old, older than most supposedly ancient research which is readily accepted. Native American oral narratives are formed often through generations of lived experience, rather than just a written, and perhaps objectified record.

I once had an encounter with a colleague who told me that people like me "told good stories" and later added that because I told good stories, I might not ever be a "good theorist." I was struck by the seeming disconnect between community stories and personal narratives and "theory." After this encounter with my colleague, I returned home to Prospect, North Carolina, one of the communities of the Lumbee tribe of which I am an enrolled member, and told several of my relatives and elders about my colleagues' comments. My mother told me, "Baby, doesn't she know that our stories are our theories? And she thinks she's smarter than you because she can't tell stories?" (Brayboy 426)

Narrative stories make research relatable to the reader. Seeing research as the telling of a story also makes it validated and more real to the writer.

Whichever kind of personal narrative you write, it is probable that your purpose will be, to some degree, both to tell a good story and to make a point. In fact, it is one of the appeals of the personal narrative, for writer and reader alike, that the writer can present an interesting idea by means of telling a good story. Writers of personal narrative generally have to ask

themselves, in writing about their experiences, the same question their readers will most likely ask: *Yes, but so what?* If the writer does not have a clear sense of why he or she is writing the narrative, the essay is likely to lack direction and coherence and may collapse into an aimless jumble of narrative detail. Although a story may be fun to read for its detail, unless readers have a clear sense of why they are reading it, it will probably be soon forgotten. (Ross 200, emphasis in original)

The *so what* that Ross refers to, in the case of this dissertation course plan, is purposefully using narrative and story as research within a service-learning based ecocomposition class for ecological restorative justice in a particular geographical area—Jasper County, then reverberating beyond. Narrative story as research has been with us forever. It is the story of humans and the story of the world. The ability to create narrative and story are a skill, like any other skill. Unfortunately, due to a narrow perspective, not all in education recognize the all-encompassing inclusivity of its craft. Nancy Mairs recalled in a narrative her “‘failure’ to do well in science in college, attributing it to the perception of her biology teacher that she was good at something else—writing—and so could not be good at science” (qtd. in Ross 230). Doesn’t knowing how to write, and write about the natural world, qualify one as adept at science? This is not a new concept³³. It is the method of our past, our present, and our future; often writing and rewriting history (sometimes correcting it) to know where we

³³ See Graves.
See also, S.H. McLeod.

came from to know where we are going. This mantra is true in academia, and it is true in life.

By revisiting our history, our stories, and our narratives, along with the practice of them, we are moving forward, full circle. “For me, ghost stories are **both** the stories of material colonization **and** the webs and wisps of narrative that are woven around, under, beneath, behind, inside, and against the dominant narratives of ‘scholarly discourse’” (Powell, “Listening to Ghosts” 12, emphasis in original). This practice of moving back in order to move forward is not for the sake of “sustainability” *per se*, it is for restoration—of peoples and of land—how they are related and connected. S. Wilson tells us “If research doesn’t change you as a person, then you haven’t done it right” (*Research as Ceremony* 135). If narrative research changes a person, great! If narrative research and our stories change a person, land, and the planet, while interacting with others, even better.

Narrative in the Ecomposition Classroom Based on Service-Learning

“In scanning a mountainous horizon or studying the geometry of a flower, a writer may find his or her or all of our faces reflected there” (Ross 19).

In reflecting back upon my very first trip to the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation in March of 2015 with the students from VU, I am reminded of the special sweat lodge ceremony we had the honor of being invited to by Tamayo and Duane Hollow Horn Bear. Most the students who went on the trip participated in the sweat lodge, a ceremony symbolizing personal, spiritual purification via steam heat. I stayed outside the circular sweat lodge dome due to my own asthma issues, since there was no medical facility nearby in case of an

unexpected attack. I sat quietly just outside the sweat lodge, listening to the beautiful chanting and ceremonial healing songs taking place inside. One of the VU students, Riley, also sat outside, just down from where I was seated. As the sky grew increasingly dark, I could not see Riley very well. My attention was drawn to the night sky as I listened intently to songs going on inside the dome. As the songs and the ceremony continued, bright stars appeared overhead. Suddenly, the stars all seemed to physically move closer to us, as if they were being drawn to the song. I was amazed by this occurrence, and I know what I saw. I did not mention it to anyone.

About six months later, I saw Riley on the VU campus. We were talking about our trip to Rosebud and I told her, "You know, I never told anyone about this, but when you and I were seated outside the sweat lodge at night and the ceremonial songs were being sung, I saw the stars in the sky move closer to us." Riley responded, "Yeah, they did. I saw it." I realized that as above/so below was manifesting multiple presences. Lakota ancestors seemed to draw closer to us as stars being drawn to the songs.

With the Lakota known as the "Star People," believing their ancestors exist among the stars, I wonder how often students far from home at St. Joseph's Indian Normal School in Rensselaer may have looked to the night sky for the comfort and familiarity of their relatives, connections to home and to the afterlife, as above/so below. I cannot help but also wonder about their narratives, narratives suppressed, those whose suppression could be reversed by the telling. On the Rosebud Reservation, I heard many stories from on and off-

reservation boarding schools, those which brought me to tears. Many of the stories among various people intersect. The physical and mental fortitude to survive them is astonishing.

The spirit of survivance of the Lakota is apparent in all of Lakota culture. The spirit of *Mitakuye Oyasin* also continues to be apparent everywhere within the culture. “Indigenous rhetorics I understand as the interpretive study of meaning in diverse Indigenous art forms, including forms that are alphabetic and non-alphabetic, literate, performative, aural, and visual” (MacKay 352). *Mitakuye Oyasin*, the relation and connection of all things living shows up in symbolic Lakota art, beadwork, sewing, as well as within narrative storytelling with elders regarded as the revered “texts.” They have the value of lived experience, which holds just as much credibility, and often more credibility, than a formal, Euro-Westernized academic education alone. “Experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively” (Clandinin and Connelly 19). There is a big difference between learning *about* something and learning *from* something. Learning about something gives one general knowledge. Learning from something transfers knowledge in context. This is especially true when learning the worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin* from the Lakota and Lakota elders. To truly even begin to understand it, the concept must be lived.

My narrative experience at Rosebud, continuing from the spring of 2015, to the present, is just the smallest grain of knowledge, and bit by bit, I am slowly learning that land, sky, water, people, and resources, are all one beating heart.

This is why Lakota ceremonies exist in many forms, including song and narrative story—oral history and culture well preserved long prior to the written Lakota language. Written narrative therefore, based on relationships and connections offers the best alternative to oral history in beginning to attempt to capture the expression of *Mitakuye Oyasin*—the connection and relation of humans to each other and to all things on the Earth. This is one of the reasons journals are utilized as part of my course plan. Journals can express thoughts more personally, and even more spiritually, than a standard assigned paper.

“Relationships don’t just shape Indigenous reality, they are our reality” (Anderson qtd. in Wilson *Research is Ceremony*). This relational reality is exactly what this dissertation course plan seeks to instill in the academic research writing classroom. In Native American communities, the phrase, “I come to you with a good heart” means: an open heart, one attuned to the responsibilities we all share as relations and inhabitants of the continent. It is an orientation that tries to pay attention to the needs of the whole community instead of pushing the agenda of a single individual. It is almost exactly the opposite of everything we’re taught to be in the academy. Academic ideologies that tout a single individual as holding power and authority of any kind, or encourage competition for scarce resources, are anathema to the idea of a good heart. As people who live at least part of our lives within academic communities, these are difficult ideologies to resist. We’re the first to admit that any kind of decolonial and/or indigenous pedagogy is difficult to enact

in a university setting. It takes time, patience, and understanding and encourages a shift in student/teacher roles that can feel disorienting.

(Mukavetz and Powell 156-57)

Although Mukavetz and Powell are referring to graduate students in the above passage, they remind me of the role shift I found it necessary to make in taking the twelve VU undergraduate students on our first trip to the Rosebud Reservation to do service-learning with the Tree of Life Methodist Relief Agency. Although I was used to a “hands off” approach in a “student centered” classroom, being with a group of twelve traveling undergraduate students and living with them twenty-four hours a day for ten days was a new experience for me and for them. Thus, we had to change the narrative of how we related to each other, via our lived experience. Outside the formal setting of the traditional academic classroom, side by side, we were writing our own narratives in journals recording our interactions with a different culture, worldview, and collaborative experiences with each other and Lakota community members. Therefore, our trip not only fostered reciprocal learning on multiple levels, it allowed students to view me as a co-learner, and it allowed me to step back and let the students find their own best way to learn as individuals, taking initiative as their own learning style dictated.

I do not recall anyone who resided on the reservation telling us how to go about doing anything at any time, under any circumstance. The way efforts were carried out were left to the individual’s discretion. We were all told that however we accomplished things was “as it should be,” an expression the Lakota repeat often; the valued sense of one’s personal identity in action. Given the history of

the boarding school era, where colonizing authorities dictated the way in which Lakota young people did most everything according to someone else's idea of what was "correct" or "civilized," their ability to not blink at the way we did things, whether right or wrong, was again astonishing.

My reappearing narrative explains why I continue to return to Rosebud, to write from an interactive perspective with the Lakota people in order to learn the deeper and comprehensive meaning of *Mitakuye Oyasin* and relate that to students within the classroom as effectively as possible. This helps all of us before and after we do work in Northwest Indiana, as well as before, during, and after our visit to Rosebud. Narrative helps all of us form a relationship with not only the Lakota people, but the Lakota worldview via narrative and thick description via experienced service-learning. Thick description:

[D]oes more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond the mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (Denzin 83)

Thick description utilized with experiential service-learning not only facilitates deeper cultural understanding via writing, but also relational understanding between various cultures, worldviews, and ecological value

systems. Since the group of students who went to Rosebud with me in 2015 were students from different countries, the use of thick description via writing in journals, helped us understand Lakota culture, as well as get at least a glimpse into the perspectives we were all coming to the experience with via later discussion of what we had written and why. Our writings were generally based upon our individual and personal cultural frames of reference.

The notion of thick description is often misunderstood. It must be theoretical and analytical in that researchers concern themselves with the abstract and general patterns and traits of social life in a culture. This type of description aims to give readers a sense of the emotions, thoughts and perceptions that research participant's experience. It deals not only with the meaning and interpretations of people in a culture, but also with their intentions. Thick description builds up a clear picture of the individuals and groups in the context of their culture and the setting in which they live...

Thick description can be contrasted with **thin description**, which is a superficial account and does not explore the underlying meanings of cultural members. (Holloway 154, emphasis in original)

Within our VU group at Rosebud, we rapidly learned not only more about Lakota culture and the Lakota worldview, but about how we interacted with the community there, how we interacted with each other based upon being in a new community, and why.

Thick description refers to the researcher's task of both describing and interpreting observed social action (or behavior) within its particular

context. The context can be within a smaller unit (such as a couple, a family, a work environment) or within a larger unit (such as one's village, a community, or general culture). Thick description accurately describes observed social actions and assigns purpose and intentionality to these actions, by the way of the researcher's understanding and clear description of the context under which the social actions took place. Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them. Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turns leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report's intended readership. Thick meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of verisimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively "place" themselves within the research context. (Ponterotto 543)

Using thick description to relay experience can be used as an indication to ascertain to what degree a person is comprehending cultural and relational/connection understanding in context, with the Lakota, as it encompasses *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Hence, the motive for our service-learning trip in my course plan to take place on the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation is in order to be, and operate, in the context of the culture and worldview as it is lived out. "The descriptive and interpretive thick description records interpretations that occur within the experience as it is lived. These types of statements are difficult to produce and obtain. They require a person who is able to reflect on experience as it occurs" (Denzin 98). The very fact that a cross-cultural narrative can be

recorded in writing as it is lived and experienced provides a relationship itself between the writer, fellow writers, and the shared relational context, creating new narratives for all involved. These new stories can also be recounted later between participants in the course, as well as those at Rosebud, a shared history of sorts, just like the experience Riley and I both later shared of watching the stars come down. “Consideration of twice-told tales, or narrative events built around stories already familiar to the participants, offers a special perspective on conversational storytelling, because it emphasizes those aspects of narration beyond information, problem-solving, etc.” (Norrick 216). Stories alone provide connections. Thick description brings those connections into vivid feel and context, such as Riley and I not only meaningfully connection with each other, but also with the landscape, the cosmos, and for however briefly, viewing the world in the Lakota way.

Such stories can become a new narrative for the field of composition itself, in a way which builds relationships between academia, and later, life outside academia through lived experiences put into continued action by habit. “As a field, basic writing is in many ways defined by the stories that researchers, teachers, and institutions have told about teachers and the students that populate writing classes” (Adler-Kassner and Harrington 13). These stories have the additional potential to restore the value of Native American knowledge to the non-Native public—that which should have been valued at the onset of colonial expansionism in the U.S. “Scholarship as well as public discussion in the news and among policy makers promotes narratives about students and teachers”

(Adler-Kassner and Harrington 13). Stories can benefit not only the tellers, but the listeners, as mentioned earlier in this dissertation by Lincoln, “The philosophy of the classroom in one generation, is the philosophy of government in the next” (Lincoln). One can only hope that instilling Native American themes in the college classroom now, transfers into positive changes in laws and policies in the future.

This change can bridge the gap between life inside and outside the college classroom, with students also often writing about the natural, scientific world in context, along with academically appropriate prose such as materials for ecologically restorative materials for environmental advocacy. When students learn solely within the classroom,

they remain poorly prepared for the writing required of them in courses outside the English department. Instead of disparaging “the stuff” written in other disciplines, we ought instead to appreciate the varieties and excellences of academic discourse. Such an appreciation would discourage us from drawing false dichotomies between “them” and “us,” between academic and personal writing, between inside and outside the academy. (Lindemann 311)

Bridging this gap provides a smoother seamless transition between traditional academic knowledge, relational knowledge, and therefore, experienced intuitive knowledge via context. When Indigenous knowledge is experienced within a culture, a place, an experience, that is relational, it becomes part of “who you are.”

Some of the discourses generated by being a body-in-a-material-place are recognizable as expert-like discourse. Bodies in place are bodies that *attend from* those spaces: their contours, intensities, densities, textures, rhythms. An imperfect description of embodied knowledge might be the vernacular phrase “gut feelings,” which are born from the discourses of being-in-a-material place. (sic; Rice 126)

I would call this “intuitive knowledge.” I remember this being encouraged in my family. That knowledge and sense of place, time, and experience is something that becomes part of your identity. You become your own expert on your experience. “Primitive peoples are certainly not confused about the places and rites they consider sacred, for these form the basis of their community and provide an identity that incorporates rather than transcends the time-space dimensions” (Deloria, *The Metaphysics* 209). This knowledge allows students to explore the complex histories and the ways in which Native spaces are recovered within their communities. In addition, they explore the current representations of Native peoples through naming and realities. Students continually comment that they had little idea of the connections to Native space that still exist in their communities. Like other indigenous ways of knowing, these activities connect and educate the mind, heart, body, and spirit. Indigenous peoples understand theory and research as evolving from these ways, which include writing, orality, bodies, and making—connecting the whole—contrary to Western ways of knowing. (Anderson 166-67)

Establishing a relationship/connection with all living things in a multi-dimensional sense via an understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing can foster cultural and ecological restoration in Northwest Indiana, as well as reverberating to Rosebud, SD, knowledge traveling in the same full circle as the students who were to be “civilized” as per the St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School in Rensselaer. Even today, Shawn Wilson tells us a “sense of alienation can be a powerful factor for a lot of us Indigenous people in a university setting” (104). He was referring to the distance between academia and relational, intuitive knowledge. The perceived distance between “academic” discourse and Indigenous ways of knowing needs to end. Further, “academic discourse is an invention, not a natural phenomenon” (Royster 23). To reiterate: “There is not a university in this country that is not built on what was once native land” (Gould 81-82). This fact should never be forgotten. Without the land, there would be no university. Without the land, there would be no knowledge, and no us. Hence, using narrative writing for ecological restorative justice and related earth advocacy is crucial.

Narrative and Storytelling as Healing and Restorative Justice

“You are all the things you have ever known and will ever know” (P. Harjo 141).

The above quote provides hope that some things will never be forgotten. “We know who and what we are. And that knowledge does not come from blood or legislation or a school or community consideration. In LaDonna Harris’s words, it comes from ‘the heart’ and the heart knows what it is” (qtd. in Sanders and

Peek 12). Once Indigenous narrative and oral history is eradicated, the culture and habits of the culture are sure to follow. The Native Americans believe in the essence of life in every created element of Earth, down to the most minute detail. "Everything is alive and has a spirit, including rocks, trees, water, wind, stars, etc., according to the Indian perspective" (Blanche 29). This is exactly why it is believed all things on Earth (and Earth as a whole) should be respected, because all things on Earth are connected in a circle and people are at the center as the earth's caretakers. These beliefs were passed on to future generations via oral storytelling. "Groups around the hearth fires of their dwellings," wrote Carl Denzel, "the young and old loved to hear the tales relating to the entire concept of their being. Too few of these tales and orations have been remembered or recorded for the benefit of modern society. American life would have been richer, indeed, had our heritage from the American Indian been appreciated and preserved" (qtd. In Blanche 31).

Aside from providing stories which stressed caring for the Earth, as well as moral lessons, the Native Americans passed on knowledge practices for the benefit of the society as a whole:

We must hope that one day they will realize that Indian beliefs are backed by thousands of years of close observation. Learned truths refined by each generation and handed down for further development to the next. Genetic engineering through selective breeding allowed the Ponca to produce corn from wild seeds. It took generations of acquired knowledge to accomplish even after we knew the science of plant breeding. When the

horse came we transferred this knowledge to them and developed superior horses such as the appaloosa of the Nez Perce. Indians begin their education as babies and their lives were spent learning the most minute details of their world. Their welfare depended upon not only acquiring this education but daily putting it to practical use. (Camp 168)

Just over two hundred years since the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, most of our country is in a critically ill ecological and environmental status. This is due to a lack of respect for the earth as the Indigenous people practiced, and much of that practice from a scientific perspective of benefit is gone due to the loss of narrative oral history and narrative storytelling brought on by the boarding school era. "Colonization and genocide in the Americas and elsewhere depend on the destruction of cultural memory through attacks on indigenous rhetorical practices" (Driskill 57). Thus narrative, storytelling, songs, ceremonies, and cultural ecological service-learning within this course plan seeks to raise awareness and restore knowledge of what should have been revered by Western society. A traditionally provided Indigenous education and growth was valued on a personal, individual level in relation/connection to the people and world around you.

For First Nations people, study is directed at that which is not seen, not known, at what is cherished and hidden. In the discovery of the unknown lies growth. At the bare minimum, consciousness of who we are ought to occur. This takes some humility and, of course, some witnesses who know you. Study, then, is a collective and collaborative process: collective not in

the sense that one wants to come to a common position, but a collective in that many participate, and collaborative in that we all want to come to a good mind about what is cherished and hidden. The good mind ranges from clarity, consciousness, to the end goal of a good life. (Maracle 57)

I returned to study at Sinte Gleska University in the summer of 2017 to try to understand as much knowledge as I can from one specific tribe.

A growing awareness of the exclusion of American Indian voices had led to an increasing classroom focus on American Indian rhetorics and literature, and although this trend is notable, some of the potential for progress is thwarted by the unintentional perpetuation of stereotypes and appropriation of American Indian cultures. (King, Gubele, and Anderson 4)

I whole-heartedly confess that there is much to learn, more than I will learn in a lifetime. However, this does by no means imply that I do not greatly value the privilege of coming to know just the smallest fragment of Lakota knowledge, the people, and culture. I am blessed and honored for the opportunity to do so.

I intended to take a second Lakota language class in the summer of 2017, but my availability and the course availability did not coincide, so I registered for a class in Ethnocosmology with Douville. Prior to the first day of class, when I was back in Indiana, I showed Janke at Valparaiso University a photo of the man I registered with for the class from an on-line article about the topic. "This is the man who gave me the walking stick to hike Bear Butte that you have" Janke replied. It had been in the back of my 4Runner SUV for the past few years.

When I returned to Rosebud for my first day of class, I asked Douville if it belonged to him. He replied that it belonged to Duane Hollow Horn Bear. Douville and Duane Hollow Horn Bear look a lot alike. I took it to Duane Hollow Horn Bear and asked him if he missed it. “Yes!” he replied, “It finally made it home. I’m sure it has many stories to tell from your travels.” Duane Hollow Horn Bear³⁴ and his wife Elsie invited me to their Sundance. The year before, Spotted Calf-Martinez (who now happily shared with me that she began her Native American Studies Ph.D.) had also invited me to her 2017 Sundance, so in the summer I attended both.

In some very small way, this course plan and pedagogy helps us begin to learn the stories, the narrative, the ecological worldview of the Lakota, *Mitakuye Oyasin*. This worldview, in combination with service-learning expressed via narrative/place-based writing, can serve as a means of fostering restorative ecological justice in Jasper County, the home of what was once St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School. Moreover, it can expand beyond this territory, back to the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, the place from where some of the students of St. Joe’s were brought to Rensselaer. Had we been learning from the Lakota Sioux, and other tribes represented at St. Joe’s, Northwest Indiana, as well as the rest of the U.S. would be a very different landscape today.

The Native American population, as well as the land, have narrative stories to tell. Those stories, connected and related to student service-learning narratives, can change not only landscapes, but people everywhere. “Stories are

³⁴ Duane Hollow Horn Bear’s statement regarding the return of his walking stick will become even more significant in Chapter Five.

‘more than survival, more than endurance or mere response’; they have the power to make, re-make, un-make the world” (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses* 15). The Kankakee Valley Historical Society can utilize student experiences to promote marsh restoration in Jasper County. The Northwest Indiana Citizens Helping Ecosystems Survive (NICHES) Land Trust organization also needs help with hands-on prairie restoration from donated farmland via the replanting of native plants to restore native wildlife, such as bison, which are being reintroduced. The bison arrived in the fall of 2016 from Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. These are just a few of the possibilities for a *Mitakuye Oyasmin* themed service-learning course in Northwest Indiana. Full circle from there, this course plan allows students to experience a service-learning trip with people of the Lakota Sioux tribe via the Lakota Youth Development Camp in Herrick, SD. The cultivation of traditional healing plants via a planted medicinal garden, along with ceremonial practices related to those plants, may be just one of the seasonal service-learning opportunities students can engage in there as part of the course, with related narrative writing assignments.

Narrative writing assignments, which are further described in the next chapter, can be used to align our university objectives with not only service-learning, but more engaged student writing. Since in the past my experience has been that students relay a lot of detail regarding their service-learning experiences because they are utilizing a hands-on method of learning, I also encourage the use of “thick description,” which will be beneficial due to the service-learning component of the course plan (Geertz, *Available Light*).

Examples and instruction of thick description will be provided as part of the course plan. Designed writing assignments for the class, journals, in particular, involve the use of narrative to establish how local opportunities “make things matter” for the class body (Pagnucci 9). As narrative is used, it can be drawn upon as a “project management tool” at a later time to adjust our projected service-learning and writing goals for future and continued outcomes and success (Scott 1). These student narratives within assignments in this course plan can establish a story for the future of cultural and ecological restoration in Jasper County, and beyond, with the Native American boys and young men who attended St. Joseph’s Indian Normal School remembered, not forgotten.

I did eventually return to the old St. Joe’s school a second time in 2016, after having originally gained access to the St. Joseph’s College library archives following placing sage and cedar there. I placed another four fronds of cedar and sage at the front and back of the building. I sensed the presence of many spirits. I did not have my cell phone handy, so I could not record the sounds I heard coming from inside, a rush of footsteps from the past. Nearly a year later, in 2017, feeling the time was right, I returned a third time with sage and cedar on a clear morning at six o’clock a.m. On the way up the long, lonely driveway, I was greeted by two young eagles playing in cross paths directly over my 4Runner. As I parked and got out, they swooped down over my head, calling, then disappeared. As I placed the sage and cedar this time, sensing something would again happen, I turned on my phone video camera. One of the two eagles appeared out of a cloud, swooped counterclockwise over the building, calling out

the three sets of times I had now placed sage and cedar there, then it swooped over my head, and disappeared.

Following this experience a few weeks later, when I attended both Sundances at Rosebud, an eagle came to each. One eagle circled over my 4Runner as I pulled away, the other circled over the ceremony, both flew counterclockwise. I was told this was a special blessing. In total, I have been visited by three counterclockwise circling eagles this summer—the same number of times I have visited the old Indian school with sage and cedar. The fourth visit to the old St. Joe school is pending—a circular, intertribal, healing ceremony, as is revisited in the overall conclusion of this dissertation in Chapter Five, along with the further significance of the counterclockwise circling eagles, especially as they pertain to Jasper County.

At the second Sundance, I also learned that Duane Hollow Horn Bear is now involved at the St. Francis Indian School at Rosebud, along with High Crane, both are teaching young students there traditional Lakota language and culture. Both attended a boarding school that existed there when they were young. Their lives are full circle ceremonies. One of the texts I intend to utilize in my course is by a Lakota man, Walter Littlemoon, entitled *They Called Me Uncivilized*. The narrative served as a healing process for Littlemoon in the retelling of his boarding school experience and life. I wonder how many other lives can experience some level of healing and reconciliation through the power of narrative.

In searching through the archives of St. Joseph's Indian Normal School which I was eventually granted access to, I found the name of a young Chippewa man. Through sheer happenstance, I found that one of the former professors at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer is his great-great granddaughter. She is going to look further into her family history there. St. Joseph's College closed its doors this past May due to financial problems and the archival records regarding the Indian school are no longer available. It was within a very limited window of time that I had been granted access to the records, although I believe I was meant to see them from the time I was four years old. This writing is my ceremony.

Jason Wesaw, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Potawatomi Tribe that I contacted, responded to my e-mail inquiry as I sought to ascertain if he was related to the three young men with his surname who also appeared on the archival rolls of the school. He is indeed related, and he, as well as the appropriate tribal recipients for the Sioux, the Chippewa, and the Menominee, received information for the names that I could recover from the archives. The final ceremony belongs to them. The narratives of the boys and young men who attended St. Joe's are yet to be told...who they were, and who they are...ancestral stars in a night sky, eagles by day...spirits circling overhead—dwelling where the temperance of this world, and the infinity of the next, shall one day meet...in story. As above/so below.

Mitakuye Oyasin.

CHAPTER FOUR

A NARRATIVE PLAN OF ACTION LOCALLY AND BEYOND

Moving Forward While Moving Backward

“Teach me how to trust my heart, my mind, my intuition, my inner knowing, the senses of my body, the blessings of my spirit. Teach me to trust these things so that I may enter my sacred space and love beyond my fear, and thus walk in balance with the passing of each glorious sun” (Lakota Prayer).

The top of the very first page of typed, narrative, archival records for St. Joseph Indian Normal School reads as follows:

Every year towards the end of summer the good priests undertook journeys to Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and Michigan to secure the raw materials on which to apply the tools of civilization. A motley crew it was when finally it arrived at Rensselaer. Most of them underestimated the boon that was going to be conferred upon them and tried to escape whenever the chance presented itself. (Herman 335-41)

On the same page, the clergy who ran the school, concerned about sustained government school funding, also lamented that the school, in its assimilation and catechismal practices, seems to have excited the envy of some bigoted individuals who were obviously just anti-Catholic. At the time, competition between Catholic and Protestant Indian boarding schools was rife.

While plenty of Indian boarding schools in the U.S. had no religious affiliation whatsoever, few of the government sanctioned schools met any kind of resistance from the general public. They did, of course, meet with resistance

from the Native American public³⁵. One tribe of such resistance was the Onondaga Iroquois, famous for stating their reply to government officials: “if the gentlemen of Virginia shall send us a dozen of their sons, we would take great care in their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them” (sic; qtd. in Franklin 27).

Colonial society had a unique opportunity to learn from Native Americans. It is not too late to do so. In fact, it is vital to our continued existence, especially in this current, crucial, point in time, with racial, societal, and ecological upheaval upon us. As people of all backgrounds, races, creeds, and strata, we still have an opportunity to offer ourselves and our spirits as the raw materials upon which to apply the tools of a more balanced civilization by seeking to learn from Native American people, who continue to view us all as relatives. The amazing fact is, despite the genocide, immense pain, and trauma of the past, the descendants of some of the same individuals who were victims of the boarding school era are still willing to teach us. That mindset is civilization. That practice is true humanity. (And, dare I say it, that level of love for all human beings as relatives is a true and merciful example of Christianity as well, a virtue that would have likely been encouraged at St. Joe’s.) In the case of this dissertation, the Sicangu Lakota have allowed me to be placed somewhere within their trust, and this valued connection altogether overwhelms me. Together, we will walk a road into the past, to seek out a better future. A better future requires two things: unity and balance.

³⁵ Vocalized resistance was mostly silenced by church and government officials.

Don Trent Jacobs (also known as Four Arrows) states:

Nature teaches us the importance of finding ways to bring seemingly conflicting opposites into harmony without destroying either one. This claim stems from a worldview derived from diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors—also our ancestors—studied nature deeply and holistically for hundreds of thousands of years. There is a second worldview, however, that has emerged during the past nine or ten thousand years that has largely departed from the first one. Is there a way to bring these two conflicting worldviews into harmony? (*Point of Departure* xi)

Jacobs' quote focuses on humans' historic distancing from an Indigenous worldview for the sake of one that is supposedly more advanced, yet separated from nature. A disconnection from the natural world, and a lack of holistic thinking, has had a detrimental impact on humans, as well as all our relations. Climate change has presented the world population with numerous diseases not encountered before and they are spreading at a rapid rate. Don Trent Jacobs states, "Although most diseases and health problems in the world relate to such environmental conditions, mainstream thinking tends to see us [humans] as separate from the delicate biosphere" (sic; *Teaching Truly* 95). Modern advances in knowledge need to be balanced with more ancient forms of Indigenous education.

Indigenous peoples indeed, historically, had a complex system of education. "Knowledge was transmitted through oral tradition and direct

interaction by elders, singers, and storytellers, and their curriculum was far-ranging and deep: mathematics, marine biology, music, botany, astronomy, dance, art, architecture, geology, cartography, language, watercraft, culture, and religion” were taught among other intellectual and practical applications (Wu, *et al.* 19). These teachings were carried out hands-on, in context. Since knowledge was passed on in context, orally, with great care and accuracy, my dual purpose is to additionally find a way to balance oral knowledge and written expression of some of the same knowledge, through narrative, to the best of our ability in the course.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the use of the traditional Lakota Sioux Native American tribal prayer, philosophy, and worldview, *Mitakuye Oyasin*, as the theme for an ecocomposition class comprised of a series of integrated, locally-related, ecologically restorative, service-learning components at Purdue University Northwest. This curriculum and pedagogy are developed to enact our campus plan for reaching targeted goals of expanded local service-learning, as well as improved, locally-engaged student writing. Further, this comprehensive course plan can hopefully transfer ecological restorative habits, skills, and practices in students across a greater sense of place, such as the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, therefore unifying and balancing traditional Westernized education with traditional Lakota education.

Within the course plan, a proposed spring break service-learning trip takes place on the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation, which has an Indian boarding school connection to our local area via the former St. Joseph Indian Normal

School. Thus, some of what we should have historically been learning and valuing from just one of the nations of the Indigenous peoples of North America will work in a reverse (or counterclockwise) circle, as we learn from the Lakota today through ecological service-learning at Rosebud. This circle also raises awareness that the boarding school era should not have happened, while also raising awareness of the incredible power of human spirit it has taken, and still takes, for the Native American population on this continent to survive such genocidal practices (one of many practices which continue), and then to possess the fortitude to move forward, surviving, and continuing to live to protect our Mother Earth. Native American survivance is a continuous act of surviving and resisting the dominant culture, based upon strength, while honoring cultural integrity. Even today, with numerous oil pipeline resistances constantly underway, the ancient, unchanging, prayer and worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasín* endures.

My course plan utilizes a combination of texts and films by Lakota authors, additional Native American authors, as well as print, film, oral knowledge, and research information regarding our local area history and ecological restorative need, combined with texts related to restorative justice on a comprehensive level. These are texts and materials I have collected over time. Some have been recommended by staff and faculty of Sinte Gleska University, the Sicangu Lakota people at Rosebud, and via my local Jasper County research and archival studies.

Examples of printed texts include *Lakota Way* and *To You We Shall Return* by Joseph Marshall III; *They Called Me Uncivilized* by Walter Littlemoon; *Native American Reader: Stories, Speeches, and Poems*, a collection by Jerry D. Blanche; supplemented with handouts from *Point of Departure: Returning to Our More Authentic Worldview for Education and Survival*, by Four Arrows (aka Donald Trent Jacobs); *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko; and *For Indigenous Eyes Only: a Decolonization Handbook*, by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson & Michael Yellow Bird. Handouts from Wilson and Yellow Bird's handbook will be particularly beneficial in instructing and illustrating the use of thick description in writing for class dual discourse journals.

Examples of films used in the course consist of *Everglades of the North*, by Director Pat Wisniewski; *Dakota 38*, a documentary by Director Silas Hagerty; and *We Are A Horse Nation*, a documentary by Director Keith Braveheart, among others. The course texts and materials will provide initial exposure to the Lakota worldview and how it is beneficial in ecological service-learning, fostering restorative justice of land through culture, as will be addressed in Chapter Five.

Writing assignments for the course (described in further detail later in this chapter) are ultimately tailored to local service-learning in Indiana, and then beyond to Rosebud, with concurrent ecological restorative advocacy using a Lakota worldview. There is much to learn from what is left (and in need of restoration) of the original prairie and marsh environments of these locations. Writing begins via journaling by composing an identity poem, followed by a place-based narrative, to establish a sense of connection between a student and a

locale of significance. After the poem and place narrative, the film *Everglades of the North* will be shown in class, followed by an outdoor group search for a geocache timed with the local, annual, Sandhill Crane migration, raising awareness to one's relatedness to all our relatives (*Mitakuye Oyasin*) in the cycle of life. Narrating the geocache journey can begin to "make things matter" for the class, highlighting the importance of restoring and preserving our area wildlife and wetlands (Pagnucci and Mauriello 9). With our local ecology and wildlife in need of restoration since the draining of the Grand Kankakee Marsh at the turn of the century, it is important students realize their personal connection with, and responsibility to, their local environment. Furthermore, as a trip is later made to the Rosebud Reservation, students involved in this course can recognize the importance of local ecologies as part of the larger whole of the Earth's ecosystem.

Since the draining of the Grand Kankakee Marsh in the late 1800s coincided with Native American peoples being driven from their homelands, put on reservations, and their children sent to boarding schools, such as St. Joseph's Indian Normal School, we can arrange to stop by the school on the way back to campus following the geocache search. The film *Dakota* 38 will also be featured in class (with a choice of film analysis as Formal Writing 1), bringing local ecology and history together for students. Some short videos are also utilized in the course plan during our classroom hours to raise awareness of the boarding school era, and students can journal regarding their thoughts, now encouraged to see situations from both their perspective, and what might have been a Native

American perspective, taking note of where these two perspectives either do or do not intersect. Students may also begin thinking about, and noting, why different perspectives exist. Journal entries will then narratively record service-learning and camp experiences from dual perspectives and discourses—that of each student’s personal worldview, and a Lakota worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, seeking to find what could be unity and balance between the two.

Moving forward from initial identity, place-based writings, and the geocache search, the course plan moves to engage students in local ecological research and service-learning field work at various available sites each semester. The initial site is a marsh restoration area, supervised by John and Mary Hodson, which lies along what is now the dredged Kankakee River. As local farmers and experts on the topic, the Hodsons will provide us with more oral history of the area. Following students’ location of the geocache at the marsh/river site, we have the opportunity to do a controlled burn in one section of the old marsh to re-establish native marsh grasses, and then to plant a traditional, Native American medicinal healing garden nearby. A “sister garden” will be established at Rosebud later in the course. A “three sisters” garden may also be planted nearby with the traditional Native American diet staples of corn, squash, and beans. Other future possible sites of service-learning consist of tree planting at the Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Preserve, and the opportunity to help restore Collier Lodge as an ecological education complex.

In the hands-on work at our sites as part of the course plan, students also physically work along with me, their instructor. I have a personal history with, and

knowledge of, the chronological ecology of the targeted areas in need of restoration. Although many of the students at PNW may live in this area, they may not be aware of this ecological history, and indeed, we are all still learning. My course plan and pedagogy actively put Freire's problem posing model to use as students work and learn reciprocally along with their instructor (72). The only way for all of us to understand our local ecology, and how it fits into the greater whole of all Earth's ecology, is to interact with it. The course plan has students develop research papers (Formal Writing 2) about our local, hands-on, service-learning practices, while also discussing ways to assist in drawing public attention to these efforts via developed printed (and possibly digital) material for the site entities and the class.

In the case of the sister garden at Rosebud, a twin, geographically appropriate, medicinal garden will be planted while a service-learning week is spent at the Lakota Youth Development Camp (LYD, formerly the Native American Advocacy Program). The purpose of LYD is to get Lakota young people back in touch with traditional Lakota culture and their identity as Lakota people through interactive learning, practices, ceremonies, experiences, and storytelling—much of what was oppressed and/or outlawed by the U.S. government during the boarding school era, along with the resulting loss of those practices today. Bull Bear (who is also a historical trauma specialist) and I discussed various hands-on service-learning opportunities for a visiting PNW class as the camp gets prepared in the early spring of each year for the summer camps to teach Lakota youth.

At the camp, students in the course and I assemble our own traditional Lakota tepees (provided by the camp), and live in them for the week, following a traditional Lakota lifestyle of being connected to Mother Earth (If the weather turns bad, we will move to the on-site bunkhouse.) When we are not doing on-site service-learning, we will also receive a traditional Lakota education covering Lakota history, art, traditional games, ethnobotany, Lakota star knowledge (ethnocosmology), Lakota foods, honey production, and ceremonies. Bull Bear will provide a schedule for the week about a month prior to our visit, based upon LYD's current needs for service-learning projects for students to engage in, and based upon various speakers' schedules to provide traditional Lakota teachings by date availability. These teachings are the some of the same educational lessons young Lakota campers will be learning after we leave the camp, as they get back in touch with their own culture, although they will learn on a much deeper and comprehensive level. Teachings will be provided to us by LYD board members: Marshall, Bull Bear, and Tamayo, among others. Marshall and Bull Bear mentioned on separate occasions that what they felt was most important my students learn about Rosebud and Lakota culture is that there is so much more than poverty on the reservation. I believe Marshall and Bull Bear know I am already aware of this fact, and I have confidence students in my course will see the amazing people and worldview here as well.

I initially became acquainted with the LYD through Tamayo and Duane Hollow Horn Bear on my first visit to the Rosebud Reservation. Tamayo worked as a cultural specialist and manager for the Tree of Life Agency in Mission, SD,

run by the Methodist Church. Tree of Life works in tandem, at times, with LYD when LYD is in need of assistance with a project that requires service-learners with hands-on skills to help ready the camp for operation. Service-learners assist with repairs to the facilities, and other individual, smaller issues as they arise. Tamayo was on the board of directors for LYD and introduced me to Bull Bear, Executive Director of LYD for over twenty years. (Bull Bear and Tamayo were both also very involved in the Dakota Access Pipeline resistance at Standing Rock, as well as being involved in many other area environmental advocacy efforts.) Other board members at LYD include Dr. Webster Two Hawk, Sr., Earl Bullhead, Jerome Kills Small, and Wayne Weston.

Opportunities for a PNW service-learning group include, but are not limited to: initiating a traditional Lakota medicinal healing garden on site (with a sister garden at the Grand Kankakee Marsh site); participating in helping with preparations for a Lakota equine youth camp (seeing horses as our relatives), as well as with other specialized, traditional camps; assisting with the Lakota Youth Enterprise at the camp, which produces local honey marketed under the name *Honey Lodge* honey (a Lakota youth-run business on site); and harvesting *timpisila* (prairie turnips, a Lakota diet staple) nearby for camp usage.

Initiating the traditional Lakota medicinal healing garden at the camp by clearing the land area, researching traditional healing plants with Lakota elders and members of the Sicangu Lakota tribe³⁶, and transferring seedling plants and wild plant offspring to this garden, will be beneficial later as Lakota youth learn

³⁶ I have been researching these plants with community members since 2017.

traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) from the garden at the camp(s). Our PNW group can also have the opportunity to install a drip irrigation system around the garden and write informational brochures about the history of the medicinal use of each plant from a Lakota cultural perspective, as well as from a standard botanical perspective. The brochure for each garden site (at LYD and at the Hodsons') will also feature information for the planting and care of the botanical specimens. These printed materials will be useful to the camp and to the surrounding communities. Once the gardens are well established, cuttings and seeds from the gardens may also be available to the surrounding communities. Use and care of these medicinal plants is not always common knowledge in either location.

At present there are no plans for PNW students to attend specialized camps in session over the summer with young Lakota learners due to the camp's current and understandable mission statement. However, many college-aged Lakota young people either work or volunteer at the camp, so there is opportunity for reciprocal learning and friendships to be established. The Lakota young people will also teach and interact with us during the week we are at the camp. PNW students will narrate all experiences at the camp in their journals from both their own perspective, as well as through the theoretical lens of the Lakota people, seeking unity and balance through differences and similarities. Traditional Lakota ceremonies such as welcoming honey bees to their hives in the spring and singing traditional songs to medicinal herbal plants prior to transplant (and then prior to harvest) to release their healing powers, are just a

few examples of cultural teachings which may be experienced by the visiting class from PNW. There is also a ceremony to welcome the Thunder Beings, which in Lakota culture bring the spring rain storms to nourish Mother Earth. (See fig. 29 below.)



Fig. 29. A Lakota Thunder Being on Horseback depicted by Black Elk on ledger paper (Berlo 29).

As one of the later projects following planting the medicinal healing garden, assisting in preparations for the annual Lakota equine youth camp at LYD can establish connections with all beings on earth as relatives, once again echoing *Mitakuye Oyasin*. At the equine camp *Sunka Wakan* (which translates in Lakota as horse, or sacred dog/giant dog), participants learn to establish a connection with horses as relatives, and part of the *Sunka Wakan Oyate*—the Horse Nation. As campers are placed near the horses they will be working with and learning from, the Lakota philosophy is the horse chooses the person they wish to have a relationship with on an individual basis. For example, when a

single person is put into the corral with a group of horses, an individual horse eventually emerges to come specifically to that person. This helps individuals see the power of the choices that horses instinctively make, and to observe how horses are often instinctively smarter than people in forming relationships and special bonds. The Lakota are very closely tied to *Sunka Wakan*, and they have many stories of people's lives being saved by both domestic and wild horses.

As Bull Bear and I one day discussed the Lakota people's special relationship with the horse, I told her a story of my first experience trying to ride a horse. Diane, my best friend in high school, loved horses and had two of them. The summer after Diane and I visited the old, abandoned, St. Joseph Indian Normal School when we were teenagers, she invited me over to ride one of her horses. Since my Grandpa Gifford had been known as quite skilled working with horses³⁷ (he died when I was two years old), I decided to give it a try. When I arrived, she brought the two horses out of the barn. One of the horses was very old and slow, and the other was younger and faster. I told Diane I wanted to ride the old and slow horse since I had no experience riding. Plus, I could tell the younger horse wanted Diane to ride him because he kept gently leaning toward her. She insisted I ride her horse, as she was afraid the old horse would not go very fast. From the minute I saddled onto her horse (against my better judgment), he took off running, then promptly threw me off into a cottonwood tree. I did not trust this horse, and it did not trust me. We had no relationship. It took me years

³⁷ He was known for easily breaking and training them.

to get back on a horse. Bull Bear reminded me it often takes a very long time, as well as a lot of patience to form trust, balance, and relationships. Yet, I know establishing, earning, and valuing these gifts often begins with small efforts, and in gradual, but consistent ways.

The trust, balance, and relationships between animals and people are the same as those between all people, as well as between people and ecosystems, and even people and the cosmos. We all have to work together, and just like everything else, even ecological balance is going to take time. Trust, unity, and balance in all four directions is reflected in the symbols identified in Chapter Two: as above/so below, and as within/so without. They are conjoined in the symbol on the attire of Scorched Lightning, a Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux Warrior as pictured (See fig. 30 below). This symbol is another reflection of the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin* and balanced interconnectedness between all beings.



Fig. 30. Scorched Lightning (Huffman).

Today, unfortunately, balanced ecological conservation efforts are very slow. “The usual answer to this dilemma is ‘more conservation education.’ No one will debate this, but is it certain that only the volume of education needs stepping up? Is something lacking in the context as well?” (Leopold 243).

I believe the context which is missing is hands-on field work/service-learning in a setting where those who can truly further teach conservation education are leading the way by example: Native American and First Nations people (the Lakota exist in the U.S. and Canada), along with others who actively believe in the essence of the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Bringing back the balance between all people and land is about restoration. We cannot sustain that which is not yet currently sustainable. In essence, we have to look to the past and restore

some of what was lost in order to eventually move forward into a good balance of sustainability.

Ultimately, the course plan visit to LYD can not only further ingrain the concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, all my relatives, in PNW students, it can help them value the Indigenous knowledge that should have been considered at the onset of U.S. expansionism—while genocidal practices were underway in the boarding school era. Further, the trip can help, in whatever small way, for all of us to recognize unity, balance, and true democracy³⁸, which is a fundamental Native American practice, as we all learn and work together. Such experiences can prepare students for life outside the classroom, learning the value of collaborative thinking across multiple contexts. This mindset is a skill which is immeasurable in the job market later, including not only internationally, but cross-culturally. “Popularizing scholarship may help solve problems on academe’s front lines, but such action does not seem to do democracy any great favors” (Cushman, “The Public” 330). In other words, a course may fill a niche at a particular university, and even gain popularity as a draw for registrants, but if it does not create long-term, sustainable change within a community or communities, one has to question its motives in seeking true democracy. Creating democratic, cross-cultural understanding through ecological restorative justice is the goal of my narrative course plan materials attached as appendices to this dissertation. Viewing our earth through the lens of environmental balance and *Mitakuye Oyasin* can impact not only this generation, but future generations.

³⁸ The basis for the U.S. Constitution.

CHAPTER FIVE

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FULL CIRCLE

“Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children” (Sitting Bull qtd. in Kunesh).

Last month, after more than half a century has passed in my life, I revisited the circular stone dome that is the grotto on the St. Joseph College campus. The dome didn’t look nearly as large as it did the last time I was there, when I was four years old. Yet still I remember, and continue to sense, a spirit there. Perhaps it is ingrained in the stone, along with others at the old St. Joseph Indian Normal School, waiting to be quietly led out by their stories, just as they led me out of the grotto over fifty years earlier. I would like to think this dissertation effort is just the beginning of seeking to honor them, what they stood for, what they endured, who they were, and what we should have learned from them. They continue to be a hauntingly familiar piece of my childhood, much like family stories I tell today.

I may never know more about my generations-distant grandfather or what exact Native American nation he belonged to when he left at age 20. I may never know more of family connections to the medicine man who visited my great-grandmother and my grandmother each year. At this point, all I have is a county record book of his visits, and stories. Records get lost or destroyed. The one thing which did not get lost or destroyed is a distant thread that carried through to the future, and the same worldview I continue to carry today: *Mitakuye Oyasin*.

My Uncle Dave in State College, PA thinks the medicine man who visited my family a generation ago came from Kansas before Kansas became a state. I will continue to research this person. High Crane mentioned to me that the Sioux stretched down into Kansas at one time. Perhaps one day I will know more. People at Rosebud assure me that I will. For now, I can only imagine I will know when the time is right, in keeping with Indian time, or as the Lakota say, “as it should be.”

Just a few years after I encountered a presence inside the back of the old St. Joseph Indian Normal School at the age of fifteen, I graduated from high school and went to work for a local newspaper, the *Kankakee Valley Post-News* in DeMotte for five years. *The Post-News* was, and continues to be, a subsidiary of the *Rensselaer Republican* in Rensselaer, the next town to the south, where the old Indian Normal School still stands. When I worked for the *Post*, our office staff went to the *Rensselaer Republican* once a week to use their printing press to produce our weekly newspaper. The *Republican* had an archive room full of farm-related objects, antique contraptions, and local artifacts related to stories, along with a resident mouse or two. The archive room also stored old office furniture, and bound copies of old newspaper editions, along with stacks of old boxes containing who-knows-what. We referred to it as the junk room. Little did I know I would revisit this room.

In the fall of 2016, as I spent days searching through the archival records of St. Joseph Indian Normal School at the St. Joseph College Library (prior to the campus closing in May of 2017), one the final pieces of paperwork I came across

among the hundreds, if not thousands of others I had already seen, was an old newspaper article from the *Rensselaer Republican*, dated 1888. I immediately recognized the masthead, which has remained the same since 1888. The center column of the page follows (see fig. 31):

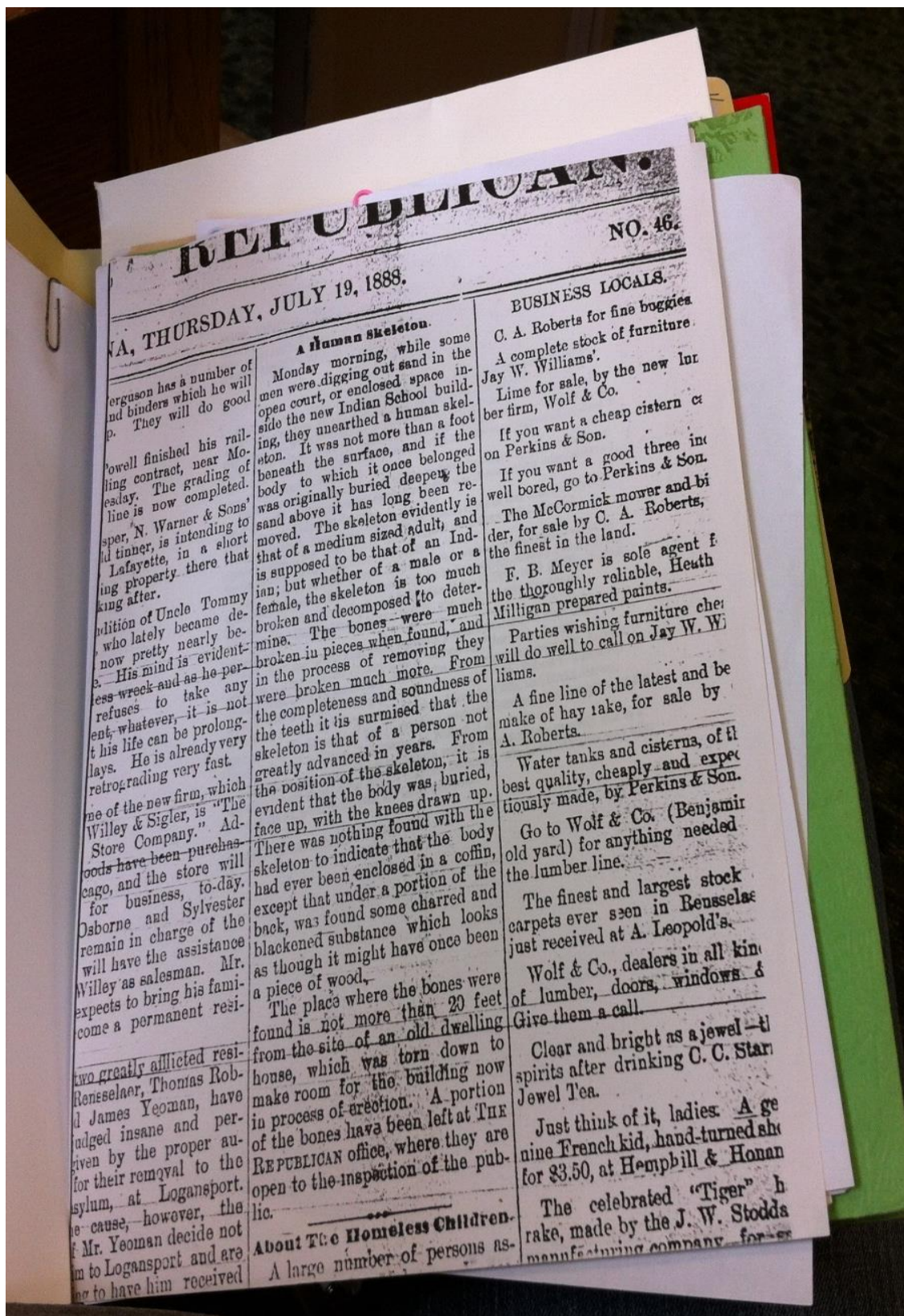


Fig. 31. "A Human Skeleton" (Rensselaer Republican, 1888).

The remains of the young person noted in the article were found in the center courtyard of the St. Joseph Indian Normal School in 1888. The school was built with a basement. These remains were found about 20 ft. from where I first encountered the spirit of a young man, in a crouched over position, having been left there to die. I sense there are others nearby. Some deaths at the school were recorded in the archives, yet there is no graveyard for the school. I can only locate a tombstone for one of the Native American students who died there at a cemetery down the road. There is mention in the archives of an accidental fire set by one of the priests, leaving him with a scarred hand. This may explain why some of the archival materials I researched through were fire damaged. Perhaps records of other burial sites were destroyed by the flames. Curious as I am, I went into the Rensselaer Republican Newspaper office after I found this article. As a former employee, I asked to rummage through the junk room. I thought perhaps the bones of the poor young man, as noted in the article, may still be there after all these years. I did not find them. Perhaps they are stored elsewhere. I have a deep and profound longing for them to return to their family and place of origin, along with the spirits, and perhaps remains, of others in need of repatriation: for peace. Perhaps this is the reason I was led to the Sioux.

St. Joseph Indian Normal School was by no means an isolated example of the U.S. Government's "Kill the Indian/Save the Man" effort. St. Joe's is just one of hundreds of schools that existed in the U.S., Catholic, Protestant, and non-religious. Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania is the most well-known, and the archival records of St. Joe's include inferences that there

may have been students who were sent from one school to the other, more so after St. Joe's closed. Records for particular one student, a young Lakota Sioux man who was a blacksmith from the Standing Rock Reservation, appears on the listings of both schools (as do others), first at St. Joe's, then at Carlisle on a list of deceased. It appears he originally arrived at St. Joe's with his own horse, a familiar relative, part of the Horse *Oyate* so closely revered by the Sioux. This young man, and others, have stories.

Unknown to me until around the summer 2017, members of the Rosebud and other Lakota Sioux tribes, including spiritual elder Duane Hollow Horn Bear³⁹ (the man whose walking stick I returned which had been given to me by Janke), have been seeking to repatriate remains of the Lakota children who died at Carlisle to bring them home. Duane Hollow Horn Bear's great aunt, Friend Hollow Horn Bear, is just one of the many children who died there. Duane Hollow Horn Bear laments that he feels pain for the remains of the children still there. Speaking regarding the records from Carlisle, he commented, "When you look at the pictures, you don't see one child smiling. That's because there was nothing to smile about" (qtd. in Gammage). Duane Hollow Horn Bear and other members of his family can speak from personal experience, having attended an on-reservation boarding school, St. Francis, at Rosebud, SD, a sister school of St. Joseph Indian Normal School⁴⁰. Duane Hollow Horn Bear described his experience prior to a movie shown at St. Francis Mission Boarding School when he was a student: "I received 50 swats with a wooden paddle when I was 10

³⁹ Elsie Hollow Horn Bear drew my attention to this fact.

⁴⁰ Although nobody at Rosebud was aware of the existence of St. Joe's in Rensselaer.

years old. This was for taking ½ of an apple out of the dining room. I took the apple because I didn't have any money to buy popcorn. Because of my experience, I believe I have knowledge of what my grandmother went through," continued Duane Hollow Horn Bear. "We carry that pain. We want to heal. We have to look at all the losses we suffered and process them. We need to heal and this is a big part of it" (sic; Waln).

Acknowledgement of wrong-doing is the initiation of healing. While St. Joseph Indian Normal School is 850 miles from Rosebud, and Carlisle is 1400 miles away, the distance between Rosebud and the schools followed a continuous train route to Pennsylvania (with a stopover in Chicago, and its branch lines), a path that is necessary to reverse for restorative justice (See fig. 32). In traveling the same route back to Rosebud from Northwest Indiana, my students will be aware of the distance many young people traveled from their homes to St. Joseph Indian Normal School in Rensselaer over a century earlier.

Children were transported over 1,000 miles to Carlisle

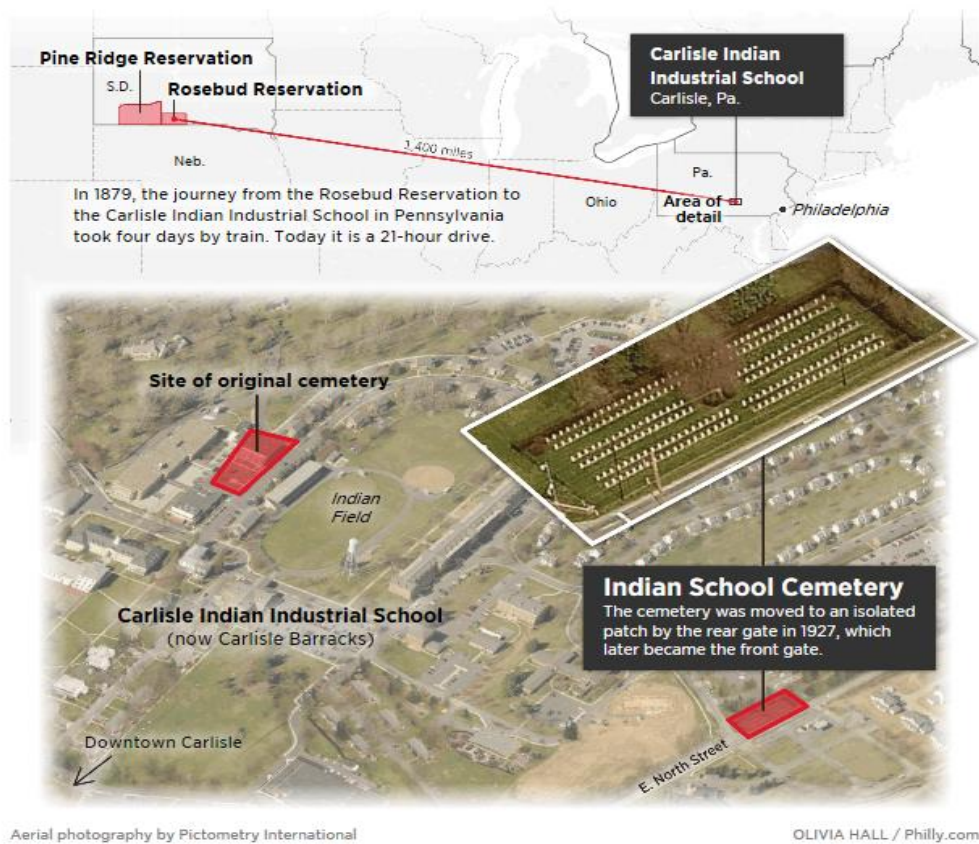


Fig. 32. Carlisle Train Route (Gammage).

No amount of time or distance should alter or prevent a full circle of the completion in family returned home. This action typifies *Mitakuye Oyasin*. The names of students I could gather from the remains of the records of St. Joseph Indian Normal School were forwarded to Duane Hollow Horn Bear, and the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) Russell Eagle Bear. The list was also made available to the THPO at Standing Rock, and to the respective THPOs: Jason Wesaw with the Potawatomi nation, as well as the THPO for the Menominee, and the Chippewa nations who attended the school. Much to my protest, the records of St. Joseph Indian Normal School were destroyed in December of 2017. In speaking with Dr. James Riding In, a Pawnee

scholar at Arizona State University, private entities, such as religious schools, can do with archival records what they see fit without penalty. Still, stories remain.

Narratives of the boarding school era exist nationwide. In fact, there are similar narratives that exist for Indigenous people worldwide. It is an all-too-familiar narrative of the fight against racism, genocide, and the destruction of our planet, which continues. We all need to be aware of this fact, and the fact that Indigenous people knew, and continue to know, our planet intimately, as a relative. *Mitakuye Oyasin* is in their spirit and in their language. The language is about the land. We must all learn to speak for it. Learning from the Lakota at Rosebud can help us begin the process.

Restorative Justice as a New Frontier

“Restorative justice is a compass, not a map” (Zehr 17).

As I spoke about St. Joseph Indian Normal School at the American Indian Studies Association conference at Arizona State University in February of 2018, I greeted the audience in the Lakota language. Some smiled warmly, others did not. It crossed my mind at that moment, many in the audience had ancestors who may have been beaten or killed for doing the same thing. Many on the Rosebud Reservation tell me they know the Lakota language, but will not speak it. The fear of reprisal lingers and the protection of that which is sacred continues: the language and the land.

The teaching of ecocomposition based on service-learning with a Lakota Sioux theme of *Mitakuye Oyasin* will allow all of us to acknowledge the Native

American community from the time immigrant settlers first stepped foot on North American soil. The teachings in the course also allow us to begin to learn from them today. *Mitakuye Oyasin* is an ancient narrative, but simply a new narrative lens of perspective for the field of composition. This narrative should have been focused on sooner, rather than oppressed throughout U.S. history, as well as throughout most of the U.S. history of education. Learning to value this worldview now, may very well ensure human survival, just as this worldview is intended to do, along with the survival of all our relatives. At this point, we all need to restore what the dominant population would refer to as an old Indian narrative as a new narrative, revisiting what has been a continuous and unfailing narrative of the Native American way of life. Acknowledging this worldview is crucial to our future, since our planet is obviously in dire need of ecological balance. It is our responsibility as humans to maintain that balance.

All human groups consciously change their environments to some extent—one might even argue that this, in combination with language, is the crucial trait distinguishing people from other animals—and the best measure of a culture's ecological stability may well be how successfully its environmental changes maintain its ability to reproduce itself. (Cronon, *Changes in the Land* 13)

Because the intended annihilation of Native American languages and cultures during the boarding school era had a profound impact on our ecology in the U.S., we must acknowledge wrong-doing to not only Native American people, but also to their land. Using service-learning to exhibit respect for a people and

their culture, as well as respect for land, has the ability to revolutionize the way we experience education. “[T]he ideal end result of transformational learning is that one is empowered by learning to be more socially responsible, self-directed, and less dependent on false assumptions” (Kiely 7).

Along with service-learning, Native American narratives and storytelling need to be revisited, as the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin* is subliminally ingrained within them. Aside from providing stories which stressed caring for the Earth, as well as moral lessons, the Native Americans passed on knowledge practices to the benefit of the society as a whole. I find it ironic that two of the texts I have studied for this dissertation are *Education for Extinction* by David Wallace Adams and *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert. The first text illustrates the boarding school era, and the second illustrates our impending human genocide. Thus, one tragic era has ensured humanity’s ultimate extinction unless we learn from a new, yet ancient, narrative and put it into practice to respect all our relatives, past, present, and future.

Walking Two Circular Narratives into the Future

“True justice requires ongoing dialogue” (Zehr 78).

Revisiting the past in order to change the future has, through this dissertation and course plan, become part of my family narrative. Although the Gifford Railroad went out of business years ago during the Great Depression with the introduction of the trucking industry, two of the things that remain from this history of land development are injustice and a damaged ecology. While the Grand Kankakee Marsh was drained to supply resources (chiefly crops and

produce) to the city of Chicago, no one questioned whether the effort was environmentally sound. Instead, ultra-bountiful crops were the Midwest's gold rush for farmers, right along with an expedient way to deliver crops via a local railroad. Ben Gifford started out as the son of a Scottish immigrant farmer seeking a better life, hoping to assist others in making a living via pride in a family farm, which is today, a rapidly disappearing icon of American progress.

If there is any law that has been consistently operative in American history, it is that the members of any *established* people or group or community sooner or later become "redskins"—that is, they become the designated victims of an utterly ruthless, officially sanctioned and subsidized exploitation. The colonists who drove off the Indians came to be intolerably exploited by their imperial governments. And that alien imperialism was thrown off only to be succeeded by a domestic version of the same thing; the class of independent small farmers who fought the war of independence has been exploited by, and recruited into, the industrial society until by now it is almost extinct. (W. Berry, *The Unsettling* 6)

While local developers and farmers at the end of the 1800s/early 1900s may not have taken the time to consider a balanced ecology in Jasper County in regard the Grand Kankakee Marsh and surrounding natural areas, that lack of respectful consideration is only exacerbated by the introduction of area monolithic super farms today, and family farms are struggling monetarily. "The dramatic loss of small farms in the United States is explained blandly as the result of global market forces, while small farmers who remain are represented

either as ‘hobby farmers’ or as ‘good managers,’ with those forced out of farming blamed indirectly for their failure to keep up” (Brewster 40). Ecological balance must be found in ways that do not take away farmers’ livelihood (and the majority of our food supply).

At the same time, there is, thankfully, an increasing awareness by corporations, farmers, and local citizens that land and our natural ecology is indeed exhaustible. Local efforts by farmers to restore ecological balance in and around Jasper County are just beginning to flourish. Last spring, John Hodson, local farmer and president of the Kankakee Valley Historical Society sent me photos of a Bald Eagle on his property near the Kankakee River, on what was once marsh. This was the day following one of my classes visiting the site for a brief tour of re-established wetlands, and I was able to share the photos with my students. Having traveled to this location the day before, they knew right where our friend, *Wanbli*, had appeared. (See figs. 33 and 34.)



Fig. 33. *Wanbli* (The Eagle) (Hodson).



Fig. 34. *Wanbli* on a Branch (Hodson).

The marsh is returning. A few weeks later, just within a half-mile to the south of the old St. Joseph Indian Normal School building, where the south end of the Grand Kankakee Marsh ended in connecting to the Iroquois River, one of my cousins (who was with me as I entered the circular stone dome on the St. Joseph College campus at age four) sent me a photo that her daughter, a professional photographer, took of a Bald Eagle nesting there; something unseen for most of the past century. Perhaps this nest is the home of the two young eagles which flew in a cross pattern over my head, with one of them then circling counterclockwise over and around the building when I last visited the old Indian school. (See fig. 35 on the following page.)



Fig. 35. The Eagle Nest (Rusk).

The Bald Eagle is returning. Other sites in Jasper County (as described in Chapter Four and the Appendices of this dissertation) are undergoing efforts to restore ecological balance as well. Through further connections established on the Rosebud Reservation with our Lakota relatives as partners, we can learn to speak for our local ecology, as well as the ecology at Rosebud, and help non-Native Americans listen to Native voices through the perspective of an alternate, and all-encompassing worldview.

Acknowledgement of past Native American genocidal practices in the U.S., such as those at St. Joseph Indian Normal School, need to be faced as fact

and become part of the American narrative. Indian boarding school trauma runs deep and wounds continue intergenerationally. Sadly, some of these genocidal practices continue in the U.S. today, with devastating effects on Native American communities, still unacknowledged by much of the American public. True restorative healing and reconciliation can only come through action and through truth. “Sometimes the solutions will require acknowledgement of past mistakes, and acceptance of insights for which none of our learning has prepared us” (Fraser qtd. in Donahue). Since the boarding school era is not generally part of the current and formal educational experience, this is a first step in seeking cultural, as well as ecological, restorative justice.

Mitakuye Oyasin embodies cultural restorative justice and ecological restorative justice, the same unified narrative has existed since ancient times. This worldview has simply been overwritten by the narrative of Manifest Destiny and/or dismissed and not valued “as it should be.” Current scholarship acknowledges:

Throughout history, numerous forward-looking social movements have contributed to the positive transformation of society, and sustained their efforts over the long term, in times of change and stagnation, and of success and failure, by exploring the paths to a fundamentally different kind of society. Over the past half century of ecological activism, many have engaged in the search for a radical counter-systemic outlook that can help transform our society’s relationship to non-human nature and re-harmonize our communities’ ties to the natural world. One such

perspective, which has played an important role in many forward-looking movements of the past several decades is that of social ecology. (Tokar 137-38)

The worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin* is radical ecology to non-Native American society today, yet it is neither new, nor has it not been sustained. It has merely been unacknowledged, along with Native American genocidal practices. *Mitakuye Oyasin* has never left the identity of the Lakota. It is who they are. “I know now that *cultural memory* is the mechanism by which all aspects of culture, everything that identifies a group of people as a distinct society or nation—language, customs, traditions, history, myths, legends, and spiritual beliefs—are passed from one generation to the next” (Marshall, *The Lakota Way* of 14).

Restoring the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin* to the entire North American and global narrative is one way to seek to begin to dismantle, if only in some small way, the tragic genocidal trauma that continues today in Native American communities. This trauma impacts all of us: human and non-human, for we are all related whether we all realize it or not. This dismantling will be a slow and gradual process, but it must start locally, and it must be in collaboration with Native and non-Native people alike, across all aspects of life, to seek reconciliation. “Reconciliation requires changes of heart and spirit, as well as social and economic change. It requires symbolic as well as practical action” (Donahue). This is why *Mitakuye Oyasin* put into action via service-learning locally, in Jasper County, and then circling over to the Lakota community in

South Dakota for this dissertation course plan makes sense. We all need to learn and work together for balanced solutions for all communities.

There are no quick fixes to Indigenous poverty and social disaster.

Solutions will be found when the non-Indigenous people respect the insights of Indigenous people, and listen to them. Solutions will not be found while Indigenous people are treated as victims for whom someone else must find solutions. They will be active partners in any solution. (Donahue)

As local, and then circularly connected efforts in South Dakota expand, a larger area will eventually be encompassed, reverberating nationally, and then globally. Of course, eventually, the related collaborators in these ecological and cultural reconciliatory efforts will require the participation of everyone. Of course, there may also be those who are simply not interested or resistant to cross-cultural understanding and/or ecological restorative justice due to their own preexisting beliefs about people and/or land. Additionally, those in society who are interested, may falsely see themselves as imparting knowledge greater than that which they absorb, in what could be called a “savior’ to the less fortunate” (Hansen 179). Hence, the focus of this dissertation reiterates the importance of equal relationships, cross-cultural and cross-contextual understanding, and open communication through the lens of new perspectives. “It is impossible to prefigure the salvation of the world in the same language by which the world has been dismembered and defaced” (W. Berry, *Life is a Miracle* 8). We must learn to look beyond what we know. “Solutions will be found through cooperation

between governments and private and voluntary sectors. This will require a degree of humility and trust which has not always characterised relations between these sectors. Each has a particular contribution" (sic; Donahue). Given the current political agenda in the U.S. regarding environmental issues, humility and trust among all concerned will be extremely difficult, but there is no other option for true and lasting reconciliation. "When the storm blows hard you must stand firm, for it is not trying to knock you down, it is really trying to teach you to be strong" (Marshall, *Keep Going* 63).

Walter Echo-Hawk, a Pawnee author and attorney states, "The cultural survival of Native America depends on a march to justice, and so does America's evolution from a settler state to a more just society" (248). This is true not only in Native American communities, but all Indigenous communities worldwide. The immeasurable genocidal loss in Indigenous communities for the profiteering of their seized lands has affected every aspect of the world, and these practices continue. Present day action with the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL Pipeline in the U.S. have tremendously negative impacts on Native American communities and worldwide ecologies, although these facts are not always made publicly known. "For the most part the dominant media have stereotyped native peoples as fighting a losing battle against the onslaught of industrial civilization" (Gedicks 168-69). Making students vitally aware of these dual circular narratives of cultural genocide and eco-destruction via an ecocomposition course based on an Indigenous worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin* put into practice via service-learning and ecological advocacy, can make students in the class aware of what

our world needs today, as well as what it needs in their future lives and careers around the globe.

All Our Relatives in Restorative Justice:

Healing Earth and People

“Grandmother, you who listen and hear all, You from whom all good things come....It is your embrace we feel when we return to you” (Fool’s Crow qtd. in Marshall, *The Day the World Ended* 47).

A connection or reconnection with the natural world often brings various forms of healing: physical, mental, and spiritual. However, reconciliation and restorative justice processes are often very personal, individualized, and multifaceted. No one person or group can tell another person or group how, when, and why reconciliation should take place, or if restorative justice has yet been carried out.

Both restorative justice and reconciliation are relational conceptions of justice. At their core, relational approaches to justice are not simply concerned with responding to wrongs but rather the harm and effects of wrongs on relationships at all levels: individual, group, community, national, and international. The focus of justice so conceived is on what is required to address these harms in order to establish and maintain peaceful (read variously as: restored, reconciled, or right) relationships, thus ensuring that the conditions for wrongdoing are not replicated. (Llewellyn and Philpott 14)

Trauma comes in many forms, and in Native American communities, it is often intergenerational. Sometimes, the best way to help is to be supportive as people and communities find their own path. Providing an environment with knowledge resources, as well as safe spaces for the facilitating of spiritual healing and other healing practices is a good beginning.

Some advocate the use of restorative approaches such as circles processes (a practice that emerged from First Nations communities in Canada) as a way to work through, resolve, and transform conflicts in general. Others pursue circle processes and other restorative approaches as a way to build and heal communities. (Zehr 7)

Attempting to apply Western ideas of resolution may only cause further damage in Indigenous communities. While it may be helpful when someone, or a group that has caused harm, works to try to make things right in some way, many crime victims are “ambivalent about the term ‘healing,’ because of the sense of finality or termination that it connotes. This journey belongs to victims—no one else can walk it for them—but an effort to put right can assist in this process, although it can never fully restore” (Zehr 39).

Moreover, deep and revered connections with people, creation, and the Creator take time: often a lifetime. Each person walks their own path to peace. Sometimes, inner peace is exhibited by actions to “repair harm rather than simply to inflict equivalent harm,” which requires a tremendous amount of both forgiveness and strength, such as I know is often exhibited through cross-cultural partnerships in learning through restorative justice (Van Ness and Strong 13-14).

Toksa Ake

"We are earth people on a spiritual journey to the stars. Our quest, our earth walk, is to look within, to know who we are, to see that we are connected to all things, that there is no separation, only in the mind" (Lakota Proverb).

This narrative dissertation has been a journey. It continues to be a journey and a call to action for valuing the Earth and Indigenous communities and their worldviews. The Lakota language has no word for authority since all things are related and we are all relatives. It also has no word for environmentalism, for environmental care is just something you do since you are part of the environment. Finally, the Lakota have no word for good-bye. When I leave Rosebud or come to the end of a phone conversation with someone there, I am told, "*Toksa Ake*" or just "*Toksa*," which translates, "I will see you again." Literally, it is meant, "I'll see you again, either in this life or the next." The Lakota also have a name for a place called *Wanagi Yata*, or the "place of the spirits." A number of people now living on the Rosebud Reservation have had visionary experiences which took their spirits to *Wanagi Yata*. There, they saw and sometimes were greeted by deceased relatives. They observed the life being lived in that place of the spirits⁴¹. But they were then instructed to return to their bodies and resume their lives here on earth. I have had similar experiences in my lifetime and people at Rosebud completely understand them and told me more information about them.

⁴¹ See *Zuya* by Albert White Hat, Sr. for more information regarding *Wanagi Yata*.

By means of these experiences the traditional Lakota views of the afterlife have been authenticated and re-affirmed over many generations. These experiences and traditions are spoken of and shared on the Reservation, and it is because of this that Lakota children can still be raised with reverence for the immortality of the soul, and with an understanding of the cosmic significance of tiospaye values. (sic; Goodman 23)

I can understand these views, especially in light of experiences I have had, including those at St. Joe's. "Our peoples, for centuries students and philosophers of the stars and all nature, gentle, compassionate, hard-working and courageous, lived a completely Spirit-dominated life. In a very short period of time our millennia-old way of life was nearly wiped out" (Yellow Bird 3). And yet, it remains, despite generations of imposed spiritual warfare.

Practices sometimes honor those who suffered during the boarding school era:

Harold Ironshield brings people of all backgrounds together, traditional prayers and sacred songs are rendered, our good traditional food is prepared and offered to the Pitiful Ones. He makes sure these ancestors know they are not forgotten, that their memories are cherished and held up, that what happened to them will no longer be hidden from view.

(Yellow Bird 7)

Recently, at Sinte Gleska University, memorial displays and chairs were set up, along with gifts placed on them for those from Rosebud who died at Carlisle and did not make it home. As repatriation of their remains is underway

by Eagle Bear and Duane Hollow Horn Bear, the chairs await the spirits of the children to return. (See fig. 36 below.)



Fig. 36. Chairs Awaiting Young Lakota Spirits (DeJesus).

Perhaps knowing and writing their stories, and then later with subsequent efforts, the stories of the students who attended St. Joe's, is one small step in the direction of restorative justice. If we overlook or forget them, as our relatives, perhaps we also forget and overlook ourselves, and this land which sustains us, our Mother Earth.

If we forget these connections, and ignore *Mitakuye Oyasin*, perhaps all of us will one day be forgotten: ghosts of the past: human beings eventually “undone by our ‘transformation of the ecological landscape.’ The logic behind this way of thinking runs as follows: having freed ourselves from the constraints of evolution, humans nevertheless remain dependent on the earth’s biological and geochemical systems” (Kolbert 267). We cannot, and will not, survive without

honoring and protecting land. We must find balance between humans and that which gives all beings life. There has never been a more crucial time to do so.

Crazy Horse, the Oglala Lakota Sioux war leader shared these words four days before his death:

The Red Nation shall rise again and it shall be a blessing for a sick world; a world filled with broken promises, selfishness and separations; a world longing for light again. I see a time of Seven Generations when all the colors of mankind will gather under the Sacred Tree of Life and the whole Earth will become one circle again. In that day, there will be those among the Lakota who will carry knowledge and understanding of unity among all living things and young white ones will come to those of my people and ask for this wisdom. I salute the light within your eyes where the whole Universe dwells. For when you are at that center within you and I am that place within me, we shall be one. (sic; Crazy Horse)

Crazy Horse's quote reminds me much of *Kapemni*, the place I call, where temperance and infinity meet.⁴² Yet, he uses it to bring all people together. His quote, said prior to the boarding school era, included "young white ones," and a hope that they would seek Native American wisdom. If we do not seek out this wisdom, and learn from the past, as well as from the grace and spirit of survivance of Native American communities and the knowledge they are willing to share, the entire planet faces an ecologically grim future.

⁴² The place (as I call it in Chapter Two) where earth and heaven, as well as this life and the afterlife meet.

Along with learning from Native American communities, we must honor their past, as well as who they are today. With an impending healing ceremony for the students who attended St. Joseph Indian Normal School in the works with the Sioux, Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Menominee tribes⁴³, let us hope that more spirits are brought home. They are eagles by day, stars by night. Like so many others in and from Native American communities, despite war, colonization, forced relocation, attacks on their culture, language, and way of life, the boarding school era, abuse, genocide, discrimination, intergenerational trauma and its terrible effects, poverty, and unfathomable loss—something mind-blowingly authentic and beautiful still continues to endure. Each time I leave Rosebud, many of my beloved friends there tell me four words:

“Toksa Ake, Mitakuye Oyasin.”

And I know I will see all of them again, because beyond all measurement of that which might even seem humanly possible, their spirits endure. As the Hollow Horn Bears, Tamayo, Bull Bear, Marshall, and many other dear people at Rosebud often tell me, with a warm and knowing glance above:

“We Are Still Here.”

A Note on Future Scholarship

“Each step, no matter how difficult, is one more step closer to the top of the hill” (Marshall, *Keep Going* 88).

The use of Indigenous teachings within the university setting has been gaining momentum in recent years. Scholars involved in this effort have faced

⁴³ This dissertation is my ceremony, along with what will become my own, personal way of honoring these boys' lives.

the challenge of “recognizing and seeking to close the gap between conventional academic discourse about Native American peoples and Indigenous modes of cultural teaching and learning” (McNally 604). It is my hope that my course plan serves as a way to further narrow this gap, creating a fresh narrative perspective of learning, bringing restorative justice to peoples and lands. Additionally, recognizing the immense value of American Indian college students’ knowledge as mentors within service-learning courses holds great potential. “The Indigenous concept of power and place strongly contrasts the mainstream scientific method of disaggregation, compartmentalization, and classification” (Nelson and Youngbull 95). Students from Indigenous communities may be able to express their knowledge of relationships and connections in ways otherwise inaccessible to both students from non-Indigenous communities and other Indigenous students. For students from Indigenous communities, these teachings and ways of knowing can “serve as a basis for connecting what students learn in school with life out of school” (Barnhardt 137). For those not from Indigenous communities, a new lens of perspective on community, relationships, and a sense of place can be gained.

On a personal level, I would like to accomplish several things beyond this dissertation and curriculum/pedagogy, later put into subsequent practice⁴⁴: First, I would like to see more information regarding Native Americans and Native American history, including history of the boarding school era in textbooks throughout the U.S. system of education, at all levels: elementary, secondary,

⁴⁴ Including an expanded, subsequent, graduate school course in partnership with Sinte Gleska University.

and at the university level. The survivance of Native American people is nothing less than an amazing testimony to the capabilities of the human spirit. The little that I was exposed to in my early formal education was not an accurate portrayal of their lives and culture. In fact, I had next to no formal exposure to Native American studies in school until I was in college. Most of what I learned prior to that time came from family stories and inherited knowledge from those family stories, along with family research. Writing this dissertation has opened my eyes to how little the non-Native American public really knows about Indigenous people in the U.S., including their history, much less their very present and vibrant cultures.⁴⁵ The love the Lakota have for land, our Mother Earth, and the subsequent protection of her, still captivates me. They are teaching me what it truly means to be a human being. It's about the language and the land—using ourselves (and our words) to care for her, as she cares for us, and teaches us to care for each other.

In examining a chronology of textbooks with his students, Dr. Michael W. Simpson, a Native American teacher/scholar, lamented there has not been much change for accuracy in U.S. history high school texts since 1885. He states, “as a teacher in American Indian schools, my students and I really questioned any improvement. History still felt like a weapon” (1). Primary and secondary school texts need to change altogether. These misrepresentations or under-representations of Indigenous people are at the expense of not only Indigenous

⁴⁵ At the same time, I am more fully realizing a part of my own ancestry in the context of the history of North America (and the greater world), especially in light of reminders of Pangaeon theory I recently viewed at the abbey on the Isle of Iona, Inner Hebrides, Scotland. We are all related.

peoples and their respective languages and cultures, which is indeed tragic enough, but also at the expense of an entire planet via the loss of a balanced world ecosystem. To quote Lincoln “The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next” (Lincoln). The students of today are the politicians and activists of tomorrow. Teaching equality and social justice now will equal cultural and ecological restorative justice later.

Second, like the country of Australia, we need the United States government to issue a public apology to all Native American people similar to the annual Sorry Day as an acknowledgement of the violation of Australia’s Indigenous population’s human rights. Just to our north, the Canadian government apologized to its native First Nations population for past government actions which suppressed their languages, culture, and spiritual practices⁴⁶ (Minow 113-14).

The U.S. needs to issue the same kind of apology. Judith Herman, a psychiatrist specializing in traumatic stress states “At heart, the apology depends upon a paradox. No matter how sincere, an apology cannot undo what was done, and yet ‘in a mysterious way and according to its own logic, this is precisely what it manages to do’” (qtd. In Littlemoon 135). It is a beginning of acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and just a flicker of the beginning of healing and restoration. There have been many apologies issued *by* Native Americans, such as in the film *Dakota 38*, which is part of this dissertation’s course materials, for offensives

⁴⁶ These apologies are at least a step in the right direction.

(although mostly defensives) of the past. It is time the remainder of the U.S. population realizes the myriad of apologies the Native American people deserve.

We should have been learning from the Native American people, rather than orchestrating calculated genocidal land-grabbing. “[O]nly crazy or very foolish men would sell their Mother Earth” (sic; Black Elk 106). If immigrant society had, from the beginning of their arrival in North America, been learning from the Indigenous peoples of North America, today the U.S. would be a very different country with a very different ecological landscape. It is not too late to learn: for the sake of the Native peoples, for the sake of all people, for the sake of all living things, for we are all related. If we could apply Indigenous beliefs about the earth to one community at a time, territory by territory, tribe by tribe, learning from them, I believe it can make a huge difference bit by bit. One of my best friends said she admires my efforts (in trying to teach this worldview and build a curriculum for it), but that overall, it will never work due to racism, capitalism, narcissism, and a number of other reasons. I say, full steam ahead, with Mother Theresa’s mantra on my desk: “build it anyway.”

Third, on my first visit to the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation, while doing community service-learning work with the Tree of Life relief agency, I became acquainted with its director at that time, Rev. Russell Masartis. In getting to know each other better, Masartis stated to me, “You know, we need someone like you here to document who the Lakota people are today.” I will spend the summers of 2018 and 2019 recording the narrative stories of the proud people of Rosebud as they see fit. We have much to learn.

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Appendix A

Mitakuye Oyasin and Balance:

Student Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

“I am going to venture that the man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures, and acknowledging unity with the universe of things was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization” (sic; Standing Bear, *Inspiration*).

In building a composition curriculum regarding working with Bull Bear at LYD and others involved in ecological restoration in our local Northwest Indiana community,

The stakes of public works are broader than classroom concerns. As such, our means for evaluating this kind of public work should go beyond traditional markers of student achievement and evaluation. A problem that persists throughout much service-learning scholarship, however, is a continued reliance on traditional methods for evaluating programs, which center on students. The student, his or her achievement, and his or her evaluations of the experience remain the primary benchmark for the majority of individuals evaluating service-learning projects. (Mathieu 93)

With Mathieu’s highlighted necessity of a non-traditional means of achievement and evaluation in mind, it is my belief that balance, again, should also play a part in this course plan, even applying to the means of evaluating student learning outcomes based upon university goals, as well as the goals for those we eventually serve—locally, and at LYD. The balanced evaluation of

targeted outcomes for this course plan should benefit not only students and those we serve today, but all parties concerned well into the future. This intended focus of overall balance will also provide students with the impetus to envision that their lives are not just about being reviewers and/or consumers, in the “here and now,” but that they are also to be responsible caretakers of the Earth “now and forever.” This concept is illustrated in the novel *Ishmael*, where Daniel Quinn makes a clear distinction between “Leavers” and “Takers.”

The Takers are the people often referred to as ‘civilized’ who formed a culture out of an agricultural revolution that began about ten-thousand years ago in the Near East. The Leavers are the people of all other cultures, referred to by the Takers as ‘primitive.’ The Leavers and Takers have very different stories. Each of these stories contain a core worldview that forms the basis of their respective cultures. As Quinn’s character Ishmael puts it: ‘The premise of the Taker story is *the world belongs to man*. The premise of the Leaver story is *man belongs to the world*.’ (sic; qtd. in Pfeiffer 134-35)

While *Ishmael* was published in 1992, the root of the worldview that humans belong to the world is nothing new. This philosophy has been the worldview of Indigenous peoples all along. We need to be aware of this worldview, learn from Indigenous communities, and ideally, put this knowledge into a lifetime of practice and teaching for the benefit of all communities.

Corresponding with O'Brien in Chapter One of this dissertation, this course plan seeks to reverse the United States' Native American genocidal narrative step by step:

- Remind the public that First Nations people were the first inhabitants of the continent
- Teach narrative Native history, events, and places with Native narratives, and correspondingly correct heirs to land
- Inform that Native American communities, cultures, languages, and practices are undergoing continual and vibrant revitalization. This knowledge benefits everyone
- The previous three actions will make the denial of Indian existence impossible

Four other sets of goals are underlying within the course plan. For the sake of brevity, they are not completely and explicitly stated in the syllabus.

The four goal sets are as follows:

Service-learning goals should focus on reciprocal learning and mutual responsibility between students, educators, and all other involved parties ("Eight Principles of Good Practice"). Goals consist of:

- Intention
- Preparedness and Planning
- Authenticity
- Reflection
- Orientation and Training

- Monitoring and Continuous Improvement
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Acknowledgement

Along with these steps, student learning outcomes for restorative social justice on a human level, according to Amy Bintliff, should entail the following:

- Open Mindedness
- International and Global Focus
- Positive Value Systems
- Ways to Make a Difference
- Declaring Universally that Rights have been violated
- Culturally Diverse Activities
- Participatory Methods
- Making Connections for Advocacy/Restoration (sic; 121-22)

These crucial outcomes on a human level, should be connected, just as all things on the earth are connected via *Mitakuye Oyasin*, with knowledge and skills that can be utilized throughout life in career, community, and local ecology.

Additionally, the following strategic outcomes garnered from the course engagement experience are recommended by the Association of American Colleges and Universities:

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
via engagement

- Intellectual and practical skills of inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy [sic; at a later time], information literacy, teamwork, and problem-solving skills
- Personal and social responsibility with civic knowledge and engagement locally and beyond, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, an impetus for lifelong learning within diverse communities with real world challenges
- Integrative and applied learning with synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies, via the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems (“Essential Learning Outcomes”)

Finally, targeted student learning outcomes for PNW’s⁴⁷ composition program should be integrated as well, with a focus on local and locally reverberating ecological issues that will benefit from a Lakota worldview centered student service-learning, while enhancing student writing via engagement as derived from the following goals:

- To foster an understanding of writing as a process (in an entirely new way) especially in regard to gathering credible research
- To help students see writing as a tool and method of creating and relaying provable ideas

⁴⁷ See Department of English.

- To help prepare students for academic writing in their other courses across the curriculum by helping them articulate, develop, and support a point through both first-hand experience and archival research
- To help students learn how to report in writing the results of their research consistent with the form, style, citation (including MLA, and perhaps APA), and documentation of sources that is appropriate for composing in a variety of genres for a variety of rhetorical contexts

These bulleted goals are integrated into the course syllabus, assignments and course schedule.

Appendix B

Course Syllabus, Assignments, and Course Schedule

“[P]eace comes within the souls of men when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the Universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere. It is within each of us” (sic; Black Elk qtd. in J. Brown).

The following course syllabus, assignments, and course schedule are designed to fulfill these collective student learning outcomes within a Lakota Sioux themed ecocomposition class based on service-learning, bringing ecological and cultural teachings into balance between a colonized, Western system of education and the Lakota worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Immediately following this information, descriptive narratives will be provided for each section.

**Lakota Themed English Ecocomposition via Service-Learning (4 credit hours, ten student enrollment limit)
Purdue University Northwest
Spring 2018**

Lora Mendenhall

Office: Classroom Office Building, 235

Phone: (219) 718-5157 (cell)

E-Mail: Lora.Mendenhall@pnw.edu

Classroom, days, and time: M/W, CLO 190, 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Service-Learning days: Friday, March 2, 2018 and Friday, March 30, 2018 along with one week in South Dakota—March 10-17, 2018

Office hours: M/W 12:30-4:30 p.m.

Office hours are also available by appointment via phone or e-mail

Texts

Marshall, Joseph M. III. *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living*. Viking Compass, 2001.

---. *To You We Shall Return*. Sterling Publishing, 2010.

Littlemoon, Walter. *They Called Me Uncivilized*. iUniverse, 2009.

Blanche, Jerry D. *Native American Reader: Stories, Speeches, and Poems*. Denali, 1990.

These texts in total should cost around \$40.00 or less.

Selected readings/handouts by additional authors will be provided. These authors include, but are not limited to: Four Arrows (aka Don Trent Jacobs), Leslie Marmon Silko, and Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird. These materials will be distributed in class. Films and film clips will also be utilized at various points in the semester.

Also Recommended:

An 8th edition MLA handbook will be of great use for the class, as a supplement to Purdue OWL.

Course Materials

- One two pocket folder – for your syllabus and handouts
- One spiral notebook – preferably the same color as the two-pocket folder specific to this class. (This will serve as your narrative class journal.)
- One 1” three ring binder – for your Final Portfolio

- Four dividers with tabs – for your Final Portfolio (Students will form a TOC later.)
- Pens
- A flash drive – to back up your work
- Money for photocopies if necessary
- Personal spending money for travel (meals, transportation expenses, lodging, and learning fees are paid to the registrar along with four tuition credit costs for the class)
- Sleeping bag or bedding for service-learning week in SD. Cots provided
- Be aware that although you may bring a cell phone to some of our service-learning sites, the phone may not have reception (internet or otherwise) at all times

Participation

You will find that our class will be much more interesting and enriching if you participate in **all** aspects of learning. This participation includes:

- Contributing to in-class and field site discussion
- Contributing as a valued and committed team member in **all** service-learning and group work. (If you are intimidated by public speaking for our PowerPoint presentation, the group will serve as your “team” system of support. If you have concerns beyond that, please see me. We will do a “get comfy with your classroom” activity beforehand to alleviate some of the stress.)
- Attending class and field sites, arriving on time, with your required materials
- Engaging in some required class activities at off-site, as well as out of state locations
- Adapting to a cultural setting with which you may not be familiar, perhaps without all the conveniences of home
- Completing reading and writing assignments on time, as assigned (this is an absolute **must**). We will have drafts of formal writing assignments which will undergo peer review and workshopping days in class
- Taking notes during lecture portions of the class. (I actually lecture very little—you will do most of the talking in this rather “flipped” and “hands-on” class experience.)
- Seeking help when necessary, either through your instructor, or the PNW Writing Center (219) 989-2200 in CLO 265. Tutoring sessions in the Writing Center are free of charge

Course Description

Lakota Themed Ecomposition with Service-Learning is designed to build upon some of the writing skills students have developed in earlier writing courses, such as English 104 or 105, but with a specialized Lakota Sioux themed service-

learning component focusing on local and expanded ecological restorative justice via “hands-on” experience. This course will continue to focus on some instances of rhetorical analysis, specifically within narrative, as well as introducing students to academic writing via regionally directed and culturally specific inquiry, research, and experience. The class will be grounded in a Lakota Sioux worldview—*Mitakuye Oyasin*—we are all related/connected to all living things. Your connection to Earth, your voice (narrative) and purpose as human beings, as well as writers to advocate for Earth and ecology, will be paramount in this class. We will seek to restore and serve some of our natural ecology within our greater regional community, and beyond.

Course Goals

- To foster an understanding of writing as an ongoing process including service-learning exploration, both personally, and academically, especially in regard to gathering credible research intended to prove a point and make a difference in ecological restoration and cross-cultural awareness
- To help students see writing as a tool and method of creating and relaying their experience and provable ideas
- To help prepare students for academic writing in their other courses across the curriculum by helping them articulate, develop, and support a point through both *first-hand experience* and in-depth research in multiple contexts, inside and outside the classroom
- To help students learn how to report in writing the results of their research consistent with the form, style, citation (mainly MLA for us—although we will also take a look at APA for our final paper depending upon the sources and/or data researched), and documentation of sources that is appropriate for composing in a variety of genres for a variety of rhetorical contexts

Course Assignments

Each student will develop a portfolio of their writing containing a total of four assignments, which includes a narrative journal. The narrative journal is to be hand written when possible. Formal writing assignments are to be double spaced in 12 pt. Arial or Times New Roman font with standard Microsoft margins. All writings must include the PNW Honor Code. Formal writings will consist of an initial draft, followed by the final paper(s). Drafts **must** be brought to class on peer review and workshopping draft days. Students without working drafts will receive an absence for the day. If you are having trouble getting started, by all means, please e-mail or call me. I am happy to discuss your ideas and work.

Due dates for peer review, workshopping, and final submittal will be listed at the top of each formal writing assignment prior to distribution.

Assignments (which are also attached to the end of this syllabus) will be explained in class when distributed at the appropriate intervals in the semester. Feel free to ask questions. The assignments consist of five journal entries, three formal writing assignments, and two PowerPoint presentations.

Assignments are to be handed in, not e-mailed. Each written assignment will have the following information on the upper left corner of the first page:

Student Name
Lakota Themed Ecomposition
Instructor Name
Assignment Name
Date

Page numbers should be in the upper right starting with page 2 including the student's last name and page, such as Mendenhall 2.

Grading

The overall course grade will be determined according to the following points and percentages:

In-class and outside-class work and participation (this includes site visits and service-learning)	10%	100 pts.
Collective individual journal work	25%	250 pts.
5 Short Writings (50 pts. Each):		
<u>Short Writing 1</u> – Poem		
<u>Short Writing 2</u> – Place Narrative		
<u>Short Writing 3</u> – Geocache Narrative		
<u>Short Writing 4</u> – Boarding School Narrative		
<u>Short Writing 5</u> – Reflective Narrative		
<u>Formal Writing 1</u> – <i>Dakota 38</i> or <i>Everglades</i>	10%	100 pts.
<u>Formal Writing 2</u> – Environmental Advocacy	15%	150 pts.
<u>Formal Writing 3</u> – We Are All Connected	20%	200 pts.
Research group work with PowerPoint presentation	10%	100 pts.
Overall portfolio preparation (sustained progression)	10%	100 pts.
	100%	1,000 pts.

This class will require time for reading, researching, and writing in tandem with service-learning at various locales. Your goal for this class is to become more confident and adept in your reading, thinking, analyzing, researching, and writing skills, while fostering hands-on ecological and cross-cultural awareness.

You should see progress reflected in the course of your writings, along with evidence that you are engaging in in-depth investigation, research, and experiential, thick description. A portion of your grade (100 pts.) will be calculated considering sustained progression in the preparation and overall presentation value of your portfolio. I will explain this concept further in class. Underlined assignments above will be included in your Final Portfolio.

Formal writing assignments will be graded according to primary and secondary trait scoring as determined by the class after the assignments are distributed. Corresponding peer review sheets established from these traits will be used in class and should help you stay on track in these areas as well.

Course Grading Totals:

921-1000	A
901-920	A-
881-900	B+
821-880	B
801-820	B-
781-800	C+
721-780	C
701-720	C-
681-700	D+
621-680	D
601-620	D-
600 or lower	F

It is very important to stay on-task in this class. It is very easy to get behind if you procrastinate.

You will **NOT** pass this class if you do not complete all the work. If you are stuck with an assignment, please contact me. I am always willing to help (and, as I stated, feel free to call my cell phone), however I do not tolerate laziness.

I **do not** accept late work. In the event of an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible either by phone or e-mail so we can discuss the matter.

Final portfolios are due on the last day of class. Late portfolios will not be accepted.

Attendance

Attendance is crucial to learning. You are allowed two classroom absences before your grade is affected. All absences are unexcused unless they are for a university sponsored event which is approved ahead of time. With absence numbers three and four, you will lose 25 points of participation per day from your

overall grade point value at the end of the semester. A fifth absence will cause you to be dropped from the class. It is your responsibility to contact either your instructor or a classmate to find out about any work assignments you may have missed due to an absence.

Three tardies will comprise one day of absence. A tardy beyond 10 minutes after the beginning of class is considered an absence.

One male and one female student may use the restroom at a time. Do not go in groups. Please wait for your classmate to return. It is too difficult to catch everyone up once they return.

Students are only permitted to leave class early with permission. Class ends with "That's it." Students who leave early without previous permission (such as letting me know you have a doctor's appointment or similar commitment) will receive an absence for the day.

Students are required to attend any and all conferencing days. A sign-up time sheet will be distributed. Students will also receive an update of their status in the class during conferencing.

Inclement weather days and campus closings are listed on the PNW homepage. I also send you an e-mail when I find out (sometimes earlier) about a campus closing.

Class Etiquette

Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be switched off in the classroom and during service-learning work times. Texting is also not permitted during these times.

Quiet food/drink is allowed in class. (By this I mean an Egg McMuffin and coffee, etc., not pork rinds and a slurpee.)

I believe in in-depth discussion and reasoned argument within the classroom. We will respect the viewpoints and opinions of our classmates. The more you think about various issues and opinions in this class, the easier your writing will become because you will be better informed by multiple perspectives. If there is something you do not understand from either the lectures or discussion, please feel free to raise your hand for a further explanation. There are no stupid questions. I would rather have you know than not know.

Write what you think, not what you think I want to hear. I value your genuine thoughts. I know what I think—I want to know what you think. If you do not agree with something, you can most certainly write about why. Feel free to explore your own thoughts and feelings—mentally, physically, metaphysically, and spiritually.

If you use auto-cite, make sure the in-text citing matches your works cited or reference page correctly.

Please do not use plastic page covers. (I do not want to crumple your hard work by taking papers out and returning them to the covers.)

This syllabus is also posted on the class Blackboard site for easy accessibility.

This syllabus may be subject to change. Any and all changes will be expressed in written update form in class, on Blackboard, and via e-mail. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Plagiarism and self-plagiarism will not be tolerated. See the information below. Penalties are listed on the PNW website.

Academic Honesty

Purdue University Northwest has adopted an honor code and pledge that is displayed in all classrooms on campus. The following pledge is taken from the Student Handbook:

I understand that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated at Purdue University Northwest. I am here to learn. Through learning, I will strive to become a better person and a more valuable contributor to society. I understand that dishonesty in the classroom, through cheating, plagiarism, or other dishonest acts defeats this purpose and disgraces the mission and quality of a Purdue University Northwest education. Therefore, I make the following pledge: "In accordance with the honor code, I will not engage in dishonesty in my academic activities, and I will not tolerate such dishonesty by other students."

Americans with Disabilities Act

Students who need accommodations due to disability should contact the Disability Access Center (DAC) to discuss specific needs. The DAC is located at the Calumet campus on the third floor of the Student Union and Library Building, Room 341, and at the North Central campus on the first floor of the Library Student Faculty Building, Room 103. If accommodations for the student are approved by that office, the student must provide his/her instructor with a copy of the official accommodations letter as soon as it is received in order to obtain accommodations. Students may contact the DAC by calling (219) 989-2455 at Calumet and (219) 785-5374 at North Central or at DAC@pnw.edu.

Lakota Themed Ecocomposition via Service-Learning

Writing Prompts

Dual Discourse Journal Short Writing Prompts:

All journal entries are to be clearly written with two entries per assignment, as described below: (Some leading questions are provided, although feel free to be as creative, descriptive and expressive as you wish. Remember thick description from the handouts I provided?)

Short Writing 1: Poem, January 10, 2018

As we read some poetry selections aloud from the books by Blanche and Silko, what thoughts cross your mind? What are some of the elements of these pieces that speak to you in a particular way? Make at least two pages of notes in your dual discourse journal about one of these poems. You can focus on scheme, imagery, meter, whatever you like. You are also encouraged to draw or doodle if you like. (Remember the symbols on the Lakota winter counts?) Now, write a poem in any form you choose expressing who you are. You may wish to spend some time in contemplation considering your past and present. You can also speculate into the future if you wish, but make sure you do focus on how you see yourself today. Again, you may draw and/or doodle if you like. (The same holds true for all dual discourse journal entries: doodling is encouraged!) Your audience is your instructor and your classmates. Poems will be shared (read aloud) on a volunteer basis.

Required Length: Three pages (with drawings included).

Short Writing 2: Place Narrative, January 17, 2018

Write a narrative essay about a place and how and why the particular place is part of you, as well as you being part of it. It may be helpful to actually go to the place when financially and/or logistically feasible. If this is not possible, perhaps you can rely on memories, photographs, notes, records, postcards, or talk to others who have also been to that place. (Internet searches with images can also be helpful in inspiring your essay. Objects from the place can also serve to prompt your memories.) What makes your connection to the place so special? Is it a connection which can be replicated anywhere else? Now, please include details of how and why you are connected to this place and how and why it affects you, as well as how you affect it. These will be two separate entries. One entry will be the place's impact on you, and the other entry will be your impact on the place. How are they connected? Think about how Marshall is connected to the place he calls home in *Lakota Way*. Can you draw

any parallels to your own sense of place? Why or why not? We will also discuss these narratives in class.

Required Length: Three pages (with images, etc. included).

Short Writing 3: Geocache Narrative on Location—Either Grand Kankakee Marsh, the Jasper-Pulaski Game Preserve, the Kankakee Sands Bison Project, or the NICHES Land Trust Prairie Restoration, March 2, 2018

After hearing the site tour lecture information from John and Mary Hodson regarding various efforts in ecological marsh restoration, make some notes regarding not only the place, but how the lecturers may have expressed their connection to it. Might this be the same connection/relation represented in the Lakota worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin*? Might this be the same worldview shared and revered over history by Indigenous peoples?

Now, as you use GPS technology within our visited site to locate our class geocache and its contents, stop at group agreed-upon intervals to take notes in your dual discourse journals. Make use of narrative about how you feel using the provided technology to locate the geocache. More importantly, how do you feel about the experience? In searching for the geocache, what do you have to consider about the environment in which you find yourself and your classmates? What other beings occupy this place? Are all the beings you encounter what you expected? Are they living, breathing, and moving; or, are they in a fixed place until disrupted? Is what you found in the geocache significant? Why or why not? If so, what did it mean? Why is what you left in the geocache significant? What does it mean to you? Was the destination to the geocache as important as the journey? Why or why not?

Required Length: Five pages

Short Writing 4: Boarding School Narrative, March 2, 2018

On our recent geocache location adventure and subsequent dual discourse journal entry, technology was used alongside nature to locate items left in the cache which may hold special meaning both today and historically. Sometimes, as time passes, meaning changes and new narratives and discourses become apparent. In viewing the St. Joseph Indian Normal School, what is the first thing you notice? What do you feel? How is this place different from the other sites you have visited? Have you heard of this place before? Do you notice any similarities here which may have been apparent in our classroom film clip from *Into the West*? Or, do you have any thoughts regarding this place after our in-class viewing of the film segment from *Our Hearts Don't Speak English*⁴⁸? Write a narrative addressing these questions and/or any other thoughts you may have regarding this boarding school.

⁴⁸ See Richie.

Now, consider the purpose of the school and the people who attended it. Based upon information I have given you regarding the school, what do you think about it? Do you think Indigenous worldviews such as *Mitakuye Oyasin* were considered during the years the school was in operation? Why or why not? What connection/relation, if any, can you express about the students who attended here? What was their connection to us and to ecology? What could they have taught us and those running the school? What, if anything, could they have changed regarding our local ecology, and us as people, if we had learned from them? Would this knowledge have affected our greater world? In considering our geocache journey earlier, might we also engage in a knowledge journey to realize what American settlers did not value along the way at the turn of the century from Native Peoples? In considering all that has been taken from Native American peoples since colonization via U.S. genocidal policies and practices, do you think although the school is now no longer in operation, that something, perhaps a lesson, or some type of knowledge, still resides here? Why or why not? In reflecting upon our classroom discussions regarding various oil pipeline outcries from environmentally concerned Native American people, such as the DAPL water protectors at Standing Rock, the Keystone XL effort (remember our video clip of Tamayo), or the devaluing of Native American ceremonies and healing practices from natural Earth resources (such as ethnobotany or sweat lodges, for example), what connections/relations have been made hidden from our awareness that may need to be found? Are they still here? What might you notice about Native American fortitude and survivance?

Required Length: Five to six pages.

Short Writing 5: Lakota Youth Development (for Lakota Youth), March 10-17, 2018

Reflect upon your experience with this class so far. Better yet, reflect upon your experience with formal education over the course of your life, from your early preschool or kindergarten years until now. What do you know about the way you learned? Was it by example? Was it from reading? Was it by rote memory, with quizzing or testing? Was it indoors or outdoors? Moreover, consider how you write about what you know. Does the writing you did during your education stem from first-hand experience or from printed and/or otherwise recorded research? Do you prefer one form of learning over the other? How much of your writing has been narrative? How much of your narrative has expressed a form of connection and/or relation with the rest of the world, and the Earth upon which we live? Would you wager some of your narrative could be put to oral storytelling and still be just as, if not even more, effective? Why or why not? Are these stories experiences that you may one day share with future generations? What might they learn from your stories and your experience in the past, and presently, within this class?

Now, consider your present travel to, and experience at, the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation with the LYD camp in SD. Is doing research here different

than doing other research in your life? If so, how? How much of what you may learn is from printed materials? How much of what you may learn is from oral narrative and/or storytelling? How much of what you engaged in is by “hands-on” experience with service-learning? What relations/connections with all living things might you have made along your journey at LYD? What did you discover? What, if anything, did you find that you did not expect? If there anything (mentally, physically, or spiritually) you might leave behind at LYD? If so, why and how? Have you changed as a person? Do you see yourself in the same way you saw yourself in your first dual discourse journal entry with the poem you wrote expressing who you are? Furthermore, how do you feel you have changed since your place narrative—the second dual discourse journal writing assignment you did earlier this semester? Is your perspective the same, or has your narrative changed? If you feel it has changed, who/what caused the change(s)? Please describe that change and/or changes. Did any changes at Rosebud perhaps have an impact on how you relate to your regional locales at home? Can the research and service-learning work (or the philosophy of it) you did at LYD be applied at home? If so, how? Is what you may have learned also valuable for future generations for all peoples? Do you have a different opinion regarding the reading of *Lakota Way/To You We Shall Return* and *Mitakuye Oyasin* after hearing it expressed orally by Marshall in person at the LYD camp? If yes, why? Do you have a different view of ethnobotany after harvesting natural healing plants with Bull Bear and singing to the plants in order to honor them as our relations? What levels of healing do you think took place? What is the most important thing you learned from your experience with the LYD camp, Lakota culture at Rosebud, and/or the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin*? Do you wish you could have learned this worldview sooner? Why or why not? Is there anything about your experience you wish you could change? How and why? Finally, write a poem about how you feel this experience may or may not have changed you. If you wish, you can simply edit the poem you wrote earlier in the semester to accordingly reflect growth you may have experienced since then.

Required Length: Six pages.

EVALUATION: Short writings will be evaluated in regard to being completed.

Formal Writing Assignment #1 – Rhetorical Analysis

Instructor: Lora Mendenhall

Page Length: Three full typed pages, 4th page is Works Cited (MLA)

First Peer Review Draft Due: January 31, 2018

Workshopping Draft Due: February 7, 2018

Final Paper Due: February 14, 2018

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND PURPOSE: Rhetorical Analysis of *Everglades of the North* or *Dakota 38*.

When you write your collaborative research project later this semester, you will summarize and analyze sources via rhetorical analysis. (You will remember we do this nearly every day in class with a Native American inspired “quote of the day.”) Rhetorical analysis invites you to examine a work, not only explaining what it argues/informs/persuades, etc., but also how and why the author, or in our case—the director, achieves his or her own purpose(s) within a film documentary. Essentially, in our case, you are looking at how and why what is being expressed is credible, valid, persuasive, and meaningful. Consider the director’s specifically chosen images, background music and audio sounds, worded segments, selection (or omission) of details, organization, context, audience, and the director’s own views and particular chosen “sources” (including oral interviews and testimony) of knowledge. You must adopt the stance of an analytical observer in order to validate or perhaps refute information within the film and why it is not only convincing, but important. For example: Might you recognize portions of the film that have an emotional appeal?

TOPIC: Cultural genocide and the need for reconciliation via *Dakota 38* or the need for ecological restoration via *Everglades of the North*.

PREWRITING: Identify the film’s purpose and main idea or point. Now identify and examine purposeful instances of ethos, logos, and pathos, as well as instances of potential rhetorical fallacies (or rhetorical manipulation—as we discussed in class) within the content of the film, albeit perhaps from those entities opposed to the film’s purpose. Make note as a viewer of elements that indicate the director’s (or perhaps a speaker’s) subtle strategies. Your observations about all these strategies—how and why particular rhetorical choices were made—will form the basis of your paper.

DRAFTING: Use your prewriting to compose a rhetorical analysis of the film—that is, an analysis that examines the author’s strategies as they affect an audience. It is important that your analysis rely upon your own words, and that you quote from the film sparingly to illustrate your own thoughts and points. Follow all direct quotations with appropriate citations. Essentially, you will argue whether or not the director (or speaker) succeeded in persuading a specific audience. Your ultimate goal is to decide whether or not the director’s

documentary is convincingly informative and persuasive by analyzing rhetorical strategies and appeals.

FORMAT: Your rhetorical analysis should identify the director (and perhaps speakers) and the title of the selected film. It should be at least 3 full pages, with a works cited page for the director/film and any other sources you may have used.

EVALUATION: Formal Writing Assignment #1 will be evaluated in regard to how well the paper meets the primary and secondary trait characteristics we will collaboratively form in class following distribution of the assignment.

Formal Writing Assignment #2 – Environmental Advocacy – Topic with Service-Learning Site Work Availability

Instructor: Lora Mendenhall

Page Length: At least 6 full typed pages, 10 in total (7th page is Works Cited in MLA, 8th and 9th pages are your written Advocacy Project, your 10th page is a rhetorical analysis of your own Advocacy Project)

Sources: At least five sources, two non-net, which can be from the site and/or oral lecture/interview/story/testimony

First Peer Review Draft Due: March 5, 2018

Workshopping Draft Due: April 2, 2018 (after our spring break trip)

Final Paper Due: April 9, 2018

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND PURPOSE: Students will provide written advocacy for Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration, Planting Tree Windbreaks at Jasper-Pulaski Game Preserve, or Restoration of Collier Lodge as an Ecological Education Complex (others as available).

The goal of this writing assignment is to inform a specific audience about a particular ecological/environmental issue in our area and present multiple perspectives on that issue in order to construct an argument, as well as an advocacy project regarding why it needs attention. One of those perspectives will be your own “hands-on” service-learning experience interacting with the area of ecological need. In order to effectively inform your audience, it is important that your research provide the background and history of the site, as well as the issue of need, and that you present your material in context, narratively, again with thick description, as you have been personally connecting with/relating to it. Your 6-page research paper should follow an organizational structure so that one point leads to another in a way that is easy to follow. Your research focuses on new insight and/or importance of the issue. Your 6th page will be followed by a works cited page. From there, you will construct a two-page Environmental Advocacy Project, such as a letter of funding appeal, or an informative brochure. One example might be to design a brochure for the Jasper-Pulaski Game Preserve explaining how planting tree windbreaks around the preserve (that you just engaged in) helps protect from soil erosion and provides wildlife, such as migrating Sandhill Cranes, with cover habitat. Further, as one person pointed out regarding this “hands-on” experience. “Later in life, I can tell my grandchildren, ‘Hey, I planted those huge trees as seedlings!’” Other 2-page advocacy projects can certainly be considered, so please talk with me about what you may have in mind.

When writing about this issue, be sure to employ the appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos to help you make your case for ecologically restorative practices. When integrating the opinions of others, be sure to gather from sources that are relevant and illuminating to the subject matter. Obtain many perspectives in order to prove that you are thinking as comprehensively as possible. Be sure to

consider all aspects of exactly how the environmental advocacy that you are engaging in is beneficial to you and to others. (Think sense of “place.”)

The final page of your assignment will be a rhetorical analysis of your intended Environmental Advocacy Project which is distributed, detailing how and why it will be rhetorically effective in ecological (and perhaps even cultural) restoration in our area, in a sense providing full-circle justice for a once altogether lost marsh, the need for tree windbreaks for wildlife, etc. Consider the elements of rhetorical analysis that we have discussed in class – purpose, audience, tone, etc., and provide feedback on your own project. Why did you make the choices you did? Knowing ahead of time that you will have to provide a rhetorical analysis of your own work should make you more conscious of the choices you make.

TOPICS: Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration, Jasper-Pulaski Tree Planting, or Restoration of Collier Lodge as an Ecological Education Complex (others as available).

EVALUATION: Formal Writing Assignment #2 will be evaluated in regard to how well the paper meets the primary and secondary trait characteristics we collaboratively form in class.

Formal Writing Assignment 3 - Collaborative Research Paper, Presentation(s), and Final Product
We Are All Connected “10-5-1” Full Circle Project

Instructor: Lora Mendenhall

Total Pages: Ten full typed pages. Your 11th page is Works Cited or References.

A collaborative booklet will also be designed by the overall class with our partners locally, as well as in South Dakota, for active use at the topic sites

Sources: Eight - at least four sources not from the internet, MLA or APA documentation

First Argument Presentations: April 11, 2018 (20 minutes)

Second Argument Presentation: April 23, 2018 (20 minutes)

Overall Project Discussion: April 25, 2018

Final Paper: Due in Final Portfolio on May 2, 2018

TOPICS: (One project below will be selected for the semester based upon need.)

Local and South Dakota Medicinal Garden Project (With the Hodsons and LYD)

Local and South Dakota Prairie Restoration Project (With NICHES and LYD)

Local and South Dakota Bison Reintroduction Project (With the Nature Conservancy and Sinte Gleska University)

Local and South Dakota Equine Relatives Project (With a local horse stable, LYD, and Sinte Gleska University⁴⁹)

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND PURPOSE: The purpose of this project is for you to thoroughly research the assigned environmentally/ecologically significant topic, while you are assigned a stance of its necessity in our local and South Dakota's local ecosystem. Although you may or may not agree with the stance you are initially assigned, either pro or con, during the time in which you disagree with the stance assigned, you must STILL research and defend the stance. You will have the opportunity to refute it weeks later. In this sense, you must “know your opposition.” By presenting and defending both sides of an argument, you will be in a better position to establish your OWN opinion and commentary in your final paper. Your final paper will be a document proving that your targeted topic goal (for example—bringing bison back in herds to Northwest Indiana from South Dakota, where they are now flourishing) is either feasible or not feasible/useful or not useful in the long term. In the case where your topic is not feasible, you can offer another, more viable solution that may exist.

Theoretically, you should have roughly four pages per argumentative stance in your final paper, for a total of eight pages with your introduction and conclusion. Along with this, you will continue with an additional two pages of your own opinion and commentary on the issue assigned. This will be followed by a works cited or reference page. Your finished product will be 11 pages in length.

⁴⁹ Colloquially known as Sinte.

In addition to the written part of this project, you will be asked to present your argument against the five other opponents in your group twice via an oral presentation. For this presentation, you may use props, PowerPoint, etc. (I will explain this project more in class. See me if you have questions.) Please do feel free to make liberal use of narrative and storytelling to make your argument(s). Again, rely upon your dual discourse journal for details and perspectives. Extra site visits to the local Northwest Indiana assigned areas of ecological concern may enhance your work when feasible transportation allows. People at these locales are VERY happy to speak with you. Additionally, your overall group will give an overview of your project and end result, along with leading an open discussion at the end of the semester. Your finished product will be a booklet utilized by our local, as well as South Dakota restoration groups, explaining the value of the assigned topic from both a U.S. Westernized, as well as traditional Lakota worldview.

EVALUATION: Formal Writing Assignment #3 will be evaluated in regard to how well the presentations and resulting paper meet the primary and secondary trait characteristics we collaboratively form in class.

Name and contact information for individuals in your stance group:

Name and contact Info.:_____

Name and contact Info.:_____

Name and contact Info.:_____

Name and contact Info.:_____

Name and contact Info.:_____

“10-5-1”

**Collaborative Group Project Contact and Accountability Sheet
(Required)**

Students in Stance 1:

**Responsibilities: Researching, Source Evaluation, PowerPoint
Presentation/Debate Week of April 9, 2018**

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Students in Stance 2:

**Responsibilities: Researching, Source Evaluation, PowerPoint
Presentation/Debate Week of April 9, 2018**

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Additional Notes:

“10-5-1”

**Collaborative Group Project Contact and Accountability Sheet
(Required)**

Students in Stance 1:

**Responsibilities: Researching, Source Evaluation, PowerPoint
Presentation/Debate Week of April 16, 2018**

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Students in Stance 2:

**Responsibilities: Researching, Source Evaluation, PowerPoint
Presentation/Debate Week of April 16, 2018**

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Name _____ and Responsibilities:

Additional Notes:

Tentative Course Schedule (May be subject to change as needed. Changes will be distributed to the class in printed and electronic form.)

Any assignment that is underlined must be included in your required Final Portfolio

January 8, 2018:

- Quote of the Day with Rhetorical Analysis. Every class hereafter will begin with a quote of the day. Quotes will be Native American, focusing on respect for the planet
- Class welcome/let's get acquainted. Students will be divided into groups of two to interview one another and then share that information with the rest of the class. Information will include name, hometown, major (if chosen), hobbies, interests, etc. Questions may follow from others in the class about the two individuals
- Syllabus overview and questions—with a verbal quiz game the following class period

January 10, 2018:

- Verbal syllabus quiz game (either you win pizza or I save money). We will go over the syllabus the first day of class, we have a verbal syllabus quiz game (so everyone hears the information again), and the syllabus is provided in printed, as well as electronic form. Therefore, everyone should be very familiar with the information contained in it
- We will read selected poems from the course texts and analyze their deeper meaning
- We will make sure everyone has a spiral notebook to use as a journal/dual discourse journal
- We will discuss thick description and handouts will be provided
- Short Writing 1: Over the weekend, students will write a poem expressing who they are. (See the Short Writing Prompt List distributed in class—those who wish to volunteer to read their poem may do so in class on the following Wednesday. Don't be shy, I will bring a poem of my own as well.) Feel free to doodle, add images, symbols, brainstorming notes, etc. in your journal

January 15, 2018:

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. No class today.

January 17, 2018:

- A selection of poetry readings will be voluntarily shared from our Short Writing 1
- Brainstorming and mapping (with an umbrella!)
- CP 123 and more. Writing for this class will be very different than high school writing, so do not feel you need to abide by the CP 123 formula recommended by local high schools

- Students will read selected stories from Marshall's *Lakota Way* for the following Monday class, at which time we will discuss the stories
- Short Writing 2: Students will write a narrative essay about how they are personally integrated with a particular place. (See the Short Writing Prompt List distributed in class—essays within journals will be exchanged in class on January 22, 2018. Your reader will share with the class what they gather from your “connection” to place. Please note: Do not write what you would not readily share with others.) Again, feel free to doodle, add images, or whatever you feel contributes to expressing yourself

January 22, 2018:

- Discussion of *Lakota Way* stories
- Sharing of Short Writing 2 with discussion also focusing on thick description
- Initial discussion, information, and pre-planning regarding our spring break service-learning trip to LYD/Sinte in South Dakota. A representative from the Travel Office will distribute information/forms binders to the students for completion prior to the trip. The binders contain travel information, along with what to bring, as well as PNW health and safety forms and waivers and legal information. Necessary forms will need to be completed by February 5, 2018 in order to go on the required trip

January 24, 2018:

- We will briefly discuss local ecological history beginning from the year 1885 to the present time, focusing on major changes that took place
- We will view *Everglades of the North* in class. Students will take notes while watching the film for Formal Writing Assignment #1, a rhetorical analysis of the film. However, the film *Dakota 38* will also be viewed in class at a later date, and students will take notes as well, so they can do Formal Writing Assignment #1 on either film—it is up to each student to choose which film they rhetorically analyze. Drafts will be due on January 31, 2018

January 29, 2018:

- Discussion of *Everglades of the North*
- MLA workshop in the computer lab

January 31, 2018:

- First draft of Formal Writing Assignment #1 is due for peer review in class. Bring your copy on a flash drive or as a file sent to yourself
- Discussion and planning for our geocache and boarding school sites visit date in early March

February 5, 2018:

- The PNW Travel Office representative will visit the class again to answer any further questions about binder information. He/she will also collect copies of forms and waivers as necessary
- Introduction to the Native American boarding school era
- Students will read Littlemoon's *They Called Me Uncivilized* for discussion on February 12, 2018. The book is not long

February 7, 2018:

- Workshopping draft of Formal Writing Assignment #1 due for in-class workshop
- Further discussion of the boarding school era, local history, and local ecological transformations over the past century

February 12, 2018:

- Discussion of Littlemoon's text
- A look at boarding school materials and archival documents locally and beyond

February 14, 2018:

- Formal Writing Assignment #1 due
- Dakota 38 film viewing

February 19, 2018:

- Discussion of *Dakota 38*
- Other video clips, in-class readings and discussion

February 21, 2018:

- Potential snow day if needed. This is Northwest Indiana! (Beware the "Lake Michigan Snow Machine." Otherwise, at home research day.)
- Reading Assignment of Marshall's *To You We Shall Return*. This book is also not long
- Introduction to LYD/Sinte via video clips and Skype in-class for upcoming service-learning trip over spring break

February 26, 2018:

- Formal Writing Assignment #2 distributed and discussed
- Computer lab research day in preparation for upcoming geocache and boarding school site visits taking place on March 2, 2018, as well as in preparation for Formal Writing Assignment #2

February 28, 2018:

- Preparation for activities on March 2, 2018
- Geocache/GPS training and familiarity
- Equipment will be used on March 2, 2018 on site

March 2, 2018 (Friday):

- Site visits – Tour of local site for service-learning later and area former Indian boarding school building
- Short Writing 3 and 4 in journal

March 5, 2018:

- Discussion of site visits on March 2, 2018
- Initial peer review and computer lab time for Formal Writing Assignment #2

March 7, 2018:

- Preparation for service-learning trip to LYD March 10-17, 2018
- Sign-up sheet is distributed for individual conferencing with me on March 21, 2018

March 10-17, 2018:

- Service-learning activities and cultural teaching schedule provided by LYD/Sinte
- Marshall will hold a question and answer session with students one evening regarding his texts, along with providing a book signature upon request
- Plans at the camp will vary based upon current need as designated by the camp Executive Director Bull Bear and/or Sinte
- Students will journal Short Writing 5
- A field trip will take place nearby in the middle of this week to an area site, such as Fort Randall, where Sitting Bull was killed, or to a local site of cultural significance

March 19, 2018:

- No class today since the return from SD is 14 hours long

March 21, 2018:

- Student conferencing/semester update. I meet with students individually

March 26, 2018:

- SD trip reflection and discussion
- In-class discussion of Short Writing 5

March 28, 2018:

- Computer lab research/planning session for service-learning regarding local ecology
- Discussion of the Toulmin Model and making a strong argument

March 30, 2018 (Friday):

- We will revisit the site from March 2, 2018 and perform service-learning as needed (the service-learning here will match what is done in South Dakota during spring break week, whether the medicinal garden project, prairie restoration, bison reintroduction, or equine relatives project)
- What might we learn from working at this site that perhaps we did not realize prior to our trip to LYD?

April 2, 2018:

- Just a reminder: April 6, 2018 is the final drop date for the semester
- Workshopping draft of Formal Writing Assignment #2 due for in-class workshop

April 4, 2018:

- Distribution and discussion of Formal Writing Assignment #3
- We will engage in an in-class activity to put us more at ease with public speaking
- Computer lab time, group assignments, and brainstorming session

April 9, 2018:

- Formal Writing Assignment #2 due
- Group computer lab time for preparation of oral presentations with PowerPoint
- Task list worksheets distributed to group members for keeping track of who is doing what for the project. Everyone must be participating collaboratively

April 11, 2018:

- First set of argument presentations
- Opposing group student feedback (the other side of the argument)

April 16, 2018:

- Group computer lab time and preparation of oral presentations with PowerPoint for the other side of the argument
- Task list worksheets filled out again, with everyone continuing to work collaboratively
- Sign-up sheet is distributed for individual conferencing with me on April 18, 2018

April 18, 2018:

- Student conferencing/semester update. I meet with students individually

April 23, 2018:

- Second set of argument presentations
- Opposing group student feedback (the other side of the argument)

April 25, 2018:

- Discussion of overall presentations
- Students give a brief individual overview orally of what they learned from Formal Writing Assignment #3
- The class addresses what they may have learned about seeking balance

April 30, 2018:

- Final portfolio workshop/construction day (Final portfolios recommended by the English Department)

May 2, 2018:

- End of semester wrap up
- Final Portfolios are due (No late portfolios will be accepted.)
- Bring your own drink (pizza provided)

Appendix C

General Syllabus Narrative

Initial Course Listing Information

Included on the syllabus is the course title and semester (as appropriate), along with my name, contact information, classroom location and class time and days, office hours, and other office hour arrangement information. Service-learning and travel dates are also listed. The syllabus follows the format preferred by PNW.

Texts

I chose Marshall's *Lakota Way* and *To You We Shall Return*, and Littlemoon's *They Called Me Uncivilized* for the class. Marshall's texts are excellent examples of Lakota narrative storytelling that should be very culturally thought-provoking, especially as they highlight the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin* in a manner that non-Native Americans can more easily understand. Later, at the LYD camp, when PNW students provide service-learning there and learn about Lakota culture and ecological practice from people at the camp, they can also hear some stories first-hand from Marshall orally, noting the difference between reading and hearing them. Additionally, Marshall's text and oral storytelling provides an example of what students will be doing in their class journals—taking narrative notes of two different worldview perspectives, that of dominant society (or a student's home culture) and Lakota. Littlemoon's text chronicles his boarding school experience and his later process of continuing to heal from the

resulting trauma. He finds comfort and spiritual restoration by focusing on his Lakota cultural beliefs, practices, and community.

Selected readings will also be utilized from Blanche's *Native American Reader* and Silko's *Ceremony*. Blanche and Silko's collections will provide further cultural context and background for all things being connected/related, and they also have wonderful works of poetry that students can benefit from as examples, particularly when working on their own poems as per the class dual discourse journal. Finally, handouts will be provided from sections of *Point of Departure: Returning to Our More Authentic Worldview for Education and Survival* by Four Arrows (aka D. Jacobs), and *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* by Wilson and Yellow Bird. These materials will help facilitate the use of thick description in student expression of a more in-depth worldview. Various films and film clips will also be utilized in the course. A general-purpose handbook is also recommended for documentation styles and grammar/mechanics reference.

Course Materials

This section is self-explanatory.

Participation

This section is also direct and establishes there will be group work within the class. I will describe a stress relieving activity for public speaking in the tentative course schedule. This section also informs students there will be service-learning class work done off-site related to our ecological focus. There will be some discussion in class regarding adjusting to varied locations for

service-learning, one of which takes place in South Dakota in a traditional Lakota camp setting. Writing Center information is also listed here.

Course Description

This course will build upon earlier composition courses, continuing to examine rhetoric, voice, and purpose in writing. At the same time, from a cross-cultural and ecologically restorative standpoint, this course can help students realize (via the materials presented in class, service-learning, and the trip to LYD), “A rhetoric can never be innocent, can never be a disinterested arbiter of the ideological claims of others because it is always already serving certain ideological claims” (Berlin 717). Berlin draws our attention to the fact that all rhetoric has a motive. Rhetorical analysis can be a particularly useful tool in examining past injustices via Native American genocidal practices for the sake of land acquisition, and the manipulative language used to facilitate it. This analysis is also where the Toulmin Model of argument may also be applicable, particularly in examining ideological claims and their validity or not, compared to the same model highlighting a Native American worldview. Students will additionally see “environmental rhetoric is also powerful because it makes rhetors members of powerful social groups, and in doing so helps create their social identity” (Herndl and Brown 215). Hence, examining the worldview *Mitakuye Oyasin*, and how it is strongly tied to Native American land and identity, can be very useful in evaluating and reconsidering a colonial-Westernized worldview and its beliefs about land and identity.

Course Goals

The course goals are briefly described in the syllabus, with further goals expressed earlier in this chapter. Considering the theme of the course, assignments, readings, and class experiences, along with cultivating an awareness of ecological and cultural balance and unity, will be the appreciation and realization that this disposition has been at the heart of Indigenous peoples all along.

Course Assignments

The course readings and writings will foster further progress in academic writing, particularly in the areas of voice, rhetoric, and argument. Short writings are geared to help students see their place in the world and their responsibility to our planet, ultimately, from a Lakota worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Formal writings via the Rhetorical Analysis of one of our films, the Environmental Advocacy Paper and Project, and Ecologically Restorative 10-5-1 (Full Circle) Research Papers with dual discourse PowerPoint presentations will help students realize they have the ability to make a difference for the restoration, recovery, and sustainability of our planet, territory by territory, along with valuing a Native American worldview in tandem with a dominant cultural perspective. In the 10-5-1 Assignment, students begin in an overall group of ten, then divide into two sets of five to represent two different stances. The two groups of five will form two different PowerPoint presentations for class, with their opposing group as their audience. Ultimately, each individual student will later have a short

speaking role at the end of the semester, hence the 10-5-1 descriptor. All short and formal writings will be included in a final portfolio at the end of the semester.

PNW does prefer portfolios for composition classes. I have always believed in the peer review of papers. I will distribute a sheet of leading questions which cannot be just answered by yes or no, based upon our collaboratively formed primary and secondary trait scoring criteria, with room for additional comments. However, I also later follow peer review a week later with what is called a workshop (more of a team peer review approach) where there are no leading question sheets provided, but the practice is more of an “overview read” prior to final submittal. The workshop takes place a week later for fine tuning feedback. I only take printed copies of papers. Students sending papers via e-mail (except in the case of a documented emergency) has proven to be rather problematic. When we have a snow day or an unexpected event, I contact students with written documentation to adjust due dates accordingly.

Grading

Grading point percentages and totals are listed on page five. Purdue University uses a plus and minus system. Papers and journals are given points which will comprise their total grade in the course. I also grade portfolios in light of sustained progression, meaning how much measured progress I see from their first writings in the class through the end of the class within the context of the portfolio. In other words, sustained progression is used to ascertain how students may have learned from their past mistakes, and/or grown in their writing processes. In the past, I had always attached a rubric to each writing

assignment, as was taught by my M.A. graduate schools. The rubric corresponded with the peer review sheets I distributed on peer review day. While most of the students understood the peer review sheets just fine, they often seemed to be confused by the rubric since it was set up in chart-like fashion, as I was taught. I like the concept of a primary trait scoring much better. I became familiar with this grading method via Dr. Patrick Bizzaro at IUP during my doctoral coursework ("Evaluating Student"). Primary trait scoring makes it possible "for teachers in a given school to devise reliable, valid holistic procedures that are uniquely suited to their school's writing program" (sic; Cooper and Odell 12). I became familiar with subsequent secondary trait scoring used in a slightly different way with primary trait scoring in a later doctoral course with Dr. Resa Crane Bizzaro ("Secondary Trait"). The tandem use of primary and secondary trait scoring provides balanced assessment between content and mechanics.

I think establishing the traits between students and teacher is a good democratic way of approaching the grading process. I believe it is much more straightforward, and also probably easier for students to remember later via direct bullet points on a handout. The process can be enacted more specifically in class with student input. Students will also determine how to best approach establishing primary and secondary traits in light of the fact that some of the service-learning will take place in the framework of a Lakota overview. Peer review sheets will be established from the primary and secondary trait scoring information collaboratively established for formal writing assignments.

Attendance

Class attendance at PNW is left to the instructor's discretion. However, it is suggested students not miss more than three days of class. The syllabus information is self-explanatory, and my experience has been that absences are manageable when a deductive point value is incurred after the second absence which does not follow with a doctor's note or some type of documentation which justifies having missed a class period.

Class Etiquette

The class etiquette section is a listing of things I have found to be helpful over the years.

Academic Honesty

PNW's honor code is listed here and on the PNW webpage.

Americans with Disabilities Act

PNW's Disability Access Center information is listed here and on the PNW webpage.

Appendix D**Course Writing Assignments Narrative**

The course plan will make use of two writing forms: that of a dual discourse journal, and formal written assignments, some of which will be based on local and expanded service-learning. The reading aloud of some of the assignments, along with dual discourse oral PowerPoint presentations with Formal Writing Assn. 3 (known as the "10-5-1" or "Full Circle" assignment) will not only allow students to gain some public speaking experience, but will also

highlight to the class the value of spoken word (oral knowledge) alongside the practices of researching and writing.

Dual Discourse Journals

Within this dissertation, my own narrative of family stories regarding relationships between people and land serves to act as an example of establishing a personal sense of place, why we should care, and why things matter. I also once kept a required journal when traveling to Spain, written as part of a study abroad program I did over a summer years ago as an undergraduate. As part of the program, I had to start writing the journal in English, and then gradually begin blending English with Spanish as we adjusted to the language and culture, eventually writing the journal completely in Spanish. Reading it now, the journal is more than just words, it still very clearly expresses a sense of place. Thus, I think a blended journal used in an ecocomposition service-learning based writing class is an excellent idea in order to gain a very real sense of connection/relation and written expression of our various locales as place. As the designated assignments indicate, drawing, illustrations, symbols, etc. within the journals can also be particularly useful as reminders of context and cultural subtleties.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Leonardo da Vinci kept a similar journal. One of the many notebooks of da Vinci tells us, "To develop a complete mind, study the science of art. Study the art of science. Learn to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else" (qtd. in Hernandez). This quote is reminiscent of the connection between Earth and people via the worldview of

Mitakuye Oyasin, therefore, solidifying the practical purpose of journaling as part of my course assignments. Dual discourse journals will also become particularly useful in the course plan as it incorporates a trip to the Rosebud Reservation. In recording (via drawings) the multiple fundamental symbols in Lakota art, such as “as above/so below,” “as within/so without,” and the quadrant circle of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, as well as multiple other symbols and images, students can document for themselves aspects of the culture and Lakota worldview they may otherwise have not connected with at a deeper level. A dual discourse journal such as da Vinci’s makes this learning experience meaningful, personal, and fun.

A blended genre, narrative discourse journal also takes da Vinci’s practice one step further and illustrates to students, via their own notes, that we as humans are in a Freire-like reciprocation process with the Earth’s resources. Students may discover at the marsh, for example, or at some of our other water-focused sites, that water is part of our DNA and we are comprised of up to 80% of it (Tracy). The use of journals can build student confidence in writing for other subjects (such as the biological sciences) and in other communities later.⁵⁰ Reflective journals in service-learning can serve as a “mirror to reflect the student’s heart and mind” and can also be “a structured and purposeful tool allowing access to the students’ internal ‘making of meaning’” (Hubbs and Brand 61). In the case of this course, journals can also bring new cultural perspectives to students, and hopefully, and their future generations (Tutwiler 60). Journals can be more beneficial than other writing assignments across the curriculum, as

⁵⁰ See Dunlop.

Toby Fulwiler highlights multiple skills gained by their utilization. The use of journals “stimulates student discussion, starts small group activity, clarifies hazy issues, reinforces learning experience, and stimulates student imagination” (15). Further, by interacting with others orally (such as fellow students, local service-learning site hosts, and later, people at LYD), students can consider multiple points of view in their “process of discovery” as they journal (Murray 377). Thus, journals are not only a good personal record of reflection regarding lived experience, but also a potential motivational springboard for future action, in this case, for restorative justice.⁵¹

As noted earlier, Marshall’s *Lakota Way* is also a journal of sorts, albeit the stories contained therein are rather objectively intended, or in other words, open to the reader’s interpretation. At the same time, after reading Marshall’s documented stories, their intended meaning often becomes more apparent with the passing of time for reflection. Since this course plan incorporates hands-on service-learning field work under a Lakota theme, the experiences students have over time can bring them to a greater understanding of *Lakota Way* as they interact with their relatives: all living beings that inhabit Earth, including humans, plants, animals, rocks, minerals, soil, water, and other minute earthly elements. Therefore, students can see themselves as part of a connected circle. The dual discourse journal assignments will also move in a circle from our local context,

⁵¹ As I journal along with my students and later read their notes, I can consider what and how they write, to both explore analyzing student notes in a future study and to refine journaling practices for future courses. Along with the other submitted assignments in the course, the fulfilling of course goals can also be analyzed/adjusted as necessary to ensure they are met.

beyond to the Rosebud Reservation, and then back home, starting and ending with a personally connected work of poetry focusing on identity and place.

Journal Short Writing #1

Selected works will be read aloud from the *Native American Reader: Stories Speeches and Poems*, by Blanche, a professor and member of the Oklahoma Choctaw tribe, as well as from *Ceremony* by Silko. These collections provide an educational narrative of many Native American experiences and beliefs. These texts can easily be utilized (with their contents, stories, speeches, and poems) to do two things: serve as educational texts to provide students with insight into Native American culture, and serve as a supplement in teaching Lakota and other tribal-themed ecocomposition to those who have a very limited view of Native American cultures, particularly in regard to care for the earth, stressing that people (regardless of their country of origin) are responsible for protecting the environment.

These passages within the Blanche and Silko texts will set the initial tone for the class and reinforce the worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin*. The works will also foster an environmental awareness/connectedness as course outdoor field work via service-learning takes place. Student journals will also follow a format similar to these books in that they will also have poems, narrative, reflections, etc. as noted in the assignment descriptions. Students will listen while the works selected from Blanche and Silko are read aloud, followed by discussion, seeking to ascertain deeper meaning within the texts. Although the readings will also be

provided in written form as a printed supplement, the students will purposefully focus more on listening, valuing the oral expression of meaning.

Following the readings from Blanche and Silko, students will then be directed in a discussion regarding Indigenous peoples of their own country of origin. They will be asked: How much do you know about them? What do you know about their culture? Are you one of them? Is their culture tied to land and earth? What are some of their practices? Where are they located? We can all learn from one another, using the computers in our classroom for reference as needed. Basso tells us “when philosophers and poets are asserting that attachments to geographic localities contribute fundamentally to the formation of personal and social identities... those in other disciplines, such as anthropology, seldom ‘study what people make of places’” (105). Poetry can effectively establish this initial contact with the Native American worldview within the class. “The literature of the aboriginal people of North America defines America. It is not exotic. The concerns are particular, yet often universal” (J. Harjo). Reading poetry in class is reflective of oral tradition more “than any other genre of Native American contemporary writing,” with spirituality pervading poets’ relationships to sacred places (Szanto). This work can be followed with further discussion of *Mitakuye Oyasmin* and Lakota cultural practices tied to this worldview.

An understanding of interrelatedness of humans and the rest of the natural world is pervasive both in traditional songs and chants and in contemporary Native poetry in the United States. The spirit of place that

fills this poetry has grown from the inherited cultural visions that indigenous poets continue to sing. (Wilson, *Research as Ceremony* 2)

While American Transcendentalists such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman wrote of spiritual connections to nature, “American writers have sought the unity the Native peoples have always felt with the land. Like Native orators and storytellers, visionary poets often express not merely the individual but the communal vision” (Wilson, *Research as Ceremony* 3). Therefore, the study of Native American poetry, followed by the writing of similar poetry based on the natural world, may help establish not only a connection to the earth, but also a subsequent connectedness among the students as they may begin to think in “insightful and unconventional ways” via the course (Young, *et al.* 16).

Following the oral reading of Native American environmentally-inspired poetry, particularly which honors and/or celebrates the earth, the works will be rhetorically analyzed to ascertain a deeper understanding of the author and his or her features and effects of the text, followed by discussion. I may also use one of my own published poems based upon my grandmother’s saying, “You’ll always have to walk back down the road you came”:

May the path you walk

Follow you, rise up

And greet you in return

To some, a blessing,

To others, a curse

It all depends upon

How you choose to live

I can discuss my own thoughts and processes about writing the poem with students, which may spark some thoughts of their own. Students will then write their own poem regarding Earth and their place within it as the first assignment in their dual discourse journal. Students will rhetorically analyze their own poem, followed by writing a brief analysis regarding how their poem may be interpreted either similarly or differently from the worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Students will write a follow-up poem later in the semester after their trip to the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation and the LYD camp to compare to this initial piece.

Journal Short Writing #2

Following continued readings from Marshall's *Lakota Way*, and other selected Lakota texts and authors, students will then have a dual discourse journal assignment to create their own story with a deeper meaning tied to the environment and/or a place in some way. These stories will be shared in groups. This sharing will help students interact and get to know one another better, as well as establishing a bond/connections within each group. This unity will also help students see themselves as a part of the Earth rather than as just individuals tied to nothing around them "to figure out who we are and where our place is in the world" (Pagnucci 6).

This awareness can help students recognize not only their sense of place in the world, but their place in the course of history and time overall. This can instill a mindset in students of their existence "with the world or with others," in the natural sphere, rather than just seeing themselves as earth consumers at the

top of the authoritative food chain (Freire 75). Leading questions on the journal assignment prompt can help facilitate the writing.

Journal Short Writing #3

A geocache will be hidden somewhere within a service-learning site location which will later be the focus of Formal Writing Assignment #2. Students will first hear a guided lecture about this local ecologically restorative area. These prospective sites include, but are not limited to; the Grand Kankakee Marsh, the Jasper-Pulaski Game Preserve (during the annual Sand Hill Crane migration), or the Collier Lodge restoration as an ecological education complex. Following the lecture by the person in charge of the site, such as John and Mary Hodson with the marsh, or the naturalist at Jasper-Pulaski, students can search for a geocache on the property collaboratively using GPS, which I will provide. Within their dual discourse journals, students will first take notes of the lecture part of the experience, noting how the person or persons giving the lecture information may seem connected to the place.

Following the lecture, as students search for the geocache, they will stop at agreed upon intervals to make note of their journey, with leading questions from their journal writing assignment prompt. As the journey ensues, students will have to collect items from the environment/local ecology to place within the geocache (albeit, no “creatures”), along with a note of explanation (a memo pad will be placed in the geocache ahead of time) of why the items have meaning. Students will include notes from the entire geocache search in their journals, using leading questions from the journal writing prompt as an initial guide. The

journal entries will be reviewed to get a sense of their journey experience through this place.

Journal Short Writing #4

Our class will make a brief visit to St. Joseph Indian Normal School in Rensselaer—one of the many previous Native American boarding schools across the U.S. (Although the outside of the building has been restored, inside, the building is not entirely structurally sound. Therefore, it is not open to the public.) Students will journal their observations about the school in light of our text by Walter Littlemoon, as well as films presented in class such as *Our Spirits Don't Speak English*, and *Into the West* (a mini-series), which has a segment regarding a Lakota boy named Voices that Carry, who is sent to Carlisle Indian Industrial School. I have watched the true segment regarding Voices that Carry dozens of times and have used it in my courses for over a decade. The segment always brings me to tears. Voices that Carry is shown cutting his own braids in the segment, rather than letting the staff of the boarding school cut them, as was required at the time to make the boys appear more assimilated. This practice was protocol in boarding schools, along with the intended spiritual annihilation of Native American culture. Cutting one's hair in Lakota culture is a sign of great mourning.

I ironically remember sharing the film clip on You-Tube with High Crane, the Lakota language professor I had at Sinte Gleska University in the summer of 2016. I told High Crane I thought “Voices that Carry” was not the real name of the boy depicted in the film, but from information I had found, I thought his Lakota

name must have been “American Horse.” High Crane very quietly watched the film clip with me, then said he knew the story of this boy. “American Horse” was High Crane's great, great-grandfather. High Crane appears in the documentary *We Are a Horse Nation*, which may be utilized in the course.

Students will write in their journals about their initial impressions of the school, especially in light of the various materials (written and film) we cover in class. Following this portion of the journal assignment, students will write regarding how they might think the school had an impact on the Native American boys who attended there, and the Native American worldview and practice regarding care for the earth, *Mitakuye Oyasin*, or did it? As we consider what has happened to our local ecology in Jasper County with the loss of the marsh, prairie, and bison herds, what should we have been learning from the Native American people, rather than vice-versa? As we watch film clips in class of Sicangu Lakota Tribal Member Tamayo speaking of more current pipeline protests, and of the water protectors at the DAPL site, what can PNW students learn now about a Lakota worldview? What can we learn about Native American fortitude, endurance, and survivance? Guiding questions are included in the journal prompt.

Journal Short Writing #5

Our final dual discourse journal writing assignment will be completed as part of our trip to the LYD Camp on the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation. Just prior to this trip, or even perhaps on the way to Rosebud, students will reflect upon their formal education not only in this class and in college, but throughout

their life, along with considering the subject matter and methods with which they were taught. They will also consider the location where they were taught, as well as the person(s) teaching. There are leading questions on the prompt for this assignment.

The LYD camp, one of many youth camps in the area re-introducing and/or reiterating traditional Lakota culture to Lakota young people, fills a void in government efforts to honor young people in Native American communities. The 1972 Indian Education Act was intended to provide culturally-specific education. However:

Article 14.3 requires the United States to provide Native American students, both on and off the reservation, with access to 'an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.' US law and policy appears to favor bicultural Indian education for tribally controlled schools and colleges; however, the government fails to provide sufficient funding for those schools and colleges, and it has not required other public school systems that receive federal funding to provide Native American students with a culturally appropriate education. (Echo-Hawk 201-02)

PNW students can learn Lakota cultural teachings along with (and providing hands on camp service alongside) young Lakota people who work and volunteer at the camp. Therefore, in some ways, both groups can interact as relatives, learning together.

On the way to the camp, a stop will be made by PNW students at Fort Randall in South Dakota, just along the Missouri River. Not only can viewing the

Missouri River be a good opportunity for students to hear of its value to surrounding tribes, as well as the rest of the country (hence, the DAPL water protectors further north and their “Water Is Life” belief). The visit will also be a good opportunity for students to hear much of Lakota history which took place here involving Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and others who fought to protect tribal lands and people. This initial oral expression of knowledge by Tamayo, who will meet us there, will be a good precursor to the oral knowledge which will continue to be shared as we arrive at the camp.

Once students arrive at the camp and get settled, the groups of Lakota young people and PNW students will further be introduced to Lakota culture and art via Tamayo, and Lakota storytelling via Marshall. Students can also then engage in service-learning within the camp that Bull Bear and the executive board deem necessary at the time. One example of such service-learning is initiating, and later caring for, a medicinal healing garden of native plants. This garden can also aid in honey production at the camp, providing flowers with pollen for honey bees. Students can hear the narration of how these plants are used medicinally, along with the history of how they were gathered by Native plains tribes long ago when crops were not cultivated (as is true today), but solely harvested by foraging. This practice is reflective of our class text by Littlemoon who states the foraging tribes never viewed American as a land of plenty, but rather, a land of enough, taking only what they needed. This belief is contrary to concepts of capitalistic gains at any cost, which is so prevalent today.

Camp Director Bull Bear will share the different healing qualities of the plants on site, how they are combined with other plants to make medicines even today, and how they are revered, and even communicated with in Lakota culture. This information is what is known as not only Indigenous Knowledge, but Traditional Ecological Knowledge, concepts which can be applied at other locales, such as in our region back home. Sacred songs are sung at the camp not only to healing plants at harvest time to cause them to release their optimal beneficial properties, but songs are also sung to welcome honey bees to their hives in a kind and communicative manner. "Through prayer and song, the early Sioux gained Bear-like knowledge and discernment to 'tune-in to' and gather leaves, stems, fruits, and roots when those things were at their peak strength and could most potently impart their healing gifts" (McGaa 21). These practices are yet another example of the *Mitakuye Oyasin* worldview in practice. "Indigenous Knowledge comes from our relationship with Creation" (McGregor 389). This is why in order for students to completely understand the natural world, and the value of a balanced ecology, they must be out in it.

As students work with the medicinal healing garden, they may also hear stories about the stones they may have to clear from the land, and even these are considered living relatives of humans in Lakota culture, treated accordingly in ceremonies. Students will also hear additional information at the camp regarding Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge by other Lakota authorities of history, such as Standing Bear. All things on and of the earth are of value.

The world of animal and bird contributed much to the comfort and welfare of the Indian, but so did plant, tree, and herb. The Indian overlooked nothing that might be of service to him. He went deep into the possibilities of all plant life. Simple plants which the white man calls weeds became things of value to the Indian. Some provided a wholesome food, while others were brewed into health-restoring medicines. The white man takes bitter drugs, and pays good prices to another man to give them to him, whereas if he wants content to live simply as the Indian does, he probably would have better health. But he disdains Nature and pays for it in hard-earned dollars. Our medicine men were poor, the white man's medicine men are rich. (sic; *My Indian* 93)

As students continue to interact with the earth via service-learning, they will be reminded of the responsibility they have to it, as the earth will take care of you, if you take care of it. Earth is our greatest teacher, despite the technology we possess. "Many medicinal plants have been discovered by Humans, and there are untold more yet to be discovered throughout the world. Unfortunately, we are losing many such plants—both those we know to have medicinal value and others whose properties we do not yet know" (sic; McGaa 21). Indigenous community traditional ecological knowledge practices are valuable and "thousands of years old" (McGregor 386).

Students may also (depending again, upon need) be involved in other service-learning opportunities, such as caring for horses and learning from them as relatives. High Crane did so when he was young, spending days holding a

rope tied to a pony to learn about life. Horses are also intuitively aware of the emotional state of humans, and possess mental and spiritual healing properties through interaction with them.

As both groups of Lakota and PNW students learn together, and PNW students journal their experiences in their dual discourse journals regarding ways of learning/knowing and other forms of education, evening talking circles can also be used for discussion of various cultures. Students from outside the U.S. can bring an even deeper level of cross-cultural understandings. "Culture circles encourage the problematization of participants' individual and collective situations. Communities cannot preserve their unique social identities and worldviews if they are not aware of them" (Souto-Manning 219). Often, cross-cultural sharing can bring fresh perspectives. In the case of the camp experience, multiple worldview perspectives can be shared addressing problems, both Native and Non-Native, for a greater sense of collaborative connectedness, particularly focusing on the value of the earth and its ecosystems in relation to people. This is particularly important as we continue to face climate change issues.

PNW students can continue journaling their experiences at LYD using the prompt guiding questions, although they may certainly address other questions and issues as they arise. Students will also be greatly encouraged to engage in dialogue with those who work at the camp, and members of the surrounding community, making friends and contacts on the reservation. They may also develop ideas regarding their upcoming Writing Assignment #3 (10-5-1) group

project, looking at ecological topics from a Lakota worldview, seeking out potential questions and answers for their future research involving medicinal gardens, prairie restoration, bison introduction, and equine therapy at dual locales: locally in Northwest Indiana and at Rosebud.

Formal Writing #1

The course plan calls for students to give a detailed rhetorical analysis of one of the initial films they watch in class, either *Dakota 38*, or *Everglades of the North*. Students can choose any element or particular scene in the film that appeals to them. Both films will be introduced with the worldview of *Mitakuye Oyasin* reiterated, so students can identify where this worldview is being exhibited in the films. Again, in my own Midwestern formal education, I was not provided with studies of Native Americans or any Indigenous people until I arrived in college. This is true for many American students, as well as those from other countries. When I recently presented a paper at Arizona State University with the American Indian Studies Association, I met Dakota author and scholar, Dr. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, and Dakota and Fort Peck Assiniboine scholar Dr. Florence Garcia, Associate Dean at Montana State University Billings. They also relayed the lack of any study of Native American teachings in Native American communities' non-collegiate formal education in their lives as well. This information left me very saddened, yet should not have come as a surprise.

It has been my experience in the classroom thus far, that students from locales outside the U.S. are also often very curious and eager to learn about Native American people because they have heard so very little about them.

Since students from countries other than the U.S. obviously have vast issues of environmental concerns in their own locales, and many of them come from cultures also of oral traditions, a class regarding Native American culture and ecocomposition can help them not only relate better to the condition of the U.S. environment (and hence, comparatively, the environment in their country of origin), but help to bridge the gap between speaking and writing in an interesting, informative, and meaningful way—in this case, through the detail of rhetorical analysis of material pertaining to Native American people, history, and ecology. Students will be taught to rhetorically analyze films that contain examples of the rhetoric used throughout U.S. history through the present day to seize Native lands while practicing genocidal ideologies in order to do so. Since repercussions of the use of rhetoric can be seen in our local ecology, particularly with sites we will be visiting for the class, this realization will help students attain a historical frame of reference, while causing them to see what the oppression of a sacred Indigenous worldview, such as *Mitakuye Oyasmin*, has wrought. This new lens of perspective will also help students to build on this information with Formal Writing #2.

Formal Writing #2

Based upon Informal Journal Writing #3—the Geocache Narrative, students will engage in Formal Writing #2, their Environmental Advocacy Project at the same site. This project will consist of (but will not solely be limited to) hands-on service-learning work at the Grand Kankakee Marsh restoration site participating in the garden project, and perhaps also participating in a controlled

burn to keep out invasive species and/or planting native grasses. Students will then write a research paper explaining what they did as hands-on service-learning and why it is important, along with a works cited or reference page after researching the benefits of local ecological restoration in the computer lab. They will also be allowed to interview those we interact with when permission is granted. From there, students will continue to collaborate with local experts at one of the service-learning sites to advocate for the site in some way via written, printed materials, such as a brief brochure, which will be available for public use. In this way, students will continue to serve the site, simply in a different way. For example, if students plant trees as a wind break to help decrease soil erosion and protect wildlife at the Jasper-Pulaski Game Preserve, they will meet with preserve employees and design a two-page brochure which will be distributed to visitors to the preserve, explaining the purpose of the wind breaks and raising public awareness about ecological restoration. Included in the brochure may also be an appeal for donations to continue such efforts.

When students submit their final paper, along with the brochure or advocacy project piece of the assignment, they will also submit a rhetorical analysis of their advocacy project explaining how and why it is purposeful and effective. In some cases, site authorities may need a video clip produced rather than printed material. In that case, students will still provide a rhetorical analysis of the film they created including how and why it is purposeful and effective, especially as a video production (such as a podcast), rather than printed media.

Formal Writing #3

Formal Writing Assignment #3 is known as the “10-5-1” Full Circle Project. It is the final paper for the class and also a group research project. At the project’s essence, it is about argumentative research and proving a point by finding a middle ground. Therefore, it is also about ideal balance—reflecting “as above/so below,” and “as within/so without,” as well as *Mitakuye Oyasin* in its concept. To begin with ideal balance in mind, I start the assignment focus in class with a very literal flipped classroom. I sit at the student desks and have all the students go to the front of the classroom. I am their student. For this assignment, the students will be teaching me from the front of the classroom. The students have to physically investigate the front of the room, operate the technical equipment, open and close the classroom door, the window blinds, and so on, getting comfortable with the physicality of the room. I remind them that the front of the classroom and all the other parts of the classroom are the same, as it is the same room. This takes some of the fear out of their perception of public speaking, since they will later have to do presentations at the front of the classroom.

Since this class is limited to/capped at ten students per semester, students will work as a collaborative group as they begin the project in the computer lab, brainstorming for questions and dimensions of the topic assigned they feel need to be investigated. They can also rely on their journals of their own narrative experiences to generate questions and ideas. From there, students will write an initial proposal for the project, posing questions for which they would like

to have answers from their future research. About a week later, students will give an oral presentation of their proposal at the front of the classroom.

Thereafter, the group of 10 students will be split in two even groups of five. One group will be assigned the “pro” point of view (initially) of the topic (such as bison reintroduction), and the other group will be the “con” point of view (also initially). For example: If the topic is Bison Reintroduction locally and in South Dakota, the “pro” group will have to advocate this effort is a good thing, and the “con” group will have to argue it is not. Based upon what the two groups of students find in their initial research of their assigned stance, each group will compose a twenty-minute PowerPoint presentation to the class, whether they agree with their assigned stance or not. For example: Even if a student is pro bison, if they are assigned against bison, they have to convincingly present the research that argues against it. In a sense, each group will have to present a persuasive narrative of why the research they are presenting is more convincing than the other group, which opposes it. As each group of five students (pro, then con, or vice-versa) presents their twenty-minute PowerPoint presentation, the other five students in the class will use grading sheets formed from the collaborative primary and secondary trait scoring to grade the presenting group as to how successfully they make their argument, especially in light of the opposite point of view. The graders are also allowed to ask questions after each set of presenters is finished. Along with the presentations, each individual student will also craft the first four pages of their formal writing assignment via their initial stance.

After the groups and their respective stances have been presented, the two groups of five students will switch stances and repeat the process. They will research the stance they were not assigned to the first time regarding their topic. However, this second time around, groups cannot present research which has already been presented by their opposing group—they have to dig deeper and come up with even more convincing research in light of what they (and the rest of the class) already know from the previous presentations. These presentations will also be graded by the opposing group, keeping in mind that new information must be presented. Once the opposing group's grading sheets are viewed by the presenting group, they are then forwarded to me to use in the final grading process for the project later. This process will follow with another four pages of writing as appropriate to their new stance, which will become an additional four pages of their final formal paper. This overall process forces the two groups of five students to compete with each other in a sense, a friendly form of vying for new and greater information, while very effectively fleshing out aspects of their topic via in-depth research, seeking balance.

Once each initial group of five students assigned has presented the sides of their arguments, they will come back together to try to find a unified and balanced middle ground for their topic in light of all they now know via their research. (If in the event they cannot find middle ground, they will express why.) This will become the last two pages or so of their final formal paper, Writing Assignment #3. Based upon all their research, the students will end up with a ten-page paper which is researched collaboratively, but written individually to

express each student's voice and point of view regarding their topic. Thus, students find a "middle ground" or reasonable determination of the best way to approach the topic for an optimal ecological outcome and restoration of a healthy planet. Students will also be very strongly encouraged to incorporate Lakota viewpoints and the *Mitakuye Oyasin* worldview into their work. For example, if their research shows that bison herds are better for soil conservation than cattle, they may find they agree with the Lakota belief that bison are the better option for ecological harmony.

This method of researching a topic and presenting, as well as writing it, helps students acquire balanced reasoning skills within argumentative research. In a sense, it also forms a collaborative democracy as other students in the class grade the presentations (I grade the final papers equally with the student evaluations of the presentations), which helps students learn from one another as they receive peer-graded evaluations back after their presentations each time. These rate sheets may perhaps also inform presenters how well they utilized visuals, voice, professionalism, etc., which will help them later in life with public speaking skills based upon research. At the end of the project, the original group of ten students assigned to the overall topic will come back together at the front of the classroom, revisiting their original proposal. Each student individually will express what they feel they learned and gained from the project—the final component of singular public speaking. This is why this project is called the "10-5-1" Full Circle Project—because students start out in a collaborative group of ten, then move to two groups of five, then to individuals writing their paper and

doing some final public speaking, later reconvening as the original group of ten. This teaches collaboration skills, argumentation skills, and public speaking skills in a way that tapers from a larger group, to a smaller one, then an individual effort, gradually giving students the opportunity to gain speaking experience presenting their research and argument(s). Overall, a well-reasoned middle ground or viable, practical advocacy option for their topic should be the end result. An additional final product which is part of Formal Writing #3 is a brochure or booklet which will be provided to the partner organization(s) for the topic of the semester.

Much like in the Lakota language where there is no word for overall authority, a reasoned plan must be established based upon all aspects of the topic. Once students become this invested in reasoning out their topics, they may realize how connected they really are as humans to their environment. Therefore, they will hopefully see the need to advocate for and protect the earth, in our case, restoring in some small sense, the Native American worldview that kept our local and expanded ecology pristine for thousands of years. While the original pure environment of the planet is not replicable, seeking to find essential and balanced solutions to restore what we can via revisiting and restoring a Native American worldview—*Mitakuye Oyasin*—can change who we are, and therefore change the earth.