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“WE PRACTICE LAKOTA WAY, BUT WE ARE NOT AN INDIAN CHURCH”: THE DIVERSE WAYS LAKOTA CHRISTIANS ARTICULATE, PERFORM AND TRANSLATE ETHNICITY IN CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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“WE PRACTICE LAKOTA WAY, BUT WE ARE NOT AN INDIAN CHURCH”:
THE DIVERSE WAYS LAKOTA CHRISTIANS
ARTICULATE, PERFORM AND TRANSLATE ETHNICITY
IN CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

BY

Kristin Fitzgerald

B.S. Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 2003
M.A. Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 2006

DISSERTATION
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy Anthropology
The University of New Mexico Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Abstract

This study looks at articulations, performances and translations of ethnicity among urban Lakota Christians at St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues in Rapid City, South Dakota. Within the context of increased ethnic revitalization and recognition, Native American Christians are negotiating new models of ethnicity in typically Western arenas, often manifesting through actions and discourse that are ostensibly traditional. Yet even in this era of recognition, the public performance of cultural authenticity is not the only thing on people’s minds. Native people mark various practices, symbols, and persons as traditional or modern at different points in history or within different contexts (see Bucko 1998); suggesting that individual expressions of ethnicity are both processual and event-dependent (see Agha 2007:165, 177, 255-256, 268). Thus, looking at Lakota Christians’ discourse and performance in congregational life, interpersonal interactions, and personal reflections illuminate many of the ways in which individuals and various
subgroups (families, denominations, etc.) signal their ethnicities within the Church, and across time. This study reveals that ethnic expression in congregational life is demonstrated through specifically situated representations of difference rather than universalized or fixed categories of indigeneity, even in this era of ethnic recognition.
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Preface

Fieldwork and Methodology

This dissertation is informed by ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, archival research, life histories, and correspondence with clergy and congregants from St Matthew’s Episcopal and St. Isaac Jogues Catholic churches, located in Rapid City, South Dakota, over the last eleven years.

In 2007 and 2008, I made brief visits to Rapid City an average of three times per year (approximately 3 months total), attending Sunday services at St. Matthew’s, the subsequent banquet or potluck, and meeting with Fr. Sneve and/or his wife outside of church. In the fall of 2007 Fr. Paul Sneve from St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church formally agreed to let me work with him and his congregation at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church and announced me to the congregation as ‘their anthropologist.’ During the same visit, I began meeting with the elder Lakota women from St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church. I then began month-long visits (June 2009, October 2009, June 2010, and June 2011), during which I attended Sunday services at St. Matthew’s and audio-recorded the life histories of Fr. Paul Sneve and the elder Catholic women.

In March 2011, after years of learning more about Catholic Lakota practices from the elder women, I expanded my dissertation research to include St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church. In June 2011 I met with Fr. David Matzko, the rector at St. Isaac Jogues, and received his permission to work among his congregation. Over the next two years, I made a series of two-week, week-long and weekend visits equaling 5 months total (in October
2011, January 2012, March 2012, June 2012, October 2012 and March 2013) during which I met with congregants and clergy from St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues (sometimes just after church, other times over coffee/lunch at a local restaurant or in their homes) and attended services at both churches.

I also attended the three consecutive Niobrara Convocations (June 2009/2010/2011), an annual gathering of Native Episcopalian congregations in South Dakota (est. in 1870), hosted by one or more church each year. Generally the Convocation is held on one of the reservations in South Dakota, but in 2011 St. Matthew’s hosted the Convocation at the Thunderhead Episcopal Church Camp, just outside of Rapid City, and I participate in early set-up. In November 2009 and again in March 2013 I attended The Dakota Experience seminar, taught by Fr. Paul Sneve, and sponsored by the South Dakota Episcopal Diocese. The seminar is mandatory for clergy in South Dakota and focuses on “[Lakota and Dakota] culture, history, spirituality, tradition, and the impact of white imperialism, church mission work, and the reservation system” (SD Episcopal Diocese 2012) so that clergy may better understand and serve the native population in the state.

While the congregants speak English as their primary language, parts of the Eucharistic service at St. Matthew’s and the Inculturated mass at St. Isaac Jogues are in Lakota, and people frequently use various Lakota kinship terms and phrases in everyday speech. In preparation for these and other instances where Lakota is used, I spent the 2007/2008 academic year studying the Lakota language materials (completing both the beginning and intermediate level lessons) compiled and published by the Department of
Linguistics at the University of Colorado. My Lakota language studies were guided and monitored by my committee chair, Dr. David Dinwoodie.

Rather than performing a single and consecutive year of fieldwork, my regular returns to Rapid City over the years, I hope, have contributed to a better perception of anthropology among native people in Rapid City. As I noted earlier, on more than one occasion people at St. Matthew's have offered narratives in which they confront what anthropologists call "hit and run" anthropology, and their narratives often center on friends’ or relatives’ experiences with anthropologists on reservations. I have come to understand that people tell these stories around me as a way to implicitly guide my behavior - to discourage me from exhibiting the negative behaviors they have associated with anthropologists, such as coming to gather information and then never returning, or failing to maintain relationships with people across geographical boundaries. The folks at St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues have been good teachers. Today I continue to cherish these relationships and appreciate the compassion and patience they have been so gracious to offer me.
Introduction

American Indians live today amidst a morass of “Indian” social categories, many of which have been fashioned and imposed by the political institutions of American society, some which may descend from historically based Indigenous societies, and some which have been “excavated” and in a sense constructed by legal scholars or anthropologists (or both working together) to resemble historical categories, and which nonetheless derive from dominant society.

To make matters worse, despite well-meaning scholarship, there are no certainties as to which of these categories are which, which presumably imposed, which presumably “authentic,” which “constructed,” under what circumstances they were constructed, etc. And, of course, in contemporary politics and even contemporary anthropology, the differences among them are continually obscured, the imposed often being newly re-imposed in the name of one cause or another, one version of de-colonization or another.

In recent years, with the rise of identity politics, anthropology has largely sought to facilitate “recognition.” While admirable from a contemporary social justice standpoint, Appiah and others criticize what they see as the underlying essentialism in the politics of difference, arguing that “the large collective identities that call for recognition come with notions of how a proper person of that kind behaves” (1994:159, see also Appiah 2018). While recognizing that some measure of norms and unity exist
among members of minority groups, he and others caution against a politics of difference that would force categories of persons who have historically been treated unfavorably to identify with inherited negative and stereotypical scripts (Ibid.:160-1); as it would only substitute “one kind of tyranny with another” for the very groups seeking equal recognition (Ibid.:163).

Also important, Appiah argues, is that if our identity is dependent on the dialogue and recognition of (presumably dominant) others (see Taylor 1992), it follows that “authenticity requires us to reject much that is conventional in our society” (Appiah 1994:153-4). In other words, in order to be authentic they “must also fight against the family, organized religion, society, the school, the state—all the forces of convention” (ibid.:154). Generally speaking, cultural anthropology has long departed from this essentialist and ahistorical view. Yet as many have noted, anthropological research with respect to indigenous peoples (and American Indian studies in particular), has never fully extricated itself from essentialism (see Field 1999: 194-195). Well-meaning scholarship has had an overwhelming focus on the stasis and continuity of traditional epistemologies among indigenous groups, turning attention away from the full complexities of the present.

Policies of ethnic recognition as they have been formulated within Catholic and Episcopal churches have variously been celebrated as a means to emancipate Native people (enabling them to be themselves within the Church) or denigrated as essentializing
selective traditional practices and epistemologies (obligating people with long histories of involvement in various “middle grounds” to represent themselves as unequivocally “traditional”). What this study shows is that both of the two congregations in question have made inculturation (incorporating traditional rites and symbols into church services) available as an option, and that people have taken it up selectively. Lakota people have engaged inculturation in a diverse range of ways, depending on the situation. If they feel confined by it at times, overall the movement has quietly enriched the larger environment in which they live. Ultimately, participants demonstrated specifically situated representations of difference rather than universal forms and categories of Native expression, both in congregational life and in personal reflections.

I am not primarily interested in the categories of recognition, rather I seek a better understanding of the various practices of identification and ascription revealed to me by my Lakota interlocutors. In studying context-specific identifications and ascriptions I draw on concepts that have been developed in classic social psychology (George Herbert Mead), contemporary semiotic anthropology (Mertz 2007), contemporary linguistic anthropology (Agha 2007; Silverstein 1993), contemporary social philosophy (Appiah 1994; Taylor 1992), and in part in the study of comparative ethnicity including the study of immigrant ethnic groups (Smith, Hutchison, etc.). Regarding the latter, while I hope to use some concepts used in the study of immigrant groups, I do not mean to confuse the circumstances of the Lakota with those of immigrants. The Lakota of Rapid City are
indigenous peoples and this study does not compromise that reality in any way.¹

Throughout, I use the term *ethnicity* as synonymous with *indigeneity*, with the hope to bridge valuable work done among urban Indians and indigenous Christianities with others who highlight increasingly hegemonic religious, political and economic ideologies of ethnic recognition and identity politics throughout the world, including multiculturalism, neoliberal multiculturalism, inculturation theology, ethnic nationalism, repatriation, and self-determination; turning attention away from primordial essentialisms and toward what is alive and dynamic.

Native peoples’ engagement with and contextualization of particular aspects of modernity is certainly not a new phenomenon. Sahlins (2000:515) noted several years ago the many ways in which “exogenous elements are culturally indigenized” so that people often refute “disconformity or inauthenticity” in composite ideologies and practices. Native groups have engaged with external (Western, intra-tribal, pan-Indian, etc.) institutions and ideologies for centuries, thus their reflections on matters of ethnicity draw from several bodies of knowledge and modes of discourse.

¹ There are a number of salient arguments against linking ethnic studies with indigenous studies, including the profound differences of indigenous peoples’ geographical proximity to and participation in home territories (versus immigrant populations who might have diasporas but tend to be much further removed from their home countries); indigenous peoples’ histories of colonization and subjugation within the nation they live (which immigrant populations do not share); and indigenous peoples’ unique multi-layered political statuses as members of one or more nations within a nation. While recognizing the accuracy in these distinctions, this study asserts that urban Indians’ participation in western political, economic and religious realms has included engagement with global politics of ethnic recognition. As such, it is in dialogue with others who address the politics of ethnic identities by “critically engaging with ethnic studies from an anthropological [and/or sociolinguistic] perspective...in post-colonial and post imperial spaces” (Harris, et. al. 2013:viii).
Similar to other indigenous groups in an urban milieu, the Lakota Catholics and Episcopalians in Rapid City with whom I worked drew on various ‘traditional’ symbols in performance both strategically (tacitly and/or overtly) and in everyday embodied practice (Goodman 2005; 2007). Sometimes participants retold or reimagined aspects of collective and personal histories to admonish, instruct, or build solidarity; and the context of semiotic events, social position of attendees, religious and/or institutional affiliations of members, occupation(s), and familial or social networks all had the potential to factor in to the ways in which people interacted.

Overall, I found that the Lakota Christians in Rapid City with whom I work do not consider themselves less Lakota because they practice Christianity, nor do they feel their Christianity is compromised because they identify with various Lakota epistemologies. Rather, the multiple pulls people feel to family, reservation(s), career, friends, education, the Church, and numerous other ‘traditional’ and ‘Western’ categories and institutions factored into people’s orientations and expressions. While one might expect that all Native Americans interested in Christianity would choose to participate as Native Americans, the situation seems to be more complex than that. What I have found is that individuals are engaging the new opportunities presented by policies and ideologies of ethnic recognition within the Church (inculturation theology) in a diverse set of ways.

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2 I use this term not to signal unity or homogeneity, but as a partial and unexamined term spoken in everyday language and religious speech.
developing new and very interesting patterns of participation. It is these emerging patterns of identification, identity ascription, and reflection throughout congregational life that I seek to illuminate.

**Organization of Chapters**

In Section I (Chapters 1 & 2), I detail essential context for this study: Chapter 1, Setting the Stage, outlines relevant historical material for the population with whom I work; Chapter 2, Theorizing the Present, looks at some of the critiques of multiculturalism, inculturation theology and other postcolonial ideologies of ethnic recognition as they relate to individual formations and expressions of ethnicity in daily life.

In Section II (Chapters 3 & 4), I look at tacit and overt expressions of ethnicity in personal reflections and in daily life. Chapter 3 draws on personal reflections from research participants and considers the ways in which they tacitly or overtly index ethnicity in novel ways, while engaging with relevant (local, national and global) hegemonies. In chapter 4, I explore the genre of humor, in which people reanimated ostensibly traditional (primarily kinship) frameworks as innovative responses.

In Section III (Chapters 5 & 6), I explore some of the ways that parishioners and clergy create articulations (alignments) of indigeneity and the Church or manage other’s (ascribed) perceptions about them. Chapter 5 discusses ways that congregants and clergy articulate a proposed Lakota collective (meaning both "to utter" and to join together, see Hall 1986) with seemingly disparate institutions and/or ideologies in order to propose a
common (mutual) goal. Chapter 6 highlights two cases (one historical, one contemporary) which demonstrate that urban Lakota Christians in Rapid City—like the Cuca in Mexico and “many [other] contemporary indigenous people around the world”—must negotiate “both the older pressures to assimilate” alongside “more recent pressures to perform otherness” (Muehlmann 2009:12).
Section I: Essential Context
Chapter 1: Setting the Stage

Introduction to the Field

In the summer of 2006, while on a family vacation to the Black Hills, I had loosely organized a visit to Bear Butte under the assumption that I would eventually do my fieldwork around sacred sites and the negotiation of land claims, largely because it seemed like the natural progression of my academic and personal life until then. My family has lived in the Black Hills, South Dakota, since the 1890s; and it was not until I was an undergraduate that I learned my ancestors were among the countless prospectors who illegitimately claimed ownership of Sioux lands. I was deeply conflicted by this for quite some time, and to be honest, remain so to this day. Further, I felt deeply ambivalent over the potential conflict this kind of study might bring among so many of my relatives who own land in the Hills.

My family has also been Episcopalian as far back as we can trace them, and I had some informal knowledge of Lakota and Dakota peoples’ involvement in the Church in South Dakota. I was aware as a young child of Lakota symbolism peppered throughout the all-white congregation I attended during the summers that I stayed with my grandmother in Lead, SD. We were taught a handful of Lakota songs during Vacation Bible School and would perform them during an interlude of the following Sunday’s service. Why did we do that? I remember sitting in the pew, staring at the ornate stained-glass windows, donated by people who were long dead, at the cascading pipes from the organ
that echoed throughout the sanctuary, and at the conspicuous feather headdress that adorned the lectern. Where did that headdress come from? I thought about how one of our closest family friends became the first Native Bishop of South Dakota, and wondered whether (or hoped, perhaps) the Episcopal Church might be a place where some of these historic grievances were somehow mediated.

Someone at my grandmother’s church informally asked me what my research was about. I told them I was interested in learning more about Lakota practices in South Dakota, and they asked me if I had ever been to the “Indian church” (St. Matthew’s) in Rapid City. While I was familiar with the ubiquitous categories of Indian and white throughout state, I had never heard a distinction like this in reference to churches in South Dakota. I was immediately interested in finding out more about the ways that congregants in so-called “Indian churches” thought about such categories.

After my first visit to St. Matthew’s Episcopal church in Rapid City in 2006, I contacted the Episcopal bishop of South Dakota, Rt. Rev. Creighton Robertson, and told him about my interest in learning more about St. Matthew’s. Bishop Robertson was a long-time family friend, also Dakota Sioux, and I trusted that he would steer me away if my interests were inappropriate for research. He encouraged me to continue forward with my work, first by getting to know clergy and congregants at St. Matthew’s.

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3 The diocese first ordained Right Reverend Harold S. Jones as Suffragan Bishop (who served under the bishop of the diocese) during tumultuous and controversial Red Power activity in the early seventies. The Right Reverend Creighton Robertson was the first Native American Diocesan Bishop, ordained in 1994.
My first several visits to St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church were awkward at best. Each time I attended there happened to be either a banquet fundraiser or a potluck following the service, meaning that I needed to have cash in my wallet and a bag of potato chips in the car so that I would be prepared for either scenario. It took me several visits before I figured this out. People seemed generally polite, but more so, they were indifferent; when I went downstairs to the basement where they served the meals, I often sat alone. The tables are large, holding 8-10 people each, and a bit uncomfortable occupying an entire table by myself. I was discouraged. Eventually, three things seemed to fundamentally change this dynamic: first, after the birth of our first daughter, people began warming up a bit. People like babies. Secondly, David Dinwoodie, my dissertation chair, advised that I keep returning to the churches so that people would appreciate my long-term commitment to them. This has proven to be instrumental toward developing and maintaining relationships with folks in Rapid City. Finally, when Ray Bucko joined my dissertation committee as the outside member, I told him of my troubles. He had worked among Lakota people for thirty years and had a number of hunka [hunká ‘adoption,’ also ‘adopted relative(s)’] to call on for help. He called an Episcopal priest he knew from South Dakota, who happened to also be his adopted brother, who in turn called his nephew Fr. Paul Sneve (Rosebud Lakota and Norwegian), who fortuitously was the vicar⁴ at St.

⁴ In the Episcopal Church, a priest at a mission church is referred to as a vicar. In terms of address, he/she is referred to as “Father (first or last name, depending on familiarity)” or “Mother (same rules associated with Father).”
Matthew’s – ultimately encouraging the building of our relationship.

During my next visit, Fr. Sneve invited me to meet him and his wife Tally for coffee. Over the course of our first meeting, they provided essential insights for me as I moved forward, and gave me the names of several other individuals I should get to know. He warned me that while people seemed apathetic toward me when I visited, they were waiting to find out what kind of relationship I was ultimately going to have with them.

Was I a relative? A friend? An enemy? Each of these relationships has prescribed norms, obligations and/or avoidance strategies, he stressed, and only time, observation behind-the-scenes conversations would reveal this for congregants. Conversations about newcomers prior to their formal inclusion are very common, and I have subsequently observed this to be an almost requisite stage to entrée. As Fr. Paul often joked, “White people talk about the weather, and then get to know one another. Lakotas find out how we are related first, and then we can talk about the weather.” Ella Deloria made similar statements concerning historic practices (Deloria 1998:29):

In other words, you simply did not dare have dealings with strangers, because you could not be sure of them. [...] Of relatives only you might be sure, because they and you both knew what our reciprocal obligations were as such. The dictates of kinship demanded of relatives that they not harm each other; so it was necessary first to make relatives of erstwhile strangers, thus putting them “on the spot,” and then deal with them on that basis. You assumed that as relatives they would be trustworthy, and by the same token you obligated yourself.

Interestingly, as my trips to the field have become less frequent over the past few years, I have grown even closer to some congregants via Facebook; about which much could be
written, but is outside the scope of this study.

After meeting with some of the folks at St. Matthew’s, it soon became apparent that I should also get to know some of the people who attend what is commonly referred to as the Catholic Indian church in the city, St. Isaac Jogues, as so many Lakota people in Rapid City are connected to one another through kinship (consanguine, affine, and fictive), employment, volunteer work, military service, schooling, and associations with various reservations. Fr. Bucko called on the priest at St. Isaac Jogues to suggest the names of some congregants who might be interested to meet with me. This resulted in my introduction to a group of elder women, which was fundamentally different from my introduction to St. Matthews. The elder women from St. Isaac Jogues already knew who I was ‘related to,’ thus they immediately greeted me warmly and affectionately. Since then, Mary, Rosemary and Dee (the three women whom I have developed the strongest relationships with from St. Isaac Jogues) have demonstrated what I now understand to be a number of obligatory practices, including sending small gifts to me through the mail and when I visit, greeting me with other tokens such as native jewelry and books, and eventually, by calling me granddaughter.

Rapid City, S.D.

Rapid City’s current population is just over 60,000, making it the second largest city in South Dakota. Rapid City’s American Indian residents comprise 9% of the city’s population
(6,538 of 61,633), the largest minority population in the city\(^5\) (Bureau 2008) and present with marked economic and health disparities. According to the American Community Survey for 2011, an estimated 50.9% (3,617) of American Indians in Rapid City live below poverty level (as opposed to 10.3% of whites)\(^6\) (Bureau 2008).

Economic hardships only compound severe health issues; according to a recent Public Health Bulletin issued by South Dakota’s Department of Health, American Indians in South Dakota have the highest mortality rate of any race/ethnic group in the U.S. The disparity is even greater when one considers that South Dakota whites have the second lowest mortality in the country (Health 2008:11). Further, they report that the years of potential life lost (YPLL) before age 75 is more than three times greater for American Indians than for whites in South Dakota (South Dakota Department of Health 2008:57). The infant mortality rate for South Dakota Indians is more than double that of non-Natives in the state (14.3% versus 6.1% of whites) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2000).

The city’s amenities and close proximity to Mt. Rushmore make it a central

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\(^{5}\) According to the 2000 census statistics, 5,256 individuals identified as Sioux alone or in some combination. The total responding population for Rapid City in 2000 was 59,607. While the term ‘Sioux’ is generally understood to include Lakota and Dakota bands, each of which have their own sub-groups, the census does not make these more nuanced distinctions. ‘Lakota’ people are generally listed as belonging to one or more of seven sub-tribes: Oglala, Sicangu, Brule, Sans Arcs, Minneconjou, Two Kettles, Hunkpapa, and Blackfeet. These are independent, but confederated bands within the tribe. Oglala are associated with Pine Ridge Reservation, Sicangu with Rosebud Reservation, Hunkpapa with Standing Rock Reservation, and the rest with Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

\(^{6}\) No data is listed for African Americans, Asians, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders. It is likely that the “Two or More Races” category includes American Indian/white, American Indian/Hispanic, or Hispanic/white, and of these 2,492 residents, 43.9% live below the poverty level. Hispanic or Latino only respondents included 2,657 residents, 52.1% of which live below the poverty level.
destination for tourism, which is the second leading source of revenue in the state just after agriculture. The state is infamous for its Wild West flavor, Native American histories, presidential sculptures (including Mt. Rushmore, President’s Park, and several bronze statues that line Rapid City’s downtown), geographical splendors, and various kitschy attractions. While in Rapid City, tourists can take a bus ride to the Memorial Museum at Wounded Knee; visit Deadwood’s downtown for the Days of ’76 (an annual commemoration in which the town celebrates the height of the gold rush in the nineteenth century); stopover to Murdo, S.D. to see an authentic 1880s-era town comprised entirely of relocated buildings and accessories circa 1880-1920, explore the underground anomalies inside Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern, located just one mile from the city; and tour an active paleontological mammoth dig.

Steady streams of billboards promoting these and similar attractions line highways throughout the state, along with tourist’s maps and brochures in gas stations and rest areas all along major thoroughfares. Even the newest attractions are marketed to reflect their historical import; the recently completed 109 mile-long George S. Mickelson Trail named for the former South Dakota governor (1987-1993), built on top of an old railroad line, advertises the opportunity to walk or bike along “a path where the ghosts of Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane still roam” (South Dakota Game 2010). Thus, South Dakota’s historical narratives are a vital source of revenue for the state. They are histories that

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7 Although ‘discovered’ and owned by the Duhamel family, the cave was named by Black Elk, who also participated in the Indian pageant held outside of the cave for tourists during the 1930s.
have been refashioned and branded with romantic caricatures of various military
generals, cowboys, Indians, outlaws and politicians.

A number of Indian people benefit from tourism, including those who own local
businesses, are employed in the state or national park service, and/or those who are able
to sell crafts with some success. Some Native people have also utilized opportunities to
practice historic traditions while educating non-Natives in the process. The Mt. Rushmore
National Memorial offers tourists a hike on the Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota Heritage Trail,
upon which they can observe “members of South Dakota tribes... demonstrating
traditional living and their artistic talents as well as telling traditional stories.” Some
guests “may even have the opportunity to sit with an American Indian elder and talk
about days past and the future” (Baker Spring/Summer 2008). For others, such images
and performances, geared largely toward non-Native tourists, carry forward a number of
long-held stereotypes in the media, film, and academia of Indians as spiritual
environmentalists, or more generally, as anachronistic figures in the modern era (see
Berkhofer 1978; Pearce 1965; Singer 2001).

In order to better contextualize expressions of ethnicity among urban Lakota
Catholics and Episcopalians today, I first geographically and historically situate the
population with whom I work, including the migration of the Lakota (Sioux) onto the
plains, their isolation and removal onto reservations through a series of treaties, land loss,
and the subsequent weaving of missionization (primarily Episcopalian and Catholic)
through federal policies which were implemented on reservations in South Dakota.
During some of the most violent conflicts in Sioux country, missionaries (and later, politicians) ostensibly countered the war policy on the Great Plains with a religious and political “Peace Policy.” The Peace Policy (1869-1882) assigned reservations to particular denominations and operated under the principle that the inevitable extinction of American Indians and perpetual violence could be thwarted by “civilizing” (Christianizing) the Indian, integrating him into mainstream society, and therefore resolving the Indian problem altogether.

The Episcopal and Catholic churches have had the most lasting influence since the Peace Policy’s implementation, and many Sioux people today, including those who lead traditional ceremonies and practices, belong to one denomination or the other (see DeMallie and Parks 1987: 14). Nearly one hundred years after the Peace Policy was initiated, the Episcopal and Catholic dioceses respectively established St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues as Lakota mission churches during the federal relocation era, in response to the large number of Lakota people who moved to Rapid City, primarily from Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations.

**Contextualizing the Population: Early Migration**

While there are no archival records of the Sioux until their contact with the French in the 1600s, some evidence suggests a “clustered group” of Dakota language speakers lived “in the southern half of the northwoods in Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin” until about AD 1500, when “separate [and] distinct dialects” emerged (Gibbon 2003:50-
The Ottawa, an Algonquian-speaking tribe, referred to the group as *na-towe-ssiwak* (the plural form of the word *na-towe-ssi*, derived from a proto-Algonquian word meaning “speak a (foreign) language”). The French documented the term as Nadouessiouak (the Ottawa singular form), then pluralized it by adding an “x” (Nadouessioux), and abbreviated the form to Sioux, both of which were standard French colloquial patterns at the time (DeMallie 2001a:749).

The first face-to-face interactions between the Sioux and Europeans likely began in the early 1760s with French coureurs de bois (sometimes called “forest runners,” referring to independent, unlicensed fur traders), and later, with explorers, missionaries, and licensed fur traders. Accounts from early fur trades claim that the Sioux were by then divided both by territory and dialect into three groups, each containing two or more tribes (Ibid.: 48-50). According to legend, the seven tribes lived separately, and called themselves “Oceti Sakowin” (the Seven Council Fires). There were four Santee groups (the eastern group, *Dakota*, comprised of the Mdewakanton, Wahpeton, Sisseton, and

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8 Prior to moving south and west during the seventeenth century (supported by legend and archival documents), the Dakota probably lived around Lakes Mille Lacs and Big Sandy (to the east), with the Yankton–Yanktonai and the Lakota in the wooded Headwaters region of the Mississippi River (in the northwest) (Gibbon 2003:51).

9 There is a long-held belief that the Ottawa word meant “little rattlesnake,” “lesser snakes,” or “little adders,” likely because in several more recent Algonquian tribal languages the word *na-tow-wa* means “little rattlesnake.” Some have convincing arguments to support this association (see Siebert 1996), while others hold that this belief is not supported in the documentary record (DeMallie 2001a:749).

10 The documentary record does not support the existence of a confederation called the Seven Council Fires, or a record of its divisions into various groups and subgroups. As DeMallie notes (1982:11-12), however, this does not invalidate the symbolic social and cultural solidarity that it provides for Lakota/Dakota peoples, or the important fact that the tribes continued to share the original council fire.
Wahpekute), the Yankton-Yanktonai tribes in the middle (also Dakota, though sometimes referred to as Nakota), and the western Teton (the western group, Lakota, who were still united) (Gilroy 1970:5-7; Walker 1982:17). The names meant “allies” in slightly different dialects. Their legend declared that they were originally one people with a central chief, therefore were still kin. This meant that they never declared war on one another, and also met each summer for great council (Gilroy 1970:5-7; Walker 1982:18).

The Lakota began migrating west from the area that is now Minnesota in the mid-seventeenth century, when neighboring Algonquian tribes acquired guns through trade with British and French fur traders. By the eighteenth century, they had made their way west of the Missouri River (DeMallie 1982:16; DeMallie 2001b:794; Hurt 1974:93). Though beginning their migration as a unified tribe, by the time they crossed the Missouri they had divided into three groups: the Oglala, the Brule, and the Saone. By the mid-nineteenth century the Saone further divided into five tribes, the Hunkpapa, Sans Arc, Minneconjou, Blackfeet, and Two Kettles (DeMallie 2001b:794).11

**Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

For the next several decades, the Lakota lived as nomadic horse-back hunters and

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11 By their own account, the Lakota began occupying the Black Hills in approximately 1775 (DeMallie 1982:50). They were not the first group to reside in and around the area; Kiowas and Kiowa-Apaches likely lived in the area for several centuries by 1700, before leaving around 1800 (Schlesier 1974:309-314). The Northern Comanche also lived just west of the Hills from about 1640 until 1700. The Suhtais came to the area in 1670, joined the Cheyenne in 1730, and collectively migrated south of the Hills in 1876. The Arapahos came into the region as early as 1550, and allied themselves with the Cheyenne/Suhtais, before finally moving out around 1800 (Schlesier 1974:317, 323).
warriors throughout the Great Plains. In the 1830s, various denominations built day schools and missions throughout the Plains, sometimes supplemented by the government’s “civilization” fund, as several missionaries and political leaders increasingly viewed “assimilation through education as the most humane approach to the “Indian problem” (Naugle 2007:90).

The ubiquitous intertribal warfare throughout the Great Plains was exacerbated by westward expansion throughout the nineteenth century, and military scouts often capitalized on long-standing hostilities between tribes in their campaigns. Still, by the mid-nineteenth century the Lakota population had swelled immensely (outnumbering all other Sioux groups combined), and along with their allies, presented a formidable challenge to political and military westward expansion into the northern and central Great Plains (see Bamforth 1994; Bamforth 2011; Galloway 1996).

In 1851, Congress passed the Indian Appropriations Act, which created the reservation system and called for individual treaties with tribes to outline their respective land bases (i.e., Unceded territory). The subsequent Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 defined the boundaries of Sioux treaty lands in an effort to limit conflict with surrounding plains tribes and to allow for the construction of military posts and roads, but did not define the boundaries of a reservation (see Image 1.1, 1.4, below). Just three years later, armed

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12 The Santee (Dakota) Sioux signed a treaty that sold 24 million acres in Minnesota, and they were relocated to two small reservations. The Yankton (Dakota) sold nearly all of their land in South Dakota through a treaty in 1858, also leaving them only a small reservation (Lazarus xx-xxi).
conflict began raging throughout Sioux Country (a series of events collectively referred to as the Sioux Wars, from 1854-1890), while several more treaties (referred to as “agreements” after 1871) resulted in the loss of Sioux lands, removal to reservations, and aggressive policies of assimilation (Barrett 2011; Hoover 1989b:58-59).

The Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868 defined the Great Sioux Reservation, signed with the Brule (Sicangu), Oglala, Miniconjou, Hunkpapa, Blackfeet, Two Kettles, San Arc, Yanktonai, Cuthead, and Santee, and included all of South Dakota west of the Missouri, and designated parts of Wyoming, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Montana either for hunting or as Unceded Indian Territory (see Image 1.2, 1.4, below). Both Fort Laramie treaties allowed for annuities, and the 1868 treaty also forecasted a plan for education and eventual allotment of the land on the reservation. (DeMallie 2001b:796, 799; Gilroy 1970:8-12; Lazarus 1991:xx-xxi, 56; United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs 1868).

Concurrently, and more pointedly after the Civil War (1861-1865) ended, the government focused more of its resources on controlling tensions between Indians and whites in Sioux Territory. In 1867, Congress created a Peace Commission (1867), separate

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13 Beginning with the Grattan Massacre (1854) (see Beck 2004), and included major events such as the Fetterman Fight (1866) (see Brown 1971; Goble 1992), Battle of the Rosebud (1876) (see Mangum 1966), Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876) (see Sandoz 1966), and ending with death of Sitting Bull (see Aller and Parlin 2004; Allison 1912) and the tragic events at Wounded Knee (1890) (see Allen 1997; Eastman 1945). For more expansive political/military outlines, see Prucha 1964 & 1988. Prucha also details several religious denominations’ approaches/interactions with Native people from 1865-1900; see Prucha 1976.

14 The Santee were never paid for their 24 million acres, and the would-be beneficiaries of the 1868 Treaty never received promised rations or funds. Further, when gold was discovered in the Black Hills in 1874, miners flooded the land (Ibid.)
from the War Department (Office of Indian Affairs), to remove sources of conflict in Indian
country wherever possible (especially among “hostile” Indians, which included the Sioux);
to protect frontier and railroads; and finally, to develop a plan of civilization for the
Indians (Marrs 1970:3).

Specifically, the Peace Commission’s aims included a plan of Indian boarding
schools, allotment of Indian land, aggressive missionization, and the “civilization” of
native people. The Indian Office (OIA) created their own boarding schools, and also
offered increasing incentives to various Christian denominations to do the same,
continuing the church-state partnership that began early in the nineteenth century. The
OIA promised to provide rations of food, clothing, and student tuition if the
denominations provided other necessary materials, such as the building and staffing. The
Peace Commission’s work culminated in President Grant’s 1869 Peace Policy, which
formally delineated various Christian denominations control over specific reservations.
The Policy also allocated federal money to educate and missionize the Indians (Markowitz 1987:116, 119-21, 129-31).

For at least a decade preceding the Peace Policy, Episcopalians and Quakers led a group of churchgoers and philanthropists who collectively pressured the Executive and Legislative branches to opt for church-appointed Indian agents, pointing to the well-documented abuse and fraudulent behavior of politically appointed Indian agents (Marrs 1970: 1-2). Proponents argued “that leadership of Indian Affairs by Christian men and women would end all forms of abuse and corruption within the OIA” (Bakken and Kindell 2006:90). Yet the Peace Policy (in opposition to the military’s “war policy”) dovetailed with contemporary military and government efforts to dispossess coveted land, limit mobility and other freedoms, and confine Indians to reservations. Ultimately, these religious, military and political approaches throughout the last half of the nineteenth century allowed for more centralized efforts to assimilate Indians to dominant cultural and political practices, including farming, reading and writing, liberal individualism and conversion to Christianity (Trafzer 2009:102-103).

Under the Peace Policy, the Episcopal Church received the Yankton, Whetstone (Sicangus, later renamed Rosebud), Crow Creek (Yanktonais and Lower Brules, part of what was then-called Upper Missouri), Red Cloud (Oglalas, later renamed Pine Ridge), Spotted Tail (Upper Brules), Sisseton (which they lost to Presbyterians soon after) and Cheyenne River (Two Kettles, Minneconjous, Sans Arcs) agencies.15 Essentially the entire

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15 The Catholic Church also received Devil’s Lake (now Spirit Lake, in North Dakota), and the Hicksite Friends
Great Sioux Reservation, with the exception of Grand River (later renamed Standing Rock, which was assigned to the Roman Catholics), was under Episcopal jurisdiction, with a strong presence of Catholic missionaries at the borders who would minister to those who wished to visit them (DeMallie and Parks 1987:11-12; Keller 1983:152; Marrs 1970:48, 50; Prucha 1984:513-519).16

Episcopal and Catholic Missions

In 1870 the Episcopal diocese held the first Niobrara Convocation, which gathered the Sioux tribes, and all interested Episcopal clergy, together at the Santee Mission to formally organize the Indian Missionary Convocation. Reverend Samuel Hinman17 presided over the meeting, and several resolutions were formulated and adopted, all of which promoted assimilation to white societal ideals (Driving Hawk Sneve 1977:10, 20). Scheduled in the summer, the Niobrara Convocation served the same social function for many Sioux as the annual Sun Dance (Ibid. 10, 72-78).

In 1872, the Episcopal Church named William Hobart Hare bishop for the newly given the Santee Reservation (Nebraska) (DeMallie and Parks 1987: 11). The Episcopal Church also received the Ponca, Fort Berthold and Shoshone and Bannock agencies; though these reservations did not include Sioux occupants (Marrs 1970: 48, 50).

16 In all, four denominations organized missions to the Sioux, including Presbyterians, Congregationalists American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, or the ABCFM), Catholics and Episcopalians (see Driving Hawk Sneve 1977; Duratschek 1947; Prucha 1984; Riggs 1869).
17 Hinman established a mission to the Dakotas at the Lower Sioux Agency (Minnesota). In 1864 he translated most of the Book of Common Prayer into the Dakota language (published 1865). Hinman later worked at Santee mission in Nebraska, and served as Archdeacon of the Nebraska and Dakota Indian work under Hare (Episcopal 2018).
outlined jurisdiction of Niobrara, which covered parts of modern day South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska. Hare’s jurisdiction was unique in that it served the Indians exclusively (Marrs 1970:28-29). He believed that the Indians’ ward status with the federal government was detrimental, and that the Indians should be encouraged to become independent and self-sufficient. His strategy was to use native clergy to aid in the process, and after the Episcopal church ordained its first full-blooded Native deacon Paul Mazakute in 1868, several Sioux went on to become catechists, deacons, priests (and eventually, bishops) in the Episcopal church (Sneve 1977: 53, 55).

It wasn’t until 1882, when the federal government rescinded the Peace Policy, that Catholic missionaries could formally expand their missions outside of Standing Rock. For missionaries and government officials purporting assimilation as the means to save Indians from extinction, even after the Peace Policy was no longer in effect, civilization and Christianity were still synonymous. As Prucha notes, assimilation policy was couched in dominant beliefs concerning what it meant to be a civilized person in the United States in that socio-historical moment. Thus the break from Grant’s Peace Policy was less a reproach to missionization than it was an argument for the “right, under the Constitution, as much as any other person in the Republic, to the full enjoyment of liberty of conscience,” including “the right to choose whatever Christian belief they wish, without interference from the government” (Prucha 1976:58).

By 1887, the Catholic diocese had established Saint Francis Mission and Boarding School among the Brule Lakota on the Rosebud Reservation, and one year later, they
established the Holy Rosary Mission and Boarding School among the Oglala Lakota at Pine Ridge. The brothers of the Jesuit Order, the Sisters of Saint Francis, and various priests ran both institutions, following the guidelines offered by the government for the aggressive assimilation of the Indians (Markowitz 1987:121, 129-31).

Overall, both the Episcopal and Catholic missions functioned similarly, operating day schools (and later, boarding schools) to encourage assimilation to religious and societal norms, recruiting native clergy and catechists to help convert their brethren, and holding annual convocations to build and increase solidarity among converts (DeMallie and Parks 1987:12). The missions had various degrees of success in converting Indian occupants. The inconsistency was not only because some groups were more receptive than others, but some agents were especially charismatic, while others were less than remarkable (Driving Hawk Sneve 1977:53, 55). Further, among some groups of Indians, influential members (often chiefs) persuaded their brethren to convert. However, conversion did not necessarily mean wholesale rejection of traditional religious practices. Further, there were certain advantages for Indians who converted to Christianity; Indian clergy and catechists in both Episcopalian and Catholic missions “formed a kind of local elite dedicated to helping their people through the access to money, influence and spiritual strength provided by the churches” (DeMallie and Parks 1987:11-12).

**Increasing Tensions, Further Confinement and Land Loss**

While the 1868 Treaty promised to remove all military forts and prevent non-Indian settlement, the United States government ordered Brevet Major General Custer onto the
Great Sioux Reservation in 1874 both to find a location for a new army fort and explore the area’s natural resources.\textsuperscript{18} Approximately one month later, his men found gold in the Hills. Even though the gold took much labor to extract, and the amount found was very modest, Custer wrote that the gold was found “at an expense of but little time or labor” (Letter from Custer to Assistant Adjutant-General, Department of Dakota, Saint Paul August 15, 1875) and recommended “the extinguishment of Indian title at the earliest moment” (Ibid.).

Thus, the Black Hills gold rush began in 1874, and ended with the Deadwood Fire in late 1879 (Parker 1966:38).\textsuperscript{19} Seven months after Custer’s entry, the Grant administration began to evaluate the overall worth of the Black Hills and attempted to purchase the land from the Sioux (Lazarus 1991:77). Rather than government assurance toward "the absolute and undisturbed use and occupancy" of their lands, President Grant told the Sioux representatives that there would “be trouble in keeping white people from going [into the Black Hills] for gold” and “it [would be] possible that strong efforts might not be made to keep them out” if they were unwilling to sell the land (as cited in Lazarus 1991:78). The Sioux delegates\textsuperscript{20} and President Grant were unable to reach an agreement,

\textsuperscript{18} As he traveled the region with his 7\textsuperscript{th} Cavalry, his dispatches exclaimed the extreme richness of the land, arguing that it would be perfect for white settlement. He wrote, “No portion of the United Sates can boast of a richer or better pasturage, purer water...and of greater advantages generally to the farmer or stockman than are to be found in the Black Hills” (Letter from Custer to Assistant Adjutant-General, Department of Dakota, Saint Paul August 15, 1875).

\textsuperscript{19} Several factors influenced white settlers to enter the Hills; the prospect of finding gold coincided with the 1873 farm and financial depression, which pushed hordes of settlers from surrounding areas off of their agricultural claims. (Parker 1966:38-39).

\textsuperscript{20} Sioux delegates, Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, initially refused to sell, but over time, thought the sale might offer long-term stability. They offered to sell for $70 million, and the administration counter-offered $6
however. Then on November 3, 1875, Grant secretly declared that “no further resistance
[should] be made to miners going into [the Black Hills],” and although the administration
maintained the rhetoric of safeguarding the Hills for the Indians, they allowed the flood
of miners to come in unimpeded (Ibid. 81-83).

One month later, under mandate from the Secretary of the Interior (December 3,
1875), the commissioner of Indian Affairs ordered all Sioux bands to return to the
permanent reservation from their hunting grounds in Yellowstone and Powder River
valleys by January 31, 1876, or they would be declared hostile and treated accordingly.
Of course, even if the Indians had wanted to adhere to the ultimatum, they would have
been unable to; the harsh winter would have not allowed them to return in time for the
deadline (Ibid. 83-84). The resulting series of conflicts culminated in Custer’s defeat
during the Battle at Little Big Horn (June 25-26, 1876), after which Congress passed a
retaliatory provision (August of 1876) to the Indian Appropriations Act that withheld
rations for the Sioux entirely until they ceded the Black Hills, gave up other rights outside
of their permanent reservation, and allowed miners/settlers right of way throughout their
reservation, now commonly known as the “sell or starve” rider. President Grant then
formed a commission to spread news of the ultimatum to the Sioux agencies, headed by
former commissioner of Indian Affairs, George Manypenny (Ibid. 90, The Office of Sen.

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million (in six installments), or alternatively, to lease the Hills for $400,000/year. The Sioux refused both
offers, and the negotiation for the sale of the Hills came to an abrupt halt (Lazarus 1991:81-83).
Many chiefs, including Spotted Tail and Red Cloud, finally gave in and signed the agreement. Still, the commissioners never attempted to collect the required three-fourths of the Sioux men’s signatures, which was necessary for any changes to be made to the 1868 treaty. Only ten percent of the men signed (Ibid. 90-92Lazarus 1991), leaving the new agreement technically invalid, but nonetheless Congress signed the Manypenny Agreement into law on February 28, 1877\(^2\) (see Image 1.3, 1.4; Lazarus 1991: 92-93, The Office of Sen. Daniel 1988:11). Non-Indians were now able to enter the Great Sioux Reservation unimpeded and began settling in both new and existing towns in South Dakota. The Indians, however, remained largely confined to their reservations, due to economic and social constraints.

By 1887 it became clear that both North Dakota and South Dakota would inevitably be inducted into the Union, and non-Indian settlers in the Dakotas were increasingly pressuring the federal government for access to Sioux lands. These factors, along with the passage of the General Allotment Act in 1887, hastened Congress’s appointment of federal commissions (in 1888, and again in 1889) to visit Sioux tribes and persuade three-fourths of the adult males to agree to the breaking up their land-base.

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\(^{2}\) Over one hundred years later, on June 30, 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court awarded the Lakota $106 million after a decision was reached that the Black Hills were illegally seized. To date, the Lakota have not accepted the money, and it continues to accrue interest (Lazarus 1998: 401). If they choose to accept the money, they will be unable to ever again contest the ownership of the Black Hills (Ibid. 403). When the financial sum was awarded, some Lakota believed that accepting the money would allow them substantial political and economic gain. Vine Deloria, Jr. proposed that the money be used to buy land in the Black Hills or that it be funneled to reservations in order to build a thriving economic foundation (Ibid. 428). Others felt that it was more important to hold out for the treaty obligations to be fulfilled. To this day, it is certainly a source of contention not only among the Lakota, but also between the Lakota and the descendants of those white settlers who rushed into the Hills.
The resulting Sioux Agreement of 1889 led to the breakup of Sioux land into six reservations in South Dakota, including Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Lower Brule, Crow Creek, Rosebud and Pine Ridge. In order to quell potential protests to the 1889 agreement and the surveying of land for eventual allotment (particularly related to Sitting Bull’s camp), officials reinforced the land-loss by violently capitalizing on popular fears concerning the Ghost Dance movement, eventually culminating in the Sitting Bull’s death and the horrific events at Wounded Knee (see Image 1.5, Hoover 1989a:65-6; see also Prucha 1984).

22 The signatories included representatives from Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Standing Rock, Santee, Flandreau (Santee), and Ponca agencies (Hoover 1989b: 66). (For a thorough analysis of the 1889 Agreement, including the sale of “surplus” lands, land in trust, allotted land, etc., see Greene 1970; Hoover 1989a.)
From 1858 to 1889, the Yankton, Yanktonai, and the seven tribes of Tetons “lost their rights to use nearly 58,695,000 acres...and retained only 13,111,911 acres in South Dakota...in other words, they retained only 18.3 percent” of the land they held pre-1858 Fort Laramie treaty. Later allotment of Sioux lands, alongside the open sale of what were considered “surplus” lands relative to the number of Indian occupants/acre on each reservation, led to even more land loss for the Sioux, and the familiar “checkerboarding” on South Dakota reservations found throughout Indian country (see Image 1.6 for an image of current tribal lands/overall land loss).

**Image 1.5**
Created by Kristin Fitzgerald

**Image 1.6**
Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs

**Continued Assimilation (Missionization) and Boarding Schools**

While the Peace Policy was still in effect, missionary agents expressed repeated concerns that traditional practices, including those engaged in by medicine men, thwarted their missionization and assimilation efforts. After the Peace Policy was rescinded in 1882, subsequent Indian agents echoed these sentiments. In 1883 Hiriam Price, then-commissioner of Indian Affairs, responded to these concerns by establishing the Court of
Indian Offenses. The so-named “Rules for Indians Courts” included a ban on traditional cultural and religious practices, such as polygamy, giveaways, Sun Dances, and medicine men. Indians convicted of engaging in such practices were subject to ten days of withheld rations or imprisonment, with subsequent convictions carrying a penalty of up to thirty days (Congress August 27, 1892; Price 1883).

Yet even with Indian religions outlawed,23 and reservation schools in South Dakota still frequently being operated by Episcopal and Catholic missions, popular sentiment grew toward off-reservation government boarding schools as a better means to both civilize and Christianize Indian children. Toward the end of the Peace Policy (1879), missionaries and policymakers had begun to see proximal “traditional” families as obstacles to children’s assimilation, and policy focus started shifting to off-reservation government boarding schools as the best solution. The same year, Sioux (primarily Lakota) children comprised the entire rosters at both the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania and the Hampton Institute in Virginia (Trafzer 2009:102-103). Recognizing that parents might lack incentive to voluntarily send their children to off-reservations boarding schools, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas H. Morgan successfully lobbied

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23 Although the U.S. banned their ceremonies, Indian religions did not cease, but they did have to go underground. Even though John Collier (Chief of Indian Affairs from 1933-1945) issued a directive in 1934 that encouraged freedom of religious expression for Indian people, Congress did not pass legislation on this issue until 1978, when it supported the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. This measure officially recognized the right of all Native North American people “[the] freedom to believe, express, and exercise [their] traditional ...including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites” (Steinmetz 1990: 16; Cornell Law School).
Congress in 1898 to make school attendance compulsory. Morgan was “to withhold rations, clothing, and annuities of those families that refused to send students” (Booth November 2009).

By the 1890s there were twenty-five off-reservation federal boarding schools (including schools in Pierre, Flandreau, Chamberlain, and Rapid City, South Dakota), along with sixty-seven day schools, and forty-three reservation schools throughout the Plains. After the turn of the century, the high cost of the schools, along with little evidence of assimilation progress, eventually led to their decline.\textsuperscript{24}

It was obvious by the late 1920s that American Indians had failed to settle in as farmers or entrepreneurs. At the time, popular sympathy grew for the “landless Indians” who were poorly educated, malnourished, often living in abject poverty, and diseased. Some also lamented the loss of tribal culture (Stuart 1977:454). In 1926, Secretary of Interior Hubert Work called on the Institute for Government Research to commission a survey of Indian Affairs that would ultimately provide recommendations for government policy. Lewis Meriam was the technical director of the survey entitled \textit{The Problem of Indian Administration} (or the “Meriam Report”), which his team published in 1928. The Meriam Report would become the guiding document for future administrative changes, with important additions concerning Indian self-government, and laid much of the foundation for the Wheeler-Howard Act (or the ‘Indian New Deal’), passed during

\textsuperscript{24} Off-reservation schools still operate in Flandreau and Pierre, South Dakota (Naugle 2011:92).
Commissioner John Collier’s tenure (Officer 1971:42; Stuart 1977:455; Useem 1954:387). The Wheeler-Howard Act (1934) marked the period known as the Indian Reorganization Era in federal Indian policy, marking a (brief) return to self-governance and the end of allotment.

The Meriam Report also offered the first comprehensive study of the growing population of “migrated Indians” living in urban areas, focusing on those who had left the reservation after they sold their allotments or who had attended boarding schools as children and remained in the city as adults. The authors recognized that cities were ill-equipped, both financially and philosophically, to handle the social and economic needs of Indians. However, Meriam and his cohorts (1928:669) suggested that “the efforts of the national government ...should be directed not toward building up an independent organization in such cities for aiding the migrated Indians,” but that government should work “toward establishing cooperative relations with existing agencies which serve the population as a whole.” The New Deal era lasted until 1945, when federal Indian policy shifted to termination of several tribes as entities and the federal relocation of Indians into urban areas.

**Termination/Federal Relocation Era (1945-1960), Urban Migration to Rapid City**

The Indian Claims Commission (ICC), established in 1946, set the stage for both the Termination Policy (1953-1954) and its Federal Relocation Program (introduced in 1953).\(^{25}\) The ICC was designed to close all outstanding claims that Indian tribes had against

\(^{25}\)While termination was controversial (ending in 1955), Congress viewed the Relocation Program as
the federal government, ultimately promoting independence from federal assistance and assimilation to white society (Fixico 1980:31-38). Congress believed that termination of tribal status and incentivized relocation into urban areas would expedite Indians’ assimilation into white society. By attempting to “get out of the Indian business,” Congress aimed to end all federal responsibility and administration by cutting all services and liaison with tribes, selling reservation lands (while giving proceeds to the tribes), and later, incentivizing relocation into urban areas. The large amount of capital it took to sustain their treaty obligations to tribes, they believed, far outweighed the cost it would take to settle tribal claims (Fixico 1980:17-27).

Ultimately, this era also brought an unprecedented number of Lakota people into Rapid City, South Dakota. Rapid City was one of many cities in South Dakota founded during the Black Hills gold rush in the 1870s; while some Native families have lived there since its inception, more (primarily young men) moved in during the late 1930’s in essential to Indian assimilation. In 1956, they passed Public Law 959, which created a Vocational Training Program (VTP) for Indians between the ages of 18 and 35. Qualifying for VTP services was often more difficult than it was to relocate without any federal assistance, however, and of the 100,000 Indians (nationwide) who relocated from the end of WWII to 1957, three fourths did so without any government assistance (Fixico 1980: 223-231). Although relocation was optional, agents aggressively advertised the possibilities available to Indians in cities, using brochures with photographs of successful Indian families living middle class lives. However, Indians often faced extreme hardships in urban environments; agents frequently placed men in low paying, insecure jobs, such as seasonal railroad or agricultural laborers. Further, Indians were often set up in housing that was dilapidated, or in some cases, in middle class neighborhoods—which many relocatees could not afford. The BIA offered enough to cover one month’s expenses, and no more. Once in the city, adjusting to wage work, frequent unemployment, and racism from landlords, employers, and lenders became too much for many relocatees, and the ratio of return to the reservation was high (Fixico 1980: 214-219, 231, 233). WWII vets, Korean vets, and those with some college education seemed to have the most success in adjusting to urban life. Still, “red ghettos” filled with under- and unemployed Indians developed in many cities, which only further isolated the Indian relocatees (Ibid: 240).
response to Civilian Conservation Core (CCC) projects, and some families gathered in camps around the lumber mills. Ellsworth Air Force Base opened just outside of the city during World War II, and this, coupled with a new demand for construction workers during the labor-scarce time, prompted a more steady migration of Indians from South Dakota reservations in the early-mid 1940s. The Relocation Program ushered the greatest numbers of Lakotas to the city, however, and by 1958, Rapid City’s population soared to 44,190 (from 13,384 in 1940). Roughly ten percent of the population in 1958 was Indian, most of them Lakota from Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations (White 1960:157-160).

**Rapid City, S.D. (1940s-Present), St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues**

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, a growing number of Indians in Rapid were working as seasonal laborers and living in temporary tent camps throughout the city. By 1952, white residents were increasingly pressuring the Mayor to abolish the “unsightly and unhealthy” camps (Bronner 2003:1-2). The Mayor’s Human Relations Committee (HRC) responded in 1954 with the ‘Sioux Addition’ - twenty acres of land a mile and a half north of the city – which they subdivided into eighty lots, and required Indians to purchase. This was a politically contentious motion, given that the land was technically trust land as established by the federal government (Ibid.).

The HRC proceeded to forcibly remove Indians from the Rapid City area to the Sioux Addition on two occasions, first in June 1954 and again in September, arguing that "a permanent spot for the shacks would be more desirable" (Ibid.; White 1960:160-161;
1970:183). The city did not provide the Sioux Addition with water or sewage services until 1973 — 19 years after its construction. In the interim, residents of the Sioux Addition were also forbidden from using the adjacent water source (Rapid Creek) for their water supply, and instead had to walk along Haines Avenue, a major street in the city, to visit a public pump at the lumber mill for individual gallon cans of water. The city also failed to serve the all-Indian community with electricity, although they did service farm properties north of the Sioux Addition (Bronner 2003:1-2; 2009; White 1960:160-161). According to White (1960:160-161), this spatial segregation in housing did much to localize ethnic identities, enhanced by the later establishment of [Episcopal and Catholic] church organizations, which he argues “crystallize[d] the general feeling of ethnic difference into a community spirit.”

The Catholic diocese built the Mother Butler Center in 1950, which was a complete religious, recreational and service center for Catholic Indians. The Center housed a gym that doubled as both a parish hall (called St. Issac Jogues, opened in 1957) and sports center. The Center later offered free medical services, washing machines, showers, a credit union, a used clothing store, and residence for employed women. During the winter, they also distributed surplus commodities from the Mayor’s Committee (Ibid.). Mother Butler Center was destroyed by the Rapid City Flood in 1972, so later that year the diocese raised funds to move the parish and Mother Butler Center to nearby locations in north Rapid.

While today many practicing members of St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church are non-
Native, inculturation (the process of contextualizing the gospel, hymns, liturgy, and theology among non-Western groups)\textsuperscript{27} is a lively endeavor in both the church and city’s diocese, organized and implemented by Lakota congregants and clergy. The parish is adorned throughout with Lakota symbols in the four direction colors (black, white, yellow and red),\textsuperscript{28} as well as a stunning portrait of Jesus depicted as a Lakota, and a small teepee adjacent to the altar.

The elder Lakota women at St. Isaac Jogues with whom I work generally see inculturation as beneficial to cultural reinforcement and revitalization. They support the incorporation of Lakota rites during the once-monthly inculturated mass at St. Isaac Jogues, though they do not prefer that all masses at St. Isaac Jogues be inculturated. They variously participate in Kateri Circle meetings (see Chapter 6) and attend activities sponsored by the local Catholic Lakota Inculturation Office. More recently, they have become active in the movement to canonize Nicholas Black Elk.

In 1995 the Catholic diocese established the Lakota Inculturation Task Force in Rapid City, comprised largely of members from Brulé, Hunkpapa, Oglala, and Sans Arc bands (four of the seven bands, or sub-tribes, which comprise the Lakota), many of whom also graduated from the Diocesan lay ministry formation program and were involved as lay ministers, catechists, and/or deacons (Marquette 2008). The Task Force also regularly

\textsuperscript{27} A politically and historically specific doctrine from the Second Vatican Council, intended to contextualize the religion for indigenous people.

\textsuperscript{28} The White Buffalo Calf Woman gave the Lakota the four winds (or directions), which are symbolized in yellow (\textit{wioheumpata}, “east”), white (\textit{itokaga}, “south”), black (\textit{wiyokpiyata}, “west”), and red (\textit{waziyata}, “north”) (Zeilinger 1990).
consults specialists in theology, anthropology, and liturgy in their endeavors, which include three chronological ‘phases’ of inculturation. The first phase examines which Lakota ritual elements “can be used in liturgical services and prayer services.” Phase two examines “religious elements in Lakota life and ceremonies, which prepare the way for the reception of the Gospel and its expression in the Church.” Finally, phase three examines “Lakota philosophy and theology” (City 2003c:203).

The Task Force has since published guidelines for the Liturgy of the Eucharist, azilya (incensing), the keeping of the spirit, the wiping of tears, wakes, funerals, the blessing of the stone, marriage, the Pipe ceremony, coming of age ceremonies (including the Buffalo Singing Ceremony for young women and the vision quest for young men), and Christmas (including directions about how Santa might appear, what he might wear, and what he might do upon entering) (City 2003a; City 2003b; City 2003c).

The Episcopal diocese built St. Matthew’s in the Sioux Addition in 1952 with a resident pastor, and also held numerous service clubs for fellowship (White 1960:161-162). Over the last sixty years St. Matthew’s has continued to participate in the Niobrara Convocation, and like St. Isaac Jogues, has maintained its reputation as an ethnic church among practicing lay people and clergy throughout the diocesan region. The church’s

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29 Currently in Rapid City the Lakota Bible Translation Project is also underway by a committee made up of clergy and elders. For each completed section, the whole community comes together to check it, and then Hebrew scholars double check its accuracy. There are several hurdles in this process, for example, there is no Lakota word for sheep, as Lakota had no concept of sheep. Further, Lakota does not mark gender pronouns, so there is no way to make God/Jesus gendered (as is the case for Hebrew). The Lakota Bible Translation Project is not part of the Catholic Lakota Inculturation Task Force (Sneve November 9, 2008).

30 According to Schwartz (2009), characteristics of North American ethnic churches generally include the following “1) their own hymnology, 2) their own successful lay movements, and 3) the freedom to develop their own contextual theology or ethno-theology.”
strategic location in the Sioux Addition also signals its congregation-base to those familiar with the city.

At St. Matthew’s, Sunday services are performed in English and supplemented with Dakota hymns and prayers. There are a handful of hymns that are favored due to their melodic style, and these are sung more frequently on Sundays as well as during special occasions such as memorial services, family gatherings, and at the Niobrara Convocation. Throughout its tenure, the influential elders at St. Matthew’s (often casually referred to as ‘the grandmothers,’ as most of them are women) have chosen not to incorporate traditional Lakota rites during the Sunday service.31

Lakota congregants from St. Isaac Jogues and St. Matthew have numerous connections to one another through kinship (consanguine, affine, and fictive), employment, volunteer work, military service, schooling, and associations with various reservations. Congregants also frequently come together at various funerals, wakes, weddings, and memorial services32 held in the city. In these communal settings, such as a memorial service for a Lakota person, one generally expects to see some overt representations of Lakota ceremony and symbology incorporated into the ceremony, such as a formal giveaway with star quilts and other hand-made crafts, some form of Catholic or Episcopal liturgy, a traditional men’s drum group, a slide show honoring the

31 Traditional rites such as the pipe ceremony have been integrated into services with Native congregants at other Episcopal churches in South Dakota, including the Cathedral in Sioux Falls, see Fr. Martin Brokenleg’s Toward a Lakota Rite (2003).
32 A feast and giveaway sponsored by the deceased’s family, sometimes with an Episcopal or Catholic liturgical component; typically held one year after the funeral.
deceased, a feast, and one or more store-bought cakes. This was perhaps most clearly demonstrated at one memorial service I attended in the summer of 2009, in which the star on one of the quilts for the giveaway had been sewn to look like an American bald eagle, likely to honor the deceased’s military service.

In the following chapter, I identify and expand upon two local models of ethnicity, variable between individuals and context, that include overt signaling that draws on highly recognizable Lakota symbols and rituals (Lakol wicho’an); and more tacit orientations that draw on interactional virtues (Lakota way) as opposed to visual markers.

Rather than identifying one model as more or less authentic than another, the ethnographic data highlights some of the ways in which (primarily) St. Matthew’s congregants variously employed overt and tacit displays of ethnicity to challenge structural inequalities in the Church alongside local discrimination.

While younger activists drew primarily on material signs and performances to challenge dominant institutional norms in the 1970s, elder women at St. Matthew’s engaged tacit interactional virtues associated with Lakota Way both to limit discrimination in Rapid City and to exercise cultural agency within the Church. Further, the elder women’s tacitly organized (indigenous) framework both circumvented and preceded the Church’s acceptance of Lakota rites and symbols into church services, pointing to the ways in which indigenous Christians control the flow of culture within western institutions such as the Church, both historically and through today’s era of ethnic recognition.
Chapter 2: Theorizing the Present: Lakota Way and Lakol Wicho’an

Introduction: “We practice Lakota way, but we are not an Indian church”

When I began my fieldwork, I wondered whether St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues mission churches were perhaps communities where conflicts between Indians and whites, otherwise ubiquitous throughout the state, were somehow mediated. I learned that there were several primarily Lakota churches in the state (including on reservations), and a pronounced number of Lakota clergy, both historically and today. Yet I also understood that for many Native people throughout the United States, Christian missionization and practice stirred deep religious, political and social antagonism and grief.

My focus shifted fundamentally when one of the elder Lakota Episcopal women, Jean, told me (admittedly, probably for the tenth time) that St. Matthew’s was not an Indian Church. Until then I believed that I understood this, at least in the sense that St. Matthew’s (unlike St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church) did not incorporate traditional Lakota rituals or practices into the church liturgy. But clearly, and given her persistence, I was missing something.

At St. Matthew’s, most of the congregation is Lakota. The church also incorporates Dakota hymns and prayers from the Dakota Book of Common Prayer. The Lakota Bible and Prayer Book are not yet translated into Lakota. (Sneve November 9, 2008).
Lakota kinship practices. I asked her why the children serve the elders’ food first, and then eat last. I juxtaposed this with my experience at non-Native Episcopal churches, including my own, where the kids rush past everyone in the room to get to the cookies first. I also asked her why, during the Niobrara Convocation, after the St. Matthew’s guild was given an award for their service, someone else got up to receive the award and passed it on to her (the senior most elder in the room), while she remained seated. “How did everyone know that it should go to you?” I asked.

I could hear her relief when she replied, “Well, yes! We practice Lakota way, but we are not an Indian church.” Jean had finally managed to get something through my thick skull. St. Matthew’s was not an Indian church. For Jean this partly meant that they did not incorporate Lakota rituals and symbols in the church service, and also that they did not exclude non-Indians from attending or becoming integrated into the congregation. Her pragmatic response was also part of a metapragmatic framework reflecting a larger set of historically embedded ideologies about how people should interact with one another. For her this is separate and distinct from an inculturated service during which Lakota rites or symbols might be used.

Pragmatics refers to language-in-use, or the social meaning and context of speech. Metapragmatic frameworks give pragmatic acts meaning in that they reflect larger ideologies about what (particular categories) of language can or should do. In other words, “without metapragmatic function simultaneously in play with whatever pragmatic function(s) there may be in discursive interaction,” Silverstein asserts, “there is no
possibility of interactional coherence, since there is no framework of structure” (Silverstein 1993:36).

Some time later I came across a similar description in a book written by Fr. Paul Sneve’s mother, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, celebrated author of both fiction and non-fiction works centering on the Lakota. In Lana’s Lakota Moons (2007), two cousins, Lana and Lori, are like sisters in the Lakota way. They also attend the Episcopal Church and share a mutual interest in a Hmong refugee student from Laos, who recently enrolled in their public school. Driving Hawk Sneve took her inspiration from the mutual appreciation of cultural practices between Asian and Lakota children in the Rapid City School District, and likely from St. Matthew’s as parishioners conceptualize it today. In describing her church, one of the main characters says (Ibid. 15-16):

[...] Our family attended St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, which followed many Lakota ways in worship and congregational activities. Grandma belonged to the Wiyan Ominiceye, a Lakota society of women who helped their people. This church consisted mostly of grandmothers. They made quilts to raise money to send kids to church camp and to fund other things the congregation needed.

In the Lakota way, everybody had something to do that was helpful to the band. So our dads read the lessons, served as ushers, and did anything that Father Jim asked. Aunt Martha taught Sunday school. Grandpa used to mow lawns and shovel walks...

Both Jean’s statement and Driving Hawk Sneve’s work point to a maintenance of indigenous cultural and religious forms (Sahlins 1992) within Western religious institutions. Yet the maintenance of certain symbols or forms of expression over others is not prescribed, nor is it predictable. Congregants and parishioners at both St. Matthew’s
and St. Isaac Jogues repeated similar sentiments to me throughout my fieldwork; reminding me in various ways that there was more on their minds than the public performance of cultural authenticity in the Church, even in this era of ethnic recognition.

Subsequent conversations with folks at St. Matthew’s helped me to better understand that the continued separation of Lakota rites and symbolism at St. Matthew’s was reinforced over the last several generations partly because the elders wanted to maintain this separation. The collateral that elders like Jean hold over expressions of ethnicity in the Church demonstrates a tenet of this historically embedded metapragmatic framework. Among these particular congregants and clergy at St. Matthew’s, elders’ wishes to maintain these boundaries were honored in the Lakota way.

What it means to live in or practice the Lakota way has been historically informed, and shaped in response to people’s experiences, as well as broader political, religious and social policies and ideologies. Practicing Lakota way, as Jean and Driving Hawk Sneve describe it, refers to a pliable framework of *interactional virtues* by which people strive to live, and one’s social position(s), age, gender, kinship role, etc. factor in to the ways in which these virtues are pragmatically performed. This framework is somewhat distinct

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34 Joseph Marshall III outlines twelve Lakota virtues in his Book, the Lakota way (see Marshall 2001); Kenneth Oliver outlines five virtues in the introduction to “Traditional Lakota Religion in Lakota Life” in *Sioux Indian Religion* (Oliver and Stead 1987:211-212, ed. DeMallie and Parks); others refer to four (Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center2018) or seven Lakota values (Fiddler 2018). While there is overlap with each, Marshall’s (2001) is most comprehensive, including *unsiicyapi* (humility), *wowacintanka* (perseverance), *waooohola* (respect), *wayuonihan* (honor), *cantognake* (love), *icicupi* (sacrifice), *wowicake* (truth), *waunsilapi* (compassion), *woohitike* (fortitude), *canteyuke* (generosity), and *woksape* (wisdom).
from *Lakol wicho’an* (traditional Lakota ways/culture), as the latter also includes historic “ceremonies, dances, songs and oral narratives” that are generally associated with pre-reservation lifeways (Rice 1985:5; see also DeMallie 1984: 80-84).35

The boundary between Lakota way and *Lakol wicho’an* is porous, rather than fixed and static. Certainly, some Lakota people would say the two terms are synonymous. The delineation between Lakota way as a framework of interactional virtues and *Lakol wicho’an* as a reference to traditional rites and symbols is limited to the Sunday Services and congregational activities at St. Matthew’s in Rapid City over the last sixty years, as described to me by several of the elder parishioners and clergy.

Anderson (2001:695) observed among the Arapaho that while “some in younger generations perceive and speak of the missions as part of an oppressive history of assimilation,” many of the fluent Arapaho-speaking elders are both Christian and identified as “traditional” within their groups, as “keepers of a uniquely Arapaho religious pluralism.” Beginning in the 1970s, elements of Christianity began appearing in traditional Arapaho rites, while many overt Arapaho symbols were inculturated into Catholic practices (Ibid.: 708). While many in the younger generation viewed this as integral to “the new traditionalism of contemporary reservation life,” many of the elders viewed the trend of “mixing once-compartmentalized traditions” as “one of the most serious threats to the Arapaho way” (Ibid.: 695). Whereas the “traditional” and compartmentalized religious pluralism maintained “both difference and congruity among traditions,” these elders felt that overt syncretism negatively impacted their agency in controlling “the
boundaries between cultures and the flow of knowledge across them” (Ibid.: 689).

Anderson expands on this by pointing to the way that Arapahos convert to Catholicism translated the Our Father in a way that emphasized not “sin and forgiveness,” but “doing things in a good/right way so that power (beeteet) can be channeled through proper exchange into life-giving paths and relations” (Ibid.: 706). This alternate interpretation was kept secret from the whites, in what Anderson calls “a strategy of empowerment and continuity against Euro-American domination” (Ibid.: 707). Therefore in “two seemingly contradictory processes,” Arapaho people “kept new religious traditions set apart from each other in space and time, thus resisting true syncretism” while appropriating new religious practices “within an Arapaho theory of practice” (Ibid.: 707).

Similarly, the American Indian Consciousness Movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s was particularly active in Rapid City, and its associated identity politics also demonstrate (largely generational) contestation and struggle over competing models of ethnic expression at St. Matthew’s. Many young urban Indian activists in Rapid City adopted pre-reservation symbols and rituals (Lakol wicho’an) during the American Indian

35 The term identity politics is broad, encompassing political movements generally related to struggles within western capitalist democracies, including (global) indigenous rights movements, self-determination, and nationalist projects, among others. While there is no coherent set of ideologies or practices that strictly define a political movement as an example of identity politics, it generally “signifies a loose collection of political projects, each undertaken by representatives of a collective with a distinctively different social location that has hitherto been neglected, erased, or suppressed” (Heyes 2014). “Identity politics” is closely associated with multiculturalism, “identity politics,” “the politics of recognition” and “the politics of difference.”
Consciousness Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, partly to mark their shared Lakota heritage. Rather than severing from western institutions, however, many of these young, educated urban-born Native activists argued for recognition as a distinct ethnic group within them (White 1974:286).

In Rapid City, Lakota adherents to the American Indian Consciousness Movement also pushed for political and social reform in the city. Particularly relevant to this discussion were the activities that centered on the desire for “greater control over the two Indian service centers established and maintained by the Catholic and Protestant churches,” as well as full control over the Lakota Protestant (Episcopalian) and Catholic mission churches (White 1974:285, 287), St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues.

Fr. Paul recalled being told about friction between AIM members and elders at St. Matthew’s, which culminated during one of the church’s annual meetings. Ultimately, the younger activists were ineffective in persuading their cause, and conceded to their elders:

As I have been told it occurred during the 70’s when AIM was becoming very visible in SD Indian Country. Fr was the priest at St Matthew’s and it was time for the Annual Meeting (probably in January). There had been tensions developing between various factions in Rapid and surrounding reservations and of course had infected St Matthew’s. Older more conservative women were mostly in charge and the younger women who were either AIM members or at least were sympathetic were challenging their authority.

So these younger AIM members thought they would pad their numbers and overrun the Annual Meeting thus taking over. [The priest at the time sensed the tension and] merely informed them that no one could have voice and vote if they weren’t a confirmed member of St Matt’s.

[The elders were not persuaded by the younger AIM members’ appeal for full Native-control of the church.]
The AIM folks had no choice but to leave. Of course, whether they liked it or not they acted according to the cultural mores of the St Matthew's Lakota.

In one sense the young activists were challenging a tenet of what had been an enduring framework for Lakotas in Rapid City, honoring elders’ wishes in the Lakota way, while drawing from symbols associated with Lakol wicho’an to advocate for more representation within western institutions such as the church. Rather than a simple dichotomy between (neo) traditional and assimilated/Christian Lakota people, then, the contestation and struggle centered on which model of Lakota expression would endure in that moment. Ultimately, the interactional virtues associated with Lakota way were adhered to.

Throughout my time in the field, Fr. Sneve continually stated that he felt St. Matthew’s was nearing a precipice; as many of the elders of the church (casually referred to as “the grandmothers,” as most of them are women) were beginning to pass away, and that the next generation would eventually determine whether to incorporate Lakota rites and symbols into the church or to continue traditional (compartmentalized) pluralism that their elders had maintained.

The grandmothers had very different experiences than many in their children’s generation, he said, as many of the former moved to Rapid City during the federal relocation era, while assimilation was still the dominant religious and political paradigm. Prior to the establishment of St. Matthew’s, the only Episcopalian church was the almost exclusively non-Native Emmanuel. In order to mitigate unwanted or negative attention
within the congregation, the Episcopalian Lakota women often wore veils over their faces and sat in the back of the church.

For the grandmothers, he asserts, the goal was to (outwardly) assimilate to the best of their ability in order to avoid serious problems in the market, schools, churches and with respect to the local government. Thus the young activists’ interests not only conflicted with the more tacit interactional virtues related to honoring elders in the Lakota way, they also conflicted with strategies that the grandmothers had successfully utilized while navigating their precarious social and religious environment(s).

Beginning in the latter part of the twentieth century, political and religious policies began shifting away from assimilation and toward ideologies of ethnic recognition in the U.S. and throughout the world, including multiculturalism, neoliberal multiculturalism, inculturation theology, ethnic nationalism, repatriation, and self-determination (Appiah 1994; Brokenleg 2003; Gutmann 1994; Hale 2005; Hutchinson 1996; MacDonald 2003; Martinez Novo 2006; Muehlmann 2009; Orta 2006; Sieder 2002; Smith 1981; Smith 1986a; Smith 1986b; Smith 2003a; Smith 2003b; Speed 2005; Taylor 1994; Taylor and Gutmann 1992). The narratives in this work explore some of the ways Lakota Christians negotiate representations of ethnicity in the context of inculturation theology, which has presented both opportunities and challenges.

Inculturation theology arose along with other international ideologies of neo-ethnicity during the mid- to late-twentieth century. While the persuasion had been felt for at least a decade prior, post-Vatican II the Catholic Church officially redefined the
nature of Catholic missionization and ministry among the Sioux and other indigenous groups by encouraging that the religion be contextualized for indigenous people instead of wholly replacing former religious ideologies and practices. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, this theology was more defined, and congregations saw more formal attempts to inculturate indigenous practices and traditions into mass and congregational life. Similarly, the Episcopal Church started its movement toward contextualization (later referred to as inculturation) by the late 1980s (Brokenleg 2003; MacDonald 2003; Markowitz 1987; Steinmetz 1980; Stolzman 1986).

Increased recognition and autonomy for cultural expression within the church has in many ways offered novel forums for ethnic expression for Lakota clergy and congregants. In South Dakota, for example, Lakota clergy from both the Catholic and Episcopal dioceses now hold seminars (the latter of which are mandatory for all South Dakota clergy) wherein they instruct non-Native ministers on some of the individual Lakota expressions of the religion as well as traditional Lakota epistemologies. The Episcopal diocese sponsors bi-annual weekend-long *Dakota Experience* seminars (developed by Fr. Martin Brokenleg, later led by Fr. Paul Sneve from St. Matthew’s), one of which is held at the cathedral in Sioux Falls and the other in Rapid City. The Catholic diocese of South Dakota holds a formation program called the *Basic Directions in Native American Ministry Institute*, also designed for missionary personnel being sent to work with Native people.

The Lakota Catholic elder women (Mary, Dee and Rosemary) with whom I worked
generally viewed the incorporation of traditional symbolism and practices (*Lakol wicho’an*) into church services and activities as integral to their expressions of ethnicity.

Yet they did not prefer that all masses be inculturated, noting that building consensus among elders at the church over the form and structure of the inculturated liturgies was sometimes problematic.

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<th>Rapid City Mission Church</th>
<th>Lakota Way (interactional virtues)</th>
<th>Lakol wicho’an (traditional rites/symbols)</th>
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<td>St. Isaac Jogues (Catholic)</td>
<td>- Less practice within whole-congregational activities/committees</td>
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<td>- More present within Native groups such as Kateri Circle (which also help the priest organize inculturated services)</td>
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<td>- Practiced variously among Lakota congregants in everyday life</td>
<td>- Practiced/used variously among congregants in everyday life</td>
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| St. Matthew’s (Episcopal) (The focus of this chapter) | - Congregants and clergy defer to elders                                                          | - Sunday services are not inculturated                                                                 |
|                                                      | - Elders generally maintain a boundary between visual symbols/traditional rites and Episcopal worship | - No markers of Lakota symbology within or outside of the church                                       |
|                                                      | - Practiced variously among congregants in everyday life                                          | - Dakota hymnal and prayer book                                                                       |
|                                                      |                                                                                                  | - Free to engage in outside of Sunday services                                                         |
|                                                      |                                                                                                  | - Incorporated variously within memorial services and at the annual Niobrara Convocation             |
|                                                      |                                                                                                  | - Practiced/used variously among congregants in everyday life                                       |

At both churches, participants with whom I worked said in one way or another that certain expressions of ethnicity were distinct from and/or contextual within congregational life, though people had different ideas over what the boundaries should be. Individual congregants and clergy were not uniform in their beliefs, practices or expressions of ethnicity, even while certain metapragmatic frameworks, material signs, performative and pragmatic acts were mutually recognizable among them.
Academic criticisms of inculturation theology are similar to those of multiculturalism and the politics of identity more generally. Marking a group as distinct within the dominant institution can (intentionally or inadvertently) essentialize group identities through neoliberal tropes which point to symbols or expressions that the group is known for, not all of which may be relevant for all members across time. These generalizations can potentially usurp individual agency and creativity over the malleability and transforming of cultural identities (Appiah 1994). Finally, critics point to the ways in which policies such as multiculturalism and inculturation theology, once adopted by the state or church, can serve to reinforce rather than challenge the dominant power structure of colonialism (see Baca 2005; Muehlmann 2009; Orta 2006; Povinelli 2002), effectively “[integrating] the movement into the state apparatus” (Baca 2005:151).

Drawing on his research in among the Andean Aymara in Highland Bolivia, Andrew Orta asserts that while inculturation theology attempts to encourage localized Christianities, it can sometimes essentialize native identities through the resurrection of selective traditional rites they once forbade but now see as amenable to an acceptable form of indigenous Christianity. Because much of the knowledge concerning traditional rituals is often lost, Orta asserts, missionaries construct an indigenous-archetype, in effect proctoring “a range of metacultural discourses around a posited [nativeness,] anchored by newly remembered history” (2006:175). Similarly, Povinelli (2002: 39) argues that while colonial domination operated by compelling colonized subjects to align themselves with their colonizers - to assimilate to dominant cultural and religious practices - the
“hegemonic domination” of postcolonial multiculturalism can compel indigenous people to identify with an indigenous archetype, “a lost indeterminable object—indeed, to be the melancholic subject of traditions.”

The Episcopal and Catholic churches in Rapid City generally see the guiding premise of inculturation as the formal adaption and incorporation of traditional rites and symbols (*Lakol wicho’an*) into localized forms of Christianity. The practical application of inculturation naturally includes varying levels of education and acceptance related to the embedded and contextual interactional components of indigenous peoples (Lakota way), depending largely on the orientation and application of the relevant clergy, congregants, and the larger sociopolitical environment(s).

The grandmothers at St. Matthew’s have engaged these criticisms over the limitations of current ideologies of ethnic recognition, partly through exercising the interactional virtues associated with Lakota way. This tacit framework both preceded and circumvented political and religious ideologies encouraging ethnic recognition, thus many of these challenges over material symbols and public performances of ethnicity36 have

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36 Dakota hymns, the Dakota Prayer Book, and other already-embedded material signs such as the Niobrara Cross necklace (given exclusively to Lakota and Dakota communicants, beginning in the late nineteenth century through the 1970s) had already been embedded into the historic framework of Episcopal worship, thus were not necessarily considered overt symbols of ethnicity among elders. Bishop Hobart Hare designed the Niobrara Cross in 1874 for Lakota and Dakota converts who could not read, but desired to be marked as members of the church. The oval in the center is his Episcopal seal, with the Latin inscription “The Seal of William Hobart Hare, by the grace of God Bishop of Niobrara.” Greek letters also quarter the oval, reading “That they may have life.” In each angle of the cross is a tipi surmounted by a small cross; signifying “that Christ has come to the Dakotas and gathered them under the protection of the cross, that they have accepted him, and their homes have become Christian homes” (Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota website, October 20, 2010, see also Sneve’s *That They May Have Life: The Episcopal Church in South Dakota, 1859-1976*).
continued to be negotiated among congregants through dialogue with and/or deference to these elders.

More recently, Fr. Sneve asked a congregant who was especially gifted at crafting star quilts to make a series of satin wall hangings and an altar cover to display during the Advent season. Derived from early buffalo robe designs, the morning star is important in a number of traditional ceremonies. As Agha (2007:255) notes, however, even the most common, widely recognized group symbols and behaviors do not necessarily elicit identical readings among members. In some cases, participants have different understandings of the underlying framework(s) informing the event, or hold conflicting frameworks which lead them to different conclusions over why certain symbols are being used.

With respect to *Lakol Wicho’an*, the morning star is generally representative of the direction from which spirits travel to earth, standing as a link between the living and the dead, thus symbolizing immortality (Center 2008). While the design is derivative of early buffalo robe designs, “the extermination of the buffalo herds coincided roughly with the implementation of the first mission schools where the craft of quilting was taught,” and as such, the pattern also resembles various Anglo-American designs dating to the 18th century (Ibid.).

When some of the grandmothers at St. Matthew’s heard about Fr. Sneve’s request to have the star-quilt pattern on display, several of them were concerned that he was attempting to incorporate Lakota symbols in the church. Fr. Sneve spoke with them about
his views on the importance of the star pattern during Advent, representing the North Star that led people to Jesus’ birth, and this explanation eventually satisfied them.

Their discussion signals a more processual and heterogeneous response to material signs than in many of the neoliberal tropes which assume ethnic groups are authentic or distinct on the basis of certain historically recognized rites and symbols. Without asserting that one model of ethnic expression is more authentic than another, stories like these demonstrate that certain reactions to material or public representations of ethnicity are sometimes met with tacitly organized (indigenous) frameworks of opposition. In other contexts, however, the same framework could be indexed to encourage younger congregants to align their behavior(s) with crucial elements of Lakol wicho’an.

Another of my visits to Rapid City took place just days after a prominent member of the congregation at St. Matthew’s had passed away. I met Fr. Sneve and his wife Tally for coffee one week after the wake. Tally was very active in the church, is non-Native, and, along with Fr. Sneve, was often given implicit guidance from the grandmothers concerning how to appropriately adhere to traditional Lakota epistemologies.

A few days after the wake, while Tally and several of the elder women were preparing a meal for the congregation in the church’s kitchen, the grandmothers began talking to one another about their childhoods, and their stories focused on the presence of children at wakes. Most of the women agreed that because children are more susceptible to chichi attachment (similar to bogey men, also similar to hoohooos among
the Hopi); they were kept away from wakes as children. One mentioned that as a child she frequently attended wakes; recalling that she would sleep on the floor of the home while the deceased family member or friend rested on the kitchen table. Tally knew from similar previous experiences that the women were telling fragments of their own life histories with embedded advice, and while the women were ostensibly speaking to one another rather than to her directly, she understood the women’s dialogue as concern over her decision to bring her and Fr. Sneve’s five-year-old son to the wake. Thus she reassured them she had taken the necessary precautions, including announcing both her son’s and her own name on their departure from the wake, along with her declaration of their intent to leave, to protect the boy from *chichi* attachment.

During our conversation over coffee, Fr. Sneve agreed that he felt this was an important safeguard, and also offered an explanation for the discomfort the women felt over children’s presence at wakes. At public wakes--frequently held in communal places--wandering and potentially dangerous *chichis* might visit. Such *chichis* would not enter a private wake held in someone’s home, however. Within this set of interactions, beginning with the wake itself, members of St. Matthew’s were again negotiating the terms of ethnic expression within the church relative to lived experience(s). The way in which the elder women collectively told their stories “informally but with purpose” (Dinwoodie 2002) resembles a narrative style found among other native groups; among the Chilcotin,

37 (Sneve 1993)
for example, similar historical narratives are presented at public events and “feature actions that epitomize either violations of or appropriate expressions of Chilcotin values” (Ibid.: 34). Such semiotic events also offer further evidence that new (contextual) forms of ethnicity arise within the context of congregational life, an ostensibly Western arena; forms that draw on multiple ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ modes of discourse (Goodman 2007:411).

**Theoretical Contribution**

Recent literature in the anthropology of religion has signaled a renewed focus on Christianity among indigenous populations. While recognizing the salient and tragic stories of missionization, colonialism and forced assimilation of indigenous peoples in Native North America, anthropologists and ethnohistorians have recently given more attention to the ways in which Native people have variously exercised agency “within the tight confines of colonialism” and Christian missionization (McNally 2011:60). Some studies within the anthropology of Christianity highlight the “permeable, mixed, and fluid” character of Christianity and indigenous religions, arguing that converts are able to tolerate “considerable ambiguity and inconsistency” as they individually address “cultural and historical points of concern” through religious appropriation (Barker 1990:12, 22; Barker 1992:159, 166). Others focus on indigenous peoples’ ‘collision’ with Christianity and its imposing ‘cultural logic’ (Robbins 1995; 1998; 2001a; 2001b; 2003; 2004), or the
maintenance of indigenous cultural and religious forms (Sahlins 1992). Still others draw on discourse and textual analysis to better understand the multiple ways in which indigenous people and missionaries interact, resulting in competing and processual forms of ‘localized Christianities’ (see Keane 2007; see also Scott 2005).

One of the persistent themes in the anthropology of Christianity has been of authenticity, specifically whether tangible symbols (such the Bible) and other visual markers or behaviors signal that one is an ‘authentic’ Christian. Keane (Keane 2003:419; 2007) and others approach this question through an analysis of individual semiotic ideologies, or the “basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world” (Ibid.). Engelke (2007) illustrates the prevalent belief among the African Friday apostolics with whom he works that the Bible, while perhaps interesting historical material, holds little relevance in their lives today. Instead, they assert, members “receive the Word of God live and direct from the Holy Spirit,” with no need for a material representation (Ibid.:2-3). By studying semiotic ideologies, Engelke argues, we can better understand which modes (textual, behavioral, visual, verbal, sung) become privileged communicative forms among groups (Ibid.:29), and ultimately, which expression(s) are viewed as the most ‘authentic.’

While their question arises out of the anthropology of Christianity, Keane and Engelke’s approach can be equally applied to expressions of ethnicity. Lakota Christians in Rapid City draw from a variety of institutions and modes of discourse throughout the

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38 For a detailed analysis of trends in the anthropology of Christianity, see Scott (2005).
course of their daily lives, yet manage to negotiate features of semiotic ideologies that are mutually agreed upon in various contexts. While certain modes of ethnic expression are inevitably considered more or less authentic by different groups of people, this was rarely the expressed or primary focus in conversations. In departing from work that focuses on the authenticity of cultural symbols and expressions as a primary objective, we can better approach the ways in which indigenous people continually engage with modernity, both individually and in groups, in urban realms.

While the majority of Indians in the U.S. now live in cities, Native American studies literature has continued to focus overwhelmingly on reservations (for a detailed analysis of these shortcomings in the literature, see Lobo 2001). Several authors have also challenged the persistent stereotypes of native people in academia, the media, political and social programs, film, the Church, and other typically Western/European institutions (see Berkhofer 1978; Deloria 2004; Pearce 1965; Singer 2001).

Native American studies, for a variety of reasons, also tends to bracket itself away from ethnic studies literature and the result is that the Native American studies literature has an overwhelming emphasis on stasis and continuity of traditional epistemologies. Continuity is interesting and relevant if one recognizes the full complexities of the present. While among the Lakota, for example, many have highlighted the historical and contemporary influences of a western political economy (Biolsi, et al. 2002; Biolsi 2007; 2004; Pickering 2000), national policies (Ostler 2004; Prucha 1988), or missionization (Archambault 1998; Cerney 2005; Markowitz 2002; Schmidt 2001), literature focusing on
indigenous peoples’ constructions of ethnicity within the context of current widespread ideologies of ethnic recognition such as multiculturalism, inculturation theology, and neoliberal multiculturalism has been almost entirely outside of the United States (Appiah 1994; Gutmann 1994; Hale 2005; Hutchinson 1996; Martinez Novo 2006; Muehlmann 2009; Orta 2006; Povinelli 2002; Sieder 2002; Smith 1981; Smith 1986a; Smith 1986b; Smith 2003a; Smith 2003b; Speed 2005; Taylor 1994; Taylor and Gutmann 1992).

While others deal more directly with revitalization (Kehoe 1989; Medicine 2001), neo-traditionalism (Baird-Olson and Ward 2000; Birkeland 1993; Medicine 1987), multiculturalism (Clark 1998; Holmes 1981; Law 1993), neoliberal multiculturalism (Bordewich 1996; Fenelon 2009), or inculturation theology (Brokenleg 2003; MacDonald 2003) - recognizing Native Americans’ engagement with Western institutions and ideologies – my focus on urban Indian discourse and performance calls for further theoretical contribution. While the above works are useful in arguing against stereotypes and generalities, and do account for some of the (political, religious, economic) complexities of the present era, some fall short in documenting the ways members transmit traditional symbols and epistemologies across time.

A large number of ethnographic and ethnohistorical works on the Lakota (or the Sioux more generally) come out of a symbolic or interpretive approach (Bucko 1998; 2006; 2006; DeMallie 1993; DeMallie 1994; Parks and DeMallie 1992). Central to these works is the marked influence of a method first established by Fogelson termed ethno-
ethnohistory, or “a kind of anthropological ethnohistory in which a central role...[is] given to intensive fieldwork, control of the native language, use of a native time perspective, and work with native documents,” either pre-existing or purposefully collected (Fogelson 1974:106), the method is differentially applied by scholars. For example, Bucko’s work concerning the Lakota sweat lodge relies heavily on ethnographic fieldwork and contemporary meanings, with less emphasis on historical reconstruction (though it is present); while DeMallie’s works tend to focus more on interpretation of historic native documents with less emphasis on fieldwork.

This study adds an urban focus to the already remarkable body of ethnoethnohistorical work among Lakota people. As LaGrand (2002) notes, the extensive and significant histories of American Indians in cities over the last several generations warrant further consideration in the literature. In his unprecedented social history of the Chicago Indian community between the years of 1945-1975, LaGrand positions himself between “historical studies that view twentieth-century Indian people as products of government policy, and anthropological studies that sometimes neglect to examine the effects of important social, political, and economic trends on Indian people” (2002:8). While his attempt to reconcile a major schism in ethnohistory between analysis-oriented anthropologists and narrative-centered historians is quite effective (see Krech 1991), I aim to expand on this by including Christian denominational affiliation as a meaningful

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39 There is some debate concerning who initially coined the term ethno-ethnohistory (Fogelson or Terrence Turner) (Turner 1988:235-281).
coalition among many urban Indians. Further, I argue that a discourse and performance-based approach will allow a better understanding of how current ideologies of ethnic recognition in the both churches affect various perspectives of Lakota ethnicity in Rapid City.

Since the 1980s, anthropological literature concerning ritual has been profoundly impacted by the discipline’s growing interest in and inclusion of historical analyses (Kelly and Kaplan 1990). This dissertation also expands on these approaches by focusing on the ways individuals integrate collective memories and histories into conversations and sermons (see Oakdale 2005) as a way to index or negotiate ethnic expression within congregational life.

Further, anthropologists during the last few decades have emphasized the importance of ritualized (political and social) discourse alongside the analysis of formal rituals. While formal rituals offer settings for the communication and expression of both Christian and Lakota epistemologies—interactions or everyday rituals, depending on their degree of ritualization, can also signal "major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes" (Grimes 1976:16). Senft and Basso’s (2009) edited volume points to the ways formal and everyday ritual communication forms might be placed on a continuum where “the most ritualized events...show the greatest degree of formal patterning and condensation” (16).

If, as Silverstein argues, members’ ritualized discourse and behavior “articulate[s] the ideological” in social groups (1998:138), it follows that members can examine one
another’s ability to produce the appropriate ritualized behavior and/or discourse in any given context (see Enfield 2013:137). As Enfield (2009) argues, members evaluate the behavior and language of one another during both formal and everyday rituals to covertly or overtly determine how well one “inhabits [their] status and [ethnic] identity” (53). Further, individuals “can strategically display such behavior to exploit these normative patterns of assessment and thereby manage others’ impressions” of them (Ibid.). Thus, this study also expands on historical and performative approaches to ritual by examining the ways urban Lakota Christians sometimes signal and interpret expressions of ethnicity in congregational life through ritualized performance and discourse, both intentionally and through embodied practice.

**Conclusion**

When younger activists drew on material signs and performances to overtly challenge dominant institutional norms and discrimination in the 1970s, the elder women at St. Matthew’s engaged tacit interactional virtues associated with Lakota way both to mitigate discrimination in Rapid City, and to maintain compartmentalization between St. Matthew’s services and *Lakol wicho’an*. Decades later, while the diocese encouraged the inculturation of Lakota rites and symbols into the church, they once again employed the metapragmatic framework of Lakota way to exercise agency over the flow of cultural rites and symbols within the Church.

These negotiations over expressions of ethnicity exemplify Phillip Deloria’s assertion that Native people are not passive recipients or isolated agents operating
outside of the forces of modernity but have engaged with these forces to continuously “reevaluate their own expectations of themselves and their society” (2004:6).

Further, they demonstrate that members often draw on different ethnic formations; sometimes evolving new models of ethnicity with contest and struggle (see Kloos 2017). While sometimes generation is the most prominent feature in these struggles, at other times kinship obligations, denominational affiliation (Catholic vs. Episcopalian), and/or gender factor in to these struggles. They demonstrate that the building of ethnic identity is a heterogeneous process, and even when individuals across these divides share similar goals (cultural agency in the church and successfully navigating local discrimination), they often have different restrictions, obligations, and life experiences that inform their approaches and ultimate expressions.

In the chapter that follows, I detail some of the ways in which individuals overtly and tacitly index ethnicity in personal reflections, conversations, and remembered events. Their stories and performances demonstrate some of the ways in which participants reflect on, reimagine, reenact, and innovate ethnic expression(s) in daily life while continuing to engage with the forces of modernity.
Section II: Expressions of Ethnicity in Daily Life
Chapter 3: On Tacit and Overt Expressions of Ethnicity in Daily Life

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture, and power. [...] [Identities] are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall 1990:225)

Introduction

One Sunday in the autumn of 2010 after the service at St. Matthew’s, during the potluck-style lunch in the basement, I heard a roar of laughter from the table next to me. Before I could ask what happened, someone told me: a visiting Lakota priest had wondered who I was and when told I was an anthropologist, said something about how an anthropologist is able find a group of Indians anywhere. My response was to (nervously) laugh and nod my head along with them. Fr. Paul Sneve’s wife, Tally, told me a similar story. She knew that she was finally accepted among the women’s guild when someone referred to her out loud as the “wannabe,” after which the room erupted in laughter.

Both incidents – a sort of playful othering of non-Indians – puzzled me. While I was well accustomed to initiation via friendly teasing, the way in which these individuals drew attention to whether or not someone in the congregation was Indian, was novel. Generally the parishioners at St. Matt’s went to great lengths to downplay such categories in the church, emphasizing instead the Episcopal tenet of welcoming everyone, not just Lakotas and other Indians. I came to understand that neither of these statements was an attempt to oust us from the room, or to punitively exclude us as non-Indians in a primarily
Lakota congregation. Rather, they were presented in forums during which overt expressions about ethnicity and cultural agency could be made without adverse or hostile responses. In one sense, and given the racial hegemony in Rapid City, these statements marked Tally and me as neutral enough, when present, to make overt expressions of an already-known but seldom voiced difference concerning many of St. Matthew’s congregants. Their statements also overtly referenced Indianness (juxtaposing “us” with “non-Indians” or “anthropologists”) by personalizing bits of collective (tribal, indigenous) histories, a bit of interactional teasing (in the Lakota Way) to indicate affection for the “other.”

In this chapter I open attention to other overt and tacit expressions of ethnicity in personal (autobiographical) reflections, while recognizing that ethnic identity and the display of cultural authenticity are not the primary things on people’s minds at all times. I first provide a sketch of each of the participants, along with a description of the contexts in which their contributions were recorded. While people’s personal reflections, conversations and utterances sometimes reveal an intentional turning toward indigenous practices and epistemologies, they also reflect dynamic engagement relative to their own and others’ experience(s), the structure of the narrative event, and relevant (local, national and global) hegemonies (Clifford 2013:25).

While examining expressions of ethnicity in urban Christian contexts, the aim is not to wax ethnicity onto people’s narratives. Ethnicity was not the primary lens through which people viewed every experience, nor was it the focus of every conversation.
Sometimes people overtly discussed being Indian in Rapid City, including their experiences in the workforce, the market, or in schools. At other times people recognized that certain practices and commonly-held values varied from those of non-Indians. There were also clear examples of communicative patterns and frameworks that have been carried forward across generations that were reframed or reenacted in contemporary contexts. However, this was not true in every area of their lives, and people regularly expressed concern that I might fail to recognize these nuances.

Their concerns were perhaps (and once again) best synthesized by Jean, a prominent elder at St. Matthew’s Episcopal church; while she recognized that she and many others feel “at home” with other primarily Lakota congregants, she is also among those who object to Lakota rituals, visual adornment, or ceremonial items in the church that might discourage non-Indians from attending. Jean and her late husband are well known throughout the diocese, partly because her husband was a (non-Native) Episcopal priest, and they visited churches throughout the state during his long tenure. Jean said that as a Lakota Episcopalian it can be “difficult to go to churches without Indians,” where she says non-Indians are sometimes “not as welcoming,” or “go overboard because you are Indian.” She admits that being the Lakota wife of a non-Native priest likely helped inform her perspective. Over the years, she said, “…a lot of people had a hard time accepting me as an Indian, [and] some never have.”

In some cases, Jean recounted, people drew overt attention to her indigeneity in situations where she felt it was out of context. For example, several years ago her husband
filled in as the Officiate at a primarily non-Indian church in the diocese. The church also held a concurrent Lakota inculturated service in the basement, which many Lakota Episcopalians (both clergy and congregants) enjoy, as Lakota clergy helped design and officiate it. One of the non-Native congregants asked Jean if she would be more comfortable attending the service downstairs. Jean declined, partly because a priest’s wife is generally expected to attend the service her husband officiates, and partly because she feels more comfortable in a non-inculturated Episcopalian service. While Jean recognizes that the woman’s request was motivated by hospitality, it also exemplified the often liminal position she felt both as a Native Episcopalian and as the wife of a non-Native Episcopal priest.

In the early years of their marriage, while her husband was active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), she couldn’t join the organization because Indian people were not allowed membership. Years later, she said, “they asked me why I didn’t join [now], and I declined.” Her husband eventually became the National Chaplain of the VFW (2002-2003), and while she personally supported his position, she never joined the women’s group, the VFW Ladies Auxiliary (now the VFW Auxiliary). Overall Jean’s position was that she is proud of her heritage, and expressed her own adherence to interactional virtues of the Lakota Way in church life. Yet she did not feel compelled to join the VFW, an organization that had discriminated against her in the past, or go to the inculturated service at the cathedral. In both instances she responded to the invitations, based (both of which related to her Indianness) with cultural agency.
Throughout this chapter, Jean and others reference similar occasions in which people’s Indian-ness became either positively or punitively central in directing the course of their (occupational, spiritual, daily, etc.) lives. Their reflections demonstrate that the consequences of difference shift across histories and contexts, and that the boundaries of (ethnic, religious) categories, sometimes internally defined and other times externally imposed, are constantly shifting.

Stories like these also demonstrate that the display of cultural authenticity is not necessarily the primary concern for Lakota Christians in Rapid City at all times. The elder women and men I got to know were largely unconcerned about whether being Christian made them less Indian, a concern that has arguably dominated academic, religious and political discussions since contact. As Clifford (2013: 60) notes, indigenous groups have “persisted with few, or no, native-language speakers, as fervent Christians, and with “modern” family structures, involvement in capitalist economies, and new social roles for women and men.” This creates a sort of moving target for those (political, legal, academic) entities who attempt to define what it means to be indigenous today, who also sometimes focus on primordial archetypes to measure cultural authenticity (for further discussion, see Garroutte 2003; Lawrence 2004; Muehlmann 2009).

Thus the reflections I present in this chapter are not meant to represent all 21st century indigenous Christian populations,40 nor are they meant to stand as the coherent,

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40 Several studies argue a cause and effect legacy wherein colonialism (specifically relocation, assimilation policies, missionization, etc.) set the stage for post- or neo-colonial resurgence of traditionalism in congregations. A comprehensive historical analysis of these broad histories is outside the scope of this
unabated representations of the narrators' identities and epistemologies (see Bourdieu 1987:2-3). Rather, they demonstrate individual, contextual dialectics of cultural expressions in “the contradictory, stony ground of the present conjuncture” (Hall 1989:151). Their statements are some of the many strands forever weaving (personal, familial, religious, local, national, global) histories; sometimes uniformly, sometimes inconsistently. Each thread, while distinct within, is a part of the fabric they support. A few strands can never reveal a “whole story,” as people’s statements are complex and varied, often framed contextually, and subject to revision. Yet they tell “big-enough histories” (Clifford 2013: 8), stories that ”are not mechanically determined by,” but operate in and through the various “limits and pressures” that accompany relative “political hegemonies and globalized economies” (Clifford 1988; 1997; 2013; as summarized in Tengan 2015:84).

**Material**

The narrations and reflections include several spontaneous utterances from congregants and clergy at St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues over the last ten years, along with excerpts from audio-recorded conversations and participants’ personal reflections. The audio-recorded personal reflections are from four individuals; three elder Catholic women, Dee Schumacher, Mary Tognotti and Rosemary Sayers (from St. Isaac Jogues), and Fr. Paul Sneve (the rector at St. Matthew’s). Each of these took several different study. For useful studies that make these connections, see Alfred and Corntassel 2005; Mucha 1983; Nagel 1996; and Officer 1973.
forms, some more linear, others more conversational and bracketed with discussions of current affairs, or of national and local politics. I also draw from notes transcribed from a conversation with Jean Marrs (an elder from St. Matthew’s) where she detailed several prominent events in her life. Finally, I include excerpts from an audio-recorded conversation among myself, Rosemary and Mary as demonstrative of others that we shared (usually including Dee) at our kitchen tables during the last several years.

**The Tellers, the Tellings**

From the very moment I met her, Dee reminded me of my grandmother. Dee is Cheyenne River Sioux, but happened to be born on Pine Ridge reservation in 1928 while her father was helping to build a road on the reservation, and her mother went into labor. Her short stature, spit-fire personality and quick wit - along with her feigned obliviousness of it – felt like home. As I began to learn more about her Catholic faith and deep ties to her family, the likeness, for me, resounded. I was unsurprised then, when first visiting her home, to find it filled with ceramic figures and teapots on display, photos covering nearly every available wall-space, and propped-up greeting cards and pictures from grandchildren and great-grandchildren on every unused table space. *Home, home, home.*

When we sat for our first coffee and recorded interview session, Dee was prepared with numerous loose photos and clippings to augment her stories. She had just turned eighty years old at the time of our first recordings in 2009, and she explained to me that, for her, our sessions were primarily for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, to
supplement her own and her ancestors’ historical and religious legacies. Rather than
detailing her own chronologically significant events (a typically Western narrative style),
Dee told stories about people, including her personal or observed experiences among
them. Her two daughters and son were in and out throughout our conversations, and the
phone frequently rang during my visits, with a grandchild or great-grandchild on the other
end of the line. When something came up that she felt was controversial, she made sure
to let her stance be known (including her experiences at Cheyenne River boarding school,
the Black Hills land claim), while simultaneously diminishing her authority on such matters
(often through self-deprecation), a performative act that I understood to accentuate her
own legitimacy as an elder.

Mary, born in 1934 (Oglala Lakota), is slightly younger than Dee but shares her
quick wit and delightful humor. She is tall, slender, and always impeccably dressed, with
perfectly matched necklaces and earrings that well-suit her colorful personality. She is
retired from Sioux San Hospital in Rapid City, where she worked for many years as a
recreational therapist. Her statuesque appearance is paralleled by her kindness, which
she displayed generously to me from the very moment I met her in the fall of 2008. Her
husband had then recently suffered a stroke, rendering him largely incapacitated. Our
first several visits were necessarily truncated by her need to return home and care for him.
While she struggled to manage her husband’s care over the next few years, she was ever-
welcoming and affectionate with me, although I worried that it was burdensome for her
to meet.
Mary is a doting mother and grandmother, and often talked about her children and grandchildren in conversations. Just two years after we met, one of Mary’s daughters, Sister Jean Marie Tognotti, died after a lengthy battle with a scleroderma, a painful autoimmune disease that increasingly tightens and hardens patches of skin until the living body becomes entirely encased in rigor. Sr. Jean was a Benedictine nun at St. Martin’s Monastery in Rapid City, and while I never had the pleasure of meeting her, by all accounts she tirelessly served the Native population both on the reservations and in the city. Less than a year after Jean’s death, Mary’s husband Ray passed away. His grief over Jean’s death, Mary said, trumped the progress he had made since the stroke. Thus much, though certainly not all of our communication for the last five years, has been informed by her emotional anomie as she sought to find a “new normal” after the death of two close family members in one year. When it came time to record her reflections, and out of respect for her grief, I limited questions concerning tender autobiographical and familial narratives. Instead I approached our breakfast meeting at a local eatery in a way that had become characteristic of our conversations, where we excitedly shared our views on politics (tribal, local, federal), the latest stories on NPR and on John Stewart, and about life in the church. Mary was seventy-seven at the time of this particular recorded conversation, where she referenced bits of her personal history, her life in the Catholic Church and at Holy Rosary Mission boarding school (now called Red Cloud), and when appropriate, I asked follow-up questions.

Rosemary, (Oglala Lakota) born in 1930, is similarly kind and gracious, funny and
clever. While some minor health issues have made her voice less robust over the years, her laugh is still infectious. I recorded her personal reflections in the same place where many of our conversations took place – at her kitchen table, where she served warm rolls, fruit and coffee. While all of the St. Isaac Jogues women are remarkable, Rosemary’s story is especially inspiring. At a young age, as a single mother of four children and only a high school degree, she forged a career in social services. Her decision meant that she would have to leave her hometown of Martin, S.D. (and her extended family) behind, and find a way to financially support them without an immediately available network of friends and family to help with childcare.

When Rosemary talks about her tenure in the South Dakota Department of Social Services, her face lights up. Having been abandoned by an alcoholic husband, she was left with scars that ran deep – and she said that it took her a long time before she felt she wasn’t “too stupid” to drive, find a promising career, and support her children. After years of steady promotions, however, she recollects, “...it’s when you finally ... all these white lights come on. You can do this stuff. You can figure it out yourself. Maybe you don’t have an education, but you’ve got some common sense.” Rosemary did not spend much time discussing her (now deceased) ex-husband, rather, she demonstrated that her common sense and personal experience enable her to bring laughter and a sense of ease to those around her.

When the four of us got together (the St. Isaac Jogues women and me), our conversations generally centered on family and church gossip, politics, and reservation
priests (including who were the latest or greatest resident Jesuits). They also almost always made reference to Sioux San, the BIH hospital in Rapid. Sioux San provides constant fodder for conversation, whether it be concern over the current administration, longing for the way it used to be, frustration or satisfaction with care received, or as a continuing saga of the General Hospital variety. Partly due to its first-come-first-serve approach, patients might socialize all day while they wait in the lobby together, thus it is a frequent hub for Natives in the city and from reservations.

Beginning with our second visit, the women would hand me one or more small gift(s) and greeting card(s), which I came to understand as common practice for friends who travel a long distance to visit. I reciprocated by bringing them each a bag of locally made individually-wrapped chocolates from Nebraska, which my own Grandmothers loved, and happily, they did too. I made the mistake once of leaving the chocolates behind at my house in Nebraska, so I instead bought some truffles in Deadwood to bring to our meeting. They never said that they didn’t like the truffles, only that they really liked the other chocolates. And for the next several visits they made sure to reemphasize the latter point. I didn’t make that mistake again.

Fr. Paul (who is both Rosebud Sioux and Norwegian) recorded his session with me at the Thunderhead Episcopal Church Camp in the northern Black Hills, where he was participating in a clergy retreat. I had not been to Thunderhead in nearly a decade—the last time was just after my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, and we set out to visit relatives prior to her extended surgery and treatment. Only days after we arrived,
however, an aggressive fire quickly spread through the Black Hills. When it reached Lead, SD, we received word from local firemen that my grandmother, then almost 90 years old, had to immediately leave her home. Every hotel that was a safe distance away from the fire was booked to capacity with tourists or evacuees. After some clever brainstorming we discovered that the camp had vacancies, which was extraordinary given that it was mid-summer and typically reserved with back-to-back vacation Bible schools and various congregant and clergy retreats. We took my grandmother to the camp, and over the next several days, as the ominous smell of forest fire permeated the Black Hills, we began to realize the depth of my grandmother’s dementia.

My unease over returning ten years later to Thunderhead to meet Fr. Paul lessened as I felt the welcoming atmosphere of the retreat. The Native and non-Native clergy were light-hearted and jovial with one another and me, reminding me of when I played at the camp as a young child during Vacation Bible School and would stay with my grandmother. Thunderhead holds similar memories for Episcopalians who grew up in or had some relationship with the diocese in South Dakota, including Fr. Paul, who served as a camp counselor in his youth. This was reflected throughout his narration – while in many ways following a linear-autobiographical style (I was born here...I grew up here...etc.), he also used the camp as a sort of anchor for many of his stories, as a continual point to come back to, to relate with, in recounting his life experiences. The Camp was also the place where he met Tally. The week that he shared his autobiographical reflections with me was the same week, twenty years earlier, that he and his wife had met while working as camp
counselors. He honored the week with a poem which he wrote and read for his wife (and the rest of us) during lunch that day. Fr. Paul said that he grew up in the Episcopal church in South Dakota (primarily at Flandreau), and as he got older he came to understand that categories such as “Indian” and “white” held increasing import in his professional and personal life.

Jean Marrs was born in 1935 on Cheyenne River Reservation, and today is a respected elder at St. Matthew’s. When I began visiting the church Jean was one of the very first people to welcome me, and also one of the first congregants who agreed to participate in my research. Immediately apparent in Jean are her great intellect, her kind heart and her sense of humor. Her numerous achievements are remarkable given the multiple bureaucratic and social restrictions she had to navigate, both in her career and in her role as the wife of a non-Native priest in the Episcopal Church. After high school Jean attended Black Hills State University, and though she applied to medical school after graduation, the program did not yet admit women. Instead she went to UNM in Albuquerque to study medical technology, then to Morningside where she earned her teaching degree. Over the course of her career she helped establish an Indian Health clinic in both Sioux City and Sioux Falls, SD, an alcohol and drug rehabilitation program and social service program in Morton, Minnesota, and brought countless adopted children and children from group homes back to their respective reservations in response to the Indian Child Welfare Act.
Tacit and Overt Ethnicity

I roughly define overt ethnicity as an explicit, expressed reference to cultural heritage. I define tacit ethnicity as the intentional or inadvertent (re-)animation of culturally distinct patterns and frameworks. Distinguishing between overt and tacit ethnicity is not to suggest that one is authentic and the other is inauthentic or derivative. Both overt and tacit ethnicity can be carried forward across generations, both can be re-constructed or re-animated in the present. In making this distinction, I expand on Whorf’s (1945) overt (phenotype) and covert (cryptotype) grammatical categories; the former of which present a “formal mark” related to the category in question, the latter of which is marked by “a reactance to the category” in question (1945: 2).

In relation to social identification, categories, ascriptions, overt means that someone presents a formal representation (by means of an item of material culture, a name, etc.) of a social category; an act of identification as a member of a category; or an act of ascribing someone to be a member of a particular social category. Tacit would mean the representation of membership in a category via a complex social transaction (like drawing someone into a relationship or giving a gift) without the use of a single overt sign or emblem of the category. Whereas overt expressions of ethnicity might include an explicit reference to one’s Lakota heritage, tacit ethnicity might include the active performance of kinship roles in daily life (which can remain unnamed/unfixed).

Tacit Ethnicity through Kinship Performance

Throughout this chapter individuals discuss a familiarity with tacit interactional
norms, many of which are associated with Lakota kinship. Kinship among many contemporary Sioux, DeMallie (1994:132) writes, “is an active force, the act of relating.” Historically, the Sioux recognized kinship “as the foundation for morality” (DeMallie 1994:142), and clear guidelines concerning whom to avoid, defer to, tease, provide assistance to, ask help from, etc. provided social and moral order to daily life (see Albers 1982; Bucko 2008; DeMallie 1982; DeMallie 1979; 1994; 1972; Hassrick 1964; Johnson 1950; Lesser 1928; Walker 1914).

“Even today, among the Lakotas,” DeMallie continues (1982:6), “relatives are people who act like relatives and consider themselves to be related.” When my youngest daughter was born, for example, the St. Isaac Jogues women sent her a pair of tiny moccasins. The card read “Thought we’d better send Abigail these moccasins, before she gets too big for them. [signed] her Rapid City uncis.” One of the St. Matthew’s women, upon hearing about Abby’s gift, said, “Abigail has lots of uncis at St. Matthew’s [too]!” Unci (uŋčí) means “grandmother” in Lakota. While I realized this was a great kindness, and made sure to express my gratitude, it was not until much later that I understood the “naming” of themselves as grandmothers to indicate a re-framing of our relationships, an overt reference to their ethnicity which simultaneously invited me to participate in a tacit framework of associated (Lakota) norms.

**Overt and Tacit Expressions of Ethnicity through Personalizing of (Collective) Histories**

People sometimes referenced their ethnicity by overtly personalizing bits of
collective (tribal, indigenous) histories, as they did with Tally and me (teasing the other), while tacitly including the “other” on the joke (interactional teasing which is consistent among relatives and friends). Sometimes people used a personal pronoun when referencing a historical event, regardless of whether they were actually present for it. When Jean signed her research consent form, for example, she looked up with a smile and said, “You know, the last time we signed something, we lost all of our land!” At these times, snippets of collective histories were made malleable, portable and in-flux with the present moment, offering ethnohistorical insight, or embedded advice, to the (in this case, non-Native) listener(s). At other times people overtly situated ethnic histories in juxtaposition with modernity, as belonging to a sometimes-nostalgic past.

For example, Dee recollected growing up on Cheyenne River Reservation with her grandmother, before diabetes was a prominent health threat among many Native populations. She juxtaposed today’s epidemic of diabetes among Lakota people with her experiences working as a child in the kitchen at Cheyenne River Agency Boarding School:

Lately, I have been studying about diabetes, ‘cuz you know it’s running rampant in the Native communities, and it isn’t just here it’s all over the United States. [...] But it seems to me that, I’m noticing more, it’s diet and stress. Because, just about everyone I talk to, they live stressful lives and they don’t eat right and half of them are obese.

I can remember going back…my grandma…she roasted, and everything was cooked in the ovens or on top of the stoves in a stew pot. We never had fried unless it was fried chicken and that was a treat, ‘cuz we had chickens then they sold the eggs and you know you aren’t going to eat your profit, you know? We didn’t know that but we understand that now. And we ate a lot of vegetables ‘cuz we had a big cellar. Everything from the garden that could be saved was put in the root cellar, and that’s what we ate. And cabbages were pulled up by the root and
hung upside down by a rope in the root cellar so you’d have the whole head with the root hanging upside down. And carrots were put in sand, just cut about that much top off then put the carrot in the container and fill it all up with sand, made sure it was nice, solid, and firm. And that kept rutabagas, turnips, parsnips, all of that stuff we ate.

And I’m thinking that years ago when I was a kid and even when I was at boarding school, at the Cheyenne River Boarding School, they had a great, big, huge dining room. One of my aunts was a cook. [...] She was a big lady and she used to tell the girls that worked in the kitchen that, ‘cuz you worked in the kitchen when you were just first, second graders, you washed the tables, you cleared the tables, ‘cuz we had loading carts, you know. Cleared all the dishes, washed the tables, all of the condiments had to be washed out, every meal. Every...sugar shakers, creamers, we had ketchup and mustard, and at that time those were the only thing we had for condiments. We didn’t have salts and all of the fats, steak sauces and dressings and that kind of stuff because when they made a salad, it was generally homemade dressings you know? [...]
contrast to many other published accounts (see, for example, Giago 2006). As Lomawaima (as quoted in Rotondaro 2015) notes, students “who went into the school as an English speaker from a family that had been Christian for three or four generations, and really wanted an education," often had dramatically different experiences from those "who went in under duress, [sometimes via] order of the courts.”

Tacit (re)-framing of Boarding School Narratives

Jean grew up on Cheyenne River, and went to St. Mary’s Episcopal School for Girls from 4th through 8th grade. She then attended the Old Cheyenne River Agency Boarding School until the Oahe Dam flooded the area, and the school moved to its new location at Eagle Butte. She says that boarding school was “the very best thing I ever did,” noting that she “played in band, basketball, choir,” and that “almost all of us went to college.”

She contrasts this with her observations in contemporary Rapid City public schools:

When my grandson was in school, I spent a lot of time there. The kids were fine with that, but the parents were not. I see schools as the biggest problem – kids get labeled as slow or dumb because they are Indian, and teachers and parents are perpetuating the racism.

Mary attended Holy Rosary Mission School during a time in which several claims of abuse were later made. Without dismissing the merit upon which others’ claims might be based, she insists that her experiences were inconsistent with them:

I wouldn’t be the person that I am today. I mean I know families...they didn’t just
send me there, they wanted me to get a good education. [...] [My family] didn’t want us to go to government schools, they thought the Jesuits and nuns were far better teachers, [and provided a better] education.

Dee attended a mission school at Cheyenne River, and she maintains that not everyone experienced the same kinds of trauma that others faced while attending Indian boarding schools:

When I was born my grandparents took me to the Cheyenne River (I was born down here at Pine Ridge). Anyway, and they thought my mother was not capable of caring for a new baby because she was a kid. [...] 

[...] My father’s mother was a very devout Catholic. My grandpa was you know...go to church maybe once a month or whatever...holiday Catholic. [My grandma] made us all go to church whether you wanted to or not and that’s how come I ended up in the government boarding school. My aunt and my uncle, my uncle was a year older and my aunt was two years older than I and so consequently they put us together and took us to the boarding school.

[We attended] Cheyenne River. That was Old Cheyenne River before they moved it to Eagle Butte. I have a lot of pictures of the old agency including the school and the dormitories and ... and so our life was spent the first eight years in government boarding school. The people there are critical of the boarding schools now and the Catholic schools. I have my ... I never encountered any of the nastiness or the nasty treatment that they all claimed that they did. Well, it may have been a different area, a different tribe. I don’t know... 

[...]We had excellent teachers, we had excellent care and my father’s people would not have allowed us to stay there had it not been that way. Because they were ranchers and they worked hard and I always say they loved hard work and believed in the Lord in that order. Anyhow, I am very uncomfortable when I go to a meeting and someone starts berating their educational background. Because not everybody experienced that kind of nonsense.

Similar to former students interviewed by Barrett (2005) from St. Elizabeth’s Boarding School for Indian Children at Standing Rock Reservation, Jean, Mary and Dee
emphasized the quality of their education, the value of learned skills, and the continued practice of Christianity as central to their formation. In distancing their boarding school narratives from any overt reference to a loss of cultural identity, they implied that they did not see this as a central component in school. As further discussed in the following section, this could also be attributed to the fact that while growing up, being Native just “was.” Boarding schools filled with students from the same cultural backgrounds likely contributed to an embodiment of cultural norms and communicative practices. Dee reflects:

[...] I went to school with all Native kids, government boarding school and Catholic schools, and we were all Native you know, so we just assumed everybody was.

**Overt Recognitions of Ethnic “Difference” and Embodiment of Tacit Frameworks**

Similarly, and throughout their narratives and reflections, people overtly referenced ethnicity when stating or intimating that they felt “more comfortable” working among or attending church with other Native people, yet they had trouble articulating exactly why that was the case. It was not that anyone was opposed to working with, worshipping among, marrying or befriending non-Natives. People recognized that they happily engage in multiple practices and institutions with non-Indians, many of which are

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41 The women’s narratives underscore Lomawaima’s (Rotondaro Sep. 1, 2015) assertion that “there is no one story” concerning American Indian boarding schools. A constellation of experiences, ranging from good to very bad, can be offered by the “Thousands of people [who] went through this experience...[from] all different tribal backgrounds, all different ages, all different personalities.”
distinct from their attachments to a geographically removed, culturally distinct “home.”
Their statements echo Appiah’s (1997:618) “rooted cosmopolitanism” or “cosmopolitan patriotism,” where an individual is both “attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities” and finds “pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people.” Yet the expressed sense of heightened familiarity around other Native people in the city suggests that people also actively re-made home in new contexts and locales, including urban Christian congregations, by mutually drawing from familiar and culturally distinct communicative frameworks.

On Christian Practice/Spiritual Formation

For example, Rosemary made similar statements to Jean concerning primarily Native congregations, where familiar tacit frameworks which were familiar among other Native people seemed more like “home”:

[On attending St. Isaac Jogues]... when I came back [to Rapid City] I went right back there. I went to St. Teresa, but it was too big and [St. Isaac Jogues] was more like country, how I grew up. There is more Indian people and it felt more comfortable. It was smaller and I just ... I don’t know.

Similarly, when Fr. Paul (who had attended predominantly Indian churches throughout his Episcopal formation) decided he wanted to go to seminary, he was living in Omaha, Nebraska. The bishop told him that while he supported Fr. Paul’s decision, he could not send him to seminary because there were not any openings in the diocese for him to be placed. The bishop told him he would need to find another diocese, to which Fr. Paul
similarly felt excited to go “home”:

[...] he says, “I think you could go home, you should go home.” And I was very relieved to hear that because...Omaha, even though I was going to an Episcopal Church, I’d been to all the Episcopal churches in the Omaha area, they were not home. I did not feel at home there, I did not feel comfortable.

When he returned to South Dakota, he recognized that throughout his adult life, familiar (tacit) interactional norms among Lakotas such as himself likely discouraged them from “volunteering” for seminary, as well as “recruiting” other Lakota people into the seminary:

I went to the Chair of the Commission [C.O.M.] and he said, “You know, I’ve been waiting for you, all this time I’ve had people telling me you need to get ahold of Paul Sneve.” For years people were telling the C.O.M. about me. But no one went to talk to me. Now I realize, now that I’m a member of the C.O.M., that’s so flawed, so flawed. So many people, especially Indians, they will not volunteer, and then they will not come forward, you have to go ask them. And now, that’s partially what I am doing, get out there as much as I can, get out there and meet people, find out who may be called. Who are the elders recognizing as leadership material, and are they being called?

The bishop in South Dakota suggested that Fr. Paul complete his residential seminary in Vancouver. Before he left, he attended a clergy summer session at Thunderhead Camp. 42

In attendance at the time was only one other Native candidate for seminary. He reflects on other Native peoples’ tacit organization and eventual (overt) support of himself and

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42 Incidentally, this was the same session he was attending several years later while dictating his personal narratives to me.
the other Native seminary candidate, the latter of which became more pronounced after 
the other Native candidate unexpectedly died. While Fr. Paul had not at that point been 
as well known in Indian country (outside of Flandreau and among family and friends at 
Rosebud) as the other man, after his passing, several elder Lakota women started giving 
Fr. Paul money “in honor” of the deceased. They did so with overt reference to Fr. Paul’s 
ethnicity, explicitly stating their interest in the ordainment of Indian clergy:

[We] were kind of neck-and-neck in the process, and he was preparing to go with 
his family to go to Suwanee [a residential seminary in Tennessee] in a couple of 
weeks. Tally and I were going to go to Vancouver and while we were here, he and 
I finished the week and we were going to walk to a meeting, right after lunch, and 
he and I were just joking and talking, and I was aware he wasn’t walking next to 
me. I turned to look behind me just in time to see him collapse and he had a heart 
attack and died. And we did CPR on him, an ambulance came and the Bishop and 
I went to the hospital in Lead, where they declared him dead on arrival, and 
everyone knew who [he] was but nobody really knew me that well, and certainly 
not in Indian Country. And [shortly after that at] Niobrara Convocation [...] little 
old grandmas that knew him would have these little wrinkled ten and twenty 
dollar bills and they’d come up to me and they’d say, “You know I was gonna give 
this to [him] but in his memory, I want to give this to you, because you are the only 
other Indian that we have going to seminary now.” And at that time, I was the only 
Native American going in a residential seminary in the United States.

Fr. Paul regarded Thunderhead as instrumental in shaping his spiritual development and, 
ultimately, his journey into the priesthood. As a pre-teen, he remembers it as one of the 
first public places where the categories of ‘Indian’ and ‘white’ were largely insignificant to 
him and his fellows, which was a stark contrast from his life in Flandreau. As he grew older, 
(and similar to the later experiences he had as a seminary candidate), he found that overt 
categorizing of “Indians” and “non-Indians” within the Church was more pronounced:

I started coming to camp I think in the seventh grade [...] that had a lot to do
with...my Christian formation, my spiritual formation. Being able to come up to Thunderhead and learn about God and everything, meet other kids who were like minded and weren’t hung up on Indians and whites, which was a refreshing change from Flandreau.

[...]There were always a bunch of Indian kids here, and I can’t remember any major clashes, and that was really interesting. And the grown-ups, I know now, there were lots of clashes. But us goofy kids, we just had fun together.

He framed his cultural roots through descriptions of places like Thunderhead and Flandreau, people (family members and clergy/congregants) and events (family gatherings, church events). He attended a church in Flandreau throughout his childhood that incorporated Dakota hymns, also influencing his spiritual and cultural formation:

[We used the] Dakota Hymnal in church...rarely heard the prayers in Dakota, but early on I learned how to sing out of the hymnal and how to read it. I heard enough Dakota in church and from my relatives—at least the rhythm and how it sounds stuck in my head—so that even today...even if I don’t understand what I’m reading, I can read it, and then with a little work, then I can translate.

I was hearing Dakota and I was so young I didn’t know there was a difference [between the Dakota and Lakota dialects]. So when I would visit my great uncle and my auntie on my Mom’s side, I would want to learn words, and Uncle was Lakota but Auntie was a Santee from the area and she spoke “D,” and they would just kind of teasingly argue with each other about [pronunciation]... so I never learned a whole lot from them. [Laughs]

But it was good knowing that...I had access to it. They were...more like grandparents to me. [...] She worked at St. Mary’s Boarding School, and taught my Mom etiquette, and all that stuff. A very stern woman, always very stern. And [he] was always just a goofy guy, he was just always just silly and fun. [...] They, they were good for me. They were really good for me. And then of course she- they both went up here and in the summers would manage Thunderhead. And so I further got to continue to get to know them and get closer to them as I grew older, just as by coming to camp.
As a child, he said that his family felt like outsiders in Flandreau; sometimes because of his mother’s Indian heritage (in a community divided by Indians and non-Indians), at other times because his parents were academics in a predominantly farming town, and still other times as Rosebud Sioux among the Santee (Dakota) Indians in Flandreau. Overall, and partly because he often “passed” as white, Fr. Paul describes:

[...] Flandreau’s a predominantly white town, very much a farming community, and the Indian kids that live there are Santee Sioux. [...] Dad went to work for the Flandreau Indian School and Mom was teaching English at the time. [...] I grew up in Flandreau and went to the public school...they didn’t let...well in high school, at that time they had a policy, children of faculty couldn’t go to [the boarding] school there and I thought it was a pretty good policy. Especially after I worked there, and they revoked that policy, because the worst kids were usually the kids of people who worked there! [Laughs]

High school was very difficult. Growing up in Flandreau, it just, even though we moved there—I was pretty young when we moved and I grew up with you know, started kindergarten there, my family and I, we never really felt welcome there, we were never “in.” We just, we were so different. Mom and Dad were both very intelligent and taught, and Mom started writing, and was getting published, and that kind of weirded people out, they didn’t quite know what to make of that. I think most people in Flandreau weren’t really aware of her kind of, the beginning of sort of a South Dakota celebrity status by my Mom [Virginia Driving-Hawk Sneve went on to write several historical works and children’s stories based on Lakota cultural traditions, as well as her seminal work on Episcopal Missions to the Sioux in South Dakota].

Throughout his personal reflections, Fr. Paul reflected on the ways that being Indian and Norwegian, light-skinned and an “outsider” in Flandreau impacted his personal and spiritual development. At the close of nearly every example, however, he countered it with the familiarity with the tacit expression of interactional norms among his relatives.
I look non-native. So I kind of went from...as far as my cultural identity, I would swing from one extreme to the other. I’d either be Indian and nothing to do with my Norwegian part, or be all Norwegian and nothing to do with being Indian. But in spite of that we still, we were always close to our relatives back home, and we would go visit great-grandma and great-grandpa Ross at Oak Creek, and it was good for me to be around them. [...] And then the cousins would come and we’d have sort of ad hoc family reunions and such.

**Workplace Settings: Overt Recognitions of Ethnic Difference**

Similar to Fr. Paul’s discussion, others felt a tension between overtly displaying cultural heritage and being “othered” among friends or strangers. People also felt the effects of being noticeably dark-skinned or light enough to “pass” as white in Rapid City.

Several of the elder women who were lighter-skinned made reference to occasions when they overtly referenced their Indian heritage as a way to address discrimination. Mary offered examples from two separate occasions. In the first, she made an Italian dinner and went to the liquor store for a bottle of wine to accompany the meal.

In the store, I was going to get some wine, the sales person [said], “You know those Indians they just come in here and ...” So, I said, “Here is your wine, I happen to be part Indian.” And I said, “Look at your nose.” [Laughing] His nose was just red.

In the second story, she was eating a meal with some of her non-Indian contemporaries, one of whom—apparently unaware of Mary’s Native heritage—was referencing Rapid City’s historical segregation:

I have friends, about a year ago, we were having lunch you know and this one lady had just golfed and she said, “I remember Woolworths, the store we had there,
the Indians sitting there.” And she was going on and on. You know, [I said,] you are really racist. I said, “Did you know I am Native? I am an Indian.” She didn’t know what to say, and her face got red, but she never did come to lunch with us. All of those ladies [said], “Oh Mary, good for you.”

**Tacit Signaling of Ethnic Identity in the Workplace**

Similarly, when others recounted their experiences of being overtly othered in Rapid City, they almost always juxtaposed it with the sense of ease around more familiar social norms. When discussing their early work lives, for example, Mary and Dee began by noting some of the challenges they faced. In each case, a boss and/or fellow employee found out about her Indian ancestry, which had negative consequences for each of them. While working in Rapid City in her 20s and 30s (during the 1950s and 60s), Dee reflects:

...there was a place in Baken Park called Holt’s drive in. It was one of the few drive-ins in Rapid City, and ...I [was a waitress]. *(She also had a second job at the hospital.)* ...And when I went into the hospital to work, it was just [as] an aide or just something. The head of nursing discovered I was a breed and so, needless to say, my jobs were not the greatest jobs in the world, you know. [She] was just nasty. And then we got a director, a medical director came in there and there were several of us had to take tests, you know. And I passed mine with flying colors.

[...] I had my own car, and they would give you a prescription and they had Becker’s drug, right on Main Street. We had Mill’s drug on St. Joe and there was another drug store in this town. And they’d send you with prescriptions to pick up drugs that they needed at the Hospital in sealed containers. You had to sign in and sign out. They give X amount of time to get from point B, from point A to B.

And so I was a drug runner for the hospital for about nine months before a real good friend who was on the police department [...] he was just a rookie but he always came to Hook’s and helped us check out at the end of the night with money and take us to the bank for night drops so that we were escorted. [...] He said, “Dee I don’t want you doing this, it gets around, especially if they know that you are a breed.” So, I had to quit.
Prior to Mary’s work at Sioux San, she had similar experiences:

Well see with me I could pass but I had comments. I was always proud of my Native mother and grandmother. I know the owner didn’t like it. So I quit, I could just tell they were talking, I could just see...that they were trying to find things.

Mary’s later work in mental health services at Sioux San was not the same. Rosemary, who worked in social services on various reservations, concurred with Mary’s experiences. She elaborated by discussing her frustration with social workers who failed to appreciate the relational aspects of working with their clients at Pine Ridge:

...We would have...a lot of girls that would come in there to work, they were college graduates you know, and couldn’t get a job ‘cuz they had no work experience. So, they would get a job there. And they just, oh God, I’d hear them talk to...I just hate it...and so they’d come and say, “Well how come your people all come in when they’re supposed to?” I said, “‘Cuz I treat them like they’re people. You know, they’re not bad.” I used to get so discouraged with them.

They couldn’t understand and in Pine Ridge, these girls would come in and they would say ... They’d tell me what they’re doing. Their biggest problem there was they had been living with a dad of the kids that they were getting ADC for and that gets swamped. They’d tell me. I’d say, “Don’t tell me that.” They’d tell me everything like that and the rest of [the social workers], they’d say, “How can you find that out?”

When Rosemary decided to move out of Pine Ridge for a job transfer, her clients had a difficult time accepting it:

I like to move. I like to go off and I like to meet new people. [...] When I [left] Pine Ridge – I loved it there...I loved all the people and I had so much fun with them – when I left, they kept saying, “Why are you going?” I said, “Well, I’ve just got to go see what it is in the white world. Like working with people.” I said, “I’ve got to see how different it is, or if everybody is really the same like you said.” I suppose if I’d
have went to school, I’d have known, but I had to find out for myself.

As indicated in these stories, people found that the performance and display of both overt and tacit ethnicity in Rapid City had varying consequences. While in some cases perceived Indian-ness led to a punitive response from non-Indians, in other cases people overtly referred to their own ethnic heritage as a form of solidarity or redress.

**Conclusion**

While each of the above individuals throughout this chapter overtly referenced their own (or others’) ethnicity, each instance was specific to the speaker and the context of the speech event. Sometimes overt expressions of ethnicity were accompanied by the tacit (intentional or inadvertent) (re-)animation of culturally distinct patterns and frameworks, even though individuals were not always clear about how to articulate the embodied norms associated with tacit frameworks such as the performance of kinship norms. Given Native peoples’ continued engagement with modernity, it can be problematic to strictly define traditional and external elements (Clifford 2001:478). Just as historic cultural frameworks can influence the ways in which people participate in (or conduct) ostensibly modern practices, relevant hegemonies also influence people’s re-animation or re-construction of traditional practices (Moore 2006). Clifford (2013:61) notes that among indigenous peoples the world over, “new modes of individualism, universalism, exchange, and communication have restructured [traditional] bodies, societies, and spaces.” Thus “particular combinations of heterogeneous elements, old and new, indigenous and foreign” can be seen across time and geographies (Ibid.).
Focusing on tacit and overt representations of ethnicity among Lakota congregants and clergy in Rapid City allows for the recognition that “[internal] elements have, historically, been connected with, [external] forms, in processes of selective, syncretic transformation” (Clifford 2001:478). Further, it helps to account for the multiple categories and institutions that factor into people’s orientations and expressions, without designating any expressions as more (or less) authentic than others.
Chapter 4: On Humor

Introduction

In chapter 2, I elaborated on collectively-negotiated, group-affiliated models of ethnic expression within the Church (with respect to generation, Catholic/Episcopalian), and in chapter 3, I discussed individual (contextual) expressions of ethnicity in response to lived experience(s), including the ways in which people tacitly and overtly indexed ethnicity. In this chapter, I look more closely at humor, including pragmatic performances and expressions that index ethnicity overtly and tacitly, the latter of which were often consistent with interactional patterns associated with traditional Lakota kinship norms and social organization as documented in the ethnohistorical record (see DeMallie 1994).

As with other styles of conversation among congregants and clergy, not all humorous expressions and acts referenced ethnicity, nor did all expressions rely on identifiable historic (Lakota, or Sioux) frameworks. Several works do point to certain standardized (and historically similar) patterns of joke-telling, teasing (affectionate or punitive), comedic story-telling, and self-deprecating humor among Indian peoples across tribal affiliations and geographies; and more specific patterns of expressions among

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43 Others refer to humor as a speech genre, or a combination of multiple speech genres, which can include teasing, joke-telling, conversational humor, etc. A discussion of humor as a performance-centered approach relative to speech genres is outside the scope of this essay. (For further reading on a Bakhtinian approach to humor, see Kotthoff 2007.)

...humor has in some cases been removed, censored or ignored by some observers because of a variety of preconceptions, both by Lakota and non-Lakota, just as participants shielded certain behaviors based on the presumed sensibilities of their observers. [...] Today, as in the nineteenth century, humor continues to appear and disappear, thus becoming event and then becoming nonevent.

Where available (aka, when the documentary record accounts for humor as an “event” in the ethnohistorical record), I include documentation of these historic patterns relative to people’s expressions. The intent here is not to demonstrate that these historic metapragmatic frameworks have been wholly carried over and (re)applied in daily life, or that the continuation or reenactment of certain patterns indicates that associated performance and discourse can be deemed clearly “traditional” as opposed to “modern” (Moore 2006). Rather, take an ethno-ethnohistorical approach (Fogelson 1974; 1989) concerning the roles that humor historically played in daily life, while I follow Moore’s (2006) lead in attempting to situate (tacit and overt) expressions of ethnicity as processual and contextual, as engaging with modernity.

Throughout my time in the field, participants mentioned that they were “more
comfortable” around other Native people, and many of them referenced humor as one of the reasons for this. Humor, “a performative pragmatic accomplishment involving a wide range of communication skills,” can include “language, gesture, the presentation of visual imagery, and situation management” (Beeman 2000:103). Humorous expressions rely on recognizable pragmatic and performative acts embedded in standardized metapragmatic frameworks to which the pragmatic act (joke or teasing) applies. In other words, “without metapragmatic function simultaneously in play with whatever pragmatic function(s) there may be in discursive interaction,” Silverstein (1993:36) asserts, “there is no possibility of interactional coherence, since there is no framework of structure.”

**Tacit Expressions of Ethnicity via Humor: Joking to Build/Maintain Relationships**

I began asking people directly about humor after a particularly hilarious incident one morning in the fall of 2011, when I was at a diner in Rapid City with several of the women from St. Matthew’s. The hostess seated us in the back room, as our group was large and needed the room to accommodate all of us. After we settled into our seats, we began to hear what sounded like a drum beat coming through the speakers. One of the women looked around and said, “Is that for us?” Our table erupted in laughter, after which someone responded, “it’s only in the back room, must be for us!” Her tacit reference to ethnicity (via humor) was common among participants throughout my fieldwork.

A few days later, I shared this story with Rosemary and Mary over coffee and rolls, which prompted them to tell similar ones. When our laughter subsided, they began to
reflect on what they felt were some of the other roles that humor played for them in social life. In contrasting their experiences in working with non-native and native people, Mary and Rosemary discuss humor as a central to the interactional norms among Lakota people. While overt in their discussion with me concerning how they felt these humorous exchanges were specifically “Indian,” or more specifically, “Lakota” norms, they all point to their own tacit familiarity with historically embedded frameworks:

Rosemary: I…worked in Pine Ridge, I was there about three years. Really liked it. Then, I moved to Hot Springs. Then I moved to Rapid City. God, I couldn’t stand it there. You’d walk in that office in the morning and you’d say good morning and people and I thought, if I have to work here another ten years…I can’t do this! I stopped and talked and visited, you know?!? So then, I transferred out […]

Mary: Did you like…you really liked Pine Ridge?

Rosemary: Oh yeah, I love the people.

Mary: I like the people too, when I go down there…

Rosemary: […] And, of course, when you move into a new area [referring to Pine Ridge] then they go through all their files, everybody picks out five or six people you know. They pick all the worst, crabby, mean ones, you know? But I love them, I always thought if I can make them laugh before I go out that door, I got it made. And I did. […]

Mary: Well it is fun to work with Native people!

Rosemary: I know, I had fun. […] And if they liked you, you had a friend for life.

Mary: Oh, yeah.

Rosemary: They would do anything if I asked them, they would do anything. There was one lady, she lived out in a housing area for Pine Ridge and it was just, she’s really mean. She came in one day and she said, “I heard you’re going to be my new ADC worker.” You really had a leverage because you held their check. Anyhow she came in and she said, “I’m going to tell you right now, I have a friend that comes
and visits me,” and she said, “He always brings me big stacks of groceries, and he always helps out with everything. I’m just telling you that because you know somebody will come in and not be telling you about it and I want you to know that.”

I said, “Okay,” I didn’t say nothing. I just sat there and looked at her for quite a while. She kept looking at me and finally I looked at her and I said, “Does he have a brother?” I was like, then all of a sudden, it dawned on her. She just laughed about it and said, “Are you crazy?” That’s how I treated them.

[laughter]

When my mom died, I was gone for a week and she came in my office. I always got up when they came in, and I never let anyone sit across the desk from me. She shook hands with me and never said a word, and I never said a word, just knew. Then she turned around and walked out.44

Rosemary associated these pragmatic displays of humor as a tacit signaling of her ethnicity among other Lakota people, which she directly attributed to her clients’ willingness to tell her things that they would not share with her non-Indian coworkers:

[...] And they would tell me stuff and they would say...this one girl came one day and she said, “My mom told me I had to tell you because I’m getting ADC and I’m living with my boyfriend and I had to tell you that.” And I said, “That’s bad.” And she said, “I know. What’s gonna happen?” And I said, “I don’t know. You will have to come back tomorrow.” She said, “Why?” and I said, “Because, I’ll have to go home and think about this tonight. I might have to cut you clear off.” So, I said, “I have to figure out what I can do to help you.”

And so they would tell me all this stuff and then we would have like a lot of [non-

44 Rosemary told this story to Mary and me, and also shared it with me during her personal session. I used excerpts from both versions in order to include implied elements from the former version that were overtly stated in the latter (to me) without duplicating both versions in their entirety. However, it is relevant to the central thesis to note that Rosemary was more overt in her descriptions with me, likely so that I could better understand. For example, she explained to me that the elder woman silently greeted her after her mother’s passing “because that was our way of doing the greeting...when somebody had lost somebody.” In her version to Mary and me, she said “And I got up and she shook my hand and I never said a word, just knew.”
native] girls that would come in there to work, they were college graduates you know, and couldn’t get a job ‘cause they had no work experience. So, they would get a job there. And they just…oh God, I’d hear them talk to them…I just hated it. And so they’d come and say, “Well how come your people all come in when they’re supposed to?” I said, “Cuz I treat them like they’re people. You know, they’re not bad.” I used to get so discouraged with them. [...]

As Rosemary alluded, teasing or “getting someone to laugh” was frequently used to develop or reinforce relationships; people often tacitly made known to listeners – through teasing and/or joke-telling – their general cultural savvy, their tribal and/or band affiliation(s), as well as their kin-relationship(s) and/or level of intimacy with various participants.

Using Humor to Tacitly Index Ethnicity (Tribal Affiliation/Kin Relationship/Deference to Elders)

At other times, people indexed their affiliation through (re)animation of historic frameworks, such as ritualized teasing between members of different bands/tribes, kinship relations and friends.

At St. Matthew’s one Sunday in October, 2009, for example, the congregation included several faces that I had never seen before, in addition to the usual crowd. Sometimes this happens when folks visit Rapid City from all over the country to attend a larger event, such as the Black Hills Powwow. On this occasion it happened that there were several baptisms taking place, which brought a number of the inductees’ family members and friends to the event. I later found out that Fr. Paul did not intimately know the baptismal candidates, their sponsors, or many of the visiting congregants, but he did
recognize them as Lakota people. Just before we sang the first hymn to open the service, Fr. Paul told a joke to the congregation which tacitly indexed own ethnic heritage. His joke is consistent with traditional and contemporary intertribal teasing among Pine Ridge (Oglala) and Rosebud (Sicangu) people in which a member of one group attempts to (humorously) illustrate the other’s general incompetence (Pickering 2000:1-2):

...the Sisseton...are dragging and going on and on about how much fun it is to go ice fishing.

And these two Oglalas thought well oh gosh, you know, ice fishing, I never heard of that, I, well, gosh we’ll try that, we’ll try that, it sounds like fun.

So, it was winter, and a real cold morning, and...so they went, and they drilled, they drilled a hole in the ice.

And as they’re doing the auger, they hear a voice, a loud man voice from up high saying, [in a deep, slow voice] “THERE’S NO FISH UNDER THAT ICE.” They kind of looked [he looks up], and said okay, so they moved down a little bit. Drilled another hole.

[In a deep, slow voice] “THERE’S NO FISH UNDER THAT ICE.” And then they look up, “Is that you God?”
[In a deep, slow voice] “NO, I’M THE HOCKEY ARENA CUSTODIAN.”

[Loud laughter]

By making Oglalas the “but,” the natural conclusion – for those familiar with this metapragmatic framework – is that Fr. Paul is from Rosebud. Thus, he is able to situate his status/band affiliation among visiting congregants without overtly detailing his lineage. Further, visiting congregants who are familiar with intertribal teasing and socio-economic norms among South Dakota reservations would know that Oglalas and Sicangus
do not fish; that fishing is something ‘easterners’ (i.e. Sisseton) engage in, which is why the Sisseton were the ones ‘going on’ about the joys of ice fishing. Just before his sermon, he references the joke once more, acknowledges that he rekeyed (Goffman 1986 (1974):43, 74) it a bit, and engages in a bit of ritual self-deprecating humor:

Well, I think I’ve done enough insulting Oglalas today, so I won’t tell another joke.

Uh, that was great, that was a good one.

I...If it makes you feel any better, I, I’ve heard that with uh, um, a Sven and Ole joke, you know, I’m half Norwegian, so, um, Oglalas/Norwegians, you know, I mean...[weighing hands back and forth in comparison]

While he tacitly indexed his Lakota heritage by teasing Oglalas, he also demonstrated humility as a leader by teasing himself; noting that he’s also been the “butt” of this joke as a Norwegian.

Humor to Get Through Difficult Times

People were quite clear on what they felt was a primary role of humor for Lakota people in both individual and social life, namely, to get through times of difficulty:

Mary: Oh yeah, that’s really helped my grieving. And you know, you wouldn’t think so but it does. That is when you talk and laugh. And you know, they are just funny. I love to hear them talk. I just feel comfortable when I go to Pine Ridge or Rosebud. Oh you feel just good.

45 Sven, Ole (and Lena) are Scandinavian American characters in jokes which are frequently told in the Midwest; particularly in South Dakota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, states where Scandinavian immigrants are most populous.
Rosemary: Just like when my mother died and [...] they got her all ready. The mortician called me and my sister, “you girls come up here, I want you to look at your mom and see that everything is alright.” And so, I go up to her and we were looking at her you know, and I said to [my sister], “Boy, are we lucky.” She said, “Why?” I said, “Look she just dyed her hair before it happened.

All: Laughing.

Rosemary: You know, you just have to, all of that gets you through. And you see stupid little things...just hit you, just funny! [...]  

Mary: [...] They got a sense of humor. And when I worked in mental health, this woman was so funny [...], she was from Pine Ridge. [...] We’d go to support groups...and they’d say, “Oh my God.” [...] They said, “Oh you are so funny.” We were all laughing, all of us women. They’d be laughing and laughing, you know and we’d have fun and say things like, “You’re supposed to be depressed!” She said, “Well that’s the only thing we have.” And even our priest [...] when he was there, we’d be laughing and he would say, “Those [Lakota] women can have so much troubles in their life but they laugh a lot.

All: (laugh)

Rosemary: But that’s why they weren’t, if you could laugh!

Mary: I mean, they don’t say, “Ooh, I’m...” [feigns exaggerated pain], you know.”

Bucko (1998:138) found similar sentiments among Lakota sweat-lodge participants at Pine Ridge, who remarked “We believe in laughter. Humor is a good medicine. [...]When a person is on the verge, laughter takes that away. [...] Humor...makes you stick to reality. Don’t get too serious. You tease someone who is really serious or down and out.”

Fr. Paul also injected humor throughout Sunday services, particularly when discussing ageing, illness and death. One such example was in June, 2010, when his sermon was over the story of the prophet Elijah, the widow of Zarephath, and the widow’s son (1 Kings 17:17-24). In the passage, Elijah meets the widow and her son while they are
gathering sticks, and he asks her for a piece of bread. The widow uses her last bit of oil and flour to feed him, and he blesses them both, assuring them that their supplies will be plentiful from now on. The boy then dies, Elijah prays for his soul to return to his body, and God returns the boy to life. He once again begins his sermon by relating the story to a Norwegian joke (this time Ole and Lena), then relates the joke and biblical passage to similar experiences among congregants at St. Matthew’s, also framed with humor:

We have the readings of Elijah, and Elijah traveled a lot with the father and he would always stay at this one widow’s house, and so he always stayed there and she made a special place for him, his own little hut or whatever, and he had his own little bed and everything, and her son died, and she was very upset, wasn’t she? After a lot of noisy prayer, that didn’t heal him. [...] 

Makes me think of – I think I’ve told this story – I think I’ll tell it again. Ole was dying, was laying on his death bed. He was REALLY sick. Everybody was getting ready for his funeral, and Lena, so upset, she went into the kitchen, pouring her heart and her soul into making cookies for the funeral, and she put so much love into these cookies that an aroma came up and went wafting upstairs where Ole lay dying. And he could smell these wonderful cookies, and they revived him. He walked out of his bedroom and came downstairs into the kitchen and he says, “Lena, I’m alive!” And she says, “OH, THANK GOD!” She gave him a big hug and a kiss, and she was so happy to see him, and then Ole reaches for one of the cookies, and she swats his hand with a wooden spoon and says, “Ole, those are for the funeral!”

[congregation laughs]

Right away, when I read this story, pretty dramatic stuff, and we’ve seen things like that! We’ve seen things like that at St. Matthews. Lots and Lots of times, it’s amazing. [...] 

[Names a male congregant], at that time he was, at that time supposed to have cancer, the doctors weren’t sure, they needed to do a biopsy. I was going to go to the hospital to give him communion. As, he got older communion was real exciting because he was deaf as a post. He could have lived next to a railroad car and he wouldn’t have heard anything. And so, I was yelling into his ear, “THE
COMMUNION” Then, he would “HHHUH???” [laughter] Then he would notice the black shirt, and he’d say, OH Yeah! And he would put his hands on mine and we would pray. And they went to test the biopsy and ALLL traces of cancer were gone, completely gone, and as you know, he lived to be a hundred and four and we’ve seen other things like this.

[Names a female congregant] was supposed to have had a stroke and she was laying out ice cold, and we all laid hands on her and she woke up. And she had spinal tap, and she was like “OW! That hurts, what are you doing?” The poor nurses, doctor about ran out of the room because she wasn’t supposed to do that. And, the neurologist was meeting with [her husband] and they were saying, “well we aren’t sure what happened, but it looks pretty serious, we might start wanting to think about nursing homes and things like this, and then they wheeled her in a wheel chair and, “Hi everybody, what’s going on?” The neurologist, they couldn’t find anything wrong with her. They kept her for two more days, just looking for things wrong with her. They even had a psychiatrist come in!

[congregation laughs]

Rather than focusing on the rare miracle of the boy’s return to life, however, he emphasizes that the boy eventually died, as we all do. The miracle is not emphasized as fantastic, but rather as somewhat commonplace among congregants, therefore he reminds them that they should pause sometimes to consider the magnificence of such miracles. Through his initial use of humor to introduce the subject of death and dying, he later ties the story more overtly to traditional Lakota practices and the importance of relatives:

We see these things, they are not unknown to us, we know stories of when our loved ones are near death and relatives come to visit! I have seen this lot. You, know these are all real powerful things, but yet we forget...that these things happen and that they are amazing! But, death still comes eventually. [...] And so, whenever you read these stories, of widows losing their only son, this is serious, so for Elijah to heal her only son, this was important, but he did die eventually.

And [...] when they were carrying him up to go up to the cemetery, the guy was
probably all wrapped up in his burial shroud, they probably had a three-day wake, which they did that, kinda like Lakotas. And, mostly they also had the same ideas that Lakotas do about that when you die, our spirit hangs around for a few days before we cross over. And so, they like to sit with the body, and there is another reason too, and our ancestors did too, an extra reason, to make sure they were really, really dead. If you are in a coma for three days, you are probably not going to come out. If you’re not up and around in three days, then you’re probably pretty well gone.

So... this was amazing, and [...] we have to be mindful of such an amazing miracle. These people [...] that were, really needed the help and a miracle, but someday, they died. [...] The fact of the matter is, we are still going to go someday. [...] And I can never tell. And I can’t stress this enough – I have gone and visited people and they look like death on a cracker, they look TERRIBLE! “And it won’t be long now.” Then they get better, and I have been there other times where they’re dying, it’s a simple little procedure and they say “well, they will be up and around in a day,” and...I can never tell. And I’ve even given up trying.

But healing is such a thing that, we want it to be physical healing, but you know, it’s a spiritual healing. And when we pray for healing, it ALWAYS comes, ALWAYS. It might not come the way we want, but, it will come. It may come in death. [...] But you know, we know that we are going to see our relatives again. [...] These miracles come not to give us faith, not to keep our faith, but just to bless us. [...] We may think we have seen so many miraculous things that we will never need to worry about our faith again and...don’t do that. Don’t sit because that’s about the time you’re going to lose it. [...] Faith comes through fellowship, and relatives and talking about God. These are the promises that we have. This is what we have.

His use of humor to ultimately frame the inevitability of death, eased by the knowledge that congregants will still be with relatives, underscores the significance of relation (being a relative, behaving like a relative, and making relatives via actions associated with particular kin-relationships) among Lakota people. These historic frameworks continue to inform many of the ways that people negotiate conflict with, avoid, defer to, have obligations among, or tease one another (Albers 1982; Bucko 2008; Deloria (1988) 1969;
To underscore this, Fr. Paul told me that evangelical preachers had frequently consulted him over how to better missionize Lakota people in Rapid City, as they have continually struggled to find success. He said that evangelicals’ continue to emphasize the importance of individual redemption to compel conversion, whereas “Lakotas will say they would rather go to hell with their family than to heaven by themselves.”

**Self-Teasing**

Social leveling within the community and among relatives was also prominent in discourse, often expressed through self- and other-teasing, consistent with ethnohistorical and contemporary works which address humor in social and ritual life among the Sioux. Lakotas often level by telling jokes “on [themselves]” to others (see Bucko 2006:170), noting that people (particularly ritual/political leaders) “tease [themselves] as a means of showing humility” (Deloria 1988 (1969):147) in a generally egalitarian society (see Bucko 2006:170). I found that when people used self-deprecating humor as a communicative strategy, they consistently did so to express general humility as a means of cultivating or maintaining relationships with others (see Deloria 1988 (1969):147), as a mechanism to “[level one’s] role” with others, especially when the speaker may be seen as an authority or leader of some kind (Bucko 2006:170); or to amend a social breach of some kind.

Diminishing one’s abilities, either through self-deprecating humor or other self-effacing declarations, concomitantly signals authority over the subject matter, at least to
those cognizant of this communicative pattern (Deloria 1988 (1969):147). Fr. Paul repeated that because humility is a central quality for virtuous leaders, when someone knows they have leadership qualities, or are called an authority, they reflexively respond with humility and deference to others, further signaling their leadership qualities to the group.

This was sometimes expressed through communicative patterns that reinforced other interactional virtues associated with Lakota way, such as prescribed deference to certain individuals based on familiar status distinctions. Fr. Paul also regularly leveled himself in sermon through humor, and in daily conversations, especially with respect to elders in the congregation. During his sermon on New Year’s Day, 2012:

If we encounter someone who is misguided or misunderstood it is up to us to teach them gently and with compassion and kindness and love just as those many, many people in my life have taught me...at a time we get too big for our britches.

So let's go to our elders and go to those who have been around the block a little longer than we have, they'll set us straight. They'll set us straight! And hopefully kindly, and gently. [Laughs] So that...now, we really are smarter, because we listened to those smarter than us.

This is really how Jesus prefers that we learn. And, the knowledge we get from those smarter than us, we carry along carefully, and we share it carefully.

People frequently leveled themselves via self-deprecating remarks that served both to acknowledge a social breach and prompt laughter. Just as a women’s guild meeting began one Sunday morning at St. Matthew’s, for example, it was abruptly halted by the sound of a cell phone ringing. After she collected it from her purse (obviously aware that everyone
had their eyes on her), she examined it for a moment, and said strongly, “Humph. 
Creditors.” The table proceeded to erupt in laughter, and the meeting proceeded. People 
also used self-deprecating humor to (indirectly) acknowledge that they are performing a 
role that contradicts societal norms. Fr. Paul notes:

I have seen this a lot, especially in more public events where a leader must do 
things in a non-traditional way. [One] example of [a female Episcopal clergy] being 
elected to finish [an] Arch-deacon[s]...term as Niobrara Itancan

46 is a good 
example of a more public form of this concept. She would tease herself during her 
entire meetings, so that the assembly would laugh so hard that even her 
detractors would laugh.

47

In both cases, the women preemptively teased themselves to show humility (see Bucko 
2006; Deloria (1988) 1969) the first because of a small faux pas, and the second to 
recognize her non-traditional fulfillment of Niobrara Itancan as a woman. Central to both 
interactions is the audience’s response, Fr. Paul asserts, “If they didn’t laugh, it would be 
their way of expressing their unwillingness to forgive.”

Other- Teasing

Also prominent in discourse was the practice of teasing others (ranging from mild 
to severe), or telling humorous narratives/jokes around someone, with the purpose of

46 The Niobrara Intancan is the head of the Niobrara Convocation Council.
47 He continues: Forgiveness is a western European concept. In the Lord’s Prayer, long complicated words 
had to be invented to translate the words ‘sin’, ‘temptation’ as well as ‘forgiveness.’
eciŋsiŋniŋ (to do foolishly): this term existed but was used by early missionaries for ‘sin’;
wicauŋkicicajujupi (to be forgiven): this word did not exist prior to missionaries inventing it;
wowawiyutarye (temptation): this word did not exist prior to missionaries inventing it. (Rigg’s 
Dakota/English dictionary, much of their early translation work [Bible, Hymnals, etc...]) formed the English 
basis for much of the Episcopal work that Fr. Hinman did shortly after they started.) (Personal e-mail 
communication, 4-5-2014)
indirectly admonishing them for behaving badly, and/or to influence their current or future actions (Bruchac 1987; 1998; Bucko 2006:142; Cohen 1971:33; Deloria (1988) 1969:146-147). Teasing someone was in some cases a sign of affection, intimacy, or subtle (and indirect) invitation into community. Generally, “joking is an intimate act and is not engaged in casually” (Bucko 2006:177), therefore teasing relationships and associated pragmatics were generally restricted to conversations among particular relatives (such as sexually explicit brother-in-law/sister-in-law teasing), 48 friends, or members of different bands (such as Rosebud/Oglala teasing). Whereas pragmatic expressions of teasing can function to “increase social intimacy and equality” while simultaneously delineating “social boundaries, roles, and statuses” (Bucko 2006:177, see also Bruchac 1987:26), “politeness” between two individuals, or a noticeable absence of teasing in their discursive encounters, indexes a lack of social intimacy. In contrast, as Bricker found among Zinacantecos:

The majority of Zinacanteco joking interactions involve men who are nonrelatives, and whose relationships to each other are not well defined... Joking interactions are relatively less frequent among residential kinsmen than among affinal and ritual kinsmen and friends. (Bricker 1980:415).

Thus while Zinacantecos teased in order “to provide an interaction framework for people who [had] little in common... or [were] uncertain of what to say” (Ibid.), the same pragmatic expressions demonstrate intimacy via humor among Lakota people familiar

48 Therefore, I never witnessed this occur, rather, I was informed by Fr. Paul that this was common.
with this metapragmatic framework.

Other-teasing plays an important role in Lakota ceremonial life, both traditionally and in contemporary practices (Bucko 1998; Bucko 2006; Walker 1917). Among Bucko’s participants, humor helps maintain humility:

We use [humor] so you don’t get too mysterious and holy. Somehow out of this comes humility—we go in serious and afflicted—come out hécheglala ška ‘not so bad after all.’ [...] Folks also say we are stoic and serious. They are stereotyping. We are humans. There is lots of joking and teasing, even in the sweat...”

Being too stoic, serious, or pious was generally seen as a lack of humility. Humor, and being “happy” in ceremonial and religious life, Rosemary and Mary asserted, demonstrated humility, which was consistent with the way they both saw Jesus:

Mary: Well me, I like Jesus – in fact I have a picture of the blessed Mary and she’s holding baby Jesus – he is just smiling. So, myself, I like the laughing Jesus, the happy Jesus. But at the Baltimore catechism, it was so solemn, now when they get so pious, not me. I’m not for that. Are you?

Rosemary: No, I think Jesus didn’t want people to be like that. He was always happy.

Mary: I like the laughing Jesus. I [...], but I respect them, whoever.

Rosemary: If that is their way. [...] For me, you know you have respect but you don’t have to be so pious about it. You know you can be human.

Mary: But I mean, somebody’s behind you. You are going like this [makes slow and exaggerated bows and signing of the cross]...up to the communion, I mean you are being disruptive to people in back of you. [...] 

Rosemary: It’s just funny how some people are. You know, I’m, I don’t know, I guess it’s our attitude or when we laugh and see something funny.
Rosemary: But I can’t understand…

[refers to the exaggerated bows and cross-signing again]
Mary: I don’t look at [people who do that] because [I will] laugh.

Rosemary: Yeah, I know!

Kristin: [Are they] trying to be pitiful? [humble before God]

Mary: No, [they’re] H-O-L-Y.

All: [Laugh]

The demonstration of humility as honorable is also consistent with pragmatic expressions of this virtue in the Lakota way. In stating it’s just “our attitude when we laugh and see something funny” during ritual, they simultaneously point to embodied norms within a tacit framework of interactional norms documented in Lakota ritual more generally, both historically and today.

Admonishing Others (Critical Humor), and Iktomi

Similar to the indirect ways in which people told stories around someone to admonish or instruct (in the case of the elder women and Tally regarding the chichis, for example) people also used humor to indirectly “correct unacceptable behavior” in lieu of direct confrontation or “public embarrassment” (Bucko 1998:142, Deloria 1988 (1969)). One such example occurred in February of 2014 after Dee had spent a few days in the hospital for a minor infection. Her son drove her back to her residence at Lakota Homes when she was released, recognizing that she was still a little ‘loopy’ from the medication she was given. As she was making her way up to the house, her neighbor (a woman that Dee has
known for years) came out to greet her.

The neighbor looked at Dee, and in a soft voice asked, “Do you know who I am?” Dee responded, “No. Go ask my son. He’ll tell you.” Dee reiterated to me, “I’ve known her my whole life! She shouldn’t have asked me that. Humph!” Rather than directly confronting her neighbor for assuming that Dee had caught Alzheimer’s while in the hospital, her biting humor served as a form of admonishment for asking her that kind of question at all.

Sometimes a joke or narrative centered on a ‘type’ of person similar to the one being indirectly addressed (e.g., ‘white people,’ ‘anthropologists,’ or ‘wannabees’). Folks at St. Matthew’s skillfully put forward one-liners and funny narratives about “anthropologists” and “white people” to me, both of which, I came to understand, were symbolic terms representing a collection of negatively valued attributes more than clearly fixed categories of persons (for similar conclusions, see Basso 1979; Braroe 1975). The anthropologist stories came early on and, similar to Bruchac (1987), people offered indirect but clear guidance concerning some of their expectations as I moved forward. The narratives centered on anthropologists long ago who would ask children questions like, “Where do babies come from?” One man told me that his mother and her friends would respond with absurd answers, with the intended meta-message being, “Why are you asking us such ridiculous, embarrassing questions?” Margaret Mead almost always served as the iconic “anthropologist” figure in these stories.

When juxtaposing patterns of humor related to non-Natives, Rosemary and Mary commented:
[talking about Rosemary’s duplex]
Rosemary: The best part is you can drive right up to the door...you don’t have to carry your groceries.

Kristin: That is nice, is it a quiet neighborhood?

Rosemary: Yeah, people go by at ten o’clock at night. That is our big excitement.

[laughs]

Kristin: Well that is alright. Is it mostly families and elderly?

Rosemary: Yeah, well my neighbor boy he has a girlfriend then [another Lakota woman] lives in the other one.

Mary: [recognizing the woman’s name] Oh does she? Do you ever talk to her?

Rosemary: A year ago, the 31st of December. She got mad and left. Never talked to her since.

Mary: She got mad?

Rosemary: I don’t even know why. She told my neighbor I was trying to act white.

Mary: Oh! [laughs]

Rosemary: We had, playing cards New Year’s Eve [...] and somebody said something...just stupid. And we all just laughed and laughed. When we got through laughing I said, “I wonder if five white women were setting here and said the same thing...if they would...”

Mary: No! [laughs] Yeah...you know I could think something’s funny but they wouldn’t even think it is funny. That’s just the way we are.

Rosemary: The only thing I can think could of that offended her! Why would that offend her? All of us were Native except my neighbor.

Using humor to admonish others for “acting white,” or for any number of other social breaches, is common throughout contemporary and historic accounts in Lakota studies.
One of the most famous and widely read essay among anthropologists and social scientists, which is also the most broadly-admonishing, is Vine Deloria’s “Anthropologists and Other Friends” (1988 (1969):78-100). In it, Deloria uses witty and biting humor to both chide and direct the anthropologist, described as a “tall gaunt white man wearing Bermuda shorts, a World War II Army Air Force flying jacket, an Australian bush hat, tennis shoes, and packing a large knapsack incorrectly strapped on his back” (78). Deloria charges anthropologists with preying upon and exploiting Indian people for the sake of “research,” and for publishing a priori assumptions as hard facts – both of which influenced government policies that were harmful to many Indian people. While many anthropologists were “disconcerted by Deloria’s wit and sense of comedy” (Wax 1997:50), it was effective in transforming the generations of anthropologists who came after. The narrative style in which he delivered his prose also indexes historically embedded interactional norms among the Sioux in which humorous stories with archetypical characters (Iktomi, coyote, etc.) are used to admonish. Deloria alludes to this framework more specifically in his chapter entitled “Indian Humor,” noting that “people are [often] awakened...through funny remarks” (1988 (1969):147), and that “satirical remarks often circumscribe problems so that possible solutions are drawn that would not make sense if presented in other than a humorous form” (1988 (1969):147).

Iktomi

Iktomi (“spider” or “spider-like”; also called Ikto in the Teton dialect or Unktomi in the Santee) (DeMallie 1987:122; Dorsey 1894), while not entirely exclusive to the Sioux,
serves as a trickster fixture in historic and contemporary narratives, sometimes as culture hero, other times villain, but always mischievous. “In ancient days,” Trimble\(^\text{49}\) notes, “Iktomi was K\(\text{o}\), wisdom, but he was stripped of his title because of his troublemaking ways. Most of his schemes end with him falling to ruin when his intricate plans backfire” (Trimble 2014).

More recently Iktomi is a fixture in a number of popular children’s books (1994; Goble 1999; Kaltreider 2004a; 2004b; Marshall 2005), and people invoke him in novel yet pragmatic ways to address a variety of issues. One such example came from a series of articles beginning in the early 1990s, when the Oglala councilwoman at the time wanted to respond to a series of criticisms from Lakota Times’ publisher Tim Giago, but felt that she did not have the resources to challenge the widely-distributed paper. She and a handful of like-minded people collectively (and at the time, anonymously) circulated an underground periodical, dubbed TIM (an acronym for Truth in Media) “under the nom de plume of “Iktomi...[and] like its legendary namesake, [they used] satire with humor and self-deprecation in their rollicking crusade” (Trimble 2012).

In order to best use their limited financial resources, the periodical was quietly sent via postal mail to select members of the Native American Press Association (NAPA), who then faxed copies to others, all of whom, the TIM contributors anticipated, were Giago’s peers. The entire TIM project was a demonstration of indirect admonishment

\(^{49}\) Charles E. Trimble is an enrolled Oglala Lakota (now living in Omaha, NE), founder of the American Indian Press Association (est. 1969), former Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indian (1972-1978), and widely respected author, historian, entrepreneur, and human rights activist.
through a metapragmatic framework in which readers must understand Iktomi’s place in historical narratives (as both culture hero and satirist), the role of other-deprecating humor as a leveling mechanism among Lakota people, and relevant criticisms of the Lakota Times publisher in order to “get” all aspects of the “joke.” Further, Iktomi refers to a wealth of other institutionalized bodies of information that readers must simultaneously be cognizant of, including then-current D.C. politics (e.g., Marion Barry’s 1990 arrest for smoking crack), the status of the Mencken Award among journalists, and the role of tribal elections on the rez.

For a demonstration of Iktomi’s wit and ridicule, the following TIM article, from February 1990, is reproduced below in its entirety:\(^{50}\):

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**February 1990 Issue: Iktomi to be honored by NAPA....or not!**

Word came to us here at Lakota TIM\(^*\) that I am going to be honored at the Native American Press Association (NAPA) conference this spring. Our secretary got a call from someone from the NAPA office who said that they are initiating a national Iktomi Award to be named after me because of the growing popularity of Lakota TIM\(^*\). At first there was much skepticism about the call because our secretary said that there was a lot of giggling and loud music on the other end of the line, and the caller sounded a bit in the bag himself. But we figured maybe the guy was calling during a NAPA staff meeting. After all, staff meetings at Lakota TIM\(^*\) are occasionally raucous too, especially when someone in the office has traded off commodities and we have enough cash for a couple six packs. At any rate, the news caused great excitement in the office, and we hocked the old Remington upright typewriter and had a celebration. But I got to thinking it over, and I now have doubts about accepting that prestigious honor. A person never knows what embarrassment such an award might cause his loved ones after he is dead and gone. Like a few weeks ago I read in the other newspaper hereabouts that Tim Giago, in a huff of righteous indignation, announced he is going to return a national journalism award to the folks back east who had given it to him. It seems that the award was named for a certain H.L. Mencken, whose recently published diary revealed him to be a racist, sexist and otherwise bigoted grouch.

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\(^{50}\) I received Charles Trimble’s permission to reproduce this segment from his book. The entire segment is also available at http://www.lakotacountrytimes.com/news/2012-06-06/Voices/Iktomi_strikes_back.html.
Apparently, that hit pretty close to home in describing Giago himself, so he decided he would give back the award (at least the plaque -- the cash that came with it is now in the form of baubles, bangles, beads and fur on the person of the current Mrs. Giago, and we're told that she warned him not to get any ideas of sending them back if he knew what was good for him). Anyway, Giago figured that he could get double mileage out of the award -- first for receiving it, then for noblesse oblige in giving it back.*

Well that got me to thinking: What if this NAPA award makes me famous and someone decides to do a biography? It would take only one beer-round of interviews in a saloon across the reservation border to rake up enough muck on old Iktomi to make D.C. Mayor Marion Barry look like a Mormon bishop by comparison. My God, I thought, what would NAPA do with all the certificates in dime store frames that are returned by those idealistic young journalists when they learn what a miscreant it was whose name is on their cherished award?

And if the biographer decided to get anecdotes from old veterans of Crow Fair and other such doings, those young Iktomi awardees might even be moved to return the fake Pendleton blankets or whatever NAPA might give them with the cheap certificates. No way am I going to let that happen! But now my dilemma is how to decline the honor yet still have my one brief shining moment in the limelight. How does a person turn down the greatest honor of his life? Especially if it's the only honor to come his way since third grade!

Perhaps I should just decline the honor for reasons of humility. If the truth be known, my humility would be fully justified, because I really don't deserve credit for the humor that readers find in my columns. It's in the usual subject of my commentary that the humor lies. There's nothing much goes on out here on the rez between tribal elections, so I just read Giago's column and comment on those odious encyclicals. There's enough pomposity and absurdity there to keep old Iktomi busy for years to come. Then the idea hit me: I will pull a Giago trick! I will go to the NAPA conference and graciously accept the honor of having an award given in my name. I will give a memorable speech about the grave responsibilities of the Indian Press. The white media from far and wide will cover the event of a new name joining the ranks of the great Prize names: Pulitzer, Nobel, Mencken, Iktomi! Awesome!

Then, next day I'll make my move. I'll call a press conference and announce that I have thought it over and decided against allowing my name on the NAPA award. With as much righteousness I can muster, I will inform the press what a bunch of scoundrels the NAPA people must be to hang such a stigma as an award named after Iktomi on progeny of their own profession. What lice! What vermin! Defenders of the people, Hah!

The white media will eat it up, and I will get national publicity all over again. But the best part is that I will beat the future Giago types to the punch. They'll never have the chance of getting all huffed up and indignant and giving an Iktomi award back. Iktomi's great name will be protected from besmirchment at the hands of hypocrites.

*(P.S.: It has been pointed out to me that in his bio blurbs these days Giago is again listing the Mencken Award, so he's getting a three-fer out of the honor: First getting the award; then giving it back in protest; and then boasting it again when he presumes that everybody has forgotten about his noblesse oblige. Talk about having your frybread and eating it too! Tim, you old rascal, you!)*
TIM’s periodical points to the utility of Goffman’s (1983; 1986 (1974)) work describing the importance of delineating author(s), animator, and principle in culturally-specific patterns of expression. The author, Goffman tells us, is the person who wrote the words or speech (in this case a group of then-anonymous members), the animator is the person who utters the words (in this case, Iktomi), and the principal is the person to which the speech refers (Tim Giago/Lakota Times), or the concept for which the words stand. Depending on the context and the social position of participants, the author may have more or less authority than the animator of the text or speech. In this case, Giago had been the more powerful entity, as he was able to control the text-in-print for the Lakota Times, but the TIM contributors attempted to level the power dynamic by drawing on a standardized metapragmatic framework in which Lakota people use humorous ridicule (in some cases, by drawing on discursive patterns of Iktomi myths) to manage perceived social conflict and/or power inequalities.

A similar occasion in which a ‘non-traditional’ medium of communication was “connected directly to a [‘traditional’] pattern of interaction given in the words of the culture hero in the origin myth” (Dinwoodie 2002:101-102) took place among the Chilcotin people of Nemiah Valley in Canada. Through a formal “declaration” in August of 1989, the Chilcotin leadership worked with lawyers and environmentalist to both outline their traditional lands and call for an injunction on logging, which was later approved by the court. The declaration, first written in English, resembled the narrative style presented in the U.S. Declaration of Independence. The Chilcotin translation, produced roughly six
months later, was instead “a direct representation of the voice of the original ancestor of the Chilcotin people” (Ibid.:83).

Both the Chilcotin translation of the declaration and the TIM periodical were pragmatically framed for their presumed audience in order to accentuate traditional ideologies. In other words, they each represent “one community’s attempt to encompass the modern political present within the framework of traditional culture” (Ibid.).

Conclusion

Ethno-ethnohistory calls for us to examine epistemologies and perspectives from the point of view(s) of participants, without falling into “historicism” or “presentism,” both of which risk distorting present contexts and histories (Fogelson 1989). This necessarily includes recognition that indigenous people concomitantly demonstrate familiarity with models of conduct that are not specific to indigeneity, and that being indigenous doesn’t define the full complexities of people’s lives.

People creatively (tacitly and overtly) indexed ethnicity through humorous pragmatic expressions and performances that engaged with modernity, while sometimes (re)animating historic (metapragmatic) frameworks. This chapter offered examples concerning the ways that individuals contribute toward ethnic identities in “processual” and ontologically “event-dependent” ways (Agha 2007:165, 177, 255-56, 268).

In some cases, people creatively and reflexively employed humor as a mechanism to signal their indigeneity, tribal affiliation, and/or kinship relationship(s) both tacitly and overtly. At other times people used humor to enact interactional virtues associated with
Lakota way, such as obligatory self-teasing as a leveling mechanism (self-redress) and demonstration of humility. In still others, people used humorous anecdotes or quips to indirectly admonish someone else for a social breach, which might include “acting white” (see also Basso 1979). Throughout, people also used humor to navigate difficulties such as coping with a death, illness, discrimination and poverty. People generally viewed the framing of these performances and expressions as markedly Lakota/Dakota (or sometimes more broadly “Indian”), in juxtaposition to “white.”

In attempting to outline people’s pragmatic performances and expressions concerning the roles that humor plays in daily life relative to the ethnohistorical record, I hope to have situated their points of view with respect to the processual and event-dependent nature expressions of ethnicity.

In the next two chapters (Section III), I discuss articulations and ascriptions of ethnicity. In chapter 5, I describe individual and collective attempts to articulate (temporarily join together) a Lakota (or broadly indigenous) collective with seemingly disparate institutions, discourses or bodies of knowledge in order to achieve mutual interests. In chapter 6, I outline salient examples where congregants or clergy attempted to balance tensions between ethnic recognition and being “othered” within the Church, either through direct attempts to contest non-Indian narratives “about” St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church and its (primarily Lakota) congregants, or to mediate social relations between themselves and other (primarily non-native) Episcopal churches in Rapid City.
Section III: On Articulations and Ascriptions of Ethnicity
Chapter 5: On Articulations of Indigeneity

Introduction

This chapter examines three separate occasions during which participants (individually or collectively) articulated a collective (Lakota or indigenous) identity in relation to other discourses and institutions, with an attempt to inspire (local, institutional, or global) change or meet mutual interests. I draw on Stuart Hall’s concept of “articulation,” which means both “to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate” as well as to join together (as in the lorry used to connect a truck with a trailer) (1996:53).

While accounting for hegemony, ideologies and power differentials, articulation is unique in that it recognizes that associations are contingent, so that differences between otherwise disparate elements are always minimized in order to forge alliance (the disparate elements remain “unhitched” in many, or most other contexts) (Ibid.). Further, each articulation offers only one of many possible arrangements, thus the different interests at play could always “lead to its unraveling” (Li 2000:169).

Each of the articulations described in this chapter demonstrates the making of novel collectives; sites wherein individuals or groups of individuals purposefully engaged within and attempted to align multiple complex and overlying “arenas of institutional and ideological discourse” (Goodman 2007:411). They each provide context wherein certain such interactions or performances “articulate with, and can even help bring into being, larger institutional structures” (Ibid.).
The first two examples are individual articulations made by Fr. Paul through sermon; the first meant to adjoin baptism with Lakota norms of gift-giving and expected reciprocity; the second an attempt to mobilize traditional kinship practices in order to foster alliance with the South Dakota foster care system; and the third, a collective articulation of Lakota epistemologies expressed through devotion to Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American saint.

This chapter also utilizes of Goffman’s (1983; 1986 (1974)) *production format* (the author(s), animators and principle in the speech event), and *participation framework* (*ratified versus unratted listeners*) to illustrate some of the tacit and overt ways that Fr. Paul signals multiple institutionalized bodies of knowledge and modes of discourse to interactants during his sermons. Goffman notes that people’s orientations often overlap or contradict one another, and Fr. Paul’s articulations functionally minimize contradictions in order to highlight the overlapping common goal(s). He does so by speaking on behalf of a particular collective or character (acting as animator for Jesus, Bartimaeus, Lakota people, Christians, Indian Child Welfare Act delegates, DSS workers, etc., and representing the principal interests of each, respectively) relative to another partial collective within the congregation (the *ratified listeners*).

This chapter argues that attention toward particular articulations of indigeneity helps avoid essentialism, reductionism and debates over authenticity while accounting for the creative and contextual ways in which members might assert a collective “we” in order to accomplish specific goals. As such, it is in dialogue with others who focus on
articulations of indigeneity relative to wider political and/or ideological trends (see Clifford 2001; 2013; Li 2000; Muehlmann 2009).

Articulations at St. Matthew’s

In many ways, Fr. Paul necessarily serves as a mediator relative to life’s complexities through sermon, partly because sermons occupy a genre in religious speech that serves both a “homiletic and didactic function” wherein “human addressees receive doctrinal teaching and are exhorted to follow prescribed moral codes” (Howard-Malverde 1998:570). In order for sermon to be persuasive, addressees must subscribe at least minimally to the idea that his status as a priest gives him some formally recognized authority to make such exhortations. An arguably greater deal of his efficacy, however, rests in his ability to negotiate the complex metapragmatic frameworks among addressees.

Sermon #1:

After performing several baptisms for families who were not regular attendees, Fr. Paul attempts to frame the responsibilities for the godparents in a way that references traditional kinship practices, ultimately to encourage the recipients’ (ongoing) participation at St. Matthew’s.

The Gospel reading on that Sunday was Mark 10: 46-52:

And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out
and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

He begins:

...a lot of times to hear these stories about Jesus healing people but it isn’t every day that we hear their name. And here we have a fellow named Bartimaeus, and we know he must be somewhat important, or became important, because...the writer Mark felt it was important enough to mention a name!

Fr. Paul later told me that consistent with Semitism, Lakota names are rarely if ever spoken in narrative or in direct address, rather, individuals are referred to in terms of their kin relationships (i.e. ‘uncle,’ ‘grandfather,’ or ‘cousin’ as a generic term for individuals whose relation is understood but unspecified) or genealogically (i.e. granddaughter of Black Hawk, similar to ‘son of Timaeus’). Lakota names were traditionally given at birth and later changed during important times in one’s life. To know someone’s name, he asserted, meant that you had power over them because you could use it in prayer. Today, many Lakota people continue to use kin terms over given names (Sneve November 9, 2008). Thus, while the mentioning of Bartimaeus’s name in Mark’s gospel, while potentially significant to many theologians and practicing Christians outside of the congregation, might also offer implicit reference to traditional and contemporary
collective Lakota speech patterns.

He continues:

... Jesus and his disciples were...coming out of Jericho...on their way to Jerusalem. And this is important because this is the last trip to Jerusalem that Jesus will make. [...] There’s only a couple of entrances to Jericho, and most cities are like this. There’s a wall that surrounds the city for protection, because invaders were still a real problem back then, and you have the gates, the city gates. And people who were afflicted, who had diseases, were blind, or crippled, they weren’t allowed inside the city...because the belief...of the people at the time is that if you were sick, you or your parents must have done something really bad, that God would make you sick [...]

And so what these people would do is sit on outside of the gate on the road going into town and they would beg. And that’s how they would make their living, they had no other way to do that, they weren’t allowed to do anything else. ...because there were a lot of pilgrims going to Jerusalem at that particular time, because Passover is coming up and that’s the time you go to Jerusalem...there were...[a] Lot of people coming and going!

Now on top they’ve got all beggars lined up along the road, they’re kind of noisy anyway, because they have to compete with...each other...to get...everyone’s attention, so they can get some money. “Hey, k’unší [paternal grandmother], hook me up!” you know, uh, “Give me some ch- I haven’t eaten in a, ch-, a couple days, hook me up!” you know [congregation laughs], um, that kind of thing. We know how it is!

And he must have been really annoying, because they, they said they rebuked him: “Shut up! You’re bothering Jesus, be quiet!” You know, “You’re just- shut up!” Ha, ha, that’s what they did! They were yelling, “Be quiet!”

And he’s yelling and yelling and Jesus finally says, he, you know, he talks to them. Then Bartimaeus rises up, you know, just “Shut up, get up, you got what you want, he’s calling you now! There’s Jesus for you! You got you what you want, there’s Jesus.” And, most beggars, what do they want? They want money. They want money...so that they can live.

And here Jesus...he asks him, “What do you want? What! You’ve been yelling, what do you want...I’m here, what do you want? I’m here; tell me, what do you want?”

“I would like to heal. Let me redeem my sight.”
Bartimaeus calls on Jesus in the same way that a grandson might call on his grandmother for assistance, referencing Lakota norms in kinship and associated obligations. When Episcopal missionaries began teaching Lakota people the rites of the Church on reservations, many Indian converts naturally drew associations between the Christian rituals and their own. Baptism, for example, was for many an acceptable substitute for the *Hunka*, or adoption ceremony (Sneve 1977:10). *Hunka* relatives were (and continue to be) seen as equal to biological relatives, and adoption came with a host of associated obligations, not just between those who decided to adopt one another, but between both families, who were linked together from that point on (Sneve November 9, 2008). In this sense, baptism was viewed by many as an adoption into Christ’s family, so that God became their father and Jesus their brother. In accordance, because one can (and does) frequently call on relatives for help, they should thus be able to call on Jesus (brother) to restore their sight if their brother is able do so; especially if one presents him/herself as *pitiful*.

Historically, asking for help--whether from living relatives, Jesus, or *Wakan*--had its protocol: as Bucko notes, there is “remarkable [historical] consistency in the [Lakota] supplicant presenting himself as poor and pitiful…so that one’s needs might be fulfilled” (Bucko 1998:117). While the trend has shifted some toward Lakota people “*praying* for those who are poor and pitiful” with the belief that “in doing so one’s own needs will also be addressed” (Bucko 1998:117), by recognizing Bartimaeus as pitiful, in fact as the most pitiful beggar in the crowd, Fr. Paul indexes a set of norms in which being pitiful is valued.
Further, he demonstrates his own historical and cultural literacy by making the connection between Bartimaeus and grandchildren, also signaling to addressees his mutual understanding of the daily obligations they feel toward their family members.

Picking back up with the gospel story, he notes that Jesus goes on to honor Bartimaeus’s request and grants him his sight. Fr. Paul refers to it as a remarkable gift from God and asserts that Bartimaeus must have become a leader in the church as a way to offer his gratitude, although it’s important to note that no one knows exactly what happened to Bartimaeus after he was healed. The key is how he uses his supposition to segue into the baptisms he is getting ready to perform in the service:

Today we’re, we’re doing more baptisms. Gonna do a whole bunch of baptisms. We’re doin ‘em! And I think it’s a wonderful gift, you’ve heard me talk about that just being like a present, ah, that we get from God. A wonderful gift, big fancy package wrapped up, looks so nice, uh, and then God gives it to us...

...You’re getting a wonderful, wonderful gift. And the whole little service of the baptismal rite is designed to emphasize that those who are being baptized understand what is expected of them. That we know that, we, we, we’re going to keep going to church. We’re going to do everything we can to raise these children in church. Otherwise...you just baptize your kid and never come back to church, you’re just gettin your kid wet! Might as well just take ‘em home and give ‘em a bath, it’s about as much good as you’re gonna do, probably better, cause they’ll smell better [congregation laughs]! You’re gettin their forehead wet. This is important, this is an important thing. If we do these sacraments but then don’t live it out...we don’t act on it...we don’t follow Jesus, than it really doesn’t mean a whole heck of a lot.

He continues by referencing Lakota people as a group, both historically and in contemporary circumstances:

Lakota people...we like to put a big emphasis, a real drum of importance on ceremonies... [in] smart guy theological circles we say we have a high sacramental
theology, that means that we think...the sacrament’s a big deal! We think it’s really important. That’s why we, we have communion, and why we do baptisms, and why even people who never come to church and come and get their kids baptized and we never see them again...they don’t understand what baptism is, all they know is that its important. Otherwise, why would they have called me up, why would they have gone to all the trouble to do this? Why the fancy white dress, and...all that stuff? Um, they- we all have at least some kind of inkling that it’s important. But we all should know that it’s more than just...something we do....in church, once...and we don’t come back...we don’t act on it, we don’t live up to it, we don’t bring our kids, continue to bring them back to church, and teach them...it’s not gonna do a whole heck of a lot.

[Bartimaeus] could have gone on and moved into town, got a job, made some money...but...[instead] he follows Jesus. He acted on this...special gift that was given to him. He just didn’t take it and leave. This is why we have all these special prayers, and things that I say, and the things the family says back...to support...this person in their new life with Jesus Christ. We’re all making promises. It is up to us to live up to these promises...and keep them, to honor them.

Fr. Paul’s unique way of relating Bartimaeus’ ‘gift’ from Jesus to baptism as a gift from God articulates symbols in both Lakota and western ontologies, both of which, he presumes, congregants are intimately familiar with. He refers to baptism as a wrapped package, incorporating western patterns of gift-giving (a norm to which Lakotas now also subscribe) into a commonly held Lakota metapragmatic framework involving a host of relational and ceremonial obligations concerning gift giving and receiving. During memorial services and wakes, families often hold formal give-away ceremonies during which gifts are displayed throughout the event until finally they are ritually handed to the recipients (unwrapped) by order of closeness to the deceased and/or contribution to the event(s). In these and other contexts, the metasemiotic intent of displaying gifts is to index one’s generosity rather than wealth; or to send a message to the recipient that you
desire to have a relationship with that person that goes beyond a casual acquaintance. “Gifts,” as Fr. Paul told me, “cement relationships.”

Further, and perhaps most relevant to Fr. Sneve’s dialogue, is the largely naturalized emblematic feature obliging delayed (and continual) reciprocation to the giver; not unlike Mauss’s descriptions, except that the value of the reciprocal gift need not be greater than the value of the received gift, as was found among potlatch societies (Mauss 1990). And as is the case with any set of institutionalized metasemiotic practices within groups, individuals attempt to strategically alter various emblematic features during events of recognition. In this case, Fr. Paul draws on institutionalized bodies of knowledge in both Christian (Episcopal) practice and Lakota ontologies in an attempt to articulate baptism (covertly recognized as a western tradition through his imagery) into a collective Lakota ontology, stating that the obligatory delayed reciprocation must be met through future allegiance to the Church in some form, in this case, to be a leader (or at least to come back and attend church).

Fr. Paul’s gift-reference also tacitly indexes the traditional Lakota religion’s origin myth-complex, a key scenario in which a diagram for successful and appropriate gift-relations (and ultimately a successful life) is overtly stated. White Buffalo Calf Woman offered the gifts of the sacred pipe and the seven sacred rites to Lakota people with the understanding that practitioners always follow the sacraments to the letter (delayed and continued reciprocal obligation), lest they destroy the power of the ceremonies. The tacit relationship Fr. Paul indexes is between ritual efficacy and delayed reciprocity: the sacred
pipe wouldn’t remain sacred if disrespected or used incorrectly; and a baptism would just be getting your kid’s head wet if it were not followed with regular church attendance.

In many ways his dialogue shows his reliance on the supposition that interactants subscribe to (and are literate of) what he tacitly and overtly notes are expressible features of a collective Lakota identity, including a ‘high sacramental theology’ and obligatory delayed reciprocity. In this way, he tacitly challenges those who intend to accept the ‘gift’ of baptism that day to be good *Lakotas* and continue to attend church regularly. He later confirmed the intentional way he framed these tacit associations to me, and that he did so with the objective of articulating these Lakota epistemologies with the expectations of continued church attendance. He states this more explicitly in his concluding remarks:

> And don’t hide these gifts. Take them out, use them, act on them, live them. Walk in the Way. Follow Jesus in the way he lived. You’ll be doing pretty darn good. And you will have all the benefits that come with it, there, you know benefits of membership [congregant laughs]. You know? Uh, we have...membership has its privileges, isn’t that what the commercial says? And that’s, that wonderful privilege is being able to hear God...being able to talk to God, being able to rely on God in everything that we do. It is amazing, I can’t think of a better thing.

The overall (long-term) efficacy of his articulation is unknown, as these families were not ones with whom I became familiar. While they might have continued to attend church elsewhere, they did not while I was actively engaging in fieldwork at St. Matthew’s. When I discussed this articulation with Fr. Paul, he indicated that this is a common way for him to frame baptisms among Lakota people with whom he is not intimately familiar (i.e. those who are not regular attendees at St. Matthew’s). This suggests that for some individuals,
articulations might be reenacted relative to reoccurring contexts (i.e. ritualized articulations).

Sermon #2:

In 2011, NPR aired a series which accused social workers in the state of ignoring the Indian Child Welfare Act and arbitrarily removing and replacing Indian children into homes with white families. The heart-wrenching series gained popular and political attention. Congress, tribal representatives, and the press collectively mounted pressure on the state and its Department of Social Services over the next two years, and it was apparent that both the Oglala and Rosebud tribes, in concert with the ACLU, were getting ready to bring a class action law suit against them. Just days before the suit was formally filed in March 2013, Fr. Paul held his annual Dakota Experience seminar in Rapid City, and several DSS workers unexpectedly registered for and attended it. He spoke with each of them at great length, encouraged by their willingness to learn more about Lakota culture and to better engage Lakota people to foster Native children.

Thus his sermon the following Sunday was an attempt to propose an articulation between Lakota people with the state generally, and DSS in particular. The collaboration, he asserted, could help both collectives approach a (mutual) goal of both elder- and state-approved native homes for Lakota children in need.

The Gospel reading that Sunday was John 12: 1-8:

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the hometown of Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. So they hosted a dinner for Jesus there.
Martha served, and Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him. Then Mary took about a pint of expensive perfume, made of pure nard, and she anointed Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was going to betray Him, asked, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” Judas did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to take from what was put into it. “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “She was intended to keep this perfume to prepare for the day of My burial. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have Me.”

While Fr. Paul’s sermon addressed the Gospel reading, he framed it in a way that would hopefully inspire the elder women to identify which of their granddaughter(s) would make good foster parents, a proposed articulation of Lakota kinship practices with the foster care system. He first sets up his object of focus while simultaneously demonstrating humility, referencing deference to elders/fluent Lakota speakers. He continues:

Well, I taught my Dakota Experience class at Emmanuel yesterday we had a nice crowd, 10 or 11, and had a nice surprise! [Male] from the Cheyenne River mission, he's the Itancan there, he came down with his wife, and they dropped in and “crashed the party,” so to speak.

So, I was really happy to have him there, because, I like to have especially fluent speakers in the class because then they can help me, and they correct me if I make a mistake, and I usually do. And [same male], if you don't know him, pretty outspoken guy, so if I said something funny, he corrected me RIGHT NOW, and um, it was a lot of fun! [congregation laughs]

And I was especially happy because we had representatives, this has happened twice now—the one I did last November in Sioux falls—we had representatives from Children’s Home Society, […] and quite a few of them actually, and then one representative from the Department of Social Services came. Child Protection came - I was really surprised to see her. And we had two more DSS workers that came to this class and they were, not just workers, but they were also administrators. Very glad to see that. And we had a number of people that also came from Children's Home, and both the DSS people and Children's Home, and asked me if I would do in-services for the workers, especially their foster parents. So, I'm very excited by that! […]

I think most DSS workers mean very well, they try very hard, but if they really don't know anything about Lakota people, what else can we expect? How can they know? They don't know how to recruit the foster parents. They don't know how
to...who they should talk to in communities... who's important. They, they just don't know. And, they said that they were very pleased to learn all kinds of things.

They had no idea that elders are so important to us and that they need to be talking to the elders. And the elders are the ones who know who would be a good foster parent. They didn't realize that Indians don't volunteer very well. Uh, you think they figured that out by now [congregation laughs], they'd say “who wants to be a foster parent? You know, everyone just sits, you know. But if your grandma says, “Oh, hey, by the way, you're going to be a foster parent.” “Oh, okay.” [congregation laughs] And then so you are.

So, they learned all kinds of things, and we taught them how to talk to communities. How they need to be sponsoring dinners and inviting the important elders, then having the elders invite their children and their grandchildren to come, and then things will begin happening. Not quickly, but they will happen.

In the above passage, Fr. Paul animates both his own sentiment and those of the DSS workers with whom he spoke. Yet his sentiment also tacitly begins his attempted articulation; first through aligning himself and these social service workers as humble, eager learners, and ultimately as behaving (appropriately) deferent and respectful.

And they, they also knew that Lakota people, we do foster care all the time! We're good at! But we don't usually go through the state, do we? Oftentimes didn't go through tribe. Most of the time, there's not legal documents involved. We just, you know, a family - a mother or father's having trouble, can't quite get things together? Well then Auntie or Uncle will step up. Grandma or Grandpa will come forward and help take care of those children until they get back on their feet. We do this all the time.

I remember my cousin coming to live us for a while. His parents were struggling and going through a divorce and he was having a hard time. He came and lived with us for a year. And two cousins in the same bedroom, you can about imagine how well that works! You know, I, uh, we had, we had our knockdown drag-outs [congregation laughs], but, he is my cousin after all. That's what you do with cousins! But, we helped him. Today...he still, even now, he's grateful. And we have those memories that we smile and laugh about now.
I think about all this because in the gospel reading we're having this story where Judas gets all crabby and chews out Mary, who is a good woman, and means well, and is just doing something nice for Jesus. And um, is it a little decadent? You bet it was. But she must have sensed that something was about to happen six days before he was going to be gone from them. Something was up. And she just felt the need to do the blessing, and to anoint him. And of course, Judas being crabby, the Bible tells us that he really didn't care about the poor. He was, he was just being crabby. That he was crooked. And uh, I don't know, we always make Judas out to be the bad guy. There was a time in the early church where they actually, certain groups believe that Judas was actually told by God to do what he did. And uh, there are problems with that theory because it implies that God wanted Jesus to sin. And that is problematic. I don't know, I don't have the answers, I don't think it's an important question to ask, I'll ask Judas when I see him. But I think the point of this story is important.

And all weekend as I was teaching this class and talking to the DSS workers; they need our support and our help. I think the Department of Social Services in our state has turned the corner. Some events have occurred, that has kind of made that pay attention. You remember, it wasn't long ago, we had that meeting of all the Indian Child Welfare Act workers came to Rapid City and had an important meeting? Man, I was so happy. Our ICWA workers are overworked, they're underpaid. They're not appreciated. They get greed from everybody. They get greed from Indians, they get greed from the state, they get greed from everybody! Even the adoption agencies in the state give them a lot, a big, hard time because they're not willing to give up control of its children, to give up the sovereignty, because that's what these agencies want. They're afraid of the tribes.

Fr. Paul was referring to a meeting where all the Indian Child Welfare Act delegates from each of the Lakota tribes in the state got together and shared information and built relationships with each other. Fr. Paul was able to attend the ICWA meeting in Rapid City (which had taken place roughly two years prior to this sermon) and later told me that the meeting was the first time many of the tribes had benefitted from the opportunity to engage their experiences relative to ICWA with one another. The ICWA workers’ collaboration across tribal boundaries, he felt, was critical to the sustained
implementation of the law’s central tenets, which often clashed with viewpoints from individuals within DSS and other social services programs. He elaborated on this in sermon:

When we adopted our boy, Kenny, we were getting ready to adopt him. We went through Lutheran Social Services. The woman, very nice woman, that was helping us was horrified when Kenny's tribe would not give up sovereignty and she says, “Oh no, this is terrible. If they don't give up the sovereignty, you're going to have all kinds of trouble...it will be terrible. The tribe, the tribal courts, they don't know what they're doing. They're going to screw everything up.” I got very angry with her. We told her to shut up [congregation laughs], we told her to be quiet, to knock it off, that that's racist! And we told them we have no problem at all going through the tribal court. Especially Sisseton. I knew the judge too. Nice guy. That helps. But we never had trouble with tribal court. They were wonderful. They were delighted that they had an Indian family that was willing to step up and to adopt this baby. How wonderful!

This woman thought she was helping us. She was just being crabby, like Judas. We, she had to be reminded. This is, these are our relatives, these are our people. And you're badmouthing them. And I think, I hope, she learned a lot from working with us because we sure taught her a lot of things. And I hope she listened, but there's a lot of work that needs to be done. The, uh, they have a new director of the, uh, of DSS, the gal that I never had much nice to say about, she's gone now, and they have someone else. I don't know this person, I haven't met them, but I'm hopeful. I'm hopeful. And if you have never been a foster parent, and we have them in our community, in our congregation, and if you're able, if you have a good home, and you have the room, consider it! It's important. It's really important.

And we know about Indian Child Welfare Act works. It's supposed to go, to a child that would be in foster care or adopted, needs to go to family first. If there's no one in the family that can step up, then it's gotta be a tribal member. No tribal member, then another tribe. And then if no one steps up, then a non-native family can take them. And uh, in the past, I remember hearing a radio broadcast where it was the director of DSS and uh, the interviewer had adopted children and felt that the Indian Child Welfare Act, they wanted it to be repealed. Because there were all these Indian children and all these white families that wanted to adopt them. Why shouldn't they be allowed? They didn't understand. I was not able to call in, it was a call-in radio show, I wasn't able to call in, but I sent a nasty email.

It got their attention. That got a reply immediately. I said, “You can't be saying
things like that!” And they didn't have anyone to give the Indian viewpoint. I was very upset. It could have been me. It probably should have been me. But uh, my sister kind of got after me because uh, I had, accused this radio commentator as well as the director of being racist. They were! [congregation laughs] They were.

At this point Fr. Paul reframed his sermon as a call for help, and while not explicitly stated, the primary ratified participants were the grandmothers, which he later confirmed to me:

But racism can be cured. It is a disease that can be healed. And maybe I should have put a little sugar with the medicine, I don't know [congregation laughs], I guess, but let's go forward. And rather than being quick to just crab about the system, well let's teach the system! And if I am going to be doing, if this comes to pass and if I'm going to be doing this in-service, I may ask you to join me. Maybe to offer your own experiences, maybe to, uh, just uh, be there for moral support for me. That, that'd mean a lot. But it would be important so that these workers, these people would have someone to talk to, to ask questions!

And then they would be able to call you later! [They could ask you questions like] “How should I handle this? What's going on? Do you know this family? What's going to happen? Would you be a foster parent?”

That's how we do things in Indian country. I think Jesus would approve of that. I think he would approve of that. And I will pledge to that, you know, they're making an effort, and I'll honor that effort and I'll come halfway, and I'll help. I want all of us help them too.

So I'll keep us all posted. I think this is a good thing to do and I’m especially glad this happened in Lent. And uh, as we continue on throughout Easter, the rest of the year, let's consider how do we help our social workers, tribal and state? How do we encourage more people to step up? This is true, there aren't enough Native families that are willing to be legal foster parents. And...why not, why not? We know who we are, we know our relatives, and we should step up. By doing so we will be good and Godly people. Jesus will honor us, he will bless us. He'll bless our children, and those foster children, because they deserve a good way to live, to grow up and be good, strong people so that they will do that, too.

Amen.

Four days after his sermon, the Oglala and Rosebud tribes, in conjunction with the ACLU,
filed a class action lawsuit against the Department of Social Services and the state for violations of the Indian Child Welfare Act and the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Shortly after that, Fr. Paul received a letter from the state’s attorney notifying him of a no-contact request. If DSS agents expressed the need for or received help from Native people concerning how to better recruit Lakota foster parents, it would be tantamount to acknowledging guilt in the legal sense. Thus, his attempted articulation “failed” due to legal constraints inherent in the system which with he was attempting to engage.

While Fr. Paul is the animator of both sermons, he is only a partial author (sometimes restating DSS workers’ words, or collective voices of “Lakota people,” Jesus, or various biblical characters). The principle also shifts throughout his sermons; speaking at some points attesting the views of DSS workers, of Jesus, of Lakotas, of Christians, or of adoptive parents. In both sermons, only certain segments of the congregation are the ratified participants (named or unnamed addressees), while the rest of the congregation function more as unratified participants (overhearers or bystanders). The primary ratified participants in his first sermon are the godparents of the baptismal candidates, and in the second sermon, the grandmothers.

Both of Fr. Paul’s sermons provide examples of complex ways in which actors command numerous institutionalized bodies of knowledge and discourse in performative events, and how for many individuals, orientations might contradict or overlap one another. In both of his sermons, Fr. Paul implicitly draws variously from various Lakota
epistemologies, inculturation theology, religious speech (sermon), local and national politics, federal law, and relevant current events to perform his articulations.

Performances such as these, (Goodman 2007:411) notes, demonstrate the ways in which seemingly small interactions and performances might contribute to a collective’s orientations, and further, how members draw on several “arenas of institutional and ideological discourse” to inform individual orientations.51 Yet differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, level and style of allegiance to the Church, and political affiliation can, and do, impact the ways in which people interpret the semiotic (and metasemiotic) processes of the sermon, as well as its effectiveness.52

Individual articulations embedded within a sermon arguably hold the same measure of unpredictability with respect their persuasion as do sermons in general. Even potentially impactful articulations sometimes unravel due to legal constraints (as was the case with the DSS); while others might not gain momentum at all. In the next section I first outline an example of a decades-long, collectively negotiated articulation, formed by the Church and Native Catholics through the symbolism of Kateri Tekakwitha (the first Native American saint). I first provide a brief history of the establishment of the Tekakwitha Conference, a national Native Catholic organization, and elaborate on its Kateri Circle

51 Goodman explicated how Parisian Berbers drew variously on epistemologies and discourse from traditional Berber village committees, French law, French educational institutions, and Algerian associations in France.
52 Fr. Paul noted that in many contexts, he held less influence on addressees than the grandmothers did; and consistent with the Lakota Way, he often looked for nonverbal cues from the grandmothers during his sermon. Outside of the service, he also gave their feedback special authority, given their elevated status as elders in the church.
(satellite group) and Kateri’s canonization at St. Isaac Jogues through Mary, Dee and
Rosemary’s reflections. While the Tekakwitha Conference is in one sense the intentional
implementation of inculturation theology for Native people by the Catholic Church, when
viewed through another lens, it is also a forum in which people and collectives make
multiple articulations between tribal and Christian (Catholic) practices. Articulating Native
(Lakota) Catholicism through Kateri, Lily of the Mohawks

Kateri Tekakwitha

Kateri Tekakwitha was born in 1656 in Ossernenon, a once-Mohawk village in what is now
the town of Auriesville in Montgomery County, New York, along the Mohawk River. Her
mother was Algonquin, a converted Catholic, and her father was a traditional Mohawk Chief. When Tekakwitha was four years old, smallpox swept through her village and killed both of her parents and her younger brother. While she did survive the epidemic, her body was badly scarred, her eyesight impaired, and her body chronically weak. She was adopted by and raised by her aunt and uncle, and in 1677, one year after being baptized and given the name Catherine (“Kateri” in Mohawk), she left her small village for Sault St. Louis, St. Francis Xavier Mission near Montreal, Canada. Kateri spent her time at the Mission teaching prayers to children, helping the sick, the elderly, and growing her spiritual life. By the age of twenty-four, Kateri had become very frail and weak. As she lay dying (in 1680), she uttered the Mohawk words lesos konoronkwa (“Jesus, I love you.”), and minutes after she took her last breath, the scars on her face disappeared (Conference 2018b).

Kateri’s rise to sainthood began in 1943, when she was declared Venerable by Pope Pius XII, followed by her Beatification in 1980 by Pope John Paul II. Her canonization in 2012 was the climax among Native Catholics in the Tekakwitha Conference, who had steadfastly prayed for her elevation for generations (Ibid.).

Tekakwitha Conference

The Tekakwitha Conference, originally called the “Missionary Conference,” was established in 1939 in Fargo, North Dakota to advise Catholic missionaries residing and working among Plains tribes. In 1977, Native people began challenging the Conference’s
purpose (Holmes 1999:166). One priest recalls the initial challenge at the annual meeting, where Indians had been allowed to attend but not participate:

There was an old Indian lady there. [...] She was nervous, wringing her hands, trying to stir up her courage to do something. She wanted to say something to the bishop. She said, “Oh Bishop, I am so glad you are here. You say such nice things.” The Bishop beamed and smiled. “But you always say the same things. We wonder whether these Waicishus, white people/priests could get out of this room and we Indian people could talk to you by ourselves.” So all the white priests left. The Indians made no demands, just raised concerns and put these forward very straightforwardly and shockingly to the bishops. The bishops had never heard anything like this before. The Indian lady said, “Is it possible that you would send only healthy men and women [to our reserves]-not the ones with problems and the ones who couldn’t function anywhere else? Is it possible that our girls who are in the orders could come back to their own reservations? Is it possible that married men could be priests? Then we could have some of our own.” That’s how the Conference began to be revitalized. (Personal Interview, Father Maudlin, 1996; as quoted in Holmes 1999:166-167)

The woman’s questions sparked the active participation of Native Catholics into the Conference, “thereby initiating a dialogue between the Natives and the Catholic church hierarchy” (Holmes 1999:177; see also Hoffman 1982; Kozak 1994). The Tekakwitha Conference’s vision since the early 1980s has been “To be the Voice, Presence and Identity of Indigenous Catholics of North America under the protection and inspiration of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha” (Conference 2018a). The expressed goals of the Tekakwitha Conference are to reinforce pride in Catholic and indigenous identities and spiritual traditions; to promote peace and justice within indigenous communities; to advocate healing through forgiveness and reconciliation; to build catechesis that are reflective of the interests of indigenous Catholics; to nurture the relationship between indigenous
people and the Church; and to foster indigenous Catholic leadership (Ibid.).

The Tekakwitha Conference has an expressed mandate of inculturation relative to indigenous Catholics. Given that there are multiple tribes represented within the national Tekakwitha Conference, inculturation at the national level requires “essentializing […] “spirits” or essences of “Native traditions” in order to integrate them into a larger Catholicism” (Holmes 2000:190-191). The “core” of Catholicism is also extracted from the “colonial framework of the first missionary encounters” (Ibid.: 191), so that the essences of both “traditional Native culture” and “Catholicism” can be distilled and recombined (Ibid.).

Thus differences between and among indigenous tribes and peoples were functionally minimized in order to form a collective which could articulate with the Catholic Church, whose diversity (and history) was also minimized – through the image of Kateri. In this way, Holmes (2000) argues, Kateri’s image serves both as a (Catholic) symbol of reconciliation to native people through inculturation theology and as a symbolic figure “belonging” to native Catholics, both collectively (pan-tribally, tribally) and individually (through personal devotion).

The Tekakwitha Conference adopted pan-tribal symbols such as drums, eagle feathers, and “socio-religious practices such as powwows and sweat lodges” (Ibid. 195) to enhance pan-tribal solidarity, symbolic forms also associated with Pan-Indian political movements. Whereas political pan-Indian movements invoked these symbols to denote “explicitly non-Christian […] traditions which [were] understood to be antithetical to
Christianity,” the “inculturationists within the Tekakwitha movement use[d] the same symbols of an inter-tribal Native identity to represent their Indianness within the Catholic Church” (Ibid: 194-195).

At the tribal- and parish-levels, where local (satellite) Kateri Circles operate, Dee told me, they each have “their own way of honoring Kateri.” The blessed Kateri’s relative “blankness” and silence in the hagiographic (saint-biography) tradition relative to other saints has allowed room for the conception of her as representative of both indigeneity (writ large) and for individual tribal expressions. Thus her image promotes both inter-tribal solidarity (articulating a collective indigeneity with Catholicism via the Tekakwitha Conference) and intra-tribal solidarity (articulating tribal practices during inculturated masses) within the Church, Holmes (2000:iii) notes.

Dee, Mary and Rosemary all reiterated this to me in various ways; holding that the once-monthly inculturated mass at St. Isaac Jogues, which incorporates Lakota practices and symbols within the church, is made possible through Kateri (Lily of the Mohawks), who is also honored in some form at each mass. Each (parish) Kateri Circle consults with their respective bishop concerning which tribal-specific ritual forms and expressions might be incorporated into the mass. Dee, Rosemary, and Mary are all members of the Tekakwitha Conference, participate the Kateri Circle at St. Isaac Jogues, and took place in the formation of ritual inculturation at St. Isaac Jogues.

On Kateri Sunday at St. Isaac Jogues, a statue of Kateri is pulled out to stand near the lectern. The mass begins with a layperson walking down the aisle holding the cross,
then the altar boys/girls proceed, followed by the priest, the deacon, and finally, the Kateri members, most of whom have shawls over them. The first song is the Four Directions song (accompanied by drums), while congregants shift their stance to face the direction being referred to in each verse. During the song the entire church is smudged with sage, along with the clergy and each pew of congregants. Most of the hymns sung during Kateri mass are in Lakota, some of which were written to honor of the Mohawk saint. After the mass, the priest comes back into the sanctuary for special anointing of those who are sick or in need of encouragement (consistent with Kateri’s gifts). The Kateri Circle usually also holds a potluck after the mass as a means to celebrate family, friendship and visiting with one another in the Lakota Way.

On separate occasions they each told me how that they love Kateri, and necessarily consider her a relative, because she is native. Mary and Dee both elaborated that Kateri is a sister, someone whom they can confide in and find comfort with. Dee added (laughing), “Well I love her because, she was stubborn, like me.” The understanding of Kateri as a relative is consistent with Native Catholic perceptions writ large, as “kin-type relationships professed by movement participants [...] make it possible to construct durable, consistent relatedness not embedded within or bounded by consanguinity and affinity” (Hogue 2012:iv). Among the Sioux, kinship was traditionally extended outside of the earthly realm into the spirit world; as Deloria (1998:28-29) notes: “The Dakota words “to address a relative” and “to pray” [...] are not really two; they are one. Wacekiya means both acts.” Today many practicing Lakota Catholics extend relational norms to Kateri the
way they would a sister (see Hogue 2012), as Mary told me “you can tell your sister anything [...] you can just be yourself with her,” which is how she relates with Kateri.

Thus, Kateri’s image articulates both a broadly indigenous collective with an essentialized core of Catholicism, and more specifically, her image articulates tribal (Lakota, Jemez, Navajo, etc.) ritual and symbolic forms with Catholic practices (in mass). Both the Tekakwitha Conference and its satellite Kateri Circles are collectives through which members negotiate the terms of ethnic representations, necessarily minimizing distinctions in order to reach consensus.

Conclusion

As discussed in chapter 2, much literature concerning the politics of ethnicity has been critical of attempts to promote a primordial essence of a collective in order to make respective (economic, religious, political) accommodations for those collectives in the dominant majority. While not arguing against the necessity for counterhegemonic appeals, these critics have astutely pointed to the fact that substantial variability between members within any ethnic group makes it unlikely for them to find consensus on all things.

Articulation addresses these critiques by questioning both “the assumption that indigeneity is essentially about primordial, transhistorical attachments” as well as the “equally reductive” notion that indigenous claims are “the result of a post-sixties, “postmodern” identity politics...fragmented groups functioning as “invented traditions” within a late-capitalist, commodified multiculturalism” (Clifford 2001:472). Alternatively,
articulation incorporates both the “pragmatic, entangled, contemporary forms of indigenous politics” while also considering “long histories of indigenous survival and resistance, transformative links with roots prior to and outside the world system” (Ibid.).

Analytic attention toward indigenous articulations (Clifford 2001:478) thus “offers a nonreductive way to think about cultural transformation and the apparent coming and going of "traditional" forms.” Rather than focusing on authenticity as a central tenet, indigenous articulations are expressive sites where cultural forms can “be made, unmade, and remade” as communities attempt to “reconfigure themselves” in new contexts. The relevant question in articulation theory, Clifford (2001:479) asserts, is instead “whether, and how, [individuals] convince […] insiders and outsiders, often in power charged, unequal situations, to accept the autonomy of a “we.”

In all of the examples above, individuals or groups of individuals, through their performance and discourse, attempted to articulate (join together) people, groups, institutions, or bodies of knowledge to carry out mutual interests (Hall 1986a; Hall 1986b; Hall 1996). Ultimately, they demonstrate that when indigenous people tacitly or overtly index heritage(s), they do so in ways that draw not only on ‘traditional’ indigenous ontologies. They help account for the many cases in which discussion of and around culture has moved beyond the domain of anthropology and into many other realms, including local and national politics, economics, law, or the Church. They demonstrate the reality that people reflect on their heritage (ethnicity, culture) today in ways that are indicative of the many arenas in which they are knowledgeable of and participate in.
Chapter 6: On Ascriptions of Indigeneity

Introduction and Theory

On the evening of Saturday, January 24, 2015, the Rapid City Rush hockey team hosted the Wichita Thunder at the Rushmore Civic Plaza Arena in Rapid City. Among the crowd were roughly five dozen Lakota students (ranging in ages, from eight to thirteen) and their chaperones from the American Horse School at Allen on Pine Ridge Indian reservation. Each of the students earned their bus fare and game ticket through both academic achievement and good behavior while at school. The students left the game early, however, after at least one adult male in a nearby private suite reportedly began throwing beer on them and yelling that they “go back to the rez” (Payne 1/28/2015). One week later, the Rapid City Journal continued their coverage of the event, this time through the eye-witness account of an anonymous guest who had allegedly been in the private suite, in a front-page article entitled “Did Native students stand for National Anthem?” (Tupper 1/31/2015). Both the incident and the Journal article drew national attention.

The events surrounding the hockey game served partly as a springboard for individuals to address historical issues of citizenship and power, while also demonstrating some of the complexities of expression and ‘being’ for Lakota Americans in Rapid City today. While being “othered” as outsiders – being told to “go back to the rez” — they were simultaneously expected to show solidarity with dominant national cultural practices, to performatively denounce, or at least diminish, their perceived “otherness” through a display of American patriotism.
For the next several weeks, racialized dialogue steadily increased, and the National Coalition Against Racism in Sports and Media (NCARSM) sponsored an anti-racism rally outside of the Civic Center. Hundreds of people attended the event, where native people sang, drummed, and told stories of land loss, police profiling, and of their experiences of institutionalized racism in the city. In this case, when (native and non-native) protestors felt that the Lakota attendees were denied access to basic freedoms because of their perceived difference as “Indians,” some Lakota people responded in a performance of modernity marked with traditional cultural elements—a protest with overt cultural expressions—displaying a measure of cultural difference to call for equal access to liberal freedoms within dominant society (see Taylor 1994).

American Indians, like many indigenous people in the world, share a history of being isolated, removed and relocated; and based on their putative differences, denied access to basic liberal freedoms and universal human rights. For many indigenous peoples, removal and isolation was inevitably followed by coercive political and religious efforts to assimilate them; to stamp out any remaining differences, so that they might be incorporated into dominant society (see Anderson 2014; Taylor 1994).

Yet for Lakotas in Rapid City and indigenous people in postcolonial societies more generally, more recent policies and ideologies of ethnic recognition once again identify (often the very same) putative differences “as the basis for their incorporation in the state and the political economy” (Sider 2008:276; see also Gray 1998). Povinelli (2002) refers to the shift from assimilation policies and ideologies toward those of ethnic recognition.
of indigenous peoples within liberal institutions as a “cunning” kind of recognition, one in which expressions of indigeneity are venerated, so long as those expressions do not offend liberal moral sensibilities.

In this chapter, I draw from archival records and contemporary ethnographic observations at St. Matthew’s to detail examples where Lakotas in Rapid City, like many other indigenous people in postcolonial, multicultural societies throughout the world, “increasingly face both older pressures to assimilate” alongside “more recent pressures to perform otherness” (Muehlmann 2009:12) within dominant institutions such as the Church. I outline salient examples where congregants or clergy attempted to balance tensions between ethnic recognition and being “othered” within the Church, either through direct attempts to contest non-Indian narratives “about” St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church and its (primarily Lakota) congregants, or to mediate social relations between themselves and other (primarily non-native) Episcopal churches in Rapid City.

The first example is drawn from a series of historical documents and letters I came across in the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota’s archives at the Center for Western Studies, Augustana University, in the “Conrad Gesner Papers” collection. The Rt. Rev. Conrad Gesner served as Bishop for the Diocese of South Dakota from 1953-1970, during the federal relocation and termination era of federal Indian policy. Gesner appointed Rev. Vine Deloria, Sr. as his Archdeacon of the Niobrara Deanery (serving Indian Episcopalians in South Dakota and part of Nebraska), the latter of whom was well-known for his criticisms of federal Indian policies of assimilation and termination.
Several of the letters between Rt. Rev. Gesner and the vicar of St. Matthew’s, Fr. William Anthony, centered on the state of St. Matthew’s and its (primarily Lakota) congregation (1964-1966); communications which seemed to bracket themselves from Rev. Deloria’s expressed views.

In Fr. Anthony’s pre-Lent circular to the congregation and the Diocese in 1965, he lamented over the fact that St. Matthew’s was informally known as the “Indian church,” and suggested that through his efforts at “dialogue” between different factions in the city, the categories of “Indian” and “white” might become obsolete, and the Niobrara Deanery could (ideally, in his opinion) be dissolved entirely.

The archival collection was interrupted by a letter from Rev. Vine Deloria Sr. to the Fr. Anthony (ccd to Bishop Gesner), which responded directly to the circular. Vine Deloria Sr.’s prose in the letter was similar to his son’s admonishment of anthropologists in Custer Died for Your Sins, only it had been written four years earlier, and its contents were not publicly shared, although his sentiments were well-known.

Referring to Fr. Anthony’s futile attempts at “dialogue” in the basement of St. Matthew’s, for example, Rev. Deloria writes, (Rev. Vine Deloria to Fr. William Anthony 1965: 1-3):

“If you established such fine communications in St. Matthew’s Church, why in the hell dont [sic] you go to the Sioux addition & start getting acquainted with our people out there [...] At least, this was how the Founder of our Religion did it. He went among the poor. He did not sit in the undercroft of a dwelling house of His in His sea city in Capernaum, holding Group Dynamics, Dialogues, Seminars, Panel discussions. [...] Do the Indians of the Sioux addition know your “Voice”?”
In the second example, during the women’s guild meeting, held after the Sunday service at St. Matthew’s in 2013, discussion centered on the recent Lenten soup-supper the guild hosted for the other two (primarily non-Indian) churches in Rapid City. The guild chair felt that they had served too much food, as many of the non-Indians only ate the soup. The guild members offered potential explanations as to why the non-Indians might not have eaten much (Was it indicative of their Lenten reflection/fasting? Did white people not eat desserts at all during Lent? Was the food a “big show off”?) The demonstration of certain cultural practices (such as watecha, or having a generous spread for people to take home as leftovers) at the soup-supper, they felt, were unexpected by non-Indians at the event, and therefore negatively received (see Povinelli 2002). Thus they framed their menu for next year’s dinner with these expectations in mind (including the note that the whites “ate pretty good on fry bread last year”), suggesting that congregants variously feel pressured to negotiate external expectations of cultural performance in congregational life.

Thus both examples (historical and contemporary) engage with work arguing that ethnic recognition within western institutions necessarily involves “a formal meconnaissance of a subaltern group’s being and of its being worthy of [...] recognition and, at the same time, a formal moment of being inspected, examined, and investigated” (Povinelli 2002: 5); as Rev. Deloria notes in his letter to the St. Matthew’s vicar, “…why is it that the Indian is so carefully watched” (?) (Rev. Vine Deloria, Sr. to Fr. William Anthony, 1965:3).
Finally, both examples offer instances of native responses to outsiders’ narratives about indigeneity, demonstrating once again the emergent and processual nature of individual expressions of ethnicity; which are often formed in response to present circumstances, through interactions that are met with some contest and struggle. While Rev. Deloria confronted ascribed formations by verbally opposing the assimilation of Indian Episcopalians at St. Matthew’s (arguing instead for ethnic recognition within the Church), the women’s guild at St. Matthew’s response was an attempt to counter external formations through performatively balancing the tension between “older pressures to assimilate” alongside “more recent pressure to perform otherness” (Muehlmann 2009:12) with non-natives in Rapid City’s congregational life.

**St. Matthew’s, 1965**

The Rapid City Mission for Native Americans in South Dakota started in 1948, and after surveys indicated that most of the native population in the city were Lakota people, the Mission became more exclusively focused on Lakota Episcopalians. Native priest Rev. Levi M. Rouillard guided the Mission while he served as the Director and General Missionary for Protestant People of Indian Blood, as well as the Priest in Charge of Indian Work for the state of South Dakota. In 1950, Fr. Rouillard moved to Rapid City to work to be closer to the Rapid City Mission (eventually renamed St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church) and became the St. Matthew’s first full-time vicar (60th Anniversary Church Pamphlet, September 16, 2012).
Fr. Rouillard ran the service at St. Matthew’s with expressed Dakota elements in services, and upon his retirement (1956), roughly sixty congregants (unsuccessfully) petitioned the Bishop for another native priest, Rev. Andrew A. Weston, to succeed him (Chapel, 1956). Shortly after Fr. Rouillard retired, Bishop Gesner applied to the National Church’s newly established Division of Urban Industrial Church Work (UICW) for its financial and operative aid relative to St. Matthew’s. The UICW’s work dovetailed federal termination and federal relocation efforts, aiming to help newly migrated minority populations within urban environments integrate into American cities. After its initial assessments of proposed sites, the UICW provided detailed recommendations and steps for each of the clergy and parishes to take in order to accomplish these goals. At St. Matthew’s, the UICW initially suggested a 3-year program and research project with the following proposed action plan:

1. The program, at the outset, make no effort toward an integrated or intercultural parish, but that the work continue to be wholly with the Indian people.

2. Because of the long history of Indian subservience, the program of St. Matthew’s be designed to build up in its communicants a justifiable pride in their heritage and a realization of the potential contribution they can make to this or any community of which they are members.

   This program, then, would include a stimulation of the Indians’ native art; for example, the use of Indian beadwork and weaving to make frontal, burse, veil and the like, rather than the traditional Anglo-Saxon handiwork commonly used. There would also be direction toward the rediscovery of forgotten traditions, practices and handwork, together with a strong emphasis on the Indians’ history and the contribution their culture has made to the present American way of life.

53 The Division of Urban Industrial Church Work is no longer a division in the National Church.
With the new feeling of respectability and an awareness of their potential within the Church, the succeeding step for St. Matthew’s congregation would be to move out into the community, among the Indian people in areas such as the ghetto described above, for the purpose of evangelizing their own people. Having thus enabled them to gain a sense of justifiable pride and self-respect, the Church’s emphasis could then turn to teaching the responsibility the Indian people must take in order to be good citizens and good neighbors. (UICW Rapid City Project Proposal; 1957:7-8)

Thus while the initial phase of the project was “to establish a Church environment” in which the primarily Lakota congregants would feel “at home,” the eventual aims were toward the acculturation of “persons [who were] in a transitional stage between two cultures” to “accept personal and financial responsibility,” while becoming “familiar with persons of their own ethnic group who have become acculturated,” and ultimately, “to become conscious citizens of the total community” (Webb: May 1960).

While inculturation theology had not formally been introduced into the Episcopal Church, the history of South Dakota’s special Niobrara Deanery (serving Indian Episcopalians in South Dakota and parts of Nebraska) alongside Grant’s Peace Policy in 1869, the annual Niobrara Convocation, and its Indian Missions within the state of South Dakota and on its reservations had reinforced and maintained distinct cultural elements in religious practice for nearly a century. In the decade following Fr. Rouillard’s exit (1956), aligned with the shift at the end of the UICW project, St. Matthew’s parish began moving away overt symbols and expressions of ethnicity within its church services, which become a major point of contestation among parishioners. In an update to the UICW research project concerning St. Matthew’s, the vicar in 1960, Fr. Edward Moore wrote (Moore
(May-July 1960)):

[... ] The major problem with regard to worship is the choice of language. There is pulling in both directions on the part of a few people, though the major portion of the congregation seems satisfied or unconcerned.

The major pressure for increased use of Dakota in the worship is coming from people who also would like to have this maintained as a segregated congregation. They argue that people coming from the reservations will feel more at home if they could hear the language. [...]

Our number one organist is bi-lingual both in speaking and playing for services, so the organ support is equal in either language. We have tried every possible combination for the music. The present arrangement is that we sing English in the morning for the sake of the children. If a hymn happens to be in both books, the Dakota number is also placed on the hymn board. In the evenings, they hymns are chosen from the Dakota book, with the English, if any, equivalent put on the board. Thanks to the bi-lingual hymn book, all Dakota hymns can be sung in English. The chief Dakota protagonist can drown out the whole congregation when he cuts loose. When he is absent, the singing seems to be about equally divided between the languages. [...]

In his conclusion, Fr. Moore notes, “The expected arrival of the Rev. Vine V. Deloria as Archdeacon for the Niobrara Deanery sometime this fall may bring about profound changes in plan and program” (Ibid., June 1960 V. p. 3).

Moore’s statement was marked by his own and the National Office of the Episcopal Church’s awareness of Rev. Deloria’s expressed statements against the assimilation and acculturation of native Episcopalians. Fr. Deloria had just finished serving as executive secretary for Indian work at the National Episcopal Church in New York (1954-1959), where he “spoke out forcefully against the federal government’s plan to force Indian assimilation by “terminating” tribal governments,” insisting “that the church nurture and maintain an Indian clergy to serve its Indian adherents” (Deloria 2004:109).
As Philip Deloria, Vine Sr’s grandson recounts (Ibid.), “These views [against termination and assimilation policies] won him no friends in the church hierarchy,” and Fr. Deloria was eventually forced to resign.

Rev. Deloria’s began serving as Archdeacon of the Niobrara Convocation one year after his resignation at the National Church. His tenure began just after the removal of several Lakota in Rapid City to the Sioux Addition, and ending just prior to the culmination of events associated with the American Indian Movement in Rapid City (1960-1968). In the years immediately following Rev. Deloria’s appointment, the St. Matthew’s mission church began once again incorporating more Dakota services and symbology.

St. Matthew’s experienced the loss of several priests after Fr. Rouillard, and by 1965 (halfway through Rev. Deloria’s tenure as Archdeacon), the Bishop appointed Fr. William Anthony, a non-Indian priest from Virginia, as the sixth vicar at St. Matthew’s. Fr. Anthony was adamant in his belief that the Indian congregants should assimilate to dominant social and religious practices, and communicated with Bishop Gesner regularly concerning the state of St. Matthew’s and its (primarily Lakota) congregation. Fr. Anthony worked hard at convincing St. Matthew’s congregants and the Bishop of what he felt was the inherent “irresponsibility of Indians,” (Letters from Rev. Anthony to Rt. Rev. Gesner, Feb. 10 and Dec. 6, 1965); informing Rt. Rev Gesner of congregants from the Sioux Addition whom he chose to favor with diocesan loans for things like hearing aids, loans which he gave relative to each family’s desire and ability to acculturate to dominant societal norms (Letter from Fr. Anthony to Rt. Rev. Gesner, April 16, 1966). Fr. Anthony’s views were also
diametrically opposed to those of Archdeacon Deloria concerning St. Matthew’s (primarily) Lakota congregation.

The communication between Rev. Anthony and Rt. Rev. Gesner was interrupted in the archival record by the then-Archdeacon to the Bishop, the Rev. Vine V. Deloria, Sr., Episcopal priest and Dakota Sioux. Rev. Deloria’s letter was to Fr. Anthony and ccd to Bishop Gesner; in it he responded to Fr. Anthony’s newsletter (which had been sent out to St. Matthew’s congregation and the South Dakota Diocese). Before discussing them, I include the entirety of both Fr. Anthony’s circular (Anthony Pre-Lent, 1965) and Fr. Deloria’s response to it (Rev. Vine Deloria 1965) below:

-1-

From the Vicar St. Matthew’s Church Rapid City, South Dakota

“You don’t want to hear what we have to say, so why say anything?” – the woman said. The man replied, “At least some of us do want to hear what you have to say—and you’ve got to say it. You’ve got a duty to respond.”

The man who was speaking is a Roman Catholic priest, a member of the Society of Jesus. He is “white.” The woman who spoke first is “an Indian.” The exchange took place in a Seminar for Dialogue which was held here at St. Matthew’s a couple of weeks ago. For five days the members of the Seminar talked and listened and learned from one another. And when it was over, they didn’t want to stop. So, we are continuing indefinitely on a once-a-week-for-lunch basis. In between the meetings together, we are trying to put into practice the convictions and ideas which came from the Seminar.

It was a fascinating five days. Included in the membership of the Seminar was a large variety of persons, coming out of a variety of classifications: Indians and non-Indians; men and women; clergy and lay people; negroes and whites, and red skins; a lawyer, a businessman, homemakers, men who work with their hands, a medical secretary; Episcopalians, a Congregationalist, a Presbyterian, a Roman
Catholic; married and not married; Air Force people and civilians. We emerged from our classifications and by reason of determination persistence and love, established communication.

Believing that the division of the District of South Dakota into Indian and non-Indian fields constitutes one of the great barriers to communication, I am hopeful that we can soon arrange a Seminar for Dialogue centering around this state of affairs. If, out of our categories of either “Niobrara” or “white” (and you have to be one or the other in this District....) we can have conversation with one another, then the barriers have been pierced through.

I found on coming to St. Matthew’s that it has been known by many people as “the Indian Church.” I heard about this because there are some members who don’t like this label. They think that a Church cannot be Indian or Negro or white. They are sure that a Church is always first of all a Christian Church, Christ’s Body. Second, it is Episcopal or carries some other denominational tag. And that is enough. Thus, we are working our way up to the place where we shall someday be known as the Episcopal Church in North Rapid City.

Serious damage is done to the people who identify themselves with a Church commonly known as “the Indian Church.” It is segregationalist. And serious damage is done to those who hold back from identifying themselves with that Church since it is “the Indian Church.” Those who are in that Church and those not in the Church because it is Indian thus perpetuate a heresy which takes us back to the question in Epistle to the Galatians, “Is Christ divided?” .... “As many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew not Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

“Doing something to help the Indians” is a dangerous thing because it is so easy to do it in a condescending spirit. And the condescending spirit is not a love spirit. Only love as the motivation behind it will make the help really helpful. The spirit of condescension has too often marked our attitude [page 2] toward “the unfortunate” or “the underprivileged” or “the heathen” as we have undertaken missionary work. Because this is true, it is difficult for us in the Episcopal Church to get into our heads that the talk these days in our Anglican Communion is about something called “Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of

Christ.” It is **mutual** and it is **inter-dependent.** That is: the unfortunate, the underprivileged and the heathen have something just as valuable to give to the rest of us as we have to give to them. We may be too busy giving to be ready to receive, unless the love spirit rules us.
St. Matthew’s has more money pledged and a greater number of pledgers for 1965 than for a long time, maybe ever. Still the amount pledged is only about two-thirds the amount of the budget, $4,771.00, adopted by the Bishop’s Committee. Of the total amount budgeted, at least $1,250.00 is “for others.” My hope, shared by others in St. Matthew’s is that we may next year move close to the goal of fifty per cent for others, fifty percent for ourselves.

This is the third of these newsletters I have written since coming to St. Matthew’s. My purpose is, within the limits of a written thing, to communicate with you. And I welcome your response if you wish to make any.

In the last few months, I have been appointed to the Board of the Mayor’s Committee on Human Relations in this city. A large part of our job as a Committee is taking care of “Sioux Addition,” an Indian village outside the city limits, plus doing other things for the welfare of the Indians resident in the city. This Mayor’s Committee has taken the initiative locally in organizing a “Community Action Program” under the terms of the Economic Opportunities Act (Anti-Poverty). It is a struggle to get this organized, but I am sure it will get done.

I am a member of the staff at the local Community Service Center, a Council of Churches sponsored settlement house, though I do little more than attend staff meetings.

I have recently joined the Chamber of Commerce as the most broadly representative civic group in the city. I had the feeling that a parson might be able to contribute something as a member of certain Chamber committees. And I am sure the parson stands to learn a lot from contact with Chamber members, many of whom are the ones responsible for the things that are getting done in our changing and developing community.

William S. Anthony

Pre-Lent, 1965

Rev. Vine V. Deloria, Sr.’s reply:

[page] 1. Dear Bill:
Your circular letter, of course, disturbs me because I expressed myself to you before. Accordingly, how can all sorts and conditions of people made up of

Romans, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, & others from all walks
of life gather at St. Matthew’s & have such a splendid dialogue, worrying about the Indians & the Whites who are not as separated, divided, & technically as segregated as they were? Look at the ways your group represented many divisions, literally speaking? Religiously, professionally, racially, & in other ways, were you not? Now, you did it in spite of your divisions, in spite of your different names, Romans, Episcopalians, etc. but you could not have done it fifty years ago, or even twenty-five years ago. You are doing it today & has it been because you had moved the barriers of names of identifications, such as Romans, Episcopalians? No. You have done it because of actual, realistic communications, personalities meeting with personalities, gathered there in St. Matthew’s Church. Meeting together & being in the presence of one another did it. You could have met to cut out paper dolls for children to play with & through that achieved just as commendable communication. Brother, talk about trying to move the mote out of your brother’s eye without first moving the beam in your own eye.

We have many reasons for having the so-called barrier which bothers you so much. First, Bishop Hare wisely initiated the Niobrara Convocation to replace the frequent annual gathering of the Sioux people for the Sun Dance when the Government, instead of leaving it to the Churches to replace the sun of the skies with the Son of Righteousness, went ahead & killed the whole thing. Now, the Churches might have suggested to the Sioux to place the Cross in the place of the straight, tall sacred pole & the Indians’ culture, truly Christianized, might have continued dancing & praising the Lord of life, having had only their sacred pole, transfigued [sic] into the cross & their capacities filled with Christ. But no. The Government ruled that everything the Indians did was darkness & everything the Whites did was light. Consequently, Hare took a big chance & forbade also the dancing BUT the annual gathering, thank God, save the Sioux people. Had Hare not instituted the Niobrara Convocation, the Sioux would have had to face life with even a bigger vacuum in trying to make himself over into the image of the whiteman [sic].

Second. The Niobrara Deanery Church, the INDIAN CHURCH, grew out of the [page 2] Niobrara Convocation. But why continue? We are not insisting that there always be this “niobrara” [sic] and “white” church. But until the Indians themselves are able to travel to the District Convocations more ably, we are going to have the two Convocations. I am sure that Bishop Gesner will agree with this. I have heard him say something like this “It is not fair to our Dakotas to cut out the Niobrara Convocation at least during my time it won’t go because they love gatherings & until they themselves can get to our District Convocations, & themselves begin to care far less for their own Convocation, we’ll have it.”

So, not only is the Indian Convocation a matter of geography & economics but also a matter of being considerate of the Sioux for something elevating they love that
we continue the Niobrara Convocation.

Then, third, the Niobrara Church is a unifying force of the Dakotas, just as the old Indian Religion was a unifying force for them in the old days, the sun dance of which was part of the expression of that religion.

What you are really after, Bill, is what the Egyptians tried to do to the Jews, I am sure. There are enough verses in Exodus to prove this, none of them read out of context. They tried to make the Jew over into the image of the Egyptian. Result? They landed into slavery & they began the policy of breeding the Jewishness out of them when God said: I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows and I am come [sic] down to deliver them.....God acted when the Egyptians not only barred them from exercising their sources of unification & inspiration but the policy of breeding out the Jewish blood through killing off the males born. Is this what we the Sioux are coming too? [sic] Our blood is being breed [sic] away now by the corrupting of our women because the good people sit in church basements talking about our names, instead of just plainly associating with us in our homes, leaving the field wide open to the scums of your white society to come in and have a field day, unhindered.

If you established such fine communications in ST. Matthew’s Church, why in the hell don’t you go to the Sioux addition & start getting acquainted with our people out there who want also the finest of the white society far more than the trash. At least, this was the way [page 3] the Founder of our Religion did it. He went among the poor. He did not sit in the undercroft of a dwelling house of His in His sea city in Capernaum, holding Group Dynamics, Dialogues, Seminars, Panel discussions. He was too darn busy, doing the work the Lord sent Him to do for that. Did he once try to change labels? I don’t know but He changed people, as no one has ever done since by being in communion with them which is a far better, deeper, loftier thing than this communication business you have been talking about. Do the Indians of the Sioux addition know your “Voice”? You told me that you could not get along with La Verne La Point [then-church army worker, later priest at St. Matthew’s (1972-1977)]. Was this because he spent too much time out at a place like the Sioux addition?

The cultural gap between Italians & American society is not as wide as the gap between the Sioux and the American society because really the origin of American culture came from Europe, while the Sioux came from Mongolia. Yet, the Italians get together twice a week to let down their pent up days, “playing America & we need this spiritual refueling among ourselves as Mrs. Condelario told me when I was invited to one of their meetings. Moreover, I crashed an Irish dance in lower
East side New York & danced with possibly a relative, Sally Sully. All Irish gathered there. Now, if these different peoples are not having trouble living in America being themselves whenever they like, why is it that the Indian is so carefully watched. He needs refueling far more than the Italians, Irish, & other European Americans, having a much wider cultural gap to narrow than the others.

We love to meet together, we enjoy one another. We like certain Indian ways & until the last Indian breath is drawn, they are here to stay. If people experience serious damage because they belong to the Indian Church & others for not belonging to it, the trouble is not because of the word Indian but the overwhelming Americans who are not Christian, but in name only. The name does not matter, if the evil of self-centeredness is not changed, or eradicated. This is what you ought to be fighting in Rapid City for if what I hear is true, there’s plenty of this evil there.

I really get mad when you want to make me drop the name Indian. This is like asking me to renounce my family because I am ashamed of them. No. If my family is a disgrace, I will stand by them & try to make it good. Never, however, will I change the name Deloria for some other name. No matter how many times the name of Deloria is changed, not one speck of good will come out of it as long as no Deloria rises to his [page 4] finest hour.

Why not work on the name, whiteman, also? If the word Indian is bad business because we scalped the whiteman in the past, then you better work on the name whiteman because he taught the Indians the art, only the Indian was naturally so much more humane, he moved only the scalp, instead of cutting of the whole head to prove to their colonial officials that one more red skin had bit the dust. Why did the whiteman do this? According to Mr. John Collier it was what the whites did in Europe in their war against wild boars to prove with the goods to get their bounty. Yet, the name does not bother me. My church has taught me that if all the whitemen were eradicated I would turn to something else because my real trouble was hate. Get rid of hate, replace it with love, & I would get the situation in hand.

Many Indians managed to get to the District Convocation & are all mixed together & have a wonderful time. Many whites come to the Niobrara Convocation, stand in line for their meals like Indians, sing with the Indians at the booth until the police ask them to go to bed. They must enjoy each other over singing melodies unto the Lord. We tease the whites, the whites tease us. I always tease Bishop Gesner with
“All right, hand over your $1.60 BCU\textsuperscript{54} [Brothership of Christian Unity] dues. You are always good for that.”

I am sorry I am really angry but we send man after man up there to Rapid & they have more to do with the city which, as important as they are, are all secondary things. We hope again & again that our man would be so busy that word would be sent to him that some city father would like to see him and our man would say: “Tell him that I am here & will be here today & tomorrow.”

Yours truly,
[signed] Vine V. Deloria. Sr.

Rev. Vine Deloria Sr.’s scathing response uses mutually-understood biblical references to accuse Fr. Anthony of failing both his Indian congregation and their God, both through comparing Fr. Anthony’s actions as oppositional to Christ’s teachings and actions, and through aligning them with those of the Egyptian hierarchy. Rev. Deloria further indexes the closeness of Indians and whites at the Niobrara Convocation, as well as his own closeness with the Bishop, based on the fact that teasing is present in their interactions. Whether Fr. Anthony is aware of the significance of teasing as an interactional pattern used to both establish and reinforce relationships among the Sioux is unclear, but his next circular indicates both a nonrecognition of Rev. Deloria’s sentiments, and a persistently false understanding of the political and social position of his Lakota charges (Anthony July

\textsuperscript{54} In 1873, Vine Sr.’s father, Philip Deloria (then nineteen years old), along with two other young Indians, David Tatiyopa and Felix Brunot, started a society of Indians called \textit{Wojo Okolakiaye}, or “The Planting Society” (subsequently changed to the “Brotherhood of Christian Unity”), with the dual goals of uniting the various denominations and identifying other important problems plaguing Indian people. The society’s first goal was to teach farming practices, followed by instruction on the handling of money, then stressing the importance of education, and finally, encouraging young men to participate actively in any Christian denomination. Over the next hundred years, the society spread to every reservation in South Dakota, and at its peak, boasted a membership of more than one thousand (Driving Hawk Sneve 1977:13-16).
Before coming to this post about fifteen months ago, I lived in southern Virginia. During the last year there, we shared some of the excitement of negro neighbors really discovering “Freedom.” And from them I learned something new about myself. Not the least important lesson I learned is that new freedom anywhere anytime is a net gain. No one loses when there is new freedom; everyone gains.

Here working now for the most part with Sioux who have come to Rapid City from the Reservations, I have found none of the excitement of searching for, reaching for freedom. The word itself is never mentioned an, apparently, the idea is rarely if ever thought of. I don’t know who it is I am misquoting when I say, There is none so blind as him who will not recognize the chains which bind him.

Segregation of the Sioux and non-Sioux in this part of the country is a fact. It is witnessed to by the existence of the Reservations. “Reservation Rights” give the Sioux certain privileges which other citizens don’t have. I must say that these privileges are a mixed blessing. A very effective speaker at one of our Lenten evening sessions here at St. Matthew’s pointed out that a man is not a full and free citizen of the U.S.A. until he stands up on his own two feet and competes with other men on the same terms for those things which give a man dignity.

The Reservations are the creation of Sioux and non-Sioux alike. We are all responsible for the Reservation system. But it is a sign and a guarantee of segregation. This country is coming to see segregation of any kind as an evil thing. Segregation makes a mockery of the idea of “community” or the idea of a free society. You can’t have both segregation and community. If democracy fails here in Sioux-land, it is just as critical a failure for our whole democratic society as if it fails in Selma, Alabama or Bogalusa, Louisiana or New York City.

The other day I was both sad and angry at the same time when I read in one of the bulletins from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington something about the Hopi Indians. The head of the Tribe was quoted as saying, “What we are trying to do is take advantage of the material benefits of the white man and at the same time keep our own way of life. It is a difficult thing, and we are not always agreed among ourselves as to how best to do it.” Do I need to comment that I think this is unrealistic?

Almost every day I meet someone who is living in some such unrealistic world. “What are you living on?” I said to someone the other day. She smiled and answered, “Gravy.” Yesterday, I asked another woman who had come to ask me
to pay her light bill as the power was about to be turned off. I asked the same question, but got a different answer. “What are you living on?” The smile and the answer, “Nothing.”

In the last twelve months I have kept a record of income and outgo in my Discretionary Fund. Often I refuse a request for help when the person is a drunk or a known dead-beat. Sometimes I make a gift from the Fund, knowing that there is either no chance or no good reason to expect to be repaid. But I have made eighty “loans” from the Fund in a year. It was solemnly agreed that these were loans, that they were to be paid back, etc. Eight have been repaid. I often ask myself if I am encouraging people in irresponsibility, chicanery, lying and in this business of unrealistic living. [...]
entailments” (Ibid., emphasis added). Native North Americans, at least for non-Natives, complicated matters of categorization with various treaty obligations, their relative isolation on reservations beginning in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, and (while not true for all tribes) their status as domestic dependent nations within the United States.

It was not until 1924, several generations after a majority of Native people were confined to reservations, that Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, (also known as the Snyder Act). While the Act extended American citizenship to all Native Americans born in the United States, individuals might also be enrolled in a federally recognized tribe, making them a citizen of the tribe, as well as the nation/state/county/city in which they reside. Fr. Anthony’s notion that reservations are the creation of both Sioux and non-Sioux, marking segregation in an otherwise “free” society, further demonstrates his misunderstanding of the people with whom he works, as well as his ignorance (intentional or inadvertent) relative to Rev. Deloria’s admonishments.

Throughout his communications, Fr. Anthony also demonstrates both a nonrecognition and misrecognition by of St. Matthew’s congregants, and of native people more generally. Nonrecognition and misrecognition can occur, several argue, through institutional and interactional norms that value dominant cultural practices and beliefs over those of minorities. Fraser, for example, argues that certain individuals and groups are sometimes disallowed full participation in social interaction “as a consequence of

55 Prior to 1924, some tribes or individuals within a tribe were granted citizenship through various statutes, treaties, naturalization proceedings, or military service.
institutionalized patterns of cultural value in whose construction they have not equally participated,” so that “their distinctive characteristics or the distinctive characteristics assigned to them” are invariably devalued (2003:29). In what she calls the \textit{status model of recognition}, Fraser argues that “institutional patterns of cultural value,” relayed through social institutions, can sometimes limit or “prevent one from participating as a peer in social life” (ibid.). While Rev. Deloria was serving as Archdeacon (a position that was higher in rank than Fr. Anthony’s post), his statements were indirectly devalued (ignored) in the dialogue Fr. Anthony maintained both with the Bishop and with his Lakota congregants.

Yet Lakota parishioners at St. Matthew’s responded to Fr. Anthony’s admonishments through an unwillingness to engage his dialogue, a marked decrease in the momentum to pay their portion of his salary (which was heartily attended to with former and subsequent priests who were well-liked), or to heed his advice. While these were likely indirect efforts by congregants to exclude Fr. Anthony from their community (pragmatic acts that are still practiced today in response to social breaches), Fr. Anthony seems to have perceived these actions as Indians’ general apathy and irresponsibility. And finally, when signs conspicuously began to appear on St. Matthew’s property which read “Anthony Go Home” (as Fr. Paul recollects), the vicar seems to have lost his steam. He finally wrote Rt. Rev. Gesner that he would be searching for another post rather than continue his efforts to move “a small ingrown thoroughly dependent Church for Indians [into] being the Episcopal Church in North Rapid City with a sense of mission toward this
whole area and a sense of responsibility for our proper obligations” (Anthony Feb. 10, 1965). To stay at St. Matthew’s while congregants lacked a desire to shift, he feels, would only be “encouraging greater irresponsibility” among parishioners (Ibid.).

St. Matthew’s, 2013

Within the last few years, the three Episcopal churches in town (Emmanuel, St. Andrew’s and St. Isaac Jogues) started hosting one another for soup-suppers on Wednesday nights during Lent. On the Sunday following the dinner St. Matthew’s, the guild members took part of their meeting to discuss how the event had gone. The guild is meeting consisted of native (primarily Lakota) women with the exception of Tally, Fr. Paul’s wife. The conversation began with a declaration from the chair:

Guild Chair: I know everybody's going to be upset, but we had our soup, whatever it was, here. We really went overboard.
Member 1: Yeah...
Chair: ...and that shouldn't happen again. That was just too much food. And one of the ministers that come by, even said, "Isn't this soup?"
Member 2: Yeah, some of them just ate the soup.
Chair: Yeah, they did, they wouldn't eat nothing else. It was like a big-
Member 3: It was during Lent, so... don't...
Chair: Well there was, it was like a big show-off, you know, is what it was. All this food, you know, is what it was. So we don't need that no more. I should have said no, but I didn't.
Member 3: So what are we having, then?
Chair: Just soup and bread-
Member 1: Soup and bread-
Chair: -and water or coffee or whatever they serve.
Member 1: Yep. Fine with me. Soup. Chair: That's it.
Member 5: Well you know, we weren't even supposed to have dessert.
Combined: I know, we know.
Chair: It was just like I said, like a big show off, all this food. A lot of them just had the soup.
Member 1: All right. (in agreement)

Later Jean told me that she felt the major problem centered on the cultural rub between providing enough food in a meal so that participants have *watecha* (leftovers) in the Lakota way and the norms of Lenten reflection through fasting. Other members agreed:

Member 3: I guess they all said it was great but-
Member 1: I heard that, too.
Member 3: -but um, yeah, I was wondering why we was putting on a *meal*.
Chair: What did we have, four or five soups?
Member 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Member 3: Which is fine, but...
Member 5: And wozapi, and fry bread, and...
Member 1: Dessert...
Member 3: They don’t eat dessert?
Member 1: Not during Lent.
Chair: It was a full meal.

Members returned their discussion to how things might be changed for the next year relative to non-Indians expectations:

Member 5: So next year, we'll have just soup- Member 1: Just soup and bread.
Member 3: Soup and bread, or soup and fry bread, even.
Member 5: They asked for water, they just ... yeah, they asked for water.
Chair: They like water.
Member 5: Next year maybe we could buy things that, you know, things like water.
Member 6: No juice. Water.
Member 3: Didn’t, that one year, we put water jugs on each table with ice in it? We even had that the year before.
Member 1: Well thanks to the people that provided the food this time, it was nice. I enjoyed that wozapi. So next year will be less-
Chair: Way...way, way, way too much.
Tally: Like I said, they didn’t eat much. Yeah. No wozapi. It’s just white people.
Member 1: Yeah. Now we know.

Tally’s assertion that white people don’t eat wozapi (a cold-berry soup), while others generally agreed that non-Indians like fry-bread, was then challenged by the chair:

Member 3: It might have been just because of Lent.
Tally: No, they don't eat as much. Half the people don't even know what it [wozapi] was. I had to tell people what it was.
Member 6: Last year they ate pretty good on fry bread...
Tally: Oh yeah, they liked the fry bread but they never eat as much wozapi as, if, you’re an Indian. [laugh] I’ve noticed that, all the time.
Chair: Still, they always ask for it.
Tally: Hmm?
Chair: Some of those white people have asked for it.
Tally: Oh, yeah.
Chair: If we have...maybe we should do just, like, two soups.
Unison: Mm Hmm.
Member 3: Like everybody else does.

Tally’s affirmative response to the chair, seemingly in contradiction with her initial declaration, was instead an act of deference to a Lakota elder. She told me that on more than one occasion during her early time on committees at St. Matthew’s, she made the mistake of prematurely responding to declarations that were posed as questions from elder women. When planning for an event, for example, one of the grandmothers might ask “Does anybody think we should have something other than pizza for such-and-such event?” She came to understand that the question was actually an indirect assertion of the speaker’s position, and that others’ silence (which she initially mistook as general uncertainty) was instead their respectful deferral to the speaker’s status.
Tally eventually understood that she was drawing from a different communicative framework concerning how group consensus is reached, resulting in cultural “rub.” While she initially felt that verbally contributing to the discussion was the expected way to reach consensus, the other (primarily Lakota) participants practiced verbal abstention to indicate consensus. She told me that for the next several years, she consistently observed that after offering an indirect declaration, when an elder and/or high status individual asked “if anyone had a different opinion,” for example, the proper etiquette (for most hearers) was to be silent. Eventually, and if there was disagreement, someone who was the same age or older than the speaker, and/or someone who held (at least) equal status, would respond.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the elder women at St. Matthew’s indexed the Lakota way, an historically embedded indigenous framework of interactional virtues, in order to pragmatically assert their decision to maintain compartmentalization of traditional Lakota rites and symbols (Lakol wicho’an) in Sunday services. The same metapragmatic framework of interactional virtues was indexed at the guild meeting, while conversation from elder women centered on ascribed expectations and misunderstandings relative to cultural performance in congregational life.

**Conclusion**

In both examples, non-native clergy or congregants constructed formations of indigeneity (including the nonrecognition or misrecognition of ethnic expressions) concerning St. Matthew’s parish and its congregants. Further, the ascribed formations
were seen as inaccurate and/or unfavorable, prompting native clergy and/or parishioners to puncture and reframe these external narratives through performance and/or discourse, while balancing the tensions between ethnic recognition and pressure to assimilate in congregational life.

Thus both examples (historical and contemporary) engage with work arguing that ethnic recognition within western institutions necessarily involves the formal examination of indigenous peoples within them (Povinelli 2002: 5). They demonstrate individual and collective instances of native responses to outsiders’ narratives about indigeneity- and both responses drew partly on tacit (indigenous) metapragmatic frameworks and partly on western institutionalized bodies of knowledge and discourse.

While Rev. Deloria argued for ethnic recognition within the Church (pointing to interactional norms that were expected among Lakota people and admonishing Fr. Anthony’s conduct as an Episcopal priests), the women’s guild at St. Matthew’s attempted to counter external formations through performatively balancing the tension between “older pressures to assimilate” alongside “more recent pressure to perform otherness” (Muehlmann 2009:12) in order to mediate social relations with the other Episcopal churches in Rapid City.

Overall, both examples demonstrate a commonality between congregants and clergy at St. Matthew’s with many indigenous people in the world, who are attempting to balance tensions between ethnic recognition and being “othered” within dominant institutions such as the Church. Dominant institutional and interactional norms which are
inconsistent or incongruent with salient pragmatic acts upheld within indigenous frameworks (teasing, serving a meal, or ignoring someone as a way to admonish them) can inevitably be missed (or misrecognized) within the dominant institution, leading to contest and struggle.
Conclusion

American Indians, like many indigenous people in the world, share a history of being isolated, removed and relocated, followed by coercive political and religious efforts to assimilate them so that they might be incorporated into in dominant society (see Anderson 2014; Taylor 1994). After the Sioux were confined to reservations, Grant’s Peace Policy (1869-1882) assigned particular denominations (primarily the Episcopal and Catholic Churches) to reservations in Sioux Country, with the expressed goal of “civilizing” (Christianizing) the Indian, integrating him into mainstream society, and therefore resolving the Indian problem altogether.

While acknowledging the salient and tragic stories of missionization, colonialism and forced assimilation of indigenous peoples in Native North America, this study also highlights ways in which Native people exercise cultural agency within western institutions such as the church, as both the Episcopal and Catholic churches in South Dakota remain influential for many Lakota people today. Many Lakota people in South Dakota, including those who lead traditional ceremonies and practices, continue to belong to one denomination or the other (see DeMallie and Parks 1987: 14).

Post- WWII and during the federal relocation era, a large number of (primarily Pine Ridge and Rosebud) Lakota Catholics and Episcopalians moved into Rapid City, S.D. prompting the Episcopal and Catholic dioceses respectively to establish St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues as urban Lakota mission churches in the city. During the mid- to late-twentieth
century, along with other international ideologies of neo-ethnicity within western institutions, both the Catholic and Episcopal churches also shifted toward inculturation theology (intentional inclusion and incorporation of indigenous practices and epistemologies within the Church). While one might expect that all Native Americans interested in Christianity would chose to participate as Native Americans, what I found is that individuals are engaging the new opportunities presented by policies and ideologies of ethnic recognition within the Church (inculturation theology) in a diverse set of ways, engaging modernity while developing new and very interesting patterns of participation.

Without claiming that one set of expressions is more “authentic” than another, this study accounts for historically salient metapragmatic frameworks that have been carried forward across time, while illuminating emerging patterns of identification, identity ascription, and reflection throughout congregational life. Similar to other indigenous groups in an urban milieu, the Lakota Catholics and Episcopalians in Rapid City with whom I worked drew on various ‘traditional’ symbols in performance both strategically (tacitly and/or overtly) and in everyday embodied practice (Goodman 2005; 2007). Sometimes participants retold or reimagined aspects of collective and personal histories to admonish, instruct, or build solidarity; and the context of semiotic events, social position of attendees, religious and/or institutional affiliations of members, occupation(s), and familial or social networks all had the potential to factor in to the ways in which people interacted.

Congregants and clergy did not overtly reference ethnicity in all discursive and
performative acts, nor did all expressions rely on tacit signaling of historic (Lakota, or Sioux) frameworks. I include material in the ethnohistorical record (where available) relative to contemporary expressions, not to argue that continuation or reenactment of certain patterns is clearly demarcated as “traditional” as opposed to “modern.” Rather, I assert that (tacit and overt) expressions of ethnicity are processual and contextual, and engage with modernity.

In studying context-specific identifications and ascriptions I draw on concepts that have been developed in classic social psychology (George Herbert Mead), contemporary semiotic anthropology (Mertz 2007), contemporary linguistic anthropology (Agha 2007; Silverstein 1993), contemporary social philosophy (Appiah 1994; Taylor 1992), and in part in the study of comparative ethnicity including the study of immigrant ethnic groups (Smith, Hutchison, etc.).

As Keane (2003:419; 2007) and others (see Engelke 2007) demonstrate within the context of localized Christianities, discourse and textual analysis can also account for the ways in which Lakota Christians in Rapid City draw from a variety of institutions and modes of discourse throughout the course of their daily lives, yet manage to negotiate features of semiotic ideologies that are mutually agreed upon in various contexts. In departing from work that focuses on the authenticity of cultural symbols and expressions as a primary objective, a discourse and performance approach illuminates some of the ways in which indigenous people continually engage with modernity, both individually and in groups, within western institutions, and in urban realms.
This study adds to work in Native American studies, urban anthropology, ethnic studies, the anthropology of Christianity, ethnohistory, and linguistic anthropology. In arguing against stereotypes and generalities, while accounting for multiple (political, religious, economic) complexities of the present era, this study attempts to document members creatively transmit traditional symbols and epistemologies across time.

Marking a group as distinct within the dominant institution can (intentionally or inadvertently) essentialize group identities through neoliberal tropes which point to symbols or expressions that the group is known for, not all of which may be relevant for all members across time. These generalizations can also fail to appreciate individual agency and creativity over the malleability and transforming of cultural identities (Appiah 1994). Chapter two demonstrated that members often draw on different ethnic formations; sometimes evolving new models of ethnicity with contest and struggle (see Kloos 2017). While younger activists drew on material signs and performances to overtly challenge dominant institutional norms and discrimination in the 1970s, the elder women at St. Matthew’s engaged tacit interactional virtues associated with Lakota way both to mitigate discrimination in Rapid City, and to maintain compartmentalization between St. Matthew’s services and Lakol wicho’an. Decades later, while the church began turning toward inculturation theology, the grandmothers once again employed the metapragmatic framework of Lakota way to exercise agency over the flow of cultural rites and symbols within the Church.

Stories like these demonstrate that certain reactions to material or public
representations of ethnicity are sometimes met with tacitly organized (indigenous) frameworks of opposition. In other contexts, however, the same framework could be indexed to encourage younger congregants to align their behavior(s) with crucial elements of Lakol wicho’an. While sometimes generation is the most prominent feature in these struggles, at other times kinship obligations, denominational affiliation (Catholic vs. Episcopalian), and/or gender factor in to these struggles. They demonstrate that the building of ethnic identity is a heterogeneous process, and even when individuals within and/or across these divides share similar goals (cultural agency in the church and successfully navigating local discrimination), they often have different restrictions, obligations, and life experiences that inform their approaches and ultimate expressions.

This study also expands on historical and performative approaches to ritual by examining the ways urban Lakota Christians sometimes signal and interpret expressions of ethnicity in congregational life through ritualized performance and discourse, both intentionally and through embodied practice. Individuals “can strategically display such behavior to exploit these normative patterns [...] and thereby manage others’ impressions” of them (Enfield 2013: 137). Chapters three and four expanded on some of the ways in which congregants and clergy overtly referenced their own (or others’) ethnicity, noting that each instance was specific to the speaker and the context of the speech event. Sometimes overt expressions of ethnicity were accompanied by the tacit (intentional or inadvertent) (re-) animation of culturally distinct patterns and frameworks, such as the performance of kinship norms.
Focusing on tacit and overt representations of ethnicity among Lakota congregants and clergy in Rapid City allows for the recognition that “[internal] elements have, historically, been connected with, [external] forms, in processes of selective, syncretic transformation” (Clifford 2001:478). Chapter four expanded on overt and tacit indexing of ethnicity by focusing on humorous performances, including tacit frameworks which were often consistent with interactional patterns associated with traditional Lakota kinship norms and social organization as documented in the ethnohistorical record (see DeMallie 1994).

Policies of ethnic recognition within Catholic and Episcopal churches have variously been celebrated as a means to emancipate Native people or denigrated as essentializing selective traditional practices and epistemologies. Critics also point to the ways in which policies such as multiculturalism and inculturation theology, once adopted by the state or church, can serve to reinforce rather than challenge the dominant power structure of colonialism (see Baca 2005; Muehlmann 2009; Orta 2006; Povinelli 2002), effectively “[integrating] the movement into the state apparatus” (Baca 2005:151).

In chapter five, I argue that attention to indigenous articulations helps avoid essentialism, reductionism and debates over authenticity while accounting for the creative and contextual ways in which members might assert a collective “we” in order to accomplish specific goals. In Stuart Hall’s framework, “articulation” means both “to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate” as well as to join together (as in the lorry used to connect a truck with a trailer) (1996:53). I outline three separate occasions during which
participants (individually or collectively) articulated a collective (Lakota or indigenous) identity in relation to other discourses and institutions, with an attempt to inspire (local, institutional, or global) change or meet mutual interests.

Each of the articulations demonstrated the making of novel collectives; sites wherein individuals or groups of individuals purposefully engaged within and attempted to align multiple complex and overlying “arenas of institutional and ideological discourse” (Goodman 2007:411). The first two examples are individual articulations made by Fr. Paul through sermon; the first meant to adjoin baptism with Lakota norms of gift-giving and expected reciprocity; the second an attempt to mobilize traditional kinship practices in order to foster alliance with the South Dakota foster care system; and the third, a collective articulation of Lakota epistemologies expressed through devotion to Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American saint. These articulations of indigeneity contribute to work that highlights articulations relative to wider political and/or ideological trends (see Clifford 2001; 2013; Li 2000; Muehlmann 2009). Ultimately, each of the articulations demonstrated specifically situated representations of difference rather than universal forms and categories of Native expression, both in congregational life and in personal reflections.

In chapter six, I draw from archival records and contemporary ethnographic observations at St. Matthew’s to detail examples where Lakotas in Rapid City, like many other indigenous people in postcolonial, multicultural societies throughout the world, “increasingly face both older pressures to assimilate” alongside “more recent pressures
to perform otherness” (Muehlmann 2009:12) within dominant institutions such as the Church. I outline salient examples where congregants or clergy attempted to balance tensions between ethnic recognition and being “othered” within the Church, either through direct attempts to contest non-Indian narratives “about” St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church and its (primarily Lakota) congregants, or to mediate social relations between themselves and other (primarily non-native) Episcopal churches in Rapid City.

Overall, I found that the Lakota Christians in Rapid City with whom I work do not consider themselves less Lakota because they practice Christianity, nor do they feel their Christianity is compromised because they identify with various Lakota epistemologies. Rather, the multiple pulls people feel to family, reservation(s), career, friends, education, the Church, and numerous other ‘traditional’ and ‘Western’ categories and institutions factored into people’s orientations and expressions.

The articulations, performances and translations of ethnicity presented in this dissertation aim to open attention to the creative and processual ways in which urban Lakota Catholics and Episcopalians engage with modernity while valuing their respective cultural heritage. Lakota Christians at St. Matthew’s and St. Isaac Jogues in Rapid City, South Dakota represent two sites where within the context of increased ethnic revitalization and recognition, Native American Christians are negotiating new models of ethnicity in typically Western arenas, often manifesting through actions and discourse that are ostensibly traditional.

Yet as they often reminded me, the public performance of cultural authenticity is
not the only thing on people’s minds, even as liberal institutions such as the Church continue to move toward the inculturation of native epistemologies and rites. Native people mark various practices, symbols, and persons as traditional or modern at different points in history or within different contexts; and people’s discourse and performance in congregational life, interpersonal interactions, and personal reflections illuminate many of the ways in which individuals and various subgroups signal their ethnicities within the Church, and across time.

**Afterword**

The last time I went to Rapid City (in the summer of 2018), Mary greeted me with a Black Elk Canonization Prayer card (see below). When I spoke to her on the phone in the fall of 2018, as we were sharing about Kateri, she said, “I mean I’m really happy about Kateri but I’ll tell you the truth, I’m really enthusiastic about Black Elk!”

In November 2017, the Baltimore Bishops voted to move forward the sainthood petition of Nicholas W. Black Elk, a petition which started among Lakota Catholics on Pine Ridge Reservation, where Black Elk lived.
Dee also shared her excitement with me over the possibility of Black Elk’s canonization, including her belief that his canonization could bring an economic boom, as well as esteemed notoriety to the state, to its reservations, and to Lakota Catholics, as has been the case for the Mohawk tribe relative to its relation to Kateri.

Black Elk was both a practitioner of traditional belief and ritual and practicing Catholic. His “teachings represent to a great extent traditional Lakota belief and ritual” while his “long active involvement with Roman Catholicism” likely influenced “the way he spoke about traditional religion” (DeMallie 1984:89). Black Elk spoke about Lakota religion with an ecumenical attitude, which is not part of traditional Lakota philosophy. Also, he interpreted the sacred circle as the salvation for all people—a foreign concept to Lakota people, but a prevalent one within Christianity (DeMallie 1984:90). Black Elk’s
granddaughters recalled that, “every evening, we used to sit down, and [grandfather] would pray and smoke the pipe, passing the pipe around the family...[a]nd then when he walked he used to take the rosary and pray the rosary” (Black Elk DeSersa, et al. 2000:143).

No doubt Black Elk’s path to sainthood will be a subject for future research and interest, as his legacy continues to be negotiated among native and non-native people alike, and as Lakota Catholics continue to negotiate the terms of ethnic expression in congregational life.
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