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MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

Dances with Indians: Pop Culture, Education and Contemporary Cultural Genocide in North America

verfasst von / submitted by

Rachel Hamdoun

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master (MA)

Wien, 2022 / Vienna 2022

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 067 805

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Individuelles Masterstudium UG2002 Globalgeschichte

Betreut von / Supervisor:

ao. Univ-Prof. Mag. Dr. Friedrich Edelmayer, MAS



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I. ABSTRACT:

The concept of genocide has evolved over time, with new perceptions and with unfortunately new cases and situations as time wears on. One thing is certain, that the cultural constituent cannot be separated from this matter, and the case of the United States versus the Indigenous Nations is a testament to this. By observing the pursuits in every and littlest way possible, I will attempt to not only prove that genocide in all its forms had taken place but also that *cultural* genocide is still occurring in forms that *intentionally* are invisible to the naked eye, and one of these forms concerns the media, with emphasis on the sociology behind it. Across Utah, reservations exist as homes to the remaining generations of the Indigenous Nations, and unfortunately still lack access to adequate resources like sanitation, electricity, and water. When the Trump administration in 2017 permitted oil drilling and illegal land-grabbing on indigenous land through the removal of the Bears Ears environmental protection, which has failed. The Biden administration in 2021 rescinded that decision to protect the land and environment of the Tribal Nations. One aspect that the latter administration is still not considering is the continuous physical and cultural harm against the indigenous community that come in forms such as direct attacks, cultural appropriation, and especially erasure of traditional norms and customs. I will attempt to investigate the forms of genocide directed against indigenous nations in Utah and Nevada such as the Shoshone, Paiute, and Ute, by analyzing both their history and their present conditions, starting with the tale of Pocahontas and by referring to Lemkin's definition of genocide to study this issue. I will be observing and questioning the ways in which they have been attacked physically and culturally, and the steps currently being taken and the laws by the

US administration to protect the indigenous community and its natural surroundings.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG:

Das Konzept des Völkermords hat sich im Laufe der Zeit mit neuen Auffassungen, leider auch mit neuen Fällen und andere Situationen weiterentwickelt. Sicher ist, dass die kulturelle Komponente nicht von dieser Angelegenheit getrennt werden kann, und der Fall der Vereinigten Staaten gegen die indigenen Stämme ist ein Beweis dafür. Indem ich die Verfolgungen auf jede nur erdenkliche Art und Weise beobachte, werde ich versuchen, nicht nur zu beweisen, dass Völkermord in all seinen Formen stattgefunden hat, sondern auch, dass kultureller Völkermord immer noch in Formen stattfindet, die für das bloße Auge absichtlich unsichtbar sind. Eine dieser Formen sind die Medien, mit dem soziologischen Schwerpunkt dahinter. In ganz Utah gibt es Reservate, in denen die verbleibenden Generationen der indigenen Völker leben, die leider immer noch keinen Zugang zu angemessenen Ressourcen wie sanitären Einrichtungen, Strom und Wasser haben. Die Trump-Administration erlaubte 2017 Ölbohrungen und illegalen Landraub auf indigenem Land durch die Aufhebung des Bears-Ears-Umweltschutzes. Diese Aktion scheiterte als die Biden-Administration 2021 diese Entscheidung zum Schutz des Landes und der Umwelt der Tribal Nations wieder aufhob. Ein Aspekt, den die letztgenannte Regierung immer noch nicht berücksichtigt, ist die ständige physische und kulturelle Schädigung der indigenen Gemeinschaft, die sich in Form von direkten Angriffen, kultureller Aneignung und insbesondere der Auslöschung traditioneller Normen und Bräuche äußert. Ich werde versuchen, die Formen des Völkermords an indigenen Nationen in

Utah und Nevada, wie der Shoshone, Paiute und Ute, zu untersuchen, indem ich sowohl ihre Geschichte als auch ihre gegenwärtigen Bedingungen analysiere. Um dieses Thema zu untersuchen, werde ich mit der Geschichte von Pocahontas beginnen und mich auf Lemkins Definition von Völkermord beziehen. Ich werde die Art und Weise, in der den indigenen Stämmen physisch und kulturell angegriffen wurden, sowie die von der US-Regierung gegenwärtig unternommenen Schritte und Gesetze zum Schutz der indigenen Gemeinschaft und ihrer natürlichen Umgebung beobachten und hinterfragen.

II. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

I would like to express my gratitude to those who have helped make this journey possible – to my professor and supervisor, Dr. Friedrich Edelmayr, for his guidance, patience, and support especially with my endless questions and through the hardest times during a global pandemic and dealing with the consequences of a digital reality that was imposed on the world to accept. I want to thank him for his constructive feedback and constant encouragement.

I extend my utmost gratitude to my parents, Mohammad and Rita, for their unconditional support and for all their love through every step of the way, and for giving me so much strength and positive energy, even when they had none left in them. They kept me grounded, and when I was close to giving up so many times, they gave me hope I thought I would never have. I am beyond blessed to call them my parents and my support system. I would also like to thank my brother, Helal Adam, for the countless cups of coffee, for pushing me forward and for being there for me. He constantly makes me laugh, makes me forget about the worries of life and tells me to keep striving because this is just the first step to success. Mom, dad, and Helal, I love you with my all heart.

I was fortunate enough to receive advice from Dr. Franci Taylor, former director of the American Indian Resource Center at the University of Utah, for direction on my research starting point. Dr. Taylor took the time to answer all my questions when I didn't even have a starting point for them. Thanks to Rachel Ernst as well, reference librarian in the Special Collections of the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah, who was a big help during the start of my research, by guiding me through the archival

research process at the University of Utah. I would like to mention my appreciation for Samantha Eldridge, the Interim Director of the American Indian Resource Center at the University of Utah, who identifies as Diné (meaning the people in the Navajo language), for indicating to me the distinction between terms used to refer to the indigenous tribal communities of both the United States and concerning the state of Utah, to maintain authenticity and respect in my research towards the communities. Finally, a special thank you goes out to Universität Wien and Universität Leipzig, as part of my Erasmus Mundus Master in Global Studies, for providing me the opportunity to learn, research and to write about this topic for my master's thesis. Part of my thesis goes to those who believe there is power in the logic and right to deny that Indigenous genocide in North America did not and is not taking place, I hope this thesis serves as a reminder and an awakening. The Native American past must not go unacknowledged. The Palestinian voices must not go unheard. Native America is a land that belongs to its ancestors, not its settlers; just as the land belongs to Palestine, not to its colonizers. In identifying myself as a non-Native American, researching and writing about the past and current struggles that constitute direct and indirect cultural genocide against the Native American indigenous peoples of the United States, I recognize my privilege and I acknowledge that this land of the United States of America belonged and will forever belong to the Native American Nations.

III. INTRODUCTION

Pop culture in America has more than evolved into a *mise en scène* of entertainment, but frightening enough, has also become a supply for information, credibility, and knowledge production. Children, with intelligence absorbing information so fast, learn about Greek mythology through Disney's *Hercules*, about Chinese folk through Disney's *Mulan*, and about Indigenous¹ genocide through Disney's *Pocahontas*. Apologies, I mean Indigenous "history". The true question is not *why* Disney, and other media like it, puts itself in command of educating the public on national history, but the question is *how* they come to have the capability and control on that matter. The critical focus is not on Disney at all; it is on the system that gives the leverage and immunity, to this media conglomerate and establishments alike, to be able to narrate historical events, adjusted to suit one party, and one side of the story.

Media, in all its forms - television, radio, music - function to produce information, to manufacture reality and make it a public performance. It is the use of media as a tool to relay a message to an audience, and often as a weapon against a certain audience to display that audience's image in a controversial fashion. Not everything on a screen or in a book is what it seems. If I were to apply Michel Foucault's theory on discourse to how media plays a role in knowledge construction, the philosopher determines that the language, or the rhetoric employed in a discourse meant to describe a certain entity, becomes legitimate and normal because of the knowledge produced and re-

¹ In this research thesis, the terms "Native American", "Indigenous" and "American Indian" will be applied interchangeably. Although they all refer to same definition of the peoples who were living in the United States before European contact, the term "American Indian" is used most often in legal and government contexts, and "Native American" is most used among the public, but I will also refer to the mentioned Native communities by their specific tribal names.

produced by and in it². Discourse becomes the tool to impose dominance on the subject and the weapon to gain power over that subject as well. Because society believes it is true, it creates meaning and evolves into becoming true. Therefore, the power wielded from this discourse becomes valid through the implementation of the meaning through social practices including, but not limited to movie productions, social media participation, academic practices (education curriculums and debates) and popular culture trends. Discourse is intertwined with power³ and so is the American discourse towards the indigenous peoples, from their movies and their national parks to their festivals such as that of Coachella. It is the discourse and the rhetoric that the United States political realm birthed, made to create a meaning that would only fit the American social fabric, to uphold its position of global hegemony and compensate for its dark past by striving to bury it. This Western-born design of social positioning favors the genesis of hierarchy, establishing the good versus the bad - the civilized versus the savage. It fed on classical knowledge, religious and biblical sources, mythology and the journals and tales of travelers and explorers, and now it feeds on stereotypes, trends, and social media. One may wonder why I have decided to research and compose a whole paper concerning a matter that has (only recently) become prominent on a global scale, something that society is already noticing and become aware of. Let me be straightforward and answer to this curiosity in a transparent manner.

² See Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1972. Print. Foucault's connection between language and power brings together thought and knowledge through discourse, or a way of speaking, and that is through a spotlight on history and truth.

³ See Hall, Stuart A. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." (1992). Hall explains how the discourse of the West, being Europe, and the "Rest" (everything that is not Europe) rose from colonial roots and background, creating the ideology of us versus them. He further describes the technique in which exploration was an alibi by travelers to spread their territorial claims and norms to expand their power over those they believed were less than them.

First, this study is bound to challenge efforts that work against proving the genocidal accounts by attempting to normalize the massacres as unavoidable and by way of involuntariness. Second, why can't there be a tribunal against the United States for the crimes against humanity carried out against the Native Americans? Precisely and explicitly for this reason, the approach I have taken in the analysis of this study addresses this issue by directing the attention towards the field of international law and arguing how the United States can be charged with counts of crimes against humanity towards the indigenous peoples, whose lands were taken over and whose rights were robbed of. As for the third and final reason, adopting Raphael Lemkin's *weltanschauung* of genocide through the cultural frame of reference, with the help of terms such as self-determination, eurocentrism, and cultural destruction will better convey the message that this study embodies.

It need not to be reiterated that Native American lives were colonized, taken, and sold. It need not to be restated that Native American lands were robbed and exploited; that ecocide on indigenous land took place at the hands of settlers blinded by greed and power. The settlers had taken over Indigenous land, which meant their resources, means of income and source for survival, until they left the inhabitants economically reliant on the settlers' *modus operandi* even after so much time has passed since the decolonization process. My intention in this paper is to serve one purpose, that is to exhibit the myriad of techniques utilized by the United States government to this very day against the Indigenous peoples in America under the label of cultural genocide. The research I have conducted for the purpose of this paper is to combine past turmoil and merge their residues to reveal how cultural genocide in the United States still exists and is still being turned a blind eye.

For the structure of this paper, chapter 1 intends to unfold the history of the Native Americans in the United States, with focus on the indigenous nations of Utah, Nevada, and the Intermountain West. I will be evaluating the chronological narrative not to give a rundown of Indigenous history, but rather to frame the perimeters of the issue I intend to rationalize and shed light on, from the departure of the Spanish conquistadors, their replacement by English settlers and to the beginning of the institutionalized discrimination justified by no more than a piece of paper. Further, I will delineate the past struggles and wars that paved the path for cause of revolution by the native inhabitants and what became the road to the forced decline of the Indigenous and tribal lifestyles, beginning with the Trail of Tears in 1830 to the case of the Dann Sisters of Nevada in 1973, and ending in the Utah-Bears Ears case of 2017.

Chapter 2 will delve into debunking myths that the American life was built on, such as Thanksgiving, the state of Utah's Pioneer Day and the national Columbus Day (now recognized as Indigenous Peoples' Day in some states). In this particular section of my research, I hope to demonstrate why and on what grounds I claim that the picture of the American dream was built on the nightmares of the natives who once called this land their home. Chapter 3 will move towards a more ideological and interpretative range of analysis, whereby I integrate Lemkin's concept of what genocide comprises of, how his ideology conforms with the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and then incorporating international laws that America has violated, to keep it all in context. Lemkin went against the current, against nation-states themselves, and defied all the odds to reevaluate the interpretation of the acts of genocide from a developmental, rather than solely physical, point of view. Therefore, it is utterly paramount and

essential to link the American genocide of Native Indians to Lemkin's theory. I will additionally refer to Said's concept of *Orientalism*⁴ and Hall's *The West and The Rest* for supporting defense and rationalization – in the context of discourse and language. Discussing contemporary issues will be fundamental in the fourth and final chapter, to project the manners in which the dark past of the United States has led to make America in our present day the “untouchable”, and how the beacon of democracy yet contradicts itself by not practicing what it preaches. This section illustrates the ramifications that American high school curriculums, state government laws and media outlets have on indigenous representation on a local level and a global one. Finally, I plan to draw out, in the conclusion of this research study and in accordance with Lemkin's interpretation, that genocide exceeds physical extermination - genocide is the erasure of a people by mental, developmental, and cultural carnage, which is most evident in the Native American history and present, and that is what I strongly believe the gist of my fact-finding investigation will determine and attest.

⁴ See Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. Said employs the term “othering” to illustrate the behaviors of Europeans towards the populations of the East by tools of imagination. This will be followed with more insight in chapter 4 of this paper.

IV. METHODOLOGY:

There is such an abundant number of sources that would maintain my credibility, for this reason I believed that using discourse analysis and historical analysis will permit me to accurately investigate the information I have collected, in order to come to the verdict, I propose to relay at the final stage of this research. On account of that, I resorted to the use of a combination of historical material for discourse analysis, and for the process of assembling this research paper, I gathered the paramount data over a longitudinal time frame, examining the different occurrences over an extended period of time. The advantages to using qualitative methods are many, especially when it comes to sensitive subjects like that of my research. The ability to extract information required to complete the objective of this analysis by research of historical narrative, media publications and government documents, expedited the process and made it easier to formulate and prove my thesis in my research. Discourse unearths the inequities evident in social dilemmas because it embodies a power-play, it consists of being able to read subliminal messages or read in between the lines. Discourse is disguised in forms of communication through various media, mainly language and narrative, to achieve an objective and that objective is often a negative impact on one subject or another.

This research was carried out during my stay in the state of Utah in the Intermountain Western region of the United States, where I attended the University of Utah J. Willard Marriott Library for both primary and secondary sources to ensure that I read all the necessary literature and that I utilized all necessary material to complete my research. Out of respect for the

indigenous peoples of Utah and considering the inhumane and unjust conditions of the reservations they reside in, I determined to employ a method that did not necessarily require going to the reservations for observation or questioning. Regardless of the conditions of the reservations, as an observer of this study, I believed that visiting the reservations even for research purposes was inconsiderate towards the communities living there and would be inappropriate, for this would have also led to opening wounds, exposing personal information, and arising sensitive feelings. I could have chosen to work with a quantitative technique, but using a more language-oriented, interpretative method, suited the direction in which my research intended to take.

With the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the effectivity of in-person possibilities for library and archival research took a toll on the potentials of researchers, which gave way for the expanding alternative of work on digital platforms and on-line resources. It is becoming more accessible and flexible from any location, just with the click of a button, and that eased the course of my research. Tough times called for tough measures, but the results turned out positive, precise and detail oriented. The Special Collections in the J. Willard Marriott Library, which maintains a vast assortment of archival sources relating to countless academic topics at the University of Utah, offers an online database called Archives West that allows researchers to attain the same information they would find at the brick-and-mortar location on campus.⁵ As for the primary and secondary sources

⁵ The University of Utah. "Archives West." *Archives West*, Orbis Cascade Alliance, archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/search.php?r=US-uuml. Accessed 19 May 2022.

used, the university library's main website does contain open-access options for a wide selection of textbooks, articles, books and journals.⁶

In this chapter specifically is where the controversy of methodological nationalism arises, which entails that the dominant source of credible information derives from the nation-state as the natural politico-social form of the modern world.⁷ The issue of methodological nationalism emerges significantly regarding not just the topic itself, but any literature, media, or instrument that attempts to mirror or be the device to represent this theme and interpret it, therefore impeding the capability to capture significant aspects and details that would be clouded by this theory. For that reason, it was quite challenging and essential to ensure that the sources I extracted were not only plausible but of a background that would not contradict or counteract my claims, be it by the author of the source or the content I am examining. I had contacted Granite School District⁸ which serves the central part of Salt Lake County (including cities like West Valley and Millcreek), Jordan School District⁹ that administers cities including but not limited to West Jordan, Bluffdale, and Riverton, and Canyons School District¹⁰ which overlooks the southeastern part of Salt Lake County including the city of Sandy, Draper, and Cottonwood Heights via email and phone; I received no answer back from Canyons School District, neither by email nor

⁶ The University of Utah. "J. Willard Marriott Library." *J. Willard Marriott Library*, lib.utah.edu. Accessed 20 May 2022.

⁷ Wimmer, Andreas, and Glick Schiller, Nina. "Methodological Nationalism and beyond: Nation- State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences." *Global Networks*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2002, 301.

⁸ A school district is an administrative body that manages and looks over a number of schools in a certain area or perimeter in a city, county, or state.

⁹ See "Jordan School District | Lead. Educate. Inspire." *Jordan School District*, 2022, jorandistrict.org.

¹⁰ See "Canyons School District", 2022, <https://www.canyonsdistrict.org>.

after leaving voicemails. The first response I obtained was from the Social Studies/World Language Content Administrator at the Jordan School District, followed twenty days later by an email from the Social Studies Specialist at the Granite School District. Per my request, both districts stated that there are no set of particular books exclusive to the history courses offered at their elementary and secondary-level schools, but she did provide me with a list of academic books that are instead prepared for the instructors to pick from for their classes. The list, which is published by the Utah State Board of Education, consists of 43 books suiting various subjects of history such as Utah state, world history and western civilization under the category of “History”¹¹. The Social Studies Specialist at Granite School District did however disclose to me that some exceptions to the course material apply; several teachers use Open Educational Resources (OER) for their teaching materials, such as *The American Yawp*¹², a 2021-2022 edition openly accessible U.S. History textbook published by the Stanford University Press, and *Lumen Learning*¹³.

The structure in which I intend to pursue, to accomplish my conclusion begins with looking back at the overall reasoning, duration, and intensity of the atrocities committed on Native American land, for the purpose of colonial interests, and at the expense of innocent Indigenous souls and sacred soil. It then continues with monitoring the impact they had on the shaping and formation of present-day regulations, interpretations, and dissemination of history through American education and media rhetoric. This step is

¹¹ “Recommended Instructional Materials - MIDAS.” *Utah State Board of Education*, usbe.midaseducation.com/rims. Accessed 19 May 2022.

¹² Locke, Joseph L., and Wright, Ben. “The American Yawp.” *The American Yawp*, Stanford University Press, 2019. Accessed 9 May 2022.

¹³ “Boundless US History | Simple Book Publishing.” *Pressbooks*, courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-ushistory. Accessed 9 May 2022.

not intended to repair the damage that has been done or to make up for the carnage inflicted upon the Indigenous peoples, rather to point out the flaws that are still paving the way for the damage to persist and what can be done to impede and eventually putting an end to this systemic process, and to gaps that exist in contemporary modes of representation and production or transmission of knowledge to the public.

The question is not *if* cultural genocide took place in North America, the question is *why* it took place and *how* it is still taking place. It is not to find and prove one single fact, but the essence is to discover all the different facts that contribute to the *how-part* of my questions and merge them to answer the *why-part* of my questions, and thus demonstrate the reality which is the bottom-line of my study.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The concept of genocide has evolved over time, with new perceptions and with unfortunately new cases and situations as time wears on. One thing is certain, that the cultural constituent cannot be separated from this matter, and the case of the United States versus the Indigenous nations is a testament to this. Extensive research has produced the distinctive ways in which genocide can be interpreted, but the conventional approach taken by the following literature I have studied, implies to complement views of partisanship and in some, it seems to eliminate any probability of validating that culturally negating the indigenous peoples' reality is and should be considered utterly genocidal.

With that being mentioned, the objective of this literature review first, is to position all the following academic literature in the context of my own research range, whether and the direction in which these compositions adhere to the structure or not. Second, and most importantly, it is fundamental to compare the different viewpoints but essentially detecting the gaps in these works that will complement one of the primary reasons why I am conducting this research on contemporary cultural genocide in the United States.

Stannard's presentation of historical accounts is evident in *American Holocaust*¹⁴, in which Columbus' encounter of La Española (what is now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) bred the phenomenon of "othering" or of an Oriental paradise, a notion that Said¹⁵ coined to illustrate western views of the Eastern part of the world. By addressing the presidency patterns of the

¹⁴ David E. Stannard. *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World*. 1992.

¹⁵ Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

United States since the start of its independence, Stannard demonstrates the genetics embedded in the lineage of American heads of state and their policies against other races and ethnicities. He suggests that the rationale pertaining to the abundance of denials emerging from scholars and citizen descendants of the forefathers of independence – the perpetrators of indigenous genocide – deals with the longing to safeguard the moral reputation of the country and individuals accountable.¹⁶ The devotion of redemption, salvation, natural law, and purification are categorized by the author under the justification for indigenous extermination at the hands of the Eurocentric complex of the culprits. Consecutively, the ideology of Eurocentrism is accentuated by Jaimes in her book, *The State of Native America*¹⁷, by way of war tactics and conspiracies nurtured by a colonialist state of mind. In her book, she tackles issues concerning indigenous feminism and toxic masculinity, media romanticization and representation, and of these issues is the popular misunderstanding of the historically substantial Doctrine of Discovery, as a right of restriction on indigenous human rights rather than its actual purpose – regulating relations between nation-states and different power structures. This (perhaps intentionally?) misunderstood document gave leverage to validating illegal entry to indigenous land, leading to both physical and cultural genocide.

Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*¹⁸ is a vital pillar in the foundation of the politically controversial concept of cultural genocide. It is not just a necessity

¹⁶ David E. Stannard. *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World*. 1992, 52.

¹⁷ Jaimes, M A. *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*. Boston: South End Press, 1992.

¹⁸ Lemkin, Raphael. *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*. 1973.

to include Lemkin's work in genocide studies and research, but to include it is to discuss the criticality of an atrocity against humankind, a question of controversy since the year 1944 when Lemkin attempted to incorporate the cultural strain of genocide in the United Nations Draft Convention on the Crime of Genocide, that need not be contested with respect to the presence of intent. To discuss Lemkin's noteworthy efforts on the reconstruction of interpretation on genocide in this chapter would do it injustice, so I will leave that for the next chapter.

Schabas draws from Lemkin's philosophy¹⁹, where he presents his interpretation of genocide as a crime against humanity in a more legal framework, rather than coming from a sociological perspective, in his book *Genocide and International Law*. By leading his argument with the intrinsic history of Raphael Lemkin and his journey to achieve international recognition of this crime, Schabas not only puts on display the fundamental metaphysics, but he goes as far as exposing the Eurocentric tone of past (and still current) world powers like the United States and France for refusing to include cultural genocide in the UN resolution²⁰. He references critical international law treaties and instruments such as the Rome Statute and the United Nations resolutions, while most importantly highlighting the element of *mens rea*, or intent. It is significant to review genocide in the framework of international laws and provisions, because when questions arise of what it is and how it is constituted (or when it is deliberately diverted from even being considered a crime), not only does the detailed interpretation of the articles of law uphold the fact blatantly that it is a crime but it most definitely

¹⁹ Schabas, William. *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

²⁰ Ibid., 57.

ascertains the existence of elements like intent, that cannot be isolated from being a qualification of genocidal characteristics.

Schabas' and Whitt & Clarke's works are similar, in a sense that the latter also tackles genocide on an international law level, although not as much as the former. In Whitt and Clarke's *North American Genocides*²¹, the authors focus in on the approach of victim-blaming and the widespread belief of the unplanned extermination of the Indigenous peoples in North America. The unintentional reason behind the disappearance of thousands of Native Indians descending from various tribal families points to the old-world pathogens and diseases such as that of the plague and cholera – an excuse by the many scholars, historians, and pro-nationalist individuals to acquit and evade the blame for the erasure of native peoples and by voluntarily eliminating the factor of human force. The involvement of human influence in their collective work serves a significant purpose in the presence of *mens rea*, as a justification not for *what* happened to the indigenous peoples but for *why* it happened, to supply a certain purpose, rhetoric, or cause.

The origin of this determining factor of intent is discussed by Chalk and Jonassohn²² as they unravel the mentality of genocide culprits. Chalk and Jonassohn's book, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*, outlines the psychological causes behind the behaviors leading to the resort to genocide. The equation between perpetrator and victim is calculated proportional to the element of necessity that led to the conduct of genocide primarily, such as land, wealth or hegemony and power. The authors classify the term conforming to the intent and rationale of the perpetrator, through four types

²¹ Whitt, Laurelyn, and Clarke, Alan W. *North American Genocides: Indigenous Nations, Settler Colonialism, and International Law*. 2019.

²² Chalk, Frank R, and Jonassohn, Kurt. *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

of typologies: threat elimination, economic gain, terrorism as a scare tactic and belief implementation. Each of the aforementioned motives have a common solution to the Indian problem for the American government, that is to relocate and thus remove the native peoples from their path as an obstacle through the architecture of reservations. Chalk and Jonassohn include American presidents such as Benjamin Harrison and Secretary of Interiors like Alexander H. H. Stuart, as examples of both acknowledgement and compliance of Indigenous peoples' displacement and most importantly, their denial of events of genocidal behaviors taken towards the native indigenous nations.

Woolford tops off Chalk and Jonassohn's analysis in his book, *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*²³, through his emphasis on child removal from Indigenous families, and especially removal from their land. He likens this particular component of genocidal behavior, to a means to carry out colonial strategies.²⁴ He pinpoints how the practice of adopting and fostering native American children (which is still a much-used practice to this day in the United States) contributed to the severance of familial and ancestral ties, and to a cycle that lies beyond the bounds of being broken. Woolford thus gives a glimpse in his work, on the drastic and long-lasting ramifications that these "equitable services"²⁵ for racial assimilation have left on the indigenous nations and livelihoods – or what remains of them.

Hafen and Rensink's *Essays on American Indian and Mormon History*²⁶ examines the chronicles of the Intermountain West region, and its defining

²³ Woolford, Andrew J, Benvenuto, Jeff, and L. Hinton, Alexander. *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*. 2014.

²⁴ Ibid., 194.

²⁵ Ibid., 199.

²⁶ Hafen, P. Jane, and W. Rensink, Brenden. *Essays On American Indians and Mormons History*. The University of Utah Press, 2019.

structures of being and spatial belonging, through the rhetoric of the Book of Mormon. Since my focus is partially but significantly fixated on the states pertaining to that region – Utah and Nevada – the authors associate religion and state to connect to the formation of these states and this is what they achieve in their compilation. As Utah houses the global church headquarters of the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) religion²⁷ and owes many of its city names to its historical figures (such as Lehi, Nephi, and Brigham City), it also owes its very own name to the original *Yuta* and locations like Peoa, Ouray, and Timpanogos, to Native Indian nations and leaders. Integrating Hafen and Rensink's work in my own research on indigenous circumstances in Utah corresponds to why Utah's tribal existence is the way it is today. The authors tackle quite a relevant point being the missionary system to spread religious knowledge and conversion attempts; nonetheless I intend to handle this matter in the context of cultural genocide and how the missionary ideology functions as a flaw of the church-state establishment. In his book *Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday*, Baker narrates the anecdote of the famed holiday that has evolved into an annual tradition of the American household.²⁸ From the encroachment of the pilgrims to The New World, to the modern-day celebration and glorification of their arrival, the biographical exposition delves into the evolution of a holiday observed by households and families all over the United States, with the typical roast turkey, cranberry sauce, candied yams, glazed carrots, and a moment of grace – for the food on the table, the family gathered together and the remembrance of natives and settlers uniting. Interestingly, Baker

²⁷ "World Headquarters." *Newsroom.Churchofjesuschrist.Org*, newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/topic/world-headquarters.

²⁸ Baker, James W. *Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday*. Durham, N.H: University of New Hampshire Press, 2009.

offers an eye-opening approach to observe not the impact the pilgrims had on the sustenance of the natives, but the reverse effect the natives had on shaping the life of the pilgrims and the lives of their descendants they have today. The native Indians both equipped the newcomers with crops and goods, and even supplied them with recipes.²⁹ The author thus maintains a rather compelling standpoint at the history of America's beloved holiday from the eyes of the victim whose identity was taken and modified to become someone else's. Baker's biography on the day of pilgrim-Indian unity locates itself in my research as an outset that will demonstrate the embarkation of American mythology.

Just like the evolution of an invented and naturalized holiday, *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies* by James Clifton traces the steps back to etymology.³⁰ The term "myth" is central in Clifton's book, defined as a believed-to-be-true tale establishing the foundation of a certain society, or alternatively a qualitative and, often simultaneously, a subjective judgement of a certain entity.³¹ With that being principal to its diagnosis, Clifton justifies his claims surrounding fabricated myths-turned-realities, by combining numerous tales or elements, like that of Mother Earth, with the ideology of identity portrayal through the medium of discourse theory. The author's explanation of myths in terms of Native American context, identifies with Hall's *The West and The Rest: Discourse and Power*³², in which the former promotes the same direction of the latter's when interpreting the power dynamic between the "us" and the "them", or as Hall puts it, the

²⁹ Ibid., 52.

³⁰ Clifton, James A. *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*. New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A: Transaction Publishers, 1990.

³¹ Ibid., 130.

³² Hall, Stuart. "The West and the Rest:" *Essential Essays*, Volume 2, 2018. *Duke University Press*, doi:10.1215/9781478002710-009.

West against the Rest. It is the act of othering that gives birth to that alternative's identity, formed by the aspect that believes it has the higher hand or the higher power, thus creating an imbalance in representation – a permanent hierarchy of what Clifton refers to as primitive earth-loving Native America and modern refined Euro-America.³³ Clifton's title of his book gives away a new angle in the study of Indigenous peoples' integrity in America's context.

A prevailing void that I have realized throughout the period and in the material of my research, entails the absent emphasis on the weight that education and academia carry on more than just the approaches of knowledge production and identity representation. I consider this an integral and inseparable element in contributing to cultural genocide of indigenous native nations and families in Utah, Nevada and wherever they remain in the United States.

Although a vast variety of the literature I have read, including the aforementioned in this chapter, encompass the definition of genocide in accordance with the United Nations Draft Convention on Genocide as a point of reference in their endeavors, the authors and scholars of these literatures leave missing blanks despite their minor mention of Lemkin's efforts on this definition. They do not sound off on the impression that not only knowledge production (through media, arts, or education) endures on the understanding of the past or of the present, but on the impact it carries as a burden on the shoulders of Native Americans by the people, the descendants of settlers, living on their own ancestral land and creating a new meaning for their natural and rightful existence.

³³ Clifton, James A. *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*. New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A: Transaction Publishers, 1990, 354.

VI. ANALYSIS:

1. History and European Contact:

After the formation and establishment of the Holy Roman Empire, the Europeans then took it to themselves to differentiate between the two types of human beings in the world, the Christians, and the “infidels”. Their mission was to sophisticate and enlighten the non-Christians with wisdom and direct them to the way to become “humanized”, through the teachings of, and eventually the conversion to Christianity. Today, the mission still carries on. Missionaries from different forms of Christianity, such as the Mormon religion of the Latter-day Saints, are relegated by their church to go on a mission with the aim to educate non-Christians (whatever religion they may be) but can successfully complete their duty by converting them into Christianity.

Inter Caetera Divina, or the Doctrine of Discovery, was issued by Pope Alexander VI in 1493 legitimizing the encroachment of European travelers to lands they would set foot on as a land they supposedly discover, on one condition - to encourage and spread the Christian faith. The doctrine was then adjusted by Spanish Roman Catholic theologian, Francisco de Vitoria, known as the father of international law. Vitoria’s most significant contribution to the doctrine’s framework is his skepticism towards the ownership of the already-there inhabitants in private and public law before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors.³⁴ His take on the document was how to act towards the Indians who had previously been residing on the lands

³⁴ Anghie, Antony. “Francisco De Vitoria and the Colonial Origins of International Law.” *Social & Legal Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1996, pp. 324.

Europeans claimed to newly occupy. He characterizes and differentiates between logic under divine law (religion-based law), natural law (reasoning from human nature) and human law (man-made laws), to dispute the matter of indigenous ownerships with regards to European allegations to property claims. Vitoria deduced in his writings that, what the Europeans referred to as unbelief³⁵ does not overpower natural and human laws, but that the latter elements determine possession of property and dominion contrary to divine law, coming to the conclusion that the indigenous peoples and original inhabitants could not be stripped of their rights to their own property solely based on their religious orientation. *Territorium res nullius*, translated to “no man’s territory”, framed the perimeters of the Discovery Doctrine, stipulating that any uninhabited territory can be declared by whoever discovered it as one’s own.³⁶ In taking this term a completely different way, Columbus and those who followed his footsteps were capable of using it to their advantage and justify *why* the new land they had set foot on was now rightfully theirs. The theologian and political writer even further analyzed his reasoning in clarifying that anyone could travel to any destination they desire, but that does not justify their necessity to conquer soil they tread on the basis of their whiteness or their Christian faith, adding that the indigenous natives were not inhuman as they were depicted to be due to their institutions being like that of Europe. The language inscribed in this document of principles brings the Catholic faith to the forefront of its main message and promotes more than the expansion of the religion, but the conversion of the godless and the lawless to Christianity and nobility. What does it mean when the doctrine advocates to “train them

³⁵ Ibid., p. 324.

³⁶ Churchill, Ward. *Struggle for the Land: Indigenous Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Expropriation in Contemporary North America*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1992, 46.

(the inhabitants of the land in question) in good moral”? What is good moral, what does it entail? This is according to the eye of the beholder. What is normal to one culture is considered abnormal in the eyes of another – or the *other* – which endorses the us-and-them formula. To put this issue more into context and associate it to the concept of discourse, if one looks closely to the overall motif of the Doctrine of Discovery, it is plainly and intrinsically induced by motives of race and of religion. What was not Christian, was not moral, was not human. What was not of white skin, was not worthy of self-determination. This ideology of self-determination was the essence too, of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine³⁷ declaring the end of European affairs in the Western Hemisphere and the beginning of American imperialism in the region and the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement³⁸ after the fallout of the Ottoman Empire and the division of the Middle East among European powers. This is not to review a relevant course in history to this issue, but to demonstrate the unchangeable trait that is engraved in the politics and the nature of Western hegemony, politics, and law; or else wouldn’t there have been restitutions, a more just world? Indigenous and native peoples around the world were and remain facing human rights violations, persecution, gender-based violence and forced displacement, like those of Yemen, Syria, Libya, Peru, and Kenya. The Papal decree endorsed Christian superiority, and with that, it paved the path for the Manifest Destiny, the second bible of the United States. The term “Manifest Destiny” was coined by journalist John L. O’Sullivan, and it is because of him that the term became known to the public after

³⁷ “*Monroe Doctrine; December 2, 1823.*” The Avalon Project, Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library, 2008, avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp. Accessed 8 Mar 2022.

³⁸ Bilgin, Pinar. “*What Is the Point about Sykes–Picot?*” *Global Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2016, pp. 355–59. Routledge, doi:10.1080/23340460.2016.1236518. Accessed 13 June 2022.

publishing it in an editorial about the legal title and claim to Oregon, in the Eastern State Journal of the city of White Plains in New York in January 1846.³⁹ Issued in late 1845, the document dealt with validating America's expansion across what is now North America, which the Americans considered to be their destined mission, chosen destiny, and rooting from their superior nature. Quite like the Doctrine of Discovery, its rhetoric epitomizes an ethnological hierarchy; an outlook of war that validates all its tactics and methods, symbolizing a God-sent assignment to embody a nonpareil of social order to other states and nations, much like the United States still strives for today.

What Manifest Destiny had signified to the Europeans coming to the New World, the religion of Mormonism had meant the same to Brigham Young, and Utah was his vision for that destiny. Mormonism, which follows The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints or the LDS, was founded by Joseph Smith in the early 1800s after a revelation from an angel called Moroni⁴⁰, and while fleeing the East Coast and moving towards the West of America. After Smith was murdered in 1844, his successor Brigham Young gathered the Mormon converts and followers and began their journey as part of the Mormon exodus in 1846. Joseph Smith had composed the Mormons' own biblical version of Manifest Destiny called The Book of Mormon, and as the promised land of Zion awaits them, they could settle wherever they please, and Brigham Young envisioned that as the Great Salt

³⁹ "Manifest Destiny" by John Louis O'Sullivan, Eastern State Journal. *Smithsonian American Art Museum*, https://americanexperience.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/White-Plains-Eastern-State-Journal-Jan-1846_manifest-destiny-reference.pdf. Accessed 22 Mar. 2022.

⁴⁰ "American Prophet: The Story of Joseph Smith." *PBS Utah*, www.pbs.org/americanprophet/joseph-smith.html. Accessed 19 Mar. 2022.

Lake Valley (now Salt Lake City) with his famous phrase upon arrival:
“This is the place”.⁴¹

The Book of Mormon implies that the indigenous natives are homogenous descendants of Lamanites, and the sole explanation of the history of North America lies in that book.⁴² According to the book, patriarch Lehi left Jerusalem with his 2 sons, his eldest Laman and the youngest Nephi, and his wife. Nephi was favored by his father, which led Laman to rebel and divide civilization into two partitions – Nephites and Lamanites. Those who belonged to the Nephites had followed God’s path and his revelations, while those who reflected Laman’s path were believed to be cursed with “skin of blackness” and they could be differentiated because Nephites had a complexion that was “white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome”.⁴³ They were, however, observed as a promised people only if they accept their fate to convert to Mormonism and abandon the path of Laman. This renders a complete erasure of a peoples’ history, in not a small territory but a whole state, and in a whole country. If this does not contribute and amount to cultural genocide, then I do not know what does.

With the image of the City of Zion in mind, part of the plan which later proved successful, was to take over Indian land (starting with Paiute soil) and moving the inhabitants to the Uintah Basin, thus completing the blueprint of a reservation as the new Indian home.⁴⁴ Treaties were the easiest route to ensure that the scheme went according to plan – for two reasons:

⁴¹ Hausladen, Gary. *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think About the West*. University of Nevada, 2003, 139.

⁴² Cuch, Forrest S. *A History of Utah's American Indians*. Utah State University, University Libraries, 2003, 4.

⁴³ Hafen, P. Jane, and W. Rensink, Brenden. *Essays On American Indians and Mormons History*. The University of Utah Press, 2019, 14.

⁴⁴ Cuch, Forrest S. *A History of Utah's American Indians*. Utah State University, University Libraries, 2003, 139.

treaties were to be approached as a legal way out, and second, because the inhabitants signing the treaties did not have English as their first language so technically, they were often signing documents they either did not understand or did not have correctly translated to them. This had led to trouble, and that trouble between both the Indians and the Mormon settlers led to wars. In 1863, the Bear River Massacre had occurred, when Mormon settlers in Franklin, Idaho (near the Utah border) had persistent altercations with the Indians residing there and there was no solution in sight. Colonel Connor of Salt Lake City did have one solution in mind, that would end the hostility between both sides, and surely the easy way out was to remove one of them from the problem entirely (rather than find a common ground or negotiate, since it was not even the settlers' land in the first place for them to fight over.) Following the deaths and massacres of Indian families in freezing rivers and by the hands of the American army, those who survived the atrocities traveled to the nearby town of Promontory, Utah. The more settlers had arrived looking for shelter, the more the Indians had lost their own homes and were the topic of relocation discussions. The Mormons requested the Ute tribal families be transferred to the Uintah Valley reservation against their will, but Brigham Young had offered between \$15,000 and \$25,000 over the duration of 30 years in exchange for the lands. Yet another gimmick to outmaneuver the natives, the exchange was never acknowledged or ratified, and the payments were consequently never made to compensate the loss of Indian land, the loss of their means to sustain.⁴⁵ In the course of 25 years following contact with the Mormon

⁴⁵ Ibid., 190.

migrants, the Paiute population in Utah decreased by 90% of their original count.⁴⁶

By the time the Church of the Latter-Day Saints had set up camp in Utah and was pending expansion, the Indian Student Placement Program went into effect and was recruiting local Native Indian children. The program intended to offer the children with better educational opportunities, stable family environment, an experience of intercultural networking – an all-inclusive package, but terms and conditions apply: *must accept and join the LDS church membership*. Hence, not only were the Indian Nations stripped of their spiritual freedom, but they were also forced to accept a reality different from what they have known. Ione Yellowjohn, member of the Shoshone Nation and former student of the Placement Program, recalled having his natural hair trimmed short because her foster parents had no clue how to braid it.⁴⁷ It is quite common to hear that a picture is worth a thousand words, but in the case of Native American struggle, a mere few words from those who have survived Indian boarding schools are worth more than thousands of pictures in any textbook, in any museum or monument. Although the Indian Student Placement Program lasted from 1947 to 2000, it had left wounds and scars that still last for generations as part of an unerasable remnant of their ancestors' history - irreplaceable, irreparable. Former students who attended and completed the Placement Program and succeeded in adapting to their new lives with their Mormon host families, were admitted to Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁷ Hafen, P. Jane, and W. Rensink, Brenden. *Essays On American Indians and Mormons History*. The University of Utah Press, 2019. 215.

Every native Indian was coerced to accept the United States citizenship as a requirement to live on their own soil and to claim allotment to their own land through the General Allotment Act⁴⁸ (also known as the Dawes Act) ratified in 1887 by then-president Grover Cleveland. The natives who chose to turn down the offer, such as the Cherokees, were isolated and left without a claim to land and consequently, without a place to live. Those with mixed blood were not exempt either. Not only were they excluded from being designated a piece of land, but they were forbid from recognition and being acknowledged as members of their corresponding tribal nations. This enforcement goes back to the Indian Citizenship Act⁴⁹ issued back in 1924, under the presidency of Calvin Coolidge. The Indian Citizenship Act declared that all Indians are obliged to acquire U.S. citizenship, regardless of whether they wished to have it or not, and notwithstanding any rejections or acceptances of land allotments. Ten years later, the Indian Reorganization Act⁵⁰ of 1934 was born from the Merriam Report⁵¹, which entailed an evaluation of situation and living conditions on reservations. Its transcript aimed at replacing the land allotments of the preceding Indian Citizenship Act and encouraging Native American self-governing, which naturally they had a right to as the aboriginal inhabitants, and by taking into consideration Wilson's 1918 self-determination declaration.⁵² Then came

⁴⁸ Churchill, Ward. *Struggle for the Land: Indigenous Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Expropriation in Contemporary North America*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1992, 341.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 343.

⁵⁰ "Indian Reorganization Act (1934) | Tribal Governance." *University of Alaska Fairbanks*, uaf.edu/tribal/academics/112/unit-2/indianreorganizationact1934.php. Accessed 13 July 2022.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² As part of his Fourteen Points, Woodrow Wilson had declared at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918 that original inhabitants of a territory have the right to self-determination through forming their own government and administrating their own cultural, social, and political affairs.

the Relocation Act⁵³ of 1956, that intended to put a band-aid solution by trying to improve the conditions of those residing on the reservations, but it was to no avail. Due to the imminent famine they were already dragged into, approximately 35,000 Indians relocated to urban areas such as Phoenix and even as far as Boston, in just a span of 2 years' time.⁵⁴ As relocation, more like displacement, efforts continued to persist both directly and indirectly, two native American sisters in Nevada stood in the face of suppression.

In 1974, sisters Mary and Carrie Dann, were herding cattle near their home just right outside of Crescent Valley, Nevada. A ranger from the Bureau of Land Management had asked to verify their grazing permit (animal grazing refers to the act of animals feeding on grass and land), but the sisters rejected his request on the basis of being on their ancestral land of the Western Shoshone, thus not requiring a permit. However, the Indian Claims Commission of 1962 had taken away claims and titles to land as a result of occupation by settlers. Their case was taken to be filed in Reno, and the sisters appealed through the use of aboriginal land rights as defense.⁵⁵ But weren't there treaties that the federal government should have honored? Certainly, but the federal government wasn't quite pristine with keeping its word. The 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley⁵⁶, designating lands and territories to the respective nations and permitting safe travel and passage, was not

⁵³ Churchill, Ward. *Struggle for the Land: Indigenous Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Expropriation in Contemporary North America*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1992, 351.

⁵⁴ Jaimes, M A. *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*. Boston: South End Press, 1992, 351.

⁵⁵ Churchill, Ward. *Struggle for the Land: Indigenous Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Expropriation in Contemporary North America*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1992, 178.

⁵⁶ Chadwell, Jeri. "Indigenous Land Activist Carrie Dann Has Died." *This Is Reno*, 3 Jan. 2021, thisisreno.com/2021/01/indigenous-land-activist-carrie-dann-has-died. Accessed 10 Mar 2022.

honored by the federal government, and was regarded by the court as being invalidated by the Indian Claims Commission 90 years later. The Commission's attempt to win the case by offering the Western Shoshone nation \$26 million was futile - the nation rejected the bid and demanded the right to their own and ancestral lands, but surely the federal government had to have the last word. Not only were the Dann sisters charged with trespassing, hundreds of their cattle and animals were forcibly removed from their land and the Western Shoshone nation was fined approximately \$3 million.⁵⁷

Just like the equivalent to managing land was the grazing permit, the equivalent to managing native children was the Indian Child Welfare Act⁵⁸ of 1978. The initiative was intended to preserve Indian culture while protecting the child and their values, but that was encouraged through adoption, foster care and including tribal families in the consequent court proceedings. Though it does offer an advantage to promoting security and inclusion of the parents of the Indian child, on the other hand it still implements the possibility of the removal of children from their families for what they considered as welfare reasons. To the naked eye of the reader, it would sound absurd to say that this would amount to cultural genocide, but to think that the tremendous loss and removal of children from their nations with perhaps no return in sight would *not* amount to cultural genocide, would be absurd to even imagine.

To accomplish their destined mission, the settlers visualized a new system that required educating the unsophisticated natives, and so the notion of a

⁵⁷ Chadwell, Jeri. "Indigenous Land Activist Carrie Dann Has Died." *This Is Reno*, 3 Jan. 2021, thisisreno.com/2021/01/indigenous-land-activist-carrie-dann-has-died. Accessed 10 Mar 2022.

⁵⁸ Woolford, Andrew J, Benvenuto, Jeff, and L. Hinton, Alexander. *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*. 2014, 200.

boarding school for the indigenous was born. Boarding schools, more built like military academies intended for indigenous children, were a strategy of forced assimilation and social engineering. Of the settlers in the various regions across North America, many had become teachers for these schools, wanting to do good in the world and teach the underprivileged. Observing the situation that they have been thrown into, the native tribal nations like that of the Paiutes, the Western Shoshone, and the Northern of Nevada, were faced with one of two choices that would risk their lives and cultural inheritance – send the children into the unknown or face the consequences. Thus, the technique of impeding or eventually completely stopping the transmission and passing on of the Indian culture and tradition, so Indigenous children were enlisted in these schools to learn the “white” and “right” way of life, therefore making the indigenous life and ways dissolve and become inexistent. Taking into consideration the Eurocentric ideologies that colonialists brought with them to instill upon their new subordinates (or so they planned), the former had used the boarding schools as a means to an end - to sophisticate the inhabitants and paint a picture of the white savior saving humanity and helping the underprivileged and sophisticating them meant detaching the children from all that they knew, to become protégés of the new colonialist era. The children were compelled to wear in Euro-American dress and attire, were forbidden to observe their religious faiths and to communicate in their native languages (such as Navajo, Yupik, and Dakota) and were enforced to follow and maintain Western values and norms that they were never taught by their families. If the children went against the wishes and desires of their instructors, they were subjected to incarceration for disciplinary reasons. It wasn't only the forced displacement of indigenous children that contributed to the fallout of native culture

and stability, since the settlers also employed conventional methods of warfare such as the destruction of agriculture pertaining to the livelihood and sustainability of the natives, which really was more than a method of warfare against them. The scorched earth policy employed by the Euro-American aggressors, served to ambush the natives, and leave them dependent on their colonizers for survival. The vast land and its resources were a constant and common denominator between the colonizers and the indigenous peoples; one wanted to exploit the land and take advantage of it with any means necessary, and one needed to shield it from vandalism and commercial-material gain. It's always about land, isn't it? Aggression, is always being fueled by greed, desire, and power. So much for democracy and freedom, I say.

2. Myths and Narratives:

Before delving into the analysis of stereotypical representations of Native Americans in Hollywood, and other American national media and entertainment, it is crucial to define what a myth is and how it can be understood literally and in this context. Myth derives from the Greek origin of *muthos*, but Clifton divides the definition to be interpreted in two ways; myth could signify the idea of a true story that forms the basis of a society or place, or myth could predominantly indicate to an emotion-driven qualitative judgment of a person or entity.⁵⁹

Popular belief, partially supported by the writings of John Smith, tells the tale of Smith himself, whose ship washes on the shores of the Pamunkey nation's land in the New World, and young Pocahontas, daughter of the tribal nation's chief, saves Smith from a death sentence at the hands of her father, Wahunsenaca, and they fall in love and form the bridge between the two civilizations, that of the English settlers and of the Indigenous peoples. Let's lay down the facts. Pocahontas, who also went by Amonute and Matoaka, was the favorite daughter of Wahunsenaca, ruler of the Powhatans of the Pamunkey nation in the region of Tsenacomoco or what was known as Jamestown, Virginia.⁶⁰ Upon Smith's revelation of the New World, he begins to learn the ways of the Powhatans through Pocahontas. In 1607, during Smith's exploration of the Chickahominy river in then-Jamestown, he was taken captive by Pocahontas's uncle Opechancanough and later

⁵⁹ Clifton, James A. *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*. New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A: Transaction Publishers, 1990, 130.

⁶⁰ Mansky, Jackie. "The True Story of Pocahontas." *Smithsonian Magazine*, Smithsonian Magazine, 23 Mar. 2017, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/true-story-pocahontas-180962649. Accessed 11 Apr 2022.

returned to England in 1609.⁶¹ Pocahontas went on to marry a tribal member, Kacoum, but shortly after his death, she was kidnapped by English colonizers as an attempt to negotiate with her father but was taken hostage aboard a ship back to London, England. After converting her to the Christian religion upon her arrival, she married tobacco grower John Rolfe, and was given the name Rebecca. In March of 1617, a ship departed London sailing back to Virginia, but Pocahontas unfortunately did not make it as a consequence of falling ill in Gravesend, Kent, in the United Kingdom where she is now buried.

In 1995, Walt Disney released the musical animation film *Pocahontas*, in which the two main characters are Pocahontas and English settler John Smith. In the beginning of the film, Governor Ratcliffe arrives on the ship alongside Smith that reaches the shores of the New World, and the governor orders the men on his ship to give the inhabitants a “proper English greeting”⁶² (little did anyone know that meant taking their land and crops), and Smith tells his shipmate Thomas to worry about the gold and leave the savages to him to take care of. While exploring the river, Smith notices a shy, 20-something year old Pocahontas observing his movements from afar. She is dressed in a light brown one-shoulder dress that covers her curvy and voluptuous physique and talks to a tree by the name of Grandmother Willow, a raccoon named Meeko, and a hummingbird named Flit. Long story short (literally), Smith teaches Pocahontas what a handshake is, that their houses aren’t acceptable because her people don’t know any better, they fall in love and the Native Americans live happily ever after – the

⁶¹ Hindley, Meredith. “Soldier of Fortune: John Smith Before Jamestown.” *The National Endowment for the Humanities*, The Magazine of the National Endowment for Humanities, Feb. 2007.

⁶² *Pocahontas*. Directed by Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, Buena Vista Pictures, 1995.

end. At first sight, it is no more than a harmless entertaining cartoon for children to watch, with songs about the beauty of nature and its beings, and to learn about the historical narrative of two adversaries that made America the nation it is today. It takes just one closer look to detect the minor and subliminal messages and details that in fact obscure the accurate series of events. The first and most overt controversy lies in the oversexualization of Pocahontas, the depiction of her indigenous culture and John Smith's infatuation with her, as if it were love at first sight. The feature of romanticizing Native Indian-European history by curtailing it to an unknown love story cancels out all things bad and devious and sugarcoats it. Towards the end of the film, the character of John Smith objects to Governor Ratcliffe and declares that the land belongs to the Indians rather than to him – the same John Smith that founded the first colony of Jamestown.

The film concludes when Smith is injured by Governor Ratcliffe and is shipped back to England, leaving a sobbing Pocahontas and her comforting father behind, but the show goes on in the sequel, *Pocahontas II: Journey to the New World*. Released three years after its prequel, the film follows Pocahontas' marriage to tobacco grower, John Rolfe, her arrival to London as an Indian princess and her adventure living a life of royalty. Between the singing and the comedic skits, besets another romantic venture between John Rolfe's attraction and Pocahontas' curiosity in both the industrial city of London and Rolfe's attention towards her. The one-hour animation ends with the two characters on a ship sailing back to the New World, and Rolfe's assurance that they are going "home" (being Jamestown). Calling Jamestown home by the colonizer who allegedly is living a Romeo-and-Juliet type of love with the colonized, brings a complex of

spatial belonging and normalization of a fabricated historical narrative that speaks of genocide against an indigenous people.⁶³

Contrary to the Walt Disney depiction, Pocahontas was not the seductive adolescent-gone-rogue, which brings me to an issue here. The over-sexualization of Pocahontas is even more thought-provoking in both the 1995 Walt Disney film and in the 2005 film by director Terrence Malick. In both films, Pocahontas is dressed in a barely-there dress over her suspiciously curvy figure. This fantasized image of the Native American Pocahontas equates savagery, wildness and naiveté with lust and sexuality, fortifying the analogy of the charismatic white settler-savior and the mysterious and vulnerable indigenous woman. This goes back to Said's ideology of Orientalism, the perception of the East by the West or the European and its antithesis – the non-European. Media facilitates the correlation between power-political (i.e., colonialist or imperialist power) and the subject of discourse, via producing knowledge and making it true to justify the philosophy towards the subject itself. Through the works of Disney and First Foot Films, the fabricated realities of the Native American history are reinforced, the imagined other is reinstated, and the genuine indigenous history is consequently annihilated and replaced by a white-washed rendition of the alleged love-betrayal story. The writers of both films are not even of Native American heritage⁶⁴, which prompts a sense of skepticism towards a presence of Eurocentric bias in both scripts, causing concern of a controversial nature in both as well. Her fictitious illustration gives leverage to the archetype of the noble savage, paving the way and giving the stage to the individuals that

⁶³ The movie can be viewed on streaming services such as Disney+, Apple TV and YouTube.

⁶⁴ The writers include Susannah Grant, Carl Binder, and Philip LaZebnik. See "Pocahontas (1995)." *IMDb*, 1995, www.imdb.com/title/tt0114148. Accessed 12 Mar., 2022. for credits and crew information.

deny genocide ever took place, on account of enlightening the primitive and liberating the female who needs to be saved from the repression she's in. Younger generations, and those who had seen the two movies (or any similar depictions) when they were released, will not learn the accurate encounters of the Native American history if they are not taught the genuine history in schools and educational institutions (and let's be frank, American education can't be relied on to teach history that America specifically intended to erase and replace it as its own). Is this premeditated erasure of history not a technique of the colonizer to bury his mistake? Is this not considered a feature of genocidal behavior by the agency of passing down the history of the colonizer to generations born on land that wasn't even theirs?

Among the menaces brought with the settlers to indigenous lands, like that of advanced weapons and forced displacement of the inhabitants, was the principle of male superiority over women. Contrary to popular belief (again), gender dynamics in tribal families is utterly antagonistic to what is portrayed as fact-based. Just like the Western powers had unfortunately succeeded in shaping their discourses about the peoples of the Middle Eastern regions, as simple-minded, ignorant, and oppressive towards women, simply because their skin is not white, the majority religion is not of the Christian faith and because media seems to be the primary source for fact-finding. Western media publicizes this theory, that women are an oppressed and vulnerable people. Yet again, exactly the way in which travelers' journals were depended on for truth formation and transmission to the masses, today's media has replaced written accounts and has become a mode of transmission to the public, faster than ever known.

The fairytale of the Indian princess simultaneously normalizes Euro-American presence in the past and decriminalizes their presence in a more contemporary form. Pocahontas is not the only questionable portrayal in American media and television; movies like *The Last of the Mohicans*⁶⁵ and *The Ridiculous Six*⁶⁶, and television series like *The Simpsons*⁶⁷, their portrayal in *Peter Pan*⁶⁸ and Looney Tunes' character *Injun Joe*⁶⁹. So, when myth becomes reality, just like the portrayal of the traditions of Native America or the imagined story behind how Thanksgiving first began, that's when the truth becomes clouded with judgement, with racial and ethnic intolerance, and thus becomes bait for American media to feed on. More fallacies lurk in the shadows of nearly every account about Native Indian-Westerner film or Native Indian history, and eight years later in 2005, Terrence Malick's movie, *The New World*⁷⁰, only proved to be state of the art. The Native Americans were shown to be smelling the settlers and yelling inaudible sounds (the Natives have their own language as opposed to the gibberish they are assumed to speak), walking around with objects and the intent to exhibit violent behavior every chance they get, and tearing up crops and grass in anger which is wholly absurd considering the sacredness Native Americans hold towards land and living beings. The invariable image of the Native American man as barbaric and ruthless with dark gazes and a

⁶⁵ *The Last of the Mohicans*. Directed by Michael Mann, Twentieth Century Fox, 1992.

⁶⁶ *The Ridiculous Six*. Directed by Frank Coraci, Netflix, 2015.

⁶⁷ "Little Big Girl." *The Simpsons*, written for television by Don Payne, directed by Raymond S. Persi, Twentieth Century Fox, 2007.

⁶⁸ *Peter Pan*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, Buena Vista Pictures, 1953.

⁶⁹ "Injun Trouble." *Looney Tunes*, written for television by George Manuell, directed by Robert Clampett, Warner Brothers, 1938.

⁷⁰ *The New World*. Directed by Terrence Malick, New Line Cinema, 2005.

villainous nature, carved in the heart of cinema philosophy, transforms into eternalizing the noble savage; the American Indian.

The occasion of Thanksgiving is glamorized in juvenile and children's books in such a way, that it overflows with motifs of friendship and a happy ending. This form of misrepresentation in literature, especially for such a young audience, masks the true event but to normalize the murder, theft, and deception that contributed to a day Native Americans consider as a day of mourning.

3. Sociology and Discourse of the Genocidal Mind:

As previously mentioned in the literature review of this paper, to speak of the magnitude of this crime against humanity is to speak on the success of the man and the brains behind the United Nations Genocide Convention, Raphael Lemkin, and specifically for his perseverance on the interpretation of this crime in another prospect. The lawyer worked on drafting the first United Nations human rights treaty for genocide in 1948. After its adoption, the United Nations declared the definition of genocide in Article II of the Convention, to amount to, killing members of a group, causing both mental and physical harm to its members, *deliberately* causing its physical destruction partly or in whole, preventing births within it and forcibly transferring and displacing children.⁷¹ Under the category of the elements of the crime, the Convention states that cultural destruction does not meet the qualification to be considered genocidal, and can be regarded as a shortcoming of the UN definition of this crime against humanity.

Lemkin even denounced The Hague Convention for turning a blind eye towards the laws of occupation by fixating on the technical conditions instead of focusing on the security and preservation of people's integrity and decency.⁷² A widely but disheartening popular belief tells the unfortunate story that Indigenous tragedies were inevitable and just plain unlucky; no one was accountable for their deaths, it was the disease that was bound to erase them all; no one was at fault for their murders, their rape, and their exploitation, it was the right people at the wrong time, that just made them

⁷¹ "United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect." *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml. Accessed 25 Mar 2022.

⁷² Schabas, William. *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 29.

quite unlucky. Whitt and Clarke thus articulate that contemporary genocide deniers point the blame to Old World pathogens like that of cholera and the bubonic plague, for the extermination and disappearance of the indigenous peoples as opposed to death by the hands of human agents.⁷³ This form of thinking not only suggests the factor of “unintentionalism” but it eliminates reason to condemn the illegal settlers for the barbarity carried out against the natives for generations and generations. Though disease spread cannot be controlled, the contagion and transfer of diseases from one individual to the other (or more alarming, from one individual to an entire group) is simplified and expedited by settler processes and their colonial practices which include but are not limited to the imprisonment of natives, the forced displacement of children and the seizure of land and resources. This, by itself, certifies the existence of the element of intent and disregards the traumatic ordeals that essentially determined the act of the genocide committed against its victims. The traumatic memory pertaining to an ethnic group’s culture are what Erll calls “carriers”.⁷⁴ The process of maintaining genocidal memory is eased in by these carriers through publications and symbolic expressions to transfer memory to performance for the progression of both its history and its future. The obstruction of that process would include *not* incorporating the *true* Native American genocide in history books or school curricula, which results in the elimination of the cultural memory that constitutes Native America and its identity. This is what may seem like a partial erasure of U.S. history but is a total erasure of Native American history – categorically considered an indication of cultural

⁷³ Whitt, Laurelyn, and Clarke, Alan W. *North American Genocides: Indigenous Nations, Settler Colonialism, and International Law*. 2019, 2.

⁷⁴ Erll, Astrid. “Travelling Memory.” *Parallax*, vol. 17, no. 4, 2011, pp. 4–18. *Taylor and Francis Online*, doi:10.1080/13534645.2011.605570. Accessed 18 May 2022.

genocide on indigenous peoples. In fact, such “carriers” tend to cultivate behavioral health problems and disorders which often produce long-lasting effects that are irrecoverable without the means necessary to recuperate or even avoid them.

Frederick Beauvais, Ph.D., and professor Applied Social and Health Psychology at Colorado State University, articulated in his 1992 investigation on the misuse and ratios of alcohol among Native communities, with a spotlight on the youth. The motives of alcoholism in Native American youth and nations fall under the socioeconomic category, pertaining to school dropouts, unemployment, boarding school experiences, colonization history, and domestic issues.⁷⁵ Causes, such as the aforementioned, bear cycles within the Native communities that not only involve consequences and their irreparable outcomes, but they further cause the intrinsic problem to be rooted again and difficult to contain. What starts as unemployment trouble and becomes subject to emotional and physical abuse, develops to become emotional and mental stress which strains the individual and community’s stability, thus leading children to drop out of school, inflict violent behavior upon others and resorting to other ways to release the stress. Of these ways, alcohol and drug abuse are the most common and the most fatal of causes in Native American youth. This yields stressed and failed relationships and familial complications, disconnection from a productive social life, violence, and suicide. A research study demonstrating alcohol use trends in Native American youths living on reservations in Nevada, deduced in 2005 that teens ranging from ages 14 to 18 were the most affected

⁷⁵ Beauvais, F. “American Indians and alcohol.” *Alcohol Health and Research World*, vol. 22,4 (1998): 253-9.

by alcohol, being 39.7%.⁷⁶ A study conducted by physician Dr. Connie Uri in 1977 indicated that a minimum of 25% of Native American women aged 15 to 44 were tested on and sterilized without both their consent and their knowledge in the period of the 1970s.⁷⁷ Forced sterilization is deemed to be a major component under the category of genocide and especially under the cultural fragment of it, if we consider Lemkin's take on what cultural genocide constitutes. While coerced and nonconsensual sterilization does fall under the United Nations' interpretation of genocide, preventing the access and freedom of indigenous women to personal liberty and health services like that of abortion possibilities does fall under the "coordinated"⁷⁸ aspect of Lemkin's definition, since it gradually endangers their personal safety and impedes their economic development. Through not accomplishing what they were established to maintain, the Indian Health Service is yet putting the women's lives in danger of becoming missing, murdered, exploited, and abused, predominantly because of existing dilemmas that prevail on the reservations, and that both the Indian Health Service *and* the U.S. government are turning a blind eye to. Beauvais articulates that regulating the trade and use of alcohol solely cannot be the solution to the problem, due to the matter that the initial root causes are not properly addressed and rectified to avoid the development of

⁷⁶ Collins, Sanchen. "Alcohol Trends Among Native American Youth: A Look at a Reservation in Nevada." *McNair Scholars Research Journal*, 2007, scholar-works.boisestate.edu/mcnair_journal/vol3/iss1/7. Accessed 29 May 2022.

⁷⁷ "Woman; 442; Concerns of American Indian Women." *American Archive of Public Broadcasting*, WNED, 15 Apr. 1977, americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip_81-67wm3fxh. Accessed 26 May 2022.

⁷⁸ Luck, Edward C. "Cultural Genocide and the Protection of Cultural Heritage." *J. Paul Getty Trust Occasional Papers in Cultural Heritage Policy*, no. 2, 2018, www.getty.edu/publications/occasional-papers-2/. Accessed 31 May 2022.

these cycles.⁷⁹ It would be illogical to criticize the past of colonization as the sole purpose behind such patterns; the continuous failure by the American administration, towards meeting the core and basic needs of the indigenous peoples living on reservations, is on the rise and contributing to even more damaging ramifications. Access to sources of alcohol are so facilitated, that young Native American alcohol consumers are approximately twice as likely to obtain alcohol from adults over 21 years of age, and twice more likely as whites to get alcohol from individuals under the age of 21.⁸⁰ Lemkin's standpoint on the rules of law being both the problem and the solution⁸¹, goes hand in hand with both Beauvais' and Collins' approaches to tackling this issue from its source, in a sense that the law holds the power to produce reform and it is holds the ability to prevent effective policies to take effect, and for educational institutions to be equally held liable. In Collin's study concerning Nevadan reservation youths, the participants of her survey disclosed that treatment of alcohol and drug abuse was never sought, due part to the mistrust held by them towards the institutional system and part to the lack of available services on their reservations to treat and recover.⁸²

⁷⁹ Beauvais, Frederick. "American Indians and alcohol." *Alcohol Health and Research World*, vol. 22,4 (1998): 258.

⁸⁰ Frieze, Bettina, and Joel Grube. "Differences in Drinking Behavior and Access to Alcohol between Native American and White Adolescents." *Journal of Drug Education*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2008, pp. 273–84. *National Library of Medicine*, doi:10.2190/de.38.3.e. Accessed 28 May 2022.

⁸¹ Bilsky, Leora, and Klagsbrun, Rachel. "The Return of Cultural Genocide?" *European Journal of International Law*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2018, pp. 373–96. *Oxford Academic*, doi:10.1093/ejil/chy025. Accessed 27 May 2022.

⁸² Collins, Sancheen. "Alcohol Trends Among Native American Youth: A Look at a Reservation in Nevada." *McNair Scholars Research Journal*, 2007, scholarworks.boisestate.edu/mcnair_journal/vol3/iss1/7. Accessed 29 May 2022.

Even if we take Evans and Thorpe's coining of the term "indigenocide"⁸³ as another annotation for the concept I am studying, its components feature intentional colonization of land and the conquest of its peoples, the element of *mens rea* and the intent of extermination, the degrading of indigenous peoples as the pests of society and the eradication of the religious establishments pertaining to the respective indigenous peoples. Were both the indigenous peoples and their lands violated by settlers? Check. Was there an intent to destroy the natives and all the factors that make up their identity and carry on their livelihood? Check. Were they portrayed as uncivilized savages and enforced in settings such as reservations that surround them with such a degrading system? Check. Were their religious, cultural, and social establishments threatened, and tumbled to the ground? Check. In the case of Utah, religious conversion was one of the many principles in boarding school project in the Intermountain West. Besides the need to convert the students to Mormonism for the purpose of land accrual, there also lies the injection of Western norms and enforce in them a social value totally different from their own. The attempt to bring out the pupils from the misery they endured on the reservations, by persuading them that in their veins runs the blood of the promised people of Zion, succeeded in increasing the number of members but was futile for those who resisted. Foucault suggests that the divisions of the past are repetitive in this present time now through different sequences, new and developing institutions, and yielding different responses. These responses are achieved in modern and varying forms, that may incorporate literature, media

⁸³ Moses, A. Dirk. "Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the 'Racial Century': Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust." *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2002, 25.

networks and institutional arenas.⁸⁴ Such aspects mirror the power-truth equation that Foucault refers to as the “will to truth” or the “regime of truth”. This notion of truth can only feed on the structure of exclusion and marginalization, advocated by institutional systems, in which the discourse is fashioned and thus exercises deterrents on other discourses that may counteract its significance. Discourses, according to Foucault⁸⁵, are at risk of becoming void of sense by locating itself at the disposal of the producer of said significance. In this manner, the approach of discourse can become a concept of power play. By entangling power, it reinforces hierarchical standards between producer and subject of the discourse, while simultaneously allowing it to be recreated as “truths” through agencies such as media, politics, and academia and by using words and texts that operate as signifiers to the message being communicated. Of the three, educational mechanisms tend to be one of the permissive and yet most delicate access to any form of discourse (aside from the first considered as media outlets and platforms), as their censoring and endorsing of knowledge can either neutralize social conflict or promote it. In the appendix of his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault characterized the position of education as a political channel to balance or customize the appropriation of the discourse in question, along with the weight and power it has. In situating this in the context of the contemporary cultural genocide against the indigenous Native Americans, it can be understood that history textbooks and academic resources contribute negatively to the production of knowledge regarding Native American culture and history being the subjects of their discourse.

⁸⁴ Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Pantheon House, 1972, 215, monoskop.org/images/9/90/Foucault_Michel_Archaeology_of_Knowledge.pdf Accessed 13 June 2022.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 228.

By applying historical rhetoric and stereotypical demeanor, it grows effortless to maintain the approval and advocacy of these “truths” in the form of books, whose success they owe to the power the producer gives them. I made a visit in May 2022 to what was once the largest boarding school for Native American children, the Intermountain Indian School.⁸⁶ Located about 60 miles from the capital of Salt Lake City in Utah, Brigham City holds the school that consisted of over 10 buildings but now contains less than half of the original amount of structure and more of vast spaces of grass and empty land. On the mountains that lay behind the school’s property is a big painted letter “I” that can be seen from the entrance. As I entered the property and walked inwards, a man walking his dog approached me and asked how I was doing and what had brought me here. After some small talk and telling him that I came to the property for my research on Native American history in Utah, I learned that his name was Simon, and he was the caretaker of the property. He had disclosed to me as well that when the school was still open and operating, he used to come and spend time with the children that were enrolled there. As Simon spoke, I noticed a melancholic look on his face, and I decided not to go much into detail with him about his experience at that time or whether he had gone to this school himself. A woman on a bike with her son had stopped by us while we were talking and said hello to Simon with a friendly wave, told me what a nice man he is, and it appeared to me that Simon was a famous face to the residents in the area. Little did I know, it turns out the woman was living in the set of the buildings on the right of the property that have now

⁸⁶ Reed, Jon. “‘Some Lost Their Lives, Some Found Their Lives’: Remembering the Intermountain Indian School.” *KUER*, 17 Nov. 2021, www.kuer.org/race-religion-social-justice/2021-08-06/some-lost-their-lives-some-found-their-lives-remembering-the-intermountain-indian-school. Accessed 9 June 2022.

been transformed into an apartment complex, but that was just one of the few discoveries I would come to make. Before I said my farewell to Simon, he mentioned that I would find old bricks laying around from the demolished buildings and that I could take a few home with me, but those bricks in the context of my research would only represent a grim and permanent fragment in the collective memory of the Native American communities in Utah. Facing the remodeled apartment complex was one of many commemorative and informative plaques mounted by the Utah State University around the perimeters of the school. The plaques displayed photographs courtesy of the university's archives and special collections, of the students and teachers interacting through activities from reading to mechanical work, and of students' artworks and the campus.

What struck my attention as I read through all the plaques, was the prevailing rhetoric carved in them that spoke of the positive and lasting effect the school had left on its students even after its closure. The writings on the plaques emphasized the school's objectives that included training the students to acquire jobs and assimilating them into white society, without compromising their abilities to take pride in their Native American culture. Another plaque board stated that the students had appreciated the school's efforts and fought to keep it open. It is a fact that the school did offer more opportunities than other boarding schools⁸⁷, yet I questioned myself constantly as I read through the information until I reached the end of the property. Although the school did succeed in teaching the English language and vocational training and introducing new activities, why weren't there

⁸⁷ Reed, Jon. "Some Lost Their Lives, Some Found Their Lives': Remembering the Intermountain Indian School." *KUER*, 17 Nov. 2021, www.kuer.org/race-religion-social-justice/2021-08-06/some-lost-their-lives-some-found-their-lives-remembering-the-intermountain-indian-school. Accessed 9 June 2022.

any indications of *how* the assimilation had taken place? Why didn't they describe how the students' hair were cut, their language prohibited to be spoken and were part of a strategy to be removed from their indigenous families and surroundings?⁸⁸

By the end of my tour of the school, I reached one of the last set of buildings that once held the workshops and classrooms, and I made yet another astonishing and bitter discovery. It turns out, that these remaining buildings have been refurnished and remodeled and now host a furniture store, storage space and a mechanics shop. This property, over the course of time, will ultimately become a mere landmark of what used to be, of what has faded into history books and of what will vanish out of them and remain a fragment in the collective memory of the indigenous communities in Utah.

⁸⁸ Wride, Terence. "The Intermountain Indian School." *Intermountain Histories*, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at BYU, 31 May 2018, www.intermountainhistories.org/items/show/192. Accessed 15 June 2022.

4. The Media and American Education:

The obvious reason why cultural appropriation persists on being in hot water, despite the technological advancement that allows the globe to be digitally connected within seconds, is because the underlying and primary cause is not being repaired from its roots, from the vital pillar of any society, community, and knowledge itself – education. In the past couple of years, legislative action in the United States for educational matters has proved just so. The legislation of Nevada’s Assembly Bill 88 passed the Senate in May of 2021 that would ban the use of “identifiers” considered to be racially discriminatory, especially towards the federally recognized Native American nations, including but not limited to logos, names, chants, and mascots (with the exception of obtaining approval from the concerned nation).⁸⁹ This concerns various entities including businesses, geographical locations and a particular fixation on high schools and academic institutions. In that same year, a proposal addressed at the General Session at the Utah State Capitol to also prohibit the adoption of racially offensive identifiers was dismissed and failed to be passed by the Senate. In the same proposed resolution, it was directed that the Utah State Board of Education supply more knowledge and instruction on Native American culture and history.⁹⁰ The chief sponsor of the resolution, Representative Elizabeth Weight, stated in her introductory address to the House of Representatives that most white students undergo 12 years of education and learning at Utah schools with “little or no understanding of the people who inhabited the

⁸⁹ “Assembly Bill 88 Text.” *Nevada Legislature*, www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021/Bill/7369/Text. Accessed 18 May 2022.

⁹⁰ “H.C.R. 3 Concurrent Resolution Regarding Native American Mascots and Equality in Public Schools.” *Utah State Legislature*, le.utah.gov/%7E2021/bills/static/HCR003.html. Accessed 18 May 2022.

lands where the schools now sit.”⁹¹ Despite the urgency in Representative Weight’s tone in her speech, the House floor reciprocated the connotation with debate that gave off an ambience towards an issue of oversensitivity and of voluntary acceptance and pride by the Native Americans in the state.⁹² By the end of the debate, the voting count came to 27 votes with the bill and 45 against it, leading to its filing under the category of bills not passed. This was not 1955, nor was it 2010 – this was 2021. The Texas Legislature proposed a Senate bill in that same year by Representative Bryan Hughes that concerned and regulated the content and materials to be taught in social studies classes from kindergarten all the way to 12th grade. Under the name S.B.3, the bill introduced to ban the inclusion of critical race theory⁹³ and civil rights historical figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez and those prominent in Native American history, in instructional materials in classes. State leaders and officials had justified their approval of the bill’s succession by claiming that learning the authentic American history is what parents want their children to learn at schools, as opposed to being taught through the use of what Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick of Texas referred to as “ridiculous leftist narratives”.⁹⁴ This bill

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Representative Francis Gibson commented by contemplating whether PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) should be involved regarding the representation of animals as high school mascots, and Representative Rex Shipp claimed that Native Americans he spoke to are proud that their names are being used for this purpose.

⁹³ Critical Race Theory explains how racist ideologies are ingrained in social and political institutions of the United States, such as the judicial system, educational, healthcare, and financial institutions through their formation and implementation of laws and regulations. It also fixates on how that has shaped and reshaped the history and present of America. See Ray, Rashawn, and Alexandra Gibbons. “Why Are States Banning Critical Race Theory?” *Brookings*, 9 Mar. 2022, www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/07/02/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory, for more detail on the reason behind more states in the U.S. attempting to ban this theory in their classrooms.

⁹⁴ Stinson, Paul. “Texas Senate Votes to Remove Required Lessons on Civil Rights.” *Bloomberg Law*, 17 July 2021, news.bloomberglaw.com/social-justice/texas-senate-votes-to-remove-required-lessons-on-civil-rights. Accessed 31 May 2022.

also advocated for the prohibition of discussing and bringing up contemporary and controversial debates in the classrooms in fear of involving a one-sided perspective or bias.⁹⁵ The question is, will other states follow suit? And how will this impact those whose histories are being intentionally erased from institutions on the very land they were enslaved on and robbed of? Ignorance has become a privilege for the vetoed push to amend the injustices suffered at the hands of a system that's meant to protect them as the indigenous peoples whose land was taken away from them, the land the Americans now ironically call "land of the free and home of the brave". Following the leak of Supreme Court's draft opinion on rescinding the landmark decision of the *Roe v. Wade* case, the United States witnessed nationwide upsurge in protests against the decision's nullification, sparking outrage across the country, especially among women of color. The *Roe v. Wade* case of 1973 constituted abortion to be a legal and constitutional right before the viability of the fetus is determined, except for instances of rape, incest and danger posed to the mother's life.⁹⁶ What does this change mean for women of color and indigenous native women? Supposing that the decision is overturned, with women of color, minorities, and indigenous women bear the brunt of disadvantages, these demographic groups face even greater repercussions parallel to the underrepresentation of their needs in jurisdictive and civil arenas. Movements, such as the feminist movement and that of the abortion rights, were not taking indigenous

⁹⁵ For full bill details and content, see "Senate Bill 3, 87th Texas Legislature, Second Called Session – Update to Instructional Requirements and Prohibitions | Texas Education Agency." *Texas Education Agency*, 18 Nov. 2021, tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/senate-bill-3-87th-texas-legislature-second-called-session-update-to-instructional-requirements-and-prohibitions. Accessed 9 June 2022.

⁹⁶ Cornell Law School. "Roe v. Wade (1973)." *LLI / Legal Information Institute*, Cornell Law School, [www.law.cornell.edu/wex/roe_v_wade_\(1973\)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/roe_v_wade_(1973)). Accessed 26 May 2022.

women and women of color in consideration and to some extent still do not. So indigenous women did relatively have reach to reproductive health aid and rights but now that the 49-year-old Supreme Court decision that classified abortion in the United States as legal is in the works of possibly being overturned, women who are denied access to abortion have a higher probability of falling into poverty, increased exposure to domestic violence and hardships. Indigenous women living on reservations are considered among the most vulnerable and easily susceptible to sex trafficking and sexual violence, in addition to the domestic violence and poverty, thus with no abortion facilities available on the reservations, they have to depend on clinics and amenities outside their residence which are already often remote. This further puts the life of jeopardized women living on reservations in more threat, catalyzed by both psychosocial factors and government negligence regarding the necessities of reservation residents – particularly women.

The current controversy additionally uncovered a shortcoming in the U.S. administrative approach to Native American affairs and concerns. The sovereignty of the indigenous communities and their lands has been at stake under state control, especially relevant to contemporary and rising matters like that of the current abortion dispute. Operating abortion clinics on reservations instigates a number of issues; non-Natives and individuals who are not tribal members may not be able to access the on-reservation clinics as opposed to the liberty they would have with off-reservation clinics and Native women would still face obstacles for utilizing them due to domestic circumstances and limitations that may prevent their access. Moreover, the probability of being able to open such facilities on lands and reservations that already lack competent amenities is quite low, due to the scarcity of

funding by the Indian Health Service⁹⁷, and wasn't supplying Native women with the access they were entitled to when *Roe v. Wade* took effect.⁹⁸ Keeler indicates that due to the Indian Health Service being reliant on federal funding, Native women are left to depend on state-regulated abortion clinics and that also rests on their capability to afford these services.⁹⁹

A Native American village setting is installed in a Utah state park called This is the Place Heritage Park, that holds replicas of what historical settlement life in Utah was like when the Mormon settlers had arrived. A statue of Chief Massasoit, a Wampanoag Nation tribal leader in Massachusetts in 1620¹⁰⁰, is set up at the State Capitol building in Downtown Salt Lake City, Utah, as a tribute to the Chief who had approached the settlers aboard the *Mayflower* ship in Plymouth. Another model is a landmark erected in Pleasant Grove, Utah, memorializing the first Indian-Mormon battle that took place between Timpanogos Indians and Mormon settlers in 1849, which contributed to the nearby canyon and stream being named as Battle

⁹⁷ The Indian Health Services is an agency administered by and funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, responsible for serving the health and basic necessities of the federally recognized Native American nations, by ensuring to preserve the mental, physical, spiritual and social well-being of the tribes and nations. See <https://www.ihs.gov/aboutihs/> for information regarding an overview of the agency's objectives and statistics.

⁹⁸ Rose, Christina. "Native History: *Roe v. Wade* Passes, But Indigenous Women Lack Access." *Indian Country Today*, 15 Mar. 2021, indiancountrytoday.com/archive/native-history-ro-v-wade-passes-but-indigenous-women-lack-access. Accessed 25 May 2022.

⁹⁹ Keeler, Jacqueline. "Striking Down *Roe v. Wade* Leaves Native Women and Girls Even More." *Sierra Club*, 9 May 2022, www.sierraclub.org/sierra/striking-down-ro-v-wade-leaves-native-women-and-girls-even-more-vulnerable. Accessed 25 May 2022.

¹⁰⁰ Daley, Jason. "Massasoit, Chief Who Signed Treaty with the Pilgrims, To Be Reburied." *Smithsonian Magazine*, 21 Apr. 2017, www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/massasoit-chief-who-signed-treaty-pilgrims-be-reburied-180962928. Accessed 18 May 2022.

Creek.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, the fundamental question is this: what is the purpose in constructing a traditional Native American village-model in the middle of a state park, to exhibit the influence of the original inhabitants of Utah, when the value behind their history becomes merely material? Would it not then be mirroring the developing principle of some museums and exhibits, harboring pictures but without any words? Without the proper education and knowledge produced to the public, the objective of historical landmarks would be counterproductive, symbolizing a façade and the window-dressing of history. With Utah's failure to pass the bill to productively reform the ways in which indigenous history is disseminated in schools, it appears inevitable that the possibility of introducing a sister bill to alter the direction of education on American history is closer than anticipated.

On March 20th, 2022, a 19-year-old Native American man was shot by another Native American individual in the Grand Gateway Hotel in Rapid City, South Dakota. Immediately after the incident, the hotel owner Connie Uhre expressed her frustration with Native American crimes and invoked an administrative policy prohibiting the rental of rooms to any Native American and forbidding their presence on the hotel's property.¹⁰² On top of that, she had placed the blame on the city's mayor and system of governance through her post on the social media platform, Facebook, for collaborating with non-profit organizations, and further shared in the same post that a "very special" discount on nightly rates applies for ranchers and

¹⁰¹ Revelli, Bryce. "Battle Creek Marker." *Intermountain Histories*, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at BYU, 12 Jan. 2017, www.intermountainhistories.org/items/show/11. Accessed 18 May 2022.

¹⁰² Salcedo, Andrea. "A Hotel Banned Native Americans. The Sioux Served a Trespassing Order." *Washington Post*, 30 Mar. 2022, www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/03/30/south-dakota-hotel-native-americans. Accessed 16 June 2022.

travelers.¹⁰³ The implementation of this action taken by the management of the hotel backfired and became a nationwide matter of discrimination and racially offensive rhetoric against the indigenous nations of the state of South Dakota, leading some hotel employees to quit alongside its entire bar staff. Amid the backlash, Uhre hired armed guards and the hotel, being located on Native American land, was served a trespassing order by the Oglala Sioux tribal leaders¹⁰⁴, as it violates the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie.¹⁰⁵ According to the Rapid City Journal, the hotel has reopened at least as of May 4th, and no additional comments on the incident have been obtained despite attempts by journalists.¹⁰⁶ Considering the steps taken by the administration, with no supplementary or additional action taken by higher officials to effectively tackle the situation, the hotel should have probably not been allowed to resume business, let alone should have undergone a thorough investigation and comprehensive trial. Communities and societies should not have to resort to social media or a television box, to acquaint themselves with their surroundings. They would naturally open academic books to be aware of their true history and current topics, but if the most basic and essential source of information is

¹⁰³ Brown, Lee. "South Dakota Hotel Staff Quit in Protest after Owner Bans Native Americans." *New York Post*, 23 Mar. 2022, nypost.com/2022/03/23/hotel-staff-quit-in-protest-after-owner-bans-native-americans. Accessed 25 May 2022.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Named after the 1868 conference convened in Fort Laramie, present-day Wyoming, it intended to establish a truce between white settlers and the Sioux nations in the Dakota territory and designating the Black Hills region for the Sioux nations. The treaty was later breached when miners unearthed gold deposits in the region and forced the territorial boundaries of the tribal land to be redrawn. See Darus Clark, Linda. "Sioux Treaty of 1868." *National Archives*, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 23 Sept. 2016, www.archives.gov/education/lessons/sioux-treaty. Accessed 25 May 2022.

¹⁰⁶ Gee, Shalom Baer. "Grand Gateway Hotel, Cheers Lounge Reopen Following Racist Comment Fallout." *Rapid City Journal*, 9 June 2022, rapidcityjournal.com/news/grand-gateway-hotel-cheers-lounge-reopen-following-racist-comment-fallout/article_2a242f6c-970d-5807-8fb0-bf989ec68a9b.html. Accessed 16 June 2022.

fabricated, then no wonder the easiest alternative would be a television screen. For instance, Mother Earth was named by the indigenous communities to describe the soil we walk on, the air we breathe, and the water we drink, and they were mocked for their gullibility; for holding such sentiment towards the planet we live on. Now, Mother Earth is a widely used term to portray the earth in various occasions and situations like climate change issues, environmental demonstrations, and worst of them, at music festivals and art-focused events. Sage, crystal rocks, feathered headbands, fringe clothing, and moccasins are all materials and resources that belong to native cultures and are used for healing purposes, handicraft, traditional practices and to connect with the earth. They are not to be used as fashion statements, or social trends - that amounts to cultural appropriation, exactly like Coachella in California, or Burning Man in Nevada. Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, commonly known for short as Coachella, launched in 1999 representing various artists performing different genres of music but mainly electronic dance music (EDM).¹⁰⁷ The two-day, turned into 11-day event in Indio, California, also hosts novice art exhibitions and food and beverage trucks from distinct vendors. Attendees range from Madonna, Rage against the Machine to Beyonce and The Weeknd; clothing and outfits ranged from denim shorts and swimsuits to sundresses, fringed crop tops and feathered headbands. The festival has been a go-to for outfit inspirations of teens and young adolescents for years and has thus come under fire and scrutiny for promoting cultural appropriation. The adoption of traditions and customs of an ethnic minority (African American, Asian, Native American, etc.) by the dominant majority society evolved into a

¹⁰⁷ "Coachella Valley Festival | Music Festival, Indio, California, United States." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/art/Coachella-Valley-Festival. Accessed 18 May 2022.

popular trend, thanks to festivals like that of Coachella and Burning Man¹⁰⁸ and has caused outrage among those affected by appropriation of their own culture. As celebrities such as Kim Kardashian don box braids, which traces back to the African culture; models like Alessandra Ambrosio also find the courage to wear the feathered headdress known to be a sacred Native American garment¹⁰⁹ followed by the staple of Coachella, Vanessa Hudgens, who wears feathers in her hair and jewelry on her face, indirectly professing someone else's culture that makes up their *identity*. Displaying another individual's cultural value as a fashion statement or for the sole purpose of a selfie trend, dressing up as Pocahontas for Halloween and costume parties, verifies the aspect which factors in the element of ridicule and ignorance. The Intermountain West may not host Coachella, but it sure hosts its sister event, The Burning Man in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada. Many goers of the likes of such events claim such a wide terminology to describe the purpose of their being there, from finding inner peace, enjoying art, and to be one with nature and its home – Mother Earth. Mother Earth may be an expression for Coachella-goers and for nature-lovers, but for the Western Shoshone, the Diné, the Lakota and the countless number of diverse nations across North America, it signifies a spiritual connection and meaning with the earth and its elements, and all it is home to. Nature and its surroundings can symbolize different values for two very different realities. The West craves domination, regardless the being or the

¹⁰⁸ Burning Man refrains from calling itself a festival but describes itself as an annual gathering that supports self-expression and recognizes artists and their global engagement. See "About Us." *Burning Man*, Burning Man Project, 2022, burningman.org/about/about-us. Accessed 15 June 2022., for more details.

¹⁰⁹ "Supermodel Uses Sacred Headdress to Get Totally Stoked for Coachella." *Indian Country Today*, 3 Mar. 2021, indiancountrytoday.com/archive/supermodel-uses-sacred-headdress-to-get-totally-stoked-for-coachella. Accessed 18 May 2022.

size or the nature of what it yearns to dominate, and in the eyes of the Indigenous, domination is not synchronized with the existence of being. The natives desire to live in harmony with nature, something that the West views with money signs in its eyes - nature, land, soil, air, water, the environment are nothing but one: a means to material profit, that of money and power, such as the action taken by the Trump administration in 2017 towards the Bears Ears National Monument in Southeast Utah. The then-president had caused a national stir in ordering the biggest reduction of a protected national monument to go down in U.S. history.¹¹⁰ The land that holds Bears Ears is a land for herb collection by nations living nearby that formed the Bears-Ears Intertribal Coalition: Ute Mountain Utes, Hopi, Navajo, Pueblo, and Zuni Nations. Bears Ears has its own unique anecdote behind its name, which explains why the Native Americans in Utah, such as the Navajo and the Utes, hold it sacred. The national monument in San Juan County marks where creation began, and although each nation has their own adaptation of its contribution to creation, the land carries one unanimous meaning: the homeland. According to a storyteller of the Ute Nation¹¹¹, Larry Cesspooch, there was Bear who protected the Earth, the animals, and the people, and brought peace to the land, until there was the antagonist Coyote, who spread chaos.¹¹² As Bear guards the Native homeland, he sleeps beneath the Earth during hibernation, and when it is

¹¹⁰ “Trump Orders Largest National Monument Reduction in U.S. History”. *Morning Editions*, from NPR, 4 December 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwoway/2017/12/04/567803476/trump-dramatically-shrinks-2-utah-national-monuments>. Accessed 26 Mar. 2022.

¹¹¹ Mims, Bob. “A Spiritual Reason Utah Tribes Want to Protect Bears Ears: It’s Their Eden and Plays into Their Stories of the Creation.” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 Apr. 2018, www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/04/17/a-spiritual-reason-utah-tribes-want-to-protect-bears-ears-its-their-eden-and-plays-into-their-stories-of-the-creation. Accessed 27 May 2022.

¹¹² Ibid.

springtime, he comes out until it is time to hibernate again, but he keeps his head lifted to watch over the land and the White Mesa Utes. His ears, his snout and his head can be viewed from certain angles, and this is how the Bears Ears National Monument came to be named. Even traditional ceremonies are held there, which indicates clearly that it is a sacred land to them. The natives would gather herbs such as sage used for healing benefits and would spiritually connect with the plants and animals in that region through chants and conversations.¹¹³ Not to mention that indigenous land was and is still used as nuclear testing sites, but these forms of struggle against land rights and ecocide are not new.

Renowned actor Marlon Brando took Hollywood by storm in March of 1973, for his refusal of his Oscar Awards win for his acclaimed film *The Godfather*, not by himself but by Sacheen Littlefeather speaking on his behalf. The awards ceremony was simultaneously taking place as Oglala Lakota activists took over the South Dakota town, Wounded Knee, known to represent a milestone in the Native American history of massacres 132 years ago. The occupation of Wounded Knee lasted for 71 days, but the approximately 3-minute nonacceptance of the Oscar award by Littlefeather, then-president of the National Native American Affirmative Image Committee, is still recounted to this very day among the most controversial moments in the history of film and entertainment. Not to mention, besides being booed off the stage by part of the awards' crowd, Littlefeather's presence was a subject of mockery moments later by the famed Hollywood cowboy, actor Clint Eastwood and 60s' leading lady Raquel Welch, wondering whether the dead cowboys in Western films should be credited and if

¹¹³ Keeler, Jacqueline. *Edge of Morning: Native Voices Speak for the Bears Ears*. 2017, 17. See Keeler's book for a collection of interviews with local Utah tribal leaders regarding the impact and significance of Bears Ears National Monument.

the winner of the next award hopefully didn't have a cause as well, respectively.¹¹⁴

In 1992, Carrie and Mary's brother Clifford Dann took a stand against the case like his sisters, but this time against the captivity and impoundment of the ranch's horses and cattle by the Bureau of Land Management and its rangers. By drenching himself with gasoline and attempting to light himself on fire (a method many individuals have taken up to deliver their message such as the incidents of the Arab Spring¹¹⁵), he was charged with endangerment and assault of a federal officer. His exact words to the BLM were "you are taking away our lives".¹¹⁶ Land is not a piece of material or a means to produce material gain, but it is a matter of belonging, a sense of community - a mark of identity. Take away land, you take away rights. Dispose of land and its soil, you not only dispose of, but you eradicate the very existence of a community, the core essence of sustainability and development. Supposing that a whole group in its entirety sustains through the violence, with every individual of that group surviving, the attempt to even deny the occurrence of a genocidal instance should be considered impossible if we were to take up Lemkin's interpretation of what constitutes an act of genocide. The foundation of Lemkin's concept lies in the circumstances and resources that would threaten the evolution, existence and continuity

¹¹⁴ "Marlon Brando's Oscar® win for "The Godfather"." *YouTube*, uploaded by Oscars, 02 October 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QUacU0I4yU>. Accessed 15 June 2022.

¹¹⁵ In 2010, during the emergence of the era of Arab revolutions, Mohamed Bouazizi had lit himself on fire in his country of Tunisia to protest unemployment. See Lageman, Thessa. "Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi: The Man Who Sparked the Arab Spring." *Arab Spring: 10 Years on | Al Jazeera*, 22 Dec. 2020, www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/12/17/remembering-mohamed-bouazizi-his-death-triggered-the-arab for more information on this incident.

¹¹⁶ Churchill, Ward. *Struggle for the Land: Indigenous Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Expropriation in Contemporary North America*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1992, 180.

of an ethnic community and group. Lemkin asserts through this notion that the disintegration of their basic needs to exist means their identity is bordering on extinction and may be inconceivable to preserve it and create a life of it again (and yes, pun intended for reason of emphasis). Land to those who see nothing but money and value nothing but power, becomes worthless and easy to trash away. Must I repeat the Palestinian case to clarify further, or was that implied? Or would the illegal use of Latin American land add more perspective to it?

VII. CONCLUSION:

In a private phone call I conducted in January 2022 with former director of the American Indian Resource Center at the University of Utah, Dr. Franci Taylor, she had told me that “history is taught by the victor”. Her statement had stuck with me from the moment I ended the phone call till the end of my entire research process. By observing the patterns of legislative modifications over the recent years in the United States, it becomes simple to notice that progress for preserving Native American integrity is declining rapidly. The enacted statutes, be they in Utah, Nevada, or any of the states in America, have become nothing more of a placebo – or a resemblance to a morphine injection. In the case of Native American communities, regulations put in place to merely enforce the law, cater to the illusion that the justice system is in favor of the individuals of these communities (and not to mention as well as the African Americans and others considered as minority populations), when in truth it may as well be just lip service. As morphine functions to temporarily alleviate pain but do not remove the pain entirely, so do laws and principles that are currently in place like those of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Initiatives in privately-owned companies that advocate for services and that benefit the Native American communities, such as programs founded for healthcare access, give some sort of relief when one realizes that the responsibility of social and racial equity no longer falls on the government.

The intrusion of the religion of Mormonism into the state of Utah and parts of Nevada marked only the tip of the iceberg for the changes that would come to cultivate and transform into irreversible fallouts that would alter Native American life forever. In Nevada, Western Shoshone sisters,

Mary and Carrie Dann, continued to live in defiance of the federal authorities and the Bureau of Land Management which strived to remove them off their ancestral land in Nevada, until their deaths in 2005 and 2021 respectively. Their story lived on to be a turning point in Native America's incessant resilience notwithstanding authoritative treatment and oppression, of its generations' past and for generations to come. The forced destitution that the indigenous Nations were left to rely on, from settler enslavement to housing on barren lands, has worsened over time since the commencement of indigenous displacement and their re-placement for gentrification profits. The persistent deficiency of adequate health resources on these reservations, sanitary water access and sufficient living conditions required to maintain their traditional modes of living, such as culinary preparation and medicinal techniques for traditional healing - the very basic human rights and the core essentials that founded the Native American society. This chain thus results in increased illness and mortality rates, decreased fertility and birth rates, which generates staggering unemployment rates and high risk of domestic and sexual violence among families – alcoholism being the top lead in the category. A study conducted in 2020 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration revealed that in 2018 alone, 58.8% of youth aged 18 and above were drinkers.¹¹⁷ Alcoholism and emotional deterioration could potentially continue to rise amid current

¹¹⁷ Regulated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the research studied substance, tobacco and alcohol use and misuse among youth aged 12 and above. See for the full report on the study and its statistics: N. Lipari, Rachel, and Park-Lee, Eunice. "Results From The 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*, June 2020, www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2018-nsduh-detailed-tables. Accessed 17 May 2022.

situations that will eventually impact Native American women and girls catastrophically.

Incidents in schools aren't immune to government negligence either. In 2011, a student at Juban Pare Junior High School in Louisiana was sent home and told not to come back until he had his long hair, a Native American cultural tradition, to be cut short, as it violates the school grooming policy.¹¹⁸ The American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana filed a lawsuit against the school's administration based on the protection of religious freedom and practices. 10 years later, a 5-year-old Native American boy in Texas was also sent home from kindergarten and given a punishment for wearing his hair long. The American Civil Liberties Union in the state also filed a case against the Martinez Elementary School for committing a civil rights violation, especially after the school had asked his parents to provide proof of Native American heritage, as that breaches Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹¹⁹ Less than 1 year later, in March 2022, a first grader had his long braids snipped without his permission by classmates in Del City Elementary School, Oklahoma. The student is of Kickapoo origin, an indigenous tribe of Oklahoma. When the Oklahoma 4 News station reached the school to make clear what their policies were on such an incident, the station was only provided with the policy on non-discrimination that delineates the school district intolerance on discrimination based on race, color, origin, gender, etc.¹²⁰ The leader of the American Indian

¹¹⁸ "Native American Student Suspended for Refusal to Cut Hair." *American Civil Liberties Union*, 18 Mar. 2011, www.aclu.org/press-releases/native-american-student-suspended-refusal-cut-hair. Accessed 31 May 2022.

¹¹⁹ Thompson, Darren. "Native American Kindergarten Student Punished for Having Long Hair." *Native News Online*, 18 Nov. 2021, nativenewsonline.net/currents/native-american-kindergarten-student-punished-for-having-long-hair. Accessed 31 May 2022.

¹²⁰ Moss, Ashley. "Controversy Continues Over Del City Native American First Grader's Unwanted Haircut." *Oklahoma News 4*, 25 Mar. 2022, kfor.com/news/local/controversy-

Movement, Nokuse Wind, called for heightened measures for education on cultural sensitivity, in wake of this case and those that came before it, and perhaps to those that will follow it if it continues to be that no concrete action is taken to protect Native American customs rightfully and legally. This proves one of the seemingly infinite ways in which once again the law – the highest protector of justice – is deliberately paying no mind to implementing a solution to the problem they already are fully aware of. As I reached the conclusion of this research paper, on the morning of Friday June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court overturned the forty-nine-year-long decision of *Roe v. Wade*. As of that moment, states now had the power at their own discretion to either allow or deny women the access to abortion. The urgency of this situation stands regardless of whether one is with or against abortion access because there lie broader implications that will surely impact the lives of those who rely on such service to ensure their safety and privacy.

Cultural genocide in the Intermountain West and all over the United States is not a mere matter of the integrity of knowledge or education, as it simply cannot be diluted to just these aspects as factors contributing to its occurrence. It is the intent, whether subliminal or out in the open, that fosters the rationale that justifies its neglected occurrence. Media, globalization, and the advancement of technological wealth did not escalate cultural appropriation. Both evident legal deformities and the improper production of knowledge creating those flaws in the American schooling system is the epitome for no effort to work against falsification of information in textbooks, and for the idealization of pop culture of America. It would be

continues-over-del-city-native-american-first-graders-unwanted-haircut. Accessed 31 May 2022.

ridiculous to blame music festivals, the entertainment industry and news outlets for the continued aggression on indigenous cultures, without condemning the institutional system that catered them for more than 200 years. If the American academic institutions took the initiative as they should have long ago, to reform the educational narrative and content in middle- and high school curriculums, public communication and media wouldn't have had the strength to do what they do. The urge to debate yet on whether Native American cultural appropriation is a contemporary issue requiring reform and discussion, only mirrors the true interior of the Western/American attributes. The reluctance to act on matters adversely impacting indigenous communities is evident in the institutions that Foucault describes as messengers of orders sent down from those with the upper hand (the government), one of those institutions he emphasizes on being the education sector, that retains the power of one social class while ruling out another social class's modes of power.¹²¹ This approach reintroduces Foucault's theory mentioned in the third chapter of this research, whereby academic institutions embody producers of a certain discourse, as they are vulnerable to the exposure of knowledge and discourse regulation, of what is right and what is untrue – of what is legal and what is criminal. Chomsky did not only agree with Foucault, but he further expanded the argument by affirming that the power in the hands of the State has the competence to impose notions of what is considered legal, but he underlines the fact that power does not necessarily always entail justice.¹²²

Cultural assimilation was never meant as a choice but was more of an intrusion and primarily an imposition. The only choice the natives were handed

¹²¹ "Chomsky-Foucault Debate on Power vs Justice (1971)", *YouTube*, uploaded by Philosophy Overdose, 20 July 2021, <https://youtu.be/xpVQ3l5P0A4>. Accessed 5 July 2022.

¹²² *Ibid.*

by the settlers, a colonial ploy, was one of two: live the way we tell you to live or lose your life and everything you own. What was then forced displacement and removal of Indigenous children, is now under the practice of adoption and foster care. These procedures implement the savior/victim complex, where the child lives a horrible and unjust life on the reservation only to be rescued by the passionate and stable family living in peace and security. If it truly was for the welfare and in the best interest of the child, wouldn't there be an alternative to the options of removal for adoption, such as rehabilitation for the guardians or parents? This represents a chain that could not and cannot be broken, as it comes with irreversible damages. Removing and separating a child from their home indicates detaching them from their warmth, security, and identity; from everything they've known ever since they've opened their eyes. That means placing them in completely new surroundings, cutting the bonds between that child and their kin, their families and especially their land. The expansion of American forces first in North America, then later in the Middle East and Central American nations like Nicaragua and El Salvador, was instigated by the jingoistic philosophy of Manifest Destiny. Children on both sides were victims of its aftermath, and boarding schools were just another means to another end.

The boarding schools may be shut down, but the system it ran on still exists to this very day, but in a different form. A suspected 12 Paiute children are assumed to be buried under the Panguitch Indian Boarding School in Panguitch, Utah, a research study suggests¹²³. This remains under

¹²³ Tanner, Courtney, and Lee Bitsóí, Alastair. "Bodies of Paiute Children Believed to Be Buried at Site of Former Utah Indigenous Boarding School." *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 Aug. 2021, www.sltrib.com/news/education/2021/08/23/bodies-paiute-children. Accessed 30 Mar. 2022.

investigation, but if the suspicion proves true, then what remains to be asked of whether both cultural and physical genocide have ensued in the Intermountain West or not? What else remains to inspect if there are other indigenous children buried underneath boarding schools around Utah and Nevada? Let alone boarding schools that perhaps may not be known to exist or schools that have been demolished. The indigenous boarding schools in Utah that still stand to this day, like the Panguitch Indian Boarding School and the Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, may not be open and working but have certainly left a scar for the tribal families that stood their ground and for the generations that followed. These wounds linger as a reminder of a constant battle, and as a gravestone of a culturally genocidal history of a nation that preaches on democracy, human rights, and individual freedom to the rest of the world. Small native shops stand all around Utah, ranging from handmade clothing stores to traditional restaurants, that defy the negativism and stand their ground on their own land that their people have been expelled from – the land they still maintain to call home.

As October 10th marks an annual holiday, the American nation continues to be divided between those who celebrate Columbus' Day and those who commemorate Indigenous Peoples' Day – between those who are proud of their nation's past and those who still grieve from this nation's past. Indigenous Peoples' Day is not a federally recognized holiday, but rather a choice of a holiday: while attempts to cancel out Columbus Day and replace it with Indigenous Peoples' Day have failed, both days are recognized in both Utah and Nevada.¹²⁴ Legislators in multiple states across the nation faced

¹²⁴ A proclamation by the Governor of Nevada in 2021 announced August 9th to be Indigenous Peoples' Day and Columbus Day to remain on the second Monday of October, while both days fall on the second Monday of October in Utah. See for details about the

backlash when it was proposed to discard of Columbus Day as a national holiday, due to its observance as the birth of America's discovery and by many as a day of Italian American heritage¹²⁵, and to replace its common understanding to commemorate Native Indian history and rename it Indigenous Peoples' Day. Utah's Pioneer Day is no exception when it comes to the holiday debacle, as it is a state-specific day that is celebrated on July 24th annually, in which the Mormon pioneers arrived in 1847 at the Great Salt Lake and established the land to be their new home, marking the founding of the state of Utah – completely disregarding their existence and value. Native America has become a watered down and commercialized history. Retail stores across the states take advantage of these days to slash their prices and offer sales to increase consumer business - rendered at the expense of Native American sentiment and historical significance. The term “cultural genocide”, per both Lemkin's definition and that of the United Nations, has deeper connotations than how it is interpreted. When we piece together the means implemented by the United States government towards the indigenous peoples and their necessities for existence, we observe the gradual but immense indirect physical and cultural genocide against the Native American peoples. By combining the lack of healthcare, sanitation and housing access, the return of boarding school behaviors, the cultural appropriation of Native American identity, and the meager distribution of knowledge surrounding Native American culture (including but not limited to the practice of school mascots, fashion statements and media

proclamation: “Indigenous Peoples Day in Nevada.” *Nv.Gov*, gov.nv.gov/News/Proclamations/2021/Indigenous_Peoples%E2%80%99_Day_in_Nevada. Accessed 18 May 2022.

¹²⁵ Weaver, Jennifer. “Indigenous People Day Is Commemorated in Salt Lake City along with Columbus Day.” *KUTV*, 14 Oct. 2019, kutv.com/news/local/indigenous-people-day-is-commemorated-in-salt-lake-city-not-columbus-day. Accessed 11 May 2022.

stereotypes), a frame is illustrated and thus completes the larger picture that constitutes the description of contemporary cultural genocide against the indigenous peoples in the United States. Why would it make sense to bring other nation-states to the International Criminal Court for criminal tribunals pertaining to war crimes and crimes against humanity in their pasts, but not to bring the United States of America for its genocidal past and continuous cultural genocide against the indigenous peoples?

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