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TRIBAL CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN ZUNI PUEBLO

Information Access in a Cautious Community

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If I had to characterize the Zuni or their Pueblo neighbors in one word the word would be *silent*.
—Larry McMurtry

Despite many attempts by Zuni Pueblo people to remain private about our culture, a continuous stream of colonizers, anthropologists, settlers, and tourists have never respected our privacy. Since the late 1800s, Zuni people have been under intense research scrutiny by ethnographers and anthropologists (Colwell 2017; McFeely 2001). Research by outsiders has resulted in the publication and dissemination of ancient sacred knowledge, esoteric traditions, and religious practices—without free, prior, and informed consent of Zunis. The information and knowledge collected was not the author’s information to share or the readers’ to know. In addition, subsequent publications build on this unethical work and continue to depict us only as historic people, ignoring our contemporary lives, which are a mix of our traditional culture and modern conveniences. All of these factors have resulted in a community-wide distrust of research, common in many Native and Indigenous communities (Smith 2012).

We are members of Zuni Pueblo. We are also library and information science/studies (LIS) professionals. We are part of a steadily growing number of Native scholars actively engaged in responsible research practices that privilege and center tribal sovereignty with regard to each tribe’s information resources. We recognize that the cultural desire to remain private about our knowledge systems can clash with

foundational purposes of libraries, which primarily support full access to any and all information. We also recognize that a fraught history of the representation of our people embedded in Western collecting practices means that the information available does not adequately serve Zuni people seeking information about Zuni subject areas. As researchers and tribal members, we realize there is a distinct need for accurate and appropriate information about Zunis, particularly for Zuni people.

Such accurate and appropriate information should be created by Zuni people, sharing our voices and perspectives on who we are, where we came from, and how we will continue. Many information sources already exist; some are written, but some are documented in other forms such as stories, songs, artwork, and ceremonies. Considering the importance of this information, accessing the content from any of these forms should be done respectfully and in accordance with Zuni epistemologies.

To that purpose, the Pueblo has created its own cultural institutions, and has initiated a number of information-sharing projects in an effort to retain authority over what information gets shared and for what purpose, for both tribal members and nonmembers. Our institutions include the archeology program, the archives office, and the Zuni Cultural Resources Advisory Team (ZCRAT), comprising the leaders of various religious groups in Zuni. One of the projects, discussed later, is the Zuni Map Art Project, initiated by the A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center (AAMHC). The formation of Zuni institutions centering Zuni voices are examples of counter-narratives or counterstories, “a method of telling the stories of people whose experiences are not often told” (Solórzano and Yosso 2002, 32) and a tool often used by Critical Race Theorists (Parsons, Rhodes, and Brown 2011). Native peoples’ efforts to challenge erroneous misinformation circulated about us, without our knowledge or consent, serve as a response to the long history of exploitation of our culture by outsiders. Counternarratives reinforce sovereignty and self-determination by allowing us to shape the output of information regarding us to be based on our sociopolitical, lived realities, realities virtually ignored by non-Natives.

In this chapter we engage Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) to examine three projects that share Zuni cultural information and knowledge. This theory provides a relevant framework, as it is based on the acknowledgment that “colonization is endemic to society” (Brayboy 2005, 428), and for Indigenous people, this reality affects all aspects of our experience: personal, professional, historical, and contemporary. TribalCrit empowers us as Native women in academia as it recognizes stories as data and provides space to discuss our tribal knowledge practices while also thoughtfully critiquing how our LIS field often disregards Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous experts.

The projects discussed here place TribalCrit into practice and illustrate strategies Zunis have used to access tribal knowledge in our own community while being respectful of sensitive and privileged information. Finally, we include a dialogue between us about a current project to digitize Zuni language materials and our thoughts about balancing roles as academics and tribal members. Our goal is to highlight projects that are contributing to the continuance of our culture, traditions, and lifeways. These projects are not replacing, but are complementing the millennia-old methods Shiwis (our name for ourselves) have developed to document and pass on our various ways of knowing. While we primarily focus on our specific tribal community, the themes of information taking and importance of tribal philosophies as guiding principles likely characterize other Native American experiences. Non-Indigenous LIS practitioners should consider these concepts in relation to their local tribal communities, Native collections, and outreach services.

To this end, we will not begin our discussion with the linear layout typically found in the field of Native and Indigenous studies by first providing a background of who and where our community is located. Instead, we choose to begin by addressing the possible uses of TribalCrit for Indigenous LIS scholars and practitioners. Our goal is to examine the relevance and applicability of TribalCrit for our fellow Indigenous LIS professionals, tribal community members, and non-Indigenous allies before highlighting the potentials of applying the TribalCrit framework to projects and information institutions at work in our home community of Zuni Pueblo.

TRIBAL CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Developed by Lumbee scholar Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy in 2005, Tribal Critical Race Theory, or TribalCrit, draws inspiration and guidance from the fields of Critical Race Theory (CRT), anthropology, political/legal theory, political science, American Indian literatures, education, and American Indian studies to provide a framework that acknowledges the complicated and complex history of Native peoples existing and resisting in the United States. Brayboy posits that TribalCrit, while influenced greatly by CRT, “is rooted in the multiple, nuanced, and historically and geographically-located epistemologies and ontologies found in Indigenous communities” (Brayboy 2005, 427).

While CRT is a useful theoretical lens to examine issues of power, law, and race, its limitations when applied to Native communities in the US context are, ironically, *because of “race.”* American Indians and Alaska Natives, as we are federally identified

and subsequently labeled, are not just an ethnic and racial category of minoritized peoples; we hold *a different political status* from other US citizens (US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.). Our political status as political entities, complete with our sovereign rights as governments, was acknowledged with treaties signed between government agents and tribal leaders and has been affirmed through an entire canon of state, federal, and Supreme Court cases (US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.). The complicated and complex history Brayboy references is different for every Native community, even as we share many of the same struggles under the weight of colonialism. While CRT identifies racism and various systems of oppression meant to limit access to education for People of Color, it lacks a widespread acknowledgment that the entirety of Native ways of knowing—including, but certainly not limited to, our conceptions of what constitutes information and knowledge, and our specific protocols regarding the sharing of our information resources—has been specifically targeted for eradication and erasure. While the methods of elimination of Native culture and communities have morphed from the blatant (outright genocide, containment through the reservation systems, forced assimilation through the cruelty of the board and residential schools) to the quietly insidious (continued land theft, predatory economics, and broken treaties) (Fixico 2008; Simpson 2014), the challenges specific to Native communities are not central to CRT. TribalCrit was born out of this gap and this need within the CRT space, and thus it has at its core the needs of Native communities.

The nine basic tenets of TribalCrit are listed below; bolded tenets are directly referenced throughout the chapter:

- 1. Colonization is endemic to society.**
2. US policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White Supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
- 4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.**
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
- 6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.**
- 7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but**

they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.

8. **Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.**
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work toward social change. (Brayboy 2005, 429–430)

Tribal Critical Race Theory is a tool that should be broadly utilized in library and information science (LIS) to recognize the problematic processes in the field that serve to marginalize and even erase the Indigenous experience. While strides have been taken by some to acknowledge Indigenous systems of organizing information and knowledge in mainstream information institutions (Webster and Doyle 2008) and the pervasive colonialism in the subfield of knowledge organization (Littletree, Belarde-Lewis, and Duarte 2020), there is ample room for critique of the LIS profession when it comes to incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into the field. TribalCrit has thus far not been utilized by the LIS field, and we use it here to discuss three Zuni Pueblo information resources created and shared in ways that respect tribal knowledge structures and for the purpose of strengthening our culture and traditions.

COLONIZATION IS ENDEMIC TO SOCIETY

A discussion of the history of any Indigenous community must include an acknowledgment and analysis of the destructive nature of colonization on the bodies, languages, spiritual practices, and homelands of Native peoples. The pervasive and long-standing nature of colonialism and the actions that uphold and maintain colonization are numerous and include the privileging of written sources over all other forms of documentation. American Indian communities in the US who adopted a constitutional system with public elections in the early twentieth century (Wyaco 1998, 67–70) began keeping records about tribal meetings, documenting policies and tribal resolutions. While easier from a bureaucratic standpoint, these records conflicted with millennia-old formats of transferring knowledge, which in Zuni Pueblo include the oral tradition, ceremonies, and art. Similar to nearly all Native communities, Zuni people have experienced a diminished reliance on the oral tradition as our governance model has shifted from a theocracy to public elections (Isaac 2007, 17). While the religious leadership in the community is highly respected and the ceremonial calendar determines a large part of the community's social structure, we acknowledge that our elected governance replicates Western political structure; this is further confirmation that colonization is endemic to us

all (TribalCrit tenet 1) and impels Native people to address colonization within our own systems.

Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.

In 1978, Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr. wrote “The Right to Know,” a paper that outlined what he saw as an “imperative need” of Native communities—the need to know. He wrote that Indian communities need “to know the past, to know the traditional alternatives advocated by their ancestors, to know the specific experiences of their communities, and to know about the world that surrounds them in the same intimate manner they once knew the plains, mountains, deserts, rivers and woods” (Deloria 1978, 13). The paper was prepared for the 1978 White House Preconference on Indian Library and Information Services on or near Reservations. In addition to asserting that Native peoples should be able to know the specifics of legislation regarding them and their lands, Deloria stated that Native peoples specifically negotiated for education provisions in their treaties. He argued that if libraries had been as much of a public right at the time of treaty signings, they certainly would have been specifically negotiated for at the time. Bringing libraries into a present-day context, Deloria called for “direct funding *from the federal government to tribes for library, information and archival services* and [said] every effort should be made in joint planning to transmit the major bulk of records dealing with tribal histories to modern and adequate facilities on the reservations” (Deloria 1978, 13; emphasis added).

As Native communities continue to create and sustain their own libraries, archives, and museums, these tribal information institutions are uniquely positioned to forge and strengthen tribal sovereignty. As tribes assert our positions in defense of our treaty rights and our abilities to self-determine the future of Native communities, tribal information institutions will continue to play a pivotal role. Granted, the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the information field, specifically libraries and museums, is a complicated one, one discussed briefly in the next section.

LIBRARIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Libraries have a complex history in relation to Indigenous peoples, considering the fact that governmental policies have an assimilationist agenda, which privileges the written word and ignores the many manifestations of Indigenous knowledge (Tribal-Crit tenet 6). Often the materials in libraries reflect the stereotypes of tribal communities, rarely including our voices (Bowers, Crowe, and Keeran 2017). The privileging

of non-Native perspectives and consideration of outsiders as “experts”—instead of the Indigenous people who embody their cultures and worldviews—has often led to weariness and skepticism from Native people in considering libraries as resources (Burke 2007). Perhaps not surprisingly, less than 1 percent of academic librarians in the United States identify as Native American (American Library Association 2012); therefore, these embedded colonial practices in libraries are rarely acknowledged by information institutions.

Unfortunately, there are a multitude of examples illustrating ways in which the library enacts colonial practice. Standard cataloging, description, and metadata used in libraries ignores Indigenous place-names, utilizes inconsistent spelling and naming of peoples, and uses terms meant to erase the abuse and violence enacted on Indigenous peoples (Webster and Doyle 2008; Cooper et al. 2019). These practices are known barriers to Indigenous studies researchers, both Native and non-Native (Cooper et al. 2019), ultimately counteracting the stated aim of libraries, which is to enable knowledge access.

These factors (mistrust of Western cultural institutions, few Indigenous librarians in the profession, inaccurate descriptive metadata) lead to the common occurrence of Indigenous researchers inadvertently discovering tribal knowledge they are not meant to access, or do not want to access. Information-sharing practices in Zuni are based on a variety of factors including gender, clan group, religious initiation, family group, and age, but libraries have often disregarded our protocols for accessing knowledge, either through ignorance or indifference. We have both experienced reading a description of a ceremony or sacred being, or viewing a photograph of an item we think might have ceremonial purposes—and only then realizing we should not be accessing this information due to our community role. Based on our conversations with other Zuni people who regularly conduct research for education or professional purposes, we know these disturbing situations are common.

Yet there are models for improvement in cultural institutions, developed either in collaboration with or solely by and for Indigenous people. For example, The Mashantucket Pequot Thesaurus of American Indian Terminology is a controlled vocabulary developed to better reflect Indigenous knowledge classification, for use in the Mashantucket Pequot Museum (Littletree and Metoyer 2015). The Makah Culture and Research Center in Neah Bay, Washington, houses an extensive archeological collection and community interviews documenting the community’s millennia-old history of whaling (Bowe chop and Erikson 2005). There is also Sípnuuk, the Karuk tribe’s digital repository, built on the Mukurtu content management system (Karuk Tribe et al. 2007). Mukurtu is an open-source content management system (CMS) developed for

Indigenous community use, as it allows a variety of levels of access to cultural materials, recognizing and allowing for traditional knowledge system organization (Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation, n.d.). These successful projects illustrate the possibilities for truly representative libraries that reflect Indigenous worldviews rather than obfuscate the history and contemporary lives lived by Indigenous people today.

HOME: ZUNI PUEBLO

Now we shift focus to Zuni Pueblo, first describing the people and the place.

Zuni Pueblo is located on the Zuni Reservation about twenty minutes from the eastern Arizona border. Zuni is the largest of the nineteen pueblos in New Mexico, with a population of about 12,000 residents (Zuni Pueblo Census Office, in conversation with the author, 2018). The Pueblos have common elements of lifestyles and philosophies while maintaining their unique identities (Sando and All Indian Pueblo Council 1976, 4). Like the other pueblo communities, Zuni is rich in culture, language, and ceremonial practices that have existed for thousands of years. The Zuni leadership moved from a theocracy to an elected council structure in the 1930s (Wyaco 1998, 67–68), although it is still the religious leaders of the community who confer authority on the incoming elected leader every four years. The spiritual obligations of the Zuni people guide the social calendar, with residents contributing in both direct and tangential ways. Zuni traditions would not continue without the Zuni language, which is a linguistic isolate, completely different from the language families of the nineteen other pueblos (Sando and All Indian Pueblo Council 1976, 4–5).

While such description gives the facts about Zuni, we also want to share what it is like to be a Zuni tribal member. Spirituality and humor are the threads that run throughout Zuni life. Shiwis like to laugh and enjoy spending time with our families, often cooking and eating together, which is especially important around times of ceremony. Though it is common to hear the Zuni language being spoken at home and in school, many of us are not fluent; however, most of us can greet, joke, and pray in our language. Art has always been a way for us to share Zuni stories and culture within our community. Zuni is known for our artists, who create jewelry, pottery, and 2-D art grounded in traditional symbols and imagery.

Zuni people know the stories of why we live at Halona I'diwana (the Middle Place), how we survived attacks by Spanish conquistadors and other tribes, and why we have to value and cherish our culture by continuing our traditional ways. Our

ancestors and our children are counting on us. They guide us in our daily lives, and we engage in library/archive/museum work always thinking of them.

INFORMATION PRACTICES IN ZUNI

With the religious cycles guiding daily life, information about the ceremonies shared orally in the Zuni language is powerful and valuable. We grew up knowing that information is shared with individuals based on one's clan group, specific roles a male family member may have in a religious group, life-altering events, and other factors. Zuni people understand that information and knowledge are powerful; we understand and accept that there is some information that is known by only a select few in our village (Enote 2011, 4). This tacit knowledge is also recognized by outsiders. Described by a non-Zuni researcher, Zuni knowledge is shared in both the familial realm (everyday use) and the differentially privileged realm (with others in the same religious society) (Isaac 2007, 35). Information about all aspects of Zuni lifeways is vital to our continued existence; therefore, we have developed unique systems of knowledge organization, sharing, and access (TribalCrit tenet 5). However, these systems are consistently disregarded by non-Native outsiders, including researchers from across the academic spectrum.

ZUNI PEOPLE AS SUBJECTS OF RESEARCH

Former Zuni Pueblo governor Malcolm Bowekaty is straightforward in his judgment of outsider research with our people as the subjects: "Research can be dangerous and divisive for our people" (2002, 148). He mentions the harmful history of ethnographic research done in the pueblo as a direct reason for the creation of a tribal council review process for potential research to be conducted today. While Bowekaty focused on harm related to health and biological research, he conversely recognizes that some research can be useful. His point is that research *about* Zunis needs to *benefit* Zuni people. As tribal members who are also part of the LIS profession, we are acutely aware of the contradictions between these conflicting worldviews and exercise great care when working with our community or advocating for Native peoples in the LIS field.

The following section discusses how the application of a TribalCrit lens can be used as a methodological and epistemological tool when analyzing Native projects, particularly when the Native community initiating these projects has a century-long distrust of information-gathering institutions.

APPLYING TRIBALCRIT TO A CAUTIOUS COMMUNITY

Although Western cultural institutions are often problematic for Indigenous people, we have also seen promising examples of how these organizations can be decolonized and Indigenized. As Native peoples develop our own institutions and center our ways of knowing, we create counternarratives that focus on what we envision for, and how we will continue in, the future (Sumida Huaman and Brayboy 2017). Next, we review examples of such counterstories that Zuni cultural institutions have created to share Zuni knowledge within the community, illustrating TribalCrit tenets in practice.

TOOLS OF ART, HUMOR, AND HISTORY

The A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center (AAMHC) was founded in 1992 (Isaac 2007). Its purpose since the beginning has been to reflect the living culture, language, and *ways of knowing of the Zuni people, for the Zuni people*. The AAMHC is an eco-museum, not focused on building a collection of objects to care for but instead primarily focused on community outreach and long-term projects that center Zuni history (Isaac 2007). The AAMHC has actively worked to correct misinformation about Zuni people documented through the work of outsiders. Two examples of the tribe retelling history through projects centering the Zuni perspective are the book *A Zuni Artist Looks at Frank Hamilton Cushing*, with cartoons drawn by tribal member Phil Hughte, and the Zuni Map Art Project. *A Zuni Artist* was published by the A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center in 1994. Cushing was one of the first ethnographers to come to Zuni, in 1879 (McFeely 2001), and he published extensively about Zuni culture. Many of his writings are still referenced today, with outsiders recognizing him as an expert on our community. He was well known in his time because he came to be regarded as a member of the pueblo: he was initiated into a religious society, learned the language, and generally lived like a Zuni. However, Cushing, as the Zuni artist Hughte notes, “dug too far” and violated the trust bestowed on him by the community (Hughte, Sneddon, and Ruiz 2003). Appallingly, Cushing created and sold replicas of religious items when he returned to his post at the Smithsonian (Colwell 2017, 25), had portraits taken while wearing the replica (Hughte 1994, 96, 105), and continued to act unethically by publishing what he had learned in confidence while living as a citizen of the community (Hughte 1994, 112–113). While Cushing did advocate on the tribe’s behalf in Washington, D.C., and helped protect some Zuni traditional lands, he is a derided figure in Zuni even today.

Considered a master Zuni painter during his lifetime, Phil Hughte was interested in Frank Cushing's experience in Zuni and challenged himself in an unconventional art form to draw a series of one-panel cartoons depicting how Zuni people may have perceived Cushing during that time (Hughte 1994, 107–108). Hughte captioned each image, giving some context for what historic A:shiwí may have thought of Cushing's actions and what Cushing was doing, based on his own accounts and letters. Depicting and revisiting this historical moment, which ultimately brought continuous outsider scrutiny to Zuni, helps the community remember events that created our current reality while incorporating specific Zuni humor and voice into this reflection. The cartoons contribute a critical—and hilarious—commentary and are fondly regarded in Zuni.

Hughte's creation of the cartoons exemplifies the TribalCrit tenet 4, Native peoples' need to forge self-identity, telling our own stories of what it feels like to be ourselves. People around the world likely became aware of Zuni Pueblo through Cushing's writing, but his vision was clouded by his Western ideology, by his need to appropriate and exploit Zuni culture and knowledge, and it was skewed by his own ambition. Hughte's representations of Cushing turns the narrative inward and speaks directly to Zuni people, depicting a fuller picture of these historic events in a way that makes sense to *us*.

The Zuni Map Art Project is a series of fine art paintings that depict the migration history of our ancestors, the ancient A:shiwí, creating a visual representation of knowledge historically shared through stories (TribalCrit tenet 8). The process, developed and stewarded by the AAMHC, engaged language teachers, religious and tribal officials, and artists in a series of conversations about the need for Zuni people to know their own history. The community advisory board conferred for over a year about the Shiwí migration/creation story, landmarks, and historical sites, as well as how to facilitate the communication of that knowledge while still respecting the various levels of access to information at work in our community (Enote and McLerran 2011). The result is nearly forty large-scale fine art paintings that have been exhibited as *A:shiwí A:wán Uhlonnone: The Zuni World*, in Zuni, Flagstaff, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, and New York City, with an accompanying catalog. Three maps depict the middle village, the reservation boundaries, and the waterways that define our traditional territories. Printed as posters with a select number of locations labeled in the Zuni language, the maps are available only to Zuni households and available for pickup at the AAMHC, adding a level of control over the posters, now considered a valuable information resource in the pueblo (Belarde-Lewis 2013). The notion of taking control of access to our information and knowledge is not new, but the *enactment*

of control in this manner has been a challenge when there are thousands of records, publications, and objects that originated in our community and are now in the care of non-Zuni institutions.

These two creative endeavors are not merely visually pleasing, artistic representations of Zuni Pueblo history and cultural knowledge; these are tools to dismantle outside misrepresentations of A:shiwi people. These works were produced to talk back to narratives and depictions that place our knowledge as secondary to the outsider who uses our knowledge for their own gain. The Zuni Map Art Project and Hughte's artwork make sense to Zuni people, build on Zuni knowledge, and reinforce tribal methods of information sharing.

The two projects exemplify multiple TribalCrit foundations. Their existence shows the need for Indigenous people to tell our own stories and self-identify, as in tenet 4. Tenet 2 recognizes material gain and imperialism are the foundation of US policies to regulate Indigenous people; researchers such as Frank Cushing take Native information and knowledge for institutions (cultural and educational) to tell us our lands are not as large as we know, to tell us which places we do or do not have ancestral connections to, all in support of removing us from existence. Researchers have taken and published for material gain Native creation stories, which libraries generally classify as myths; these are not myths, but histories of our migration. The Zuni Map Art pushes against this imperialism to show outsiders we are connected to these sacred spaces and always have been.

ZUNI LANGUAGE DIGITIZATION WITH UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO (UNM)

We recognize Native stories as legitimate sources of data, and we exercise Tribal-Crit tenet 8 by including a conversation between us to share our experiences in our own voices. We specifically discuss a hybrid project that respects and acknowledges Zuni knowledge systems, yet was created in a Western library: the Zuni Language Materials Collection. Additional TribalCrit tenets surface as themes in our discussion, including a desire to forge tribal sovereignty and self-identification (tenet 4); US policies—and arguably library practices—rooted in imperialism and desire for personal and institutional gain (tenet 2); and tribal traditions and visions for the future that are central to the understanding of the lived realities of Indigenous peoples (tenet 7). These concepts are embedded in the inspiration for the language project, the purpose of the collection, and the tension that comes from working with our community while also navigating academic spaces as Native women.

Miranda Belarde-Lewis (MBL): In your 2018 article [Wise and Kostecky 2018], you outlined the process of digitizing Zuni language materials in the UNM library collection. How did you become involved with that project?

Sarah Kostecky (SK): UNM had a branch campus in Zuni, and some students there were taking classes and working as educators in the Zuni Public Schools. Many of them wanted more resources about our Zuni history and culture. But the branch didn't have dedicated library space or library support. As both the UNM education librarian and a tribal member, I knew I had to help.

And I was angry that UNM—Zuni did not have the same basic services as other branches, but the university had no problem taking their tuition money. I could not ignore this, and I decided I would provide library services there that they should have had all along.

MBL: How did you help provide these services?

SK: We worked with students and brainstormed with UNM faculty and Zuni educators. It was suggested that digital Zuni language materials—which were only available in print from the Zuni Public School District's bilingual department—would be a welcome resource. I volunteered to work within UNM Libraries to get the items scanned and published online.

When planning to digitize these cultural materials, I worked to center Zuni values in every decision. From the start, I made clear that the top priority was what was best for Zuni. I was aware that as a librarian, I would have the agency to develop a project that was respectful of the tribe, more so than if I were involved as an individual tribal member. I wanted this digitization project to be useful to Zuni people and still in accordance with our tribal worldview. I put a lot of pressure on myself to ensure this was done in a good way. And I think it was successful.

MBL: I agree! From the social media posts I've seen of the link, folks back home seem excited about the collection. We've both worked in mainstream institutions, and just like others who are from underrepresented groups, we often find ourselves in the position of being the "institutional contact person" or "point person" for our communities, even as we recognize personal, organizational, and structural inequities around us. What has your experience been being the "point person" for folks back home?

SK: Doing research within and about my/our own community is rewarding and stressful. I work with Zuni people to keep myself grounded in the academic space or else I would leave, because it is a challenging environment for me. But living with the potential to have Zunis view my work negatively or to be perceived as acting in a way that is not in accordance with tribal values, despite my intentions to do the opposite, leaves me feeling very vulnerable. My tribe defines the core of who I am, and I value my relationship with my culture and people more than my career. This description by Dr. Kim TallBear of her own research resonated with me: "I do not simply study indigenous communities, but I inhabit them, both local and virtual, within and without the academy" [2014, 3].

MBL: Dr. TallBear is amazing. Thinking more about this specific project, can you describe how you see this digitization project? Does it help to control Zuni information and

knowledge? How does this project of Shiwí language materials contribute to the narrative of community-held language knowledge? How are we controlling/contributing to the narrative of community knowledge?

SK: These materials are available in a publicly accessible digital collection space, without password protection. But I believe these digital materials share Zuni information while still being in Zuni control. First, the language materials were selected by knowledgeable bilingual department educators who had the discretion to donate only materials they thought were appropriate to be digitized. Zuni people would have final say on the project, not the library.

Second, because the collection does not require authentication to access, I believe this represents tribal recognition of new strategies to share community knowledge. Developing this project through the lens of librarian and tribal member, I thought of relatives who don't live in the pueblo because they are in the military, have moved for jobs, or did not grow up there because of the choices their parents made. You and I are living away because of our careers. By digitizing Zuni language materials, I hope we help those relatives feel connected to home.

MBL: I think about that a lot, especially for my son. He doesn't have the luxury of growing up at home like we did. It's not as easy for him to learn about our language, history, and ceremonies, so I have to work harder at it. It would be best to be at home, but like you said, we are working on our careers away from home.

SK: Of course it would be ideal to learn or relearn the Zuni language from a grandparent or relative in the pueblo, but that is hard to make happen. Providing access to these materials helps our own community "see" Shiwís who are not home but are trying hard to live and teach the values and stories important to us, in our own language. Reaching out to Zuni people away from home is a counternarrative to colonization as we are recognizing that there is no "one way" to be Zuni or "one" Zuni experience.

MBL: Exactly. And once we find ourselves working in large libraries, in "mainstream" museums, we realize that it's not just Zuni people we're serving. It's Native people from all over. Even though sometimes I do feel that vulnerability of being judged by people at home, I try to keep in mind that our presence and voices in these spaces means a lot to students wondering if they made the right decision to be here in the academy, or in the field doing research. And when it comes to the research process at home, I feel like our community should do what former governor Bowekaty was advocating for—to develop an IRB [institutional review board] process to monitor what research is being done about us.

SK: That is definitely needed. What would be a bigger goal? Developing a record center from the archives at the former archaeology program?

MBL: Or to have a consolidated building and department like the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinaabe Culture and Lifeways in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. They have a museum, library, research and archive area, and a meeting space all in one location.

SK: Great idea, though that requires skilled staff, space, money, partnership with other information resources in Zuni. But a central office could support community research, K–12

education, people at home and away at school, lawyers working for the Pueblo....If our community got together to imagine the possibilities like you and Marisa encouraged [Duarte and Belarde-Lewis 2015], we would have the beginnings of an amazing resource to support traditional knowledge sharing that really utilizes all of the rich information resources that already exist at home.

CONCLUSION

Though the Zuni people desire privacy and have dealt with a long history of exploitation and disrespect of our cultural practices, we continue to persevere and grow. We have always recognized that knowledge is sacred. Zuni knowledge continues to be shared through systems thousands of years old.

This counternarrative is our recognition of TribalCrit tenet 9, where theory and practice are deeply connected and therefore push us as scholars to support social change. The example projects and stories we shared respect and follow specific Shiwí knowledge theory and structures. By examining tribal projects that respectfully share information about Zuni culture and lifeways, we have presented counternarratives and illustrated how specific practices utilized by our people have pushed against endemic colonization in Western institutions. These stories are also a way to give voice to the variety of A:shiwí experiences today.

As Zuni people in the information field, we endeavor to be part of current efforts by Zuni Pueblo organizations to create more opportunities to share cultural knowledge and history to ultimately strengthen our community now and in the future. In utilizing some tenets of the TribalCrit theoretical framework to analyze Zuni Pueblo knowledge sharing for our own uses as Zuni people, we see where the tribe has been forward-thinking and note opportunities to build on these successes. To share knowledge with Zuni tribal members in a cohesive way, we argue that a record center for the tribe would be ideal. Rather than having piecemeal efforts by various tribal organizations, resources can be leveraged by one entity. However, we are only two individuals, and larger community conversations about these concepts should happen before any action can be taken. We have to consider where we are today as a Native community and the many ways colonization is embedded in our lives.

Tribal Critical Race Theory is a tool that must be utilized in library and information science broadly to recognize the problematic processes in the field that serve to marginalize and even erase the Indigenous experience. This theory allows us, as Zuni women and LIS faculty, to create a framework to share stories of our people's experiences. The stories range from when we did not have control of our knowledge

that was shared by outsiders to how our communities can create counternarratives to correct the record.

Brayboy developed TribalCrit as an intervention in the education field. He hopes that TribalCrit might improve “the ways that both schools and educational researchers think about American Indian students” (2005, 442). We hope TribalCrit is used to help Indigenous information professionals advocate for the value and strength in their local practices to non-Native colleagues. We strongly encourage librarians, archivists, and museum professionals to acknowledge and respect Indigenous ways of knowing and put in the work toward making these cultural institutions more reflective of Indigenous values. TribalCrit can compel non-Zuni outsiders to finally accept our “silence” as our answer to their constant questioning. For our own efforts, we hope to empower the generations following us. Elahkwa.

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Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory

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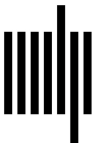
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