WALK A MILE IN MY MOCCASSINS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXAMINATION OF THE DISCOURSE OF AUTHENTICITY AS ATTACHED TO THREE EPISTEMOLOGIES

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation is an examination of how epistemologies that I participate in that are mapped/mappable, in terms of authenticity, through three coordinates: the biological/political, the cultural and place. These coordinates are then processed through the interlocutor (in the case of this dissertation, the reader) who filters the data through the lenses of their positionality. This work necessarily recognizes that the interlocutors’ frames of reference are, like mine, shaped by their positionality.

The three prime ethos/culture based epistemologies that are examined are the NDN (more commonly referenced as Native American), the United States Marine and the Academic. The analysis performed is done through my personal experiences, as processed through a number of theoretical frames. While this limits the scope of the work to my interactions through and within the epistemology, it also recognizes that these epistemologies are keys to formulating identities that are living, moving, and often contradictory shifting concepts.
I conclude that the various Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser) and Panoptic policing or disciplining discourses/structures (Foucault) that shape and authenticate these three discourses of authenticity are both internally contradictory and mutually contradictory in ways that illuminate several hegemonic processes at play in the contemporary US and NDN country. While recognizing the inherent limits of an autoethnographic methodology, I believe I have elaborated an approach that can be widely used in examining not only these three but other identity-based communities.
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For Dakoda Rayne LameBull
There are a number of things that are important in trying to understand what this project hopes to accomplish. This includes but is not limited to, the idea that this is not intended to be a fully realized project. Rather it is a theoretical framework that needed to be proposed through a dissertation project rather than a project that examine a single case study. These are thoughts that should be tested, interrogated and revised.

**Under Construction**

This project assumes a social constructionist stance. In this case the socially constructed nature of race, class, gender and sexuality is assumed. These social constructions arise from what Louis Altusser’s called Ideological State Apparatuses.¹ The social constructions are then policed through what Foucault’s named Panoptic² structures to ensure that they are more or less kept intact in order to maintain a hegemonic system that is built upon colonial projects that are remnants of imperial structures.

I pull heavily from Foucault’s Panopticism as a means of illustrating the policing of authenticity.³ My interpretation of the panoptic structure spatially manifests in a series of interlocking spheres, each populated by individuals connected through some sort of relationship (friends, family, teacher/student, producer/consumer, etc. et al). In this way we understand that we not only constantly police others but we are simultaneously under constant surveillance. When applied through my epistemic-authenticity dyad what we can see is that the policing takes place regardless of the epistemology. This makes the Panoptic structure all the more powerful as

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³ Foucault, “Panopticon”.
we begin to identify each epistemology we subscribe to, how it was transmitted to us, by whom and for what reason.

I use Althusser’s Ideological State Apparatuses as the delineation of basic parameters.\(^4\) In the case of the United States Marine (a member of an RSA) the ISA is the Drill Instructor, the Platoon Sergeant, fellow Marines, the Platoon Commander, on up the chain of command. But to focus exclusively on the Marine’s experience after he has earned the title vacates all the exposure she has had leading up to enlistment. Family, friends, colleagues, schoolmates, television, videogames, movies, literature, news and government all inform that Marine of who and what a Marine is far before they ever sign on the dotted line. The Marine Corps is unique in that it markets itself as an ethos first and foremost while the other services focus on occupation. The strength of the ISA is multiplied by the application of ideology in this way, as occupations come and go but “Once a Marine, Always a Marine” panoptically remains.

These two concepts, ISA’s and Panopticism form the heart of this work. The epistemic logics that we apply are tied to discourses of authenticity that denote the validity of application and access. Where we get these matrices from matters, as it marks the means of transmission and hence the ownership of production. How we discern authority, and who has it, is critical to de-centering the imperial project from “Big Government” and recognizing the vestment of the discourse of authenticity in our peers, family, friends which denotes that how we know and why is just as important as what we know.

I would be remiss if I didn’t also cite Antonio Gramsci’s work on hegemony\(^1\) as critical here, more specifically his notions of ideology and our complicity with the hegemon as a means of maintaining our position within it. Channeling this critical point through the framework I outline above we are able to see how dynamic the discourse of authenticity can be when it is

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\(^4\) Althusser, *Ideology.*
allowed to be fluid in its definitions through context and selectively apprehended to meet the end goals of the hegemon and thus the complicit individual.

**How you know, what you know**

There are ways of knowing that are attached to identity typologies. Each race, class, gender and sexuality has multiple epistemologies associated with it. Epistemology will be defined, for the purpose of this paper as a way of knowing. Race, class, gender and sexuality are not the end-all-be-all of epistemic typologies, but rather an inception point from where an understanding of more nuanced, intersecting (and often niche) ways of knowing can be undertaken.

**Keepin’ it Real**

There is a discourse of authenticity. Authenticity not only exists but is operable and operating contemporarily. The tension here is that while I foster authenticity as a concept that is in existence, I do not want to forward the discourse of authenticity as THE metaphysical Truth. That is to say that, societies/cultures/institutions/people/individuals use the discourse of authenticity as a primary schema for understanding the world around them but it doesn’t follow that a given authentic epistemology is THE authentic epistemology.

Theodor Adorno writes, “[The Authentic Ones] sense the danger of losing again what they call the concrete-of losing it to that abstraction of which they are suspicious, an abstraction which cannot be eradicated from concepts. They consider concretion to be promised in sacrifice, and first of all in intellectual sacrifice.”⁵ While Adorno is addressing advocates of a certain sort of philosophical thought in the early twentieth century, I find that his critique is still valid today. While authenticity, as a concept, is critiqued for its lack of an objective foundation it is used as a primary schema for validating notions of identity. Adorno clarifies in terms of language, “The

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jargon has at its disposal a modest number of words which are received as promptly as signals. ‘Authenticity’ itself is not the most prominent of them. It is more an illumination of the ether in which the jargon flourishes, and the way of thinking which latently feeds it’.6

The manner in which I am using this concept is through the indicators of authenticity that are read through the coordinates that I provide in my framework. Any of the coordinates can be evaluated as singular verifications of authenticity, but in doing so the interlocutor risks a simplification of the epistemology to the single dimension. The biological-political is one aspect of authenticity, with its own lexicon of jargon relative to the epistemology being observed. With NDN’s it would have “enrolled” as a primary term, with CDIB (Certified Degree of Indian Blood), voting/hunting/fishing rights, per-capita payment, etc., et al. as words that infer the primary term. The cultural is another aspect with its own vernacular. A primary term for Marine culture could be “knowledge”, which would include subsidiary terms such as history, practical application, weapons, customs and courtesies, etc. et al. The connection to place brings with it its own forms of authenticity. A primary term Academe in reference to place would be Research One, with attending glossaries of presentation, networking, publication and research.

Charles Taylor grows Lionel Trilling’s argument that authenticity is a moral ideal “[...] a picture of what a better or higher mode of life would be, where ‘better and ‘higher’ are defined not in terms of what we happen to desire or need, but offer a standard of what we ought to desire”7, stemming from an understanding of individual self, “There is a certain way of being that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else’s. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I

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6 Adorno, Jargon, 6
miss what being human is for me.” (emphasis Taylors). In prizing concepts of “reason”, he pushes further against “subjectivism” and “soft relativism”. In prizing concepts of “reason”, he pushes further against “subjectivism” and “soft relativism”.9

I agree with the general thrust of Taylor’s argument on the subject of authenticity, his notion of the moral ideal and the way that the individual shapes it. The discourses of authenticity that I will describe herein are idealized, the reproduction of the shadows of these discourses in media help form these ideals but only relative to the epistemologies that the authenticity discourse is wrapped around. The individual shapes their own discourses of authenticity around the epistemologies that they are literate/competent in.

Where Taylor and I part ways is that I refuse to invest in his rejection of “subjectivism”. The rub comes with his substitution of “reason” as a system of moral ideals without seeing that it is rife with its own metaphysical assumptions and canonical privilege. Rather I offer that there are reasons, or reasoning systems if you will. These are defined by the panoply of positionalities, which are in turn defined by the ISA’s/RSA’s and Panoptic structures that I detailed above.

So while the individual is being “being human for [themselves]”, they have to define their experiences in the semiotic structures of language, that are built through social interactions and evaluated upon shared moral ideals. The moral ideals that are held by the group are not static or even consistently analogous. Rather they are constantly shifting under the pressures of the material experience of the individuals who comprise the epistemic communities that the discourse of authenticity is simultaneously manufactured by and applied to. Taylor recognizes this in part, when he discusses the authenticity of identity, but also wants to maintain an unwavering pinion, a monolithic shared ideal that ties (or should be increasingly tying) humanity

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8 Taylor, authenticity, 28-29.
9 Ibid, 13-29.
The issue here, is that there is no space for flexing, or changing course, much less for the notion that some epistemic communities may not be buying the ideal that is being sold.

By applying Adorno to Taylor what we can see is that the jargon that figures most prominently is in Taylor’s formulation of authenticity is “reason”. “Reason” is the concreteness that Adorno warns of, when Taylor uses it combat abstract conceptualizations of multiple shared moral ideals. To translate: abstract conceptualizations of multiple shared moral ideals are discourses of authenticity. Inversely, what Adorno offers is a system of reasoning that provides a moral ideal in the form of an analysis of authenticity through language.

Two authors who have been particularly insightful on the topic of authenticity, especially in relation to NDNness, are James Clifford and Gerald Vizenor. When considering authenticity it is critical to reflect on how definitions of authenticity operate for both the people who use them and for the people who created them. These scholars examine the topic in depth from a critical cultural studies and American Indian Studies perspective. However, while they agree on the importance of the production of authenticity, there is some disagreement on how those definitions are used by various actors across space and time.

Clifford and Vizenor both define authenticity more by what it is not than by what it is. Clifford defines authenticity through its panoply of presentations. He discusses hybridity at length as a means of deconstructing the fixed primitive notion of authentic indigeneity. At the same time he challenges postmodern interpretations of authenticity by connecting cultural practices to specific “historical and political situations”. Vizenor, on the other hand defines authenticity through the methods of manifest manners. For him, “Manifest manners are the

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10 Taylor, authenticities, 49-53.
12 Clifford, Routes, 176.
simulations of dominance; the notions and misnomers that are read as authentic and sustained by representations of Native American Indians”. 13 To replace these modes and models, Vizenor introduces the concept of survivance. Vizenor suggests that, “Survivance is a practice, not an ideology, dissimulation or a theory. The theory is earned by interpretations, critical construal of survivance in creative literature, and by narratives of cause and natural reason”. 14 As a practice then, it is crucial to see survivance linked to the production of authenticity and its attendant discourses across historic and political realms and systems.

It has been pointed out to me that I am, or at least have written a dissertation that could be considered, “postindian”, to use Vizenor’s terminology. While I find that term problematic, I can see how it applies. I would offer that my attachment to understanding how the discourse of authenticity around NDNness is operationalized derives from a sort of strategic essentialism on my part. In this instance Clifford helps describe my situation, “[...when every cultural agent (especially global capitalism) is mixing and matching forms, we need to be able to recognize strategic claims for localism or authenticity as possible sites of resistance rather than of nativism.” 15

The term “post-Indian” initially felt somehow inauthentic to my experience, largely Pan-Indian, and amorphous. Having lived as an NDN my entire life, and then to be informed that it is unreal, (due to “manifest manners”) feels like an intrusion upon my ways of knowing. Vizenor clears this up in the epilogue of his book Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance, “The postindian antecedes the postmodern condition; the resistance of

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15 Clifford, Routes, 183.
the tribes to colonial inventions and representations envisioned the ironies of histories, narrative discourse, and cultural diversities. The postindian mien is of survivance over dominance; the postmodern is the discourse of histories over metanarratives.\textsuperscript{16}

The tension here is of the strategic claim of authenticity that is used materially in day-to-day life under tribal governance and the understanding that the authenticity is socially constructed, primarily by forces outside of the epistemology. My writing this document is an indicator of my postindian’ness as viewed through the lens of the institution of academia, but my resistance to the term is born of my need to maintain a strategic claim to an authenticity that is bound by external forces as a survivance method. I can resist colonial inventions of notions of knowledge, but only up until I write this work (with a chapter on NDNs) to complete the requirements to become an Authentic Academic. Even in the challenging of immobile primitivist constructs of NDNness, I am implicitly supporting the Western knowledge institutions that created them. While I engage in narrative discourse, I am forced to support my narrative with non-NDN theorists as a means of legitimating my work. In this way, I am no more postindian than the United States is post-racial.

The tension between the material realities of NDN life, including mine, and the hegemonic virtual constructions of NDNness cannot be resolved theoretically, but only through the praxis of resistance, or "survivance," in Vizenor's terms.

Exercising my treaty rights to fish on the Columbia, is an exercise of the identity provided by the colonial narrative (which defined what Yakama is through the legal document of the Treaty of Walla Walla 1855) but it is also a method of survivance. The exercise of the treaty right to fish recognizes a cultural (Yakamas are salmon people), biological (enrollment

\textsuperscript{16}Vizenor, Manifest Manners, 167.
is necessary to legally exercise the treaty right) and place based (we fish in the usual and accustomed areas of our tribe) discourse of authenticity, one that is more than nativism. Exercising the treaty right to fish is a tacit recognition of the definition of what a Yakama is that derives from a time prior to colonization. It may be documented through the treaty, but that language was placed in the treaty through the direction of the Yakamas that were present to sign the document. Fishing is an exercise of tribal agency, a resistance to the pressure to assimilate, an homage to those who came before and fought for these rights to be maintained for generations to come.

Articulating what I was taught as a traditional Yakama and what I am taught in the Western educational system is one way that I resolve the tension between what I am described as and what I am. It is also one of the reasons for crafting this framework. Vizenor would label me postindian, but I would argue that the term holds no power on the rez.

**Meat and Potatoes**

In order to clean up what may be labeled an overly relativistic position, I offer a take on Greg Sarris’ methodology for writing history.\(^{17}\) The interlocutor’s literacy/competency/comprehension of a provided epistemology, is critical to clarifying the premise of this project. Not only does this render transparent the process in which the positionality of the interlocutor resides, but it reveals the consumption process around the epistemology in question revolves.

*takes a breath*

I didn’t know what I wanted this to be when I started. In all honesty I became a bit lost as I floundered for a common theoretical thread to tie together my disparate experiences outside of

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the sort of disjointed memoir I had jotted down. Then on a wintery drive on the Palouse I found the very thread I was looking for.

What will follow are examinations of spaces that I participate in, some by choice, others not so much. The lenses shift as the material moves, but there are a few constants. Authenticity plagues my existence as both an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe and as former United States Marine. Epistemology, in this sense the non-colonial notion “ways of knowing” has allowed me to navigate the bi-culturality that has in many cases defined me.

While I was using both terms often, it wasn’t until that snowy day that I came to understand that all epistemologies are inherently bound to notions of authenticity. Cartesian Epistemology is the heart and soul of the scientific faith, and hence the notion of authenticity it derives from is also the authenticity that it recognizes. While I understood this Westernized concept it hadn’t occurred to me that this applied to the gamut of epistemologies in a sense.

By interpreting my experiences through the exercise of auto-ethnography it is possible to see the silhouette of these parameters of authenticity. Because while it is one thing to claim that all epistemologies have a discourse of authenticity as a framework of their existence it is another to demonstrate it in lived experience. And since I have an issue with imposing my lens of analysis upon others lived experience as an exercise of academic imperialism, I have chosen to first look inward.

**Framework**

In order to translate my observations into a format utilizable in the academy I have constructed a framework for interpreting constructions of authenticity. Using auto-ethnographic examples I anchor authenticity to provided epistemologies. I use discrete(ish) epistemologies in
which I am certified (enrollment card, a DD-214 and will acquire a diploma upon completion of this program) authentic, through the authority of institutions.

The framework consists of three coordinates, the biological-political, the cultural and the place-based. In each chapter, there is an examination of the provided epistemology through these coordinates. Each epistemology uses a different jargon to demonstrate/evaluate what is authentic.

The biological/political, I am tempted to reference this as a citizenship point, but it would limit the applications of the framework to the most institutional. That said I do think it is important to note that this coordinate binds the individual within the matrix to an institutional notion of what is legitimate and what isn’t. It is also what makes some epistemologies discourse of authenticity so fluid.

Culture is the second coordinate. Culture, in its multiplicity of definitions, is used as a means of mapping the knowledge of an individual within an epistemology. Culture is often used as a second term that follows a pre-fix term, Political Culture, Military Culture, Rape Culture, Academic Culture, etcetera. For the purposes of this project all of these terms could be applied within a single authenticity discourse, or individually used in multiple authenticity discourses.

Place is the third coordinate. Where an epistemology is examined is important to the authenticity of those within the matrix. Place is tied to epistemology through notions of space, and the way that meaning is tied to spaces. Whether these are descriptions of sacrosanct locations, or rendering a space sacrosanct through socially constructed notions of institutional mechanics, (ex: nationalism or patriotism) ways of knowing are tied to where they derive from, are acted out, are going to.
These coordinates can be mapped spatially in three dimensions, the biological/political on the x-axis, cultural identity on the y-axis, place on the z-axis. It is the interlocutor’s literacy/competency that shifts the identity of the individual. This isn’t to say that performances of identity do not change as an individual code shifts but that is more of a recognition that the interlocutor’s interpretation of identity is just as important as the actual coordinates one thinks they have. In mapping a provided discourse of authenticity, adding time as the fourth dimension of analysis projects the dynamism of identity through the framework.

For the full effect of the project herein, while reading, plot your own identities in terms of the biological/political, culture and place, how the different groups that you associate with would read them. Then move the coordinates, or not, from a provided time to the present. Consider the narratives that I provide here as different means of plotting my identity, and reconsider them at the end of the dissertation.

**On the chapter: Forever Tonto**

~Your brother got bird lice
to a feather he fixed with a bobby pin
That’s a small price to pay
for the privilege of being the Indian~

Ass Ponys, Dollar a Day

Due to strong ties to my own epistemology I have generally resisted reading academic texts on/by tribal people in general. Particularly texts that derive from personal or specific tribal spaces. This is also because I hesitate to appropriate from another tribe, or denounce a practice simply because my people do not do/believe as much. While I respect the Dineh’s matrilineality, the Haudenosaunee who eat bear, and the Oklahoma Choctaw’s contemporary ties to political conservativism these are not in line with the epistemology I was taught was Yakama, within my family, at Satus Longhouse. I am specific here because I do not speak for all NDN’s, or even all
Yakama. To have read another NDN academic’s work would tempt me to interrogate their authenticity against my own, and I fear I’d fall prey to the hubris of the Western NDN (in this case West of the Mississippi). That hubris being built on the social construction of NDN’ness in a specific flavor of hyper-masculine, patriarchal, very specific phenotype and culturally Plains derived.ii

That said, as a young Marine I was introduced to Vine Deloria Jr.’s work by a fellow NDN Marine from the Omaha people. In Custer Died for Your Sins, I found voice given to experiences that I thought were specific to me.18 In We Talk, You Listen, I was again inspired by Vine to examine the social structures around me through an NDN lens.

I’m sure it doesn’t escape anyone that Vine was masculine, had dark skin, black hair and was Oglala, Lakota. Rather than try to obscure the fact that Dr. Deloria heavily influenced my initial interpretations of the White world in any theoretical sense, I think it aids me in making my case through a simple syllogism: If Vine Deloria Jr. is the intellectual NDN voice that speaks to me most, then where would other writers of differing pedigree (I use this term intentionally) lay?

Another writer that inspired my work is Sherman Alexie. While Sherman’s work isn’t necessarily theoretical in the same way that Vine’s is, his commentary is extremely valuable in the sense that it was the voice of an NDN who grew up on the Rez. His rez wasn’t my rez. But The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven,19 spoke to my experience on the reservation. Alcoholism, violence, death, joy, laughter, family, and the sort of belonging that being “where you’re from” brings you...all were there in a way that I’d never read before and in many ways haven’t read since.

Once again it is important to interrogate the texts that impacted me. Written by an NDN man from my region, whose image on the dustcover could have been a cousin, that he was Spokane/Couer D’alene was actually more true to my own experience as he spoke of places I’d been and used names I’d heard. Sherman’s analysis of relationships aided me in understanding my own, made me feel less alone as an NDN with aspirations to education. But once again, if my ties to Sherman Alexie’s work are so tight then what of works that are authored by NDN’s that aren’t from where I’m from?

Now I am sure to be challenged to read a slew of NDN academics work as a means of broadening my understanding. And while I am sure that I will attempt to further develop in that literature at some point, I wish to emphasize that reflexively I want to turn over who the writer is before I begin citing their work in implicit support. And if I find the writer not meeting my bar for NDNness, what should the result be? Should I lambast them academically? And what if the epistemologies that clash with my own are tribally derived (as is sure to happen sooner if not later)? I become a self-appointed ad hoc token, gauging what NDN is or is not as based on the individual experience of one Yakama man who has lived off his reservation for over two decades at the time of this writing. I become no different than the non-native scholar, (often mis-)typologizing every tribal person at a pow wow through their own imperial lens. While I end up missing out on work that I could draw from, I insure that I do not recreate the sort of intellectual cultural violence that has taken place for me. More on that in the next chapter.

So while auto-ethnography allows me to cite personal experience through the authority of my identity, it also limits my universe. In this case, instead of exclusively citing NDN or even indigenous people I primarily pull from (at this point) a couple on NDN men, a Canadian, a pair of Frenchmen, an Italian and a German.
Does this make my work inherently less authentic due to the intellectual buttresses that underpin it? I’m not sure. As I have stated, my avoidance of heavily using NDN/indigenous texts derives from a goal in finding my own voice. Ironically enough, it is the process of the academy that induces me to engage in the authority of published academic literature as a means of establishing my authenticity as an academic.

**On the chapter: Earning the Title**

~Twinkle, twinkle little star,
Who’s that man, with the gold bar?
I don’t care, just where he goes,
Because they don’t make Marines at Quantico~
U.S. Marine Corps cadence

It may seem a bit jarring to move so rapidly from the social constructions of NDN’ness as I interpret them, to video games as they relate to the social constructions of the US Marine specifically and the military in general. The fact of the matter is that both epistemologies as well as their attendant discourses of authenticity are constantly and consistently acting within and through my body. This examination of the literature has a different tone, a different voice as my interactions with the material derive from a different space. I will start with the reasoning behind selecting video games as the locus of my analysis of video games, and move through to specific critiques of militainment.

While a great deal has been written on the impact of war based video games on the psyche, the ability for war games to act as recruiting mechanisms, and the conditioning aspects of war games in terms of a sort of virtual war voyeurism to date, there is little in the way of how video games conditioning in these ways has the capacity to influence policy. In other words, consuming video games centered on war has an effect on the consumer but how does that impact affect the positivist system? Is an impact likely or even possible?
Here I would like to introduce two scholars who have written extensively on the subject of video games potential to impact policy from divergent disciplines. Edward Castronova has his Doctorate of Philosophy in Economics from the University of Wisconsin, while Jane McGonigal has her Doctorate of Philosophy in Performance Studies from Berkeley.

Castronova writes in *Exodus to the Virtual World*, that video games can be used as models for the improvement of the real world. Specifically he emphasizes how video games can be used as policy models, due to the manner in which video games meet the needs of players in a way that the real world does not. Castronova lays the foundation for what is now being called “gamification”. Gamification is the utilization of game mechanics in application to “real world” policy, as a means of drawing on the very concepts that draw so many players into the virtual world. What Castronova is attempting to prevent is an “Exodus to the Virtual World” leaving the “real world” more or less empty of both population and activity.

Jane McGonigal also sees the potential for the use of video games as a means of shaping a template for the use of basic qualities of gamers, specifically in her TED talk of 2010. She lists four qualities that gamers have that are encouraging. Urgent Optimism, Social Fabric (trust), Blissful Productivity (somewhat drawing on Marx’s concept that humans love to work) and Epic Meaning that she states adds up to “Super-Empowered Hopeful Individuals”. She lists these in opposition to the manner in which players see themselves in the real world, as “bad at life”. She also notes, through the histories of Herodotus, the precedent for people using games to not only escape reality but as a means of negotiating crisis through policy.

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22 McGonigal, *Better World*.
23 McGonigal, *Better World*. 
Taking these two authors’ premises it is possible to see how video games can affect the larger social structures as rough outlines for policy. And while both see video games operating in a much more positive way, it is important to illustrate the potential of the influence of these convergent media formats’ narratives on the consumers. The baseline argument is that gamers that leave the “real world” in pursuit of the Epic Winz of McGonigal and enter the games examined herein, will have their notions of recent history abbreviated through the distorted lens of militainment and hence will participate in the larger discourse armed with a malformed historicity shaped by the tensions between simulation and marketability. Thus the qualities of the gamer, provided by McGonigal will be distorted through the experience in the virtual world in such a way that only part of the political culture is represented.

I should mention that McGonigal and Castronova do not necessarily see eye to eye. While Castronova would resist the “Exodus to a Virtual World” (by increasing the efficacy of the real world), McGonigal proposes that more time to be spent in virtual spaces as a means of developing a “virtuoso” skill set built upon the values previously mentioned that can then be applied to the real world. Though these two scholars hold divergent viewpoints their analyses are predicated upon the shared premise that video games can influence policy by influencing the consumers/players of ergodic texts.

From this more general establishment of the ability of ergodic texts to sway policy through their consumption it is possible to access a greater granulation of literature. That is, the more specific literature that deals with military videogames from different perspectives.

Ed Halter mentions in his book *From Sun Tzu to X-Box: War and Video Games*, that the term “Bad Guys” is applied by those operating in the current conflicts to describe the enemy.24 He points out that the convention conveniently sidesteps the graduations in identity. In other

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conflicts we had Redcoats, Yankees, Krauts and a number of more offensive racial epithets. What sets “Bad Guys” apart is that it can be applied to Baathists, insurgents, Republican Guard, Taliban fighters, indigenous forces, and in either current theater of operation (Iraq or Afghanistan). What Halter offers is that it is possible that this usage derives from video game culture, as the Americans operating in these conflicts are members of the first generations that used consoles from young ages.

The rhetorical fulcrum here is that with a term as flexible and ubiquitous as “Bad Guys” the ideological mechanisms that have had to be modified for each conflict are now easily translated via a single term. It is also a dichotomous term that simplifies the other’ing process, in an in-group/out-group binary. The elegance of such a simple vernacular is in its application over time and space, from an identification nomenclature in the socialization process found in the Ideological State Apparatuses to the exercise of those terms as target signifieds for (in the current conflicts raced Arab signifiers) used by Repressive State Apparatuses.25

As Graham and Shaw also point out this identification of the “familiar yet unrecognizable, the distant yet intimate, nowhere yet everywhere, virtual yet real”26 allows for the dehumanization as a simple set of characteristics while maintaining the complexity of personal/national identity. In terms of political psychology it is the externalization of the stimulus acting upon the personal (we were attacked), while the internalization of the actions of the “other” (if they were less backward they would understand we are trying to help them). By working through this schema the ideology (in the invisible Marxian sense) of the hegemonic structure eliminates any question of who is justified in their actions and thus “good”. In the

25 Althusser, Ideology.
binary that the video games under analysis provide through their narrative on rails, the opponents are transformed into “Bad Guys” ad hoc.

Rich C. King and David J. Leonard present the policy swaying power of what they term as wargames through how “…spatial mapping within virtual warfare affects the actual mapping of war-torn zones across the world”. 27 Their work can be applied herein in a number of places, but in a more general sense their thesis supports this writing through the discarding of the notion that ergodic militainment, as texts, are toys and rather seeing their capacity for the crossing of the (non-existent) virtual boundary into the “real” world of politics, war and imperialism.

As mentioned, these video games operate as one of Althusser’s Ideological State Apparatuses, and interestingly enough they are shaping the manner in which Repressive State Apparatuses are considered 28. As ISA’s that are sought out, purchased, consumed and shared on the global level one could argue that they have the capacity to shape how information within the paradigm of education (as an ISA) is gestated. That is to say, video games with historical events will be used as a sort of experiential epistemological short hand relative to what is taught at school. While not dramatically different than the manner in which Braveheart shaped notions of Scottish (and to a lesser extent Irish) identity, the ergodic properties of gaming mixed with a heavy dose of social interaction via online multi-player modes changes the equation.

As Shaw and Graham argue in “Playing War”, the military-entertainment complex extends a political invitation to players to participate in a colonial present. They argue that through the transitional space of gaming the perceptions of the real and fantasy become blurred,

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28 Althusser, ideologies.
which places consumers of these games within the borders of the new imperial projects in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁹

Roger Stahl in his book *Militainment Inc.* examines how war has become consumable. In this he tours through a number of topics but central to my argument is the manner in which military videogames have the capacity to collapse the identity of the citizen and that of the consumer of the videogame into a new iteration of citizen-soldier.

More than any other cultural manifestation, video games represent the emerging politics of the virtual citizen-soldier, produced by the changing configurations of electronic media, social institutions, and world events. This new figure represents a reprogramming of the citizen subject in accordance with the new logics of Netwar where the citizen identity itself becomes a battle-ground.³⁰

I offer to extend Stahl’s argument from the battle for identity into the cultural literacy of previous conflicts re-mapped onto contemporary conflicts. The players of these games are expressing support through the vector that Americans know and perform best (perhaps the only space where we are still truly exceptional) consumption.

Der Derian’s *Virtuous War* provides a similar insight into the how the military-industrial-entertainment complex has been assembled for use in training. Of greatest use, is his insight into how simulation may lead to a false certainty of what is knowable; “As superior computing power and networking increase in representational power and global reach, simulation leaves little room to imagine the unpredictable, the unforeseeable, the unknowable except by accident.”³¹ In relation to these video games, the false sense of security participating in the discourse of

²⁹ Shaw and Graham, *Playing War*.
authenticity through the hyperreal exclusively has the capacity to reinforce the ongoing façade of conventional warfare being the dominant form waged in the theaters the US is participating in.

**On the Chapter: So, you think you’re better than me**

~*Jack Donaghy: We’re not the best people...  
  *Liz Lemon: ...but we’re not the worst.*

*Liz Lemon, Jack Donaghy: Graduate students are the worst!*~

30 Rock\(^{32}\)

Part of the confusion over the coordinates of the Academic within the framework that I provide is that I am still in the embryonic stage of my identity as an Academic. Completing the dissertation process is only one part of the authentic academic’s rite of passage. There is an assumption of instruction, participation in professional organizations and publication. Through my tokenization, often self-inflicted, the manners in which I participate in the Academic identity are filtered through my NDN identity.

While I aspire to become an Authentic Academic, as an interlocutor/participant my interpretations are not fully realized. I know what it means to be Yakama, or to be a Sergeant in the Marine Corps infantry, but to be an Academic is still mysterious. I’ve taught, I’ve written and I’ve presented at many conferences, but what an Academic is, confuses me.

I attribute this to the manner in which my education has been undertaken to this point. That is to say that the American Studies Program at Washington State University has provided me with analytical tools that are effective at finding the fissures in methodologies and the disciplines that hold them sacrosanct. I’ve taken courses in philosophy, anthropology and communications. None of those courses considered knowledge in the same malleable manner as

the program that I was/am participating in. Even the program confounds me, in that my colleagues and I can use the same tools and often come to dramatically different conclusions.

These experiences are what inspired me to attempt to map the authenticity of the academic. The coordinates are not as solidly delineated, due to my understanding of the vagaries of academia. With tenure becoming an increasingly uncommon benchmark for the authentic academic, I may not ever achieve the sort of authenticity that was once the goal of the majority of academics. More importantly, perhaps the reason why the coordinates are less cleanly defined is because I don’t fit into the schema constructed by the dominant narrative in terms of the contemporary epistemic values of the corporatized educational institution.

**Conclusion to the Introduction**

As a young Yakama growing up on the reservation is south central Washington State, the world was awash in confusion and contradiction. As an example, I understood that we venerated the Storyteller. That they provided us meaning derived from the collective experiences of our people from time immemorial. But I was also punished for “telling stories”.

This non-commutative property was perplexing to a young person growing up in the 1980’s during the Japano-phobic turn to the emphasis on math and science to the detriment of the humanities. The commutative property is one of those things that explained that the world worked in some sort of coordinated balance. The English language seemed informed by the same sort of thought process, the printing press is a press that prints. Equations were the logic that I was passed from the Western education I was provided, things were inherently balanced around an equals sign.

My til-ah (my mother’s father) sighed deeply as he explained to me that things do not work like that. A Storyteller carries with them a sense of what has taken place, which is why
you should listen to them. They carry with them unexploited information, the stories of our people. A person who tells stories is making things up, likely to their benefit. Someone who does that is not to be trusted. This was one of the first lessons in how the schools that I have attended have provided information that does not operate within the epistemologies that I was passed.

When I went to school in Toppenish, Washington (at an elementary school on the reservation) I was told that our stories were “Myths”, that what my family talked about as history was fantasy in the Western institution of education. What further baffled me was the way that this discussion took place and then the tales of Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, Paul Revere, Christopher Columbus and others were described with solemn reverence. In my experience, this system has not changed all that much over the course of my life.

These anecdotes are foundational to the way that I conceive of the work that I perform. The Storyteller (in academic parlance) intends to pass on a narrative on how the world works, how it operates in conjunction with parts and pieces both interior and exterior to the boundaries that we assign it. Depending on the position that a person carries with them (race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, ability) any Storyteller can be considered a teller of stories, and vice versa contingent upon the context in which the narrative is being provided.
Forever Tonto

~My heroes have never been cowboys; my heroes carry guns in their minds~

Sherman Alexie\textsuperscript{33}

What I am proposing is a granulated identification of the authenticity of a provided epistemology predicated upon three coordinates. These coordinates were selected as a means of representing general areas of critique of authenticity as I perceive it. The three coordinates are intended to create a three dimensional impression of identity as a means of undermining the two dimensional representations that are commonly presented as dichotomous or even dialectic.

The Biological/Political

The first is the notion that is more-or-less status quo. The biological/political coordinate investigates the phenotypical as well as genetic tie to NDN identity. In a way it is the last form of institutional biological race policy in the United States that holds pertinent weight. That is to say that without the concept of biological race many tribes would have to completely alter their enrollment policy.

While the history of blood quantum is written elsewhere\textsuperscript{34}, suffice it to say that the very notion is derived from a policy that was not intended to further the goals of NDN people. That said, a thumbnail sketch is important to describe the tension and the proposals for other means of creating a political identity for Tribal people. One place that blood quantum is said to have originated is in the intent to draw upon the construct of biological race as a means of defining the populations of the tribes and distribute lands to those deemed members of the provided tribe.

\textsuperscript{34} David E. Wilkins, American Indian politics and the American political system. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 23-40.
through the Dawes Act of 1887 (also known as the General Allotment Act). Through the mechanisms in the Dawes Act the federal government expropriated the “surplus” lands, guaranteed to the tribes through treaties, in order to redistribute them to American citizens.

The current impact of blood quantum as a policy within tribes (particularly federally recognized tribes) is in the dis-enrollment of members, as well as the exclusivity of membership for those who no longer qualify for the benefits of citizenship due to their non-member heritage. These two concepts lead to the great majority of friction on the subject of blood quantum and the actions of tribes predicated upon maintaining their enrollment policies as exclusively as possible.

These are primarily surface claims though and the deeper issues have much more to do with claims on NDN identity and who defines it. The first issue is tied to resource management and the second to kinship systems.

The most detrimental use of blood quantum has taken place in narratives surrounding gaming (in this case meaning gambling) tribes who have tightened their membership requirements and forced out members. The story is that the members ejected from the tribe had as much claim as those that were making the decisions to remove these people from the rolls. The motivation in this case is gaming revenue, and thus smaller rolls leads to greater dividends for those still enrolled.

The obverse of this critique is that tribes such as my own, Yakama Nation, has protected their fishing rights through the recognition of their treaty right in cases like US v. Washington. These natural resources are not taken into account by those that critique the system at large.

35 Wilkins, American Indian, 110-112.
Moreover it should be noted that there are a million acres of closed area set aside by the tribe for exclusive use by the members of the Yakama Nation, another resource that is not discussed in the revenue critique of blood quantum. The land use argument can be further expanded through a quick study of the Treaty of Walla Walla 1855, concerning the Yakama, specifically article III, second paragraph:

The exclusive right of taking fish in all the streams, where running through or bordering said reservation, is further secured to said confederated tribes and bands of Indians, as also the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed places, in common with citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary buildings for curing them; together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses and cattle upon open and unclaimed land.  

The point to be made here is that enrollment as a member of the Yakama Nation has much more than just a per-capita check associated with it. It grants further access to natural resources and spaces beyond the boundaries of the reservation.

To be more transparent about the national geography of NDN affairs, Yakama’s membership is a large’ish 10,000 members, most of whom reside on the reservation. The landbase is the second largest in the State of Washington. These are uncommon numbers when considered nationally.

These tribal specific concepts are the rub though. It is the differences between tribes that make the tribe’s agency (sovereignty) in defining their own membership the paramount value. While the blood quantum system is contingent upon a racist definition of the tribes by an external source that has desired their elimination, it is the choice of the tribes to this point for one reason or another. The external pressure for the tribes to alter their policies (like Reitman’s call for the partial abrogation of sovereignty in terms of setting their own membership

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requirements, is just that, external. Trading imperialistic racism for what can be viewed as cultural neo-colonial ideology (in the sense that it is external to the current membership), doesn’t make a world of sense when the source of both critiques comes from outside the tribes.

Critiques of a tribal government policy external to the tribal membership could have its utility. It should be understood that within the narrative of continuous challenges to tribal epistemologies in terms of spirituality, land, food, and political economies there would be a devaluation of external critiques. So while there may be value in a critique, the positionality of the author of the critique will be analyzed in order to assess their motivations relative to those who hold tribal membership.

This brings up the second critique, that of kinship systems. There are tribal members that critique the status quo blood quantum system. I would argue that the reason for this is found in the possible enrollment of their relatives, their children and grandchildren. It is also possible that they hold membership in one tribe, and desire membership in another. Or, quite possibly, they have cousins/aunts/uncles that aren’t enrolled in their tribe due to an issue of blood quantum.

Another critique derived from a more traditional epistemology is found in the construct of adoption. Often tribes adopted people, providing them citizenship within the tribe. Sometimes this process was achieved through raiding and slavetaking. One could say that the construct is found contemporarily in some tribes that recognize “descent”. That is to say, that descending from someone who was enrolled under the construct of biological race, while not being biologically of a tribe oneself, is to be both NDN and not. Or rather, to be more specific, an individual could be a member of a provided tribe and yet not NDN at all.

Though the critique of the system rests on a critique of biological race, when held up to a certain light it also rests upon upholding biological race. What I mean is that the system of

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40 Reitman, Partial Abrogation.
biological race is intended to (as the Cartesian epistemology of science likes to do) have a sort of replicable consistency, a logic. This logic would state that an individual of a provided race must be that race. It is a sort of zero-sum logic that on face would make perfect sense, but when applied to NDN ID doesn’t consistently apply the great majority of the time. It is this sort of (in)consistency that both upholds and attempts to challenge blood quantum.

This brings me to the other side of the term that I am using to describe this coordinate. That is the political. As blood quantum is a means of locating the citizenship of the NDN in question it is also a means of identifying the political identity that is ascribed/subscribed to. The political identity of the NDN/non-NDN is critical to understand as it brings the discussion back to the motivations of enrollment.

As a member of the Yakama Nation, I am charged with behaving in a way that will not undermine the sovereignty of the tribe. I would identify this as a facet of tribal nationalism. This aspect of political tribal identity (in this case: an awareness of sovereign citizenship) is likely the least concentrated upon, or examined by academia. Without doing the quantitative research I can only stipulate that many tribal members haven’t contemplated how their actions could potentially undermine national tribal sovereignty either.

A short anecdote should suffice as an example. I was on my way back from hunting on my reservation. Seeking a short cut from just west of Lewiston, I tried to find a back way into the Palouse. I ended up stuck on the south side of the Snake River without a way to cross. While on the high ground above Boyer Park I spotted a pair of bucks playing in the dusk. I could have dropped one of them and likely gotten home without much trouble. If stopped I could have cited the “Usual and Accustomed” clause I list above. The problem is that the area in question is colloquially accepted Nez Perce country. I could make the argument that the area is Palouse and
as the Pelouze are signatories of the Yakama Treaty of 1855 that the area is actually just as much
Yakama as Nez Perce. Should I take the case to court and lose though, I could damage the
sovereign reach of Yakama Nation in other cases. More importantly the case could damage the
sovereignty of other tribes, such as the Nez Perce, in this case, and create political rifts between
the tribes. Needless to say, I left the pair of bucks alone and rode off into the night.

This form of political racial identity is unique the NDN people in the United States.
While stereotyping, marginalization, othering and the like can be shared with others in the US
this political coordinate of the NDN epistemologies’ discourse of authenticity creates issues that
are hard to communicate due to the manner in which it is constructed where it lives and how it is
used. Just describing the political positionality origins requires a citation of the Marshall Trilogy
circa 1830. To respond to critiques of blood quantum, I have to enumerate the benefits as well as
retell the narrative that leads to the diasporization of NDN’s through policies of Termination and
Relocation. Though any racialization has this sort of narrative, the difference (and in a way the
necessary historicization of blood quantum) is that these policies define NDN ID today from the
way we practice salmon harvest, to PL 93-638 contractsiv and PL 280v, to the way I teach a class
that pertains to NDNs as more than an anthropological study of a (pre)historic people.

The biological/political is treacherous terrain to tread as it is charged with pathos and
delineates an ethos for future rhetorical engagements. Perhaps another anecdote will act as a
means of communicating the point.

I was once involved in an email argument with one NDN over another NDN’s
questionably appropriate posting of a joke on a listserv. As a sort of sideways claim of
authenticity, the individual I was bandying words with signed their emails with their enrollment
number. The person who posted the joke was descentvi from the same tribe as the person doing
the critiquing. During the course of the discussion we ranged from the topic of NDN humor as a means of coping with colonization, to the exclusive hiring of one tribe to certain universities and on to the White academics who teach at universities. While the question of authenticity of NDN’ness was never raised outright, the construct was alive and well in the discussion. And while I didn’t sign my emails with my enrollment number, my responses were rife with counter claims on the discourse of NDN authenticity as a means of establishing the necessary ethos to “win” the discussion.

At the heart of the blood quantum discussion, in terms of the biological/political, is the concept of authenticity. This ethos claim on resources, policy and the very definition of what it means to be fill in the blank tribe. Though there are those that claim that the issue is greed, if such is the case why would it matter who is proclaimed NDN through a tribal system using the antiquated genocidal notions of a federal policy designed to expropriate tribal land? Or more to the point, if the definition of NDN (in terms of the biological/political) is so flawed...why would you want to subscribe to such a corrupt ideology?

One proposed alternative to blood quantum is the use of a sort of cultural matrix. By developing a cultural competency exam it is possible to weigh an NDN’s identity through what they know. It could/would involve language, religion, gender, traditional foods, etcetera. There are a number of issues involved here that I will enumerate.

The first issue is that this policy is proposed for all tribal people regardless of their narrative. It does not recognize the nuance or history of the tribes relative to each other much less to the hegemonic entity that is the United States. As mentioned above Yakama is about ten-thousand members, and encompasses over a million acres. To place Yakama in a similar position to the tribe with the largest landbase (Dineh) or the largest tribe in terms of members (Cherokee)
would be just as disingenuous as comparing it to any number of small California nations that have been colonized three times over by three different nations.

As a Yakama that practices Washut, under the concept of the proposed cultural literacy matrix, that epistemic literacy threads it way through a traditional foods paradigm, which is then seen in the policy listed above and the court cases mentioned previously. Without the epistemology found in the temunwit (teachings) of Washut, the actions of the tribe seem less coordinated and more chaotic as well as combative.

And yet there are other religions practiced by Yakamas, from the Euro flavors of Christianity to the Shaker religion and the Native American Church. Which would be preserved in this cultural exam? How does Catholicism speak to how Salmon agreed with the creator in giving itself up to feed the NDN people? Or at least how does one design an exam to quantify such a negotiation?

I provide these examples as a Yakama, as honestly I could not adequately describe this situation on other reservations with any veracity. But what I would offer is that I would not propose a national system without recognizing that the narratives are different from tribe to tribe. Moreover, I am presuming that if it is this complicated on one reservation then attempting to design a system that fits over all 565 federally recognized tribes and that would likely act as a template for any State recognized tribes that would apply for federal recognition.

The second is that there is an assumed cultural literacy present on reservations across the nation. The pertinence is that the cultural competency test would be applied to current members of the tribe that could just as likely lead to disenrollment. This point both stands alone and builds on the previous point.
What can be observed is that the complications of tribal identity lead to a panoply of definitions for who an NDN is. I once again return to my own tribe which is confederated as an example. The language program at Yakama is currently administered by an elder who speaks Wenatchipum. I speak another dialect that is most likely mixed Satus and Rock Creek (Washington side of the Columbia opposite the John Day River). In the language portion of this fictional cultural competency exam, what dialect is used?

On its own, the assumption of cultural competency fails to take into account the success of the systems of assimilation. The Ideological State Apparatuses that have been used by the United States government have been wildly successful. From the Dawes Act to Termination, from Boarding Schools to forced conversion, from progressive judicial impingement on tribal sovereignty to continued battles over funding of the fiduciary responsibilities found in the treaties, the ISA’s of the United States have constantly worked to stymie NDN epistemologies.

The potential for romanticization and primitivism is also there to play upon. There is a slippery slope, that leads to only describing a tribe’s epistemology in terms of beads, buckskin, and bones rather than looking at the way motorized boats are used to pull gill nets, or how modern transportation and communication has effected hunting or root gathering. NDN’s do not change, they are consistently historic.

On the other side of the coin, there are gendered practices that would be considered patriarchal by those external to the epistemology. How would those be treated? Are they to be excised? Are they to be encouraged?

The point here is that any exam is designed to quantify epistemic literacy in a provided discipline. In and of itself this practice is Cartesian and modernist, ideologies that have historically stood as mechanisms to erase NDN culture. How does one establish the essential
NDN, and more specifically the essential member of a given tribe without recognizing the epistemologies of each group of people?

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this proposal is the potential that political economy could play. That is, the ability of those who have the financial means to become NDN through curriculum. While those who have lived the colonial material existence on reservations cease to be NDN through an examination of the very things that the United States government has worked to rid them of, those that have decided to become NDN could just as easily accrue the information through educational programs sure to crop up.

What would I base this projection on? There are already those who desire a change to the status quo. Then there are those who are appropriating NDN spirituality and NDN ID for a variety of self-aggrandizing reasons. Of course there are those who self-identify as tribal. In short, there is a market and where there is a market there are those who would exploit it.

While I believe that blood quantum is a non-sustainable system in the long term, the delineation of membership is a primary attribute of a sovereign. The calls for change by Reitman\(^{41}\) and Gould\(^{42}\) bear out critiques that have some merit, but the external pressure of these critiques, sound like paternalism. By pushing an external agenda to redefine the biological/political membership of the tribe, these critiques quite literally want to tell NDN’s what NDN is or should be in their mind. The difference between the original external agenda of blood quantum and the continued, at least in appearance, paternalism is the development of tribal membership requirements that are generated by the tribe. So while blood quantum does not have full solvency, it is the choice of the tribe’s to continue to use it.

\(^{41}\) Reitman, Partial Abrogation.
The Cultural

I do not agree with the exclusive use of a cultural competency exam as a replacement for the blood quantum system. I do see culture as a coordinate in the construction of the discourse of authenticity in the epistemology of the NDN. There are three aspects that I think contribute to the ability to locate NDN ID in the framework that I propose. I believe that a shared epistemology creates a shared identity. There are also shared experiences that generate shared identity. And there is shared marginality as a means of resisting the dominant discourse.

The notion of a shared epistemology is what I think the cultural competency concept is attempting to quantify. And as I point out there is too broad an expanse to really bridge. That doesn’t mean that it isn’t used as means of gauging a sort of authenticity in inter-personal relationships.

While at WSU I’ve met a couple of young NDN women who are/were Washut. So when we were at certain events we sang the same songs, songs that non-NDNs and non-Washut folks were both ignorant of. When we talked about what our responsibilities are, there is a shared understanding. One of the women was raised Yakama but was enrolled Paiute. So while her blood quantum was predicated on one assumption her cultural competency was in another. The point here is that in sharing the Washut epistemology we were then able to discuss other aspects of Temunwit.

In order to make this concept transferrable, there are epistemologies of hyper-masculinity that are just as easy to access in the dominant narrative. Football as an epistemology has a language (much of it largely predicated on militarism), semiotic systems and malleable value system. I can speak in terms of nickel backs that play in the Tampa 2 and those with the epistemic literacy in the provided discourse can respond. This shared epistemology comes with a
shared language that can be an indicator of knowledge base. The same can be said of firearms (SA, DA, DAO), my Marine Corps background (SMEAC, BAMCIS, General Orders) or academia (ABD, Pre-lims, publishing). The semiotic system for football is found in the x’s and o’s, for firearms in the customization (techno-fetishism), for the Marine in the emblems of unit and rank, for the academic...well frankly I am still trying to figure that out, as I don’t seem to fit in well here. But the jargon of authenticity that I am using in this work, to include but not limited to epistemology, Ideological State Apparatus, hegemony and my attempt to provide a framework that re-conceptualizes authenticity are my attempts to become culturally authentic.

While I teach some things at the “big drum” there are some things I just don’t talk about with folks that aren’t Washut, NDN or not, I tired long ago of hearing of the error of my heathen ways. Shortly after that I tired of the romantic notions of the noble savage. Attempting to explain just one small portion of the epistemology leads to more and more description of the larger system to someone without the knowledge base or (often) the interest in a more full answer, is exhausting.

By having some sort of shared epistemology there is an assumption of shared values and knowledge base. Even if there is a difference in the way it was taught, or even the substance, it is significantly easier to establish where that difference may matter and in the end to resolve the difference in epistemic literacy or simply ignore it.

The next area I want to move to is in shared experiences. Shared experiences provide a complication of the construction of the monolithic culture of a provided epistemology. Here what I am referencing is the material reality of NDN life. Most Yakamas can talk about fry bread, commodity cheese, pow wow drums, tribal politics or the teams at “The Big Tournament”. None of these things are necessarily “traditional”. That is to say that these discourses within the larger
shared epistemology would likely not be on any sort of cultural competency exam, but they do mark the literate as potentially NDN.

For example, I sit at/teach on the WSU Registered Student Organization “The Wazzu Singers”. My mom used to work for the organization that dispensed commodities, so I am likely composed of 30% commodity cheese. Of course, my mom’s fry bread is even more epic than Victor Joseph’s. My grandpa’s team played in “The Big Tournament” back in the 80’s, they were called “The Valley Panthers”. My grandpa was also a general and executive councilman on separate occasions.

These are little bits of trivia (some told tongue in cheek) that I can drop as a means of demonstrating literacy and hence garnering authenticity that strengthens my ethos. Of course, for those without the literacy (or who simply don’t care) these little markers are completely without value. More importantly, for those who are looking for some sort of primitivist or romanticized demonstration of identity these markers are not only foreign but jarringly disconsonant.

Some of these markers delineate an intersection of class and race. Commodities are a form of subsidization for those with low income. Fry bread was born of commodity distribution, a deliciously unhealthy artifact of colonization.

The previous pair of points aid in comprising the last point. As a member of a marginalized epistemic community finding other members of that community through discussion of shared literacies provides a safe space as well as a space to resist the dominant discourse.

My Washut background puts me at odds in a nation whose Christian majority is often driving in the opposite direction of what I was taught in my family, in my tribe, and where I was raised. Having the material experience of subsistence subsidy is anti-thetical to the individualist bootstrap narrative of the American Dream. This mixture of cultural facets marks me as
decidedly other, but a sort of other that is complexified by the relatively small population on a national scale that is further decreased by tribal membership and decreased again by the sorts of epistemic communities within that tribe.

In the larger racial discourse of the United States, NDN people are rendered forever Tonto. We are sidekicks that are not worthy or capable of saving ourselves so we recruit Val-Costner into riding on the back of a large orange pterodactyl in order to battle their own people as the Pathfinder. Alternatively we can be werewolves, the Freudian Id in savage red skin, the Jungian Beast given form in cut offs, coastal art tattoo and shredded abs ever present regardless of the weather. The point is that in the Black-White racial discourse of the United States the NDN is sidelined.

I use the term non-NDN rather than White unless I am specifically addressing White people. The assumption that a person of color will understand the epistemology, history or situated narratives that I subscribe to without any sort of discussion is naive at best. To quote Sherman Alexie, “sharing dark skin doesn’t make two men brothers”43. The assumption doesn’t pay attention to the historicization of the narratives beyond the marginalization of the other by the dominant narrative. This of course works in the other direction as well, as I cannot pretend to comprehend the material experiences of the Black narrative regardless of the number of times I’ve seen Boyz-N-Da-Hood or NWA albums I’ve listened to.

This of course should be complexified as there are mixed race NDN’s that have to experience both the racialization of phenotypical blackness while also having the epistemic literacies of the NDN material existence. This includes the racialization of these mixed race

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NDN’s by other NDN’s. Here the assumption is that due to their skin color they lack the cultural aspect of NDN identity in any of the annotated aspects.

This sort of racialization happens to phenotypically White NDN’s as well. The assumption being that since they have access to White Privilege they are somehow less NDN. Their experiences are often rendered moot, as is their epistemic literacy.

After that long tangent we get to the point. NDN people are rendered invisible, historically playing a bit part in textbooks, in popular culture the backdrop artifact, in political discourse a minor player in a few issues, in anthropology the object to be subjected to study, in English a few authors of note. But for those who share the epistemic literacies it is possible to resist falling into these dominant modes by banding together.

This concept isn’t new. Rather it is the underlying ideology for things like student centers on college campuses. By grouping together people who share marginalized epistemologies it is possible for them to not only survive, but to actively push back against the ignorance of the dominant narrative. Collectivizing provides a base to remind non-NDNs that the discourse of race should include more than just Black and White voices, that NDN people aren’t simply historical artifacts but living, breathing, communities of people dealing with poverty and violence as well as the cultural preservation/dissemination “plight”.

The cultural coordinate is intended as a means of communicating to NDNs and non-NDNs alike a level of epistemic literacy. This coordinate is not intended to act in the same way as a cultural competence exam, a quantification of information. Rather it is used as a means of communicating shared experiences and ways of describing the world, shared language and semiotic systems.
Place

I was taught a song by Dr. Ron Pond. It is in Nez Perce but in my estimation the message is a commonly held sentiment, nu-nay-mwa tesh-whah\textsuperscript{4}...this is our land. This coordinate of NDN ID is found in place based ideology.

Here I think we can discuss three locations as generalities: The Rez, urban spaces, wild spaces. These three spaces tie themselves to the other coordinates, so in a way this coordinate is more dependent on the other two. At the same time it has the capacity to define the other two more clearly.

The Rez, is a space defined by the manner in which the treaties that govern the area were upheld or not. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales performed a review of cold case murders as well as discussed funding for a meth task force, and the tribe was listed in a report titled “Neither Safe, Nor Secure” on the subject of unsatisfactory jail facilities.\textsuperscript{x} My rez is a dangerous space. As Sherman Alexie also notes, “...the reservation is more than pain[,] it’s double happiness too…”\textsuperscript{44}

My longhouse is on the rez. That is also where my family is buried, and where the majority of my extended family lives. It is where I can hunt year ‘round. It is where the pow wow’s I attended as a child were/are. It is where I will get the answers to the cultural questions I have from language to the “whys” of what we do.

After my tour in the Marine Corps I lived in Portland. There are a number of tribal organizations based in the Portland area, though I only ever visited one of them while I lived there. As an urban area there are a number of NDN people who live there for one reason or another. I had the privilege of being brought up in my tribe, on my reservation. Hence Portland as an urban space was fun and interesting but it will never be home.

\textsuperscript{44} Sherman Alexie, “Reservation Mathematics”, \textit{First Indian on the Moon}, (Hanging Loose Press: Brooklyn, NY, 1993) 43.
A common term to describe those who don’t have the sort of attachment to tribe, culture or place is “Urban Indian”. Sometimes it is used pejoratively, other times it is simply descriptive. What it is not, is uncommon.

Urban NDN’s are a prime example of the intersections of the coordinates of the discourse of authenticity as applied to the NDN epistemology. It is a catch-all term, that is a recognition of an NDN (in some way shape or form) who lacks full claim to the discourse of authenticity. It can demarcate access to a form of material NDN experience, though even these are complicated through the other coordinates in the discourse.

Wild spaces is a category I am loathe to use as it is rather primitivist. But I place it here as a means of delineating not only the resources that some tribes have, but also the lack of resources others have. As I noted earlier, Yakama Nation has a large area closed for the use of Yakamas exclusively, an uncommon situation nationally.

These spaces are often where the stereotypical epistemic literacies noted in the cultural section are practiced: hunting, fishing, root digging, berry picking, gathering the right sort of rocks for sweathouses and the like.

These spaces can also be shared, such as the Columbia River or Devil’s Tower in Wyoming. This is a contact point for the discourse of political/biological ID, as the rights of NDN people as guaranteed through treaties or other policies are brought to bear on the dominant narrative.

The place coordinate of NDN ID may seem subservient to the other coordinates but due to the way that kinship works when looking at population clusters (Yakama Nation specifically) place functions as a means of tying an individual NDN into social networks. Constructions of the
coordinate of place, in the Pan-Indian sense, are inundated in a history of movement, mobility and often displacement.

**Application**

These coordinates are intended to be used together to map a three-dimensional sphere of NDN ID for a provided individual or possibly a group though I haven’t thought it that far through. Rather, it is intended to complicate the static notions of social constructions by replacing them with dynamic points that shift with time and space.

Looking back on the examples provided to this point, let me provide an example of introduction at the end as a means of demonstrating the way this framework operates in a practical way.

When asked where I am from I respond with, “Well, I am enrolled at Yakama but I have grown up all over the Pacific Northwest.” With this short response I am able to locate myself on the biological/political coordinate, as well as the place based coordinate. Usually the next question is if I know so-and-so who is also Yakama, to which I usually respond with “No, but I know the family”.

When I go back to the rez for academic reasons I wear a “White Man” tie, tied in a half-windsor. When I go to academic functions I wear a beaded bolo/medallion. These are semiotic indicators of where I am coming from ideologically.

Taking these together I am attempting to provide enough indicators for the interlocutor to place me in their own matrix of NDN’ness relative to their literacy in these systems. These interpretations vary from person to person, but it is this variability I am hoping to capture with a framework that defines itself upon coordinates that are as fluid as the definitions of NDN’ness. By marking myself as external to my tribe’s place, but also wearing the phenotypical and
semiotic markers I risk being called an apple myself, a performer of NDN’ness alienated from “authentic” NDN’ness by time away from the rez and tribe. I become redefined as urban NDN by merit of space.

To be honest it is something I fear, to be labeled somehow invalid due to my exchange of time on the reservation for education, military service and opportunity. Maybe that’s why I am writing this, to come to grips with how I define myself and the inconsistency with the way I am defined by others.
A story.

A man fires a rifle for many years... and he goes to war.

And afterward, he turns the rifle in at the armory... and he believes he's finished with the rifle.

But no matter what else he might do with his hands... love a woman, build a house... change his son's diaper...

his hands remember the rifle.

*Jarhead*<sup>45</sup>

The epistemology of the US Marine is rife with hyper-masculinity, patriarchy, violence and ultra-nationalism. The pervasive impact of Marine Corps indoctrination is recognized in the slogan “Once a Marine, Always a Marine”. This slogan informs the terminology “former Marine”, because there is no such thing as an “ex-Marine”.

The romanticization of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) is noteworthy in and of itself due to its ubiquity. As an image of American hyper-masculinity it has been re-introduced to every generation after WWII. From the films “The Sands of Iwo Jima”<sup>46</sup> and “Battle Cry”<sup>47</sup> to the HBO mini-series “The Pacific”<sup>48</sup> and “Generation Kill”,<sup>49</sup> the USMC is well represented in visual media. But contemporarily there is much more material to sort through. The first person

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shooter video game genre “Battlefield 3”\textsuperscript{50}, “Operation Flashpoint: Red River”\textsuperscript{51} and “Modern Warfare”\textsuperscript{52} franchise all draw on the mythos of the Marine Corps. There is a facebook page “Occupy Marines”\textsuperscript{53} which is constructed to provide the material support of Marines, in the Occupy Movement by acting as a communications hub and information dissemination space.

Of course, I would argue, in times of war the legend of the Corps waxes and in times of peace it ebbs. While the extraction of forces is currently underweigh in Iraq, Afghanistan is still occupied by US forces. As long as troops are deployed, Marines will be on the ‘line and thus at the forefront of the popular culture constructions of the hyper-masculine. Hence, Marines will be featured in film, ergodic literature, television, social networking and more for the foreseeable future.

What this leads to is a popularity of the icon of the Marine. What I mean is that the signifier of the Marine as an image of American nationalism embodied in the hypermasculine form will only grow in stature as emblematic of what masculine is, in the United States. SEAL Team 6 will always be remembered for the assault and elimination of “Geronimo” (Osama Bin Laden’s codename). But the United States Marine Corps has a far broader personal reach even in its limited numbers in relation to the other services. So while almost every American knows a Marine, not everyone knows a SEAL.

Part of this social construction is derived from the ethos of the Marine that is distributed to the general public through ISA’s as noted above, but perhaps the larger impact is the behavior of former Marines. The greater part of this ethos is ingrained in the Marine through the indoctrination process of “Boot”. It is further cemented through the shared hardship of the

\textsuperscript{50} Battlefield 3, October 2011, Electronic Arts, October 2011-June 2013.
\textsuperscript{51} Operation Flashpoint: Red River, June 7, 2011, Codemasters, June 2011.
\textsuperscript{52} Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, Activision, 2010.
Marine with his fellow Marines. Upon EAS (End of Active Service) the Marine is returned to a civilian world that is as alien to them as the Marine Corps base is to a civilian. The difference being that the Marine is informed that this is “The Real World” and the civilian understands that their tenure on Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, Twenty-Nine Palms, etcetera, is limited by nature of the fact that they are neither Marines nor sailors.

Pre-fix

This chapter is going to be different from the one preceding it in terms of voice and structure. Less time is going to be spent on the exposition of the coordinates, but an analysis will be woven through the interrogations section toward the end of this chapter. While it is a more simplified use of the framework I present, it is contextual. The differentiation in the writing is critical to the consumption of this work, as it is the tacit acknowledgement that each epistemology operates in different ways and thus the discourse of authenticity wrapped around it is necessarily different.

The Biological/Political

The biological/political coordinate can be defined in a number of ways. The most common is the physical appearance of a U.S. Marine and the possession of information on the citizenship of the individual in question. The appearance is important as the schema of the Marine is the most fetishized.

In “Boot”, those recruits deemed to have a high body fat percentage are marked by a red stripe spray painted onto their grey sweatshirts above and below their platoon number (colloquially we called them “racing stripes”). This annotates them as “Diet Privates”, a term that they are obligated to yell when going through the chow line as a means of letting the servers know that their carbohydrate intake is limited. At the same time, the Marine Corps has the most
tolerant height to weight requirements. The Marine Corps recognized through their regulations that they wanted to police body fat and used mechanisms that observed that. The broader standard for height and weight is to recognize that muscle is heavier than fat, and the Marine Corps didn’t want to punish Marines for being overly muscular.

The political coordinate of the US Marine on active duty or in the reserves can be verified by their identification card. The uniformity of the US Marine is a means of using the physical form of the Marine to indicate their biological authenticity. The haircut is regulation, from zero to four inches. The clothing that they are allowed to wear on liberty is limited as well. If they are in uniform their body is policed through regulations passed through historical narratives and policed by any and all Marines that they come into contact with.

The political coordinate of the US Marine veteran is verified through the DD-214. This document is similar to a transcript, in that it has a short summary of the Marine’s career. It has the schools, awards, MOS (Military Occupational Specialty, the job that the Marine does) and some financial information.

**The Cultural**

The cultural coordinate of the US Marine epistemology is broader than that of the biological/political due to the gamut of experiences that a Marine can/has had. While the political coordinate is relatively binary (are/are not), the cultural coordinate of the individual Marine is impacted by their narrative. As a former Marine who is interrogating their own interpellations as a hypermasculine, heteronormative, NDN person of working class (read poor) background, it is critical to understand where I received the social constructions of the cultural coordinate of the Marine Corps epistemology: what it means to be a Marine, how I embodied my
Marine Corps mentality, and how I continue to reproduce the Marine Corps mythos in everyday performance.

What Marines do share in culturally is through the history, customs and courtesies of the USMC. The culture of the Corps is taught in “Boot”, reinforced through the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and often retained into civilian life all while being celebrated throughout. From the Marine Corps Birthday (November 10, 1775) to the adoption of the Eagle, Globe and Anchor (EGA), from the Mission of the Marine Corps Rifle Squad (to locate, close with and destroy the enemy by fire and maneuver or repel the enemy's’ assault by fire and close combat) to the Rifleman’s Creed (This is my rifle, there are many like it but this one is mine [...] the United States Marine is taught to honor those who were Marine before them, and that this shared identity is unique to those who “Earn the Title”.

The authentic Marine is literate/competent in their Marine Corps “knowledge”. The examples immediately above are common across the Corps. More specific cultural knowledge delineates the individual’s experience. While I’ve ridden in CH 53’s (the largest helicopter in the US arsenal), CH 46’s (a dual rotor helicopter commonly used to transport a Marine Corps Rifle Squad), HMMWV’s (a.k.a. Humvee’s), M 151’s (a Vietnam Conflict era jeep of diminutive size), LCAC’s (Landing Craft Air Cushion, a giant hovercraft for delivering Marines to beaches); I know little of these units’ histories, how to maintenance/repair the equipment or how to operate any of the avionics. Inversely, the First Marine Regiment (my unit), of the First Marine Division (unit motto: First of the First) is a historically renowned unit for their role on Guadalcanal, and the Second Battalion of the First Marines (2/1) is now immortalized in the HBO mini-series The Pacific.54

54 The Pacific
Intimately tied to the cultural coordinate of the Marine Corps epistemology is the place based coordinate in the Marine epistemology matrix. Much like asking “Where are you from?” in NDN Country is rife with sub-text, what units a Marine served in describe where they served and are closely connected to what they did in the Corps. As an example, the great majority of members of the First and Fifth Marine Regiments are infantry. The First Marine Regiment is stationed at Camp Horno and the Fifth Marine Regiment at San Mateo both at Camp Pendleton, CA as they are both members of the First Marine Division. The Second Marine Division is at Camp Lejeune, NC. The Third Marine Division is at Camp Courtney in Okinawa, Japan. The first, second and third air wings are stationed at Okinawa, Japan, Cherry Point, NC and Miramar, CA respectively.

**Narratives**

I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1995. Part of it was due to the fact that I was extremely concerned about my ability to survive in college. I had received the offer of a full funding package to Lewis and Clark College in Lake Oswego, Oregon. But, if I couldn’t make it in school I would have wasted the effort of my community (in this case the small former timber town of Stevenson, Washington) to prepare me for that space and I didn’t want to disappoint them. I needed time to think, and I believed I could perform and take pleasure in, the physicality the Corps demands. My father had been a soldier, I was born at Madigan Medical Center in Ft. Lewis, and I had romanticized the military for most of my life though rejected it as an option until my senior year of high school when reality rushed up on me.

I went to “Boot” at MCRD San Diego, which makes me a “Hollywood” Marine. It is the western states training facility that is populated by recruits from the Mississippi to the Pacific Coast. During training I injured my right knee and was forced to go to sick call on more than one
occasion. At the second visit I was again informed that my knee was simply “sore”. I requested permission to speak, and when granted, I inquired after the possibility of tendinitis. The physician angrily asked if I wanted to be discharged because, as she informed me, she would do it! In a split second I considered a positive response. I was in constant pain, was emotionally uncomfortable and was homesick. But I couldn’t contemplate facing my father after being physically broken by the Corps. So I answered in the negative, completed my training and went on to graduate from the School of Infantry (SOI) and then to serve in the USMC as an infantryman.

While I would offer that most Marines wouldn’t communicate the exact same story or even offer the emotional transparency that I provide here, I would say that every Marine has a Boot Camp story where they thought about giving it up, or at least that they had made a mistake. While I was in Boot, one recruit (not a Marine) refused to train and was subject to Non-Judicial Punishment in front of the entire company as a means of refuting the rumor that in Boot Camp if you refused to train you would simply be kicked out. As it turns out, you can’t quit the Corps, and they can’t fire you...unless you’re broken.

These narratives are a means of describing the sorts of shared experiences that Marines have through the hardships that Boot Camp, school, and the FMF offer. Quite noticeable here is that I have never seen combat. I EAS’d in 1999 and didn’t get called up or re-enlist post 9-11. So while the Marine Corps’ narrative is one of hardship and combat, mine is only of the garrison experience of one Marine. In more than one narrative, my experience is an incomplete experience when held in juxtaposition to the social constructions that are received through contemporary media.
The shared experiences and the indoctrination process however, provide an epistemology that can be delineated through Marine Corps publications, regulations, and oral narrative as well as unit culture. For example, Marines tend to remember the “Green Bible”, the field guide issued in Boot to all Marines that is used to test “Prac”. Practical applications of Marine Corps knowledge, from history to grooming standard to the manner in which to tourniquet or (during my tenure) Linear Infighting Neural-Override Engagement (the LINE training hand-to-hand combat system).

While most regulations are in the Marine’s “Green Bible” others are found in a timely manner in a provided place, for example on ship the “smoking lamp” is out when LCAC’s are doing maintenance turns or during flight operations. The story of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division nickname (which was changed, reportedly due to the negative connotation of said nickname) was passed to me in a berthing aboard LSD 40, (the now de-commissioned) USS Ft. Fisher. And the manner in which a unit uses its weapon systems can be derived from previous experience and as such is tailored to meet those perceived needs, such as TOW (Tube-launched Optically-tracked Wire-command-link guided missile system) vehicles having a SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon) for use in suppressing, destroying enemy infantry.

Interrogations

These narratives are included as a way of outlining my version of the epistemology as well as to demonstrate a certain sort of authenticity through a literacy in the way that the Marine ethos operates. The burden of authenticity lies in its policing. Here are two examples.

I was performing research within the previously mentioned FPS Battlefield 3. While playing one of my teammates (randomly assigned in this case) began pejoratively using the word “Nigger”. He applied it to the enemy forces repeatedly. In a fit of pique, I responded with
“Watch your fucking mouth”. To which he responded, “Hey I’m a Marine, and can say what I want”. This only further inflamed my sense of outrage. Here was a young man who was using the ethos of the United States Marine Corps as a means of establishing his privilege to use racial slurs.

While the USMC has issues concerning race, there is a stress on being green. The Marine Corps identity should be stronger than that of racial identity due to the shared pressures that becoming/being a Marine entail. This rhetoric is present in the dialog of “Full Metal Jacket”, “There is no racial bigotry here. I do not look down on niggers, kikes, wops or greasers. Here you are all equally worthless.”55, “Jarhead”, “You are no longer black or brown or yellow or red. You are now Green! You are light green or dark green! Do you understand?” 56, and “Generation Kill”, “Think I fucking care that some late sipping, bi-sexual, college student reading about Justin Timberlake in Rolling Stones, thinks that I’m a psycho, racist, cracker? Fuck no. I’d give my life for any brother in here. I know one of them would do the same for me. You think it matters if I call fucking ‘T’ a nigger? I fucking love that big dark green Marine.”57 And it was present in my boot camp experience as we reference people by their shade of green, with dark skinned people being “Dark Green” and light skinned people “Light Green”…I was just green.

Because this gamer did not know or understand this rhetoric I called into question his authenticity. “What unit are you with, where are you stationed, what’s your MOS”? His reluctance to respond informed me that while he may have some literacy in the superficial epistemology of the USMC, he didn’t have the material experience. His responses were to challenge my own and when I responded in detail, 2nd Bn. 1st Marines, Weapons Co. 2nd CMplt. T.O.W. sect., he reluctantly informed me of his MOS but nothing beyond the reasoning

56 *Jarhead*.
57 *Generation Kill*.
behind his decision. In the end, he ratcheted back his behavior, though he didn’t apologize. I suspect that he was in the delayed entry program, or had spoken to a recruiter, but definitely had not earned the title of US Marine through this interlocutor’s assessment of his authenticity matrix.

I mention that in the Marine Corps discourse socially constructed in popular culture, that there is repeated mention to the de-prioritization of race. But this portion of the discourse wasn’t what this young gamer was absorbing. I would argue, that his access to the broad strokes of hypermasculinity and nationalism that I’ve emphasized were re-interpreted through his positionality of typical White hypermasculinity. Not a large leap all things considered, but for those within the epistemic logics it violates a basic premise of the Marine Corps identity, which is esprit de corps. The outline of the parameters of authenticity demonstrate that he had violated a critical norm which defined his overt racism as outside the boundaries of acceptable behavior for Marine, conduct unbecoming if you will.

After the Sandy Hook school shooting there was another case that is important to note. Craig Pusley was a young former Marine had requested to stand post outside of his son’s elementary school. It was granted and he stood the post in desert camouflage utilities (Desert Cammies). His narrative was that he had served combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and had been Honorably Discharged as a Sergeant.

The first space to break this narrative down, is in the event. Sandy Hook’s tragedy caused a panic amongst the American public. This former Marine’s volunteering to stand post was seen as a sort of patriotic return to duty. In addition to their most commonly observed duties, U.S.

59 Ibid
60 Ibid
Marines guard the President and stand post at every U.S. Embassy in the world. Having a U.S. Marine stand guard over children seemed to provide a sense of security.

The authenticity of this Pusley is the next space to investigate. When information began to surface about this individual, it turned out, he had never left MCRD San Diego. He was discharged after spending less than a year in the Corps. He did not have the rank that he claimed to have. The school asked him to leave. The Marine Corps asked him to stop wearing the uniform and he was generally humiliated.

It is possible to examine these examples through the framework of authenticity provided. In the XBox example, the gamer likely had been able to con others through his superficial knowledge of the U.S. Marine Corps gathered through popular culture. His authenticity claim was primarily a cultural claim. Due to the incorporeal nature of the interaction (internet, XBOX Live, BF3 matching), there was really no way to ascertain the biological/political through the schemas and heuristics that I apply to other former Marines. As he had violated the epistemology of the U.S.M.C. in terms of race, his cultural claim was invalid as premised on the literacy/competency of the interlocutor. When challenged in terms of his political membership (in this case unit membership), or his place based identity (where he was stationed) his claim was unhinged.

In the second example, the individual had claimed authenticity through his limited participation in the U.S. Marine Corps. The political identity of a combat veteran is integral to the epistemology of the U.S. Marine. Providing an inaccurate coordinate (relative to himself) in that area rendered his whole identity in-authentic. Claiming a rank that he had never held, only

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61 Ibid
63 Ibid
64 Ibid
further rendered his identity in-authentic. His claim to having served in Iraq and Afghanistan were place based claims that also rendered the whole of identity in-authentic when they were found to be false. Interestingly enough, the individual had an authentic Marine Corps identity before he fabricated a more impressive profile.

My claim on an authentic Marine Corps epistemology is also subject to being tested, even if it is only by myself. And while I have some anxiety about my lack of legitimacy in terms of time spent in combat, I seek out fellow Marine Corps veterans. While I rarely share similar political positions, the shared narratives of the Marine Corps experience provide a certain sort of comfort.

While doing some informal research on the prices/availability of firearms in early 2013, I wandered into a sporting goods store in Lewiston, Idaho. I had forgotten that I was wearing a Marine Corps Veteran sweatshirt, but the men behind the counter picked up on it right away. One was an older Marine, who had served in Vietnam and later as a Sheriff’s deputy.

The other Marine was younger than I was. He opened by asking who I was with. When I replied 2/1 Weapons, 2nd Counter-mech, he smiled a bit. He was with 1/9. We had served in the same regiment. As it turns out, we had lived across the street, and a decade, from one another.

In both cases my authenticity held up. In the second case, we were able to discuss the political and place-based identity specific to the First Marine Regiment. We could only share the culture of the Corps with the older gentleman. We were all (authentically) Marines.

In another case, I was socializing at an establishment in Moscow, Idaho. I was queried about who I was with, and where I served, by a civilian that I had been discussing the Marine Corps with. Over my shoulder I heard “Sgt. LameBull?” I turned around to see a familiar face, that I couldn’t put a name to. As it turns out, there was a young man that had served in the same
Company that I had. He lived downstairs from me when we were at Camp Horno, about fifty feet from me when we were aboard the USS Boxer, and now lived across town.

He is a well-known local. His corroborating my identity as a Marine only further increased my authenticity. If there were any questions about my identity as a Marine, this person could verify the biological/political, the culture and the place based coordinates that I had provided. As I had felt no compunction to fabricate my identity, there was no temerity in talking with my fellow Marine or letting anyone else who knew both of us, know that we had served together.

**Application**

I’ll start my section on applications with a seminal quote by Dr. David J. Leonard:

> With a little money and the switch of a button, the divide between real and virtual-between civilian and military, between domestic and foreign-is erased as we wage war through gaming. Yet most Americans remain on their couches, in their classrooms, and in their offices, providing consent and support through video games-through play.\(^{65}\)

By collapsing the differentiation between the military member and the civilian through militainment it changes the lens of focus that the interlocutor is using. There are three things that should be the primary focuses when de-constructing in the militainment case, the impact of militainment on the veteran, the impact on the civilian consumer and the impact on policy.

Militainment has the capacity to act as a means of connecting the veteran or active service-member to their larger communities. In the case of the Marine Corps there is an emphasis on the history of the Corps as a template for what Marines should be to this point in the

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contemporary. The two HBO mini-series I mentioned previously provide not only semiotic markers of what a Marine is, but how those semiotic markers are preserved in the Marine Corps. It is only relatively recently that ergodic literature has attempted to capture the same level of symbol system congruency by using vernacular scripted to resemble the way that Marines banter in films like “Generation Kill”.66

I have spoken to fellow veterans who have combat time about these games. Most of them are unable to consume these titles as their stimulus is crafted too closely to simulation. The developers have succeeded in creating a sensory experience that mimics combat, with the limited kinesthetic interactions possible at this moment.

It is important to note here that the men that I have spoken to were infantry, that their experiences were derived from actually participating in firefights. This is a different experience than piloting drones, reading radar, piloting aircraft or firing cruise missiles. The spatial difference is reflected in the very stimulus that is not present in the ergodic text: the smells, the feeling of weight/textures/pain, the taste of the air/blood.

The point to be made is that for the combat veteran, consumption of these graphic forms of militainment is limited due to the visual stimulation related to their experiences in combat situations. For veterans who have never experienced the same sort of visceral violence, there is a likely alteration of their frames concerning violence, but it is not attached to the same schemas or heuristics.

Of course this alternate form of authenticity is often challenged by veterans who can play games. Googling any Youtube video on military activities, you will find comments seeking out authenticity. Whether it is comparing the Marines with the Army, or actual service with FPS authenticity, there is a hierarchal structure that is scaffolded around the video clip premised on

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66 Generation Kill.
the discourse(s) of authenticity that a provided interlocutor holds. This structure is comparative in nature and seeks to forward a certain sort of biological/political identity built upon the perceived culture that the factions have.

For example when watching the YouTube clip “Making Marines - A Drill Instructor Story - Part 1” I noticed a comment that warranted attention. In the top rated comment, BradfordPkFr states “CoD Rangers don’t count kid” in response to a comment that was removed for spam.67

The video “Making a Marine” is about Boot Camp68, and as such there were more than a few comments about the training. The first set I would identify as those people who are interested in becoming, or state that they are enlisted and waiting for their date to ship to Boot Camp to become a Marine. The secondary set is of trolls deriding the military with inflammatory rhetoric, and those who are feeding the trolls. The third set is premised on/around the FPS authenticity. Oddly enough the most prominent set is on the subject of how the main training drill instructor sounds like DMX.

The desire to “Earn the Title”, is a claim on the political authenticity of the United States Marine Corps. Many of these comments are centered around whether or not the provided individual is fit enough to join. There are also more than a handful of comments concerned about their ability to enlist due to legal issues or medical conditions. I would offer that this whole discourse of “worthiness” is built on the construction of the U.S. Marine as the modern day Paladin as presented in the Marine Corps commercials. The past discourse of join the Corps or

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go to jail is an un-referenced memory that no longer plays a part in the narrative of the ethos of the Marines.

The Marine Corps uses terms that can be linked to Taylor’s “moral ideal”\(^{69}\) of authenticity through Adorno’s “jargon of authenticity”\(^{70}\). In this sense, the authenticity is derived from the cultural coordinate but the interpretations are political. Two institutional examples are found in the Core Values of the Marine and the fourteen troop leading steps. The Core Values of the United States Marine Corps are honor, courage and commitment and the fourteen leadership traits are justice, judgement, decisiveness, integrity, dependability, tact, initiative, enthusiasm, bearing, unselfishness, courage, knowledge, loyalty and endurance (JJ DID TIE BUCKLE). While these are cultural aspects that derive from the epistemology (literally a way of knowing how to lead) the perception of the interlocutor external to the Marine identity interprets them politically through the projection and performance of the Marines as a professional fighting force, rather than the alternative to incarceration.

The second set is standard trolling. Profanity laced sentences that are intended to rouse responses through “griefing”. What trolling does in this case is distract from the actual dissenting voices. Voices that disagree with militarism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism are responded to with the same sorts of jeers. There is no real inclination to sort the comments into trolling and critiquing categories to consider, rather they are all simply CAPS’d into oblivion.

The weight of the DMX comments are humorous, but do tie into the discourse of authenticity for US Marines. The way that the training DI’s voice sounds is due to the way that he uses it on the Drill Field. It is commonly referred to as “Gunny voice”. Gunnery Sergeants commonly have “Gunny voice” due to their time spent on the Drill Field. Gunnery Sergeant is a


Staff Non-Commissioned Officers rank, that typically denotes around fifteen years or more spent as a U.S. Marine. To make the rank of Gunny, a Marine will have to perform “B-billets”. B-billets are when the Corps re-assigns a Marine from the FMF to auxiliary duties that are necessary, but are not permanent, Military Occupational Specialties.

When I was a Marine the B-billets available to Marines were I & I, DI, MSG and Recruiter. I&I is Marine vernacular for Instructor/Inspector, which is the post that Marines hold when they are working at a reserve unit as the day-to-day personnel. DI is Drill Instructor (Soldiers have Drill Sergeants, Sailors and Airmen have Training Instructors) largely considered the most prestigious B-billet, as they perform one of the primary duties of the United States Marine Corps...they Make Marines. MSG is the Marine Security Guards which is also a prestigious B-billet due to the rigorous selection process that is part and parcel of protecting every U.S. embassy on the planet. Recruiters are high profile in the communities that they operate in, but the B-billet is high stress due to the pressures that they are put under to stock Boot Camp with recruits. I should emphasize that a recruit is not a Marine, and that the DI’s job is to cul recruits from Marines.

“Gunny voice” could be mapped into all three of the coordinates of the Marine Corps’ authenticity matrix. It defines the Marine through their political identity in terms of rank, though one doesn’t have to be a Gunny to have Gunny voice. It defines the Marine as a former DI, which can take the form of cultural capital. And it also locates the Marine at either MCRD (Marine Corps Recruit Depot) San Diego or PI (Parris Island).

So while the comments on this particular video are humorous in a superficial way, upon closer inspection it can be typologized (by this former Marine interlocutor) into the discourse of authenticity. The consumers who made the DMX comments lack the literacy in the Marine
Corps experience to recognize the phenomenon, or the interest to ask why he sounds like he does. This is an example of how the literacy/competency of the interlocutor changes the mapping of authenticity to the body of the individual being typologized.

**Policy**

Where militainment can be confounding is that it is actually attempting to appropriate the authenticity of one epistemology while simultaneously dwelling within the authenticity of another. While membership in the two epistemologies are not mutually exclusive the discourses of authenticity are. The gamer’s discourse of authenticity, in terms of coordinates, are not an overlay with those of the Marine. This creates a disconnect in the way that the discourse acts as a lens of interpretation of events, particularly events that are intended to be interpreted through the eyes of a Marine.

This is similar to the academic that builds their reputation on being the NDN expert. The primary difference is found in the sheer size of the contact between the spheres of the two epistemologies. The academic who has an identity built on their authenticity as a scholar who studies Native Americans is going to be a relatively small population. PhD’s comprise 1% of the population of the United States, less than four million in number, with those that study Native Americans a fraction of that population.

Now consider that Call of Duty: Black Ops 2 (COD:BO2) sold a seven-and-a-half million copies in just two weeks, and totaled over twenty-three million over four platforms to date.\(^7^1\) While the scholar of Native American studies has the potential to alter the lens of interpretation for students, multiplying their ability to shift agendas, the sheer weight of militainment options shifts the discourse of authenticity from a congruent space.

\(^7^1\) VGChartz, Call of Duty: Black Ops 2, Updated June 13, 2013, Accessed June 20, 2013.  
Consider that COD:BO2 is one game in a franchise that has nine titles. There is also the Battlefield franchise (7 titles), Counter-Strike, sci-fi military titles (Mass Effect 1-3, Halo 1-4) and the US Army’s designed title, America’s Army. On top of this saturation of ergodic texts, there are also the films/television shows I’ve already mentioned in addition to the military and history channels. This is important as video games take cues from film and movies in terms of semiotic indicators of culture as well as the visual simulations.

This difference between the authenticity of the Marine epistemology and the Gamer epistemology is critical to establish, as consumers of these ergodic texts are exposed to sterilized combat zones. In this case the sterilization of the landscape is of civilians. Through the history of videogames there has been an increase in the rubble and texture mapping that communicates that there is(has been) a war, but the constant is that there are no civilians.

Rich King and David Leonard present the policy swaying power of what they term as wargames through how “…spatial mapping within virtual warfare affects the actual mapping of war-torn zones across the world”.\textsuperscript{72} Their work can be applied herein in a number of places, but in a more general sense their thesis supports this chapter’s through the discarding of ergodic militainment texts as toys and rather seeing their capacity for the crossing of the (non-existent) virtual boundary into the “real” world of politics, war and imperialism.

Conventional Warfare is delineated by battle lines, the deployment of concentrated forces identified by uniformity with a landscape that is typically absent of civilians. By eliminating civilians as entities, one eliminates the logistical, tactical, and strategic hurdle of operating in occupation. Der Derian provides an example of this when discussing the comments of a senior Marine in charge of a simulation program.

I can go through escalations of force on vehicles where a gunner—you’re talking a 18-, 19-, 20-year-old Marine or serviceman, whoever he be-and he’s got his hands on the butterfly trigger. He has life and death in his hands. He’s the one who has to decide, ‘Is that a vehicle-born IED, or is that a momma’ and five kids, just scared and driving erratically?’

Perhaps counter-intuitive to the claims on the discourse of authenticity that the franchises under examination make the United States Marine Corps training simulator Der Derian is reporting on has civilians as a key part of the game’s goals.

To be sure there are civilians in the games that I am presenting. Black Ops\textsuperscript{74} and COD:MW2\textsuperscript{75} both have civilians, Flash Point: Dragon Rising\textsuperscript{76} has civilians, but they are already deceased (the implication being that it was by the Chinese currently occupying the fictional island). Its namesake sequel Operation Flashpoint: Red River provides a commentary on how the absence of civilians is an indicator of impending danger, a commentary that is echoed in the National Geographic documentary Camp Leatherneck.

Even with the presence of civilians within a game’s boundaries does not necessarily mean that the amount of attention paid to a populated warzone is appropriate. That is to say that killing a civilian does not have the same sort of weight as it does in “meatspace”. I am not suggesting that there should be some sort of real world warcrimes tribunal for the murder of virtual citizens. Rather that there should be in-game repercussions on the same track as the rewards are provided. Now none of the games mentioned herein have their single-player campaign mode contribute to the multi-player character construction scale. But with games like

\textsuperscript{73} Der Derian. Virtuous War, 291.
\textsuperscript{76} Operation Flashpoint: Red River,.
The Rainbow Six Vegas franchise does actually punish the player for harming civilians, but the setting is different when there are civilians at all. The punishment is the same as “dying” in game, that is, the failure of the mission causing a restart of the level. So while rewards are gained through the campaign and multi-player modes there still isn’t a means of punishment for harming innocents on that same track.

Important to note is that in the game Under Siege, as a Palestinian participant in the second Intifada an attack on Palestinian or Israeli civilians has repercussions in game through either a loss of points at the end of the game. The intentional juxtaposition here is less to draw a new dichotomy than to critique the pre-existing Good Guy/Bad Guy construct found in the dominant narrative masquerading as “Fair and Balanced” media coverage. I offer that the designers’ of Under Siege intentionally situated civilians within the scope of the game in a meaningful way, while the designers’ of the COD series...did not. Why?

The reason why this hasn’t happened is due to a lack in player interest. Tossing a grenade through a door or window to eliminate the enemy (and any set dressing civilians) is significantly easier than attempting accurate target acquisition while being engaged oneself. But that brings us back to one of the primary points of this chapter, that the rhetoric that is being used to sell the games is built on accessing a discourse of military authenticity, but the authenticity is superficial at best and misleading at worst. Moreover it has the possibility to lead to a conditioning of acceptance of collateral damage as based upon this virtual construction of warfare, an example of how video games impact policy due to the “Epic Winz” of their virtual self. And if the player is not projected to desire it the producers of the cultural text have no reason to provide it. Vit Sisler

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78 Helga Tawil Souri, “The Political Battlefield of Pro-Arab Video Games on Palestinian Screens” Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Volume 27, Number 3, 2007, pp. 536-551
succinctly provides us a peek at the game producers’ likely logic in his article “Digital Arabs” “…the highly competitive nature of the game market, together with high production costs, reinforces the iteration of proved and successful patterns in game genres and content.”79

The player doesn’t have the option of selecting another strategy though. Due to the limitations of the genre, the player is zoomed through each map on narrative rails. The breakneck speed of each mission (sometimes timed or tied to the proximity of the player to a moving non-player character) is designed to approximate the heat of battle. What it does is act as a sort of proxy for the limitations on the agency of the infantryman. Those on the modern battlefield don’t have the sort of strategic flexibility to decide how to proceed with the civilian populace at large that falls to those in a war room in the Pentagon. Here the simulation is perhaps closer than intended.

So why the critique? This critique comes in response to the construction of the player-consumer/Western citizen-soldier as the uber-mensch. While within these games the player has the ability to be shot and survive by taking a short breather in cover, to swim without breathing (in Black Ops) to complete the mission despite the odds. Yet the operative does not have the capacity to influence policy, or even the imperative to get civilians to safety. This is another example of how this sort of play influences policy, by keeping the mission foremost on the mind of the player the situations, circumstances, narratives and well being of others is placed in the background, if present at all. Turning that schema on the macro framing of contemporary American conflicts it is possible to see it in action, to the point where now even the conflicts themselves have become small trite segments in news coverage alongside sports, weather, and local news.

Hartmut Gieselmann labels the discourse of authenticity in these games simulation, though not explicitly so, and thus is able to discern the lack of graphic violence in video games impact on the policy context.\textsuperscript{80} His position echoes David Leonard’s quote provided at the opening of this essay but in a different manner. Video game war simulations are built on the collapsing of the boundary between Real World notions of knowledge and the Virtual World notions of knowledge. This analysis is formed from the focus of simulations on the technical, the tactical, the parts rather than the ideology that is operating on and through the players without their express realizations of such. Military video games as media texts allow for the influence of policy by the recognition that the virtual and real worlds are not separate or even overlapping in a Venn diagram sense, rather they are co-habitating within the person/player.\textsuperscript{81} The player-consumer and the citizen-soldier are all the same, but for the purposes of this article, the citizen soldier is not only fighting “bad guys” in the new imperial present but also “bad guys” in the recent Cold War past simultaneously.

So how does the indestructible uber-mensch achieve McGonigal’s “Epic Winz”?\textsuperscript{82} The victory condition in this form of militainment is found in the given mission. While it is not usually complete subjugation of a population or the conquest or even occupation of a given territory it is a specific form of winning-at-all-costs. Casualties to the player’s team are common and point not only to the building of authenticity for the game but also to the sort of loss that feeds the necessity of victory. Once again though, there is no ability for the player to act through their avatar (or in Gee’s terms to impose upon the game) an alternate win condition. To win hearts and minds through effective support of domestic organizations requests for infrastructure

\textsuperscript{81} King and Leonard, \textit{Wargames as a New Frontier}.
\textsuperscript{82} Jane McGonigal, “Gaming can make a better world”, \textit{TED.com}, TED, Published March 2010, Web. Accessed March 2010, \url{http://www.ted.com/talks/jane_mgonigal_gaming_can_make_a_better_world.html}
serving social programs is one example of a means to win the game that has not been formulated to date, in effect the rhetoric presented through the ergodic text is as inflexible as the game’s outcome. This broken rhetorical triangle points back to Der Derian’s point, that as a simulation there is no room for the unknown and that rather winning-at-all-costs is not only the logos but the only knowable outcome of the argument.

The example I provide is one that is predicated on the support of the local population intentionally. These games provide no shared narrative with those who occupy these battlefields. That is to say that when they are present they are no more than background movement to imply a population without the actually recognition of personage. They are the graphically updated Hogan’s Alley innocent without the repercussions.

What is concerning is that this lack of shared narrative may be more accurate than is comfortable. The 9-11 Commission pointed out the lack of Arabic speaking ground intelligence assets. During the invasion of Iraq, there was still a dearth of Arabic translators. Add to this lack of literacy in the local language, a lack of understanding of Islam and the shared narrative is difficult to build even without the occupier/occupied identities. Der Derian points out that even those role-players of Iraqi background were separated from the Marines during training exercises to build cultural competency.\(^{83}\)

The lack of person-ality in the population is further evidence of the lack of interest in the discourse of authenticity. What is more troubling is that this is also a reflection of the designers estimation in the sense that the games have been successful without populations, the insinuation is that people get in the way of accomplishing the mission. People are another obstacle, rather than potential allies, partners, friends or the primary stakeholder. Instead the landscape could just

\(^{83}\) Der Derian, *Virtuous War*. 
as easily be the cleaned up aftermath of the neutron bomb, buildings and infrastructure absent the people.

This virtual space is the new frontier to be conquered by the hypermasculine, militarized, civilized, just, Western citizen-soldier uber-mensch. It is a re-iteration of the New World model, but in this version the legitimacy of the invasion is not that the population is savage, heathen, and “primitive” but that they are communists. Even this ideological trope is set behind the actions of the individuals, the handpainted backdrop of a kindergarten recital of McCarthyism.

By ensuring that there are no civilians there can be no collateral damage. There is no space to consider the repercussions of the actions of the civilian wearing the “skin” of the combatant. When recruiting civilians to become members of the military it is often through these ergodic texts. Should the recruitment take place many of these people will not be exposed to combat like the infantry, EOD or even some support personnel. Their experience is just as sterilized as their warfare takes place through the magic circle of the computer screen. The same implement that feeds them their CoD:Black Ops II, is the one that provides them with the combat information that they use to execute drone strikes.

Returning to David Leonard’s quote, by collapsing the space between civilian and member of the military through the simulations of a combat environment that has been cleansed of life there is a disconnect between what we think war/combat is and what takes place. While it seems ridiculous to state it outright, war is a vicious, dirty, violent, painful, ruthless undertaking. That the United States can invade two nations and occupy those nations for twelve and ten years respectively, speaks volumes about the efficacy of militainment in shaping the public discourse through the shaping of consciousness around what war is.
The video game militainment template offers some interesting insights as to how it is shaping the discourse of war in concert with other forms of militainment and quasi-militainment. A mentioned previously, the language is being co-opted by game designers, particularly the more “rough” vernacular that communicates a hyper-masculine, blue-collar, violent space. Mixed with the visual signifiers of actual military weapons, the sounds of military weapons and the mimicry (through “camera” manipulation techniques drawn from cinematic tropes) of the combat gaze, it generates its own experiential space. By going “behind the curtain”, to provide the gamer/veteran the interstitial spaces and personnel connective tissues of character development, the video game designer is able to provide their own framing of conflict that is then consumed and re-iterated as a form of authenticity. This simulacra only deepens as video games draw on other media, in addition to their own military consultants.

The FPS flavor of military authenticity is then used as an additional filter through which to weigh the political events of the era. People who have never owned, cleaned, fired, trained on a corporeal weapon can still fetishize the object through a virtual space where their kills are not only counted but rewarded. In Battlefield 3, kills are the currency to opening signifiers of skill as well as more weapons.

Through the discourse of FPS authenticity, it is possible to see how the compression of corporeal space and virtual space as it takes place in the realm of militainment in the language used to describe opposition forces (Op-For). The term “bad guy” has become pervasive. Unlike other means of describing Op-For, there is a lack of ethnic (Kraut), racial (Jap), religious (Hajji), political (guerilla) or place-based identifiers. This may sound like a progression past the base prejudices of hegemonic conflict, but the outcome is potentially much more malignant. As Halter
points out in “From Sun Tzu to XBOX” erasing the descriptive features of Op-For, opens the application of the term “Bad Guy” to any person within the area of operations.\textsuperscript{84}

The “bad guy” as a signifier has a pertinent impact in the construction of rhetoric for policy. The War on Terror, no longer has to be waged against terrorists. The difference between Prisoners of War and enemy combatants is rendered moot. Mincing the nuances between guerrilla and insurgent is no longer necessary. They are all “bad guys”.

In the pre-established civilian-free space of the FPS shooter, the differences in Op-For are largely irrelevant. Using different “skins” to communicate differences in the abilities of the “bad guy”, is the sum of the substance past the aesthetic. In the actual Areas of Operation (AO’s) where Marines are continuing the occupation of two nations the differences could further inflame tensions between the local population and the occupiers.

**Conclusion**

The social relevance of militainment is found in multiple places but for the discourse of authenticity relative to being a Marine there is more to sort out. There is a sort of pleasure in consuming content related to your identity, the recognition of representation. This makes consuming militainment enjoyable for those who are no longer active members in the military communities that delineate them as veterans. Of course there are complications.

The complications of attempting to map the dynamic coordinates of the Marine Corps epistemologies discourse of authenticity, while also attempting to sift through the rhetorical static of militainment, creates a space where the contextual definitions of narrative are the optimal manner in which to map out a snapshot of coordinates at provided times around a specific body. To put it more succinctly, the overinvestment in militainment as a primary source of information about the military increases the importance of each veteran’s narrative when

considering the framework’s coordinates relative to the USMC’s epistemology. The manner in which I am constructing the discourse of authenticity is inherently social, and as such it requires narratives as a means of demonstrating the way that these coordinates operate with multiple interlocutors.
~So, you think you’re better than me?~

It is the discourse of authenticity that is bound to each epistemology that is evident in the certifications and documentation that are so ubiquitous in the academic institution. In the application for participation at any level of the academic institution, authenticity is the coin of the realm.

For the moment we will place to the side the Classified Staff/Administrative Professionals and Administrators that must apply for their positions like anyone else. With the former, it isn't because their labor isn't integral to the functioning of the academic institution but rather because it is constantly overlooked as secondary to the overall goal. While I would prefer not to continue this practice, I would like to focus on how authenticity presses on the academic institution at the moment and by placing these quasi-proletarians to the side I think I make my point. Administrators, on the other side, have the power to define what epistemologies are valuable, which then sets the parameters for the discourses of authenticity that act within their institution. By placing them to the side we can focus on the three other primary actors within the institution.

The undergraduates with their SAT's (authentic intelligence), extra-curricular activities (authentically well rounded) and tuition payments (authentically deserving of education) provide the bulk of the population. These students strive to demonstrate their authenticity as members of US society through the certification of the college degree. Along with the overall goal of the college degree, they participate in smaller sub-cultures of commodified identity from the Greek system to the Honor Society, seeking different forms of justification of their skills, gifts, talents.
The faculty member has multiple forms of authenticity in hand, as each of their degrees are societal writs of literacy/competency/expertise in a designated area. Yet there are still a panoply of hierarchies to maneuver through, each with its own discourse of authenticity attached to the epistemology. First there is the adjunct, who is lately oft saddled with heavy teaching loads that will take great effort to research out of into the next level of authenticity. Clinical staff who, at the institution that I have attended seem to be under constant threat of release, have a slightly more improved job security over adjuncts and yet do not have the increased political capital of the next tier. The Assistant Professor, is driven by the discourse of authenticity attached to the epistemology of the academic, labors in pursuit of tenure that is a form of authenticity in and of itself. The Associate Professor is pushing for the "full" Professor status. The Professor is constantly harangued to participate on graduate student committees, to chair, direct and otherwise provide authentication to others within the system.

Somewhere in-between the youth finding their way to a form of authentic adulthood, and the academic who pursues their own authenticity in order to provide authenticity to others, is the graduate student. This limbo interstitia creates swirling eddies of pressures. As an instructor, the power of the graduate student is nigh equal to that of the Professor within the boundaries of their classroom. But as a teaching assistant that power is significantly diminished. As a student in the classroom they have a similar set of experiences to those of the undergraduate programs from which they were required to graduate, with increased challenges. All the while they are challenged to publish like an Assistant Professor in order to become an Assistant Professor who will be required to publish...or perish. If a graduate student is fortunate they will receive an assistantship, where they will be held to the labor standard of the professoriate without the fiscal
compensation; if not they will pay for the privilege of attempting to gain entry into the academic institution.

This is the alley between the structures that the institution of higher education is purported to be all about. Strewn with detritus and the waste of the bureaucracy, it is the information that won't be found in a pamphlet advertising the post-adolescent coming-of-age ritual that authenticates the American youth. And the graduate student is the ubiquitous resident of this space.

And yet the institution of higher education is still the place where a Freirean critical consciousness can be sown the most effectively. It is the space where marginalized epistemologies can be introduced to the dominant narrative in more than a tokenized fashion. It is the space where resistance to hegemonic structures of control can be nurtured in a way that is sustainable within the structures of contemporary American society.

To demonstrate the thoughts presented above, I will place these structures within the framework that I have constructed as a means of illustrating how the discourse of authenticity is not only pervasive, but how its socially constructed nature allows it a flexibility necessary to adapt to multiple academic spaces and disciplines. It has adapted so well as to be defined away as socially constructed, and yet used as a tool of a thousand titles, hundreds of times a day, within the walls of the very institutions that deny its existence.

The Biological/Political

The first coordinate is the biological/political. In this case, the biological has little bearing in this discussion with the exception of tokenization. Racial/gendered/sexual tokenization still takes place within the academy and in many ways is the primary way that marginalized
individuals are able to participate in the institution of higher education. Tokenization is the double-edged sword of providing a limited sort of transference of authenticity while being defined exclusively by the identity that you are being tokenized as.

For example, when teaching American Indian Studies material my race provides the students Goffman’s backstage authenticity. I can tell them about my interactions with non-NDNs, or tell them about how I teach people to sing at the big drum, or talk about the way I was taught to honor my first kill as a hunter. I use those small stories to provide ethos for more challenging stories of the reality of American Imperialism, such as the sterilization of NDN women in the '70s, the use of Smallpox against the NDNs in the colonial era or the Sandcreek Massacre. And while a non-NDN could, and they do and many do it well, tell these same stories the student/interlocutor's perspective is that they are getting it from the source. The advantage of tokenism here is that I can reach students in real and intimate way as they believe they are being led down a more authentic trail, a guided tour by the male Sacagawea. The disadvantage is that there are many qualified non-NDN instructors that deserve respect and whose work is diminished by this construct, to the point where student’s will dismiss these perceived inauthentic narratives.

The pejorative side of the authenticity coin of tokenism, is that the construct renders that token less knowledgeable about really anything else. In my case, the primitive construction of the NDN has no sense of technology, mathematics, advanced theory, popular culture or humor. While breaking these stereotypes in the classroom is a pedagogical strategy of mine, the institution uses its purview to limit the NDN to these spaces and as such limit the token. In the formulation of a major or minor in NDN studies I have yet to see much in the way of political economy as a requirement, though it permeates the NDN existence in terms of social
constructions of class. Little space has been made for the post-modern in NDN studies either (outside of Gerald Vizenor)\textsuperscript{85}, and yet Foucault's Panopticon\textsuperscript{86} seems tailor made for the analysis of NDN identity. Althusser's ISA's/RSA's\textsuperscript{87} are a strong analytical framework for the popular culture concepts provided in Deloria's \textit{Custer Died for Your Sins}\textsuperscript{88}, and Jameson's analysis of nostalgia\textsuperscript{89} helps explain why NDN's are frozen in time vis-a-vis American popular culture portrayals.

The term nostalgia here is a reference to Jameson’s definition of the classical nostalgia film, “while evading its present altogether, registered its historicist deficiency by losing itself in mesmerized fascination in lavish images of specific generational pasts.”\textsuperscript{90} Reminiscent of Baudrillard’s simulacra, “[…]the generation by models of a real without origin or reality; a hyperreal.”\textsuperscript{91}

These models speak to just how the social constructions/perceptions of a situation/culture/text differ from the material experience. Some tribal people reject the “Dead White Guy Canon”, due to the maintenance of their own tribal constructions of knowledge. While that makes complete sense (and in a way is the reasoning for my own methodological selection in writing this dissertation as an autoethnography), it also presumes a level of activity by tribes (as governments) in the construction of curriculum that is facilitated by the institution.

\textsuperscript{85} Vizenor, \textit{Manifest Manners}, 167.
\textsuperscript{86} Foucault, \textit{Panopticon}.
\textsuperscript{87} Althusser, \textit{Ideology}.
\textsuperscript{88} Deloria, \textit{Custer}.
\textsuperscript{90} Jameson, \textit{Postmodernism}, 296.
It also relies upon a Pan-Indian or strategically essentialist construction of indigeneity that renders the nuances of local tribal narratives obfuscated.

As an active member of the NDN community in one way or another over the past ten years at an institution of higher education, I have been asked to serve in a number of capacities. I have been used as a token, both as an NDN person and a student. But I have also legitimately been asked to participate as a member of my tribe. The differences are nuanced, but the important detail to note is the intent of the PI or administrator.

At one point in time I was asked to participate as an undergraduate student on the planning committee for a conference around the subject matter of the regionalization of tribal people where the University was located. It was/is the region that my people inhabit. During the initial meetings I voiced my concerns and objections repeatedly to a number of concepts. Eventually the meetings were scheduled during a time when I could not attend. It could have been a coincidence and yet if the student voice was valuable and the voice of the NDN student all the more valuable, then why was an effort not made to keep the participation of NDN students a priority by the Administrator in charge? My explanation is simply that a token is most valuable when they are pliable. The corporeal aspect of the token is significantly more important than the actual perspective, unless that perspective can be effectively commodified by the institution.

As a Graduate Student I was asked if I wanted to participate in the Plateau People's Web Portal as a research assistant. Having been burned in my previous experiences with the institution, as noted, I was wary of what exactly this project was and how I was going to be used in it. After meeting with the PI it was clear I wasn't going to be just the NDN, though sometimes it would have been easier, but rather I was expected to work on all aspects of the project. I did
present to tribal people on the project, but it was always a request. I also performed data entry,
worked in the archives, and scanned images/documents. I did some liaison work with my tribe,
but more often I was liaising with the, non-NDN, archives personnel that I saw daily in order to
streamline some of the process for the PI. At no point did I feel that my identity as a Yakama
was more important to the PPWP team than the actual work I was doing for the project, work
that I felt was important and valuable to tribal people. It is this difference that is critical to the
successful partnering of NDN people with the institutions of higher education that are seeking
these relationships.

So while both projects involve a sort of authenticity through my body, the difference is in
the goals and efforts of the administrator/PI. In the first case, when my challenges became too
onerous the benefits of my tokenization were outweighed by the potential harms I was delivering
in the form of my constant interrogations of the institution’s agenda. In the second case, my input
is always at least provided a stage and my identity, while valued, was not the primary function of
my participation.

The Political

The political aspects of being NDN in academia are intimately tied to this nuanced and
delicate balance of being valued and being valuable. As an NDN pursuing a PhD I become
evaluated on two intersecting but separate mobile frameworks of authenticity. The first
framework has been covered elsewhere, but the second is that of the academic.

The NDN authenticity coordinates are the same as the academic (biological/political,
cultural and place). The way that those coordinates manifest are dramatically different (as
inferred above) while the framework is still operating under the same basic premise, that it is the
interlocutor’s gaze/interpretation of the coordinates as interpellated by their literacy/competency in the epistemology. While the NDN’s authenticity is borne by blood, cultural authenticity in language RELIGION/FOOD and reservation/urban urban categories, the academic’s is defined in commodification of self, methodological dogmatism and the prestige of their institutions.

The academic’s political authenticity is tied to their ability to adhere to the values of the institution. At the moment the corporatization of the public education institution is such that the values are tied to the discourses found in the private sector, while not a new phenomenon we can see that budget shortfalls after the sub-prime mortgage scandal driven crash of 2008 make this sort of Friedman-esque economics possible. Finding means to pay for sabbatical and applying/receiving/administering grants are perhaps the most obvious indicators while the stress on publication, service on committees, chairing, professional organization participation, conferences are all still present. Lost somewhere in this commodification of higher education, at least at the increasingly corporatized public education space, is the student.

The academic’s political authenticity is thus less tied to actual education of the student in the classroom, at an institution that is predicated on pursuing research, than to pursuit of knowledge that supports the institutions economic bottom line. This layering of the Cartesian episteme’s philosophy, that everything should and can be known, is not destructive in and of itself. It is the narrowing of academic discourse that is destructive. By allowing the budget to drive education, rather than education drive the budget, the institution of higher education has become a space where thought and reflection are secondary to economically justifiable “products,” including students as products.
It must be stated that this value shift is not purely the purview of administrators, twisting their moustaches in their conference room lairs. Rather, the public discourse has shifted and with it the manner in which higher education is viewed by the larger US population. In this way the political authenticity of the academic is driven by the larger population’s construction of what an academic is and by extension what their capacity is within the institutional structure relative to their students. Part of the issue is the lack of political economic literacy/competency, in the dominant narrative, while the larger issue is the willful ignorance of just what happens within the hallowed halls of the institutions of higher learning at multiple levels.

The flexibility of the framework should be interjected here. By observing the literacy/competency of the interlocutor on the subject matter, combined with their positionality, it is possible to see just how the framework recognizes the relative views of the academic’s political authenticity. The number of grants that an individual administers is invisible to the student in the professor’s classroom, while that same process is becoming more critical to the tenure process when weighed by the administration. To the average member of US culture, who hasn’t attended college, the whole process is relegated to the ephemeral constellation of tropes around the “college experience”.

The political authenticity of the academic in the light of pop culture is difficult to ascertain. From the sage Lawrence Fishburne in *Higher Learning*\(^92\) to Donald Sutherland’s caricature of the liberal art’s professor in *Animal House*\(^93\) the academic is present in the American narrative. Rarely does the science professor, (unless there is a crisis of global proportions) make an appearance in popular culture, but their pre-eminence to the public higher

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education institution is growing due to the ability of the science’s to bring funding into the institution while also allowing the corporate structures to use the public education infrastructure to grow their capacity. This disconnect between the institution’s multiple material realities and the perceptions of what an academic, or even what academia, is creates a situation where the academic’s political authenticity is predicated upon the institution’s values more than anything else. The results are that my construction of this discourse of authenticity differs from the NDN and the Marine, as the external pressures of popular culture are ill developed so the academic’s political authenticity is almost exclusively defined by internal institutional value systems.

Hence, the epistemologies of the academic (the ways the academic knows) are attached to the discourse of authenticity in multiple ways by multiple stakeholders. For the humanities, there is often a friction as the values of the institution force them to acquiesce to a value structure that diminishes the priority of the intellectual question, in trade for the value of the dollar. That is to say that the sum of research is provided a greater weight than the ability of the academic to incite their students to interrogate pre-established norms/values/beliefs in order to pursue thought. As an interlocutor/consumer of American culture and as a graduate student it was my impression that the institutions of higher learning were established to provide the tools to students to think and reflect. In many ways, I have been disillusioned by my experiences as a member of a higher education institution.

I would attribute my response to my experiences as directly related to my increased literacy and competency in the shift of epistemologies within the institutions of academia, particularly the way that the institution perceives the labor of instructors. Bayh-Dole changed the way that funding worked at the public university by handing corporate interests the intellectual
property rights to research performed at a given institution.\textsuperscript{94} This neo-liberal economic action, in coordination with the re-construction of the liberal arts as intrinsically anti-American (counter-hegemonic)\textsuperscript{95} by the media acting as an ISA, pushes the education of students in critical consciousness to the margins while emphasizing the production of students as economic material.

**The Cultural**

Determining the difference between the cultural and the political authenticities of the academic has been a serious issue for me. What I finally decided was that the modernist notions of disciplines have determined relative cultures that are determined primarily by methodology. Paragons within each discipline set a bar of comparison through their adherence to the established wisdom of the epistemologies of their chosen field.

The political and the cultural are significantly more entwined for the academic than say the Marine or the NDN. That is to say that the culture of the academic is inherently political, while the culture of the Marine is built upon the hyper-masculine and the NDN is built upon specific tribal ideologies. Methodology as a cultural indicator is only useful through the performance of culture. These performances take place in the political sphere. Participation in professional organizations is a performance of cultural authenticity. Publication in the appropriate journal is another performance of cultural authenticity. These performances are critical to the political facet of the authentic academic identity, but they are cultural in nature. At


issue is determining where the academic cultural performance space is located. That is to say, most of the academic culture does not take place at the institution. Rather it is external to the institution. The academic cultural space is a performance that is staged largely at conferences and at publication sites. This dislocation diminishes the emphasis on the education of students on campus that is the purported purpose of the institutions of higher learning.

The political facet of academic authenticity is internal to the institution. It is found in the determinations of hiring, tenure promotion and retention. In an interesting way, the political authenticity of the academic is a function of their ability to perform the academic culture in the appropriate spaces outside their teaching institutions.

David Parry has challenged the notion of publication in prestigious journals through his analysis of “knowledge cartels.” Parry maps the “knowledge cartel” through the system of publication by mapping three players and the manner in which information flows. There is the journal that acquires that knowledge (gratis) from the academic under the schema of publish or perish, the academic that the institution that pays for the knowledge that is then published in the journal that the institution must then pay a subscription for. What he is doing is assaulting the cultural performance space in the status quo as inauthentic, or rather suggesting how it should be seen as inauthentic due to the moral ideal of knowledge as a community value rather than a purchased (twice over) commodity. His argument carries through the political facet, as he asks those that make the determinations of political authenticity to examine the hiring/tenure/retention values in order to alter them to generate an authentic academic with a different value system.

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97 Parry, Knowledge Cartels.
98 Parry, Knowledge Cartels.
As an inter-disciplinary scholar, I am caught in liminal spaces with regard to academic cultural authenticity. My interests in NDN identity, militainment, video games, and popular culture in general, have placed me somewhat outside the established terrain of academia. By refusing to specialize, I am refusing to recognize the importance of the culturally authentic academic. It creates issues with where my work will find a publication space, which conferences to attend, where and how to apply for a position.

Thus far I have presented at SAA (the Society for American Archivists), NACDP (the National Association of Community Development Professionals), WUI (Wildland Urban Interface Conference), and Computers and Writing. I have performed my academic authenticity for archivists, extension personnel, bio-regional planners and English academics. The topic always related back to my identity as an NDN, an ethos chip in the academic poker game of rhetorics. Even in attending panels in Computers and Writing I found myself interrogating the manner in which the gamer identity’s authenticity was constructed in World of Warcraft (WoW), and felt external to the group due to the modernist construction of authenticity by statistic. Not only was I academically inauthentic, but I was inauthentic as a gamer who has played WoW.

Using Foucault’s panopticism as a lens of analysis may help here. By considering the relative positions of surveillance of the academic and the simultaneous surveillance by the academic of those same positions we can begin to see the silhouettes of political and cultural authenticity. The academic is policed by their institutions through the administration, their department, their peers, their students and, as Foucault points out, most importantly, themselves.

The parameters of what makes an authentic academic are derived from Althusser’s Ideological State Apparatuses. Academia being a relatively small, insular, xenophobic, elitist and
homogenous population, the ISA’s are limited. As pointed out above, the most powerful at the moment is government in the form of budget, but it is important to note that academia is primarily shaped by academics, their institutions, their publications, their expectations and their notions of authenticity.\textsuperscript{x1}

Professionalism and job preparation workshops provide the literacy/competency of how the graduate student/potential professor can increase their political authenticity through the cultural performance of academic authenticity. Where does the curriculum derive from? From the experiences of those instructing, who are also those who have performed hiring functions as well as those who would like to see hiring processes with similar values propagate.

Having served on a hiring committee, the process is rather intuitively placed within the discourse of authenticity as attached to a provided epistemology. The political authenticity of the individual is found in the job announcement. The preferred and required qualifications list the rough outline of what the authentic “X” will be. The CV/resume provides the cultural performance spaces that validate authenticity of the individual. These of course are evaluated through the positional lenses of the interlocutors, in this case the hiring committee.

Academic authenticity’s relative aspect is no more plainly illuminated than when considering who will serve on a hiring committee. The selection of the selectors places a schema of authenticity predicated upon the interlocutors’ authenticity within the institution. Within a department the committee is primarily drawn from the department, as having an outside party determine who will populate the department would be considered insulting as well as alienating. The new faculty member’s authenticity will have to be vetted by those they hope to work with.
The hiring committees that I have served on were primarily for NDN positions within the institution. I would suppose my NDN’ness has been one of the primary reasons for my selection to these committees. The first selection process failed, when the individual selected declined. The second hiring process was successful, even to the point where a recommendation by the committee outside the parameters of the search was followed.

In both situations, the weight of authenticity was present. That is to say, how the person was weighed in terms of their biological/political, their cultural and their place-based facets of NDN’ness was all part of the discussion. But when placed in concert with the discourse of authenticity around academia the applicant pool shrank and the pre-requisites had to be pared down in order to acquire more candidates to choose from.

These examples are provided to demonstrate that political authenticity is determined by the institution through the selection of a hiring committee that then codifies that authenticity in the form of a job announcement. The cultural aspect is then determined by the hiring committee through the evaluation of the qualifications of the applicants as found in the documents required. The positionalities of the hiring committee are considered in their selection, as the implication is that they would desire replication of their ideologies in the new hire in the same way that the department does. By approaching a practice of the discourse of authenticity in the academic space it is possible to see how the facets are attached but also how the interlocutor’s assumptions about what authentic is, are not only present but are the priority of the applicant.

The impact of this re-production of the authentic academic has greater impact than the hiring practice in the private service sector due to the transmission of authenticity to the body public through students. While corporate culture reproduces itself in the same way, the
cultural/political socialization process that takes place in the heterotopic institution of education continually shapes the population’s perspectives. This is the reason offered by Billote for the conservative assault on liberal arts, as a means of ensuring that the interrogation of the dominant narrative is minimized and that the agenda setting power of corporate media is not undermined.

**Place**

Place is a significantly more difficult coordinate to evaluate in the location of the authentic academic. There are three considerations to make in the evaluation of the authentic academic’s place coordinate. The first is where they have been, the second is where they are, and the third is where they would like to be.

The prestige of a degree determines part of the place coordinate of the authentic academic. Ivy League schools are the first that jump out at the interlocutor. Harvard, Yale, Princeton are places that validate the academic through their rigorous selection process.

The next tier is more subtle and requires a greater knowledge of a specific discourse, that is a cultural competency derived from the political values of the authentic academic; the schools that have vaunted programs if not household names in general. Washington State University is one of the top tier schools in communication and veterinary medicine, but that information is only valuable to others who have invested as much social, cultural and political capital in their authentic academic identity as the one claiming that identity.

The third tier of place based academic authenticity requires an even more specialized literacy in the cultural facet of academic authenticity, and that is faculty. Washington State University has Don Dillman PhD, one of the pre-eminent scholars on the subject of surveys. Disciples of Dillman therefore have an increased academic authenticity due to the place that they
can claim which is attached to the political value of Dillman’s name, but only if the interlocutor has the cultural literacy in academic authenticity to understand the performance space the subject is participating in.

The assumption is that the places that the academic has been have shaped the academic’s ideologies in such a way as to be emblematic of the place. There is also an assumption that the acceptance of the individual into the program provides the individual with a certain validity within the eyes of the program. Graduation from a provided program demonstrates that the individual has demonstrated not only a literacy in the material but a willingness to disseminate provided material through the political authenticity’s expectations and the cultural authenticity’s performance spaces.

An academic with humble education credentials can be accepted into a more prestigious place. As a member of this new academic place they are expected to exemplify the values of their current institution. Moreover they are expected to expound the ideologies of their new institution into the next generation of academics under their mentorship.

It is also possible for the academic to descend from the prestigious into the oubliettes of the public education institutions. Through their place-based academic authenticity they lend their veracity to this new space. The expectation is that through socialization, the quality of the department will increase and as such the prestige will increase.

The present tense place of the authentic academic is encumbered with the political authenticity facet as performed through the culturally authentic academic’s performance spaces. Whether it is the pursuit of a job, the pursuit of tenure, the pursuit of promotion, or the pursuit of prestige there is a constant hare and hound system of the present tense place of the authentic
academic. Should the academic rest their weary head, their authenticity will be questioned as the pursuit of…something is integral to the identity of the academic.

Where the academic desires to be, is just as important a place based coordinate of academic authenticity. This aspect of the place-based coordinate is largely an evaluation of ambition. Employment at a prestigious school brings not only a larger monetary reward, but an increase in the authenticity of the academic. Becoming a renowned member of a provided discipline can perform a similar function. Ambition is expected of the authentic academic, and where they want to be is an indicator of the virtue.

It is here that I will address my focus on Research One institutions. As this is an autoethnography, and my experience as a graduate student as well as a portion of my undergraduate studies took place at a research one, it was really the only option left to me. That said, I do recognize that there are teaching-centric spaces of higher education. It is my understanding (gleaned from colleagues, faculty and administrators) that Research I institutions are considered “better” institutions. If it is not yet obvious, I do not necessarily agree with these evaluations of place. I do see it as a validation of place-based academic authenticity.

The first two years of my undergraduate education I attended Mount Hood Community College. While at MHCC, I was able to become a member of the Forensics Team. I also had the privilege of attending thought provoking courses taught by some of the most insightful instructors that I have had in my tenure in academia.

There was a course taught by Dr. Janet Campbell that was not only timely but important in understanding the manner in which political discourse is shaped. The course was Introduction to Terrorism, and the trimester was Spring of 2001. The class size was around thirty students of
varied race/gender/class/sexuality. In this course there was a discussion of The Doctrine of Necessity, the parallels between The Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as a historicization of American foreign policy relative to the phenomenon often referenced as terrorism.

While I am not stating that this course hasn’t been taught at Research I schools, that it hasn’t been taught as well, or that similar courses haven’t sparked internal examination, I am stating is that there is little to no expectation of this quality of education at a community college. Community colleges are not expected to be the point of derivation for authentic academics. The authentic academic is not expected to instruct at a community college. The authentic academic is not expected to desire to teach at a community college.

These coordinates are neither wholly objective, nor are they anchored to a specific time or place. Rather, the coordinates are dynamic in their placement relative to where they are observed, when they are observed and by whom. An academic commodified through the hiring process will be considered in a completely different manner at a conference presentation. A graduate student will be measured in a different manner than after they have or have not received their degree. The administrator will see a different academic, than the colleague or the student.

These are examples of an individualized evaluation of the academic, and an individualized assessment schema. The person-to-person relationships are important to evaluate as they are the basic unit of authenticity. These day-to-day objectifications take place through heuristics, fit into schemas and reified in semiotic systems of authenticity.

In the broader scope of history it is possible to see different iterations of what an authentic academic looked like. Within the American academic discourse the general gist is that
of the White, affluent male. Though to challenge this discourse, which is the antecedent
discourse of the one being analyzed in the remainder of this piece, the construct of academic
should be pulled apart.

As a Yakama man, I was taught a number of things by my Til-ah (my mother’s father).
Traditionally these are things that I should have been taught by my Push-ah (my father’s father),
but he is not traditional. My Til-ah, Pah-la-x-wash, was not an authentic academic. He did not
have the political authenticity of advanced degrees, nor did he have the cultural authenticity of
the performance of those political authenticities.

What he did do was teach. He taught the young and not-so-young i-chish-kin sinwit,
wash-ut and te-mun-wit. xii He was an executive and general tribal councilman. But was he an
academic?

I don’t think he would claim that title. Not out of disdain, but out of an understanding of
the epistemic assumptions found in the academy about NDN people. At one point Pah-la-x-wash
was pursuing a Bachelor’s degree, and was informed that he was required to have a foreign
language. He replied that he was fluent in a foreign language. When asked, he replied “English”.
In order to grant him credit for that degree, they informed him that they were going to contact a
linguist to verify his claim of fluency in his own language. When he summarized the situation, a
White man called in to validate the linguistic fluency of a native speaker who teaches the
language, the institution reversed course.

The point here is that while similar functions are carried out to similar ends, what makes
an academic an authentic academic derives from epistemic assumptions that are bound by
Cartesian Epistemology. That same Cartesian Epistemology presumes to logically map social
constructions predicated upon information that is gathered by interpellated individuals. Under the guise of objectivity the interpellations are tucked behind the opaque barriers of methodology.

My Til-ah, taught as an agent of his positionality. As a Yakama man, he taught other Yakama men. It is by his teaching that I can claim to be a Yakama man. Instead of calling on the construct of objectivity to obscure his positionality, he understood its ability to act as a teaching tool. The authentic academic cannot access that space without tokenization of self, and with that strategy they undertake the hazards that go with it.

Virginia Beavert, a Yakama elder, teaches at both the University of Oregon and Heritage University. While she is vaunted and respected, I don’t think that most in the academy would call her an academic. She lacks the political authenticity of the academic, the cultural performance space of the academic, and her place-based authenticity is not enough to compensate for the lack of substance in the other spaces. Her biological authenticity dramatically increases her political authenticity when taken into account. This tokenization is not so hazardous to an esteemed elder, and if anything it is a credit to the institutions in question that they recognize her capacity to enrich their communities.

Dr. Ron Pond carried the political and cultural authenticity of the academy. He received his degree from Washington State University, taught ethnomusicology courses, and he was the Director of the Plateau Center for American Indian Studies. As an enrolled member of the Umatilla Tribe of Indians he had the biological authenticity as well. Dr. Pond’s tribe is in the Plateau region, the very place that is served by WSU through the Plateau Center. Under the coordinates provided here Dr. Ron Pond is an authentic academic, and yet when there was
friction with the institution he had been employed by he was released to the detriment of the University community that he was a member of.

This brings me to another pertinent point. The authenticity of the academic, through the acquisition of the degree, is no guarantee of gainful employment. The hegemonic structures of the political, cultural and place-based authenticity is apparent in Dr. Pond’s story. But it is also found in the quest for conformity that is in the latent subtext of qualifications in a job listing. It is obvious in the classist discourse of professionalism as found in fashion and aesthetics. The performance of authenticity for the academic includes the ability of the academic to underplay any dissonant ideologies in favor of the dominant narratives current in the institutional agenda of further corporatization of the academy and moreso for the academic that has moved into the administrative sector of the institution.

The trend of the removal of tenure is one mechanism that is evidence of this shift in the construction of authenticity of the academic. Historically tenure was the device that allowed the academic to critique the structures of society without ideological reprimand. Currently tenure is under assault through a rhetoric of accountability, which seems to be all the more ironic as social critiques often seek to make the hegemonic structure accountable for their actions. By staffing with adjuncts and clinical faculty from the hiring process forward, the institution can significantly limit critique from within while simultaneously allowing it to police its personnel with budgetary repercussions.

While this dread and dreary analysis would appear to call only hate and discontent onto the academic institution as a whole, as mentioned previously, it is the site with the potential for spreading a pedagogy of critical consciousness that is its saving grace. That takes place in the
classroom, as well as amongst graduate students and colleagues at conferences, with instructors that not only understand their positionality but have the ability to use that awareness in their pedagogy. This awareness is born of a literacy/competency in race/class/gender and sexuality theories and the pedagogical use should be fostered by the institution.

By understanding the privileges attached to the body, it is possible to utilize the student’s assumptions about the instructor’s perspectives to illuminate their own privileges. As an example, in the classroom I can utilize my masculinity as a space to begin discussion of the male gaze both relative to students in the classroom as well as through the discussion of how women instructor’s are treated differently regardless of their academic authenticity. I can also use this space as a means of reflection for the students on the constructions of post-racial/post-gendered presented to them through ISA’s that they are subject to.

In my tenure in the institution I have had the honor of being mentored by professors of renown. More important than the institutional laurels they can claim, is the support they have provided me in developing my pedagogy without demanding my conformity to the structure. This mentorship is not recognized in a curriculum vitae (theirs or mine), nor is it found as a qualification in job descriptions.

Pedagogical authenticity is found primarily in the classroom. It is recognized in the effort that students are willing to commit to the instructor’s pedagogical plan. It is found in the response of the student to the material. The coordinate it would be assigned to is under the culturally authentic academic, but it is particularly susceptible to the literacy/competency of the interlocutor as pedagogy is situational to the class, the instructor, the course, the discipline and the material.
Unfortunately the positional privileges of the individual are often paved over in a one-size-fits-all discourse of education in a general way. As an NDN man, that derives from lower socio-economic standing, who identifies as straight the material that I can communicate, the manner in which I communicate it and to whom, is broadened due to the interpellations of the students I have been exposed to thus far. I can assign blogs, use g-chat, force my students to play “World of Warcraft” and organize my grading structure in way that diverges from the standard course (all of which I have done) all without the same sort of challenges that my White, female colleagues will face with a more standardized course.

Here the discourse of the authentic academic plays alongside the gendered, raced, sexed and classed discourses of the dominant narrative. Since the pedagogical authenticity of the instructor is found primarily in the perspective of the interlocutor, the applicable social constructions of the body act as an additional lens of analysis. While I have used these as a means of further examination of the assumptions of the student relative to the material, it is largely due to the student’s read of my positionality rather than any great pedagogical strategy.

While there could be a question of the applicability of interrogations of hegemonic construction across disciplines, I would disagree. Mathematics, “hard” sciences and the like, currently adhere to the Cartesian Epistemology of eliding positionality in pursuit of objectivity. If anything the pursuit of critical consciousness would have these disciplines utilizing their positionalities in more dramatic and dynamic ways.

As Mary Burgan points out “In some university tenure committees I have served on, members from the sciences have actually stated their suspicion of the rhetoric they found in
The investment in an economy of knowledge that is built on the elision of identity, pushes positionality as a pedagogy out of the realm of the possible. By ignoring who is doing the work, teaching the courses, mentoring students, the economics of knowledge becomes increasingly corporatized.

The more important question is: why aren’t “hard” scientists, mathematicians, and philosophers using their positionalities as pedagogical mechanisms wholesale? I would respond with the cultural authenticity coordinate. The culturally authentic mathematician has been interpellated within their discipline to understand that their positionality is a burden, rather than integral to their understanding of the world.

Positionality as a concept is nothing new, and neither is the construction of interpellation. The limitation of these ideas to the humanities is found in the modernist framing and the budgetary concerns of the institution. Here the political coordinate of the authentic academic rears up, as qualifications of the authentic “hard” scientist rarely list understanding the social constructions of race/class/gender/sexuality as ubiquitous practices within the discipline as requisite to hiring.

The discourses of authenticity that are attached to the epistemology of academia, are panoply but can be broken down into the (biological) political, the cultural and the place-based coordinates. These coordinates are found at the institutional level, practiced outside the institution and uncovered in the institutional trajectory of the academic in question. While the outlook of this individual is rather bleak due to the political economy of the institution at this

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moment in time, I do take heart in the continued work of the teachers who are developing their pedagogy with their positionalities to hand.
In the future I would like to test my framework by performing research in the field. Whether it is surveys, interviews or textual analysis, the next step is in the typologizing of data through the framework. Theorizing a framework to interpret the discourse of authenticity around a provided epistemology could potentially be mapped through data. Critical to this next step of the project is in the transparency of the researcher relative to the work.

I would like to go home to the reservation and do a comparative analysis of cultural coordinates at different longhouses. I would like to speak with fellow Marines about their view of militainment. I would like to commit to a textual analysis of the Journal of Higher Education’s use of key phrases that indicate desirability in hiring (professionalism, tenure, publishing/publication, location) in a given time frame and how it relates to epistemologies derived from marginalized socio-economic statuses.

At no time do I want to lose sight of who is doing the work and how who I am changes what is being published. It is my view of the authenticity of the given epistemology that is going to interpret the results of the survey/interview/text. And I needed to establish that through this proposed theoretical framework, before I went into the field to test it or offer it as a framework for others to test.

It Speaks

A friend and colleague, Chris Ritter PhD, and I worked on an article on the subject of the Mass Effect franchise. We presented our ongoing work to two different practicum groups. After the first negative response, we changed the presentation and received a much more positive reading from the second group. There were a number of moving parts, but our conclusion was
that we assumed a level of literacy based upon our own understanding of the subject. We violated the first rule of rhetoric, know your audience.

While working on that article, I developed an analytical frame of indigenous identity as related to one of the game’s races. It departed from the main thrust of the argument, so we abandoned that discourse to focus elsewhere. But to the point of this project, he didn’t see the frame or the framework I was proposing.

We never did get around to revising the article to being publishable as time evaporated around the graduate school process, but what it reminded me of was all the times I’d read an article and lamented the absence of the indigenous framework. All the times I wondered how native people and their stories are erased, rushed to mind. It got me wondering how many NDN’s identities are obscured by MY discourse of authenticity’s coordinate criterion for what an NDN “sounds” like.

Eva Marie Garroute mentions in the forward of her text “Real Indians” her own position as a mixed-race NDN. 100 I want to take that idea a step forward, and put myself in the work as Greg Sarris does in “Keeping Slug Woman Alive”. 101 Or the way Vine Deloria does in the forward of “Custer Died for Your Sins”, when he describes the people that claimed more prestigious heritages than his own (as a full blooded Oglala). 102

I have struggled to find my voice again after writing in the “objective” academic voice for about two decades. It has been difficult to tell these stories as means of communicating my own positionality, its requisite epistemologies and the way that I see authenticity acting on them

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101 Sarris, Slug Woman.
102 Deloria, Custer.
both. The institution of higher education has cultivated a sense of insecurity, in not following the discourse of authenticity that holds as the prime value the objectification of knowledge.

In the same way, I struggle with my own authenticity and where these epistemologies contact one another through my body. I was talking with a friend and colleague who sings with me on the pow-wow drum, and dances in the traditional style, (and as I found out after I met him is the cousin of my half-sister). I was describing a traditional dance outfit idea that I have that is based around the Marine Corps Dress Blue Alpha/Bravo uniform. I have anxiety about designing/creating/wearing that outfit, because I am not a combat vet and would not want to be seen as appropriating that space. I have also been away from the reservation for over twenty years, I have lost my accent, and am not well known even among my family. Not only would I be in-authentically portraying my service I could be seen as in-authentically NDN through the analysis of my cultural coordinate by any number of interlocutors, from family to non-native academics.

My friend assured me that I should begin working on this regalia. What I interpreted his assurance as, is that it represents not just me, not just Marines, not just NDNs, but all NDN veterans. And that there are those who cannot dance, or never learned how. I was concerned about how I was portraying my identities, as well as how they would be received, while he saw the potential for carrying on these discourses of authenticity by performing them in concert. Depending on where and how well I dance (honor) this possible regalia, it has the possibility to re-design the narrative and notions of authenticity around me as a Marine and an NDN.

Game On

Intersectionality isn’t evacuated in the evaluation or analysis of a given authenticity. Positionalities, as the primary lenses of interpretation, for the interlocutor are the primary spaces for these intersectionalities to complicate the contact zones for ways of knowing. Each component identity
epistemology has its own discourse of authenticity. The meshing of these epistemologies through the perceptions of the interlocutor must be negotiated, an often untidy endeavor.

The reasoning behind selecting these three discourses of authenticity is that they are clearly certified through formal institutional policies. Even with these certifications there are, of course, competing forces within the discourses of authenticity that I describe. But there is something quite artificial about separating out these identities, so by way of conclusion I’ll put them back together again (as much as possible). They interact in a quite different domain of activity with less distinct modes of authentication, un-certified modes specifically.

The domain I’ve selected as an example is gaming (initially my interest for this dissertation was in the social capital as it manifests through leisure activities, specifically gaming communities). I’m a gamer. And here is the first complication. In the definition of an epistemology, it becomes necessary to define the parameters of that epistemology. While I can say I’m a gamer there is a certain commodity fetishism threshold that is necessary to define. The most common definition is a video gamer, and I do play video games.

The consumption of video games, and definitions of a “gamer” is a complicated matter given the vast array of game types and gaming communities. Playing MMORPG’s (World of Warcraft, WoW) presents a whole different experience than playing First Person Shooters, for example. These are two of the most popular genres. It would be a mistake to leave out Facebook games, which have also been profitable through the “freemium” business model.

These genres can all be accessed through the user interface of the personal computer. The hardware demands and software complications are different than utilizing a console (Xbox, Playstation, Wii). This material difference can be a line of demarcation in defining authenticity.

I’m a gamer. I play multiple tabletop miniatures games (TTMG). There are a panoply of game systems with multiple rule sets and miniatures designers. These also tend to pull from
archetypal literary genres, but there is also a use of historical narratives as developmental parameters for their game and rule sets.

I’m a gamer. I’ve played Collectible Card Games (CCG’s). Magic: The Gathering is the longest running and most popular CCG. While it has built its own world, it draws/has drawn heavily on mythologies of multiple cultures.

In attempting to frame the discourse of authenticity around the epistemology of “The Gamer”, it becomes clear that (like NDN tribes) it is necessary to delineate the in and out groups. It can be done by hardware, level of virtuality or genre, but the universe of weighable variables (as our hard scientist friends would reference it...the N) becomes onerous. But unlike NDN tribes, there is no certification and no hard boundary.

The second hitch plays out here. Without an “official”, or institutional authentication system the interlocutor(s) becomes the sole arbiter of authenticity. While I can claim to be a gamer, I can be denied that claim on authenticity based on any of the listed variables or any number of un-listed variables.

Each of these spaces has their own discourse of authenticity. Each could be a chapter in and of themselves. How does one weigh communities that share a title, and could still apply the title to others who would deny it?

In order to write on game studies, I invested time in participating in multiple game spaces. I did so in order to perform research, but also to further my ethos through details that I could include in any work produced. From my level 85 Tauren Shammy (Resto/Ele), to my White Scars army, to my Keldan land control deck, to my (now fallow) Farmville, and my Marine in BF3 I worked at being literate and competent in multiple game systems/intellectual properties.
While playing through these games I was forced to negotiate the settings as an interlocutor shaped by the positionalities that I subscribe to and/or are ascribed to me, more specifically, by the three prime positionality/epistemologies described in the previous chapters—an NDN former Marine academic. It is possible to take the “authenticities” I present in the body of this work and push them through the gaming experience as an interlocutor. Instead of presenting myself as primarily the object with agency, I will evaluate the “gamer” discourses of authenticity from the perspective of the interlocutor.

When playing WoW, I chose the Tauren due to the semiotic indicators of NDN’ness. While campy and pastiched, the constructions of the Tauren were non-White. While clumsily assembled, the Tauren were resistant to the Western semiotics presented in the Alliance “races”. Tauren were/are biologically othered, draw heavily on stereotypical constructions of NDN culture, and inhabit a romanticized wilderness area with semiotic indicators (tipi-longhouses and totem poles) of NDNness.

As an NDN, it is nice to see a representation that I can inhabit, a deeply flawed but recognizable simulacra of my people. It is cartoony and inaccurate, but it is more than is present on television or in the movies. Something is better than nothing when considering the manner in which White Privilege is dictating the centering of Whiteness in media.

As an academic, I can see that Tauren are semiotic assemblies that further maintain the primitivistic social constructions of the dominant narrative. Even magical, spiritual, minotaurs that ride giant rhino-esque animals are rendered Tonto by dint of their NDN’ness. By participating in WoW as a Tauren, I can be tokenized as implicitly supporting these social construction.
As a former Marine, I obviously bring my experience to bear most intensely in militainment games (as discussed above) but in WoW as well my military background plays out through elementary strategy, tactics, communication and teamwork. In order to complete endgame raid content, it is imperative to comprehend and carry out battleplans. WoW is a role-playing game, but the mechanics of the game is about playing roles (DPS, tank, healer). Marines take and give orders (the definition of discipline that I was taught in Boot: quick and willing obedience to orders), under stress. Successfully carrying out large scale actions in WoW is benefitted by having these epistemic literacies.

These are simple sketches of how these constructions bump and grind. By keeping the frames small and focusing on defining each consumptive community it would be possible to more accurately map the discourses of authenticity. In looking at the way each of these communities define themselves, it is possible to string the discourses of authenticity around gaming together through shared concepts in the same way that a molecule is defined through its contact points and constituent elements. And by setting the three prime identity categories analyzed in this work into motion, into dynamic interaction, it becomes clear that the/my postmodern self (post-Indian, post-Marine, and post(ing) academic) has to negotiate a rich range of contradictory material-discursive spaces where a shifting array of hegemonic and resistive forces contend.

My only friend…the end

The point is that my limitations as an interlocutor, as an arbiter of authenticity are noted. That is the primary reason behind my construction of this framework. I am flawed, and my observations are heavily shaped by my own positionalities. By opening up epistemologies to self-reflexive assessments of how they construct their own discourses of authenticity, and how
the coordinates of their authentic epistemologies are being evaluated by others, it is my hope that there are more subversive spaces opened up.

This is a first step, the sort of awkward wrenching motion that accompanies the establishment of a potential gait. I don’t know where it is going to go, but I believe that it is a necessary tool to furthering the understanding of who we are.
Works Cited

Books and Articles:


Government Documents:


Film, Television, Video:


**Videogames:**


Endnotes:

i Of course Gramsci, Althusser and Foucault all draw some from Karl Marx. Here I also want to focus on ideology but in this case on (Marx’s writing partner) Friedrich Engel’s concept of false consciousness. “Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all. Hence he imagines false or apparent motives.” (Engels to Franz Mehring: London, July 14, 1894) When looking at the discourse of authenticity and its connection to epistemology it is possible to see that these contact points may be obscured from one another, or intentionally obfuscated.

ii I deliberately and intentionally use the term NDN over Native American or American Indian. Both terms use the national identifier as a prefix or suffix as a means of delineating the geographical space where these populations reside. The issue there is that the names of the Americas is a tribute to Amerigo Vespucci, a European explorer who “discovered” these lands. By using Native American or American Indian there is a tacit Anglicization of the tribes that have inhabited the area now known as America, while erasing the history of occupation of those spaces by those same tribes. This idea is carried forward in the term “The First Americans”, as the assumption is that the area now called The United States of America was always awaiting fruition of its potential through Manifest Destiny. “The First Americans” is also wildly historically inaccurate as members of federally recognized tribes were not recognized as citizens of the United States until 1924, almost one-hundred and fifty years after the establishment of The United States as an independent nation.

NDN is a term that is commonly used by tribal members self-referentially. It is most commonly found in screennames, gamertags and as slogans on t-shirts/bumper stickers. N8V is another term that is used in a similar manner, and could have been used in the same capacity as a means of dis-locating the dominant narrative’s hold on place. I opted for NDN in order to recognize the ongoing discussion of preferred terms, while also privileging a self-referential narrative that derives from NDN Country.

iii Per-capita payments are disbursements to members of the tribe from the income of the tribe.

iv 93-638 contracts are also called, self-determination contracts. These contracts allow the tribes to administer the programs that were guaranteed under the treaty, with funding from the Federal Government.

v PL 280, is a law that expanded the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the states onto reservation land.

vi Descent is used to delineate the political authenticity of an NDN individual, rather than the more common, “descended from” which lacks the legal aspects of the discourse of blood quantum and enrollment.

vii I am using ethos here to represent how blood quantum creates a physical embodiment of a rhetorical trope.

viii Or as I referenced it earlier the “big” drum, as Washut uses hand drums the notation is important

ix This is phonetically sounded out, rather than using any written dictionary.

x Yakama Nation recently opened a new corrections facility.

xi I would be remiss if I didn’t note that the government is under pressure at the moment through the mechanisms of political economy. The political ideologies that are currently in conflict are limited to notions of liberalistic exceptionalism. There is a decided deficit in a rhetoric of education that asks institutions to push past the status quo of canonization of political/cultural socialization. In other words the discourse of authenticity, as applied to education writ large, is moving in a direction pejorative to education under the pressures of budgets that are being weighed ideologically with an eye toward replication of those ideologies.

xii I would translate, but it seems fitting in the context of my grandfather to leave these Yakama words undefined. After all, the authentic academic is also marked by a vernacular language that renders those that lack the requisite literacy requiring translation.