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Always Coming Home

Territories of Relation and Reparative Archives

KIM CHRISTEN with JOSIAH BLACKEAGLE PINKHAM (NEZ PERCE/NIMÍIPUU), CORDELIA HOOEE (ZUNI), and AMELIA WILSON (TLINGIT)

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ABSTRACT This article contributes to person-centred archival praxis and methodology by providing a reparative theoretical framework based in Indigenous relationships to kin, territories, material belongings, and systems of knowledge to unsettle standard archival practices. By foregrounding the stories of Indigenous archivists and practitioners, through their own narratives, we build on Indigenous theory as story work to interrogate archival systems, workflows, and policies that continue to replay settler-colonial tactics of removal and epistemic violence. In order to restructure archival practices, we suggest that institutions need to build relationship infrastructures that allow for respectful archival listening, shared stewardship, and return practices that go beyond mere exchange. Instead, to centre Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, archival practices must not only acknowledge territorial, intellectual, and cultural sovereignty but must also enact mechanisms for their realization.

RÉSUMÉ Cet article contribue aux praxis et méthodologies archivistiques centrées sur les personnes en offrant un cadre théorique réparateur basé sur la relationnalité autochtone envers les proches, le territoire, les affaires matérielles, et les systèmes de connaissances afin de déconstruire les pratiques archivistiques normatives. En mettant de l'avant des récits provenant d'archivistes et practicien.ne.s autochtones – à travers leur propre cheminement – nous nous appuyons sur les théories autochtones comme un travail narratif en interrogeant les systèmes, l'organisation du travail, et les politiques archivistiques qui reproduisent les tactiques du colonialisme d'occupation de suppression et de violence épistémique. Dans un objectif de restructuration des pratiques archivistiques, nous suggérons que les institutions doivent ériger des infrastructures basées sur la relationnalité afin de permettre une écoute archivistique respectueuse, une intendance partagée et un retour aux pratiques qui vont au-delà du simple échange. En outre, afin de positionner les systèmes de connaissances et pratiques autochtones au cœur des pratiques archivistiques, celles-ci ne doivent pas seulement reconnaître la souveraineté territoriale, intellectuelle, et culturelle autochtone; elles doivent forger des mécanismes pour leur réalisation.

This article is a collaborative effort between Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham, Cordelia (Codi) Hooee, Amelia Wilson, and Kim Christen. One of the core tenets we hold is that Indigenous attribution, knowledge contribution, and citation are central to undoing the sustained erasure of Indigenous people and knowledge in academic writing and beyond. Particularly in archives, citation, authorship, and attribution have an afterlife that perpetuates settler legal regimes. This article came together as a series of conversations between Kim and Josiah (2012–2022), Kim and Codi (2008–2022), and Kim and Amelia (2016–2022). In some cases, the conversations were recorded and transcribed. The result is a theoretical intervention into archival practices, processes, and modes of caring for and stewarding Indigenous cultural and linguistic heritage materials (broadly conceived). We discussed different ways to ensure that this work would be cited in a manner that was congruent with its argument while at the same time honouring everyone's preferences. Thus, the article's citation is: Kim Christen with Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham, Cordelia Hooee, and Amelia Wilson. This citation reflects that Christen wrote the text of the article, which brings together her discussions with the others. In the main body of the article, the "I" represents Christen's voice, and intellectual contributions from authors Blackeagle Pinkham, Hooee, and Wilson appear in block quotes and in-text quotes. Further, we use the style Lorisia MacLeod (James Smith Cree Nation) proposes for "more than personal communication" from Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers to allow for direct citations of Blackeagle Pinkham, Hooee, and Wilson's knowledge in their narratives.[1] In this way, citation happens at two levels: for the article as a whole and for specific Indigenous knowledge. Because Christen wrote the text that links together the conversations, it was important that we provide an avenue for direct citation of Blackeagle Pinkham, Hooee, and Wilson. Citation is not only a mode of acknowledgement but, as Max Liboiron (Red River Métis/Michif) so deftly shows, it is a form of relation, relationality, and a mode of "doing good relations work within a text, through a text."[2] This text relies on and enacts obligations we have to one another, to specific homelands, and to kin networks that

1 Lorisia MacLeod, "More than Personal Communication: Templates for Citing Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers," *KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies* 5, no. 1 (2021).

2 Max Liboiron, *Pollution Is Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 1–2. See also the exhaustive reading list on citational politics from the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR) group: "Citational Politics – CLEAR Library," Zotero, accessed April 30, 2022, https://www.zotero.org/groups/4620796/citational_politics-clear_library/library.

diverge and converge. What follows is a conscious enactment of relationship building through shared storytelling and theory making.

Relational Listening

In a 2011 article published in the *American Archivist*, I labelled myself an "accidental archivist" without hesitation.[3] I had been collaborating with Indigenous, First Nations, and Native American communities for years on projects – both digital and analog – that dealt in various ways with archival, ethnographic, and museum belongings. I also worked with archivists, librarians, and museum specialists in my academic home as well as through grant projects. A trained archivist I was not. I have an interdisciplinary academic background with a grounding in reflexive ethnography, cultural anthropology, and media studies. I spent graduate school and the decade that followed working most closely with the Warumungu Aboriginal community in Central Australia.[4] During that time, I learned about the significance of closely held territorial connections and networks and the centrality of kinship relations to knowledge systems. I also understood the importance of acknowledging relations, of being aware of one's obligations – and the limits of both. As a white woman in the academy, I was well aware that my responsibilities bore no resemblance to those of the communities with whom I collaborated. I understand deep and abiding connections to kin and land. Yet, as a settler scholar and ally, I can only glimpse the enormity of the responsibility for the ongoing care and stewardship of the land, the waters, and the many human and non-human relations who sustain them. The obligations I have will certainly be different, yet they are deeply informed by the significance of relationships and responsibilities to and for kin rooted in place(s). My settler positionality does not excuse me from obligations. In fact, as Max Liboiron argues, "Introducing yourself is part of an ethics of obligation, not punishment."[5] As an accidental archivist with ethnographic training and

3 Kim Christen, "Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation," *American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (2011): 185–210.

4 Kim Christen, *Aboriginal Business: Alliances in a Remote Australian Town* (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2009); Jane Anderson and Kim Christen, "Decolonizing Attribution: Traditions of Exclusion," *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, no. 5 (2019): 113–52.

5 Liboiron, *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 4.

established relationships with Indigenous communities, I came to understand the settler narratives archives and archivists created as stories that provided intellectual and material scaffolding for definitions of professional obligations, standards, and workflows that purported to be objective, neutral, and natural – but of course were anything but.

A decade later, I am a purposeful archivist. And, as a settler scholar working and living on the homelands of the Nimíipuu and the Palus peoples, I make it the purpose of my archival work to nurture and sustain relationships that centre Indigenous values, knowledge systems, and places to move toward *reparative archives that foster relationality*. Central to this archival restructuring and repair is connecting place-based knowledge, languages, and practices to the everyday work of archives and archivists to understand how specific communities and people within those communities imagine, define, and desire to live with and through places. The purpose of archival restructuring and repair is very literally *to ground archival practices in the territories and networks of relation* of the peoples on whose land archives are built; upon which archivists work; and from which archival materials, collections, and belongings were taken.

In this article, the grounded methods, practices, and stories from Josiah, Codi, and Amelia connect those homelands to tactile, material, and intimate human actions – and this connection is their purpose. Josiah is a cultural resource manager for the Nez Perce Tribe; he is an ethnographer, a storyteller, and an avid knowledge seeker. Codi is the cultural resource manager and archivist for the Zuni Tribe. She has been deeply involved in the New Mexico Tribal Libraries network, and she proudly wears the designation I gave her as the OG Mukurtu expert. Amelia is the executive director of the Huna Heritage Foundation and the organization's former archivist. She is a self-taught archivist from whom I have learned a tremendous amount about what being a community archivist means. I have known Josiah, Codi, and Amelia for many years, and I have been fortunate to get to know them and their homelands through long-term engagements that bring archival projects to life and are maintained through a mutual commitment to relationship building.

What follows is both a multi-sited form of storytelling – as I move back and forth between discussions with Josiah, Codi, and Amelia – and an exercise in collaborative theory building that involves all of us. Listening with an intent to hear differently is the basis for what follows. My particular aim is to move beyond what xwélméxw (Stó:lō) sound scholar and artist Dylan Robinson calls "hungry

listening" – that is, forms of settler-colonial listening practices and positionalities that are starved from relations.[6] Robinson's intervention focuses on the structural inequities and epistemic violence built into listening and hearing relationships where settler practices disavow, erase, and refuse to hear Indigenous presence, knowledge, and expressions of sovereignty.[7] This work intentionally moves away from hungry listening and as such contributes to a person-centred archival praxis and methodology by foregrounding narratives, stories, and place-based knowledge from Indigenous Peoples. This reparative theoretical frame is grounded in a type of archival ethnography that weaves together narratives, kinship networks, territorial relations, and archival materials through theories of belonging that unsettle archival practices that diminish, downplay, and derail place-based and community-centred knowledge.

Throughout this article, we follow the conversational method of Margaret Kovach (Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux), which "involves a dialogic participation that holds a deep purpose of sharing story as a means to assist others."[8] We invite you to listen as we move back and forth between Josiah, Codi, and Amelia's texts, the projects we have been involved in together, and the practices and processes necessary to build a different type of archival future. The stories and narratives Josiah, Codi, and Amelia relay are Indigenous knowledge and, more directly, Indigenous theory.[9] Here, I follow Dian Million (Tanana Athabascan), acknowledging "Indigenous lives as the stuff of theory,"[10] to show that "story has always been practical, strategic, and restorative. Story is Indigenous theory. If these knowledges are couched in narratives, then narratives are always more than telling stories."[11] Extending this explicitly within library and archives theory, Miranda

6 Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 2–3.

7 See also A.M. Kanngieser and Zoe Todd, "Listening as Relation: An Invocation," in "CTM 2021: 'Critical Modes of Listening,'" posted by "CTM Festival," YouTube video, January 25, 2021, 1:49:09 at 1:09:00, https://youtu.be/kGe0DYMroEg?t=4140.

8 Margaret Kovach, "Conversational Method in Indigenous Research," *First Peoples Child and Family Review* 5, no. 1 (2010): 40–48, 40.

9 The templates from Lorisia MacLeod (James Smith Cree Nation) undo the erasure and/or marginalization of knowledge conveyed orally. MacLeod, "More than Personal Communication," 1–2.

10 Dian Million, "There Is a River in Me: Theory from Life," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Andrea Smith and Audra Simpson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 32.

11 Million, 35.

Belarde-Lewis (Zuni/Tlingit) and Sarah Kostelecky (Zuni Pueblo) emphasize respecting tribal knowledge structures by building on Bryan Brayboy's tenets for tribal critical race theory, including his point that "stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being."[12] The reparative archival theory we propose is in direct conversation with Indigenous theory through and as story, with an emphasis on centring Indigenous knowledge – in its many forms and articulations.

Territorial Responsibilities and Indigenous Sovereignties

When I first started working in Australia in 1995, I was struck by the "welcome to country" openings that were standard at both academic and public gatherings throughout Australia. Aboriginal people refer to their homelands as "country," and these welcomes were typically offered by Aboriginal people from those specific places. In the last 10 years, territorial acknowledgements have become increasingly commonplace in the United States and Canada and have reached a fever pitch in the last few years as these nations confront ongoing racist structures and systems. Critiques of these acknowledgements rightly point toward their performativity while the underlying structures remain.[13] Territorial acknowledgements must be integral parts of *more holistic efforts* to reframe and upend settler logics of ownership and objectification that seek to remove territoriality and relationality, not only from scholarly endeavours but also from our everyday lives. Anti-colonial practices begin with recognition and territorial acknowledgements. This first step must be followed by actions, policies, practices, and dialogues that centre Indigenous knowledge systems and stewardship practices, especially in

12 Bryan Brayboy, "Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education," *Urban Review*, no. 37 (March 2006), 430, quoted in Miranda Belarde-Lewis and Sarah Kostelecky, "Tribal Critical Race Theory in Zuni Pueblo," in *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory*, ed. Sofia Y. Leung and Jorge R. López-McKnight (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2021), 96–120, 115.

13 Enāemaehkiw Wākecānāpaew Kesīqnaeh, "Whose Land? The Trials and Tribulations of Territorial Acknowledgements," *Decolonization, Resistance, Sovereignty* (blog), October 18, 2016, https://onkwehonwerising.wordpress.com/2020/04/21/whos-land-performative-practice-and-the-analytics-of-territory/; Cutcha Risling-Baldy, "What Good is a Land Acknowledgment? – Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy" (lecture, Humboldt State University Summer Lecture Series, June 8, 2020), posted by "hsunas," YouTube video, July 3, 2020, 1:09:55, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WgxfugOtAY; Summer Wilkie, "So You Want to Acknowledge the Land? Some Notes on a Trend, and What Real Justice Could Look Like," *High Country News*, April 22, 2021, https://www.hcn.org/issues/53.5/indigenous-affairs-perspective-so-you-want-to-acknowledge-the-land.

educational institutions that bear the legacies of dispossession and epistemic violence that sought and have continued to seek to marginalize Indigenous Peoples, knowledges, and networks of relationality. This connection between territorial dispossession and higher education is visible to me every day at Washington State University (WSU), where I work. My office is in Morrill Hall, a building named after US Vermont Representative Justin Morrill, who in 1861 sponsored the *Morrill Act*, a piece of legislation that provided states with lands designated by the government as public domain to endow and maintain universities. Then–US President Abraham Lincoln signed the *Morrill Act* in 1862, and what are known in the US as "land-grant universities" began.

Of course, the designation of these lands as public domain lands quickly glosses over the genocide, removal, and deterritorialization of Native Peoples, sanctioned by the US government, as well the ongoing benefits to the states and the universities from those original acts of violence – physical, emotional, epistemic, territorial, and cultural.[14] My home institution, like other land-grant institutions, continues to reap financial benefits from the original dispossession of Native land. WSU generates millions of dollars a year from timber harvest and other territorial extractions. Indeed, Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone, from *High Country News*, spent two years aggregating data from federal and state documents to map what they call "land-grab universities." Their work shows in fiscal and territorial detail that "land-grant universities were built not just on Indigenous land, *but with Indigenous land*."[15] The connection is significant as we engage with the work that begins after territorial acknowledgements. The data show a clear trajectory from dispossession to broken treaties, to legal precedents that undid Native land title, to the building of universities, the clearing of lands, the mineral extraction, and the denial of Indigenous territorial and intellectual property rights. University archives and libraries that house vast collections of Indigenous cultural heritage, language materials, and data that were collected, catalogued, and circulated prior to and during the formation of these institutions are tethered to this land-grab legacy and its ongoing silencing mechanisms.

14 While Canada does not have land-grant universities, the artificial US/Canada border belies the same sort of dispossession and settler government benefits, financial and otherwise.

15 Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone, "Land-Grab Universities: Expropriated Indigenous Land Is the Foundation of the Land-Grant University System," *High Country News*, March 30, 2020, https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities. (emphasis added)

Legacies of taking and keeping are not unique to land-grant universities; they are but one mechanism within settler-colonial regimes that continues to recycle tactics of displacement and dispossession.[16] The recognition of these histories, however, provides a firm grounding in the present as archivists[17] grapple openly with how to upend and undo the destructive research agendas, policies, practices, and infrastructures that continue as the planned by-products of colonial machines. WSU, like many universities and institutions, has a land acknowledgement. It reads, in full,

> Washington State University acknowledges that its locations statewide are on the homelands of Native peoples, who have lived in this region from time immemorial. Currently, there are 42 tribes, 35 of which are federally recognized that share traditional homelands and waterways in what is now Washington State. Some of these are nations and confederacies that represent multiple tribes and bands. The University expresses its deepest respect for and gratitude towards these original and current caretakers of the region. *As an academic community, we acknowledge our responsibility to establish and maintain relationships with these tribes and Native peoples, in support of tribal sovereignty and the inclusion of their voices in teaching, research and programming*. Washington State University established the Office of Tribal Relations and Native American Programs to guide us in our relationship with tribes and service to Native American students and communities. *We also pledge that these relationships will consist of mutual trust, respect, and reciprocity*.

16 Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Angela R. Riley, "'Straight Stealing': Towards an Indigenous System of Cultural Property Protection," *Washington Law Review* 80, no. 1 (2005).

17 Throughout this article, I address archivists and archives for clarity; however, libraries, librarians, museums, curators, and museum specialists all circulate in these same settler-colonial spaces of collection/collecting/curation. Within Indigenous, Native American, and First Nations spaces, there are many designations for these positions and places (e.g., a cultural centre may also be a museum, etc.). Similarly, there are certainly different structures (legal, social, political, professional) within and between these types of institutions, yet libraries, archives, and museums are colonial institutions born from imperialist impulses, and their differences do not undo the similar colonial logics and structures.

> As a land grant institution, we also recognize that the *Morrill Act* of 1862 established land-grant institutions by providing each state with "public" and federal lands, which are traced back to the disposition of Indigenous lands. In 1890, Washington State received 90,081 acres of Indigenous Lands designated to establish Washington State University (see data). Washington State University retains the majority of these lands to this day. *We acknowledge that the dispossession of Indigenous lands was often taken by coercive and violent acts, and the disregard of treaties. For that, we extend our deepest apologies. We owe our deepest gratitude to the Native peoples of this region and maintain our commitment towards reconciliation.*[18]

What would it entail for archivists as a community to "acknowledge our responsibility to establish and *maintain relationships* with these tribes and Native peoples, in *support of tribal sovereignty and the inclusion of their voices in teaching, research and programming*"?

While, on the one hand, WSU sets the stage for repair by naming the violence and dispossession and the disregard of treaties, it does not provide a clear roadmap for repair or reconciliation. There is, however, a "pledge that these relationships will consist of *mutual trust, respect, and reciprocity*." For archivists, what does it look like to make a commitment toward reconciliation through these acts? How can we shift to "establishing and maintaining" relationships that facilitate trust – relationships that are grounded in respect and reciprocity and that take as the first principle *tribal sovereignty* in its many manifestations through physical territories, social systems, cultural practices, knowledge, and language? Trevor Reed (Hopi) argues that

> one of Indigenous sovereignty's core attributes must be *the ability to care for the voices, likenesses, and cultural representations of our people: past, present, and future*. This may include (but is certainly not limited to) the ability of Indigenous communities to determine appropriate preservation techniques and possibilities of circulation for these materials. It may also require archives to deaccession them and to transfer complete

18 See Washington State University, "WSU Land Acknowledgement," Washington State University, accessed May 1, 2022, https://wsu.edu/about/wsu-land-acknowledgement/. (emphasis added)

> ownership of physical media and intellectual or cultural property rights to Indigenous communities. But it most certainly includes the rights of Indigenous peoples to exclude the settler state from using and accessing Indigenous voices, images, and other media documenting their culture, the right to care for those media, and the right to demand their destruction.[19]

Reed directly connects sovereignty to Indigenous communities' rights to determine appropriate care for – or, significantly, destruction of – their cultural belongings (tangible and intangible) within archives. This could mean providing different modes of access (e.g., for seasonal materials or for language speakers only) or providing the space and time for communities to interact with, read, listen to, and/or view materials outside of the institution – without guarantees of return. Reed upends settler understanding, rooted in legal fictions and naturalized professional norms, that demands Indigenous cultural belongings fit into settler property regimes.[20] Legal scholar Rebecca Tsosie (Yaqui) shows instead that "the cultural sovereignty of Indigenous nations is rooted within each nation and is *not a product or overt recognition or acceptance by the nation-state*."[21] That is, enactments, articulations, and practices of Indigenous sovereignty *exist a priori*. State recognition – or by extension, recognition from professional archival or curatorial standards, theories, or policies – is not a precondition of their efficacy. Instead, Indigenous enactments of sovereignty are often what Audra Simpson (Mohawk) theorizes as refusals or "willful distancing from state-driven forms of recognition and sociability in favor of others."[22] Simpson shows how refusal is part of Indigenous governance and is enacted specifically within research relationships as an Indigenous method. Archival theories, and their everyday manifestations in policies and seemingly benign workflows, are based in settler systems and institutional-driven forms of recognition that attempt to claim

19 Trevor Reed, "Indigenous Dignity and the Right to Be Forgotten," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 46, no. 4 (2021): 1119–47, 1146.

20 Anderson and Christen, "Decolonizing Attribution"; Angela R. Riley, "'Straight Stealing.'"

21 Rebecca Tsosie, "Tribal Data Governance and Informational Privacy: Constructing 'Indigenous Data Sovereignty,'" *Montana Law Review* 80, no. 2 (2019): 229–67, 266.

22 Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 488.

Indigenous belongings and knowledge. Indigenous archival refusals, however, have been constant.[23]

When I spoke to Josiah about the connections between sovereignty, collections stewardship, homelands, and Native knowledge systems, he began with this:

> One of the most powerful quotes that I've seen was by a man named Archie Finney, and he was the first Nez Perce to attain the level of doctorate degree, in linguistics. He tediously recorded his mother telling Coyote stories over the course of a summer and then translated and put them into his, I think it was his doctoral dissertation. And I'll paraphrase, but what he said is, "When I look at words on a page, all I see is the corpse of what was."
>
> He [Finney] gets it. He gets how scarce and rare these moments are – how sacred they are. You know, when two people come together and they're visiting like that, how can you capture the subtle intonations and fluctuations in voice, the mannerisms, and the gestures, and all of that, with mere writing? And in those stories *is his mother, his relationship with his mother*. And that's all that he has.
>
> *Because it's about relationship*. It's about the perpetuation of the relationship. That's what's important. And relationship is two different things; without one, it's gone. *But yet, out there in archives, in Stuttgart, are things waiting to have life breathed back into them. And this is where the life really lives: in the relationship between the land and the people*. Because there's

23 J.J. Ghaddar, "The Spectre in the Archive: Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Archival Memory," *Archivaria*, no. 82 (Fall 2016): 3–26.; Robin R.R. Grey, "Repatriation and Decolonization: Thoughts on Ownership, Access and Control," in *The Oxford Handbook on Musical Repatriation*, ed. Frank Gunderson, Robert C. Lancefield, and Bret Woods (n.p.: Oxford Academic, 2018), 723–38, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190659806.013.39; Kirsten Thorpe, "Position Statement on the Right of Reply to Indigenous Knowledges and Information Held in Archives Released," *Indigenous Archives Collective* (blog), August 9, 2021, https://indigenousarchives.net/2021/08/09/position-statement-on-the-right-of-reply-to-indigenous-knowledges-and-information-held-in-archives-released/; Jennifer R. O'Neal, "From Time Immemorial: Centering Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Ways of Knowing in the Archival Paradigm," in *Afterlives of Indigenous Archives*, ed. Ivy Schweitzer and Gordon Henry Jr. (n.p.: Dartmouth Digital Commons, 2019), 45–59, https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/facoa/3983/; Kirsten Thorpe, "Transformative Praxis – Building Spaces for Indigenous Self-Determination in Libraries and Archives," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, January 23, 2019, https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2019/transformative-praxis/.

> this ancient relationship that's being honed, and those fragments all play an important part in that. *Because, right now, were dealing with the reconnection of a heavily fragmented culture. And every shard is important. Whether it's a digital picture, something that's sitting in an archive across the country, or a material culture object in a foreign nation, you know, these things are, they're crucial*. And people don't really understand that because they're so busy living their life and are constantly stimulated, you know? I mean there's all this stuff going on, and you've got to fit that in somehow. But looking back and connecting with your past is what helps you to navigate through the hardship, and the struggle, and the suffering because it doesn't matter what culture you're talking about; somebody's struggled through something to put you there, to make a choice about the continuity of that. *And it all plays together: material culture, language, land relationship, ceremonies, family – family is a big one*.
>
> The raw power is in the exchange from one person to the next. And see, when I listen to those recordings, my grandfather is there with me. I mean, he's in my heart and mind. But, more importantly, I'm becoming him. See, that's when the connection is really broken, when you're no longer becoming your grandparents.[24]

Josiah frames relationships in many registers, but in all cases, they are enacted and embodied – between human beings or between humans and non-humans, material belongings, words uttered or sung, and/or physical places on the land. Relationships are grounded in Nez Perce articulations of sovereignty as practised in and through their homelands, language, stories, and relatives. The relationships Josiah narrates are on paper, in recordings, over the land, and within language; they connect archival collections to specific lifeways and to Nez Perce articulations and identities. When Josiah brings up Stuttgart, it is because there are cultural belongings of the Nez Perce in museums in Stuttgart – belongings that are lying in wait "to have life breathed back into them" by Nez Perce people, their (the belongings') relations. The cultural materials are kin; the

24 Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham, Nez Perce/Nimíipuu, Lives in Lapwai, ID, Sovereignty, collections, shared stewardship, homelands, and Native knowledge systems, More than personal communication, October 19, 2021.

collections are kin. He goes further, to link physical and digital materials to Nez Perce relations and to current Nez Perce understandings of themselves through relationships of listening, remembering, reciting, and enacting. Listening to his grandfather on those recordings, he is becoming his grandfather.

Relationships of respect place us all in states of becoming; we are constantly learning to be in right relationship. Archives, as institutional bodies, need to create and maintain *relationship infrastructure* that can identify and create tools, mechanisms, processes, policies, and positions that are informed by that "raw power" or "exchange" where "every shard is important." Human, technological, and policy infrastructure are all crucial to sustaining archives. Yet, the foundation for archival repair and restructuring is relationship infrastructure – practices embedded in policies that enact, enliven, and engender respect and reciprocity through sovereignty – to enable what Josiah identifies as "where the life really lives: in the relationship between the land and the people." To make this epistemological shift, we cannot rely on winning the hearts and minds of individuals within institutions. Sofia Leung and Jorge López-McKnight argue that, to move to a social justice framework within the field, "cultural humility alone will be only a small steppingstone and will not get us to the collective action needed to make real, radical, impactful change."[25] That is, while I may be pursuing and enacting policies, workflows, and technological infrastructure based in respecting Indigenous systems, if these do not become institutional priorities and commitments, they are fleeting. Relationship infrastructures, by contrast, provide modes of governance, operational policies, systematic workflows, and systems of engagement that are grounded in long-term commitments to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination and that cannot be diluted by successive administrations in any given institution. They are explicit movements away from settler systems of ownership, classification, circulation, and access and toward Indigenous ways of caring, stewarding, circulating, narrating, and relating.[26]

25 Sofia Y. Leung and Jorge R. López-McKnight, "Introduction: This is Only the Beginning," in *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2021), 1–41, 5.

26 Loriene Roy, Anjali Bhasin, and Sarah K. Arriaga, *Tribal Libraries, Archives, and Museums: Preserving Our Language, Memory, and Lifeways* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011); Kirsten Thorpe, "Indigenous Records: Connecting, Critiquing and Diversifying Collections," *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 2 (2014): 211–14; Susan McKemmish, Shannon Faulkhead, and Lynette Russell, "Distrust in the Archives: Reconciling Records," *Archival Science* 11, no. 3–4 (2011): 211–39.

Coming Home

Between 1841 and 1846, Henry Spalding acquired Nimíipuu clothing, artifacts, and horse gear, which he shipped to his friend and supporter, Dr. Dudley Allen, in Ohio. After Allen's death in 1883, his son donated what came to be known as the Spalding-Allen Collection to Oberlin College, which in turn loaned most of the collection to the Ohio Historical Society (OHS). In 1980, the Nez Perce National Historical Park (NEPE) acquired most of the collection on a one-year renewable loan from the OHS. In 1993, the OHS asked for the collection back but agreed to a purchase of the collection, with a six-month deadline. The Nez Perce were thus put in the position to buy back their own material belongings from the OHS for $608,100. They raised money through a strategic campaign targeting Native and non-Native people in the region and were able to purchase the materials from the OHS.[27] In June 2021, the Nez Perce formally renamed the collection *Wetxuuwíitin*' (returned after period of captivity). Five months later, in November 2021, the renamed Ohio History Connection returned the $608,100 to the Nez Perce Tribe and apologized for its previous actions.[28] Josiah discussed Wetxuuwíitin' in a broader context of Nez Perce collections residing in institutions all over the world:

> Because I think about the journey of the Spalding-Allen Collection and how, you know, Spalding collected them, and then he packed them in these barrels or crates. And they were taken by horseback down to, I think, Walla Walla. And then they were taken by horse and buggy on farther down. And then they were put on boats that went all the way down into Ohio. And they're almost, kind of like, dormant for, you know, many years, for decades. And then, all of a sudden, they're back on the scene. And then they're returned home on temporary loan or permanent loan, and then the Nez Perce acquired them. And that really, like I said, in a backhanded way, adds to the value of them. Because you know that they survived that tremendous journey.

27 Trevor James Bond, *Coming Home to Nez Perce Country: The Niimíipuu Campaign to Repatriate Their Exploited Heritage* (Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 2021), 153–59.

28 See Caroline Goldstein, "More than 20 Years after an Ohio Museum Forced a Native Group to Buy Its Own Artifacts Back, It Has Repaid the Tribe," Artnet News, November 30, 2021, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/ohio-museum-nez-perce-tribe-2041781.

> And that provides a note of reassurance for the present Nez Perce: that you're very resilient in what you can overcome. Look at the journey of your material culture and how it went to this far-off place and then it came home. *Things are always coming home, always coming home*. And you count on that as a coping mechanism in some way. And it's my hope that these things that are in, like, there are some martingales over in Stuttgart, in Germany. There are objects in the British Museum. You know, those things are lying dormant. And they're probably sitting in, you know, the stacks. And they're not being seen. They're not being shown. People aren't learning about them to the extent that they could. *It's my hope that one day – that those things will come back home, and you know, again be reunited with their kinfolk* that really appreciate the spirit of that expedition. And you know, it's just a pretty powerful thought to know that those things are out there – that there's potential for us to see them.[29]

Josiah's emphasis on these materials "always coming home" is the title of this article and the basis for reorienting archival notions of repair. The first time I listened to his words, it struck me that Indigenous understandings of return, repatriation, and repair are intimately tied both to physical places and to broader understandings of *home* as a place of solace, of survival, and of revival, where kinship is manifest and maintained through multiple types of relationships. For Josiah, this material culture and more like it around the world are waiting to be "reunited with their kinfolk." Archives bear the responsibility to begin the process of reunification. These belongings are part of kinship relations rooted in home – in Nez Perce territories, first and foremost. They have survived their journey away in captivity and are now waiting to return home. This framing helps us see *collections as kin*, as relatives, as bearers of cultural knowledge with power to ignite and rekindle ongoing social and cultural systems and practices. It shows archivists that collections may be being held against their will – in captivity, away from their home and kin. The cultural belongings, as kin, are resilient, and at the same time, this process of coming home shows the resiliency

29 Blackeagle Pinkham, communication. The full digital collection is on the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal: https://plateauportal.libraries.wsu.edu/collection/wetxuuwiitin-formerly-spalding-allen-collection-nez-perce.

of Nez Perce people, who maintain the knowledge embedded in them until they can be reunited.

Josiah recorded this narrative about the travels of the Wetxuuwíitin' collection for the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal.[30] He has been involved with the portal for over a decade, and during that time, I have come to know him and learn from him about the material culture he describes so deftly and, more importantly, about the network of connections that are grounded in place and language. When we discussed this process of coming home and the significance of these returns to Nez Perce people, Josiah highlighted the full context of the relationships of return:

> If you think about the life cycle of material culture, a man goes out and he gets an elk, and the skin is stripped off, and he imbues that elk skin with his *tah*, or his spiritual energy. And then he gives that to his wife, and she processes it into leggings or moccasins or a shirt or something else, and she imbues it with her spirit; she puts her *tah* into it. And the same thing with the meat, you know? He imbues his spirit; *there's a transfer, a relationship*. And that goes to her, and she cooks it. She gives it to the children.
>
> And when you part with that . . . there's a lot of different reasons people have parted with those things. You know, I think, to be fair, Spalding was given some of those things. And he probably did buy some. And he probably did swindle some. I don't know which.
>
> But the case is probably that he came across them in a lot of different ways. *So, whether it's the shirts, the dresses, or the moccasins, or whatever, you know, somebody put their spirit into that and passed it on*. Even if they sold it, it's got part of them in it. And if they sold that and it went on this long journey – to Dudley Allen in Ohio, and then passed down through the family to the Ohio State Historical Society, etc. – that's still part of our spirit, you know? *And it comes from a place. It comes from a very particular place in this great world. And the people that have the heart to interpret that connection and that break are here*.

30 Christen, "Opening Archives."

> But when these things go to other places, they're out of context. And there's always been a respect for origin among our people because we have this concept of *Elder kinfolk* and *junior kinfolk*. Our Elder kinfolk, its best explained through a term in Nez Perce called *'anaqoonma*. 'Anaqoonma means "all of those that have come before you." That's all of my ancestors that have passed away, but that also includes animal people. *English does not have an equivalent for that term. So, there's a lack there for addressing that sense of origin, that respect for origin, that Nez Perce people have lived for generations*. I mean, that's a core value for us, to acknowledge animals like bear, elk, deer. You know, they've made us who we are; they've taught us how to live here.
>
> One of the oldest names for the Nez Perce is Kinepuu. And what that means is "the people of this particular place and this particular time," Kinepuu. *Kine* (be here) [makes heard tapping sound]. *Right here*. And we're the ones that are in the balance. See, that term right there, again, stepping through the portal, that term – "the people of this particular place and this particular time" – you're in the balance of 'anaqoonma, "all the ones that come before you." And then out towards the future is helekipuu, "all the ones that are unborn." So, you have – you're the ones that are entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that helekipuu are always going to be, you know, on into the future.[31]

This lineage, from past to present to future, is the structure around which and through which Josiah traces the power of place, right here, which is then imbued into belongings (material culture): "somebody put their spirit into that."

These belongings are part of Nez Perce communities' intimate, familial networks, which are part of intergenerational knowledge sharing and cultural transmission. *Respect for origin* is rooted in Nez Perce senses of place – of homelands, territories, and kin relationships with animals and other non-human or more-than-human beings. These connections define what that respect entails, and they are the basis not just for understanding Indigenous collections but, more fundamentally, for making a shift to a new archival paradigm that values both

31 Blackeagle Pinkham, communication.

the spirit imbued in cultural materials and the connections of those materials to human and non-human social and cultural networks. Respect for origins is defined not through collections documentation but through a deep understanding of generations of lived experiences. Processes of archival management – from arrangement and description to preservation and access decisions and to digitization and content management systems – have to be rebuilt and structured to begin with sovereign expressions, and the territories of relation must be guided by Indigenous nations and communities. What Josiah narrates is both a specific Nez Perce sense of origin, place, language, and kin, and a framework for understanding place-based knowledge and modes of care. He continues:

> There's a story about Coyote going upriver, and he comes to Groundhog. And Groundhog is sittin' there, by the river, and she's peeling her roots, and she's got this big pile of roots. And she's peeling roots and kind of humming to herself, working, busy. And she keeps throwing the peels over her shoulder like that [gesture] and setting the roots aside. And Coyote watches that, and he thinks, "It shouldn't be like that. I should go talk to her." And so, he goes, and he sits with her, and he says, "I see you're busy peeling your roots, and I don't mean to interrupt, but you should probably take those root peelings back to the grounds where you were digging them." "Yeah, yeah, okay." And she keeps peeling like that. Coyote goes on his way, and he comes back, walking by again the second day, and no change, you know, other than more root peelings. And he goes, "She didn't listen. Alright, well, I'll go tell her again," you know, "Okay." "You really should take these root peelings back to the root grounds. You don't want to leave them here, piled up." And she goes, "Yeah, yeah, I'll get to it. I'll do it tomorrow." "Alright, I'll come check on you. But I'm just warning you, I'll make an example out of you if you don't do this." "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." So, he comes back the third day, and she's still sitting there, peeling roots, and so, Coyote goes, "She didn't listen, she didn't learn" [clapping sound], swats his paws together, and turns all of her root peelings into a mound.
>
> And, so, what the story conveys – and the mound is still there to this day – and the teaching is that she didn't act on this respect for origin. Because people were always taking roots back to the root grounds, or

> at least putting them back into the ground, they were intentionally buried somewhere to send them back. And there's always this respect for where something comes from. That is a common core value for Nez Perce people. When we pass away, we're not encrypted or entombed or even embalmed. The tradition is that, when you pass away, you're put in a pine box, and you're sent back to the Earth. And the spirit goes back to where it came from. There's that separation, but they each go back to the place of origin. And I don't think that Americans really understand that. They don't understand why it's important to acknowledge where something comes from. That's something that they need to work on and develop a little bit.[32]

We do not understand "why it's important to acknowledge where something comes from." The Coyote and Groundhog story is thus an apt narrative for non-Indigenous archivists to learn from as we seek to understand, respect, and foreground Indigenous priorities for collections management. Place of origin, in the way that Josiah explains it, cannot be captured through an archival notion of provenance, but instead, following Gerald Vizenor (Chippewa), "Native provenance is visionary and ceremonial, more than the history of ownership and custody." For Vizenor, the "sources of the actual creation of traditional objects . . . are the heart of Native provenance."[33] The "heart of Native provenance" is embodied, as Josiah shows, through the people, places, and kin who are connected to those places.

Codi Hooee has been the archivist for the Zuni Tribe for several years. Prior to that, she was the librarian at the Zuni Public Library. In each of her positions, she has been an advocate for the return of materials to Zuni. After a visit to the National Anthropological Archives (NAA),[34] Codi succinctly redirected the notion of provenance:

32 Blackeagle Pinkham, communication.

33 Gerald Robert Vizenor, *Native Provenance: The Betrayal of Cultural Creativity* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 137. For a critique of provenance within archival practices, see also Dorothy Berry, "The House that Archives Built," *up//root* (blog), June 22, 2021, https://www.uproot.space/features/the-house-archives-built.

34 The NAA is a part of the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History.

All the collections, all the objects you know, even down to the ceremonial, the sacred objects, they need to come home. Because this is where, of course, they originated, but their use for them also is here. They have no meaning outside of where they're from. Whatever museum they're in, there's no meaning for them. The people who work there just see them as objects.

When I saw those collections in the drawers [at the NAA], I was like, "What are you doing with these?" It was both eye-opening, exciting to find out what they had there, and it was also traumatic. When I look at old things like that, or even just wandering around – you know, I like to go hiking around [Zuni] – and every, almost everywhere you go, you'll find pottery. Pottery shards. And we don't pick them up. We'll look at them and we'll put it back because that's where they belong. But you look at the design, and sometimes you'll see fingerprints on there. And I'll look at – I always ask, "Who made you?" I'll ask in Zuni. I'll say, "Who made you?" And then I'll look at it, and maybe it was my great-great-great-great-great-grandmother or some relative way back. I'm of the Corn Clan, and I'll say, "Maybe somebody from the Corn Clan made this." And it's always that question I ask. It's like, "Who made you?" Because it's interesting. You'll look at them, and sometimes you see fingerprints or even a handprint. *Some ancestor, one of our ancestors, made this. And I think that's when it really hits you. . . . You truly see your connection to that place. And this is where we came from. This is how far we've come. So, that's always in my mind. And I don't – I don't see them as objects. This is what gives me my identity. This is what makes me who I am. This is what makes me Shiwi (Zuni).*

You have a relationship to those things because you are of that culture. And it really has a deeper meaning for you. And that's why, when you see things in museums that are of your tribe, you're like, "What are you doing with these?" That's where that question comes from. "What are you doing with these things?"[35]

35 Codi Hooee, Shiwi/Zuni, Lives in Pueblo of Zuni, NM, Shared stewardship, archives, digitization, and homelands, More than personal communication, October 27, 2021.

What are *we* doing with these things? Codi's question is specific: what are non-Indigenous collecting institutions *doing* with these materials? And it cuts to the heart of the *intention* of collection practices. When Codi asks the pottery, "Who made you?" she is engaging in a local quest for knowledge. One of her ancestors made this. This lineage and relationship are what make her Shiwi. So, what are we doing with these things? Indigenous collections are un- or under-processed, miscatalogued, and plagued by legacies of colonial cataloguing that have failed to make them easily accessible to communities.[36] Taken in the aggregate, this amounts to a stockpile of invaluable community resources, most of which, as both Josiah and Codi note, were removed through diverse modalities of colonial collecting practices. Examining this history and connecting it to types of care and stewardship, Trevor Reed argues,

> Indigenous cultural documentation amassed during this era constituted what might be considered America's first instance of "big data." . . .
>
> This original "big data" set, still meticulously preserved in research institutions and federal repositories today, is in some cases an invaluable resource for Tribes – many of which are searching for evidence to support legal claims or are working to revitalize aspects of culture disrupted by the very government policies these collections were originally meant to support. While often touted by collectors and Institutions as rich historical and cultural resources, I argue that some of these collections have become toxic in their preserved forms, *separated from their communities' modes of care*. These materials are among those that Indigenous groups should have the right to remove from settler Institutions and, if necessary, to erase, delete, or destroy.[37]

36 Allison Boucher Krebs, "Native America's Twenty-First-Century Right to Know," *Archival Science* 12, no. 2 (2012): 173–90; Sandra Littletree, Miranda Belarde-Lewis, and Marisa Duarte, "Centering Relationality: A Conceptual Model to Advance Indigenous Knowledge Organization Practices," *Knowledge Organization* 47, no. 5 (2020): 410–26, https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2020-5-410; Jennifer O'Neal, "'The Right to Know': Decolonizing Native American Archives," *Journal of Western Archives* 6, no. 1 (2015); O'Neal, "From Time Immemorial."

37 Reed, "Indigenous Dignity and the Right to Be Forgotten," 1120–21.

Reed, like Codi and Josiah, shows that perverse policies of preservation encode paternalistic notions of care devoid of Indigenous knowledge.[38] Not everything should be kept, preserved, or sustained. It is the separation from kin networks that keeps these collections in limbo. Codi goes on to explain, in relation to Zuni cultural heritage,

> Zuni was repatriating before NAGPRA,[39] in the '80s. Yeah, they were already asking for things back, and the most important ones were our War Gods. And the War Gods were repatriated because those are invaluable; they're our spiritual deities. They were taken off the reservation. Their shrines – we have shrines for our War Gods, and that's where they get placed every year – *people came in and took them*. I think Frank Cushing was one of them. So, when they found them in museums, the governor at that time, I believe it was Robert Lewis – and I've seen the documentation, original documentation of this in the archives about how they went about asking for the return of those things, and a lot of them got returned. And the most recent one was, I believe, in 2019. *One of them came back home*.
>
> The consultant who did the archives assessment for us, the librarian at the University of Utah, he emailed me, and he goes, "I saw a news story that one of your War Gods was returned." And I said, "Yeah. Yeah, *it came back home*." And he was asking, "Oh, did it go to the museum or were you involved?" And I'm like, "NO. No, no, no, no." When sacred items like that get returned, they do not go into our museum. They either get placed back in the shrine or, you know, the War Gods are supposed to naturally degrade and go back into the earth. So that's where they go, they go back to the shrines, to where they live out their lives. And no sacred object is ever placed in our museum.

38 See also T-Kay Sangwand, "Preservation Is Political: Enacting Contributive Justice and Decolonizing Transnational Archival Collaborations," *KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies* 2, no. 1 (2018).

39 NAGPRA is the 1990 US *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*, which paved the way for physical repatriation. See US Bureau of Reclamation, "The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act," Bureau of Reclamation, updated October 20, 2021, https://www.usbr.gov/nagpra/index.html.

> Some people see that "Oh, your sacred objects are being returned; they're going to go into the museum." No, they're not. For Zuni, it's a whole different process. None of our sacred objects ever go into the museum. It's part of our – it's our religion. Whatever the things were created for, if it's meant for them to go back into the Earth, *then that's where they go*.[40]

The War Gods' return home was quite literally to their territorial home in the land. Current preservation, access, and professional standards regarding material culture disregard territorial relations and Indigenous relationships with, to, and from those belongings by defaulting to preservation as keeping, sustaining, and maintaining without adequate attention to the care responsibilities and obligations of communities rooted in place.

I first met Amelia in Juneau, Alaska, at the headquarters of the Huna Heritage Foundation, where she was beginning as their archivist. She was set to begin the Tribal Stewardship Cohort Program at WSU[41] in a few months, and she and I began what would be a years-long conversation about the opportunities afforded by bringing cultural materials home:

> Those items in the museums are waiting to come out. Those items that we have in our archives have been waiting to come out. And to really honour the Elders who allowed themselves to be interviewed is bringing that full circle to sharing. And, I feel like, what a position to be in to really honour those Elders. Because that was their intent, [it] was always to have it shared. That's why they allowed themselves to be recorded. So, they've just been sitting there. And what a waste. They're our own treasures and our own treasure chest.
>
> Because our histories are so scattered: they are in museums, they are in these three repositories that we've been working with. That stuff has not been accessible to even us, who are working in the field [of

40 Hooee, communication.

41 For more on these programs, see Washington State University, "Tribal Digital Stewardship Cohort Program," Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation, accessed May 1, 2022. https://cdsc.libraries.wsu.edu/tribal-digital-stewardship-cohort-program/.

> archives], let alone just your average everyday citizen, and so really bringing that knowledge back. We know that we have a rich history. But there's so many gaps and so many holes that, really, the knowledge of that history and having facts and visuals and tangible things that can help piece together the holes and the gaps in our histories . . . [it] *brings that knowledge home*.
>
> And so, I think even more important than having a physical item, because then you're still limited in who can access that. Are you physically in Hoonah, at a museum? And not that, well we don't discount that. But I think knowledge of our history, knowledge of our past and that richness is, I think, even what physical repatriation does, so *having that knowledge repatriation really is the gem, the gold*.[42]

Amelia's emphasis on knowledge repatriation helps orient archives to the potential of digitized content, with its metadata, contextual notes, scrawls on the back of photos, or marginalia, as a type of return. She highlights interconnected modalities of repatriation that circle around knowledge – *the gold* – that can only be brought to light through respectful relationships with communities and intentional return practices. In each case, home is the connector; it is the source of Indigenous knowledge and the place to which material must return – although those returns may take various forms. Physical, digital, and knowledge repatriation are connected but not interchangeable. Instead, when archives commit to *all types of return*, stewardship becomes an ongoing dialogue, formed through respect for Indigenous knowledge systems.

Possibilities for Shared Stewardship

Codi, Josiah, and Amelia were all members of the Tribal Stewardship Cohort Program, run out of the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation at WSU. Cohort members framed their work as stewards and caretakers in terms of their own relationships to their homelands; their kin (human, non-human, and more-

42 Amelia Wilson, Tlingit, Lives in Hoonah, AK, Shared stewardship, repatriation, and archives, More than personal communication, December 20, 2021. (emphasis added)

than-human); and communities and through their languages, which encompass and enliven the knowledge they seek to bring into their own stewardship and collections management practices, processes, and policies. Amelia recounted the process:

> For us, the digital stewardship life cycle shares many cultural values that guide how we process our traditional foods. The materials that we process in our digital stewardship work can be metaphorically understood in the steps of gathering our foods, processing it, preserving it, and sharing it. Care, attention to detail in each step, is vital to honouring the foods we gather. We are taught that everything has a spirit: our waters, our mountains, our berries, our fish. To neglect any one step in processing our food dishonours the spirit of what we gathered and could even result in misfortune or bad luck in future attempts to gather. Similarly, we understand that to truly steward the items we are digitizing, we must get them, check them, save them, and share with care and mindfulness of the responsibilities of honouring the voices, the images, the stories, and histories that we are entrusted with. Our goal of sharing digital resources ties back into Haa Kusteeyí (the Hoonah way of life).[43]

Amelia's stewardship model foregrounds a cycle of care defined through cultural gathering practices that cannot be separated from the land, animals, and people who inhabit those areas. At the Zuni Archives, Codi and her co-workers created a sign for their door that reads, "Office of the Official Caretaker of Zuni Tribal History." She explains: "And that's how I see myself. I see myself as a caretaker of all this information, and if part of that care is protecting it from people that aren't supposed to know it, then that's what I will do. And I will explain it to them – that this is why I can't divulge this information, because the same protocols that you're expected to adhere to, they also apply to me." In both cases, there are cultural and community protocols and values that underpin stewarding and caring for materials – in whatever form they take.

During the cohort program, we visited federal repositories to provide one mechanism cohort members could use to create policies and plans for the

43 Wilson, communication.

eventual or aspirational return of materials (digital and/or physical) that foregrounded building relationships with institutions. Reflecting upon those trips, Codi weaves together threads of what stewardship and return could mean:

> The Zuni willow baskets that we saw in the [NAA] collection: it's barely being revived. It died out. But, you know, baskets played a role in our daily life and sometimes in ceremonies, where they held certain things. So, I didn't understand why all those willow baskets were in that collection. Wouldn't this be better in Zuni? Maybe we bring them back, we can start people thinking about learning to craft again, or there's somebody out there who knows just a little bit of that craft and can start, and these willow baskets can help revive that tradition.
>
> It would be ideal if we could get the actual pieces back. And I know the Smithsonian lends; they have a permanent loan out to our museum. But, if we can't have the actual thing, the next best thing is digital. If we have the digital images to look at it, you know the 360, the whole view, and plus have some audio along with it – maybe get some of the potters in to say, "Hey, this is what this design is, this is what it means" – things like that, to have it as a resource, that would be terrific. If we could have a pottery image database for everybody, but more so for the art, for the potters, for the people that want to continue that tradition.
>
> And, you know, with the audio recordings, especially with the Doris Duke[44] stuff, the generation now, the storytellers from then would've been their great-great-grandparents. And to hear them speak, I think, would be amazing. Like, Councilman Kucate, who's been working with the Doris Duke project, his grandfather was one of the storytellers. They went to Washington, DC, and they met with Guha [Shankar, AFC folklorist], and he let them listen to the stories of his grandfather, which was her great-grandfather, and *you can't express how you feel when you hear – when you hear your grandfather who's no longer here*, or truly, one of

44 Codi is specifically referring to portions of the Doris Duke Collection held at the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress, which were digitized and returned to the community over several years. See Guha Shankar and Cordelia Hooee, "Zuni Cultural Heritage Materials in the American Folklife Center: The Potential of Return," *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1–2 (2013).

the Elders. I think that group of storytellers was the link between when Zuni was going into modern time versus the old. They were that link. To have recordings of them available for our community to hear, *I think it's something that the people need right now at this point. Just to tell them that this is how it was versus how it is now*. We can't let what's going on now defeat us because we have these really rich, invaluable resources. And if you need a boost, if you need something positive, you come by and listen to the story or log on when we have our database. *Listen to it, and it'll revive your spirit*.

One of the other storytelling projects that was done was done by Dr. Andrew Wiggett. One of the storytellers for that project was my grandfather. And I found the tape – this was up at the old archives building where we found the collection, so I brought it down – but I was looking through the tapes, and I saw my grandfather's name on there. And this was, I mean, he passed away in the '90s, and I was really close to him. So, when I heard it, oh my god, I wanted to cry. Because that's my nana; that's my grandfather. So, you know, if we have it in the library or wherever, it's kind of impersonal. When you're listening to it on your own, in your private space, and you can feel all those emotions, that reconnecting with your grandparents, or whoever is no longer here, great-grandparents. And I think that's a very personal moment when you go through that and like, "Oh my god, it's my nana."

This is my take on why they [Zuni Elders] recorded those stories. In their wisdom, our grandfathers must've thought, "Okay, I need to record this because one day I might not be here; I'm not going to be here, our stories might not be here. So, this is my contribution to make sure that these things get passed along." That's the way that I like to think of it. This is how our grandfathers thought, and this is why they recorded, especially the folktales and the fables and whatnot, because they're an important part of our culture. But, also the historical part, which is why they interviewed the people, because when I look at the transcripts, it's got a whole lot of things that they talked about: the coming of the Spanish, Catholicism, the Protestants who came, the people, the non-Zunis who came, the traders, the Vander Wagen family

> who was really established here, education back then – which is really interesting – education, and how these non-Zunis saw Zuni people. So, it's a whole bunch of topics that they cover when they do the personal interviews. It also gives a really good history of the community.
>
> In their wisdom, they must have seen the value in it, even though there might have been objections from the community: "Why are you recording our stories for these people?" or whatever. But what they did, I mean, *I am looking back, and I'm so grateful that they did that because now we have those, in their voices*.[45]

The voices that have the power to "revive your spirit" are contained in these recordings. These gifts from kin, recorded with the intention that they would be heard by future Zuni generations, are the basis for intentional, purposeful shared stewardship – for models that define sharing through the lens of Indigenous desires and values, where shared stewardship includes the responsibility to return. Codi's emphasis on Zuni place, on the home for the belongings – whether pottery or audio tapes – circles around identity, language, and community memory through differing modes of access and modalities of return. She connects physical and digital return of materials with meaningful changes in the description, arrangement, and attribution that together form an archival paradigm that privileges Indigenous circulation routes and, more fundamentally, Indigenous sovereignty (through cultural, territorial, and linguistic expressions).

The significance of the return is in the types of access and use, which are fundamentally different than those archives are typically used to accommodating. Similarly, Trevor Reed argues that

> recognizing Indigenous peoples' rights to care for their ancestors' voices and other cultural data would undoubtedly require a significant shift in the way Institutions conceptualize Indigenous cultural materials in their collections – from a curatable past-on-demand that substitutes for actual Indigenous presences and futures, *to one respecting the sovereignty of contemporary Indigenous peoples and these materials' actual*

45 Hooee, communication.

> *lives and existences*. But these advances are necessary if we are sincerely committed to realizing Indigenous self-determination and cultural rights in the age of big data.[46]

When many collecting institutions started creating digitization plans, the focus was on quantity – how much can we digitize and make "accessible"? – with undefined goals regarding access. These choices privileged non-Indigenous notions of access and previous colonial collecting paradigms, where digitization was seen as a stand-alone effort to create more "product" – with a decreased emphasis on contextual materials, diverse sets of metadata, and the provenance of the materials. As archivist Dorothy Berry notes, "Digital collection development has been presented as a liberatory access provider, with the idea that reparative access is primarily a workflow adjustment."[47] Digitization as goal unto itself replays the same histories of the collection of physical materials with the result of inflicting more harm on communities by sharing materials that were never meant to be public – much less circulated widely on the Internet. By extension, institutions' reliance on takedown notices puts the onus on knowledge holders to ask that sensitive, sacred, or traumatic content be removed from public circulation. The return of archival materials in digital formats, then, cannot be defined in terms of ingestion and consumption models, where content and metadata are understood as complete – or even trustworthy – sources of knowledge. Instead, digitization of cultural heritage materials needs to be predicated on established relationships of respect and understood as one possible mechanism for repair. The effect of digital returns become reparative only when the knowledge, values, social systems, and protocols of the communities have driven the return. Indeed, Sandy Littletree (Diné/Eastern Shoshone), Miranda Belarde-Lewis (Zuni/Tlingit), and Marisa Duarte (Pascua Yaqui) argue that

> through intentional safekeeping and curation, as well as illicit practices of archaeological and anthropological theft and black-market sales, the expressions of Indigenous knowledge end up in libraries, archives and museums as books, documents, recordings, interviews, films, and other collectible objects. To appropriately describe and provide access

46 Reed, "Indigenous Dignity and the Right to be Forgotten," 1122.

47 Berry, "The House that Archives Built," 2.

> to these expressions, it is insufficient to care only for the object, which is the material expression of a people's way of life. *Instead, the knowledge itself, including the means of its making, must be treated with respect, with a sense of responsibility toward the restoration of justice for Indigenous peoples in light of the history of colonialism, including the establishment of fair and just reciprocal relationships between the holding institutions and the Indigenous peoples who created the original expressions.*[48]

Shared stewardship practices can be mechanisms for establishing "fair and just reciprocal relationships" that seek to more holistically care for the materials – especially when that care means return. Amelia focuses on the benefits and power of these shared modes of stewardship:

> It's about having that voice of the community and that perspective of the community and the understanding [in the archives]. The timing is beautiful: working with these repositories now, I feel like they have just entered into this space of wanting to share. And it's that paradigm shift in practices that we're getting to experience now. And it's at the beginning still, because this is all very slow, but that is exciting for me, because it is bringing that knowledge home and sharing knowledge back that enhances all of our knowledge and all of our understanding.
>
> And I love that, through the cohort, you get to share that understanding that, you know, we're all kind of in that same, you know, boat. And it may be different storms we're weathering but, you know, we're all just starting. And we bring to the table an expertise and knowledge base that is not there at the repositories. It's much harder to learn the heart of a community, the history, the passion, the connection, the details of what these items mean. So, I think that it's really actually smart for the repositories to be working with the communities, because otherwise they just have objects.
>
> But it's working together, though, too, that is beautiful because it's – it takes all of those pieces, and the work that we're doing with these

48 Littletree, Belarde-Lewis, and Duarte, "Centering Relationality," 416. (emphasis added)

> federal repositories will also open doors for us in our state, in our region, and with repositories elsewhere. *It's about establishing a process that is going to right the wrongs and bring this knowledge home, bring our communities together, and really lift us. And it's just exciting to be able to do the work.*[49]

Amelia brings together two important threads in the discussion about restructuring archives: centring Indigenous knowledge holders and making space for those connections to be drawn home to communities. The practical paradigm shift she relates is away from a process that may "add" community voices to one that privileges and prioritizes Indigenous knowledge systems, values, and place-based protocols. To "right the wrongs," Amelia encourages sharing knowledge about stewardship practices as she and her fellow cohort members did. Repositories have as much to learn about Indigenous stewardship, care, and management practices as they do about any specific content or collections. Updating metadata is a significant step, but in the absence of substantial changes to the structures that uphold recordkeeping, descriptive standards, and authorial control, editing metadata becomes a performative act.

Codi focuses on the arc of return and how non-Indigenous repositories can enact a responsible shared process:

> What these repositories hold, it's not theirs. It's not theirs, so do they look at them as possessions? They don't let you talk about repatriation. You get a lot of pushback because it's "theirs," and they don't want to give it back to the people who – it really is theirs. So, if there was a repository, for instance, a good example is the Doris Duke stuff, when LOC Folklife Center digitized them. They digitized them; they didn't have to. *But I think they looked at it as, "We're caring for these stories until they can go back home*." And there was always the question of, "Can we, can you take them now? Here they are. They're right here, ready for you to take whenever you're ready." And, you know, the – I think the obstacles were on *our* side 'cause, you know, number one, we didn't have a place to put them. "Okay, how are we going to store these? Who's going to take care of them?" And then, when I got in the picture, that's

49 Wilson, communication.

when things got a little bit clearer. But it was always, "They're here, whenever you want them, they're yours. They are yours. So, you know, come and get them when you're ready." And I would hope that some of the other repositories see it like that. If they have objects from certain tribes, it's like, "We have your things; they're ready for you to take," or "We will care for these things for you until you're ready to take them back to their homes."

I think, if they [non-Native repositories] really established a working relationship and said, "Hey, we have this batch of objects; can you look at them, can you provide us some metadata?" and then *keep working with us and have it be a continued relationship*. I think that's what's needed, to not just one time, "Okay, visit us," and end of your visit, you don't have any more contact with them at all.

But, you know, going back to the audio cassette and the audio recorder was their digitization at that time because they thought, "We need to save these for future generations" – and I'm so glad they had, you know, if they had that thought in mind, "*Thank you*. Thank you, grandfathers," because they didn't know how much it was going to be needed. So, I thought about, you know, digitization efforts now for Native institutions. I'm like, that was done in the '60s, but they had that thought back then and how many more years is it now? And now we're still thinking about digitization and we – I think it's, for Indigenous people, Indigenous institutions, it holds a bit more meaning. When, you know, they [non-Native repositories] say, "Oh, we're going to digitize to save these documents," I think there's a whole lot more meaning to Indigenous people. *This is how we're going to save a part of our identity. This is how we're going to save a part of our culture*.

So, I was thinking about, they [non-Indigenous archives] always talk about, "We're going to digitize something." You know, "What are you going to digitize it for?" Just to have access, easy access in a format that's easy for everybody to use? *But for us, it's like, we're going to digitize our culture. It's basically digitizing our culture, our language, to pass on to future generations. Like, you know, we don't have our grandfathers here*

> *anymore*. We're losing our Elders who knew all that stuff. So, you know, and you can't have ceremonies, whatever, without the language. So, how are we going to pass that on? Now in – now what's available to us is recordings, still the recordings, but in a new format, which is digital.[50]

Through her experience with the AFC and the digitization and return of portions of Zuni audio recordings, Codi shifts the focus to non-Indigenous repositories' understanding of care, and in doing so, she shows the potential for mutuality. The relationship she and the AFC created was based in an understanding that the AFC was caring for the recordings until they could go home. It was a multi-year process, one that in its particularities may not be reproducible, but taken in its entirety, it is an example of a commitment to what Jane Anderson and I call slow archives[51] – a set of processes and procedures that emphasizes care and context from Indigenous communities and that results in recognizable and radical shifts in attribution, knowledge documentation, and display practices. Most importantly, it is in the slowing down that relationships are built and trust is established. Slowing down also encourages dialogue rather than quick assumptions that something "cannot be done." I have been in many conversations with archives managers, directors of archives, general councils for federal repositories, and metadata librarians about shifts in practice that will have ripple effects throughout the institutions. While there has been pushback, and I am sure this continues, shared stewardship does not assume a lack of friction but instead assumes that the friction, over time, propels a smoother transition and understanding that promotes anti-colonial frameworks.

Shared stewardship understands that there are many roles and structures within different repositories (be they libraries, archives, or museums) as well as within Indigenous organizations. Navigating structural borders and boundaries, however, is enacted by people in their roles as archivists, managers and so on. Falling back on arguments about structure (e.g., "I can't change that," or "There's no field for that") belies the logics of colonial power structures. Instead, shared stewardship demands that settler institutions both recognize their colonial systems and change them to reflect anti-colonial logics.

50 Hooee, communication.

51 Kim Christen and Jane Anderson, "Toward Slow Archives," *Archival Science* 19, no. 2 (2019): 87–116, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-019-09307-x.

When I asked Josiah, "Is shared stewardship possible or even a desirable goal?" he responded succinctly, "It is not only possible; it is necessary." He went on:

> We [Nez Perce people] try to synergize as much as we can. There are connections that can be made between bringing back material culture and written materials, and it's about looking at it . . . in the way that it actually is. It's fragments. We're trying to recreate this ethnosphere that helps us to be self-analytical and face the challenges that lie before the survival of a population. There's always a shedding of things that you no longer need, things that you have to let go of. And so, one of life's challenges is about, "What do I hang on to?" But also, it's about, "What do I let go of?"
>
> So, having stories available is something that's important too. And I've gone to DC and mined through stuff and brought back stories that I now tell to my young people because I want them to have it here. Or, you know, at the very least, remember, "Yeah, Josiah came in and he told this one Coyote story." But I've got young people that gravitate towards me, and I'll hit them with a story. We'll be working outside or something, and then one of my grandsons will come up, and he'll be working with me, and I'll just kind of rattle off something, or I'll sing to him. We were, my, one of my grandsons, he came up to stay for the weekend, and we took a bunch of stuff out to burn it. And we're burning cardboard and stuff, and we're just standing around the fire. And I started to sing to him, and I was surprised, because he sang along with me. I mean, what a moment! I mean, to have a six-year-old, seven-year-old boy singing along with his grandpa. I'm becoming my grandfather, you know, whether I like it or not. Well, I love it actually. It's really cool to see that continuity because that's something that you can't get from a book, you know? He's not going to find that in some archive. So, all of this stuff is related. It all comes back together, and it helps us to rebuild and keep going.
>
> And all of these stories that are lying in wait in some institution or in the digital realm, or these songs, the language, that all helps to deal with that, to deal with being a human. And . . . that's been my life's

> work, really, is to figure out how people have been doing that for at least 16,000 years here. Because that's a really special package that comes from only here – an ancient connection that comes only from here. And how do we carry that forward? That's a really magical thing.
>
> And it's really important for us to understand that, *when it comes to stewardship, it's going to be the product of a relationship between two different things*. Whether it's two bureaucracies – whether it's the Nez Perce Tribe and Washington State University – I mean, whatever, we come together and we greet a challenge. And again, you know, *a constant reinvention of the relationship*. It's not, "Okay, check that box. Done. Next." It doesn't work like that. Very few things do. And it really shouldn't be like that because, if you think about it in terms of the relationship with the land that the Nez Perce People have had, it's like, "Okay, we've done that, move on." No. *We're always going to be here, we're always going to be maintaining this relationship with the land, we're always going to be dependent on that. Because there's something about understanding how important that is*.[52]

A constant reinvention of the relationship. Josiah's focus prompts us to take the long-term view, which is always in motion and always in the making. Shared stewardship is not a proscriptive model but a framework that relies on a foundation of relationality and of prioritizing Indigenous methods and practices of enacting that care.

I began this article focusing on citational practices and territorial acknowledgements as a foundation for reparative practices and thus a restructuring of archives. Josiah, Codi, and Amelia provided theoretical scaffolding for a remaking of archives through relations of respect that circle around coming home. To understand the arc and continuum of materials, knowledge, and histories always coming home, archival practices must be oriented toward enduring territorial relations. If we ask ourselves, as Josiah does, "What do we hang on to?" and "What do we let go of?" in order to respect Indigenous stewardship, we will turn away from our inherited hungry listening stances and extractive policies. We can turn toward the reparative steps that Josiah, Codi, and Amelia detail in their narratives of return, of coming home, of breathing life into the materials that

52 Blackeagle Pinkham, communication.

have been waiting. It is time to end the waiting.[53] Return is not a settler reward. It is not in itself an ethical act. Restructuring archives around coming home is about letting go of systems that deny Indigenous authority and attribution, letting go of legal structures that feign neutrality, letting go of metadata schemas that define Indigenous knowledge bluntly. The only thing to hold on to is the certainty that Indigenous people's relationships to their homelands will endure and outlast any preservation plan archives devise.

53 Jennifer O'Neal, "From Time Immemorial," 48–49.

BIOGRAPHY Kim Christen is the Director of the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation at Washington State University, where she is a professor in and the Director of the Digital Technology and Culture program. Her work explores the intersections of cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, information ethics, and the use of digital technologies in and by Indigenous communities globally. She is the founder of Mukurtu CMS, an open-source community access platform designed to meet the information, curatorial, and data needs of Indigenous communities. She is also the Director of the Sustainable Heritage Network and co-director of the Local Contexts initiative, platforms that provide practical tools and educational resources for the stewardship of digital cultural heritage and the management of intellectual property by Indigenous communities.

BIOGRAPHY Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham is Nez Perce and resides on the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho. His Nez Perce name, Tipyelehne Cimuuxcimux, is commonly translated as Blackeagle. Josiah's father, Allen Pinkham Sr., is a Nez Perce man, and Josiah's mother, Shirley Mosqueda, is a Yakama woman. Josiah is an ethnographer in the Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Resource Program, which involves cultural research and documentation. He graduated with honours from Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho, with a degree in Native American studies and psychology. Josiah travels all over the United States to give presentations on the culture of the Nez Perce and has taken several trips to Europe for cultural exchanges. He presents to groups of all ages and backgrounds. The groups include young children; college students; and people in tour groups, elder hostel programs, museums, and interpretive centres. He also presents to a variety of agencies to help them understand the importance of tribal collaboration.

BIOGRAPHY Cordelia Hooee is an enrolled member of the Zuni Tribe. She serves as the Cultural Resources Manager and Archivist for the Pueblo of Zuni Cultural Resources Center (Zuni Tribal Archives, Zuni Public Library, A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center and Census Program). Cordelia has more than 30 years of experience working in libraries and archives. Her professional interests lie in the protection of intellectual and cultural property rights of Native/Indigenous Peoples. She received her MLIS from the University of Arizona School of Information (Knowledge River Scholar, cohort 13) and is currently enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts in Cultural Administration program at the Institute of American Indian Arts.

BIOGRAPHY Amelia Wilson is of Tlingit and Irish descent from the village of Hoonah, Alaska, and a member of the Chookaneidí Brown Bear clan. She serves as Executive Director for Huna Heritage Foundation, a non-profit affiliate of Huna Totem Corporation established to foster and support educational and cultural opportunities for current and future generations. Amelia is responsible for the oversight and administration of the Huna Heritage Library and Archives, scholarship program, and Our Way of Life community programming. Prior to her current position, she served as the Archivist for Huna Heritage Foundation and was instrumental in the development of the Huna Heritage Digital Archives, an online Mukurtu CMS web portal hosting audio and visual content of cultural and historic value to Hoonah. In 2019, Huna Heritage Foundation won the international Guardian of Culture and Lifeways Archives Institutional Excellence Award from the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums. Amelia is a motivated service-to-community-oriented professional who enjoys volunteering locally as a city council member, President of the Alaska Native Sisterhood Camp 12, and member of the Tlingit dance group, the Gaawx Xaayi Dancers. Amelia provides consultation, gives lectures and presentations, and teaches classes on numerous topics of cultural, historical, and contemporary value in local, regional, and international venues. She is personally and professionally committed to the ongoing development of her cultural knowledge and is honoured to share it with others.