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Toward a Rhetoric of Self-Representation: Identity Politics in Indian Country and Rhetoric and Composition

Scholars in rhetoric and composition have explored political issues of identity and language for some time; however, we have only begun to develop an understanding of why the identity politics of Native scholars are so different from other scholars of color and whites. Native scholars take considerable risks in composing identities—they can face censure from their communities and other scholars of color, perhaps even charges of identity fraud, if their self-representations are not persuasive. I describe and analyze the cases of three Native scholars in order to explore the claims, evidence, and rhetorical exigencies present when a scholar claims to be Native American. Ward Churchill's case establishes the differences between self-identification and self-representation as these relate to the vexing problem of identity fraud in Indian Country. Resa Crane Bizzaro's case reveals a persuasive self-representation because it includes authenticity markers recognized by many Native audiences. Finally, I describe my own case as an outlander citizen of the Cherokee Nation based in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to reveal how accountability markers must accompany authenticity markers in order to form persuasive self-representations. A rhetoric of self-representation can illuminate the systemic ways in which racial categories circumscribe us all; the ways in which identity for Native peoples is always about subjectivity enacted within kinship relations; and the ways in which we might compose identities while situated within antithetical exigencies.

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Self-representation has never mattered more to academics of Native American descent. Exactly who counts as a Native American and how this identity is defined has been debated at conferences, in scholarship, and in the newspapers for some time. Both in academe and Indian Country, such identity boundaries matter a great deal to those who are included and excluded by them. For Native scholars, reputations, authority to represent, access to resources, such as scholarships and affirmative action lines, are all at stake. In Indian country, the stakes are different though just as high: for individuals the stakes can include the rights that citizenship provides, such as access to health care, land ownership, and the right to vote; while for nations, deciding who counts as a citizen is a practice central to the maintenance of sovereignty itself. Recently, though, the case of Ward Churchill has brought these identity politics into the national spotlight.¹ Ward Churchill is a professor of ethnic studies and self-identified Native scholar who was, until quite recently, employed with the University of Colorado at Boulder. His controversial positions on topics such as the Holocaust and the 9/11 attacks drew considerable attention to his scholarship and his positioning as a Native scholar. More than an intriguing study of identity politics, his case offers composition and rhetoric scholars important insights into the often unseen ways in which individuals compose identities as they address multiple rhetorical exigencies within highly charged situations. By exploring Churchill's case, along with Resa Crane Bizzaro's and my own case, I hope to extend conversations concerning a rhetoric of self-representation, one that is certainly timely given our field's attention to identity issues. Within the last five years alone, these concerns have been the focus of a number of conferences: "Composing Community" was the theme of the 2001 convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication; "Composing Identities" was the theme of the 2002 Thomas Watson Conference; and "Representing Identities" was the theme of the 2007 CCCC convention. How is it that scholars compose their identities when situated within highly charged contexts? What professional and civic duties do composition and rhetoric professors have and to whom? How can audiences within rhetoric and composition better understand the complexities of constructing identities and support each other in these efforts? These important questions, still of central concern to our field, point to the need for further study of the rhetoric of self-representation.

In this essay, I describe and then analyze the cases of three Native scholars in order to explore the claims, evidence, and rhetorical exigencies present

when a scholar claims to be Native American. After an overview of the scholarly discussions of identity politics in rhetoric and composition, I then summarize the Churchill case to establish the differences between self-identification and self-representation as these illustrate the larger problem of identity fraud in Indian Country. Self-identification is a claim about one's identity that needs no other evidence: it happens when a person checks a racial affiliation box on a census or affirmative action form.² Self-representation, on the other hand, is an identity claim that includes evidence of identity markers valued by multiple audiences. Churchill's case shows how self-identification, though acceptable in some systems, is far too problematic to be relied upon as the sole indicator of tribal affiliation and can lead to charges of identity fraud. Next, I summarize the case of Resa Crane Bizzaro, a Native scholar in rhetoric and composition, and then analyze the ways in which her case offers a persuasive self-representation because it includes authenticity markers recognized by many Native audiences. Finally, I describe my own case as an outlander citizen of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma in order to characterize the ways that accountability markers must accompany authenticity markers in persuasive self-representations. Thus, throughout the essay I toggle between case description and analysis in order to illustrate my main points:

1. Self-identification, though perfectly legal, is not convincing to many audiences.
2. A rhetoric of self-representation can be more persuasive because it includes an affiliation claim and evidence of both authenticity and accountability markers.
3. Colleagues, now aware of the rhetorical exigencies that Native scholars face, can not only become better advocates for Native scholars but can also consider new ways of practicing a rhetoric of self-representation for themselves.

The complex ways in which Native Americans must justify their identity claims merits close examination for a number of reasons: first, such an analysis reveals the ways in which all individuals who claim Indian heritage are often caught between incommensurate category systems that create troubled and troubling rhetorical exigencies; second, when these systems are made visible, Native scholars can be more strategic about providing the burden of proof required by audiences who occupy these various systems; and third, when these

systems are made visible, rhetoric and composition scholars can be more mindful of our responsibilities to engage in and develop strategies for enacting a rhetoric of self-representation. This rhetoric of self-representation is important to all scholars in rhetoric and composition because it provides a common framework for identity constructions; this framework acknowledges the fluid, ongoing process of subjective formation (Royster, "Traces") and the need for social reflexivity (Cushman and Guinsatao Monberg).

Exploring the rhetoric of self-representation this way, this essay complements the work on Native American writing and rhetoric exemplified by Resa Crane Bizzaro, Scott Lyons, Angela Haas, and Malea Powell, who have discussed complexities of professional development, rhetorical sovereignty, digital diversity, and the rhetorics of survival and resistance (respectively). Our discussions of these rhetorical constructions of race, particularly as they relate to Native scholars, are important and necessary because they allow Native scholars, students, and colleagues to be in the position of seeing, naming, and potentially changing these constructs. On a very practical level, understanding the rhetoric of self-representation will help colleagues to better understand the complexity behind Native peoples' disclosures of tribal affiliation.

Finally, I hope that this discussion will facilitate fruitful conversation among colleagues of color. On the whole, Native scholars and other scholars of color can be quite ugly with each other when it comes to policing each other's identity. Native scholars and scholars of color can be pointed, at times, cutting, in their questioning of each other's identity claims. This problem was discussed by Joyce Rain Anderson in her featured presentation, "Funny, You Don't Look Like an Indian: Measuring Mixedblood Identity," during the 2006 CCCC convention. In this presentation Rain Anderson describes a negative experience at the 2005 CCCC wherein other scholars of color challenged the panel presenters' ethos because to these scholars of color, the presenters did not look Indian enough to be speaking about Indian concerns: "after presenting with [her] Indian colleagues about language reclamation, . . . [they] were attacked for looking 'white.'" (*CCCC Convention Program* 201). Unfortunately, this experience is not anomalous for Native scholars, especially for those of us whose phenotype is not particularly strong.³ The accusations of identity fraud, challenges related to "authenticity," and sometimes hostile, invasive questions that Native scholars receive from other scholars divert needed attention away from more pressing issues in Indian country, urban communities, and academe. Besides being off-putting and potentially debilitating to the work of Native

scholars, the identity politics in rhetoric and writing can ignorantly take on the very mantles of oppression present in racist thought that construes identity by phenotype alone (see Forbes; Purdue; Alfred). Ultimately, this essay expands upon the scholarship in writing and rhetoric concerning identity politics.

Identity Politics in Rhetoric and Writing

Identifying the rhetorical and literate strategies of African Americans (Richardson; Smitherman; Pough; Royster; Moss; Gilyard; Middleton), Asian Americans (Lu; Okawa; Young; Guinsatao Monberg [Cushman and Guinsatao Monberg]), and Chicanos/as (Villanueva; Moreno; Perez; Baca) has had noteworthy impact on unmasking the power and privilege of whiteness and race. For instance, Juanita Comfort defines whiteness as a “cultural construction of individual and group identity that is associated with images of race that underpin the structure of our society” (548). As a cultural construction, whiteness could be compared to other races as well and indeed needs those races to be the background against which the boundaries of whiteness can be seen. “In a culturally pluralistic society like America, whiteness does not exist in isolation from non-white cultural constructions such as ‘blackness’; it must exist in juxtaposition against those other constructions. . . . Certainly part of the advantage vested in whiteness lies in its ability to mask its own power and privilege—to render them normative, even invisible, in the minds of most whites, in order to maintain the framework of white supremacy” (548–49). The masking of privilege occurs, for instance, when I am asked how much Cherokee I am, a question I am most frequently asked by whites.⁴

White scholars have also asked for an unmasking of whiteness through an investigation of the power and privilege of whiteness (Ratcliffe; Kirsch and Ritchie; Prendergast). However, as Lu cautions, discussions of whiteness as a social construction of a privileged position “must be used to bring to the foreground rather than push back and out of hearing the histories, experiences, and voices of oppressed social groups” (189). When whiteness is discussed without attention to the ways in which it is foregrounded against the backdrop of other races, it risks reifying the very social positions it seeks to expose and challenge. White scholars might be well served to construct their self-representations using claims and evidence of authenticity and accountability markers for which I’m arguing here.

In short, the field of rhetoric and composition has done much to unfold the political issues of identity and language; however, we’ve only begun to de-

velop an understanding of why the identity politics of Native scholars are so different from other scholars of color and whites. Native scholars have the added burden of facing censure from their communities and other scholars of color, perhaps even charges of identity fraud, if their self-representations are not convincing. "American Indians differ from other twenty-first-century racial groups in the extent to which their racial formation is governed by *law*, yet students of race and ethnicity are frequently unfamiliar with the unique processes of racial formation in this group" (Garrouette, "Racial" 224). Only Native scholars are asked to prove their race legally to qualify for some scholarships and job opportunities. Native scholars of multifaceted identity are also asked by their tribes to qualify and clarify their claims of descendency in ways that other scholars of color do not have to do. This is not to imply that other scholars of color have an "easier time" with identity politics than Native scholars, but it is to say that the rhetorical exigencies in creating self-representations are quite different.

Our discussions of identity politics can also lead to fruitful work on the strategies for identity recovery and representation that people use for rhetorical survivance (Powell, "Rhetorics"), as Powell's work illustrates in her study of La Flesche ("Down by the River"). Powell asks scholars to move the work of La Flesche to the center of the discipline. Doing so, she states, "Maybe we can learn to take hold of one another and emerge at the beginning of a new story about ourselves, not a 'prime' narrative held together by the sameness of our beliefs, but a gathering of narratives designed to help us adapt and change as is necessary for survival" (57–58). Though Powell is describing how the discipline chooses to include rhetoricians to study, I think it also applies to strategies that scholars in the field might use to understand and accept the self-representations of Native scholars. Might there be a way to speak of race in different terms altogether, a process of writing and reading race that moves beyond snap judgments based on a person's phenotype, or discerning someone's blood quantum, or reducing people to a bloodless category? And what possibilities for understanding the U.S. history of colonization might emerge from the gathering of these self-representations?

A gathering of narratives is but one facet of cross-cultural understanding, for without the ability to listen to these gathered narratives, their messages and thus their impact are lost on audiences. As Krista Ratcliffe defines it, rhetorical listening is necessary for cross-cultural action and understanding. Rhetorical listening is

a performance that occurs when listeners invoke both their capacity and their willingness (1) to promote an *understanding* of self and other that informs our culture's politics and ethics, (2) to proceed from within a *responsibility* logic, not from within a defensive guilt/blame one, (3) to locate identification in discursive spaces of both commonalities and differences, and (4) to accentuate commonalities and differences not only in *claims* but in *cultural logics* within which those claims function. (204, emphasis in original)

A rhetoric of self-representation facilitates cross-cultural understanding between writers and their audiences: on the one hand, it offers writers a way of constructing these gathered narratives of self; while on the other hand, it offers a way for various audiences to hear the cultural logics and rhetoric exigencies informing these constructions. Because a rhetoric of self-representation includes evidence of both being in and doing for a community, it also allows writers and their audiences "to proceed from within a *responsibility* logic" that includes an ethic of reciprocity between scholars and their communities. When applied to Native scholars, a rhetoric of self-representation reveals the cultural logics that these scholars must write to and from, cultural logics that differ significantly from other scholars of color. By unfolding the cultural logics that imbue all Native scholars' identity constructions, a rhetoric of self-representation affords audiences of white scholars and scholars of color one way to engage in rhetorical listening.

Both Powell's gathering of narratives and Ratcliffe's rhetorical listening build upon the foundation of cross-boundary rhetorical practices established by Jackie Royster's canonical essay, "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own." The "subject' position really is everything," Royster writes, and can be used as a "terministic screen in cross-boundary discourse . . . permitting interpretation to be richly informed by the converging of dialectical perspectives" (29). Importantly, a converging of dialectical perspectives is possible only insofar as scholars are able to listen to each other with the goal of engaging in "better practices so that we can exchange perspectives, negotiate meaning, and create understanding with the intent of being in a good position to cooperate, when, like now, cooperation is absolutely necessary" (38). The work of rhetoric and composition scholars within academe and communities demands cross-boundary rhetorical practices of cooperation that initiate and sustain mutually rewarding knowledge-making practices with community members and colleagues. A rhetoric of self-representation holds writers and readers—of all races—responsible for engaging constructively in cross-cultural action and understanding.

To illustrate these points, I analyze three scholars' self-identifications and representations in light of recent discussions of Native American identity politics. In the remainder of the essay, I briefly describe the cases of Ward Churchill, Resa Crane Bizzaro, and myself and then follow each of these case summaries with a brief analysis. I end the essay with implications for future scholarship for the field of rhetoric and composition.

Self-Identification: The Case of Ward Churchill

A brief discussion of the complexities of Ward Churchill's particular case of claiming Native American identity brings to light a few of the rhetorical exigencies that all Native scholars face when claiming to be Native American. Unlike other scholars of color and white scholars, Native scholars are challenged by other Native scholars and tribal communities to create self-representations that provide valid evidence of their identity claims. When scholars are unable to provide this evidence, they are forced to rely upon self-identification, a legally acceptable though unconvincing rhetorical strategy.

When a Native scholar's self-representation includes only claims of having a Native identity without particular kinds of evidence asked for or provided to support that claim, then self-representation becomes self-identification. When applying to universities for positions, all applicants are sent affirmative action forms that ask candidates to self-identify their race. The assumption is that one would not choose to claim an identity without being able to support such a claim. Ward Churchill self-identified as Native American on his affirmative action hiring form. An excerpt from this form was reproduced for a news report in the *Denver Post*. Next to this excerpt from his affirmative action form, the *Denver Post* published Churchill's ancestry chart that shows no descent from Native peoples ("Ward Churchill's"). Churchill's self-identification has led some Native scholars, politicians, and tribal community representatives to question if he has committed identity fraud, representing himself as Native American when this genealogical evidence is to the contrary.

Over time, Churchill has alternately claimed various tribal affiliations (Creek and Cherokee) and has come under scrutiny for not clarifying precisely what his affiliations are. Native scholars and tribal representatives have taken three positions on Churchill's case that I describe below: Harjo and Allen strongly censure Churchill for not providing evidence of his claims; the editors of *Indian Country Today* ask Churchill to provide the burden of proof of his

claims; while Jack Forbes and Scott Lyons strongly support self-identification in and of itself.

Since Churchill has not provided evidence to support his claims for his shifting tribal affiliations, he has been challenged by writers such as Susan Shown Harjo, president and founding director of the Morning Star Institute, an Indian rights organization that has taken up legal issues for all of Indian Country since 1984. Harjo is Hodulgee Muscogee on her father's side and enrolled Cheyenne on her mother's side. Presuming a shared Creek heritage and cultural logic when she first met Churchill, Harjo "asked him who his Creek people were and other questions we ask in order to find the proper way of relating." Says Harjo:

People began to check out Churchill's claims. Cherokee journalist David Cornsilk verified that Churchill and his ancestors were not on the Cherokee Nation rolls. Creek-Cherokee historian Robert W. Trepp did not find them on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation rolls. . . . Then, he went tribe shopping. He added Métis, then Keetoowah, variously claiming to be an associate member, an enrolled member or 1/16 or 3/16 Cherokee.

For Harjo, the evidence of Churchill's claims could not be verified by outside sources, had to be "dug up" by others, and was often internally inconsistent. Churchill's identity claims changed over time, not because new information was brought to light as it might be in the case of those in the long process of identity recovery, but because evidence could not be found to support his claims by those who fact-checked them. The changing of identity claims and lack of evidence for these claims understandably raises Harjo's suspicion as well. Creek today. Métis tomorrow. Churchill's self-identification came under scrutiny in part because it provided little evidence that others might recognize, but also because it was inconsistent.

Richard Allen, a policy analyst for the Cherokee Nation, also works from a similar cultural logic when meeting outlander Cherokees. He asks about their family and citizenship in order to find a way to relate to them. Allen points out that Churchill also drew attention to himself because he was at one time guilty of policing other Native scholars' claims of being Native American.

Churchill points to Carlos Castaneda, Ruth Beebe Hill, Lynn Andrews and Jamake Highwater as classic examples of this 'New Age Hucksterism.' . . . Ironically, Ward Churchill's claim to membership in the Cherokee Nation or the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians is as questionable as those whom he has skewered. (5)

Scholars claiming a Native American identity are obliged to provide evidence of their identity claims to many audiences, especially when resources, positions, and authority are ascribed to those who claim to have such an identity. That Churchill also “has skewered” other scholars based upon their claims to Native American ancestry is ironic. However questionable, inconsistent, or thin the evidence for Churchill’s claims, Harjo and Allen are put in what must be an uncomfortable position of having to ask Churchill to address these inconsistencies in his self-representation. Importantly, Harjo and Allen are not asking about blood quantum as an authenticity marker; they are asking about kinship and family, a question that tries to establish relation first because this is of foremost importance in their cultural logics.

Taking a moderate stance that still asks for evidence of Churchill’s identity claims, the editors of *Indian Country Today* offered these wise statements about the Churchill case:

An identity grounded in indigenous existence, however, requires either documented and authorized tribal citizenship or enrollment; or, barring that, simple and yet tangible evidence that direct relatives and relations exist or existed that provides proof of the identification of the individual. We would welcome any evidence in this respect regarding Churchill, upon whom the burden of proof clearly rests—not because it is meant to add discomfort to an already unfortunate episode, but because Churchill himself made it an issue by his own claim to being an American Indian before, during and after his controversial essay and subsequent remarks. (Editors Report)

Though the editors of *Indian Country Today* have a keen sense of the history of colonization that can make a Native scholar’s self-representation such tricky business, they do believe that “simple and yet tangible” forms of evidence are the most important ones that Native scholars can provide to support their identity claims. What is also important to note in their position is that the burden of proof rests upon Native scholars. Scholars of Native descent need to indicate in specific, consistent, and clear ways what evidence they have for their claims, especially now in the wake of high-profile cases like Ward Churchill’s and others (Tallbear; Weaver).

Unlike other scholars of color and white scholars, Native scholars are challenged to create self-representations that provide valid evidence of their identity claims. The rhetoric of self-representation for Native scholars centers upon our affiliations with tribes and nations; it includes both claims and evidence offered to the audiences to whom we are accountable. Depending on the audience and context, substantial evidence of different kinds needs to be offered

in support of our identity claims. For instance, when applying for tribal resources, we would have to show our blue cards or legal identification of tribal affiliation. At powwows, if we are carrying eagle feather fans, BIA officials can ask to see proof of tribal affiliation as well as documentation allowing for the ceremonial use of the same feathers. Without such documentation and proof of identity, the fans will be confiscated under violation of the endangered species act. When first meeting another Native scholar at conferences, we will be asked what affiliation we have, then what our family name is. Though it is illegal for universities to ask for tribal membership cards, some faculty groups of Native scholars often seek such confirmation of their colleagues in unfriendly ways.

While Churchill has faced censure and moderate challenges for his self-identification, some scholars make strong arguments for self-identification and side with Churchill's use of it. Jack Forbes, former chair of Native American studies at the University of California, Davis and professor emeritus, has suggested that self-identification is the only way to ensure that tribes don't replicate the colonialist legacies of race classifications ("Blood"; "Manipulation"). Following this line of thinking, Scott Lyons defends Churchill's right to self-identify as Native American. Writing for *Indian Country Today*, Lyons states:

At the very least, even the toughest identity police among us will have to admit that, as a United States citizen, Churchill has the right to ethnically self-identify in any way he wants, as is the official policy of the U.S. Census Bureau. But even if he is a white man (which I am not prepared to admit as fact, since all the "evidence" seems based on hearsay), my question is: so what? It's not like an author of his stature and reputation needs the helping hand of Affirmative Action to land a job. ("Termination")

Regardless of whether or not Churchill "needs the helping hand of Affirmative Action," it is possible, perhaps even probable, that his self-identification as a Native American influenced his hiring as a professor of American Indian studies. More than this, at least some part of his ethos as a writer is accrued from his self-identification as a Native scholar. Audiences do not typically separate a writer's identity from the content of their message; the character of the self and the content of the message have comprised a meaning maker's ethos since Aristotle. Indeed, it is hard to imagine what Churchill's career would have been like had he been identified as a white man. One thing is for certain, though: he would not have needed a parenthetical statement of affiliation if he did identify as a white man, because whiteness masks its privilege (Comfort). Imagine the bio: "Ward Churchill (Whiteman) is professor of . . ." The stature that

Churchill has gathered is at least in part attributed to his claim to being Native American; his reputation as someone who represents Native perspectives could not possibly be the same if he had been identified as white.

Despite strong arguments in favor of it, self-identification is not a viable way for tribes to determine their citizens, nor is it a particularly effective rhetorical strategy. Self-identification is rarely persuasive, especially to other Native Americans, when it is presented as a tautology: I am Native American because I say I am. The back cover bio of his 1997 book *A Little Matter of Genocide* reads, "Ward Churchill (enrolled Keetoowah Cherokee) is Professor of American Indian Studies." When asked to provide evidence for his self-identification, the most valid evidence that Churchill finally offered was that he was an associate member of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee (UKB), a federally recognized band of the Cherokee. In 1994, Churchill indeed received an "associate membership" from the Keetoowah, who were conferring these honorary memberships to notables. President Bill Clinton, for example, also received an honorary membership to the tribe. An associate membership to a Nation is analogous to an honorary PhD. A scholar would list the honorary degree as just that on his or her curriculum vitae and would not claim that honorary degree as a credential. An associate membership is not at all the same as citizenship, or enrollment, with a tribe. As the UKB indicate, Churchill was not eligible to become a citizen of the tribe because he did not meet the tribe's criteria for verifying identity. They also reported that they made clear to their associate members that such an honorific was not to be confused with enrollment, which entitles one to the right to vote or receive services and benefits. The University of Colorado's Standing Committee on Research Misconduct chose not to view Churchill's statement of tribal enrollment with the UKB as a falsification that garnered more creditability for his perspectives. The issue of identity fraud was not taken up by the committee, given the legal ramifications of doing so. To the extent that Churchill's indication of tribal affiliation was a component of his scholarly authority and credibility, he has given audiences, particularly Cherokee audiences, grounds for deeming his misrepresentation as unethical professional conduct.

Churchill's Self-Identification as Cherokee: The Problem of Identity Fraud for the Cherokee Nation

Self-identification may be acceptable to use in particular situations that demand it, such as when completing a census form. However, when self-identification is used in ways that allow people access to resources that are meant to

help underrepresented groups gain rights, privileges, employment, education, or authority, self-identification is not likely to ensure that resources, respect, and authority are going to the most deserving people. Worse, it could be considered identity fraud. The Cherokee Nation has experienced multiple cases of identity fraud, infringements on their sovereignty that includes the right of tribes to identify for themselves who counts as citizens. If it is a good day to be indigenous, it's a great day to be Cherokee. In a press release from the Cherokee Nation dated June 27, 2000, the reader is warned about "a group calling themselves the Southern Cherokee Nation [that] claims to be a sovereign nation and has announced plans to open up casino gambling boats on the Arkansas River." This group is neither federally recognized nor recognized as affiliated to the three groups of Cherokee: the Cherokee Nation, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band. Social groups claiming to be Cherokee often are not innocent gatherings of individuals, but have, in fact, tried to claim land, casino building privileges, and sovereignty status. Understandably frustrated with spurious identity claims such as these, Dr. Richard Allen points out that "we [at the Cherokee Nation] see these get rich quick schemes all the time. The problem is that these people may be taking the goodwill and reputation that Cherokees have established over centuries and using it to mislead governments and individual citizens."⁵

While identity fraud is unscrupulous, at times illegal, and certainly abhorrent, self-identification is a different cat altogether. In 1979, Keith Basso's book *Portraits of the Whiteman* included a cartoon of a presumably Apache male listening to a stereotypically ugly tourist tell him that her "great great Grandmother was a Cherokee Princess." The thought bubble of the Apache reads: "I wonder what's for supper" (61). In a similar vein of humor, the *Cherokee Phoenix* recently ran a story about the U.S. census report mentioned earlier that showed over 700,000 Americans claim to be Cherokee, while the Nation itself currently has around 230,000 enrolled citizens. The story ends with a quip from Matthew Snipp, a Stanford professor and demographer: "Out in Indian country, there's an expression that everybody has a Cherokee grandmother." Other folks think it is humorous that whenever otherwise Caucasian people self-identify as Native, they typically pick Cherokee as their tribe.

The Cherokee grandmother and the Cherokee princess phenomena might be attributed to the increased popular culture portrayal of being Indian, thanks to Kevin Costner and to the movie *Smoke Signals*, or to the increased presence of Natives in urban centers, or to the American Indian Movement (AIM) and Red Power movement (Nagel, qtd. in Grande 108). Think of Wes Studi, Jeep,

and Target for popularizing the image and brand name of Cherokee in the movies, on cars, and in clothing lines. Sandy Grande, a Quechua critical pedagogy scholar, offers a more cynical view when she suggests the possibility that these stories are also evidence of growing ethnic fraud. Grande defines ethnic fraud as “the practice of claiming an Indian identity based on the recent discovery of real or imagined residuals of Indian blood in one’s distant ancestry” (108). When a person self-represents as Native based on no more evidence than a real or imagined ancestor, with no reference to family, place, law, culture, or community, the person is understood by other Natives to be a “self-identified Indian” or “born again Indian” (Garrouette, *Real* 85–86). The Cherokee grandmother story is not a very convincing identity claim to make before Native audiences because it is based on little evidence, amounting to hearsay, family lore. This particular form of self-identification is not only unpersuasive but is also clichéd to Native audiences. Typically, the Cherokee princess story is told in situations where a Caucasian is trying to make light conversation with an Indian; it is a story tossed in somewhere between the questions “How much Indian are you?” and “Do you still live in tepees?” Many Indians see it as harmless, even humorous; some have pity for the speaker; some see it as nothing more than a lame attempt to find something in common; some are offended by the ignorance it reveals (Cherokees never had “princesses”). When Native scholars self-identify with evidence as thin as this story, the benefit of the doubt is no longer given. With resources, respect, and credibility at stake, the rhetorical exigencies demand greater evidence for the claims made.

Self-identified Native scholars can leave themselves open to charges of identity fraud when they make claims to have an identity based on scant evidence, especially when their motives are unclear or questionable. When a Native scholar’s evidence is not convincing, the charges of identity fraud from Native and non-Native communities can carry with them censure, ridicule, and a loss of social standing or employment. One of the participants in Garrouette’s study who was an Indian service provider for an organization that relied solely on self-identification had this to say: “we really did have a lot of people showing up claiming that one of their ancestors, seven steps removed, had been some sort of ‘Cherokee princess’ . . . Hell, if all that was real, there are more Cherokees in the world than Chinese” (87). Her skepticism, though humorous, is the least deflating ridicule a person self-identifying as a Cherokee can face.

When a self-identified Indian is given authority to represent Native American concerns or is awarded scholarships, admissions, and tenure track lines,

Native scholars can be more than a little offended and can withdraw all kinds of support. From many Native scholars' perspectives, these resources are hard won, understood as providing avenues for greater tribal self-determination, and should be earmarked for those whose self-representations are more credible. A number of Native artists and scholars petitioned the University of Colorado administration to consider terminating Ward Churchill for providing false and misleading evidence of his claims to have Native American identity. The administration, however, was not in a position to terminate his employment on these grounds: "Title VII protects Caucasians as well as persons of color. Further, it has always been university policy that a person's race or ethnicity is self-proving" (Brennan and Steers). It appears that the University of Colorado did not hire Churchill on the basis of his claiming a Native American identity, thus the exigencies he faces in proving his identity claims to them simply do not exist. However, he has an entirely different set of rhetorical exigencies when claiming this identity among Native scholars, the three federally recognized Cherokee tribes, and tribal communities at large. While some Native scholars may be able to sympathize with un-enrolled people of Native descent, it is more often the case that un-enrolled people of Native descent will need to produce evidence in order to support their claims and intentions.

Self-Representation: The Case of Resa Crane Bizzaro

While Churchill's case revealed the problems of self-identification, it is crucial to recognize that many Native scholars have no choice other than to rely upon self-identification. Self-identification without any evidence provided or asked for to support this claim is indeed troubled and troubling. As sociologist Eva Marie Garroutte of Cherokee descent points out, "the uncontrollable circumstances of their personal and ancestral biographies can make methods of identification other than self-identification infeasible. . . . It is simply not the case that all self-identified Indians are 'up to something'—or wishing they were" ("Real" 94). Sure, there are ugly white tourists who do not even understand that the Cherokee never had royalty or lived in teepees, but there are also those who have more complicated histories.

Self-identification will never have the persuasive power it needs for many audiences unless it offers evidence located in recognized areas of power. A rhetoric of self-representation is needed because it provides evidence to support the identity claims made. The difference between self-identification and self-representation will become clearer in light of Resa Crane Bizzaro's case. Her situation provides insight into the reasons why today Natives are the only

race of peoples in America who legally determine their citizens. Her case also illustrates how self-representations can be effectively written using both claims and evidence, revealing how Native scholars can begin to provide the burden of proof of their identity claims. The kinds of evidence provided by Crane Bizzaro also help colleagues listen to the cultural logics informing an identity construction.

When self-identification includes many kinds of evidence in support of the identity claims, it becomes self-representation, a rhetorically sophisticated statement of identity. Resa Crane Bizzaro writes of her own professional development (“Making”) as a scholar of Native descent and of the difficulties she has faced as a non-enrolled Cherokee mixed-race student and scholar (“Shooting”). Her work exemplifies the personal frustrations and legal dilemmas that a Native scholar encounters when providing evidence that leads to a convincing self-representation. Crane Bizzaro has recognized affiliations with her community, connections that allowed her to qualify for particular scholarships as a student.

Like many Native Americans, my sustained sense of ethnic and professional community didn't develop until I was an adult. As a result of painstaking research over the past twenty years, I found that one branch of my family is Meherrin, a tribe that still struggles for national recognition. . . . The other branch of my family is Cherokee, and it is from this group that I have the most information—although it is still very limited. One of my ancestors was a tribal elder of his Cherokee clan in the Piedmont of North Carolina. When he and his family were ordered west with the Cherokee nation early in the nineteenth century, he elected to change and obscure his Indian name and hide in the mountains of Georgia rather than walk to Oklahoma. (“Making” 490)

On one side of her family, Crane Bizzaro traces lineage to the Meherrin tribe that has state recognition, though is not yet federally recognized. Crane Bizzaro has also traced in her family important indications of belonging and historical acts of resistance that many Cherokee in the Eastern and Western tribes may recognize. Unfortunately, though Crane Bizzaro would be recognized in these ways, in other ways, her claims are evidenced by her documenting this lineage to a tribally designated base roll. She has two family members on the Dawes Rolls (“Shooting”), though the rolls for the Eastern Band have been closed since 1988. “For my family and, thus, for me,” Crane Bizzaro continues, “becoming ‘civilized’ Indians resulted in a loss of explicit, public connection to our traditional ways and a loss of identity and rhetorical power as Indians” (66). This

loss of positioning and recognition also impacts this Native scholar's self-representation and, thus, self-determination. "Unenrolled members' opportunities for self-determination are nonexistent due to their mixed-blood status" (70). With Crane Bizzaro, I would like to argue for a place within rhetoric and composition where un-enrolled people of Native descent can do the work of self-representation and professional development as Native scholars without exposing themselves to charges of identity fraud and without compromising their tribes' rhetorical sovereignty.⁶ A rhetoric of self-representation for Native scholars might facilitate the process of developing recognized and recognizable evidence for identity claims.

We see in Crane Bizzaro's essays an example of the kinds of rhetorical sovereignty issues that come into play when writing an identity. Crane Bizzaro has historical and lineal connections to the Eastern Cherokee and Meherrin; however, she cannot claim citizenship with either one of these tribes for different reasons. Her abilities to self-determine her identity with the Cherokee are limited by the political organizations that closed its enrollment; however, socially and culturally the individual citizens of the three federally recognized Cherokee nations may well recognize the evidence of her identity claims as valid. On the Meherrin side of her family, Crane Bizzaro cannot write a self-representation that includes citizenship because the tribe is not federally recognized; however, she may well have social and cultural ties to the tribe and certainly has the lineal descent to evidence her self-representation. Thus, her self-representation allows us to see evidence that does locate itself—in what many Native American audiences would recognize as valid forms of evidence. "While the meanings of sovereignty have shifted and continue to shift over time, the concept has nonetheless carried with it a sense of locatable and recognizable power. In fact, the location of power has depended upon the crucial act of recognition—and vice versa" (Lyons, "Rhetorical" 450). Crane Bizzaro's self-representation builds her ethos because it is based upon authenticity markers that index recognized and recognizable locations of power. Self-representation for Native scholars, then, must take into account the multiple locations for power, and these multiple locations have more or less rhetorical weight depending on the audience. The use of evidence to support identity claims makes a more persuasive construction of identity, even as new evidence comes to light across time in the process of identity recovery.

While citizenship with a federally recognized tribe might be for some Native and non-Native audiences the most important evidence of identity

claims, it should not be understood as the sole marker of authenticity in most cases. Citizenship with a federally recognized tribe is based upon a complicated history that merits brief explanation here. In Crane Bizzaro's case, as in many others, there were noble reasons for resisting enrollment during the period of the Dawes Allotment Act between 1887 and 1907, a time when many tribes compiled what are now used as their base rolls. Base rolls are lists of individuals (e.g., the Dawes Roll, the census, or any other of the dozens of rolls that list citizens) designated by the tribe as the ones they will use to determine who will be legally included in the tribe (Thornton; Garroutte). If one can document lineal descent from someone listed on a tribe's designated base roll, then one can gain legal citizenship with that tribe. However, the rolls that tribes decide to use end up excluding some tribal citizens who would otherwise be included. Because citizenship includes the right to vote, to receive tribal health, educational, and welfare services, to sell art as authentically made by a Native American, and to live on a reservation or inherit land on a reservation, the question of which base rolls to use is hotly contested. "These rights offer their protection and advantages to those whose claims to Native identity are deemed authentic and legitimate given tribal or federal definitions for identity" (Garroutte, "Racial" 229). While citizenship is an important form of evidence for a self-representation, it also excludes many Native peoples whose ancestors resisted enrollment or who trace lineage to more than one tribe. Crane Bizzaro writes:

I am one of the mixed-bloods who comes from a background where people attempted to hide their origins. . . . My family's efforts to avoid being jailed for evading the "evacuation" of the Cherokee led them to hide in the mountains of Georgia and deny their heritage in an effort to blend into the dominant culture. ("Shooting" 61)

The descendants of families who resisted removal and then allotment have reason to be proud of their heritage, even if this heritage has left them disenfranchised from institutionalized forms of recognition. Many of these families today still have recognized and recognizable authenticity markers among their communities, however. As illustrated from Crane Bizzaro's case, self-identification may be the only means some Native peoples have to indicate their identity; her case also reveals how a Native scholar can develop a self-representation that provides evidence of connection to a tribe (e.g., lineal, historical, and social). Even though she must legally self-identify, she has developed evidence in her self-representation that shows recognized authenticity markers for tribal

audiences. In the next section, I describe the types and kinds of evidence that help make self-representations persuasive to many audiences.

Authenticity in Self-Representation

Up to this point, I have argued that a rhetoric of self-representation needs to offer valid evidence of identity claims in order to avoid the tautology of self-identification (i.e., “I am Native American because I say I am”). As we saw in the case of Ward Churchill, self-identification as a rhetorical choice can invite charges of identity fraud and can infringe on the rhetorical sovereignty of tribes. A more persuasive form of writing a Native identity, self-representation includes claims of tribal affiliations along with the evidence that helps demonstrate authenticity. In this section, I describe the kinds and types of evidence that allow audiences of Native peoples to better judge the authenticity and legitimacy of the claims made.⁷

Evidence used to support a self-representation can include both tribal and national types, though each kind of evidence has limits in its validity. By “tribal,” I mean those people who hold, practice, and preserve the cultural traditions, languages, medicines, clans, and sacred artifacts that are the legacies of the People. Before there were nations, there were tribes, in other words; and tribal identification can be evidenced through a variety of forms that tribal members would likely find legitimate. By “national,” I mean the institutional, governmental, and legal structures that sovereign Native American states use to interface with the federal and state governments and to define, serve, and govern their citizens. Nations are the political organizations of the tribes and are typically federally recognized or are in the process of gaining federal recognition. In a self-representation that appeals to tribal members, a person may disclose a clan affiliation, a family name, a familial relationship to other families, relations living and working with the tribal community, a locale where their family has traditionally resided, whether or not they still live on the tribe’s land—these are just a few tangible indications of family and place. On the other hand, in a self-representation that supports national identity claims, a Native scholar may choose to disclose whether or not she or he is a citizen of a Nation and has an enrollment card, or whether or not the family’s name can be found on the base rolls.

Whether the evidence a native scholar provides is tribally valid (e.g., clan affiliation) or nationally valid (e.g., citizenship) matters not as much as that the relations can be readily recognized and verified by the nations and tribes with whom the scholar claims affiliation. Using both national and tribal affili-

ations as indicators of identity makes some sense with how the Cherokee whom Garroutte interviewed understood themselves and their community. “Their comments show that living native communities frequently make a distinction between the tribe as political entity and the tribe as human community” (*Real* 91). National and tribal forms of evidence each have their merits, and depending upon the audience and rhetorical situation, each kind of evidence can be provided to support self-representations.

Some Native scholars would say—and with good reason—that a Native person’s self-representations should always include an indication of citizenship with a federally recognized nation. Legal definitions of identity have a very important purpose in preserving tribal sovereignty, as a recent Editors Report in *Indian Country Today* points out: “In Indian affairs, consciousness of identity origins and tribal histories is essential. Without clear tribal definitions of their memberships, lands, histories and cultures, the concreteness of American Indian rights dissipates easily.” To identify citizens is one way tribes enact their sovereignty; despite the problems with making such definitions (Forbes; Alfred; Purdue), tribes are beholden to work within and under the legacy of the allotment process. Sovereignty is fundamentally a government-to-government relationship, and as this editorial points out, “this is the relationship that is most reflective of their reality as the first self-governing societies and peoples of this land” (A2). While legal definitions of who counts as a citizen of a nation are absolutely important, I am not at all convinced that Native scholars and colleagues do each other any service by policing each other’s authenticity based on meeting this criteria alone.

In fact, some Native scholars take upon themselves the work of protecting the sovereignty of Native American nations by asking other Native scholars to produce legal documentation of citizenship. Such is the case when conference organizers of the Native American Literature Symposium reprinted the Association of American Indian and Alaskan Native Professors (AAIANP) statement on identity fraud on their conference booklet that listed speakers. This statement was created in 1993 by a group of Native American professors who were concerned by the increasing number of documented cases of ethnic identity fraud in the hiring process. The statement was intended to help university hiring committees move beyond the affirmative action process of using only self-identification as evidence of Native identity. What motivated the conference organizers of the Native American Literature Symposium to reprint this statement on their conference brochure remains a mystery.

The original AAIANP statement includes a set of prioritized recommendations for determining Native identity of their applicants. The list places legal documentation as the most credible source of identity verification that Native scholars should use in making decisions about their candidates' authenticity. They should "1) require documentation of enrollment in a state or federally recognized tribe with preference given to those who meet this criteria; 2) establish a case-by-case review process for those unable to meet the first criterion; 3) require a statement from the applicant that demonstrates past and future commitment to American Indian/Alaska Native concerns" (qtd. in Grande 121). This preferential treatment for enrollment excludes far too many Native scholars: consider those whose tribes are neither federally nor state recognized; or those whose ancestors resisted the Dawes Allotment Act; or those who may be FBI (full-blood Indian) but not "enough blood" of any one tribe to be able to enroll; or those whose tribal connections rest in their adoption into tribes. In some cases, legal documentation alone and in itself could prove only that a family's ancestors had enough money and gall to cheat Indians out of their land. These cases would include descendents of the "five dollar Indians" whose ancestors bribed Indian commissioners in order to receive land allotments and citizenship with a tribal Nation (Carter).

Another important limitation of using enrollment as a citizen of a Nation as the sole evidence for identity claims is that enrollment does not in any way guarantee that a person has maintained cultural and linguistic practices and historical knowledge that are important to tribal traditions. Russell Thornton, historian of Cherokee demographics, finds that if enrollment alone is used as the primary indicator of Native peoples, then serious problems emerge:

A Native American population comprising primarily "old" Native Americans strongly attached to their tribes will change to a population dominated by "new" Native American individuals who may or may not have tribal attachments or even tribal identities. Indeed, it may make sense at some future time to speak of Native Americans mainly as people of Native American ancestry or ethnicity. . . . Even if they are tribal members, a traditional cultural distinctiveness may be replaced by mere social membership if language and other important cultural features of American Indian tribes are lost. (39)

Citizenship as evidence of an identity claim can be an indicator of little more than membership in a club, especially when these citizens have been cultur-

ally dispossessed. Being an enrolled citizen in a Nation does not necessarily include other indicators of tribal affiliation and identity.

While it is quite easy for Native scholars to indicate in a self-representation that they are affiliated with a nation through enrollment, or that they do have lineal descent and community connections, it may be more difficult for Native scholars to describe the ways that they help a tribe maintain its cultural distinctiveness. These tribal forms of evidence might include clan affiliation, participation in tribal communities and religious practices, language use, a family's historical and current contribution to the community, and knowledge of and practice in the traditions, art, and history. These tribal forms of evidence can be quite convincing when brought together to support a self-representation, but they too have their limitations when used to determine the authenticity of a Native scholar's identity claims.

To begin with, defining what specific aspects of cultural distinctiveness count would have to be negotiated: take the tear dress, for instance. For some, the ability to make and the courage to wear tear dresses (unflattering as they are) show Cherokee cultural distinctiveness. For others the tear dress represents the nineteenth-century upper-class Cherokee who had capitulated to colonialist fashion trends in order to appear more "civilized." Shed the buckskin, don the callico. For others, the tear dress represents a significant shift in the gender roles for men and women in the tribe and reinscribes the white man's Victorian family structures. For some, the story behind the dual pronunciation of "tear" (as in the diamond shape that usually appears in the ribbon work) or "tear" (ripped cloth because scissors were not available on the Trail of Tears) would be a mark of cultural distinctiveness. For others, being able to say and write "tear dress" in Cherokee would be the mark of cultural distinctiveness. And others would cite the invented tradition of the tear dress as a myth. According to Wendell Cochran, the tear dress was created because the first Miss Cherokee had no regalia save the buckskin regalia that she borrowed from a friend. Thus, what counts as "traditional cultural distinctiveness" is an even more difficult task to decide and represent than other ways of writing an identity—where does traditional culture begin? There are just too many ways to show cultural distinctiveness across even one tribe to expect Native scholars to self-represent this way in a statement. Cultural distinctiveness is established through one's actions as much as words. This is not to say that cultural distinctiveness is not important for Native scholars to have or be in the process of recovering, but it is to point out that this form of evidence

when taken alone may not be persuasive enough to support identity claims. While indicating enrollment with a tribe cannot possibly evidence what Thornton calls “traditional cultural distinctiveness,” it is equally difficult to decide what could indicate this distinctiveness.

Rarely do Native scholars list blood quantum for the ideological reasons mentioned earlier (Sturm) and because blood quantum is often unreliable (Carter). In many cases during allotment, Indians would lie about the blood quantum in order to avoid having restrictions placed on the ownership of their land. Other times the blood quantum was simply guessed at by the Indian commissioner after a glance at the family. Thus siblings within the same family could be recorded as having different quantum despite their having the same parents. This later practice left Kate Rackleff, whose parents were full-blood Cherokee, to quip to her WPA interviewer: “I should like to ask one question—My brothers are enrolled as full bloods, my sisters as half-breeds and I am on the rolls as three-quarters, Indian. Why?” Such discrepancies are all too common and make suspect any discussion of blood quantum as a useful verification of self-representation.

Both tribal and national forms of evidence in self-representations have limits in their validity. However, if more than one marker is present, the self-representation will be more convincing than if the person were relying on self-identification without any evidence whatsoever. If the Indians in the audience rely solely on citizenship with a tribe as the most important indication of Native identity, then those whose grandparents resisted during the Dawes Allotment Act would be “outluck” (Garrouette; Sturm), even though they could be full-blood community activists who are fluent speakers and who lived in the tribal community all their lives. Likewise, if the Natives in the audience are relying solely on tribal affiliation, then those who are “outlanders” (Owens; Garrouette), urban and rural Natives who grew up away from a tribal center, who may still practice the ways, know the stories, even have the language on their tongues, are excluded. It is interesting to note that Chief Chadwick Smith of the Cherokee Nation, now in his second term as chief, is considered by some in Tahlequah and the surrounding towns to be an outlander. When asked if a returning Cherokee could ever be considered an insider, the Cherokee traditionalists with whom I have spoken are clear that it is not possible, though it might be possible for the children of the returning outlanders. Depending upon the audience, tribal identity claims of being Cherokee must include growing up with the language, people, and customs in the day-to-day life. When taken

together, tribal and national forms of evidence present a more convincing case for a Native scholar's identity claims.

To this point, I have been speaking in terms of the kinds of evidence necessary to bolster the validity of Native scholars' self-representations. However, these authenticity markers are not typically seen in isolation from another important indication of what it means to be Indian: accountability. As we saw in the AAIANP statement on ethnic identity fraud mentioned earlier, Native peoples are very much interested in reciprocity and contribution to Native communities. Point 3 of their statement suggests that providing evidence of commitment to Native issues, communities, and betterment of the People is an important indication of one's identity as Native. In the next section, I address this equally important facet of Native identity to show how Native scholars can self-represent in ways that align authenticity and accountability markers.

Accountability: The Case of Yours Truly

Self-representing with valid evidence is only one facet of the professional and tribal identity of a Native scholar. For Native scholars an ethic of accountability to tribal communities comes with being a scholar of Native descent. When one claims a Native heritage as a scholar and shows evidence that supports this claim, a certain authority is attributed to the scholar's ethos. With this authority comes an increased demand by our communities (tribal and academic) to work in an ethically responsible way that resonates with tribal value systems. As Cherokee literary critic Daniel Justice writes:

Indian scholars are held accountable for our work by many entities: our communities, our families, our friends and colleagues, and others in Indian Country. Such accountability can be painful at times, but on the whole it works to insure the quality, the respect, and the responsibility of the work being produced. We hold each other accountable, and we do the same for those who enter our world, our lives, and our minds, spirits, and hearts. ("We're" 266)

Claiming an identity as a Native scholar comes with duties to do for and with communities, families, and institutions (see Weaver for further discussion of these community ethics). In Cherokee, this ethic of the individual serving the family and community and working together for the common good is called *gadugi* (ga-dew-key). If a person is self-identified as of Native descent, even if he or she cannot prove it in legal documentation, that person can still contribute to the social and cultural networks of the community in ways that provide

evidence of his or her tribal affiliations. In the day-to-day life, that is, there is much more to being a Native American citizen of a Nation than just being enrolled. In fact, as pointed to in my own discussions with Cherokee Nation representatives, they get more than a little annoyed with those “citizens” who only want services but who do not do anything for the community. Such frustration was clearly expressed by Chief Smith in his 2005 State of the Nation address. He points out that there are those who gain tribal enrollment only to access tribal resources, and that these people do not understand the ethic of *gadugi* that his government has been trying to promote (Cherokee Nation). Though individual Cherokee citizens may be able to document their Cherokee identity, they also need to act Cherokee.

Circe Sturm offers a nuanced look into the complex ways a person can be said to be a Cherokee citizen, but not a Cherokee Indian. Chapter 5 of her book *Blood Politics* explores “five indexical markers of Cherokee identity other than blood ancestry: phenotype, social behavior, language, religious knowledge and participation, and community residence and participation” (110). These categories often intersected in the perceptions of the Cherokees’ whom she interviewed: one could be a Cherokee (a legal classification) as distinct from acting Cherokee (a tribal classification). Being Indian is only one side of the Native scholar’s identity: the other side is acting Indian. To explore this form of accountability and show how a Native scholar needs to demonstrate this through his or her actions, let me apply Eva Marie Garroutte’s notion of radical indigenism to my own experiences as a Native scholar.

Garroutte drew upon traditional scholarly resources, eighteen interviews with various Native Americans, and a host of public records to create a layered account of the troubling and troubled histories, conversations, and definitions of what it means to be Indian. Locating her work in discussions among sociologists and in Native American studies, she addresses the issues of authenticity as these emerge in legal definitions and histories of allotment; biological definitions as these impact discussions of sovereignty; cultural definitions of identity and the problems of assimilation; as well as individual identity recovery and the problem of self-identification. Though Garroutte does not argue this point, her discussion of radical indigenism might be useful to Native scholars as they write a self-representation. A “suggestive exploration” more than a mandate, Garroutte’s idea of radical indigenism “is centered on the assumption that American Indian . . . philosophies of knowledge are rational, articulable, coherent logics for ordering and knowing the world” (*Real* 113). This framework can be useful in creating knowledge, self-representing, and

developing a professional identity. Radical indigenism when incorporated into the rhetoric of self-representation allows Native scholars to show how they are being and are acting Indian.⁸ Because it takes a temporal and spatial approach to positioning and performing the self, radical indigenism mitigates major problems with identity politics that I have discussed elsewhere—the tendency to try to fix identity into bloodless, atemporal, decontextualized categories (Cushman “Butterfly”); and the racist tendency to identify someone superficially by their phenotype alone (“Face”).

This idea of radical indigenism helps Native scholars who are returning outlanders, like myself, do their work without shame, guilt, and fear of identity police. While my professional life has resonated with the Cherokee ethic of *gadugi*, it has not been centrally focused on knowledge making with and for the Cherokee until quite recently. Since 1996, I have worked to enact reciprocity in my qualitative research (“Rhetorician”; “Public”; *Struggle*; “Postmodern”) and teaching (“Sustainable”; “Beyond”; “Toward a Praxis”); my ethics are pretty centrally Cherokee in that they deal with *gadugi*, that is, working with communities to address needs and goals they deem important. Yet, as Ginny Carney, Eastern Cherokee and professor at Leech Lake Tribal College pointed out to me, I was not doing for our People. She thought that it was good that I was doing this work with other communities, but that the Cherokee might find use for my skills as well. Why wasn’t I doing work with the Cherokee, she was asking. As I found out later, Carney has been known to ask Native scholars and scholars of Native American literature the mirror image of this tough question: *Why are you doing this work?* (qtd. in Justice, “We’re Not” 264). Certainly the ways I was doing scholarship had merit, but in her eyes I was not accountable to my people.

In a very real way, she was asking me to enact a kinship relation with the Cherokee: “individuals belong to those communities because they carry the essential nature that binds them to The People *and* because they are willing to behave in ways that the communities define as responsible” (Garrouette 134).⁹ Providing evidence of kinship shows a relationship to ancestry and to community, a recognized position of *being* a Native scholar through the relations one has to family. Such relations, as Garrouette outlines them, can be ones where someone has been adopted into a family and is raised in the cultural and social networks, understands and practices the traditions, and contributes to the adopted family and clan’s well-being. This sense of *being* Native in radical indigenism affords latitude in the kinds of evidence marshaled in support of identity claims, while it also honors the tribe’s legal and biological definitions.

Though Ginny Carney was not doubting my kinship, she was gently nudging me to redirect my activist efforts to my tribe, prompting me to enact a kind of kinship accountability in ways I had not been able to do up to that point. As an outlander, or someone born and raised away from the cultural core of the tribe, the elders and their families, and the religious leaders, it has not been easy to be accountable, especially to the Cherokee in Oklahoma. I am an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation; my family names are Lee and Drew, who were originally from the Weber Falls area. My great-great-grandfather Charles Drew fought in the Civil War for the Cherokee 12th Mounted regiment on the side of the Confederacy, later becoming a Cherokee marshal. My great-grandfather was orphaned at age nine, and the tribe moved him to the Cherokee orphanage in Pryor. He enrolled during the Dawes Allotment Act and was allotted land outside of Pryor where our home was called Drew Hill. During the *Grapes of Wrath* era, my family slowly sold off their allotments, and a large portion of it was taken back by the federal government to develop a munitions factory. Half of my family finally moved to Southern California, the other half to Missouri. My mother was raised in Joplin with her father, who spoke some Cherokee still. Virginia Lee Drew, my mother, became a registered nurse for the navy, moved to New York when she married my father, also in the Navy, and raised seven children. I have lived and worked in New York, Colorado, and California and have not until very recently had a job that would support my linking to the tribe in any consistent way.

My mother's father, grandfather, aunts, and uncles were original enrollees with the Cherokee Nation. Thus, for their progeny, the enrollment process has been relatively simple because we had all of the legal documents, enrollment transcripts, and enrollment numbers on the Dawes Roll for the Cherokee completed in 1907. We have CDIB (Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood) cards that show a blood quantum that is a lie (we know our great-great-grandfather claimed to be mixed blood to obviate the restrictions that would have been placed on his land). We have a history with the tribe, a recognized and recognizable family name, and a number of photographs and other artifacts that show our affiliation. More than this, we were raised with the stories, the belief systems (both Cherokee and Southern Baptist), the practices and dispositions that some would recognize as Cherokee.

This brief self-representation uses both tribal and Nation evidence to support my claim of being Cherokee. However, if kinship is sanctioned in part through reciprocity to the community, then, as Carney pointed out to me, I

still needed to develop the social relations that would help me both be and do as a Native scholar.¹⁰

And I knew she was right. But how could I do for the Cherokee in Oklahoma when I lived in Michigan? And why would they want me to do anything for them? What could I possibly offer? And how could I offer any of my skills, which I know they do not need anyway, but especially without sounding immodest? I was taught not to be gregarious with other Indians; how then could I even make first contact with someone? When I asked Carney to help me think through this, she did the best thing possible and gave me the name of someone to talk to at the Cherokee Nation, Sammy Still, a longtime resident of Tahlequah, former photojournalist for the *Phoenix*, and a great guy who now works for the United Keetoowah Band.

Five months after speaking with Carney, I screwed up the courage to go introduce myself to Sammy Still during the Cherokee National Holiday in 2004. I knew that this would be a good time to seek him out because the Cherokee National Holiday is, at least in part, a time for outlanders to come back to socialize, find out how their families are, eat Kingfisher Indian tacos, and trace lineage at the Cherokee Heritage Center. At the time, Still was administering the online language classes that I was planning on taking—between that and Carney allowing me to use her name as a connection, I thought I would have an acceptable foot in the door without being seen as too forward.

Within six months, Still had helped me connect with Tonia Williams, the Web goddess of the Cherokee Nation and Dr. Gloria Sly, the cultural resources director. I am fortunate enough to work at a university that takes its land grant mission seriously, and because my department chair (Douglas Noverr) and the past and current directors of Professional Writing (Jeffrey Grabill and Danielle DeVoss, respectively) were generous in their support of this work, I was able to redesign the multimedia writing course I was assigned to teach into a community literacy, project-based course. Our goals were identified by the needs of the Cherokee Nation with whom we worked in collaboration to build educational Web deliverables. Students and I researched and created a new media piece about the allotment, *The Allotment in Cherokee History, 1887–1914*, that was launched off the Cherokee Nation's website at the National Holiday on Labor Day weekend, 2005. In spring 2005, students and I collaborated with the Nation to develop the site *Cherokee Laws and Treaties: 1684–1898*, which was launched in time for the 2006 holidays. More recently, I enrolled in online Cherokee language classes, proposed an IRB-reviewed ethnography of Cherokee language and identity, and have two more projects with and for the Cherokee

Nation planned. In summer 2007, I was honored to be asked to teach the history section of the Cherokee Nation's Summer Youth Leadership Institute in which we retraced the Trail of Tears with over fifty high school and middle school students from the Cherokee Nation's fourteen-county area.

While I don't think I am any more Cherokee now than I was, I do think that I have finally managed to come to terms with the wretched identity politics of being a Native scholar. That is, I'm beginning to balance the "being" a Cherokee citizen with the "doing" that might someday allow my self-representation to evidence more accountability. If I keep my head down, do good work, and show a readiness to learn, this may be the beginning of a long and lasting relationship. Garrouette quotes Christopher Jocks, a participant in her study, who describes a Native person's ability and willingness to participate in communities to enact kinship. Jocks says that a "generosity of time and spirit, respect and politeness, willingness to help out, and openness to learn, are what our elders seem to value most, and all of us who pursue this work know non-Indians who have succeeded in it . . . [as well as] full-blood Indians who have lost this ability to participate in kinship" (*Real* 129).

Jocks's understanding of doing for the community allows Native scholars who are outlanders, who live in urban centers, and who do for other tribes to show evidence of their identity claims. For instance, even when outlanders have worked with Native peoples affiliated with other tribes in their local community, their acts are part of this larger ethic of kinship. Indeed, it is sometimes impossible for Native peoples to go work for and with their specific tribes, as one Comanche elder working in Tahlequah where the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma is headquartered explained to me: "you know it's impossible to work with your own tribe. I tried it for twelve years. But when you go away and come back they have a hard time allowing your expertise, or they see you as changed and distant. Above them. It just got too hard. So I found work here." Other Native scholars I know also work outside of their own tribal affiliations and communities for many reasons but enact this ethic of service by doing the good work of kinship with and for other Native peoples.

Writing a Native Identity: Being and Doing

A rhetoric of self-representation allows scholars to find more comfort and less shame when providing the burden of proof of their identity claims because they can offer evidence of the various ways in which they are situated within Native families and communities. It makes explicit their motivations for claiming a Native identity; even if they can only rely on self-identification, they might

mitigate against accusations of identity fraud if they are showing by their actions a devotion to *gadugi* or similar tribal community ethic. Such evidence strengthens the persuasiveness of self-representation because it provides at least a partial answer to the question: Why are you doing this work? This kind of self-representation based on evidence that includes both authenticity and accountability markers shows that the Native scholar is not seeking personal gain, fame, access to resources, or cultural capital from claiming a Native identity. A self-representation that includes evidence of radical indigenous identity (being and doing as a Native person) has a number of selling points.

First, basing self-representation in part on kinship avoids the entanglement of legal definitions, while it serves to remind “members that they enjoy their place in the community only by the community’s collective pleasure” (Garrouette, *Real* 135). While enrollment and citizenship are important indicators of tribal affiliation, such a position emphasizes that citizenship with a federally recognized tribe should neither be the most important nor the sole indicator of being a Native scholar.

Second, “like definitions based on biology, a definition of identity based on kinship honors a person’s essential connection to the ancestors; yet it does so without shaming or diminishing either mixed bloods or individuals who enter the life of a tribal community through a pathway other than birth” (135). This definition of kinship based on reciprocity with communities and immersion in social networks is perhaps one of the most robust ways to be inclusive. It may not work for tribes to use this in their legal definitions, but for Native scholars who are considering other scholars’ accountability and authenticity, kinship relations could surely set a helpful baseline for judgment. Kinship relations preclude scholars from fixating on narrow terms for each other’s authenticity by maintaining the importance of accountability.

Third, this definition is based upon a flexibly structured notion of culture and identity: “like identity definitions based on culture, one based on kinship presupposes a commitment to traditional tribal values. . . . It does not demand that we see Native culture as either a static, unchanging relic or as wherever anyone chooses to label Indian (Garrouette, *Real* 135). Finally, a definition of Native identity based on kinship as Garrouette has defined it “respects the dignity and personhood of the individual” (135). While this definition does not mean that colleagues and other scholars should open the doors to freely offer hard-won resources to any and all, it does allow Native scholars and colleagues one way judge identity claims on a case-by-case basis. Kinship relations offer one way:

To see even those who are on the margins of other definitions of identity—the nonenrolled, those of low blood quantum, the culturally dispossessed, and even the ‘new Indians’—as individuals who carry in their very bodies a powerful and important connection to the ancestors, and thus as potential relatives who possess personal worth and unique talents. And it allows these people to become relatives in the fullest sense, as they are taught to turn their talents to the benefit of Native communities. (135)

The crucial element here is that notion of reciprocity within the community. Even when we encounter a student or colleague who recently discovered a lineage, who has for years been culturally dispossessed, and who may have no documentation for his or her identity, if this person can begin contributing to the welfare of Native peoples through scholarship and connection to communities’ social and cultural networks, then this person could begin to enact a relationship to tribal communities and Nations. This enactment moves beyond merely listing tribal and national affiliations to the development of a professional identity based on active engagement with tribal communities. As Daniel Justice asks himself, so we can ask ourselves: “How does my work honor my ancestors? And will it help or hinder those to come?” (“Seeing” 103).¹¹

Implications and Caveats

If Native scholars self-represent through a framework that includes indications of being and acting like an Indian, they can provide evidence of their identity claims. Self-representation allows scholars to indicate various types of national and tribal authenticity markers, as well as to show through their actions their accountability markers. Self-representations that include these components are persuasive to many audiences and allow us to appreciate Native scholars’ identity claims on a case-by-case basis. Accountability markers cannot take the place of authenticity markers, as we saw in the case of Ward Churchill’s self-identification. Churchill was recognized for his work in promoting the United Keetoowah Band’s causes: for this kinship work, the UKB gave him an associate membership. Yet, this is not the same as citizenship with the UKB, and when Churchill claimed that he was an enrolled member of the tribe and that he had Creek lineage as well, critics accused him of identity fraud because the evidence gathered on him proved otherwise.¹² Indeed, Churchill’s case drew attention to itself because he was notorious for policing other Native scholars’ identity, and he was unwilling to support his own claims, to provide the burden of proof that rests on all Native scholars whether we like it or not.

When balanced well between authenticity and accountability markers, a self-representation of a Native identity can be convincing to many audiences. This is the case with Resa Crane Bizzaro, who has provided both authenticity markers (e.g., lineage, community connection, historical connections) as well as accountability markers (she is president of the CCCC Caucus for American Indian Scholars and Scholarship and has started a nonprofit group that sends blankets and other items to Pine Ridge). Such evidence shows what it means to be Indian because it has to the extent possible both authenticity and accountability built into it. In this regard, Crane Bizzaro has met the burden of proof and released colleagues from the awkward, uncomfortable, and distracting position of having to police her identity claims. Using a framework of being and acting Indian in our self-representations, we are able to write identities in ways that shift the focus away from policing each other to developing professional identities and work trajectories that are based on our heritages and community contributions.

By the same token, authenticity markers alone cannot take the place of accountability when one claims to be a Native American, as my own case demonstrates. Though I have solid authenticity markers that evidence both tribal and national affiliation to the Cherokee, Ginny Carney was none too pleased that I was doing for communities other than Native ones. The mismatch between my authenticity and accountability markers led one Native scholar to quip to another about me: “Is she Indian, or what?” The ambiguity of her tone left me uncertain of how to take this—momentary satisfaction gave way to suspicion that she was commenting on the mismatch between my authenticity and accountability markers. Perhaps she was reading me superficially (“Face”). I was irked because she, like Carney, was pointing out a problem with my self-representation that I was not then in a position to address. Currently, I am working hard to align my authenticity and accountability markers in order to make some small contribution to the tribe and Nation as an outlander Cherokee citizen.

For Native scholars, the work of self-representation and identity recovery are particularly difficult for some of the reasons I have pointed to here. In exploring the rhetoric of self-representation, I hope to have shown how Native scholars can provide the burden of proof of their identity claims using multiple forms of evidence and can develop this self-representation over time, through consistent enactments of their responsibilities to reciprocity. When the burden of proof is met, it is often much easier for other Native scholars to extend the benefit of the doubt to each other.

The exigencies of identity fraud and identity policing have become mutually sustaining, debilitating practices for Native scholars. If we shoulder our own burdens of proof in our self-representations, then we can hopefully avoid disrupting each other's work. The rhetoric of self-representation is about ethos, the character of the person and the content of their message together at once. For Native scholars, this ethos can include both tribal and national authenticity markers, but it can also include markers of accountability to our tribal communities. When our self-representations include both authenticity and accountability, we are in better positions to demonstrate the motivations behind, evidence in support of, and reciprocal actions that sustain our claims to Native identity.

I take many risks in exploring the rhetoric of self-representation in these ways. I certainly do not want this discussion to fuel the fires of identity police or neoconservatives. It is precisely the increasing fervor and frequency of these audiences' accusations that warrant a frank discussion of the rhetorical exigencies that Native scholars face. I intend, rather, to help colleagues who do want to support the knowledge-making practices, recruitment, hiring, and retention of Native scholars to better understand the tensions Native scholars often face within and outside of their own tribes. This understanding, I hope, will enhance colleagues' sensitivity to the ways in which their actions may ease, not increase, these tensions. What's more, I am not trying to create a heuristic that audiences can use for judging a Native scholar's authenticity, nor am I judging Churchill's, Crane Bizzaro's, or my own authenticity.¹³ Ultimately, only Nations and tribes are in the position to judge the authenticity of a Native person's identity. Rather, I hope that audiences will listen (Royster; Ratcliffe) to the concerns of all the stakeholders in these discussions of Native American identity politics.

Native scholars, unlike other scholars of color, are and will be for some time in the position of having to self-represent in ways that respect tribal and National forms of verification, but we are also held to standards of accountability that ask us to contribute to our communities. Writing a self-representation as a Native scholar can be facilitated by indicating evidence for kinship that includes both aspects of being and doing. It could include evidence of lineage, location, clan affiliation, or citizenship that is valid to multiple audiences, while also showing short-term and long-term goals that serve the interests of Native communities and peoples. Finally, self-representation allows Native scholars to evidence their identity claims while protecting themselves against charges of unethical, self-serving gain because it allows scholars to

address two main questions: Who am I in relation to whom? For whom am I doing this work? Since writing an identity within a framework of self-representation allows one to draw from many sources of evidence to answer these questions, it mitigates against the erosion of sovereignty (part of the evidence could be enrollment status), without giving primary value to legal forms of identity verification. This framework also provides for the maintenance of tribal values, community ethics, and traditions. When Native scholars write self-representations, they hold themselves accountable to their tribes and academic communities while providing the necessary evidence of their identity claims.

The unfortunate reality that all Native scholars face is one in which essentialist categories do exist and do comprise part of the rhetorical exigencies we face in constructing our identities. Native scholars have grappled with essentialist categories from two distinct perspectives. On the one side, native scholars have critiqued these essentialist categories by tracing their racist ideological underpinnings (Alfred; Forbes; Lyons). On the other side, some scholars have discussed the ways that essentialism (Garrouette) and tradition (Grande) are still central concepts to Native peoples despite the humanities' penchant for postmodern fluidity, floating signifiers, highly interpolated subjectivities, and socially constructed knowledge. In this essay, I have tried to position a rhetoric of self-representation as a both/and proposition for those composing identities—both authenticity and accountability matter, both gathering narratives and listening to them matter, both being and doing matter, both tribal and national forms of evidence matter, both essential and socially constructed knowledges matter.

This brings me to the very difficult questions reviewers of this essay insightfully ask. An anonymous reviewer asked:

Despite the problematic nature of Churchill's case and the likely misrepresentations or abuses that have been uncovered, Churchill—until recently—would seem to have fit the criteria set out in the Crane Bizzaro case as well as in the author's own case. If one is able to construct over time an authoritative rhetorical/political identity such as Churchill's (a record that was the basis on which Churchill was hired), doesn't that in itself call into question essentialist claims about racial authenticity and rhetorical authority? Shouldn't ethical accountability be the final criteria on which we make claims to authority—whatever our racial, gender, class positions?

And reviewer Kris Ratcliffe asked: "To what extent does accountability apply to non-Native scholars of Native literature or rhetoric? Does it take a different form?"

Let me address these questions regarding accountability and work my way to an answer for the first question about essentialist categories. All scholars are already held ethically accountable regardless of their race, class, and gender. This is why universities have internal research review boards and faculty and staff guidelines for appropriate conduct; this is why professional organizations governing the disciplines often have similar guidelines for research and professional conduct. All scholars are already beholden to ethical accountability. This is why in May of 2006 the University of Colorado Standing Committee on Research Misconduct, following similar ethical accountability standards, found that Churchill had engaged in research misconduct (“Report of the Investigative Committee”). Though he was never charged with identity fraud, Churchill was held ethically accountable according to the guidelines for research conduct set out by the University of Colorado. However, I would not conflate the types of ethical accountability to scholarly professions with the types of ethical accountability and authenticity markers asked for by Native communities or other communities. Scholars must know and address the forms of authenticity markers that are important to the communities they represent personally or in their research.

Accountability to these communities is also crucial if these representations are to have authority, that is, be authorized, by these communities. Native scholars who have tackled this question get mighty pissed when white scholars seek to represent Native communities without speaking with, doing for, and respecting the knowledge of those communities (Womack; Champagne and Goldberg; Deloria; Kievit). In this respect, ethical accountability standards issued by universities and professions are merely a starting point for the kinds of accountability that most communities, but particularly Native communities, have long been seeking from all scholars.

Another point: accountability markers should not be conflated with authenticity markers. About ten years ago, I conducted an activist ethnography in an inner city in upstate New York and at that time was asked to be the godmother of one of the children in the community. This fictive kin relationship is an honorific given to me by a community member, an honorific that bound me and binds me still in a most-welcomed, loving, lasting obligation to the community (*Struggle*). My godson is now thirteen. Though this study took place a decade ago, I still maintain that fictive kin relationship and strong ties with the family featured in that study. Fictive kinship aside, I do not claim to be African American because I do not have the other authenticity markers that people in this community hold as important, namely biological family ties,

phenotype, a shared history of oppression, fluency with African American Vernacular English, and so on. Though we had much in common and shared class and gender perspectives, and though I could empathize each time they were evicted or betrayed or beaten by a man, I was not and am not claiming to be black. If I self-identified as black, my claim would seem outrageous to other African American scholars and spurious to other inner-city community residents—fictive kinship within this family notwithstanding. I love my sistas and brothas, but I ain't black, 'aight?

In similar fashion, Ward Churchill was given the honorific of associate member of the UKB because he helped them in unspecified ways, but this did not mean he had the authenticity markers of *being* Cherokee, though he claimed to be Cherokee. So, no, ethical accountability should not be the final criteria on which we make claims of authority. One cannot come without the other if we hope to make convincing self-representations. Again, identity constructions must include evidence of *being and doing* in order to show an ethical accountability to our communities. We simply cannot ignore or eschew authenticity markers because we have done good deeds in a community or because we deem these markers essentialist given academic values and epistemologies.

My hope is that colleagues in rhetoric and composition can now understand why various kinds of evidence can and should be admitted into consideration in support of Native scholars' self-representations. Our colleagues of color, other Native scholars, and colleagues can help the process of self-representation by talking with Native scholars about their affiliations, goals, and community relations when the situation is appropriate. At the very least, understanding the rhetoric of self-representation can help colleagues grasp the complexities in Native American identity politics.

Perhaps more importantly, these cases illustrate the ways in which all rhetoricians might begin to engage in a rhetoric of self-representation when composing an identity. In *Traces of a Stream*, Jacqueline Jones Royster writes of the material ways in which nonscholars of color might begin working from an Afrafeminist perspective:

This approach embodies the notion that the mind, heart, body, and soul operate collectively and requires intellectual work to include four sites of critical regard: *careful analysis, acknowledgement of passionate attachments, attention to ethical action, and commitment to social responsibility*. From [her] perspective, these sites operate together to create a well-functioning whole with each site involving practices forged in light of critical ways of doing that are also capable of being touchstones for critical ways of being. (279)

The Afrafeminist perspective outlined here provides a useful methodological outline for scholars who wish to research outside of their own communities. A rhetoric of self-representation dovetails with Royster's call for ethical action and social responsibility. Indeed, at first blush, it may seem as though Royster and I are saying the same things. However, in light of the cases described in this essay, we begin to see how a rhetoric of self-representation extends the notion of being and doing that Royster describes. First, "being" for Native scholars has everything to do with authenticity markers; however, these authenticity markers are no doubt different in type and importance for other subjective positions. Important questions remain in this regard: What are the authenticity markers for other races and positionalities? In what ways does discussion and analysis of authenticity markers debilitate or facilitate the work of other scholars? Second, the case discussion earlier illustrates how Native scholars' attention to ethical action really counts most to other Indians when it is done in harmony with and for Native communities. To what extent does ethical knowledge making and commitment to social responsibility need to be manifested with one's own communities? Finally, kinship relations matter a great deal as demonstrations of radical indigenism; being for Indians has everything to do with lineage, family, and clans. It remains to be seen whether or not such identity markers are necessary and relevant to other scholars' and community members' self-representations and knowledge making. This is especially relevant given the current issue concerning the citizenship of Freedmen over which the Cherokee Nation and federal government are at odds. I'm tracing this debate as part of a larger book-length manuscript because it merits much further discussion and is beyond the scope of the current piece.

Taken together, a rhetoric of self-representation is important for the field of rhetoric and composition because it provides a framework within which we as writers and audiences might begin to provide both the gathering of narratives for which Powell has called and the kind of rhetorical listening for which Royster and Ratcliffe have called. A rhetoric of self-representation can be useful in developing our cross-cultural understandings and enacting our responsibilities to the communities within which we live and hope to make knowledge. What would identity politics become if white, black, Asian, and Chicano/a scholars began to reveal their family and community authenticity markers and means of accountability? Perhaps we could begin to better understand what makes racial categories neutral or complicated; we could begin to understand better the systemic ways in which racial categories circumscribe us all; we might begin to find tangible ways in which we can identify with each other; and we

can begin to work toward commonly shared goals for writing and knowledge making for the public good. A rhetoric of self-representation places on all rhetoricians the burden to state and support our identity claims.

Notes

1. The story: A television commentator quoted from Ward Churchill's writing about the justice of the 9/11 attacks and implored his viewers to call or write Hamilton College in protest of an upcoming appearance by Churchill. After receiving 6,000 emails and threats of violence, Hamilton College canceled Churchill's appearance. This controversy drew the attention of Colorado governor Bill Owens, who called for Churchill's resignation, and the Colorado House of Representatives adopted a resolution denouncing Churchill's positions on U.S. politics and terrorism. With such negative public attention, the University of Colorado's Board of Regents met in February of 2005 to support an investigation of Churchill's conduct as a professor. They called upon the university's Standing Committee on Research Misconduct to investigate charges of plagiarism, falsification, and ethnic identity fraud. Though the standing committee decided not to pursue an investigation of charges of identity fraud, for reasons I explain later, the committee did investigate his scholarship. In the final report of their findings, they charge Churchill with academic misconduct on the grounds that "[t]he Committee's investigation of the seven allegations before us has unanimously found, by a preponderance of the evidence, that Professor Churchill committed several forms of academic misconduct as defined in the policy statements of the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Colorado system" (95). More than a year after this report, in July 2007, the University of Colorado Board of Regents voted 8-1 to fire Ward Churchill, who has since taken his case to court.

2. Self-identification is simply when a person claims to have Native heritage without any evidence for this claim, as was the case in the 2000 census. The 2000 census asked individuals to indicate their racial categories, choosing more than one as necessary. As a result, over 700,000 people self-identified as Cherokee, Cherokee white, or Cherokee black. However, the Cherokee Nation only has around 230,000 enrolled citizens. While self-identification might be the most ethical way to ensure that racist category systems are being avoided (Forbes *Manipulation*), those who self-identify without any evidence to support their claims can face extremely painful, difficult challenges from other Native scholars on the one hand and skepticism and exclusion from their nations on the other.

3. While I recognize that the challenge Rain Anderson was presented with in this painful experience was based on a superficial read of phenotype (e.g., skin color, shape of nose and head, eye color, body type, etc.), space limitations do not permit

a discussion of issues of phenotype that Indian scholars continually encounter. Besides, I have discussed the topic elsewhere (“Composing”; “Face”; “Butterfly”).

4. In these situations, I smile wryly and ask how much white the person is. If the person is from the Northeast, I often hear a rundown of his or her ethnicity: “I’m part German and Irish on my father’s side and my mother’s side is French.” Or when a person responds with a titter or an apology for the question, I explain that the Native people I know do not like to have their pedigree discussed as though we are animals. Any question about pedigree traces to the practice of using blood quantum as an identity marker.

The notion of blood quantum reflects the notion of race as being transported, literally, through blood, a notion introduced by Euro-Americans in the nineteenth century. “These theories of race articulated closely with political goals characteristic of the dominant American society. The original stated intention of blood quantum distinctions was to determine the point at which the various responsibilities of that dominant society to Indian peoples ended” (Garrouette “Racial” 225). Through intermarriage and the measurements of blood quantum, tribes would ostensibly become extinct, thus ending the federal government’s responsibility to them (see also Forbes “Manipulation” 29). Blood quantum measurements trace also to the racist ideology of colonial states (Forbes “Blood,” and Archuleta). “Genetic ancestry and pure biological definitions are so closely linked with racism and with European dominance of the Americas that I think we must be rather careful in their use” (Forbes “Blood” 40). Circe Sturm discusses how those she interviewed in Cherokee country understood blood quantum measurements for tribal identification in *Blood Politics: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (2002). Either way, the cultural constructions of whiteness mask themselves in a taken-for-granted mindset of nineteenth-century Euro-American social and political thought about bloodlines, pedigree, and purity.

5. Allen has also written about other types of identity fraud prevalent in Cherokee country in a paper delivered at the 2001 Sequoyah Research Center’s Symposium. For instance, those posing as shamans, pipe carriers, and medicine men who perform illegal ceremonies and sweats are proliferating, indicating the “significant level of increase in the activities of ‘wannabes’ and ‘new agers’” (12). Though these individuals are perhaps less of a threat to the sovereignty of tribes, they can present danger to those individuals who believe them. Allen cites a report from *Indian Country Today* of a man posing as a Shaman who was indicted for child molestation while performing a so-called ceremony. Identity fraud in these cases is certainly neither innocent nor harmless, and when it comes to groups of individuals who claim Native identity and tribal affiliation, it is an affront to tribal citizens and can potentially erode tribal sovereignty (12). Overall, identity fraud in these cases is quite clearly fraud because the intention is to deceive others in order to

achieve some personal gain. That element of intentional deception by imitation or impersonation makes these cases fraudulent. In this way, identity fraud differs from self-identification.

6. It is argued that one reason Native scholars are being pressed to prove tribal affiliation through legal documentation is that such documentation is consistent with the ways that tribes maintain sovereignty as separate Nations. There are many arguments against such a position, particularly that sovereignty itself subscribes to the white man's ideology of colonization (Alfred), that it does not account for fraudulent enrollment processes (Carter; Sturm), and that it does not consider how corrupted the establishment of base rolls can be (Garrouette). Despite these problems with sovereignty and the use of base rolls to determine citizenship, many Native scholars place stock in showing citizenship as an act that reinscribes a tribe's sovereignty and ability to self-determine who can be included in its citizenry. Herein rests a tension between a Native scholar's individual self-determination and a sovereign nation's self-determination.

7. Asking Native scholars to reveal facets of themselves in order to meet the burden of proof for one's identity claims also means asking Native scholars to set aside what might well be their tribal cultural values of humility. Drawing attention to one's self is often understood as a gross behavior (my mother called it vulgar) that runs contrary to the value of humility. I've addressed this elsewhere as one part of a larger problem with the field's calls for self-reflexivity ("Composing"). However, the current exigencies of identity fraud and identity policing make it necessary for individual Native scholars to shoulder the burden of proof.

8. To the extent that it allows scholars to disclose the being and doing of identity, this idea of radical indigenism resonates with the Afrafeminit scholarly methodology that Jacqueline Jones Royster outlines in the final chapter of her seminal work *Traces of a Stream*.

9. By "essential" Garrouette means to describe a "condition of *being*, which [she calls] *relationship to ancestry* (*Real* 118, emphasis in original). Such essentialism is not based solely on biological and lineal descendants of the People but also allows for the complex ways that ceremonies of adoption can bring other peoples into the tribe. She is trying to "emphasize the unique importance of genealogical relatedness to tribal communities while also allowing, at least in principle, for people of *any* race to be brought into kinship relations through the transformative mechanism of ceremony" (127, emphasis in original).

10. Terese Guinsatao Monberg, Malea Powell, Janice Gould, Scott Lyons, and, most recently, Richard Van Camp have all been encouraging me along this path, and I very much appreciate their nudges, support, and friendship.

11. Justice and many other Native scholars have outlined ways in which Native

scholars can use their positions of privilege to facilitate the goals of tribal communities in an outstanding collection of essays, *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*.

12. This claim was published in "American Holocaust? The Structure of Denial, *Socialism and Democracy* 19.3, issue 39 (2002): 1–6, accessed 24 December 2005, http://www.sdonline.org/33/ward_churchill.htm.

13. Daniel Justice points out that any discussion that tries to fix once and for all a Native person's identity is flawed in its essentialism. He asks: "Couldn't Indianness always be about relationships and their kinship contexts, rather than just a fixed racial or cultural state?" ("Rhetorical").

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