The Efficacy of Political Apology Within a Settler-Colonial Framework

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THE EFFICACY OF POLITICAL APOLOGY WITHIN A SETTLER-COLONIAL FRAMEWORK

By

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of the Requirements for
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ABSTRACT

Government apologies issued for American settler-colonialism, instances of mis-racialization, and instances of misrepresentation of Native American peoples – such as the joint resolutions passed by President Clinton and the 103rd Congress and President Obama and the 111th Congress – reflect the strategies used to justify the United States’ removal and assimilation policies. These same strategies are evident in the ways which historic and modern media representations transform Native Americans into a monolithic racial ‘other.’ Trump’s evocation of “Pocahontas” as a racial slur and Warren’s participation in a DNA test during Donald Trump and Elizabeth Warren’s debate over Warren’s claims to Native American ancestry most clearly illustrate the ways politicians interpret, use, and rely on the ‘Indians’ represented in settler-colonial media. The politicians both simultaneously draw from and perpetuate settler-colonial traditions. Using Jean Dennison’s framework of “colonial entanglement,” and building off the works of Kim Tallbear, Phillip J. Deloria, and Edward Jason Black, I examine American politics, apologies, and media representations of Native Americans as agents of settler-colonialism which intersect to carry out a coordinated attack on Native American sovereignty. My work uses the lens of the “apology” to reveal settler-colonialism to be entangled, intentional, and ongoing.
In 2016, amidst his first presidential campaign, Donald Trump weaponized home DNA tests and Disney’s inaccurate yet popular *Pocahontas* to challenge Senator Elizabeth Warren’s claims to Native American ancestry.¹ The ramifications of this strategy ranged from using Nativeness to deepen partisan divides, to implicitly endorsing DNA as the defining characteristic of Nativeness, to reducing Native American identity into a singular, sexualized cartoon. I argue in this thesis that this widely publicized political feud reveals the ways which politicians – charged with creating legislation affecting Native American peoples – interpret, use, and rely on the ‘Indians’ represented in settler-colonial media to group hundreds of unique nations into one racial category. The same strategies politicians use when interacting with historic and modern media representations are reflected in the way politicians and the United States government apologize. Apologies and representations mirror each other because the rhetoric of apology is a representation. Therefore, I examine American politics, apologies, and media representations of Native Americans as agents of settler-colonialism which intersect to carry out a coordinated attack on Native American sovereignty.

Stereotypes generated by settler-colonial society to justify the United States’ removal and assimilation policies transform Native Americans into a monolithic racial ‘other’ and form the basis of modern mainstream representations of Native Americans.² Because Native American mascots, DIY DNA testing, and romanticized Disney cartoons descend directly from these historic representations, modern representations must also inherit purpose and function; modern representations of Native Americans reveal settler-colonialism to be continually maintained

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structure. This imagery is used to assert parameters of authenticity and purity, positioning ‘Indian’ as a racial category rather than “a legal, social, cultural, and historical construct, where Native Nations self-define the parameters of belonging.” Once legislators treat Native Americans as a racial category, they can continue to justify stripping Native Americans of sovereignty.

However, politicians and the United States government are occasionally called on to answer for their roles in settler-colonialism – including carrying out “numerous armed conflicts which…took innocent lives,” violating treaties, and forcing Native Americans to leave “their traditional homelands” – and must issue apologies to the communities who they harmed. In this thesis, I use apologies from the United States government and individual politicians, like Elizabeth Warren and Donald Trump, who are guilty of wielding Native American stereotypes to demonstrate why apologies are frequently either incomplete or altogether absent. Regardless of the intent, apologies issued for American settler-colonialism, instances of mis-racialization, and instances of misrepresentation of Native American peoples fall short because these apologies can fail to “[acknowledge] responsibility” for the full extent of the offending party’s continued role in American colonization, fail to “[acknowledge] responsibility” for the wide-reaching ramifications of historical harm, or “[offer] repair” for any damage caused.

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5 To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States, S.J. Res. 14, 111th Cong., 1st. (Apr. 30, 2009).
CLASSIFYING NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES AS BLACK OR ‘COLORED’

Phillip J. Deloria, in his book *Playing Indian*, asserts that in order for European colonists to forge an identity separate from Europe, they had to define themselves “in relation to an array of people and objects who were not [themselves],” – people and objects who became ‘others’.  

‘Otherness,’ however, acts as a sliding scale, moving closer or further based on convenience: some are situated “quite close to the Selves we are calling into being; others, we place so far away as to make them inhuman.” American national identity is, therefore, dependent upon the ‘otherness’ of both Europe (the colonial origin point) and the original inhabitants of the Americas. Once the ‘other’ is far enough away, their ‘otherness’ can be weaponized by the Nation. Both current and historic representations of Native American peoples reveal some of the ways National identity was reckoned through the ‘othering’ of Native American peoples as well as how ‘otherness’ was weaponized against Native American peoples. Take, for example, the following newspaper cartoon published in February of 1893, conflating Nativeness and Blackness as ‘otherness’:

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7 Deloria, "Patriotic Indians," [Page 21].
8 Ibid
The cartoonist mocks the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom by portraying Lili‘uokalani, the Queen Regent of the Hawaiian Kingdom, as powerless and financially incompetent. “Lilioukalina” (a misspelling of Lili‘uokalani) is minstrel-esque: her skin is black, she has enlarged and deformed features (no nose, large brow ridge, large lips, disproportionate body, huge hands and feet), nappy hair, and wears a costume in the style of European monarchy. By conflating Blackness and Nativeness, the artist confers all of the stereotypes associated with Blackness onto Lili‘uokalani, asserting Nativeness as racially ‘other.’ By “combining variant
groups” into a singular, racialized ‘other,’ colonizers are able to more efficiently suppress these groups and strip them of sovereignty and resources.⁹

Yet, along with Nativesness and Blackness, there is still a third agent of ‘othering’ in the cartoon: Liliʻuokalani is wearing a costume which evokes European monarchy. Her sovereignty is similarly conflated with Blackness in order to visually dismantle the legitimacy of the Hawaiian monarchy. The political cartoon marks a boundary between what is civilized (White democratic America) and savage (Hawaiian monarchy). Deloria argues that one of the ways Americans made European monarchy ‘other’ was by playing Indian and defining themselves through Indigeneity to the land and “savage” freedom.¹⁰ At the same time, while White Americans used ‘savagery’ as a way to separate themselves from Europe and tie themselves to American land, they also used it to separate themselves from Native American peoples. Here, Liliʻuokalani holds a club in her hand with her name on it to demonstrate the savagery of Blackness, Nativesness, and sovereignty which threatens capitalistic exploit. American identity is reasserted by positioning the ‘Indian’ as ‘other’ in every way: politically, socially, and racially.

According to Dr. Warren Milteer, this was not an uncommon phenomenon: the Chowan people of North Carolina were documented as ‘colored’ rather than ‘Indian,’ leading to the erasure of the Chowan peoples. Descendants of the Chowan Indians survive and occupy the same land as their ancestors, but few identify as Chowan.¹¹ Many identify as Cherokee or simply

recognize an “‘Indian’ past.”\textsuperscript{12} In fact, Milteer even cites a history of North Carolina from 1830 where the Chowans are declared extinct.\textsuperscript{13} Colonizers erase Native American peoples in order to access the resources that they originally constructed ‘Indian-ness’ around: land. Milteer says,

When Europeans first began to use ‘Indian’ as a collective racial label for Native peoples, they developed sets of characteristics they believed made ‘Indians’ distinct from other people. In the minds of Europeans, Indians were bound to specific lands…As long as they remained on those lands…they existed as distinct groups and maintained an essential ‘Indian’ quality…Native peoples who no longer possessed these lands could no longer be Indians under the colonizers’ definition…Without a land base, they lost the feature that distinguished them from other non-White peoples.\textsuperscript{14}
By making the Chowans non-‘Indian,’ government officials removed connection to the land and could therefore justify taking it.\footnote{Milteer, "From Indians," [Page 38].} By the same logic, if Liliʻuokalani (representative of the Hawaiian Kingdom) was not Indigenous to the land, but simply Black or ‘other,’ there was
no reason for Native Hawaiians to retain their ties to the land. Defining Native American peoples as Black or “colored” places them in relation to Whiteness and therefore ‘others’ via racialization. The process of racialization allows for settler-colonial officials to justify stripping indigenous peoples of their resources and sovereignty.

DISNEY’S *POCAHONTAS*: A CONTEMPORARY ITERATION OF THE ‘NOBLE SAVAGE’

Settler-colonial society has historically used the image of the ‘Indian’ to access something opposed to European-ness in order to create something separate and new. Deloria describes how the positioning of Native American as ‘other’ – exterior or interior based on where settler-colonial society needs it to be – is the legacy of the early European settlers’ definition of ‘Indian’ as both ‘uncivilized savage’ and “instinct and freedom.”

16 Deloria, "Introduction," introduction, [Page 3].
17 Deloria, "Patriotic Indians," [Page 21].
19 Deloria, "Introduction," introduction, [Page 4].

For most English colonists, so-called savage Indians defined the boundaries and character of their civilization. Conversely, noble Indians allowed the romantic intellectuals of the Enlightenment to embody a critique of European social decadence. In both cases, the exterior relationship between us and them allowed Europeans to define themselves through comparison with a radically different society.

While settler-colonial society created the ‘savage Indian’ in order to justify settler-colonial violence, the ‘noble Indian’ represents “authentic reality in the face of urban disorder and alienating mass society” – the ‘noble Indian’ provides an idealistic link to a “pure and natural” past and serves “to critique Western society.”

16 Deloria, "Introduction," introduction, [Page 3].
17 Deloria, "Patriotic Indians," [Page 21].
19 Deloria, "Introduction," introduction, [Page 4].
Disney’s rendering of Pocahontas, the same one Donald Trump assigned to Elizabeth Warren as a derogatory nickname, directly descends from this kind of ‘noble-savage’ tradition. Dr. Linwood “Little Bear” Custalow’s and Angela L. Daniel “Silver Star”’s oral history of the Mattaponi tribe reveals how much of the myth of Pocahontas, John Smith, and the first English settlers – packaged and commodified by *Pocahontas* – is a narrative privileged by the fact that it came from settlers. To begin with, Disney’s Pocahontas is hyper-sexualized. According to Custalow and Daniel “Silver Star”, Pocahontas was only ten years old when 27-year-old John Smith arrived.\(^{20}\) She was still treated as a child by her family and community, meaning she most likely did not wear clothes during the summertime (a practice which changed once a child reached physical and cultural maturity) and spent her time playing games with other children\(^{21}\). Yet, Disney’s Pocahontas does not look or behave like a ten-year-old girl by the physical and cultural standards of the Mattaponi tribe.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) Ibid, 24
\(^{22}\) Ibid
The tradition of portraying Native American girls and women as “sexually available to the colonial desires of White Europeans” is as old as the colonization of the Americas. Deloria uses a painting of Amerigo Vespucci circa 1600 to illuminate some of the ways European colonizers used Nativeness to justify the invasion and exploitation both of Native American bodies and of the land. Vespucci, “surrounded by the emblems of Christianity and technology,” encounters “America” as a naked Native American woman.

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24 Ibid
Deloria says,

At an intersection between noble and savage, tawny white or colored, the figure of the Indian had enormous iconographic flexibility. By arming it, clothing it, shifting its gender, or coloring its face, British cartoonists could depict the colonies as violent, civilized, savage, genteel, aggressive, subservient, rebellious, or justified. Visualizing the figure as an Indian Princess, for example, allowed one to evoke female sexuality in picturing the fertile landscape or to show the colonies as available and vulnerable to the desires of English men.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid
Where some artists and officials conflated Nativeness and Blackness in order to ‘other,’ some (like Theodor Galle) conflated the American landscape with the bodies of Native American women, encouraging violence against both.

Disney follows the tradition of Theodor Galle: a cartoon Pocahontas, an Indian Princess, must be sexually available, romantic, and welcoming if America’s origin story is to be consumable. Not only does her actual age deeply problematize the (fictional) romantic relationship Disney portrays between Pocahontas and John Smith but their romance makes the conflation between Pocahontas and the American continent extremely literal. Take the first lines of the song “Colors of the Wind”: “You think I'm an ignorant savage…But still I cannot see / If the savage one is me / How can there be so much that you don't know?”26 Sung by Pocahontas to John Smith, the song goes on to depict Pocahontas as in-tune with the natural world – so in-tune that the song conflates Pocahontas with the natural world. When placed within the fictionally consensual romantic context of their relationship, “Colors of the Wind” sounds like the Indian Princess granting the colonial European access to the land and ancestral knowledge in the same way she grants him access to herself.

It is no coincidence that the two representations I have centered are both Native American women and sovereigns, distorted in settler-colonial representation. Where Lili‘uokalani’s sovereignty is invalidated by the invented incompetence of the ‘other’, Disney portrays Pocahontas’ sovereignty as – like the land – existing for John Smith to take. Pocahontas sanitizes the violent history of American colonization to fit into a nationalistic narrative; in Disney’s hands, colonial violence becomes a G-rated national mythology. It allows settler-

26 Pocahontas, directed by Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, Walt Disney Pictures, 1995.
colonial producers and consumers to feel not only valid, but comfortable in their occupation of stolen land.

Like the visual minstrelization of Lili‘uokalani and documentation of the Chowan people as “colored”, the ‘noble-savage’ narrative also erases Native American peoples: where the early colonial Europeans defined ‘Indians’ through ties to the land, cartoon ‘Indians’ leave no room for the ways which Native American cultures were forced to change and adapt through the colonial process in order to survive. Milteer links the process of racialization to the ways which European descendants could “not believe that ‘Indian’ lifeways could evolve.” Perhaps acknowledging that the mythical ‘Indian’ no longer exists, that modern Native American peoples are various and participate in modern American life, would be to disrupt the glorification of American mythology.

Disney has not apologized for *Pocahontas*. In the case of the documentation of the Chowan people or the imagery in political cartoons, apologies for erasure and other harm fall under umbrella apologies issued by the United States Federal Government for all violence perpetrated against Native American peoples. However, apologies are, themselves, representations. The ways Native American communities are grouped within apologies, as well as the ways the offending party represents itself, reveals the intended audience of the apology, the purpose of the apology, and often mirrors strategies used in misrepresentations.

**APOLOGY**

Apology, as a tool for conflict resolution, is necessary for maintaining social order. It allows an offending party to “[acknowledge] responsibility for an offense or grievance and

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27 Milteer, “From Indians,” [Page 30].
28 Milteer, "From Indians," [Page 39].
express] regret or remorse to...the aggrieved.”\(^{29}\) ‘I am sorry,’ often the vehicle for apology, can be used in situations ranging from condolences for the death of a loved one, to a polite acknowledgement for bumping into someone, to a sincere expression of remorse for causing harm. Yet, while this short phrase carries a multitude of meanings and can adapt to variety of situations, Aaron Lazare, author of *On Apology*, clarifies: “confusion arises when it is not clear whether the person who says ‘I am sorry’ is being apologetic or compassionate.”\(^{30}\) ‘I am sorry’ neither guarantees an apology, nor is always a complete apology - according to Lazare’s analysis, condolences for the death of a loved one should not evoke the same response as an expression of remorse for causing harm because the understanding of ‘I am sorry’ can blur across its many different functions. Indeed, the language of apology does not inherently convey “regret or remorse.”\(^{31}\)

Additionally, the party issuing the apology affects the scale of the harm, the audience, the target recipient, and what the apology accomplishes. While some apologies are interpersonal, organizations, corporations, and governments also cause harm which requires apology. However, apologies issued from larger organizations often indicate a more “formal attempt to redress a severe and long-standing harm against an innocent group,” and are “aimed at present and future audiences that include members of the nonvictimized majority, as well as the previously victimized group.”\(^{32}\) As a result, these apologies require more substance than interpersonal apologies – the scale of the apology must reflect the scale of the harm. In their study on

\(^{30}\) Ibid, 16  
\(^{31}\) Ibid, 14  
\(^{32}\) Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, "Government Apologies," [Page 221].
government apologies, Craig Blatz, Karina Schumann, and Michael Ross offer six elements of a complete and comprehensive apology:

1. remorse (e.g., “I'm sorry”),
2. acceptance of responsibility (e.g., “It's my fault”),
3. admission of injustice or wrong doing (e.g., “What I did was wrong”),
4. acknowledgement of harm and/or victim suffering (e.g., “I know you are upset”),
5. forbearance, or promises to behave better in the future (e.g., “I will never do it again”),
6. offers of repair (e.g., “I will pay for the damages”).

Governments are not exempt from issuing an ‘I am sorry’ as a justification or defense, void of “regret or remorse.” While direct action (i.e. removal of Native American mascots) is generally more effective than “promises to behave better in the future” or “offers of repair,” apology serves an important function, helping to “offset a common tendency to blame victims for their own troubles” and “assure the victimized group that the” organization or corporation or American society at large “upholds the moral principles that were violated.” However, because apologies issued by large corporations and governments are so public, because their audience includes members of the nonvictimitized group, resistance from the nonvictimitized group—stemming from “a belief that [an] apology offered on their behalf implicates them in the injustice”—presents profit-based incentive for corporations to ignore the harm of minority communities in order to avoid losing part of their consumer base.

Blatz, Schumann, and Ross reveal how in addition to the way which remorse and compassion can blur in the language of apology, individual experience of interpersonal apology can bleed into public interpretation of apologies from governments, organizations, and

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33 Ibid, 222
34 Lazare, "TWO: The Paradox," [Page 14].
36 Ibid
corporations. When the fans of a sports team like the Washington Redskins or Kansas City Chiefs feel implicated in the use of harmful imagery, it is because “individuals express remorse for their actions primarily when they are personally responsible for a transgression…By extension, if the majority bears no [direct] responsibility for a historical harm,” then why would an organization apologize on their behalf? In other words, because football fans did not personally carry out injustices against Native Americans or the creation of stereotypes, why should they forfeit their beloved traditions and be implicated?

Perhaps this reveals a shortcoming of apologies issued by organizations, corporations, and governments: if the offending party does not fully apologize for the reach of the harm they have caused, then their apology will inherently be incomplete. Therefore, in order to completely apologize, a government must acknowledge the persistence of colonial systems as well as their role in maintaining those systems. I will be using Blatz, Schumann, and Ross’ six elements of government apology to examine two government apologies in order to assess whether either government apology acknowledges the full extent of colonial entanglements that continue to infiltrate indigenous life: the first issued by President Obama and the 111th Congress for all government-sanctioned violence towards Native American peoples, and the second issued by President Clinton and the 103rd Congress for America’s role in the colonization and overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. In addition, I will be examining the proposed plans to “offer repair” based on the understanding of settler-colonial systems demonstrated by the apology.

A TALE OF TWO GOVERNMENT APOLOGIES

In 2009, Obama and the 111th United States Congress passed a joint resolution acknowledging the Federal government’s role in the violent harm done to Native American

37 Ibid
38 Dennison, Colonial Entanglement, [Page 7].
peoples spanning from initial European contact up through the present day. The resolution has
two parts. First, there is an introduction which acknowledges the “numerous armed conflicts
which…took innocent lives”; the violation of “many of the treaties ratified by Congress and
other diplomatic agreements with Indian tribes”; the Indian Removal Act which “forced Indian
tribes and their citizens to move away from their traditional homelands and onto federally
established and controlled reservations”; the Native American peoples who “suffered and
perished” as a result of removal, massacre, allotment, assimilationist boarding schools; and how
“the policies of the Federal Government toward Indian tribes and the breaking of covenants with
Indian tribes have contributed to the severe social ills and economic troubles in many Native
communities today.” 39

The introduction sets the tone for rest of the apology: there is a strong focus on amicable
relations and reconciliation moving forward, as if colonization is complete. Neither Obama’s
2009 apology nor Clinton’s 1993 apology acknowledges the continuing effects of settler-
colonialism on Native American communities or within settler-colonial society. Just like modern
representations of Native Americans, these apologies locate Native American peoples and
settler-colonial violence in the past which “[limits] possibilities for the future of indigenous
nations.” 40

The first element of a government apology is “remorse” 41: this is the equivalent of the ‘I
am sorry’ statement. The United States expresses its remorse by “[apologizing] on behalf of the
people of the United States to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence,

39 To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal
Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United
40 Dennison, "Blood." [Page 78].
41 Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, "Government Apologies," [Page 221].
maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States; expresses its regret for the ramifications of former wrongs.”\textsuperscript{42} Next, the government must take on responsibility and admit to their “injustice or wrong doing” as well as “victim suffering.”\textsuperscript{43} The document’s entire first section functions as acknowledgement of the Federal government’s role in the colonial process. Within the apology itself, the United States government recognizes the “years of official depredations, ill-conceived policies, and the breaking of covenants by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes” and the “many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States.”\textsuperscript{44}

The apology meets the first of Blatz, Schumann, and Ross’ standards. However, in expressing “regret for ramifications,” the apology is unclear about what falls under the umbrella of “ramifications.”\textsuperscript{45} Does the United States “regret” the legacy of Native American representation in settler-colonial media and the ways those representations influence both settler-colonial and indigenous understandings of indigenous identities? Is the Dakota Access Pipeline, which was approved and began construction during Obama’s administration, included in the ramifications he claims to regret? The vagueness of “regret for ramifications” is ethically lazy, but rhetorically clever and entirely intentional on the part of the United States government: they can receive credit for apologizing without acknowledging the federal governments’ complicity in ongoing settler-colonialism or innumerable colonial entanglements.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{42} To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States, S.J. Res. 14, 111th Cong., 1st. (Apr. 30, 2009).
\textsuperscript{43} Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, "Government Apologies," [Page 221].
\textsuperscript{44} To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States, S.J. Res. 14, 111th Cong., 1st. (Apr. 30, 2009).
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid
The final two criteria, “promises to behave better in the future” and “offers of repair,” further reveal the apology’s shortcomings.\textsuperscript{47} Reiterating a narrative of peace and amicability, Congress expresses “commitment to build on the positive relationships of the past and present” in order to “move toward a brighter future where all the people of this land live reconciled as brothers and sisters, and harmoniously steward and protect this land together.”\textsuperscript{48} The implication is that healing could occur if Native American peoples were to overlook historical atrocities and ongoing systemic inequalities in favor of positive interactions because the behavior of the United States is already “better”. Reconciliation is gently encouraged by commending those who have already made efforts, but there is no explicit effort to stop colonial processes. Just as sports fans feel entitled to the use of Native American imagery in their gameday traditions because modern fans “bear no [direct] responsibility for a historical harm,” the current iteration of the United States government does not feel responsible for repairing the ongoing damage initiated by a previous iteration of the United States government.\textsuperscript{49}

Additionally, there is no tangible plan for repair. Instead, the call to reconciliation featured at the end of Obama’s apology is more of a suggestion. The resolution calls for “the President to acknowledge the wrongs of the United States against Indian tribes in the history of the United States in order to bring healing to this land” and for “all State governments similarly to work toward reconciling relationships with Indian tribes within their boundaries,” but there is no action plan.\textsuperscript{50} There is even a disclaimer further ruling out any possibility of tangible repair:

\textsuperscript{47} Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, “Government Apologies,” [Page 222].
\textsuperscript{48} To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States, S.J. Res. 14, 111th Cong., 1st. (Apr. 30, 2009).
\textsuperscript{49} Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, “Government Apologies,” [Page 222].
\textsuperscript{50} To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States, S.J. Res. 14, 111th Cong., 1st. (Apr. 30, 2009).
“nothing in this Joint Resolution—authorizes or supports any claim against the United States; or serves as a settlement of any claim against the United States.”\textsuperscript{51} Read: the United States is directly responsible for Native American genocide, but not so responsible that they should honor violated treaties or forfeit land and wealth gained from Native American genocide. What is the incentive for State or Federal governments to take on these commitments or for any American Indian Nations to believe they will? What good has expressed commitment or encouragement been in the past? It is particularly ironic that their apology features the same kinds of promises that they acknowledge violating.

Sixteen years prior to Obama’s apology, President Clinton and the 103rd Congress issued a joint resolution apologizing for the occupation, colonization, and illegal annexation of the Hawaiian Islands. Clinton’s 1993 joint resolution is structurally identical to Obama’s 2009 joint resolution, opening with a lengthy acknowledgement of the process of the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and followed by an official apology “for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii…and the deprivation of the rights of Native Hawaiians to self-determination.”\textsuperscript{52} The 2009 resolution even borrows the verbatim final disclaimer from the 1993 resolution, protecting the Federal government from having to settle any “claims against the United States.”\textsuperscript{53}

The rhetorical similarities between these apologies raise even more red flags: while colonial processes in both Hawai‘i and across the North American continent share many similarities, the United States government’s roles and ongoing relationships with Native Hawaiian peoples and American Indian peoples are different. The U.S. government was involved

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid
\textsuperscript{52} To acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the January 17, 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, and to offer an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, H.R.J. Res. 19, 103d Leg., 1st (D.C., as introduced, Jan. 5, 1993).
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid
in the process of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, providing “active support and intervention by United States diplomatic and military representatives,” and while the United States government is responsible for the annexation and incorporation of Hawai‘i as a state, the violent colonial processes and systems were installed by “American and European sugar planters, descendants of missionaries, and financiers” acting out of interest for their corporations.54 Today, where 574 American Indian tribes are recognized by the federal government and therefore “eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs,” Native Hawaiian peoples are not recognized.55 The language of the 1993 resolution reflects this, apologizing on behalf of “agents and citizens of the United States,” but the where these details are rhetorically accounted for in each resolution, the 2009 resolution fails to adjust for the relationship between the United States and Native Hawaiians.

How can the United States government simultaneously be sincere and offer a pan-Indianistic apology as if violent settler-colonialism affected (and continues to affect) all groups uniformly? The monolithic treatment of colonization reflected in the rhetorical similarities between Obama’s 2009 resolution and Clinton’s 1993 resolution also reflects the kinds of monolithic imagery discussed earlier in this paper. By combining “variant groups into one consumable package of traits,” appropriating and rewriting a variant group’s identity, Dr. Jason Edward Black argues that those variant groups can then be more easily suppressed.56 Stereotyping is “a signifying practice that bolsters white power and weakens Indigenous power” by consistently positioning the Native American in opposition to a White Euro-American. 57

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54 Ibid  
56 Black, "The 'Mascotting,'" [Page 609].  
57 Ibid, 608
‘Othering’, which is part of the settler-colonial construction of race, therefore functions to maintain settler-colonial dominance.

As Jean Dennison describes in her book *Colonial Entanglements*, colonization creates “entanglements” between history, culture, government, and the construction of race. By documenting the writing process of the Osage Nation’s 2006 Constitution, Dennison reveals how members of the Osage Nation could not separate themselves from their own personal history and culture, nor from the larger systemic, colonial processes that continue to affect any and all indigenous peoples, but especially recognized American Indian Nations. However, her argument can also provide a framework to understand United States federal and state legislative processes as ongoing processes of colonial entanglement. If modern representations of Native American peoples (i.e. Pocahontas) continue the work of historic representations (i.e. political cartoon of Lili‘uokalani) to de-legitimize Native American sovereignty via racialization or ‘othering’, it seems unlikely that the governing body of the United States would uncouple from using Native American mis-racialization as a suppression strategy. That is, if the strategy to combine “variant groups into one consumable package of traits” was deployed by the United States government to more easily suppress Native American peoples during the period of removal and assimilation (like it was in the legal classifications of the Chowan Indians), then the monolithic treatment of indigenes in apologies from the American government carries out the same function. Representation and legislation are therefore intertwined in that they work together within settler-colonialism to systematically erase Native American peoples and maintain colonial power.

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59 Milteer, “From Indians,” [Page 29].
60 Black, "The 'MASCOTTING,'" [Page 609].
Both joint resolutions successful acknowledge the historic harm caused to Native American communities but fail to meet all of Blatz, Schumann, and Ross’ standards for government apologies.⁶¹ These apologies are not discussions which make space for Native American voices – they read as confessions and absolutions of guilt for the United States government. Apologies are a starting point, but acknowledgement is not a replacement for reparations. When it comes to apologies for marginalized communities, there needs to be a plan for action working to fix the damage caused. Otherwise, there’s no consequence for “violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples,” or any other marginalized community.⁶²

In the following section, I will be examining an extremely public intersection of settler-colonial politics and the racialization of Native American peoples: Donald Trump and Elizabeth Warren’s multi-year debate over Warren’s claims to Cherokee and Delaware ancestry. Again, the ways which both politicians did or did not respond to backlash in the aftermath of Warren’s 2018 DNA test will be used to further demonstrate how this intersection reveals colonial entanglement and creates ongoing political ramifications for Native American communities.⁶³

ELIZABETH WARREN AND DONALD TRUMP: 1984 THROUGH THE PRESENT

During Donald Trump’s first presidential campaign in 2016, he began calling Senator Elizabeth Warren ‘Pocahontas’ based on her claims of Native American heritage. Trump drew from Warren’s 2012 senatorial race where her claims of Cherokee ancestry became an easy target for her Republican opponent.⁶⁴ Scott Brown specifically attacked Warren for listing

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⁶² To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States, S.J. Res. 14, 111th Cong., 1st. (Apr. 30, 2009).
⁶³ Dennison, Colonial Entanglement, [Page 7].
⁶⁴ Phelps, "What's behind".
herself as a Native American faculty member at Harvard and Rutgers. Both Brown and Trump accused Warren of using a false Native American identity to increase her chances of being hired: “I find it offensive that Goofy Elizabeth Warren, sometimes referred to as Pocahontas, pretended to be Native American to get in Harvard.” While Warren never attended Harvard University (she held a faculty position there), their accusations have grounds. In a 1996 Harvard Crimson article about diversity in the staff at Harvard Law School, Warren was cited by the school’s spokesperson as one of the few minority law professors. In other words, there is documentation of academic institutions touting her self-proclaimed Native American identity. However, her claims predate her faculty positions. In fact, they extend back to a 1984 cookbook.

*Pow Wow Chow: a Collection of Recipes from Families of the Five Civilized Tribes* featured several recipes listed under “Elizabeth Warren, Cherokee”. Her earliest claims to Native American identity are not legal, but cultural. She asserts her claims across multiple platforms. However, she did not begin claiming Native American ancestry in an official capacity until 1986. According to the Washington Post, Warren marked her race as “American Indian” on her 1986 State Bar of Texas card. Since 1986,

Warren reported herself as minority in the directory every year starting in 1986 — when [the Association of American Law Schools] first included a list of minority law professors — to 1995, when her name dropped off the list. Warren also had her ethnicity changed from white to Native American in December 1989 while working at the

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65 Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), "I find it offensive that Goofy Elizabeth Warren, sometimes referred to as Pocahontas, pretended to be Native American to get in Harvard.,” Twitter, May 26, 2016, 5:15 PM.
University of Pennsylvania. The change came two years after she was hired there.

Several months after Warren started working at Harvard Law School in 1995, she okayed listing her ethnicity as Native American. Harvard listed Warren as Native American in its federal affirmative action forms from 1995 to 2004, records show.69 Furthermore, an extensive 2018 investigation by the Boston Globe reveals that while she did list herself as a minority professor, it never affected institutions’ decisions to hire her: records show that she was always hired as a White woman, then changed her ethnic identification after she was already a faculty member.70 Her listed ethnicity allowed universities to appear more diverse, but no evidence exists pointing to ethnicity being a factor in Universities’ decisions to hire her.

The core of Trump’s and Brown’s accusations are Warren’s alleged abuse of Affirmative Action. Rather than framing their public call-out in terms of harm Warren’s claims cause for Native American communities, they frame their logic around the threat Warren poses to settler-colonial power. When Trump expresses that he is personally “offended” by Warren’s claims, we can conclude that he means he is “offended” by the threats her claims pose to Whiteness.71 It is clear, however, that “offense” is simply an avenue for Trump and Brown to strawman Warren as a means to achieve political success.72 Trump’s use of “Pocahontas” is especially telling: weaponizing “Pocahontas” redirects attention from any damage he causes so that he can avoid taking responsibility for the ways he perpetuates the legacies of settler-colonialism. Rather, the blame is deflected onto Warren and the Democratic Party as an institution.

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69 Ibid
70 Annie Linskey, "Ethnicity not a factor in Elizabeth Warren's rise in law," Boston Globe (Boston, MA), September 1, 2018.
71 Trump, "I find," Twitter.
72 Ibid
In 2018, after Trump had been in office for 2 years, “Pocahontas” was still actively used as a nickname for Warren. Trump brought tensions to a boiling point by challenging Warren to a DNA ancestry test:

Let’s say I’m debating Pocahontas, right? I promise you I’ll do this. I will take – you know those little kits they sell on television for $2. Learn your heritage,” Trump said back in July. “And we will say, I will give you a million dollars to your favorite charity, paid for by Trump, if you take the test so that it shows you’re an Indian.73

In the 2012 race, Warren always defended herself and her claims, saying “These are my family stories…This is what my brothers and I were told by my mom and my dad, my mammaw and my pappaw.”74 She cites photos of family members with “high cheekbones like all of the Indians” have as the main evidence of her Native American ancestry.75 When Trump challenged her to a DNA test, she bit. In a video provided by the Washington Post, she reveals the results of her DNA test:

Stanford professor, Carlos D. Bustamante: “In the Senator’s genome, we did find five segments of Native American ancestry with very high confidence, where we believe the error rate is less than one in a thousand”

Warren: “Now, the president likes to call my mom a liar. What do the facts say?”

Stanford professor, Carlos D. Bustamante: “The facts suggest that you absolutely have Native American ancestry in your pedigree”76

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73 Phelps, "What's behind”.
75 Ibid
Trump responded,

Pocahontas (the bad version), sometimes referred to as Elizabeth Warren, is getting slammed. She took a bogus DNA test and it showed that she may be 1/1024, far less than the average American. Now Cherokee Nation denies her, “DNA test is useless.” Even they don’t want her. Phony!  

Deploying language which leaves no room for gray area or nuance – such as “Phony,” “facts,” and “liar” – makes it clear that this feud is framed as a partisan debate: one of the participants is right and one is wrong. One is grounded in “facts,” and the other is a “liar” or a “Phony.” Suddenly, Trump and Warren are in a partisan battle for personal credibility; they use Native American identity politics to center themselves. They are simultaneously the product of, and engineers of, colonial entanglements. While Warren and Trump bicker about which side of the settler-colonial aisle is more correct; when Trump invokes Disney’s Pocahontas and further removes her from her historical context; when DNA tests “they sell on television for $2” are positioned as an accurate way to gauge Native American identity, settler-colonial politicians use their public platform to make dangerous assertions about the authenticity of Native American identities. In a letter from a group of Cherokee citizens to Elizabeth Warren, they remark that this “represents the most public debate about [their] identity in a generation. In a country where Indigenous people are mostly invisible, what Americans conclude from this debate will impact

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77 Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), "Pocahontas (the bad version), sometimes referred to as Elizabeth Warren, is getting slammed. She took a bogus DNA test and it showed that she may be 1/1024, far less than the average American. Now Cherokee Nation denies her, 'DNA test is useless.' Even they don't want her. Phony!,” Twitter, October 16, 2018, 8:06 AM.
79 Trump, "Pocahontas (the bad version)," Twitter.
80 Dennison, Colonial Entanglement, [Page 5].
Native rights for years to come.” These are the stakes for Native American peoples: the parameters of Native American identity are debated publicly and frivolously by settlers.

**IS BLOOD THICKER THAN DNA?**

Warren is not the first settler to claim an Indian grandmother. In fact, it has been so common that in Vine Deloria Jr.’s 1969 manifesto, he coined “Indian Grandmother Complex” to describe the phenomenon:

Whites claiming Indian blood generally tend to reinforce mythical beliefs about Indians. All but one person I met who claimed Indian blood claimed it on their grandmother's side. I once did a projection backward and discovered that evidently most tribes were entirely female for the first three hundred years of white occupation.

The complex is deployed as a “move to innocence.” Settlers can use a mythical ancestor to absolve responsibility for settler colonialism and, once again, justify occupying Native American lands. Where Disney’s noble savage Indian Princess is conflated with land via sexual availability, the Indian Grandmother personalizes the access to Indigeneity that European settlers projected onto Native Americans. Settlers use blood to claim a mythical Indian in order to distance themselves from a settler identity. Just as Disney sanitizes a national mythology, individuals feel compelled to sanitize and justify their personal origin stories and, in doing so, are carrying out settler-colonialism.

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84 Ibid
85 Deloria, "Introduction," introduction, [Page 5].
Asserting Native American identity outside of tribal parameters of belonging undermines Native American peoples’ right to self-determine their own identities and belonging. Rather than a racial category able to be defined by blood-quantum or DNA, “[Indianness is] a legal, social, cultural, and historical construct, where Indigenous nations self-define the parameters of belonging. Put simply, it’s not about who you claim, it’s about who claims you.”

Both Elizabeth Warren and the institutions who touted her as a minority professor should have required tribal enrollment or record of lineage before allowing her to list herself as Native American. Warren cannot trace her lineage properly enough to have any kind of official or tribally recognized claim to Native American ancestry, yet she claimed it through a mythical Indian Grandmother and “high cheekbones,” completely invalidating any the process the Cherokee Nation has in place to determine their own tribal belonging. For a settler to assert Native American identity outside of these processes is to colonize Native American identity; it is to take it, disregard the self-determination of Native American communities, redefine it, and use it for personal gain.

Basing Native American identity off DNA implies that Native American identity is defined by genetic features assigned to or projected onto Native American peoples rather than determined by the communities themselves: When Warren cites skull shape (high cheekbones) as evidence of her family’s Native American heritage, she participates in the tradition of phrenology. Kim Tallbear demonstrates that the biological grounds of race as tracked through DNA testing can be attributed to racialist science – like phrenology – practiced in the 19th

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86 Estes, "Native American."
87 Franke-Ruta, "Is Elizabeth," Politics.
88 Ibid
century. In the same way that modern media representations of Native American peoples carry on the work of historical representations, modern DNA testing and genetic scientific used today to determine Native American ancestry was born directly out of White supremacist racialist scientific practices and therefore must be designed to carry out the same process of racialization:

If race in the form of genetic ancestry comes to have greater influence in how we understand Native American or Aboriginal identity, historical and legal relationships and federal-government obligations to tribes and First Nations may fade further from view… The marketing of DNA tests to tribes, First Nations, and others clearly has much broader implications than simple revisions in enrollment policy…DNA markers – when there is something tangible to gain – may be used to legitimate claims that contradict and potentially contravene prior tribal claims based in historical treaties, law, and policy, even if the groups that use Native American-DNA analysis do not intend to undermine existing tribal claims and law.

Perhaps this reveals why it is so violent to simultaneously evoke Disney’s Pocahontas and posit DNA as a means to determine Native American ancestry: Trump used his political platform to endorse and progress the racialization of Native American peoples through media representations and through genetic science. Pocahontas was not Cherokee. By calling Warren “Pocahontas” based on Warren’s claims to Cherokee ancestry, he combines “variant groups into one consumable package of traits” just like North Carolina officials did to the Chowans, just like the 1993 and 2009 joint resolutions do, just like settler-colonial media representations of Indigenous peoples do. When Trump pulls Native American media representations and Native American

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90 Ibid, 36
91 Ibid, 102-103
92 Black, "The ’Mascoting,'" [Page 608].
DNA into the center of the American political sphere, it becomes even clearer that they work together by design. They function as pieces of a larger settler-colonial puzzle.

THE AFTERMATH

After the results of Warren’s DNA test were revealed, Trump called for Warren to apologize to “the American Public”:

Now that her claims of being of Indian heritage have turned out to be a scam and a lie, Elizabeth Warren should apologize for perpetrating this fraud against the American Public. Harvard called her “a person of color” (amazing con), and would not have taken her otherwise!\(^\text{93}\)

The language of “facts”\(^\text{94}\) and phonies, \(^\text{95}\) of authenticities in question, becomes more concrete in this tweet. No longer is Warren offensive\(^\text{96}\) or a phony, she is a “scam”; a “con”; a “fraud.”\(^\text{97}\) It is clear that Trump perceives he has won the debate – he never donated the “million dollars to [Warren’s] favorite charity.”\(^\text{98}\) For Trump, the DNA test was a failure because it determined that Warren had Indigenous American ancestry. Instead, the fraudulence of the DNA test acts as his absolution. Trump apologized to Pocahontas at one of his rallies, but continued to use her name in reference to Warren.\(^\text{99}\)

\(^{93}\) Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), "Now that her claims of being of Indian heritage have turned out to be a scam and a lie, Elizabeth Warren should apologize for perpetrating this fraud against the American Public. Harvard called her 'a person of color' (amazing con), and would not have taken her otherwise!," Twitter. October 16, 2016, 8:16 AM.
\(^{95}\) Trump, "Pocahontas (the bad version)," Twitter.
\(^{96}\) Trump, "I find," Twitter.
\(^{97}\) Trump, "Now that," Twitter.
\(^{98}\) Phelps, "What's behind".
While Warren never offered an apology “for perpetrating this fraud against the American Public,”\textsuperscript{100} she has offered a myriad of private and public apologies: an address to the National Congress of American Indians,\textsuperscript{101} a speech at the Native American Forum in Iowa,\textsuperscript{102} apologies in response to questions from the press,\textsuperscript{103} and even private apologies to incumbent Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Bill John Baker.\textsuperscript{104} In all of these apologies, Warren emphasizes tribal citizenship as the determining factor of tribal belonging, but there is a clear and strong defense of her family’s stories and claims to Native American ancestry. For this argument, I examined her most recent apology in response to an open letter composed by individual citizens of the Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

THE CHEROKEE NATION AND ELIZABETH WARREN IN CONVERSATION

In late February of 2020, citizens of the Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians collaboratively published a call to action. 177 Cherokee signers and 74 Native citizen signers assert that while Warren issued multiple apologies since the DNA test, none had been adequate.\textsuperscript{105} Not long after, Warren replied with a 12-page self-defense-apology hybrid. I plan to assess how well Warren’s apology meets the requests of the Cherokee peoples. Because Warren is not a government, but an individual, it does not make sense to use Blatz, Schumann, and Ross’ standards for government apologies to

\textsuperscript{100} Trump, ”Now that,” Twitter.
\textsuperscript{101} Elizabeth Warren, ”Address to the National Congress of American Indians' Executive Council Winter Session & Tribal Nations Policy Summit” (speech, Washington D.C., February 14, 2018).
\textsuperscript{103} ”Elizabeth Warren apologises for Native American claims: ’I am not a tribal citizen,” video, YouTube, posted by Guardian News, February 6, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQdUiFLxqPQ.
\textsuperscript{104} Estes, “Native American.”
\textsuperscript{105} Letter by Pierce et al., ”Open Letter.”
determine if Warren’s apology is complete. Still, because this apology is so public and so formal, I will call upon Blatz, Schumann, and Ross’ work as a framework for understanding elements of apologies and how they function rhetorically. The Cherokee peoples’ letter features three clearly stated requests. First,

Like many other white families, your family story of Cherokee and Delaware ancestry is false and it was wrong for you to repeat it as an adult. You have had the genealogical evidence since 2012. Stating you do not qualify for citizenship is not enough; the truth is you and your ancestors are white.106

Warren must accept responsibility and admit injustice or wrong doing in clear language.107 Growing up with “family stories” of “high cheekbones” cannot be an excuse for public ignorance.108 Next,

Equating Cherokee identity with the results of a DNA test was more than a misstep — it was dangerous. Your supporters and the public need to understand why. We ask that you explain that only tribal affiliation and kinship determine Native identity, and that equating Native identity with race and biology erodes the foundation of Indigenous sovereignty.109

Finally,

Claiming Native identity without citizenship, kinship ties, or recognition from Native communities undermines Indigenous self determination. As the most public example of

106 Ibid
108 Franke-Ruta, "Is Elizabeth," Politics.
109 Letter by Pierce et al., "Open Letter."
this behavior, you need to clearly state that Native people are the sole authority on who is — and who is not — Native.\textsuperscript{110}

The authors and signers recognize that the only way to move towards repairing the damage caused by Trump and Warren’s political spat is to procure a public explanation of harm which includes sustainable behavior patterns for the future.

On the first page of her 12-page apology letter, Warren says,

I am not a person of color; I am a white woman, and that is how I identify. In addition, I am not a tribal citizen. Tribal Nations—and only Tribal Nations—determine tribal citizenship. It’s their right as a matter of sovereignty, and they exercise that in the ways they choose to exercise it. I have said very publicly—and I will continue to say—that DNA does not determine tribal citizenship. This is no small point because of the long history of colonialism and violence perpetrated against Native communities, people, and identity by this country. And I understand that the confusion my actions propagated around tribal sovereignty and citizenship caused real harm to Native people and communities. I was wrong to have identified as a Native American, and, without qualification or excuse, I apologize for the harm I caused.\textsuperscript{111}

In this paragraph alone, Warren seems to meet all of the requests of the Cherokee peoples’ open letter: she declares her Whiteness and denounces claims to Native American ancestry, she unequivocally states that DNA is a harmful measure for tribal citizenship, and that Tribal Nations are the sole determinants of tribal belonging. Yet, if all the requirements are met on the first page, then why is the document 12 pages long?

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid
Warren’s rhetoric is strategically crafted. She says nothing about her family, only declaring her own Whiteness. Perhaps their Whiteness is implied by proxy, but the Cherokee peoples’ letter emphasizes clarity as Warren’s weakness – the gaps and absences in her response speak the loudest. She says nothing about determining “who is — and who is not — Native,” instead using the language of “tribal citizenship.” 112 Tribal citizenship is a key part of tribal belonging but defining Native American belonging through tribal enrollment erases unenrolled Native American peoples. Warren intentionally did not use the language in the Cherokee peoples’ letter. Finally, Warren says nothing to her “supporters and the public” – this letter was not widely circulated amongst settlers. 113 What good is her platform if she will not use it effectively? Her opening tricks the reader into thinking she has addressed the harm she has caused, but her opening is followed by 11 pages of self-defense. She cites examples of Native American peoples accepting her apologies; she modifies her statements with ‘but’; and she provides a long-winded resume of ways which she has worked to benefit indigenous communities. 114 The tone of her apology is not sincerely sorry, but defensive and annoyed.

Were the 1993 and 2009 resolutions not rhetorically defensive? Obviously, apologizing for the whole of colonization on behalf of an entire country is on a different scale than apologizing for taking DNA test, but neither offending party offers tangible repair. 115 Emphasizing reconciliation and a history of positive interactions is to 11 pages of self-defense as an anti-claim disclaimer is to strategic diction. Warren’s apology is simply the most recent in a line of apologies to Native American communities for appropriation, for misrepresentation, or for genocide.

112 Ibid
113 Letter by Pierce et al., "Open Letter."
114 Letter by Warren, "Reply Letter."
The shape of the relationship between apologies, settler-colonial representations of Native American peoples, Native American blood and DNA, and the United States government is less circular and, as Dennison posited, more entangled.\textsuperscript{116} Settler-colonial representations of Native American peoples and apologies specifically are deeply entangled: the rhetoric of apologies is a kind of representation, using the same strategies to group Native Americans together as racial ‘others.’ Apologies, present or absent, complete or inadequate, help reveal some of the cause of entanglement. If offending parties were sincerely committed to change, they would offer tangible repair, listen to indigenous requests, and would take full responsibility for harm caused.\textsuperscript{117} They would forfeit power and wealth in order to undo harmful structures. However, ultimately, settler-colonialism is, always has been, and always will be intentional.

No government will willingly give up a picturesque national origin for something bloody and difficult to confront; no one wants to admit that they are complicit in genocide; no one wants to confront their favorite childhood cartoon. We can conclude from the evidence in this thesis the United States implemented strategies to erase the original inhabitants of land they wanted to colonize. We can also conclude that Warren sought financial benefits when she listed herself as “American Indian.”\textsuperscript{118} She acknowledges the “the injustice of ‘white members of fake ‘tribes’”—which ‘rely solely on family stories and commercial DNA tests’—‘having’ been awarded over $800 million in no-bid federal contracts set aside for minority business owners,’” but claims her situation is different because she “never benefited financially or professionally.”\textsuperscript{119} Why would

\textsuperscript{116} Dennison, \textit{Colonial Entanglement}, [Page 5].
\textsuperscript{117} Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, "Government Apologies," [Page 222].
\textsuperscript{118} Linskey and Gardner, "Elizabeth Warren."
\textsuperscript{119} Letter by Warren, "Reply Letter."
she list herself as “American Indian”\textsuperscript{120} throughout her legal career, relying “solely on family stories and commercial DNA tests,” if she did not expect to receive some kind of benefit?\textsuperscript{121} Apologies (or lack thereof) from the United States government, Elizabeth Warren, and Donald Trump reveal settler-colonialism to be entangled, intentional, and ongoing.

\textsuperscript{120} Linskey and Gardner, "Elizabeth Warren."
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid
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Walt Disney Pictures. Disney's rendering of Pocahontas stares into the distance as leaves swirl around her. Image. Lakota Children's Enrichment. September 11, 2015.


