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On Relanguaging:
From Documentation to Decolonization

Barbra A. Meek

> "You could argue that the [Catholic] churches are evidence of a cultural erasure, but they're not only that—rather, they are proof of how every society is a palimpsest, and every artifact an amalgam. . . . But in choosing how to remember them, we are also choosing how to move ahead."
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> —Hanya Yanagihara, "The Long Walk," Letter from the Editor, *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, February 20, 2022[1]

This quote underscores the significance of variation in acts of remembering and moving forward and the power of hope. The author (and editor in chief) was reflecting simultaneously on the articles in a 2022 issue of *T: The New York Times Style Magazine* and on the enduring pandemic. The title of her piece, "The Long Walk," alludes, intentionally or not, to many Long Walks that have resulted in cultural erasure and the removal of human beings. For many Native Americans, this phrase signals the long walks of displacement and relocation to "empty" lands and urban spaces. For many US-socialized people, this phrase recalls a high school class in which students learned about the Long Walk that the Five Civilized Nations took from their homes in the south to the land that would become the state of Oklahoma (and as a result of colonization, they would end up neighbors with my tribe, the Comanche Nation). There were other Long Walks of forced removal in North America, though that one is arguably the most well-known. While the passage above underscores the impact of such disruptive and tragic events, referencing the powerful forces behind their impact, it also offers hope by recognizing that syncretism inflects all social existence. Variation and change emerge from such moments of contact, whether through forceful acts of

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domination or mundane acts of exchange. My essay is a kind of reflective walk, ambling along a somewhat dusty historical chronology of research on sociolinguistic variation within Native North America.[2] And though my cases will be drawn primarily from my own research and experience, I'm hopeful that some of the discussion and proposed ideas will inspire new ways to remember, to conduct research, to question and analyze, and to move ahead in new, possibly uncharted ways that are an amalgam of where sociolinguistic research with First Nations has been and where many of us hope it will go. Furthermore, this slant-rhyme-approximate "rasanblaj" approach, interspersing different kinds of narratives and accounts to establish intertextual connections, is also a journey of relanguaging, recognizing that the destination—of antiracism, social justice, and decolonization—may be reached from a variety of trails and not just one singular pathway.[3]

The above passage serves not only as an introduction to the ideas in this essay, but it also charts our path. Here's where we're headed. After some assumptions and background, our first stop will be at cultural erasure, then we'll make our way to society as a palimpsest, and finally end our tour at artifacts as amalgams. Marking the way are excerpts of dialogue from the 1994 Hollywood movie *Maverick*, starring Mel Gibson, Jodie Foster, and Graham Greene. As we pause at these excerpts, they are intended to provide opportunities for reflection, to reveal taken-for-granted assumptions, and to elucidate alternative perspectives. The clips I've chosen center on Graham Greene's tour-de-force performance as Joseph.

Let's start with an overlooked scene to set the pace and offer a morsel for you to chew on as we begin. That morsel is the (linguistic) personification of American Indians. Once you've read the transcript, we'll move along without discussing it until later. I hope that's okay. The scene is a business meeting between Graham Greene's character, Joseph, and the Russian archduke, played by Paul L. Smith. Joseph is arranging a hunting excursion for the archduke in exchange for a nice chunk of change.[4]

Scene 1: Doing Business with an Archduke

The ARCHDUKE laughs and waves.

JOSEPH (To the man behind him): Big asshole. (To the archduke) *Bonjour, bonjour, Monseigneur. Comment allez-vous?*

ARCHDUKE: *C'est la langue de missionnaire. Parles anglais.*

JOSEPH (Raises left hand, then right, while rolling eyes): How, white man.

ARCHDUKE: Hello, noble savage. I have a terrible day. I kill every animal in sight and is boring me.

JOSEPH: Boring?

ARCHDUKE: Boring.

JOSEPH: Then maybe his largeness be interested in greatest western thrill of all.

ARCHDUKE: What t'is it? What?

JOSEPH: Come, come.

Some Signposts

Popular media are powerful sign-vehicles for producing and reproducing entrenched, familiar discourses that resonate with institutionalized, nation-building narratives. Relevant to this essay are the narrative elements that scaffold predominant, "white supremacist" interpretations of difference, or what Jane Hill referred to as the "everyday language of white racism," a logic of difference grounded in a Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic (WEIRD), usually white perspective.[5] Building on Hill's groundwork, Paul Kroskrity pointed out that linguistic racisms are "negative characterizations [that] are not the deliberate product of racist intentions but rather a medium of indirect linkages to negative stereotypes that invoke social inequality and reproduce social difference [and inequities]."[6] The goal of this essay is to reveal some of these linkages, their influence on my own fieldwork and research, and some steps to redress the unintended consequences. While some negative elements remain consistent across visions of otherness ("white" versus some degree of color; articulate versus inarticulate), the semiotics that have defined Native America and American Indians for the majority of people worldwide include emblematic features such as a raised hand accompanied by a unique, low-pitched, gravelly vocalization, "How."[7] This essay will focus capaciously on the linguistic configurations of Indigenous difference and some of the variations within and across this imagery, from salvage projects and subsequent language revitalization initiatives to scripted dialogue and performance. With these illustrations, I invite you to reflect on what the variations index in the examples presented and ask yourself: What variation has been erased or is missing or has been overlooked (and overshadowed)? In addition, as you continue to reflect on the first dialogue excerpt, consider what these erasures and epitomized, iconic elements might mean, what negative characterizations are intentionally and unintentionally being configured, how they may influence our academic assumptions, and where they have led our scholarship.[8]

A flourishing of critical work by a range of interdisciplinary scholars has recently been published, concerned with articulating a process for achieving antiracism and decolonization. Within linguistics broadly construed, recent articles have been sketching out how to change the field, to make it a more equitable and just scholarly enterprise (see, for example, Adrienne Tsikewa's piece on decolonization in the flagship journal *Language*). The *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* published a set of articles on racism and settler colonialism and how these two "white" projects have defined linguistic anthropology.[9] In addition, the March 2022 issue of *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* interrogates what social justice means in the context of applied linguistic research involving underresourced communities of color (often the authors' own communities). The investigations range from bilingual classrooms where nonwhite students' command of more than one linguistic variety is devalued to historical trauma in Indigenous communities and the pursuit of language reclamation.[10,11] A 2022 commentary by Anne Charity Hudley and Nelson Flores concludes the issue by reminding readers "that the agendas of linguistics

and applied linguistics were set by white and mostly male scholars long before [any of us were professors], yet their ramifications impact us and disproportionately impact the communities that we belong to and do research with."[12] They implore their colleagues to break down linguistic barriers and embrace what interdisciplinary scholar Patriann Smith has labeled a "transraciolinguistic justice."[13] In short, this approach to justice requires two interventions, what I'm calling *semiotic marginalization* (or the recognition of negative, demeaning patterns of differentiation) and *relanguaging* (or the intentional challenging and transforming of these demeaning, pejorative patterns of differentiation). For now, my point is that these critical first steps are happening, and when we look outside of linguistics and anthropology, we find that critical work in media studies has led the way in many respects.

For Native America, scholars of media and Native American studies have long claimed that the majority of non-Native audiences conceptualize Indianness through popular films, television shows, and books. That is, the prevalent and popular images of Indians have arisen from media rather than face-to-face interactions. Regardless of how these images were first assembled, the majority of audience members have no real-life experience nor historical knowledge with which to evaluate the manufactured visualization confronting them. The power of these media is the ground they lay, the expectations they mediate, and the outcomes they influence. These representations, interdiscursively coordinated across genres, mediums, and institutions of settler colonial storytelling, remain entrenched in educational, socializing discourses and practices, including a popular November holiday in the United States. While scholars of media and Native American studies have troubled many of the stereotypic elements of these characterizations, they've focused primarily on the visual and discursive semiotics of the media, disregarding the accompanying linguistic performances beyond noting the use of "Tonto-speak" (or Hollywood Injun English) by Native American characters in Hollywood films and television shows.[14] As I've argued elsewhere, language inflects these portrayals in significant ways.[15]

The lack of variation and complexity, visual or linguistic, that emerge in these portrayals emblematize Native Americanness and intertextually link these racialized images, thus perpetuating a version of American Indianness grounded in white supremacy. And yet, is literal recognition of these portrayals—that is, the ability to point out the problematic images or performances and critique them—enough to dislodge and "relanguage" years, decades, centuries of cultural, institutional, and linguistic subordination and eradication? My argument asserts that recognizing the scaffolding that supports white supremacy isn't enough, nor is decolonization necessarily the appropriate, relevant, or universal process for challenging white supremacy.[16] That is, experiences of white supremacy vary and the impact of white supremacy on communities of color also varies. People are socialized into and through white supremacy in different, semiotically marginalizing ways. Furthermore, white supremacy takes hold through processes of *semiotic marginalization*, the acts of identifying, bundling, and associating nonstandard features with negative deviance. A pervasive example of this in the characterization of Native Americans, as also observed by Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, is when "[a] command of English has been written out of the script already."[17] While the lack of a command

of a standard form of a language may be a seemingly universal strategy for marking deviance, the particular form that such processes of semiotic marginalization take will undoubtedly vary across groups and group portrayals.

For Native Americans, white supremacy is settler colonialism, such that decolonization is one approach for redressing the forms of subordination that accompany this circumstance. For non-Native people, decolonization may not be the relevant approach because their socialization into and through discourses of white supremacy are different. Even within and across different Indigenous nations, experiences and socializing discourses fluctuate and diverge. Such variation matters in crucial ways that I'll discuss below. For now, to unsettle settler colonial, white supremacist logics requires enhanced socialization, or what I'm calling "relanguaging." Thus, while this piece focuses on Native North America, I hope the reader finds the tactics for relanguaging a useful point of departure for thinking about processes of racism and antiracism or recolonization and decolonization in your areas of research and in your communities of practice. Thus, given the embeddedness of these dominant logics—of white racism and settler coloniality—in both "language-ing" difference and "difference-ing" language, how does one decapitulate, reimagine, and then facilitate a process of relanguaging?[18,19] How do we as scholars, allies, or advocates move beyond the steps of recognizing the structures, forms, and practices of white racism and settler coloniality—of acknowledging our intertwined histories—and use that knowledge to "choose how to move ahead"?

Erasures: "Indian" Dialects and Multilingualism

Our first stop features a prototypical colonial encounter: settlers (cowboys) and Indians. In this scene from *Maverick*, the main settler characters (played by James Garner, Jodie Foster, and Mel Gibson) are aggressively approached by the Indian characters, who are whooping and hollering in true Western fashion. Maverick orchestrates the encounter, directing Joseph to perform a stereotypic Indian warriorness in an attempt to manipulate James Garner's character Coop and Jodie Foster's character Annabelle. As the scene unfolds, the verbal banter between Maverick and Joseph counters most Westerns' depictions of cowboy and Indian relationships, indexing a (mutual) partnership as opposed to a (hostile) rivalry. In pragmatic fashion, Maverick's directive remanifests Coop's and Annabelle's—and the audiences'—expectations. Linguistically, the vocal signaling and linguistic differences underscore the savagery of the Indian characters and the civility of the white characters.[20]

Scene 2: Speaking an "Indian" Dialect

MAVERICK: (subtitled) Friend, go with me on this—I'll explain later.

JOSEPH: (subtitled) How long will it take—it's getting hot.

MAVERICK: (subtitled) I'll make it quick—scream at me now.

JOSEPH and OTHERS scream.

COOP: What's he say?

MAVERICK: Uh, well it seems we've committed a terrible sin. We're on sacred ground.

ANNABELLE: We didn't know we were on sacred ground! Can't you just explain that to him?

MAVERICK: Yeah.

MAVERICK: (subtitled) Shake your head and fire your rifle in the air—look really mad—lots of words.

JOSEPH does so; others following his lead.

MAVERICK: Uh . . . well his gods demand a sacrifice, there's no way out of it. Sacred ground is sacred ground.

COOP: Sacrifice.

MAVERICK: Human.

MAVERICK: (subtitled) You're doing great—Point your finger around at everybody and speak angry!

JOSEPH does so, with untitled dialogue.

MAVERICK: Well he says, we . . . we can go if one of us passes the Indian bravery test, but one of us has to go with him.

ANNABELLE: What's the Indian bravery test?

MAVERICK: Well, you see that (repeating one of Joseph's gestures) . . . he cuts off both your hands. If you don't make a sound, you pass.

JOSEPH: (subtitled) Who's the girl? She's pretty.

MAVERICK: (subtitled) Point to her, say you want her.

JOSEPH: (subtitled) I do want her, is she available?

Whooping, barking, and hollering commences.

MAVERICK (to ANNABELLE): I'll die before I'll let him touch you.

The one exception to the mapping of language and personae in this scene is Maverick, who speaks both English and the "Indian dialect."[21] While Westerns often have one character who is bilingual and serves as a translator for both white characters and audiences, the performance in this scene deviates slightly from the prototypical scenario, in that the linguistically precocious character (think John Wayne's character in *Hondo*) is usually part white and part Indian, and phenotypically white. This pattern isn't maintained here. A bilingual competence is shared by both Maverick and Joseph. However, Mel Gibson's character "directs" the performance of Indianness by the Indian characters ("Scream! Speak angry!") and accounts for their hostile actions as due to the settlers'

trespassing on "sacred" grounds. Whether or not these actions are a subtle recognition of Hollywood's role (and a logic of whiteness) in the construction of Indianness, the scene explicitly draws on the association of language and race/ethnicity, performed here for the white "settler" addressees, and by extension a white viewing audience. Language plays a minor characterological role, further differentiating the two types of groups by laminating English on the settler bodies and an "Indian" dialect on the Native American bodies, aligning respectability and ignobility respectively and aligning viewers' expectations with those of the settler characters.[22]

This stop along the path of our walk grounds viewers' expectations in a settler colonial framework. It portrays the age-old contestation of settlers and Indians, underscored by the behavioral contrasts depicted in this scene from *Maverick*. While this scene is ultimately poking fun at the settler characters, what the characters and the audience see are familiar contrasts. What is not performed in this scene is Joseph's knowledge of English; he pointedly does not take on the role of translator (and cultural broker). His English competence is erased, maintaining the fiction of a monoglot standard as the norm for Indigenous communities.[23]

This assumption fertilized the roots of US imperialism, manifesting in its colonial strategies qua linguistic research via ethnographic "salvage" projects. Articulated by Franz Boas as foundational to American anthropology, the salvage approach took for granted a one-to-one correspondence of language, culture, and group (or tribe).[24,25] The drive to identify Native American groups by language and locate them in specific places was unflinchingly a settler colonial project of domination: identify, contain, and restrain. This nationalistic isomorphism has remained, influencing approaches to documenting Indigenous languages and the methodological tenets of language endangerment and revitalization. The resulting scholarship in the guise of grammars and narratives primarily entextualized one language or, more specifically, one linguistic variety. They overlooked or disregarded the linguistic diversity of these situations, the multiple variations and emerging forms such as dialects, mixed languages, and new varieties.[26] Alternatively, one might ask how that could be cultural erasure when it's intended to "save" a language by providing documentation of its existence and its unadulterated forms before it disappears. And yet, what gets documented is very limited and limiting, in that only the "last vestiges" of language are attended to, embodied by the "last" elderly speaker. The remnants of these efforts, the grammars and field notes gathering dust in libraries and archives, are what Bernard Perley has called "zombie linguistics."[27] The linguistic vitalities that persist, even thrive, are erased.[28]

In a similar manner, these scholars and researchers defined these objects of study based on their own WEIRD training and philological traditions, traditions heavily focused on words, identifying cognates, and establishing historical linguistic relationships. They have also had the last word on what is and is not a language or a culture, who is and is not a speaker, and where all of these originated. As linguistic anthropologists Krystal A. Smalls and Jenny L. Davis have recently noted, an ideology of "firstness" maintains a form of cultural erasure that privileges certain narratives and etymologies over others, erasing, for example, the multiple groups and individuals who anchor their histories and cultures in particular tracts of land as part of colonizing

efforts to identify the "original" people. This is a practice of erasure (and allotting) that persists within American linguistics and American anthropology through investigations of origins (underwritten by a Western obsession with ownership). As with Catholic churches, the conversion of Indigenous epistemologies and histories into and through these fields and their assumed isomorphisms provides evidence of settler colonial erasures.

One outcome of this salvage frame—from a white, Western gaze—is the subordination of language variation and linguistic varieties as unworthy or less central objects of investigation and documentation. Furthermore, contemporary erasures of linguistic variation result in the reification and typification of an ideal Native language speaker-hearer as an Indigenous monoglot elder and the marginalization of other Native language users.[29] Thus, an ideology of "firstness" combined with one of purism which are both tethered to Western concepts of personhood, property, and ownership seem inevitably destined to remove the complexities of Indigenous life on the ground, semiotically marginalizing some language users and their language practices because they deviate from the idealized fluency of the epitomized elder speakers.

Twenty-first century fieldwork approaches have attempted to address this myopia. Discussions of internal review boards and an ethics of collaboration, such as community-based participatory research initiatives, intend to transform the process of (institutionalized) research, but the projects that get funded are still very much centered on grammar and "scripted" interactions rather than unscripted, emergent conversations.[30,31] Some of this erasure is sustained by local ideologies of appropriateness and pedagogy, but also an enduring salvage framework and a purist ideology. The projects remain anchored in Western scholarly concerns and institutional control. Even when tribes and First Nations manage their heritage language projects, Western objectives and purviews are often maintained (and go largely unquestioned).

In reflecting on how key terms and theories have affected how I approach research, I returned to my early fieldwork experiences. In many ways, the work I was doing documenting Kaska by eliciting full verb paradigms alongside my colleague Patrick Moore didn't seem especially exclusive or marginalizing or erasing. In fact, we were providing some of the first descriptions of the language informed by the First Nations' own language efforts. At the same time, only some individuals participated in the Kaska elicitation sessions (elders and young elders), and although my research was focused on children's language practices, there remained a sense that children's language practices were evidence of endangerment rather than of grammatical form (and new innovations). Even my former adviser, mentor, and colleague, Jane Hill, remarked on the narrowness of this Western, "white" imperialist perspective early on in her career: "The central difficulty and the source of my role as imperialist is, it seems to me, that my work was done completely from the point of view of the 'white' culture, in a narrow tradition of Western scholarship almost completely inaccessible to my informants."[32]

To change direction, it's useful to think about how we arrived at this juncture, a combination of socialization into and through Western scholarship and specific field sites. My earliest field research required learning Kaska, which of course meant working with elders and language teachers. But it also meant that shifts between

English and Kaska were quite salient for me, though not always for everyone. As my colleague would remind some elder storytellers in the midst of performance, "Dene k'éh zedlé" (Kaska only), my own framing of research was one that also privileged a monoglot scenario—Kaska only—rather than the more robust, fluid, and vernacular patterns of language use. Methodologically, this framing also prioritized elicitation of carefully curated verb paradigms over the recording of disorderly conversations.

Along with the prioritization of elicitation, community norms also often discourage recording whenever, wherever, and however.[33] Despite some constraints on recording socially occurring speech, I did record a few sanctioned, unelicited interactions, one of which took place at a Kaska language workshop. This excerpt illustrates the more dynamic, bilingual environment within the community. On this day, we were working on moose hides, wringing out the hides and shaving off the hair. My elder interlocutors were passing the time, joking around, though one serious individual gently chided us back to our task at hand. The linguistic variation in this excerpt aligns code with identity (with the individual being discussed, "the number one crazy ol' man"), but also suggests that linguistic variation corresponds with place (in public, at home, at the First Nation's community center).[34]

Field Transcript from a Kaska Language Workshop

LOUISE: This one, he tell me "how bony you are." I told him, "I don't want my belly *k[á:]hd[á:]cho* (that big)," I tell him. "*En[ǽ]* (Auntie), what d'you say? what d'you say?"

Other women laughing.

Gee, number one crazy ol' man *lāyédéssīn-ī* (I said about him).

Ets'[ǽ]géts'į', "Gee, I like this *ets'[ǽ]gé*," *éhdī* (About the white lady, "Gee, I like this white lady," he said).

ELOISE: *Ezés kundzuhtl'[ú:˛]-hí* (*???*) (The hide, let's tie it up again) (*???*).

LOUISE: *Gukó˛ gǽt'*ē dene āsādi kó˛' gúdét'*in* , *azás téne'*ōn a'*seni* (That's like our home; at home there are lots of skins there).

As this excerpt also illustrates, another roadblock to a more robust, holistic, and grounded research program was the neglect of the language practices of nonelder language users, and children in particular. My research initially was concerned with stages of Kaska language acquisition, but there were no exclusively monolingual Kaska environments, nor were there any monolingual Kaska children. There were children who used Kaska intermittently, suggesting emerging grammatical knowledge of some kind. These intermittent uses inspired the development of a comprehension task to probe further in the hopes of uncovering additional evidence of Kaska linguistic knowledge. With the help of a Kaska language teacher, I proceeded to design a forced-choice pointing task to find out more. This table illustrates what we learned about the children's knowledge of handling verbs.[35]

Table 1. *Children's knowledge of Kaska handling verbs*

Verb Stem	Gloss	Frequencies	% Correct
-ah	proportional	9/18	50%
-leh	plural	10/12	83%
-teh	animate	4/12	33%
-tih	stick-like	3/6	50%
-kah	contained, open	5/6	83%
-tsūs	cloth-like	6/6	100%

My daily participation in instruction and play also revealed how the Kaska language frequently appeared in children's unelicited utterances.[36]

In sum, a focus on the "most fluent" speakers of a language results in research conducted primarily with idealized monolingual Indigenous elders, excludes any code-mixing or "translanguaging,"[37] and largely overlooks other language users and types of language uses. Furthermore, such research will tend to target the most sacred, ritualized, or privileged forms of knowledge rather than mundane exchanges and everyday uses. Relanguaging in this case means an approach that is inclusive of children and other language users, documenting all language varieties and variations, including varieties of English, to more fully understand what's happening socially and to more fully investigate how languages and communities are changing in settler colonial contexts.[38,39]

Palimpsests: English, Bookish Speech, and Whoopin' Around

The next stop on our walk is the scene from *Maverick* where Joseph and Maverick are discussing the Russian archduke who has come to town and the archduke's expectations that the Indians should "play" Indian, all the time. The scene begins with Joseph paying back some money he owes Maverick.

Scene 3: Whoopin' around like Idiots

JOSEPH: (sighs) Here.

MAVERICK: It good?

JOSEPH: Nah.

Drumming and singing in the background.

MAVERICK: What's with the drums? And the war paint and the horses—what are you doin' here?

JOSEPH: Oh, we had kind of a lousy year. Not much left to hunt, so when this Russian archduke—that's where I got the bike—he came along and wanted to see the "real West" so I said "okay." But he pays well. We get all dressed up in war paint and go whoopin' around like idiots. He wants me to speak like they say in the books—you

know, uh, "How, white man." You people are such assholes. Of course, he's gotta hear the war drums (*turns to the drummers*) all the time! Startin' to get on my nerves.

In this excerpt, Joseph remarks specifically on the type of talk that the archduke expects Indians to use, "to speak like they say in the books." Graham Greene's character explicitly points to the semiotic features that mark and marginalize Indianness for a white gaze (the archduke, the audience)—drumming, war paint, whooping, Hollywood Injun English, and horses—a semiotic marginalization that emphasizes the uncivilized, primitive nature of American Indians and the expectations of a settler colonial society invested in the maintenance (and revitalization) of these seemingly more authentic, historic practices. The semiotic expectation is one that preserves visible traces of an older, traditional form, traces that are visible to and prioritize a white gaze (not necessarily an Indigenous one). This vision of authenticity is a palimpsest of historical traces and contemporary scripts.

In a similar, less satirical vein, my Choctaw colleague, Valerie Lambert, wrote an insightful, critical piece with her husband about their daughter's experience with an assigned award-winning book that preserves the traces of an imagined historic style of "Indian" speech.[40] In their 2014 article, they employ an approach that they call "ethnographic lettering." Using this approach, they demonstrate the deeply problematic, hegemonic, and ethnoracializing narratives with which non-Indigenous creatives continue to script the lives of American Indians. The Lamberts carefully dissect the missteps of this novel that public schools rely on to diversify their curriculums. Inspired by their daughter's retitling of the book, *The Sign of the Stupid*, and then *The Book of Horror*, their scholarly corrective identifies several ways that the author reifies stereotypic representations as historically accurate rather than as portraits of a settler colonial gaze. For example, Speare portrays Native American speech in the negatively valenced style of "Tonto-speak" or "Hollywood Injun English"—or, as their daughter insightfully noted, "baby talk." As the Lamberts show, this linguistic representation, used by all of the Native characters in the novel, personifies them as being subordinate to the non-Indian, English-speaking characters, relegating them to the social, cognitive, and conceptual level of nonhuman animals and human toddlers. They counter this representation with historical evidence of the linguistic ingenuity of seventeenth-century Native American orators. They also unpack the interpretive powerfulness of Speare's juxtaposition of types of English, the colonial characters speaking perfect late-twentieth-century, standard (written) English and the Native American characters speaking "toddler" English. What is most important, they point out that the texts that socialize us as children and youth can have a lasting impact, one that either reproduces racism and bigotry or one that disrupts it. Their analysis clearly illustrates how a settler colonial framework can be and is maintained, how these negative, racialized characterizations permeate the socializing fabric of educational institutions, and how they perpetuate the racializing hierarchy that American Indian scholars and American Indian studies are working to dismantle. In sum, their article demonstrates how such institutionalized text-artifacts, especially award-winning ones assigned by teachers, are attributed with (unquestionable) educational value and historical accuracy.

Furthermore, they also highlight the fact that not all authors imagine an Indigenous audience as readers of their literary efforts. As a result, the language forms used by Indian characters in these texts maintain intertextual connections to the negative stereotyping of Native Americans. Rather than breaking new ground, many popular texts encumbered by their lack of authorial imagination trudge along a well-worn path of semiotic marginalization that is a palimpsest of historical imagery and fanciful pidgin-like forms intended to "bear traces of its authentic, original form."

This same prioritization of an "original" form pervades most institutional approaches to language revitalization. If one reconsiders the process of language revitalization as a palimpsest, as resulting in "something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier [original] form," then by necessity the products of language revitalization rely on there being visible traces of an earlier form of language.[41] It is a modified version of a spoken variety of a language, even when intended to be identical to some original spoken version. Language revitalization projects reuse salvage documentation—field notes, grammars, archival artifacts—to create new documents such as language lessons and worksheets, children's alphabet books, noun dictionaries, and so forth. They are often framed by English or Spanish or French, and appeal to a white reading public.[42] While these materials are intended for Aboriginal language users and learners, they are also part of a language economy that appeals to tourists and linguists alike and preserve an idealization of Native language and authentic nativeness in service to a standard white pattern of semiotic marginalization.[43,44]

One way to disrupt such patterns of semiotic marginalization is to not only imagine a diverse audience that includes Indigenous people but also to work with Indigenous people to create the texts. Two of my favorite projects, neither of which would ever have been included in my tenure and promotion dossier, are a multiauthored, community-driven alphabet book and the first Kaska translation of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Eric Carle initiated by the former Aboriginal Head Start Kaska language teacher. The first project resulted in the creation and publication of *The Kaska Alphabet K'úúgé'*. The title alone exemplifies the presence of language variation in the text, mixing English and Kaska. My collaborators preferred this bilingual title. The entries within the book also included more than one Kaska variety when considered relevant. The translation of the Eric Carle book became a template for a scripted performance. Elders paired with preschoolers learned their Kaska lines and performed the book for the community at a Kaska language workshop. While the alphabet book originated within the community, neither the alphabet book nor the translated Eric Carle story were traditional Native American texts. They reflected the innovativeness of my collaborators and their willingness to create "Indigenous" language texts that weren't exclusively Indigenous in origin.[45] Had I thought they should have been a more traditional narrative, I have no doubt that I would have been chided and teased for my lack of imagination.

At this stop on our walk, relanguaging involves seeing (or hearing) variation in media as an opportunity, as opposed to an error or inconsistency or failure to meet standards (or a misspelling of an Ojibwe or Kaska word). A focus on variation can begin to dismantle negative characterizations by reassembling evaluation around

positive efforts and outcomes—what's been gained rather than what's been lost, what's possible rather than what's impossible. These gains manifest in the creation of innovative materials, the use of all language varieties spoken within a community, and a greater inclusivity of community participation. This proposition isn't simply a matter of changing the discourse of language revitalization but of transforming the methods and rubrics for assessing its progression. Thus, if the aim of language revitalization is the reproduction of a variety no longer spoken, then the goal will remain out of reach as the language endangerment and shift literature has underscored. But, if the focus is community-driven and anchored in the "vitalities" already present within, then new possibilities emerge along with the deconstructing of a "white" settler colonial schema of evaluation and practice of marginalization.[46,47]

Amalgams: Rebundling Language, Race, and Identity

Having returned to where we started, I present again the transcript that began this journey. I originally analyzed this scene in relation to my Hollywood Injun English work. It is, of course, an excellent example of that scripted style of Indian-speak. But what I'd overlooked is the irony with which it was performed throughout this film. I had missed the subtle (or not so subtle) critique of whiteness and the settler colonial state.

Scene 4: Doing Business with an Archduke, Revisited

The ARCHDUKE laughs and waves.

JOSEPH (To the man behind him): Big asshole. (To the archduke) *Bonjour, bonjour, Monseigneur. Comment allez-vous?*

ARCHDUKE: *C'est la langue de missionnaire. Parles anglais.*

JOSEPH (Raises left hand, then right, while rolling eyes): How, white man.

ARCHDUKE: Hello, noble savage. I have a terrible day. I kill every animal in sight and is boring me.

JOSEPH: Boring?

ARCHDUKE: Boring.

JOSEPH: Then maybe his largeness be interested in greatest western thrill of all.

ARCHDUKE: What t'is it? What?

JOSEPH: Come, come.

ARCHDUKE: What t'is greatest western thrill?

JOSEPH: (Looks right and left) Kill injun.

ARCHDUKE: Kill Inj—

JOSEPH shushes ARCHDUKE.

ARCHDUKE: Is it legal here?

JOSEPH: White man been doing it for years. But much wampum needed.

ARCHDUKE: (Looks around) How much?

JOSEPH: Uh, one thousand.

ARCHDUKE: One thousand?

JOSEPH: (Nods) Mm.

ARCHDUKE: You would not have to tie him? It does not seem sporting.

JOSEPH: Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Him loose. But easy hit. Dying anyway. Smoke too much tobacco. (Coughs four times) Very sick, put out of misery. Deal?

ARCHDUKE: (Raises right hand) Deal.

JOSEPH raises hand and the two shake on it.

As discussed elsewhere, Hollywood Injun English (HIE) produces an image of incompetence and failure, an amalgam of dysfluencies and primitivism from a settler colonial perspective.[48] The ungrammatical features of HIE reflect settler self-reports found in travelogues and early American fiction between 1823 and 1955 rather than rigorous data-driven descriptions of American Indian English and American Indian Pidgin English. They are linguistic traces of a particular colonial period, and of enduring historical representations, much like the tradition of museological dioramas representing "traditional" lifeways of Native Americans in miniaturized form and by anthropological "culture areas."[49] These portraitures celebrate early US nationhood and deny Indigenous coevalness. Bundled together, such amalgams of semiotic features (or "semiotic bundles") strategically scale ethnoracialized differences, preserving white supremacy.[50] In cases of "race-ing" language, a logic of purism and "firstness" maintain the structural imbalance of settler colonial relationships, between those settling (and their events of "firstness") and those settled (and their dwindling down to being the "last" of), such that the only authentic language imaginable is the one that Indigenous peoples spoke prior to or around the period of conquest (that is, in the past) and no longer speak fluently (in the present)—some historical, ancestral Indigenous variety that only the eldest of speakers knows and that non-Indigenous linguists reconstruct.[51] Similarly, mass media, and especially narrative media, have "languaged" an American Indian race by instantiating negative characteristics through unfamiliar or atypical and abnormalized linguistic differences. Mainstream audiences are likely to hear these linguistic variations as foreign and dysfluent, subtly juxtaposing the variety heard with some standard average English and, by extension, covertly maintaining an assumption of white supremacy.[52]

The excerpt above and the transcript below both call out and play with a white colonizing perspective.[53] In this scene from *Rutherford Falls,* Terry, chief of the "Minishonka" Nation, and Reagan, a tribal member, are discussing Reagan's struggles to get more participation from the rest of the tribal community.[54] As the transcript reveals, Reagan has graduated from college and is now in charge of the Minishonka Cultural Center, located in the tribe's casino. This excerpt shows how the indexing and reconfiguring of two stereotypes, the "rez Indian" and the "city Indian," occurs in dialogue couplets. Reagan's character configures both the "city Indian" and the "rez Indian," while Terry's character subtly disrupts and reconfigures them in his responses. The screenwriters, one of whom is Native American, aren't relying on the audience's capacity to listen and hear the distinctions, but rather they use the characters' dialogue to spell out the stereotypes and, hopefully, make salient the dialogic intervention and the shift from a colonized framework to an alternative "Native" one.

Scene 5: "City" Indians, from Rutherford Falls*, Episode 2, Season 1*

REAGAN: Okay, now you see what I'm dealing with. Nobody wants to help the cultural center.

TERRY: That's not completely accurate. They don't wanna help you.

REAGAN: Oh, because I'm a successful city Indian. Left the rez to attend a fancy college and now everyone's jealous.

TERRY: You're not successful, and Wayne's sister goes to Yale.

REAGAN: Whatever, man.

TERRY: I asked around about you. Would you like to know why you're having trouble with the community?

REAGAN: Oh, I know why. It's because "Reagan lives in town and not on the Rez. She's not a fluent speaker. She walks her dog on a leash."

TERRY: It's because they're still mad about Ray.

REAGAN: Ray. (Laughs)

This scene presents and confronts two pervasive, contemporary "Indian" stereotypes. Reagan characterizes herself as a "city Indian" through the mock voicing of the community members who won't help her and simultaneously characterizes them as "rez Indians." The axes of differentiation here contrast education (college/no college; Ivy-League fancy/ordinary; successful/unsuccessful), residence (on or off the reservation), relationship to animals (on or off a leash), and Indigenous language competence (fluent/not fluent). Terry counters Reagan's characterization, of herself and of the community, by pointing out that she's not successful, that other people have gone to even fancier colleges, and that her troubles are rooted in personal relationships, not stereotypes. Furthermore, the entire dialogue is performed in non-HIE varieties,

disrupting the legacy of linguistic primitivism associated with Native characters and peoples. These media artifacts are amalgams of past typifications combined with alternative semiotic features. They have begun to disrupt the settler colonial axes of evaluation that have driven the marginalization of characters (and people) of color in the United States and elsewhere.[55]

The enduring settler colonial racialization of American Indians in and through language (as in academic grammars, "pure" language, dysfluent speech, monoglot standard) is but one robust example of semiotic marginalization, where semiotic marginalization is the use and bundling together of negatively valenced features in ways that maintain the ongoing marginalization and conquest of certain groups, often people of color.[56] For Native America, the pattern of semiotic marginalization has been maintained through specific styles of sociolinguistic enregisterment and, by extension, can be and has been (unintentionally) mapped onto specific types of language users who seemingly sound like the enregistered, mass-mediated styles.[57] Linguistics as a field has contributed to this marginalization via covert linguistic racisms and sociolinguistic regimes of value that disregard and/or discard nonconforming variations.[58,59] Through relanguaging, Indigenous creatives are altering the dialogue and the semiotics of indigeneity found in popular media, and Indigenous scholars are doing the same with respect to language research and reclamation.[60] By revealing what has been erased and what has become iconic, they destabilize the "logic," the essentializing patterns that sustain white supremacy (or any supremacy). As we arrive at the end of our walk and reflect on the voices we've heard, I remain struck by Graham Greene's Joseph, who has been relanguaging audience's expectations for a few decades now, even though it took me a while to hear that through all of the construction noise of US-driven settler colonialism.

Discussion: Relanguage or Decolonization?

As we relax on our figurative tree stump to reflect on our walk, let's consider the overarching question: why frame these interventions as "relanguaging" rather than the more appealing call for "decolonization"? While I have not entirely discounted decolonization, it's crucial to consider the terrain that circumscribes decolonization. Decolonization has taken two routes: a return to a precolonial state and a social justice framework of empathy and allyship. And yet, as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang pointed out a while ago, "Some goals and approaches of social justice work and critical methodologies may be incommensurable with decolonization."[61] This point, in many ways, addresses the question; relanguaging is politically more capacious and inclusive than decolonization is or can be.

However, let's first begin with decolonization as a process of return, whether of land or of identity. Decolonization is largely about sovereignty and land back, not language. It's not a metaphor, it's a political project amidst ongoing settler colonization.[62] Giving land back in its most decolonized form means giving settlers' land back (individual and collective) to Indigenous peoples and recognizing that they, the settlers, are the guests rather than the "hosts."[63] Decolonization means flipping the

roles and positions of control. It also means not having the land held in trust by the settler government.

There lurks an ideology of purism in these projects of return. As with the settler colonial framing of indigeneity in the United States that promotes an exclusive interpretation of "blood" to identify who is and who is not Native and exclude those who are not (which I would argue is ultimately a settler colonial concern), the concept of decolonization presupposes a similarly hegemonic and purist understanding of indigeneity and race. That is, decolonization relies on a prior process of colonization, a process that both defines the settlers and the settled (colonized groups—in this case, tribal nations). This process also determines a particular point in time as being the moment when we were most truly, authentically our Indigenous selves. It ignores mobility and the mixed-race issue.[64,65] Thus, this concept subtly perpetuates ongoing practices of colonization via the institutionalization and standardization of "Native American" identity in the United States, most concisely articulated through determinations of blood quantum and the valuing of a "pure" bloodline measured from the moment when a tribe became officially recognized by the federal government. Popular interpretations of decolonization remain structured by this settler colonial racial logic.[66]

As either a return or as a social justice initiative, decolonization erases the complexities of Indigenous existence within settler colonial contexts. Discourses of decolonization often mask the contentious political terrain of colonized groups, such as federally defined tribal recognition processes and tribal procedures for citizenship.[67] They obfuscate the shared, distributed land-use practices of Indigenous groups. When non-Indigenous activists and allies "take sides" in contestations over land, their actions don't necessarily disrupt the colonizing context. Instead, they may aggravate tribal divisions, resulting in the privileging of one group's claims over another's. In addition, that which can be decolonized (maybe) isn't under the purview of academic institutions and non-Indigenous scholars. It is primarily a negotiation (and compromise) between federal and tribal governments, tribal and tribal governments, and tribal citizens and their tribal governments. To "take sides," then, may result in a form of exclusion and an act of appropriation (what I like to call "settler colonial creep"), as evidenced by the exclusion of tribal members who don't align with one's (settler-defined) view of (Indigenous) authenticity, and through revoicing another group's claims to a broader audience—by "amplifying" select Indigenous voices, as it were—non-Indigenous actors reclaim authority to speak and act "on behalf of" the Indigenous group, i.e., appropriating the movement or act of reclamation.[68] However, responsible non-Indigenous participation is possible if grounded in participant-observation, in doing some basic ethnography to learn more about the situation and its dynamics. Furthermore, like any good ethnographer, it's important to leave control elsewhere and reflect on one's own positionality. Do your own personal "ideological clarification."[69]

Finally, perspective is significant. Processes of decolonization are in many ways unique, specific to the circumstances and experiences of different colonized bodies. However, there are remarkable similarities. One universal similarity across all settler colonial contexts is the paradox of the colonizer decolonizing; it's an existential

paradox. Similar to claims that the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house, the colonizer's tools in the colonizer's hands will never dismantle their own house.[70] While they might renovate, rebuild, and share their house, they just can't decolonize it. Decolonizing their house would require abandonment, divesting of property and of control, and no longer being the settler colonizer. Decolonization, then, is ultimately exclusive; it is the view from the colonized, not the colonizer.

In sum, relanguaging entails critical reflection and ideological clarification, asking, "How do the choices I make with respect to my research questions, methods, and data preserve a settler colonial purview and white supremacy more generally?" Relanguaging relies on the "noise" in our data to shift our perspectives, to question and complicate the definitions and categorical choices we make (or find) rather than putting the seemingly insignificant variations to the side. It suggests a ground-up process, and the incorporation of ethnographic methods and collaboration (with other scholars, with communities). Relanguaging transcends racializing boundaries. It recognizes and seeks out the variation in the sociolinguistic landscape and complicates sociopolitical borders.[71] Finally, relanguaging demands a dismantling of settler colonial regimes of (white) value. It involves interrogating the structures and processes of semiotic marginalization that are assumed and embedded in the concepts and practices academics and students are trained in and through, then re-focusing on the variations we weren't looking for.

Conclusion: Dis/possession, or "White Man Been Doing It for Years"

Many scholars of color in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology have begun to shift the ground on which these disciplines stand, calling for a "refusal of the white gaze."[72] One tactic has been to change citational practices. For example, the recent editor of a top-tier journal required reviewers to assess the citational practices of authors and to push back against habits of privileging eliteness. They also emphasize a collaborative approach to research and scholarship, codirecting projects and coauthoring manuscripts. Finally, they call for a muting of whiteness through listening and witnessing rather than being the loudest voice in the room. While these calls recognize that the "white man" has been doing it for years, it is not merely a call to participate in this "doing," or to do it like the "white man." I would like to conclude by drawing your attention to a quote from a piece published recently by two scholars, Jenny Davis and Krystal Smalls, who are committed to shifting the institution's gaze and habits of "doing": "In terms of scholarly work, [this] is mostly a call, a plea, to our white colleagues to take care with us—with our tongues, thoughts, and bodies—because your powerful words help script our futures (and you have dis/possessed us long enough)."[73]

This is a call to recognize the powerfulness of privilege and to reflect on the fact that, as we all know, words matter, and have impact. To that end, relanguaging is a process for disrupting patterns of semiotic marginalization and disturbing canonical white, WEIRD frames of knowing by building on insightful investigations of

languaging and refocusing on the variation and the noise that we've overlooked. In this way, the potential to mute the dispossessing settler colonial frameworks that define and construct relations, both within our data and with each other, may be realized. Relanguaging is a complementary call to elevate the work already under way and to consider the bits and pieces of noise in our data that aren't obviously "evidence," and to include the folks who aren't obviously "speakers" or "experts" or obvious creators of knowledge. Our walk has, I hope, revealed how scholarly, research-driven choices result in the erasures, palimpsests, and amalgams of knowledge that have accumulated over time and how they define our intellectual journeys. However, in choosing how to remember our intellectual histories—both the manicured paths and the overgrown ones of colonizer and colonized alike—we are also choosing how to move ahead in a more inclusive and equitable way.

Language Transcription Conventions

:	increased length
-	break in word, sound cut off
[]	phonetic pronunciation

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Notes

1. Hanya Yanagihara, "Finding Comfort in Trials and Triumphs Past," *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, February 11, 2022. Hanya Yanagihara is Hawaiian and Korean, with some Japanese ancestors, too; she authored *A Little Life* (Kirkus prize, shortlisted for Man Booker and National Book awards).

2. While academic terminology tends toward using Native Americans or American Indians, my preferred terms of reference are Indigenous Peoples of North America, First Nations, and, more generally, Indigenous peoples with a capital 'I.' When specific dependent sovereign nations are referred to, I will use their preferred name or names.

3. Krystal A. Smalls, "Languages of Liberation: Digital Discourses of Emphatic Blackness," in *Language and Social Justice in Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 52–60.

4. While this scene is mythical, the practice is real. Some of the First Nations men with whom I've worked in the Yukon Territory freelanced as guides for non–First Nations tourists looking for an authentic hunting experience.

5. Jane H. Hill, *The Everyday Language of White Racism* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008). While Jane H. Hill used "white" racism and "white" racial logics to unpack covert forms of racism in

the United States, focusing especially on instances targeting Latinx and Native American peoples, she would probably have embraced the current phrase "white supremacy" as a term for referring to racialized alignments of power and authority in contemporary societies. On white supremacy, see Krystal A. Smalls, "Language, SIGNS, and the Body: Towards a Theory of Racial Semiotics," in *Oxford Handbook of Language and Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, Angela Reyes, and Paul Kroskrity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) and Krystal A. Smalls, Arthur K. Spears, and Jonathan Rosa, "Introduction: Language and White Supremacy," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 31, no. 2 (2021): 152–56; Jennifer Roth-Gordon, "Language and White Supremacy," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190854584.013.591.

6. Paul Kroskrity, "Facing the Rhetoric of Language Endangerment: Voicing the Consequences of Linguistic Racism," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (2011): 188.

7. Barbra A. Meek, "And the Injun Goes 'How!' Representations of American Indian English in White Public Space," *Language in Society* 35, no. 1 (2006): 93–128.

8. Susan Gal and Judith T. Irvine, *Signs of Difference: Language and Ideology in Social Life*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

9. Krystal A. Smalls, Arthur K. Spears, and Jonathan Rosa, "Introduction: Language and White Supremacy," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 31, no. 2 (2021): 152–56.

10. Maria Cioè-Peña, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's School: Interrogating Settler Colonial Logics in Language Education," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 42 (2022): 25–33.

11. James McKenzie, "Addressing Historical Trauma and Healing in Indigenous Language Cultivation and Revitalization," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 42 (2022): 71–77.

12. Anne H. Charity Hudley and Nelson Flores, "Social Justice in Applied Linguistics: Not a Conclusion, but a Way Forward," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 42 (2022): 145.

13. Patriann Smith, "Black Immigrants in the United States: Transraciolinguistic Justice for Imagined Futures in a Global Metaverse," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 42 (2022): 109–18.

14. Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 37.

15. Meek, "And the Injun Goes 'How!'"

16. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 2012).

17. Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians*, 37.

18. H. Samy Alim, "Introducing Raciolinguistics: Racing Language and Languaging Race in Hyperracial Times," in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas about Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford, and Arnetha F. Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–10.

19. Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores, "Unsettling Race and Language: Toward a Raciolinguistic Perspective," *Language in Society* 46, no. 5 (2017): 621–47.

20. "Indian dialect" is the label used in the script, juxtaposed with English.

21. While Maverick takes on the role of translator in this scene, speaking both "Indian" and English, Joseph demonstrates an even more robust repertoire, using English, French, "Indian," and Hollywood Indian English in other scenes (see Scene 1, for example).

22. On the politics of respectability and white supremacy, see Smalls, "Languages of Liberation."

23. See Michael Silverstein's discussion of nationality and language: Michael Silverstein, "Whorfianism and the Linguistic Imagination of Nationality," in *Regimes of Language*, ed. Paul Kroskrity (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2000), 85–138.

24. Lisa Philips Valentine and Regna Darnell, eds., *Theorizing the Americanist Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Michael Silverstein, "Of Two Minds About Minding

Language in Culture," in *Indigenous Visions: Rediscovering the World of Frank Boas*, ed. Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Lorado Wilner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2018), 147–65; Audra Simpson, "Why White People Love Franz Boas: or, the Grammar of Indigenous Dispossession," in *Indigenous Visions: Rediscovering the World of Frank Boas*, ed. Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Lorado Wilner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2018), 166–182.

25. Frank Boas and J. W. Powell, *Introduction to the Handbook of North American Indian Languages* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970).

26. For a more extensive discussion, see Barbra A. Meek, "Racing Indian Language, Languageing an Indian Race: Linguistic Racisms and Representations of Indigeneity," in *Oxford Handbook of Language and Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, Angela Reyes, and Paul Kroskrity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 369–97.

27. Bernard Perley, "Zombie Linguistics: Experts, Endangered Languages, and the Curse of Undead Voices," *Anthropological Forum* 22, no. 2 (2012): 133–49.

28. I am not arguing that we shouldn't document the last vestiges of languages, just that we might expand our purview.

29. Some linguists are complicating the concept of speaker beyond discourses of language endangerment: Lauretta S. P. Cheng, Danielle Burgess, Natasha Vernooij, Cecilia Solís-Barroso, Ashley McDermott, and Savithry Namboodiripad, "The Problematic Concept of Native Speaker in Psycholinguistics: Replacing Vague and Harmful Terminology with Inclusive and Accurate Measures," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): 715–843.

30. NIH website: https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/programs/extramural/community-based-participatory.html.

31. Wesley Y. Leonard and Erin Haynes, "Making 'Collaboration' Collaborative: An Examination of Perspectives That Frame Linguistic Field Research," *Language Documentation and Conservation* 4 (2010): 268–93; Sarah Shulist, "Collaborating on Language: Contrasting the Theory and Practice of Collaboration in Linguistics and Anthropology," *Collaborative Anthropologies* 6 (2013): 1–29, https://doi.org/10.1353/cla.2013.0006; Richard Henne-Ochoa, Emma Elliott-Groves, Barbra A. Meek, and Barbara Rogoff. 2020. "Pathways Forward for Indigenous Language Reclamation: Engaging Indigenous Epistemology and Learning by Observing and Pitching in to Family and Community Endeavors," *The Modern Language Journal* 104, no. 2 (2020): 481–93; Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

32. Jane H. Hill, "The Linguist as Imperialist," *New University Thought* 7, no. 4 (1971): 16.

33. Barbra A. Meek, *We Are Our Language: An Ethnography of Language Revitalization in a Northern Athabaskan Community* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), xi.

34. Barbra A. Meek, *We Are Our Language*, 83.

35. Barbra A. Meek, "Learning a New Routine: Kaska Language Development and the Convergence of Styles," in *Language Practices of Indigenous Children and Youth: The Transition from Home to School*, ed. Gillian Wigglesworth, Jane Simpson, and Jill Vaughn (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 355.

36. For a more detailed discussion, see Meek, *We Are Our Language*.

37. Ofelia García and Li Wei, *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism, and Education* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Pivot, 2014); Li Wei and Ofelia García, "Not a First Language but One Repertoire: Translanguaging as a Decolonizing Project," *Regional Language Centre Journal* 53, no. 2 (2022): 313–24.

38. For some examples, see Kalina Newmark, Nacole Walker, and James Stanford, "'The Rez Accent Knows No Borders': Native American Ethnic Identity Expressed through English Prosody," *Language in Society* 45, no. 5 (September 2016), 633–64; Justin T. McBride, "Native American English in Oklahoma: Attitudes and Vitality" (PhD diss, Oklahoma State University, 2015); Elizabeth L.

Coggshall, "The Prosodic Rhythm of Two Varieties of Native American English," *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics* 14, no. 2 (2008).

39. The recent volume *Language and Social Justice in Global Perspective* (2024) provides some excellent illustrations of these situations outside of North America, such as Feliciano-Santos' chapter on Taíno and Spanish in Puerto Rico, Handman and Slotta's chapter on English in Papua New Guinea, and Guzmán's investigation of discourses of health, language, and communication in Gulumapu, Chile, to name a few; Kathleen Riley, Bernard Perley, and Inmaculada García-Sánchez, eds., *Language and Social Justice* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024).

40. The book is *The Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare.

41. *Oxford Languages Dictionary*: https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/

42. Barbra A. Meek and J. Messing, "Framing Indigenous Languages as Secondary to Matrix Languages," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2007): 99–118.

43. For example, Gerald L. Carr and Barbra A. Meek, "The Poetics of Language Revitalization: Text, Performance, and Change," *Journal of Folklore Research* 50, no. 1 (2013): 191–216.

44. For a counterexample where Indigenous language swag has promoted a sense of community and belonging for Choctaw citizens, see Jenny Davis, *Talking Indian* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018).

45. For other examples: On innovative Myaamia language games, see Wesley Y. Leonard, "Producing Language Reclamation by Decolonising 'Language,'" *Language Documentation and Description* 14 (2017): 15–36; Wesley Y. Leonard, "Challenging 'Extinction' through Modern Miami Language Practices," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 135–60; On documentation and "yarning," see Celeste Rodríguez Louro and Glenys Collard, "Australian Aboriginal English: Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives," *Language and Linguistics Compass* 15, no. 5 (May 2021): e12415; On Ojibwemowin "forest walks," see Mary Hermes, Mel Engman, James McKenzie, and Meixi, "What Documenting for Reclamation Looks Like: Ojibwemowin Forest Walks," *Language Documentation and Conservation Special Publication No. 27: Perspectives from the International Year of Indigenous Languages*, ed. Sarah Sandman, Shannon Bischoff, and Jens Clegg (2022): 62–74.

46. Bernard Perley, *Defying Maliseet Language Death: Emergent Vitalities of Language, Culture, and Identity in Eastern Canada* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

47. See Serafin M. Coronel-Molina and Teresa L. McCarty, *Indigenous Language Revitalization in the Americas* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Paul V. Kroskrity and Barbra A. Meek, *Engaging Native American Publics: Linguistic Anthropology in a Collaborative Key* (New York: Routledge, 2017). For more expansive detailed examples of Indigenous language revitalization, see Leanne Hinton, Leena Huss, and Gerald Roche, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

48. Meek, "And the Injun Goes 'How'!" and Meek, "Racing Indian Language," 369–97.

49. Clark Wissler, "The Influence of the Horse in the Development of Plains Culture," *American Anthropologist* 16, no. 1 (January–March 1914).

50. Webb Keane, "Semiotics and the Social Analysis of Material Things," *Language and communication* 23, nos. 3–4 (2003): 409–25.

51. See Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

52. In this scene, Joseph is intentionally adhering to norms associated with a white supremacy framework, playing Indian for his client in order to gain access to the client's resources.

53. Monika Bednarek and I have analyzed the sociolinguistic and semiotic elements of several Australian series, such as *8MMM Aboriginal Radio*, to reveal the subtle semiotic processes that Indigenous creatives use to "flip the script" and/or reverse negative valences associated with Indigenous features. Our corpus has evidence of the subtle and not-so-subtle ways that Indigenous

creatives are using variation, linguistic and semiotic, to challenge, dislodge, and relanguage settler colonialist ideas about Indigeneity and social difference more generally. Monika Bednarek and Barbra A. Meek, "'Whitefellas Got Miserable Language Skills': Differentiation, Scripted Speech, and Indigenous Discourses," *Language in Society*, published online January 25, 2024, doi:10.1017/S0047404523000994.

54. *Rutherford Falls*, "Buckheart Lodge," Season 1, Episode 2.

55. For an Australian example, see Bednarek and Meek, "'Whitefellas Got Miserable Language Skills.'"

56. Krystal Smalls has proposed the concept of racial semiotics, which attends to acts of marginalization that are racialized in strategic ways and result in the maintenance of privilege associated with whiteness and white supremacy (Smalls, 2020). The concept of semiotic marginalization can include processes of racialization, but also includes other semiotic processes involved in devaluing, oppressing, and subjugating specific groups of people. In the United States, semiotic marginalization is often in service to white privilege and colonizing systems of value. However, it also allows for marginalization to be configured along different semiotic dimensions as well as to converge with conceptions of race (cf. "intersectionality," Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, "On Intersectionality: Essential Writings," *Faculty Books* (2017), 255, https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/books/255.)

57. Barbra A. Meek, "Failing American Indian Languages," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 43–60. For a detailed example on the creation of Japanese women's language, see also Miyako Inoue, *Vicarious Language: Gender and Linguistic Modernity in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

58. Jane H. Hill, *The Everyday Language of White Racism* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008); Paul V. Kroskrity, "Facing the Rhetoric of Language Endangerment: Voicing the Consequences of Linguistic Racism," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (2011): 179–92.

59. Via semiotic processes of erasure, rhematization, recursivity: Gal and Irvine, *Signs of Difference*.

60. Davis, *Talking Indian*; Wesley Y. Leonard, "Insights from Native American Studies for Theorizing Race and Racism in Linguistics," *Language* 96, no. 4 (2020): E281–91; Perley, *Defying Maliseet Language Death*.

61. Page 1 in Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Tabula Rasa* 38 (2021): 61–111.

62. Ibid.

63. See, for example, the discussion of "guesting" in Bethany Hughes, "Guesting on Indigenous Land: Plimoth Plantation, Land Acknowledgment, and Decolonial Praxis," *Theatre Topics* 29, no. 1 (2019): E23–32.

64. Michael J. Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

65. Michael J. Witgen, *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022); Susan Applegate Krouse, "Kinship and Identity: Mixed Bloods in Urban Indian Communities," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 23, no. 2 (1999):73–89.

66. Similar to discourses of settler firstness and Indigenous lastness; O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*.

67. On the Bureau of Indian Affairs, see Valerie Lambert, *Native Agency: Indians in the Bureau of Indian Affairs* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022).

68. For example, see Laura Menna, and Eva Codó, "Barcelona Street Vendors' Voice and the Crossing of Narrative (B)orders," in *Language and Social Justice*, ed. Kathryn C. Riley, Bernard C. Perley, and Inmaculada M. García-Sánchez (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024).

69. Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer, "Technical, Emotional, and Ideological Issues in Reversing Language Shift: Examples from Southeast Alaska," in *Endangered Languages*, ed. Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 57–98.

70. House or, alternatively, school: see Cioè-Peña, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's School."

71. For discussion of borders, boundaries, and language along with ethnographic examples, see Netta Avineri and Paul V. Kroskrity, "On the (Re-)production and Representation of Endangered Language Communities: Social Boundaries and Temporal Borders," *Language and Communication* 38 (September 2014).

72. For example, Jenny L. Davis and Krystal A. Smalls, "Dis/possession Afoot: American (Anthropological) Traditions of Anti-Blackness and Coloniality," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 31, no. 2 (2021): 275–82; Charity Hudley and Flores, "Social Justice in Applied Linguistics," 144–54.

73. Davis and Smalls, "Dis/possession Afoot": 279.