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Nathan Brown

Trinity University, nbrown3@trinity.edu

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Nathan Brown

Dr. Jennifer Mathews

ANTH 3368-1

11/22/21

“The Scholarly Erasure and Response of Indigenous Peoples: A Case Study of the “Coahuiltecan”

Peoples of Southern Texas and Northern Mexico”

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

“We acknowledge this place known to us as Yanaguana as the traditional homeland of many Native American peoples who are called Coahuiltecan by Spanish records. 200 tribes/bands/clans were documented in historical records and include the Payaya, Paguame, Jarame, Pompopa, and Borrado, as well as many other aboriginal peoples such as the Esto’k Gna (Carrizo-Comecrudo) who continue to carry their traditional lifeways. We acknowledge these various Indigenous communities as the traditional people of this land now called San Antonio, Texas.

We acknowledge this homeland that would later include Comanches and Lipan Apaches in the 1700s, as a place that is now home to nearly 30,000 Urban Indians spanning from tribes across the North, Central, and South America who continue to sustain their traditional languages and customs.

We acknowledge that the six flags which have flown over this city during the last 300 years have never fully honored Indigenous people, who continue to be excluded from processes that directly affect their cultural traditions, ancestors, and future descendants.

We acknowledge the willingness of our communities to seek healing for all the harms of colonization that are still present in San Antonio, reflected in the unequal distribution of resources, housing, education, and access to healthcare.

We acknowledge the opportunity to promote equity by centering the needs of Native peoples in decisions regarding public policy, service delivery, and distribution of resources in a manner that accounts for historical realities.

We acknowledge the resiliency, tenacity, and ability of Native Americans to survive, heal and thrive despite the systemic oppression they have faced and commit to celebrating their successes.”

- Credit to Jullian Valadez and Kristian Adams, Trinity Class of 2021, Ramon Vasquez, Director of the Office of Community Engagement at AIT-SCM, and Dr. Erin Kramer, History Department Trinity University.

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Americans have been erased in academic literature and popular media in an attempt to “legitimize” the historic removal of Native Americans from their land by the United States (Orr et al. 2019:2; Smith 2019; Panich 2013:106; Cariou 2016:310). Through my research and work with Indigenous Americans in San Antonio, I learned specifically how anthropologists and historians have described Native Americans in San Antonio in connection to what I call the “disappearance narrative.” I have also been provided the chance to see first-hand how Indigenous Americans continue to defy this notion in ceremonies, conversations, and simply by existing. This paper analyzes the ways anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists have contributed to the myth of Native extinction, using a specific case study, while also recognizing the resilience and decolonizing work of and with Indigenous peoples. During a time where scholars have begun self-reflecting on the roots of colonization within their disciplines, it is important to consider the specific effects on Indigenous peoples in spaces like Texas, where Indigenous peoples have been marginalized to the point of large public invisibility. This paper helps us to recognize specific methods of oppression against Indigenous communities, and take action to build more equitable institutions and scholarly discourses in anthropology, archaeology, and history.

While it is essential to recognize that Native American people *have* been killed, sickened, and impoverished in mass numbers through genocide and settler colonialism by our society, anthropologists, historians, and even non-academic authors have overly emphasized Indigenous peoples as an extinguished group of people (Panich 2013; Panich and Schneider 2019; Schneider and Hayes 2020:134; Smith 2019; Cariou 2016:311). This erasure of Natives peoples is part of the “logic of elimination,” in which Anglos have tried to remove any Native ties to North America to access their land and natural resources (Wolfe 2006:387; Orr et al. 2019:2). Examples of erasure such as genocide, removal, kidnapping and boarding schools, reservations, blood quantum, scholarly erasure, and federal recognition are ways that the United States has tried to assert its hegemonic control over Indigenous peoples and their resources (Cariou 2016:311; Wolfe 2006:387-88; Orr et al. 2019:2). A stark example of this erasure is seen with the so-called “Coahuiltecan” people in southern Texas and northern Mexico, who were labeled in this way by

the Spanish to denote their location around Coahuila, a Spanish colonial province in Mexico (Campbell 1977:2). Early Spanish travelers and scholars have traditionally characterized these peoples as “nomadic,” scavenging, “low-culture,” and even cannibalistic bands, and in the early 20th century scholars have referred to these groups of people as extinct or “Hispanicized,” meaning they have “lost” their Indigenous identity through intermingling forcibly or voluntarily with Spanish and Tejano settlers (Swanton 1915:17; Newcomb 1956:145, 146, 152; Chavana 2019:24).

However, the contemporary “Coahuiltecan” people are very much alive and thriving in spite of their supposed disappearance (Chavana 2019:21). For example, The Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation and its non-profit organization, AIT-SCM (American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions), are bringing Indigenous presence and history to light in San Antonio through Native markets, pow wows, mission tours, continued ceremonies, and even lawsuits (Chavana 2019:21-32; Shively 2018). For instance, the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation has filed a lawsuit against the Alamo Trust, which has planned to disturb the remains of 1,006 people without consulting Tāp Pīlam (Zavala 2020; Personal communication, 11/18/21). Additional tribes and organizations like the Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe of Texas, the Miakan-Garza Tribe, the Indigenous Peoples of the Coastal Bend, and the Indigenous Cultures Institute have helped teach other southern Texas residents about the Native history and cultural resilience within our cities and state (Xica Media 2020; Douglas 2021). The disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, and history in the past have damaged Native communities, but through ongoing decolonization processes, we can have hope that scholars will continue to work in partnership with and for Native communities to uplift their stories and continuing history (Flewellen 2021; Colwell-Chonthaphonh et al. 2010; Schneider and Hayes 2020).

SETTLER COLONIALISM AND METHODS OF ERASURE

Settler colonialism can be defined as an “arrangement of social institutions that support a structure of oppression,” where those with an unequal share of power ensure that laws and regulations promote the dominant power’s (i.e. White) interests (Whyte 2016:14). Settler colonialist societies such as the United States are places where the dominant power comes to “settle” the land occupied by other

peoples as opposed to just extracting natural resources and exporting them home (Whyte 2016:3). One way that settler societies destroy and replace Native existences and claims to land is through origin myths. Hall points out that the myth of a “mostly empty” frontier was shared widely in U.S. society as a way to justify the westward expansion and conquering of Indigenous peoples (2008:275). Thus, as Whyte argues, settler colonialism is inherently a systematic process that erases physically and metaphysically (2016:3; Wolfe 2006:388).

To justify this settlement of land occupied already by people, the concept of the “logic of elimination” is necessary to explain various methodologies of settler colonialism (Orr et al. 2019:2; Wolfe 2006:387). Settler colonialism does not always utilize genocide; however, in the case of Native Americans, the logic of elimination has been exhibited in processes that attack Indigenous existence, identity, and rights since European arrival (Wolfe 2006:387). The U.S. logic of elimination is manifested in one way through blood quantum, which is a U.S.-created definition of what the government recognizes as “true” Indigenous identity (Wolfe 2006:387-88). In the late 19th and early 20th century, politicians in Congress instituted blood quantum policies to define who would be recognized by the U.S. government as Indigenous and thus provided resources as part of treaty obligations (Schmidt 2011:4). People of $\frac{1}{4}$ or more Native ancestry were labeled by the government as “legitimately” Indigenous, a concept largely rejected by Native Americans (Schmidt 2011:5).

Contrasting to Indigenous peoples, who were restricted by the federal government to claim Native ancestry, Black people in the United States were loosely categorized by the “one-drop rule” (Orr et al. 2019:2; Wolfe 2006:388). This arbitrary rule racialized every person as Black in the United States who had any African ancestry (Wolfe 2006:387-88). In contrast to the conservative racialization of Native peoples, Black people were racialized by the U.S. government to increase enslaved peoples’ populations, and thus White wealth through Black labor (Wolfe 2006:388). This public fetishization of Black or White ancestry furthers the vanishing of Indigenous people in the U.S., thus restricting the property rights and obligations towards people who no longer “exist” within the race dichotomy (Hall 2008:275).

The logic of elimination has systematically also manifested itself through genocide. Native Americans have been victims of physical, cultural, and biological genocide (see Figure 1 in Appendix) (Wolfe 2006:387). For example, in 1864 well over 100 peaceful Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes were brutally massacred while sleeping by a U.S. Colorado cavalry regiment (Brown 1970:91). This attack was made by Colonel Chivington under false pretenses that the tribes had attacked White settlers; however, the real reason for the attacks was to attain Cheyenne and Arapaho land and gold claims in Colorado (Brown 1970:67, 100). This slaughter of mostly women, children, and the elderly was only one of the many massacres and methods by the U.S. to attain Indigenous peoples' lands (Wolfe 2006:387-88).

THE ROLES OF ACADEMIC SCHOLARS AND POPULAR WRITERS IN ERASURE

A less physically violent though no less insidious manifestation of the logic of elimination has been anthropological and historical scholarly erasure, which I will focus on for the rest of this paper. Native Americans have been portrayed as disappearing groups, which includes truth in the wake of genocide, disease, and migration, but this narrative has traditionally been spun out of control to legitimize Anglo ownership of land in the United States (Panich 2013; Panich and Schneider 2019; Schneider and Hayes 2020:134; Smith 2019; Hall 2008:275; Cariou 2016:311). At best, these disciplines have excluded Native communities from scholars' "new knowledge" as Yellowhorn mentions; at worse, these disciplines have harmed Indigenous peoples for scientists' personal agendas (1996:26; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:230). Anthropologist scholars have particularly contributed to this legitimization in the 19th century, as the discipline was founded by wealthy white men, who sought "scientific" justification for slavery, colonialism, and systematic oppression. Historians and popular writers throughout the last two hundred years seem to have also contributed to this disappearance narrative.

The discipline of anthropology is guilty of many methods of scholarly erasure. Most obviously, anthropologists in the 19th and 20th centuries were responsible for adding to scholarly discourses on the physical "reality" of race (Schmidt 2011:2). Anthropologists' legitimization of the physical inherencies of "race" has made Native Americans vanish through blood quantum requirements while also fetishizing Black Americans and their bodies (Hall 2008:275). Further examples of anthropologists' horrific erasure

include Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Samuel George Morton, Albert Hooton (Harvard University), and Ales Hrdlička (Smithsonian), who measured skulls and created “scientific” terms for various peoples such as “Negroid,” “Mongoloid,” and “Caucasoid” to explain the supposed varying capacities for culture (Schmidt 2011:2; Yellowhorn 1996:30). Characteristic of the time, “Caucasoid” skulls were claimed to demonstrate a higher capacity for culture compared to Indigenous skulls.

Over the last two hundred years, archaeologists have participated in the scholarly erasure of Native communities by robbing ceremonial objects and ancestors and restricting the sharing of knowledge with the communities that they exploit (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010:230). More recently, archaeologists have contributed to the disappearance narrative by overemphasizing what Panich references as “terminal narratives” (2013:106). Many archaeologists have overlooked Native peoples’ contemporary presence and persistence by heavily focusing on themes of disease, cultural destruction, and death during the colonial period (Panich 2013:106, 109). Due to the trauma for Native Americans that began with European contact, many scholars have tended to solely focus on these contact periods without studying Indigenous societies’ changing contexts before or after (Panich 2013:109; Lightfoot 1995:200). Indigenous societies were certainly not static before colonization, and exhibited thousands of years of cultural change; since then, they have not lost their cultural “authenticity” by changing (Panich 2013:109; Lightfoot 1995:200). Certainly, archaeologists can study colonization’s effects on Native peoples; however, it needs to be within themes of persistence and long-term cultural change (Panich 2013:110).

Panich and Schneider’s work supports this reframing of archaeological timelines by dividing Indigenous archaeological sites through contact periods with Europeans (2019:652-53). Oftentimes, this timeline division of “pre-contact” vs. “post-contact” or “prehistory” or “historical” is hastily done upon discovering artifacts such as glass beads, which signal European-Anglo interactions (Panich and Schneider 2019:653-54). In reality, other archaeologists have demonstrated that these quickly defined European “historical” sites may have been spaces where Native Americans worked, traded, or even resided (Panich and Schneider 2019:654). This imperfect timeline division defines the identities and contexts of Indigenous peoples as dependent on colonialist society, furthering the limitation of Indigenous

nations' sovereignty and furthering stereotypes of primitivity (Panich 2013:106, 109). Contrastingly, by focusing too heavily on "pre-contact" sites, the disappearance narrative is also made by archaeologists. In a later example of this paper, anthropologists have characterized the "Coahuiltecan" peoples as incapable of complex culture and have furthered the idea of their extinction.

Popular American literature is also to blame for furthering the disappearance narrative of Native Americans. For example, James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* tells the story of Chingachgook and Uncas, the supposed last of the Mohican tribe in New England, who also sing the stereotypical "Indian Death Song" of many 19th-century Indigenous characters in American media (Cariou 2016:310). In addition to colonialist literature, progressive literature since the 19th century has also contributed to Indigenous "extinction" (Cariou 2016:310). For example, Lydia Maria Child's novel entitled *Hobomok* reflects progressive ideas of interracial marriage and feminine heroines, while also adhering to the disappearance narrative when her main character's Indigenous husband moves to the west to die in solitude (Cariou 2016:310). American Romantic poems of the 19th century such as Thomas Campbell's "Gertrude of Wyoming" mirror the same emotional yet erroneous representations of single Native Americans as the last survivors of their "race" (Cariou 2016:311).

This literary discourse is also seen upon deeper probing into Dee Brown's famous historical book, *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*, which depicts the cruel tactics of the U.S. government in all military conflicts with Native American tribes. As Hampton Sides mentions in the preface, Brown's work was very progressive and meaningful during the 1970s, as it called into question our Anglo-centric idea of U.S. history by recounting U.S. politicians' and soldiers' double-crossing and violence against Native communities (Brown 1970:xix). However, while this book challenges U.S. settler colonialism and its logic of elimination, it also contributes to the disappearance narrative. We see this in Brown's introduction, in which he says, "During that time (1860-1890) the culture and civilization of the American Indian was destroyed," as well as when he says, "Although the Indians who lived through this doom period of their civilization have vanished from the earth, millions of their words are preserved in official records" (1970:xxiii-xxiv). Brown linearly connects the destruction of Native peoples' civilizations with

what he calls “the poverty, the hopelessness, and the squalor of a modern Indian reservation” (1970:xxv). Despite Brown’s good intentions to call out the injustices of the U.S. government and its citizens, his work suggests that “original” Native American communities and cultures have “vanished.”

As Lee Panich has noted, it is crucial to consider the theme of Indigenous persistence before contact with Europeans, during, and after; Brown’s book instead thinks through a lens of genocide, depopulation, and military defeat, which has still shaped public perception of Native Americans today (see Figure 2) (2016:110). Of course, we must recognize the privileged perspective we hold as being able to critique Brown’s book from the future. Moving forward, though, we can use Brown’s incredible archival work that traces the U.S. logic of elimination between 1860 and 1890, while also studying Indigenous persistence and resilience before, during, and after this settler colonization period (Brown 1970:xxiii; Panich 2013:110).

CASE STUDY: THE “COAHUILTECAN PEOPLES”

As part of the logic of elimination, Indigenous people were portrayed as dangerous and primitive to justify their forced disappearance. The Spanish-labeled “Coahuiltecan” people, named after the Spanish colonial province of Coahuila, demonstrate the damage done by anthropologists and historians, who have furthered the Indigenous extinction narrative (Campbell 1977:2). It is important to consider that the hundreds of Indigenous communities that inhabited southern Texas and northern Mexico did not consider themselves as one people, yet the Spanish chose to label all these bands as one group (Nunley 1971:303).

Spanish explorers and other scholars have claimed that the Indigenous peoples of southern Texas and northern Mexico were “exceedingly crude and barbarous...wandering and cannibals” and thus lower in cultural capacity than any other Native American region of people (Newcomb 1956:145-46). Newcomb repudiated these portrayals, saying these dismissals needed scientific evidence; instead, he called for a systematic and “scientific” measurement of southern Texas and northern Mexican Indigenous tribes (Newcomb 1956:146-47). He believed that he could measure the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year in these Tonkawan, Karankawan, and Coahuiltecan bands to determine their ranking of culture (Newcomb 1956:146). For instance, the Coahuiltecan peoples lived “nomadically” over sparse landscapes

eating wild and diverse diets, creating simple tools, and wearing minimal clothing: all reflective of the unfriendly environment of southern Texas and northern Mexico (Newcomb 1956:151-52). Interestingly, Newcomb is able in roughly two paragraphs each to summarize the entire cultures and productions of four Indigenous societies and determine their cultural ranking: an ability that few anthropologists would never claim to be able to do with their informants (1956:147-51). Unsurprisingly, southern Texas and northern Mexican Indigenous communities were labeled as primitive and inferior to “civilized tribes” of Central Mexico and the U.S. southeast (see Figure 3) (Newcomb 1956:153).

Well-known ethnologist and anthropologist, John R. Swanton, claimed that the Coahuiltecan bands, as well as the Karankawa (Corpus Christi area), and Tonkawa (southern Texas) were part of a “cultural sink” and thus unable to desire “proper civilization” (Newcomb 1956:145; Swanton 1915:17-18, 40). Due to the effects of European disease, Apache and Comanche raids, and assimilation, Swanton argued that “no considerable body of them are in existence” and “(p)erhaps no more complete extermination has overtaken the American Indians anywhere than in (southern Texas and northern Mexico) (1915:18; 1907:285). Despite the reality of forced labor and unfamiliar lifestyles at the Spanish colonial missions, Swanton argued that the Coahuiltecan peoples had no inherent desire to be “civilized” at the missions, and instead relied more on animalistic motivations, such as fear to move there (1915:18). While there are likely several other scholars who have studied Indigenous people of southern Texas and northern Mexico, Swanton and Nunley are clear examples that show the rationality of our settler society: Indigenous peoples were labeled as statically “primitive” and unable to adapt to “proper” U.S. civilization, thus they would soon die off in the face of modernization and expansion (Orr et al. 2019:2).

Modern scholars and databases since the 1970s have continued to view the “Coahuiltecan” peoples as long gone from disease, war, and assimilation (Nunley 1971:303; Campbell 1977:11). For example, Thomas Campbell studied the Juanca people, who lived before and during the time of the Spanish colonial missions in San Antonio; he argued that these people died out or intermingled with Tejano and Spanish groups to the point of cultural disappearance (1977:11). In addition to Swanton and Newcomb, Campbell mentions that all the formerly named Coahuiltecan groups have long since

disappeared from history (1977:2). Currently, the Texas State Historical Association online database conflictingly refers to the Coahuiltecan people as extinct but with some scattered, low-economic descendants living in Mexico and Texas (TSHA 1952). Many similar information pages on Google continue to refer to the Coahuiltecan people in the past tense, indicating their extinction (Texas Indians 1997; Texas Beyond History N.d.; Schmal 2020). In spite of this, the Coahuiltecan people and others such as the Karankawa people are flourishing and continue to respond to this disappearance narrative (Chavana 2019:21-32).

INDIGENOUS AMERICANS' RESPONSES

Nations, Non-Profits, and Native Programs

Before discussing the responses of contemporary Indigenous peoples, it is important to recognize that Indigenous peoples may choose to remove themselves from Western society to protect their cultures and even their lives. This has been seen in North America with the Stockbridge and Brothertown tribes in the New England area and in South America, where the Guaraní chose, in the wake of 16th-century colonization, to continue living in the forests away from Jesuit missionaries, Spanish society, and Portuguese enslavers (Reed 2015:5-6). Most if not all North American Indigenous people desired to be left alone by the U.S., as Brown's book documents (1970). In contrast to their wishes, the hegemonic power of the United States has intruded and damaged many Native American communities. Recently, many of them have chosen to unite to strengthen their voices.

For instance, in San Antonio during the 1980s and 90s, five Native American descendant families asserted their Indigenous sovereignty by uniting into the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation, a non-federally recognized tribe (Tāp Pīlam 1990; Personal communication, 11/18/21). These descendants are all related to the ancestors who lived before, during, and after the Spanish missionizations of the 18th and 19th centuries. While they did not need to form a tribe to be sovereign peoples, they chose to unite and create a nation tribal council representing the Payaya, Pacoa, Borrado, Pakawan, Paguame, Papanac, Hierbipiame, Xarame, Pajalat, Tilijae nations, and other bands and clans; their first mission was to repatriate the remains of 150 ancestors, who were dug up at Mission San Juan Capistrano in southern San Antonio

(Change.org N.d.; Tāp Pīlam 1990). Their work, which is documented in the archive at their non-profit AIT-SCM (American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions), was successful, and in 1999 and the early 2000s, the ancestors and their children's remains were repatriated from the UTSA Center for Archaeological Research, National Park Service, and Texas Historical Commission. Today, their remains peacefully reside once again at Mission San Juan Capistrano (Chavana 2019:21-22) (see Figure 4).

I was graciously provided the ability to work in the summer of 2021 for AIT-SCM in the Office of Community Engagement. There, I was given the chance to serve the Native population of southern Texas at a pow wow, in demographics research, and at cultural art retreats, while also attending ceremonies. AIT-SCM has pushed for equitable policies for communities of color and preserved the cultures of the Indigenous people in modern-day Texas and Mexico through the Native American Church, language revivals, workshops on cultural practices, Native art festivals, and youth programs (Chavana 2019:32; Shively 2018). Their mission as an organization was described in our conversations as “reversing extinction” and thus disproving the disappearance narrative (see Figure 5).

Other Indigenous peoples, such as the descendants of the nearby coastal Karankawa peoples, have publicly responded since 2020 to scholars' and the U.S. public's perception of their existence by likewise forming a non-profit to preserve their cultural heritage (The Indigenous Peoples of the Coastal Bend) (Douglas 2021; Newcomb 1956:152; Swanton 1907:285). Through the use of social media groups, Karankawa families have united into a band called the Karankawa Kadla; these families previously believed themselves to be the last survivors of the Karankawa people of the Texas coast, a clear demonstration that the disappearance narrative has had strong effects in our society. Currently, they are fighting to save their cultural heritage site in Corpus Christi Bay containing hundreds of thousands of artifacts; archaeologists and the Texas Historical Commission have suggested this site be preserved on the National Register of Historic Places. At this time, the oil storage company Moda Midstream plans to build over the site in a construction project (Douglas 2021).

The state-recognized Miakan-Garza band, a Coahuiltecan descendant family, has also responded to the colonial disappearance narrative by creating a non-profit Indigenous cultural arts center in San

Marcos (Xica Media 2020; Indigenous Cultures Institute N.d.). Incorporating Mexica and Aztec descendants in San Marcos into their community, the Miakan-Garza band has created eleven programs for Native peoples and the outside community to preserve Indigenous cultures; one of their most well-known events is the Sacred Springs Pow Wow (Xica Media 2020). Despite their strong voice in the southern Texas community, elder Mario Garza points to the band's struggles to repatriate the remains of their ancestors, which are held by the University of Texas in Austin (Xica Media 2020). While there are many more Indigenous tribes in San Antonio such as the Esto'k Gna Nation (known as the Carrizo Comecrudo), the Jumano Nation, and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, almost all of these nations do not have federal recognition and struggle to protect their communities from the effects of settler colonialism, genocide, and the disappearance narrative, which continue to threaten their autonomy and sovereign statuses.

Interviews with Members of Tāp Pīlam

Using my past experience as an intern with AIT-SCM's Office of Community Engagement, I conducted two interviews with members of the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation to understand contemporary perspectives from members who have lived through the disappearance narrative¹. It is important to recognize that with more research time, I would have interviewed more people from other nations in southern Texas and northern Mexico to provide a more encompassing understanding.

The first interview was with Mr. Lorenzo Perez², an elder with the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation in San Antonio. Perez and I met at the Mission Park site where AIT-SCM co-sponsored the Urban Indian San Antonio Pow Wow in summer 2021: a flourishing cultural site that continually defies the scholarly erasure of Native peoples in southern Texas and northern Mexico. Perez continually emphasized his work as a Native, non-academic anthropologist, trying to help reverse the invisibility of Tāp Pīlam and their ancestors. Perez's recent various projects have included research over linguistics, mission records, and Indigenous archaeology. These projects have been ways that Perez has tried to create a lasting impact

¹ These interviews were created in accordance with and approved by Trinity University's International Review Board, which protects human participants involved in any type of study.

² Informants' names have been changed for their privacy and protection.

and legacy on Tāp Pīlam. In relation to this paper's topic, Perez exemplified at a recent archaeology field school how the disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, and history can become more inclusive and respectful of Indigenous peoples' wishes. Years ago, Perez and his co-diggers discovered the buried remains of an ancestor; Perez quickly fell to his knees and mournfully sang in the Pajalt language over the disturbance of this ancestor, moving every archaeologist to tears (Personal communication, 10/29/21).

Ms. Dania Marin of the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation, a twelfth lineal descendant of Yanaguana (San Antonio), similarly demonstrated in our interview resilience in spite of systematic pressures and individual trauma for Indigenous people. Discourses surrounding the Alamo and other San Antonio missions as White-washed historical sites continue to erase Indigenous presence in the city. Nevertheless, Marin showed that her people are strong, capable, and resilient by surviving and creating a powerful non-profit and Nation that are reversing the extinction of Texan institutions and scholars. This has been alongside a handful of scholars and archivists like the late Dr. Alston Thoms of Texas A&M, Henrique Vera³ at AIT-SCM, and researchers with the National Park Service (Personal communication, 11/18/21).

HOPE FOR THE DISCIPLINES

The devastating reality is that disciplines like anthropology are deeply rooted in the colonialist studying of "the Other" (Yellowhorn 1996:23). The good news is that archaeology, anthropology, and history are disciplines existing in socially-constructed worlds, meaning that they can and will change in accordance with our societies' values. For instance, we can see over the last twenty years how much the discipline of archaeology has changed in North America: before the 1990s cultural belongings and ancestors' remains were tightly held by museums and universities, and now they are being increasingly repatriated to their Native communities (Yellowhorn 1996:27).

Eldon Yellowhorn's article, "Indians, Archaeology, and the Changing World," highlights the evolving interactions between anthropologists and Native communities. Some effects of the disappearance narrative have been that archaeologists and physical anthropologists ignored Indigenous peoples' input and concerns about culturally significant objects and ancestors' remains. Now, however,

³ Mr. Vera's name has been changed for privacy.

Indigenous people and their concerns are becoming more influential on North American archaeology and anthropology. It is essential to the decolonized development of archaeology that more Native students are given access to study archaeology and lead the field instead of only White archaeologists. This helps unite expert knowledge with scientific training and create more balanced partnerships between science and Indigenous communities. Providing equitable access to anthropology in higher education also influences the return of museum collections, which hold Native objects and ancestors (Yellowhorn 1996:26, 28, 33).

Flewellen et al.'s "The Future of Archaeology Is Anti-Racist," points out the systematic barriers within archaeology and offers up strategies to help make the discipline more inclusive to students of color. They specifically focus on four phases of making archaeology a decolonized, inclusive discipline. Firstly, we must recognize and rid archaeology of its marginalizing systems and barriers by ensuring that there are leadership positions for people of color. Phase two involves rebuilding the discipline from a foundational perspective, which includes individual and collective changes to becoming "accomplices" and not "allies." The next phase applies this new archaeological approach to challenge structures of violence. Finally, phase four discusses the essential nature of retaining and providing mentors of color for archaeology students of color (Flewellen et al. 2021:9-14).

It is also worth considering the contributions of Schneider and Hayes, who question whether archaeology can be decolonized based on its foundations in oppression against communities including Native Americans (2020:130). They explain that as a discipline foundationally based on understanding the mysterious "Other," which has included especially Native Americans, it is worth considering whether archaeology can be reformed (Schneider and Hayes 2020:128). Part of archaeology and even anthropology's misplaced confidence and oppression are related to Western scientists planting themselves within a culture to explain to the outside world and informants "the native's" societies or "lost ways" (Schneider and Hayes 2020:130-31). Bronislaw Malinowski himself claimed that any type of informant is incapable of comprehending their own societies, which legitimizes the "need" for an outside ethnographer to show the "native" their own culture (1984:11-12). In response to this, Indigenous archaeology has emerged as a discipline that is "done with, for, and by Indigenous people," centering Indigenous

community input and priorities when dealing with cultural heritage sites (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:229). While practicing Indigenous “archaeologies,” it is essential to include oral histories and stories from Native communities as legitimate sources of evidence since they know their culture far better than any anthropologist might (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:229; Schneider and Hayes 2020:135).

CONCLUSION

Settler colonialism’s effects on the present day can be explained through the “logic of elimination,” which has included cultural, biological, and physical genocide, as well as blood quantum and importantly scholarly erasure (Orr et al. 2019:2; Wolfe 2006:387-88; Brown 1970; Schmidt 2011:4; Panich 2013; Panich and Schneider 2019; Schneider and Hayes 2020:134; Smith 2019). These marginalizing processes have posited Native Americans as extinct or a “vanishing race,” justifying to U.S. settlers the robbery of Indigenous land (Cariou 2016:310-11; Panich 2013:105; Schneider and Hayes 2020:130; Hall 2008:275; Orr et al. 2019: 2;). Anthropologists have contributed to what I call the “disappearance narrative” through measuring skulls and justifying racist conceptions of people (Schmidt 2011:2; Yellowhorn 1996:30). Archaeologists have long participated in the robbery of objects and ancestors but more recently have overly studied “pre-contact” Indigenous peoples through “terminal narrative” lenses such as depopulation, disease, and death (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:230; Panich 2013:106, 109; Panich and Schneider 2019:653-53). Historians such as Dee Brown and popular writers like James Fenimore Cooper strengthened the disappearance narrative through writings that portrayed Native Americans as fleeting, doomed, and lost culturally and socioeconomically (Brown 1970:xxiii-xxv; Cariou 2016:310-11).

This paper specifically analyzes the scholarly discourse surrounding the Spanish-labeled “Coahuiltecan” peoples. These hundreds of bands and clans of Indigenous peoples in southern Texas and northern Mexico have been labeled as “cannibals,” uncivilized, and extinct by scholars and popular historical resources (Newcomb 1956:145; Swanton 1915:17-18, 40; 1907:285; Nunley 1971:303; Campbell 1977:2, 11; TSHA 1952). In response, many of these bands have banded together to form non-profits and sovereign united Nations such as Tāp Pīlam; together, they are continuously reversing

extinction and preserving their cultural heritages through the Native American church, ceremonies, social and civic programs, and cultural art events (Douglas 2021; Tāp Pīlam 1990; Chavana 2019:21-22; Xica Media 2020; Shively 2018).

Despite the damage done to Native American communities, there is the hope of reform for the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, and history. The dialogue occurring between institutions and Native communities over repatriating stolen items and people's bodies such as in San Antonio has increased dramatically in the last thirty years due largely to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act in 1992 (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:229; Chavana 2019:22-23). Archaeologists have become more aware and concerned with Indigenous communities' input, and the field of Indigenous archaeology has emerged, as more Native students are getting access to the discipline of anthropology and non-Native scholars are putting Indigenous communities' needs and opinions at the forefront of their research (Yellowhorn 1996:36; Schneider and Hayes 2020:131). For example, my conversations with Lorenzo Perez and Dania Marin of the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation highlighted the promising work done by non-Native and Native scholars around San Antonio when studying among Indigenous communities (Personal communication, 10/29/2021; 11/19/21; Schneider and Hayes 2020:132).

Another priority for students of archaeology, anthropology, and history is to engage in conversations with local Indigenous communities in research and simply in casual settings (see Figure 6) (Schneider and Hayes 2020:133). The first step for institutions like universities is to put forth a land acknowledgment written by Indigenous peoples to recognize systematic oppression and university commitments to socioeconomic equity, as currently being attempted by a coalition of students, staff, and faculty at Trinity University. Non-Natives can better understand what it means to be advocates or even "accomplices" by working and communicating with Indigenous communities, as we live in North America or Turtle Island together (Flewellen et al. 2021:11; Newcomb 2011).⁴

⁴ There are many other Indigenous issues and reasons for hope for the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, and history. This is by no means an exhaustive list but merely a reference to the decolonizing work being done.

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FIGURE APPENDIX



Figure 1: Native Americans have been victims of cultural, biological, and physical genocide. This image (likely painted on deerskin) depicts Black Kettle, a Southern Cheyenne leader at Sand Creek, in 1864 holding up an American flag while being attacked by Colonel Chivington's unit under false pretenses of being hostile (Wikimedia Commons and Stone Rabbit 2012).



Figure 2: This image depicts some of the types of Cherokee travelers forced on the Trail of Tears (National Archives and Records Administration 2019). These types of images of weary and impoverished Native Americans have become infused with public perception over Indigenous “true” identity (Orr et al. 2019:2, 12).

ETHNOLINGUISTIC DISTRIBUTION OF NATIVE TEXAS INDIANS

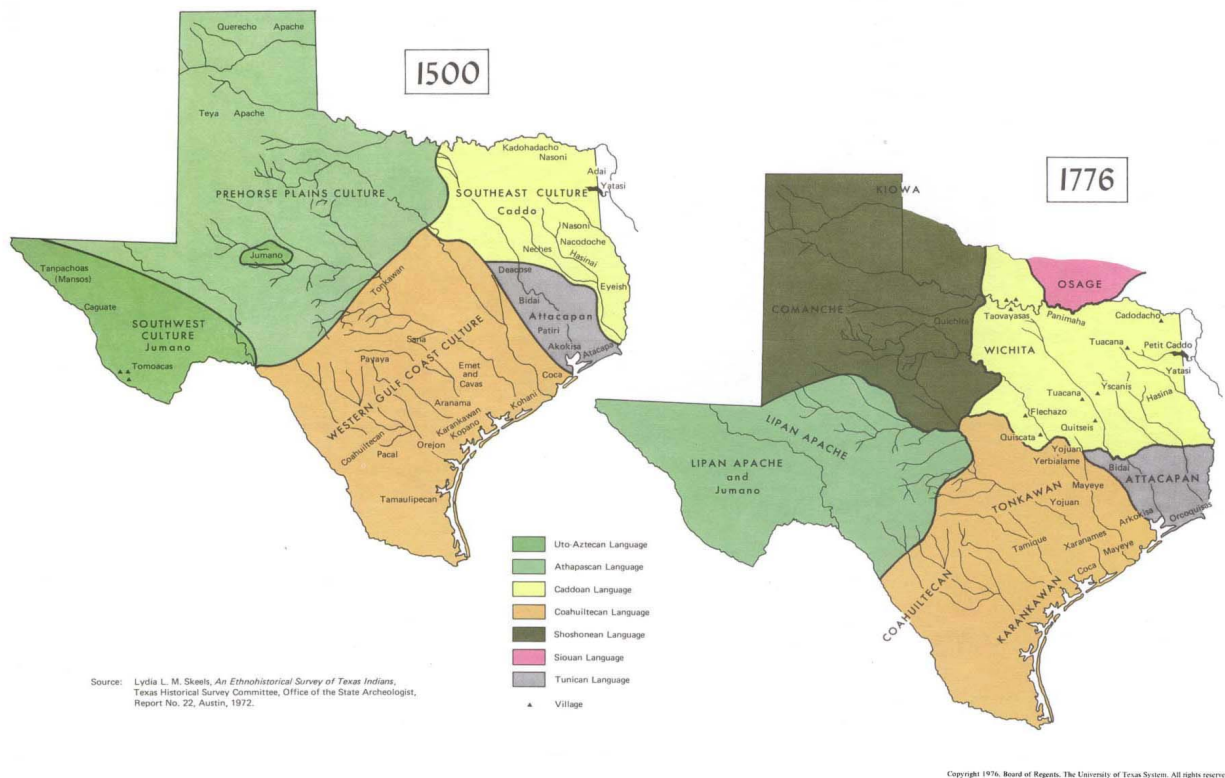


Figure 3: This figure depicts the “Coahuiltecan” dispersion of bands ethnically and linguistically (University of Texas at Austin, 1976). It is important to note that these groups did not all consider themselves as members of a single group but were rather lumped together by Spanish invaders (Nunley 1971:303).



Figure 4: This photograph taken by the author depicts Mission San Juan Capistrano in San Antonio (Brown 2021). Over 150 people including children were reburied here in 1999 and the early 2000s as part of a huge repatriation effort by Tāp Pīlam.



Figure 5: This photograph taken by AIT-SCM is displayed on the landing page of AIT's website. It beautifully demonstrates the ways that Tāp Pīlam is continuing the teachings, ceremonies, and language (to name a few cultural practices) to fight the erasure of their people (AIT-SCM N.d.).



Figure 6: This photograph by the author in 2021 displays the life and flourishing of the “Coahuiltecan” and other Indigenous peoples in San Antonio (Brown, 2021).

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