

Dear Friends and colleagues,

I thought you might be interested in my first year students' responses to the symposium – we also had a wonderful circle sharing yesterday with 36 of our students and a number of faculty. Quite moving – thanks you again so much for making this symposium possible and so meaningful.

Students will be doing more formal writing but these are their first thoughts/posts on moodle as of Sunday evening. Thanks to each and all of you again for what you have shared and the powerful ways in which you have done so - as you will see, it has made an impact on this younger generation.

PS: I have not edited these – it's straight from them.

Zha Xueyin - who has just arrived in the U.S. from China:

At this point, I am in a state of reminiscence, ruminating about the past three days when I was totally immersed in a history brought alive, history that no longer lingers on the pages and between lines of words. At the end of my thoughts I realized that I cannot point out an event which impressed me the most – I was impressed constantly during the symposium.

Just want to roughly show how my thoughts flowed:

During my reminiscence, I re-heard the resonant voice of Dovie Thomason, which rendered me a little child, sitting near the glimmering fire listening to a tribal elder telling stories. Dovie said that “history is the life of people”. I am surprised by the extent to which each of the speakers is linked with history. The stories they told are the stories of their mothers, fathers, and great grand-fathers. Indeed, the history, the truth they are trying so hard to reclaim, is their own stories and past.

During my reminiscence, I saw the pictures Jennifer Nez Denetdale showed, pictures containing the stories of her own great great grand-father. She sobbed as she said: “These photos show their (her ancestors)

courage and will to live. They remind me of the Long Walk... My ancestors carried the burden and moved on..." After attending the symposium it is clearer to me which stage the indigenous people have reached: they are no longer in the vortex of struggle but they have not yet reached the new life; they are in the juncture of the two stages, where they gather up their past, tend to the wound, and move towards the future.

During my reminiscence I also re-heard Laura Tohe's poems and I marveled at such metaphor: "The Indian School experience is like a sentence; we are all veterans of this institution." Interestingly, however, this sense of powerlessness is also accompanied by a sense of maternal superiority, as Tohe expressed in her letter to Pratt: "You and your followers are still children. You have not yet learned how to get on with people."

During my reminiscence I also recall the tales about the huge bears and the evil snake Daniel Romero told me on the dinner table, where he told me that everything has a soul. I could feel Daniel's eagerness in telling people the tradition of Lipan Apache, as he translated every word on the menu from Lakota to Lipan Apache and taught me how to read it. I felt sad and awed: this is a man who exerted every effort in rescuing the tradition and history of his nation, which are being diminished little by little.

During my reminiscence I felt the force of Margo Tamez' words as she claimed that the "officially erased past" is a "human right" issue which has transcended national boundary. I was a little overwhelmed by her very dense and scholarly speech, which I, as an utterly ignorant young Chinese student, could not yet follow. But overall she gave me a sense of forcefulness and strength. I felt empowered by this forensic historian who shows anger smoldering from years of witnesses and studying of history. She

is the kind of STRONG scholar I would want to become.

And finally, in my reminiscence, I heard the deep, rhythmic voice of N. Scott Momaday trailing away: “They came for the children, and took them away. It was a journey into darkness.” I have been recently interrogated by a close friend who insisted that I gave a conclusion about whether the whole transformation is RIGHT or WRONG. I hesitated, for I felt I could never give an absolute answer. I have always thought that this traumatizing transformation is an inevitable result of the progression of human history, and the more I read about the social and historical background of Pratt, the more I came to understand and even approved of him in some way. However, after the symposium my mind changed, for the transformation is a “journey into darkness”; it is a fundamental violation of human rights which is unexcused. It might be unpreventable, but that doesn’t mean it is not wrong. Just as Gertie the Red Bird has questioned: “How can people be a problem (the Indian Problem)? How can you experiment on people?” (From Dovie Thomason’s speech).

Where The Past Stands

By [Anine](#) - Sunday, October 7, 2012, 05:00 PM

It didn’t quite hit me until Scott Momaday said, “they were children.” His strong, Dumbledore-like voice gave me chills. Hearing these words spoken with his voice made the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and its atrocities real. It wasn’t until he showed his anger and remorse, for these children who were torn from their families and forced to abandon everything they knew, that I felt the emotion behind the history.

These days we look at history with a lens that teaches us how to change ourselves to make the future better. What I noticed about the

symposium was for these Native Americans, it's still too early for them to move on. The past isn't yet the past for them, they've kept it with them to change their present. Or perhaps the past is in front of them, as Dovie Thomason said during her brilliantly crafted story. The past is in front of them because they now know and understand the past and the future may tap them on the shoulder, but when they turn around they'll know what to do with it.

Claudia Ulbrich told a story about a young German girl named Regina who was said to have been taken by a tribe during the French and Indian War. Regina's story was similar to Mary Jemison's story, except Regina was with the tribe for nine years instead of the rest of her life. She still lost most of her native tongue and could barely speak to her mother when they found each other, but Regina held onto her religion for longer than Mary Jemison did. Regina prayed for release while simultaneously assimilating into tribal life.

Claudia Ulbrich called this story one of Pennsylvania's "collective memories," though names have been changed and details of the story altered, it remains a legend for the descendants of the German settlers from the eighteenth century.

Scott Momaday called the Carlisle Indian Industrial School "a place made sacred by sacrifice." The families forced to sacrifice their children, the children forced to sacrifice their roots, and their stories make the Carlisle Indian Industrial School sacred if only to remind us to keep passing on the history. These stories told by the speakers at the symposium should never be lost, we must keep them with us so they can live on and can defend us against what the future brings.[Reply](#)

[Stephanie](#) -
Sunday, October
7, 2012, 05:42
PM

The Symposium to me was like the weeks before a music concert. The fans know the artist's song, just as we know facts about the speakers. Then when the day of concert finally arrives the people in attendance are in awe of the artist's talent ;as I was when I attend the Symposium.

The first session I was able to attend was "The Spirit Survives" by Dove Thompson. This session was the most memorable for me because Dove Thompson is very captivating and talented woman. Her words created images in my mind without the need of actually pictures. One line that I remember the most is when Thompson said, "Wounds... will not heal, until you clean them." This line, I feel Dove Thompson explains the purpose of the Natives American participating or attending the Symposium, which is in order to move forward, they have to speak of their painful past.

Margo Tamez and Daniel Castro Romero Jr.'s session on Saturday was very moving. Especially towards the end when Tamez became very emotional and said what keeps her fighting for her people is the love she feels for them.

Tamez expressed this passion throughout her slide show and at that moment her emotions bursted. I feel honored being able to witness such a compelling and moving moment because it's not very often people express their emotions in front of a group of strangers.

Overall the Symposium brought to life what we have been discussing in class and it was a great experience.-----

Samantha: The symposium really helped me to see just how much pain and suffering Indian schools caused. It is one thing to read about the horrors of Indian schools, but it is completely different to actually hear stories from survivors or relatives of survivors. All the talks I went to were fantastic, but the ones that really interested and affected me were Dovie Thomason, Gregory Younging, and Scott Momaday.

Dovie's storytelling was amazing. She made me truly feel the pain children went through. I loved her analogy of the tree, where older people are the roots, middle-aged people are the trunk, and younger people are the leaves who nourish the entire tree. It is a very different view, and I think it is beautiful. Another thing that really struck me was how she imitated her Grandfather. He still said the word *mush* with so much anger and resentment, it made me realize that time alone will not heal the wounds of Indian schools.

Gregory Younging's talk about the truth and reconciliation commission gave me hope. The symposium was filled with so much sadness but I found his talk uplifting and I think it gave many people hope. It made me realize that the United States has so much work to do. I think the United States should make everyone aware of what happened at Indian schools and should apologize to Native Americans, which would greatly aid in the healing process.

Scott Momaday's talk probably affected me the most. He had so many strong points about Carlisle that really stuck with me. He said that Carlisle had "a policy of moral confusion," which I agree with. Momaday also said that Carlisle was "a laboratory where the children's hearts were tested." That quote is so powerful, it made me realize that not only were the children's identities taken away, but their hearts were tested because they were far away from their families with no connection to their culture, which inevitably caused them heartbreak.

I had very mixed feeling about the symposium, it made me feel sad and horrified at how people treated Native Americans, but it also gave me hope and made me realize that this symposium was necessary for people to heal.

by Michele-
Monday,
October 8, 2012,
08:24 AM

First, I want to give another big thank you to Professor Rose for making this weekend happen. It was definitely an experience that I'm now very grateful for because it was really thought-provoking. I tried to go to as many of the discussions as I could so I would have a lot to write about. Every single speaker was absolutely amazing. In all, I had mixed responses and there was something from each of them that will stay with me for a very long time.

Maurice Kenny: His poem was beautiful. It gave me chills (that might have been because it was also freezing cold at that time in ATS). But really, it was a good way to start off the weekend because it was able to communicate the same message about the "cultural rape" so-to-speak, and put me on the verge of tears. One line that is especially humbling was "Who is this boy- hair cut? Tongue cut?" While we learned and discussed the topic of identity loss and forced conformity a lot in class, it was a much different experience to hear it in such poetic words.

The flute player that followed was good at saying a lot without saying much of anything. Even though I couldn't understand the language that it was being sung in, his voice and his words put me at ease. I had a feeling of hope come over me, that the reconciliation of these people was not so far of a reach.

The "Coming to Carlisle: The Names, The Pictures, The Stories" panel was one that brought out a lot of emotion, not only from the people speaking, but from the audience too. It was something that Professor Rose had warned us about, but I was definitely not prepared for it. It was amazing how much significance this small town that to me, I've always considered a means to an end has on many different people from many different walks of life. "Coming to Carlisle" has so much meaning for them. It represents their journey, with each individual having a different one.

Barbara Landis was fantastic every time. She has such knowledge and also such a kind and gentle heart that really felt for the people coming to her for answers.

Jacqueline Fear-Segal is just as wonderful, she is very intelligent and puts things in a perspective that makes you think, but does not overwhelm you with emotion.

Dovie Thomason was not only phenomenal when she spoke on this panel but in her storytelling as well. She has such a talent for captivating an audience with words. What I liked about her the most was her perspective. She didn't seem to be blaming anyone in particular, but it was still clear she was passionate about healing and reconciliation.

When the Q&A session opened up after this panel I did not know what to do with the controversy and emotion that came up. This is when I received my first impression of Margo Tamez; it was not the best one, either. She and a few others seemed very angry and resentful, especially with the white male. After having lunch with her, I realized she really was a nice person working on some very interesting and important matters, I just simply was not prepared for the emotion. I do understand where that emotion comes from though, this is such a heavy and powerful subject that runs deeply through the blood of the affected people. But, like I said, I really just was not prepared to handle it. I suppose it's something one cannot ever prepare for, but just accept with an open mind.

Daniel Castro Romero Jr. was great! He has a way of connecting with the younger generation and lighting fires inside. I was fortunate enough to have been able to spend a great deal of time getting to know him and getting to know his work throughout the 2 days. He is another person that has a perspective that I really appreciated, because it seemed like he was not pointing fingers at anyone.

While I have much more to say about many of the speakers/events at the symposium, I will finish with Scott Momaday.

Scott Momaday's closing was easily one of the best things I've ever listened to in my life. He not only has a voice that is deep and eloquent and able to captivate anyone, he has a gift with words: speaking them and writing them. I was speechless after listening to his poetry and play. I felt many ways-I felt sad and kind of guilty, but I also felt hopeful for the future. He has a way of taking painful and awful things, and making them beautiful and therapeutic in his writing. It was such a pleasure to briefly speak with him after. One line that was really moving was "They came for the children and took them away, and journeyed them into the darkness."

All in all, there were many emotions triggered at many different points in this eye-opening weekend. I'm so happy to have had the privilege of listening and

learning so much from so many unique people. I was in awe with the amount of people that traveled long distances to share similar experiences. I hope they enjoyed it as much as I did.

Katie W.

The symposium was eye-opening and enlightening. The discussions we listened to provided us with a chance to actually experience some of the painful and angry emotions (as felt through Margot Tamez and her story of struggle), as well as the sad and reflective ones (like the stories of Dovie Thomason, which, for me, provoked reflection and thought).

As I ate lunch with Daniel Castro Romero and Margot, Michele and I had similar remarks on the tension at the panel. Though Professor Rose had warned us that there might be some emotionally-charged and heated moments during the symposium, I do not think there was any real way to prepare for these tensions. We spent so much time reading in class and discussing, which is great and very informative, but for me, the symposium brought things full circle and made everything more real. Hearing about the issues from the real native people and experiencing their emotions with them illuminated and enhanced all the work we have done in class.

The symposium was powerful. There were many moments when I had chills and goosebumps. Listening to the flute play, hearing Maurice Kenny's moving poem, and hanging on the words of Scott Momaday's creation stories really brought new meaning to all that we've learned in class. It made things more relatable, and brought up more emotion than could really be realized from reading words on a page.

I think that all of the sessions I attended were very-much worthwhile. It was nice that there were some light-hearted moments from the speakers. I particularly enjoyed Dovie's "What are we gonna do with all this shit I just told you?" I also appreciated her saying that this is "a stain that affects us all" because at times, I felt almost out of place, not because these issues are irrelevant to me (because I believe they have relevance to all of us), but more because of the sort of white-guilt I was feeling at certain moments. I think her comment reminded us all that we can help heal the situation by learning and spreading awareness, and by supporting the numerous efforts of the people in attendance.

I wish that there was a way that more students could have attended more of the events, because I was surprised to learn how many students had no idea that the symposium was even going on. At the same time, I was glad to be a part of an event which seems to be part of steps in the right direction as far as raising awareness and opening up a productive dialogue about the injustices faced by Native Americans.

Angie:

The Carlisle Symposium, where can one begin to put into words something that actually describes this event? A few days, emotionally charged with moving findings and in some respects healing for those who have experienced these hardships. The journey began years before today. Yet my inner self tells me that the journey has only begun. Where will this story end? Only the future can predict this, however, if everyone is willing to act we mold it by the knowledge we have acquired.

On the drive home, I was remembering Daniel Castro Romero stating, "I am not going to fight this on a federal level any longer- it doesn't work and WE were here before you." At this moment an overwhelming feeling of foresight struck. The overall problem is a problem caused by nations. Unfortunately, even the Indigenous nations who withstood horrible treatment for centuries are involved in this debate. Nations cause divisions. Nations naturally draw a line in the sand, which gives rise to the notion that our nation is better and more important, continuously each conceding the other in turn. When will the world, society in general, realize that we are all humans who have the right to exist on this planet in peace and harmony? Dare I ask this question? Is it even permissible to do so? I suspect that my answer is inexplicitly—no. Unfortunately, as human beings we have become ingrained to cling to what we know and overly value our own personal importance. Realistically, this is the most simplistic explanation for the complexity surrounding the issue of hatred and violence experienced throughout the world in every century. For to continue this debate it would take pages.

Changing the world is not something that a few people have the power to do. From being a witness to this symposium and what has happened, is happening and what could continue to take place, what will our stand be? Will we go on with our everyday life and forget what we have learned or instead have we learned enough to know that we need to take at the very least baby steps toward initiating change? Even if the first footstep is individually realizing and acknowledging that our previous view of how we perceived our personal world, mainly our existence and what we thought our nation to be, has not been the truth. If this is our first action, then we have left the symposium taking something with us. Because learning something new, this is always the first stride to initiating change.

Brendan

During the symposium I heard several speakers mention the need for networking, most notably Margo Tamez to Daniel Castro Romero.

One person or group could take on a fight, as Tamez's mother tried to do when fighting for her land at the US-Mexico border. Tamez's family is part of the Romero-led Lipan Apache Band, the only indigenous tribe that tried to fight off US attempts to construct a wall at the US-Mexico border. However the Lipan Apache's struggle to keep undivided land showed a need for better networking.

When people can network in order to work for a common issue, the results can be successful. As speakers pointed out, we have seen this with attempts to save the Carlisle Industrial Indian School (CIIS). Numerous descendants, indigenous tribes, and friends of the indigenous people have fought to keep the US Army War College from tearing down what remains of CIIS. While there is still a lot of work to go, the school hasn't been torn down and is now getting consideration for being put on the national registry of historic places.

This networking is needed to get any substantial progress done on the national or international level. The indigenous people have limited influence on such a level, so networking is an important part in getting a lobbying force together for real change.

The temptation will be to move on like normal after the Symposium. If we were to do that, though, the Symposium would be all for naught. One major purpose of the Symposium is to create the networking needed to make progress on the cause of the indigenous people.

Bart: An interesting event that I went to during the Carlisle Symposium was the "Plains Indian Tipi Project" which was presented by Carolyn Rittenhouse or Hwo Wash'te Winyan (her Lakota Name). Even though the event started almost an hour later than it was supposed to, I found this event very interesting. I learned a lot about the Lakota Tribe and about the life of Carolyn Rittenhouse. The first part of the presentation was emotional and interesting. The presentation started with a brief history of Carolyn Rittenhouse and how she got where she is today. I found it interesting that she was taught the Lakota language when she was growing up, but when she was in boarding school she had to stop learning Lakota. The boarding school was similar to the Carlisle Indian School because it forced people to teach the students that their "way of life was wrong". This reminded me of Richard Henry Pratt's idea to "kill the Indian and save the man". Another part of the presentation that I found interesting was the Red Road Approach. Rittenhouse talked about her family's alcohol problems. Which is a common problem in reservations today. The Red Road Approach is an alternative way of healing that I would like to learn more about. She said that her mother and 9 of her siblings had alcoholic problems. After going through the red road process her mother and siblings have been able to be sober for 25 years.

The tipi was very impressive. When I saw it I was shocked about how much of an impact it made on me. I thought to myself and talked to my classmates about what it would be like to live in one. It had a very strong presence in the room. Rittenhouse talked about how the tipi was really important to the Lakota Tribe. It was legend that the tipis were like Lakota mothers, because mothers would hold their children in the shape of the tipi. As I see it, "reclaiming indigenous histories" is about remembering the past. As we see with CIIS, networking is needed in order to keep the past remembered. Hopefully networking from the Symposium will create the organization needed to truly reclaim indigenous histories.

Jia Ma:

Although the symposium has only lasted for two days, I felt that the messages it had brought would have a long-lasting effect on all the participants.

At first, I felt that the symposium was more of a Native Americans reunion than an academic discussion. People from different ages, different professions and different nationalities came together to share their thoughts and related experiences about Carlisle. It was amazing to see how this one small school could have such a big impact on so many people for such a long time.

Yet, the more sessions I participated, the more profound I felt. The reason why people came here was not merely because they would like to spend time with the others who shared similar experiences. They were here because they wanted to share different messages. In fact, I managed to categorize these messages into three categories after the symposium.

Firstly, people like Barbara Landis, Dovie Thomason showed pictures and told stories about boarding school life, showing the audience that even though many different students had attended the Carlisle Industrial Indian School (CIIS), their experiences were not only happy or

sad, but a mixture of feelings. For example, while some students were excited about changing to new uniforms and having new haircut, they also felt frustrated because of their lost of physical connection to their Indian cultural identity. This shows that the characteristics of the young children: on the one hand, they were curious about new things; on the other hand, they were sad for their lost.

At the same time, these speakers wanted more people to understanding the cultural genocide in the past, such that more people could be motivated to reclaim their lost culture and tradition. The Indian students were forced to leave their families from an extremely young age. They were forced to cut all the connections with the tribal societies. They were forced to adapt to the white men's culture. By showing these past experiences, people would know the importance of attaining their own culture and thus were motivated to restore and preserve the lost tribal culture. Thirdly, speakers like Denial Castro Romero as well as general Native American audiences wanted the younger generation to adopt critical thinking, and learn to see history from different perspective. Since majority of the texts now only showed one side of the history, such as Columbus glorious achievements, but not his genocide to Natives, the participants encouraged the young generation to analyze history more critically. In doing so, they hope that the lost lives and culture can be reclaimed and acknowledged by the young generation sometime in the future.

Christian:

While attending the symposium, one thing really stuck out for me, and that was the frustration, anger and sorrow of those who attended the symposium. At the first session I attended, there was a panel that seemed to have the purpose of giving introductions to the speakers and what they would be going over during the time of the symposium. One part of it that really stuck out for me was the poem written and read by Maurice Kenny. It was a very beautiful and sad poem. I was very impressed by Kenny's ability to really capture the emotions and feelings of the Native Americans in the photograph that he wrote his poem about. It was a very powerful experience for me. After the poem, the presentation went on, going over many of the things in that we have discussed in class so far. It was at the end of the presentation, when it was time for questions, was when things started to get pretty tense. Many of the people there expressed great frustration, and for a little bit, things began to get ugly when sparks began to fly between people. It at time when I myself began to feel frustrated. I felt very conflicted on the inside and I wasn't really sure as to how I should feel and react to what was going and what has happened in the past. I remember one man standing up and basically saying that the future lay in the hands of the youths and that we need to step up and do something about this mess. Part of me really strongly agreed with him, but another part of me was not so sure. I do believe that something has to be done, whether it is doing away with Columbus Day or getting the government to step up and apologize for their actions. I do believe that this symposium was a very enlightening experience for me and very glad for the opportunity.

Andrew: My favorite event that I attended at the symposium was the "Coming to Carlisle: The Names, The Pictures, The Stories." At this event, Dovie Thomason presented another view of students and parents of students at the Carlisle Indian School.

Dovie spoke of a Native American boy (sorry, I forgot his name) that was very proud to have his hair cut short because he wanted to feel in style with the short hair look instead of the traditional Indian long hair. This is a very different view that we have read about, especially from Pratt, where the removal of the Indian's hair was a very hard pill to swallow. This shows that some of the children that were taken to this school actually appreciated the opportunity that they were forced in to.

Also, in another situation, a Native American parent named Cook funded his own travel from his reservation in the west to the school to visit his daughter (again, unfortunately do not have the name...). Cook took her shopping. He bought his daughter a white dress and new shoes. In the photo of Cook and his daughter, the girl looks quite uncomfortable in her new outfit. But, Cook looks to be very happy and proud of his daughter's opportunity, seeing the large smile on his face, especially due to the fact he held a large smile throughout the picture taking process, which is quite a little longer than it is today.

These two stories showed me that some Native Americans actually saw the Carlisle Indian School as beneficial and having the opportunity to attend the school was something to take pride in.