

## **Distribution Agreement**

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Claire Barnes

April 9, 2018

An Exploration of Time and Sacredness in Indigenous Food Sovereignty Movements: A Case  
Study of The Sioux Chef

by

Claire Barnes

Barbara (Bobbi) Patterson

Adviser

Department of Religion

Debra Vidali

Adviser

Mandy Suhr-Sytsma

Committee Member

Jessica Wahman

Committee Member

2019

An Exploration of Time and Sacredness in Indigenous Food Sovereignty Movements: A Case  
Study of The Sioux Chef

By

Claire Barnes

Barbara (Bobbi) Patterson

Adviser

An abstract of  
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences  
of Emory University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Religion

2019

## Abstract

### An Exploration of Time and Sacredness in Indigenous Food Sovereignty Movements: A Case Study of The Sioux Chef

By Claire Barnes

This thesis explores how sacredness and time manifests in Indigenous food sovereignty movements in the United States through the case study of The Sioux Chef. The Sioux Chef is a coalition of Indigenous chefs from North America who work to revitalize Native ingredients and cuisines. In the thesis, I argue several things: 1) Indigenous theorists understand time as space-time, 2) Indigenous food sovereignty movements foreground sacredness as existing within space-time, and 3) that while Indigenous food sovereignty movements foreground sacredness, sacredness operates as an undercurrent in The Sioux Chef's work as the organization prioritizes discussions of food as cultural restoration and health. In order to arrive at these conclusions, I rely on observational data collected at Terra Madre, a Slow Food International Conference, and coded for "mention of" words in 11 articles about The Sioux Chef. Seven of these eleven articles were posted on The Sioux Chef's website and are utilized in order to assess the public image and rhetoric of the organization. Overall, this thesis combines Indigenous scholarship on sacredness, time, and food in a way that has not yet been done by scholars in food studies.

An Exploration of Time and Sacredness in Indigenous Food Sovereignty Movements: A Case  
Study of The Sioux Chef

By

Claire Barnes

Barbara (Bobbi) Patterson

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences  
of Emory University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Religion

2019

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my departmental advisor, Barbara (Bobbi) Patterson, for allowing me to complete this thesis in the Religion Department. I would also like to thank Dr. Debra Vidali for supervising my work and serving as my primary, intellectual advisor. Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Mandy Suhr-Sytsma and Dr. Jessica Wahman, for your comments and support. I would finally like to thank my family and friends who have supported me in this project.

Table of Contents

*Introduction*.....1

*Chapter 1*.....12

Indigenous Scholarship on Sacredness and Time

*Chapter 2*.....25

Western Understandings of Religion and Continued Settler Time Frames

*Chapter 3*.....37

Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Time

*Chapter 4*.....50

A Note on Methodology and Introduction to the Sioux Chef

*Chapter 5*.....59

Interview and Article Data

*Chapter 6*.....68

Conclusions on Religion, Food, Sacredness, and Time

*APPENDICES*.....74

*Works Cited* .....78

## Introduction

In what is currently claimed as the United States, Christian missionary activities imposed a variety of Western perspectives on the Native peoples of the land—including those that relate to both religion and food. Winona LaDuke, an Anishinabek activist and writer, writes about the colonization of Indigenous food ways and destruction of land-based spiritual practices. In the preface to the anthology *Land Justice: Re-Imagining Land, Food, and the Common in the United States*, LaDuke writes, “our [Indigenous] food systems have been colonized and deconstructed, and our wealth taken by others. But now is the time to begin decolonization. The struggle over land in our nation begins and ends with recognizing our *spiritual relationship with our seeds*, our food, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the earth we walk upon” (LaDuke 2017). Colonial entities excluded and continue to exclude Indigenous peoples<sup>1</sup> from the fabric of society using food as a vehicle of power and settlement. In addition to food as a physical entity, colonial entities delegitimize Indigenous people’s respective systems connected to food, which include practices, beliefs, and spiritual traditions.

Colonial activities in North America occurred in waves. The dominant narrative surrounding the colonization of the Americas in 1492 is inaccurate, as there were several colonization efforts prior to this glorified date. The colonization of Indigenous life-ways still occurs today through land grabbing, environmental degradation, and the imposition of Western diets on Indigenous peoples living on both sovereign and settler land. The process of colonization is on-going and dynamic, as decolonization scholars recognize both physical and mental forms of colonization, i.e. the phrase “decolonize your mind” (Wilson and Bird 2005).

---

<sup>1</sup> I capitalize Indigenous and Native in this thesis, in order to denote their category as a proper noun. The capitalization of these terms are debated, but I decided to stick with capitalization throughout the thesis for consistency.



In global food sovereignty movements, non-Western peoples are reclaiming their spiritual understandings of food, in light of continued colonization and oppression. With the emergence of food sovereignty as a term and framework in 1996, and subsequently the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, the voices of Indigenous and non-Western peoples became more visible in international dialogue. The food sovereignty movement was founded in 1996 by a peasant coalition called La Via Campesina in an international setting. In 2007, eleven years after Via La Campesina coined the term, The Declaration of Nyéléni narrowed the values and goals of the food sovereignty movement. Food sovereignty has a variety of ideological tenets ranging from the rejection of the neo-liberal economy, the centrality of the food producer, and the sacred nature of land and food. While the movement relies on ideal goals, the term food sovereignty is both a concept and framework for action (Nyéléni Food Forum 2007). The broad term has been adapted for use on a local level in what we now call the United States<sup>2</sup>. Indigenous peoples, both in the United States and globally, have chosen to operate under the term food sovereignty as they engage in the cultural restoration of all things related to food.

Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS) is a subset of the global food sovereignty movement. Defined by the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, IFS has four main tenets<sup>3</sup>. The first tenet the Working Group sets for Indigenous food sovereignty, is that food is sacred and divine: “Food is a gift from the Creator; in this respect, the right to food is sacred and cannot be constrained or recalled by colonial laws, policies, and institutions. Indigenous food sovereignty is fundamentally achieved by upholding our sacred responsibility to nurture healthy,

---

<sup>2</sup> In what we now call the United States is a phrase used to indicate that the United States is not a timeless monolith: that there were Indigenous peoples living on the land prior who had different names for the space. In addition, the phrase also recognizes that in the future, the land might not be labeled the United States as labels/names change.

<sup>3</sup> I have chosen this definition of IFS as the Working Group connects movements across North America and has been cited by Indigenous and non-Indigenous food scholars as one of the core operational definitions of IFS.

interdependent relationships with the land, plants, and animals that provide us with our food” (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty 2006). The other three principles that guide the Indigenous food sovereignty movement, as defined by the Working Group, include the participation in food systems, self-determination, and supportive legislation and policy. The connection between Indigenous food sovereignty and the sacred might at first seem obscure or disparate due to sovereignty’s connotation of self-determination, yet the operational definition set by the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty makes clear the connection between the Earth, “sacred responsibility,” and food. Throughout this work, I will return to the assumption that food’s sacred nature is embedded in the ideological principles guiding Indigenous food sovereignty movements, yet explore how sacredness appears in the localization of the broad tenets and rhetoric of IFS.

Based off the understandings that sacredness is foundational to Indigenous food sovereignty movements, I seek to explore the following question in this thesis: How do IFS movements relate to *time and sacredness*? I will unpack this question by looking at one implementation of IFS by an organization called The Sioux Chef. The Sioux Chef is a coalition of Indigenous chefs from North America dedicated to the revitalization of Native cuisines and ingredients. The group was created by Sean Sherman, an Oglala Lakota chef in 2014. Sherman documents the trajectory of the organization in his James Beard award winning cook book, *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*.<sup>4</sup> I was exposed to the organization The Sioux Chef at an international, Slow Food conference in 2018 called Terra Madre: Food for Change. Sherman

---

<sup>4</sup> Due to the pan-tribal nature of the Sioux Chef’s organization, it is difficult to be tribally specific in my analysis of the group as well as in supporting scholarship. Because I am aware of this issue as it can lead to essentialization, I rely on Native authors who draw broad comparisons across Indigenous groups. These strokes are grounded in comparative case studies. Some of these broad topics include relationality (Vine Deloria Jr.), sovereignty (Glen Coulthard), and religion (Jace Weaver).

appeared on several panels at Terra Madre regarding Indigenous food sovereignty and Indigenous food movements.<sup>5</sup>

In order to unpack the study of *The Sioux Chef*, I have three chapters leading up to the case study. The first two chapters address sub-questions that have emerged when writing this thesis. These sub-questions are: 1) How do Indigenous scholars understand sacredness and time?<sup>6</sup> and 2) How have settler frames discredited the scholarship of Indigenous peoples, in addition to the extraction of resources and livelihood related to land? The second question acknowledges that settler frames have in fact discredited Indigenous ways of life, but explores how Western thinkers establish settler time as monolithic and oppressive via categories of religion. I will also explore how Western thinkers contribute to an oppressive process of de-historicization of Indigenous bodies and sacred land.

The third chapter of my thesis lays out how Indigenous food sovereignty, and its subsequent localizations, emerged from the global rhetoric of the food sovereignty movement and the organization *La Via Campesina*. In this chapter, I establish how the IFS movement, in its public rhetoric, perceives and relates to time. It is also important to note that the living reality of IFS principles existed before the frame and rhetoric of IFS. Grounding Indigenous ontologies prior to the exploration of IFS, I highlight how Indigenous authors articulate the existence of the Earth's sacredness and humanity's interdependence prior to *La Via Campesina* coining the

---

<sup>5</sup> I would like to note that the localization of IFS initiatives take many forms, and I have based my thesis on *The Sioux Chef* to explore the complexity of IFS's manifestation in Indigenous communities. Is the *Sioux Chef* an example of an Indigenous food sovereignty movement or primarily an Indigenous food movement? As the global, rhetoric of food sovereignty argues, and as I discuss in Chapter 3, food sovereignty movements take many forms. When the term IFS appears, food scholars might initially envision *Food is Medicine*, created by the Seneca Nation of Indians, or Winona LaDuke's work with land and wild rice via *The White Earth Land Recovery Project*. I argue that food sovereignty understands sovereignty as land based as well as a concept which extends beyond land: cultural sovereignty, spiritual sovereignty, economic sovereignty are central to food sovereignty and IFS. While *The Sioux Chef* is a business, non-profit, and educational center that is in some sense withdrawn from land rights issues, I will argue the organization is still an IFS movement based their concern with other forms of sovereignty. I will discuss *The Sioux Chef*'s concern with cultural restoration and the land's health, as forms of sovereignty, in Chapter 4 and 5.

<sup>6</sup> This question recognizes that there is not one, homogenized version of "Indigenous time." Because I acknowledge the potential for homogenization, I call on a variety of Indigenous scholars from North America to address the question of sacredness and time.

phrase “food sovereignty.” In the last two chapters (Chapters 4-6), I deep dive into the case study of The Sioux Chef using the previous chapters as framing devices for Indigenous understandings of time, sacredness, and IFS.

As my thesis question is pronged, I would like to quickly detail my conclusions. First, let me tackle the question of time. I argue that Indigenous scholars from North America articulate time as space-time (hyphenated intentionally). John Mohawk, Vine Deloria Jr., and Akwesasne Notes articulate time and space as dependent and co-evolving entities. Indigenous food sovereignty movements, via the rhetoric of the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, also understand sacredness as manifest in time and space—rather than delegated to one category of solely space or time. While the above Indigenous scholars will agree that sacredness stems from a hyphenated space-time, IFS movements understand time as existing within several tensions: time is both limited/important and intergenerational/cyclical.

Time is important and limited as the window to save ingredients from extinction is small. Climate change impacts growing seasons and the viability of seeds, changing the way in which producers can interact with ingredients in time and space. Despite the ecological limitations of food as it exists in time, Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives have the ability to curb the decimation of Native ingredients and ways of cooking through the movement. This is why time is limited *and* important. Within IFS, time is conceived of as a positive force as well in that it is intergenerational and cyclical. Time is intergenerational in the sense that previous and future generations are actors within time. What exists in time—knowledge, food, sacredness, the future generation—can be impacted by history in a cyclical way. The establishment of both/and categories of time rather than either/or properties addresses establishes a framework to discuss time that acknowledges the complexity of IFS and The Sioux Chef’s articulation of time.

In terms of the second prong of my thesis, I argue that sacredness, as it exists within space-time and all its tensions, appears as an important ideological tenet in Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives and the work of The Sioux Chef. While the sacredness of food and land are established by the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and The Sioux Chef in their self-defining texts, The Sioux Chef's articulation of sacredness in their public image diverges from foregrounding sacredness as a guiding ideology. Through coding for "mention of" words in eleven articles about The Sioux Chef, seven of which were posted on The Sioux Chef's website, I argue the organization foregrounds rhetorically other principles of IFS, such as health or cultural restoration. Using observational data collected from Terra Madre in 2018, The Sioux Chef's cookbook, and online interviews, I articulate an argument of rhetoric and debrief the reasons why sacredness might not appear as often in the public rhetoric of the organization—one of these hypothesis concerns the total nature of sacred things, that cultural restoration and medicine are in fact sacred as well.

Before delving into my first chapter on Indigenous scholarship from North America, I would like to discuss two assumptions my thesis makes in the introduction and its body: one is related to relational ontologies and the other to the category of religion. I think it is important to present these assumptions early in text, as they impact the conclusions of my work. The first assumption my thesis makes is the importance of what I am calling "relational ontologies." The phrase, relational ontologies, I am borrowing from the Haudenosaunee text *All My Relations: A Native's Thoughts, Poems and Prayers*, published by Victoria A. Summers in 1992. My assumption is this: ways of being in relation to the earth are central to Indigenous food sovereignty movements and spiritual traditions. To deconstruct the term, relational refers to the way in which humans relate to other forms of life. By ontologies, I refer to the different ways in

which these relations primarily manifest physically, culturally, emotionally, and intellectually. Throughout the first chapter, I explore Indigenous scholarship on sacredness, spirituality, and religion—particularly John Mohawk’s *Thinking in Indian* and Akwesasne Notes’ *Basic Call to Consciousness*—to unpack the term relational ontologies.

The second assumption I grapple with is the relationship between Indigenous ways of being and religion. Does the category of religion adequately describe Indigenous lifeways and spiritual traditions? In religious studies, the question of religion and that which lies outside of it pervades scholarship on non-theistic and non-Abrahamic traditions. I have been grappling with how to deal with the category of religion throughout writing this thesis, as Indigenous scholars—as well as settler scholars—have varying opinions on the use of the term.

The question of if the Western category of religion is sufficient to describe Indigenous spirituality can be simply answered, no. The Western category is often imposed on non-Western traditions, intentionally ignoring the people’s self-ascribed language and preferences. Practitioners of Religion, with a capital “R”, inscribe a particular qualification to the traditions that are able to enter the canon and category—whether this be the totemic, the social function of religion, or connection to a divine creature, Western scholars will debate. The idea of world religions, is one example of how Religion’s dialectic between inclusion and exclusion functions. Religions which are considered systematized enough, through ritual, a set of texts, and a large body of practioners, can be added to the pantheon of world religions. Without systematization, non-Western spiritual practices are categorized as that which lies outside of religion.

What I argue, in order to make the distinction between the Western category of Religion and religion clear, is that capital “R” religion functions on the practice of exclusion. What defines the capitalization of the term is its exclusionary nature as it is embedded in a system of

power and privilege, rather than a set of qualities that scholars have debated for centuries. This is not to say that religions, with an uncapitalized “r”, accept all traditions and have no definition. Rather, exclusion does not serve as the main driver for the category to exist. Functionally, I am making the distinction between Religions and religions in order to clarify how I am using the terms. One might ask, can one really divorce the word religion from the Western category of Religion? As I further engage in Indigenous scholarship on this question, I will try to explore how it is plausible that religion can be separated from its Western roots in a productive way. Through the case study of the Sioux Chef, I will nuance and unpack how Sean Sherman uses spirituality, religion, and sacredness as fluid categories in relation to time and his work with food. For now, in order to situate the terms for the reader, I will refer to capital r, Religion, as a category that relies heavily on exclusion and lower r, religion, as a category open to a multitude of differentiated qualities that make something “religious.”

In addition to my approach towards religion, my method is informed by the incorporation of both Western and Indigenous voices. I am informed by the 20th-century movement towards the decolonization of academia, education, and curricula. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou, Māori) groundbreaking piece on *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* informs my scholarship and method. In addition, Tuck and Yang’s essay on “R-Words: Refusing Research” has made it more comfortable for me to reject the ideology of certain giants in my field. Like Tuck and Yang, I refuse ethnography as a form a fetishization and missionization, recognizing that settler knowledge “sets limits (limits the epistemologies of the colonized/colonial/to-be-colonized) and hides its own refusals and limits in order to appear limitless” (Tuck and Yang 2014). One of the concrete ways in which refusal is manifest and efficacious “might be the refusal by the researcher, how she determines the limits on what she

can ask or what she will write” (Tuck and Yang 2014). In this thesis, I continually work to reject the confines of settler colonialism, Western essentializations, static portrayals of indigeneity, and the limits of my own knowledge. Refusal, in this context, is generative and not stifling.

In my exploration of decolonization theory and practice, I arrived at an influential piece by Audre Lorde: *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*. This idea, perhaps ironically, informs my decision to include Western voices in this thesis. In order to dismantle the master’s house in a radically new way, scholars and readers must understand what the tools are in the first place. I believe it is important to analyze the history of Western scholarship in relation to Indigenous practices. Our collective history is important, and as a scholar, acknowledging the problematic, colonial, and essential presentations of Indigenous peoples is important for my development as an academic.

In addition, I am of the belief that it is important to prioritize Indigenous voices in the discussion of their own food and cultural practices. Documentation and critique of Western scholarship allows academia to address the colonial underpinnings of its categories and scholars, and move forward towards a decolonial future; in whatever that may look like, as it continually evolves with the scholarship and people of the time. Since I am not Indigenous, engaging with Western scholarship is one way in which I can critique, re-evaluate, and inform my own work—which is situated within Western academia itself. I therefore take the stance that we must understand the history of our peoples, scholarship, and disciplines in order to make radical transformations geared toward the future.

Indigenous authors lie on a spectrum of engagement with colonial scholarship. Authors such as Audra Simpson envision a re-indigenization of the future, rather than a decolonial one. In her piece on “Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, ‘Voice,’ and Colonial Citizenship,” Simpson



writes that “the people we speak of, when speaking for themselves, interrupt anthropological portraits of timelessness, procedure and function that dominate representations of their past, and sometimes, their present” (Simpson 2014). The theoretical frame of re-indigenization claims that while decolonization might be the first step, the following steps are made by and for Indigenous peoples. Authors such as Glen Coulthard play with the idea of re-indigenization at the end of his work, particularly in the piece *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. However, throughout Coulthard’s text, he puts Indigenous social movements in Canada in dialogue with Marxist and Hegelian philosophy.

Indigenous perspectives on the incorporation of Western scholarship lie on a continually evolving spectrum. There is an interaction between Indigenous scholarship and the Western world, especially (and unfortunately) as Indigenous groups are made to conform to a framework of reconciliation and recognition. Static portrayals of Indigenous bodies—as totemic or lower on a hierarchical scale—aid in the dehistoricization of land and tradition. I engage with Western voices in order to break or re-evaluate these frames as well as unpack the imposition of settler power, perspective, and privilege on Indigenous bodies. I do not think it is my place to situate my scholarship as a piece of re-Indigenization—a process which also occurs in time and references a future imagined and constructed by a community of insiders. Rather, I feel more comfortable expressing my continual support to those who can re-Indigenize. The allyship I hope to engage in, is based in pointing out the essentialization of Indigenous peoples in Western scholarship, working to encourage alternative and collaborative pieces of decolonization, and striving to do so in my life and work. Articulating Indigenous philosophy and temporalities in space-time as diverse and inherently complex is one way that I engage in decolonization throughout my work.

Overall, this project is novel as it puts into conversation Indigenous scholarship on sacredness and time with food. To my knowledge, no other food studies scholar has this done previously. What is difficult about my work is that it operates within multiple disciplines: religion, food studies, and Indigenous studies. I also briefly dabble in philosophical models due to the nature of Indigenous scholarship on sovereignty. Due to this, the intended audience for my thesis is cross-disciplinary: emerging scholars in the above fields. While I am happy to have my work reach scholars who have been working within academia for years, I am interested in using this thesis as a platform for unpacking the difficulties of interdisciplinary work with emerging scholars. As each discipline has its own language and style, I have found interdisciplinary work difficult. This thesis is my final undergraduate exercise in engaging with and crafting interdisciplinary work. With that acknowledgement, I will now delve into the first chapter of my thesis on Indigenous scholarship.

*Chapter 1: Indigenous Scholarship on Sacredness and Time*

In this chapter, I document how Indigenous scholars perceive their own traditions on time and space. To do so, I explore the scholarship of Deloria Vine Jr. in *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, John Mohawk in *Thinking In Indian*, Mark Rifkin in *Beyond Settler Time*, and Akwesasne Notes' *Basic Call to Consciousness*. The chapter serves as a limited literature review of several prominent Indigenous authors, where I pull common themes from their work while acknowledging the variance of their ideological positions. As it relates to content, I unpack how relational ontologies manifest in time and space and generate understandings of sacredness. Particularly, this chapter looks at how settler time renders land un-sacred, Indigenous peoples invisible, and the settler state, as Rifkin would deem, a geopolitical totality (Rifkin 2017). In Deloria Jr.'s work, Native struggles for land sovereignty appear as key examples of how settler understandings of time accomplish this rendering—in restricting access to the land and therefore access to sacred places in time and space. In distinction to the following chapter, which explores how Western scholars within religious studies contribute to theoretical frames of settler time, this chapter explores how Western settlers have debased and exploited the land, leading to decreasing understandings of sacredness in space-time.

Straying away from the essentialization of Indigenous time as its own totality, I look to grapple with how various Indigenous scholars perceive time as well as draw similarities between Indigenous scholarship on relational ontologies in a generative, non-essentializing way. My exploration of Rifkin's work specifically, sets up the foundation to further explore how Western thinkers within the field of religion have contributed to the construction of settler frames of time. It is important to note these frames do not exist because of the homogeneity of Western

perspectives, as Western thinkers have various understandings of time and space, but in the function of settler narratives as the dominant paradigm in systems of power and privilege.

First, I would like to foreground Akwesasne Notes' *Basic Call to Consciousness*, which unpacks how sacredness manifests in Indigenous relations with the Earth. *Akwesasne Notes* edited the original text of *Basic Call to Consciousness*, which originally appeared as a report brought to the United Nations in 1977 by a group of Haudenosaunee leaders and scholars. In addition to the original address given in Geneva, Akwesasne Notes integrates work by Seneca scholar John Mohawk, Chief Oren Lyons, and José Barreiro into the introduction of the text. The 1977 piece is otherwise known as "The Haudenosaunee Address to the Western World." Since the work was one of the first speeches offered by Indigenous peoples to the United Nations, the address sparked hope in many Indigenous communities in North America. The address "is a call to basic consciousness that has ancient roots and ultramodern, even futuristic, manifestations" (Lyons, Mohawk, and Barreiro 1978).

How Indigenous peoples, particularly the Haudenosaunee, approach spiritualism is further explored in the text of the address. In the chapter "Spiritualism, the Highest Form of Political Consciousness," *Basic Call to Consciousness* explores spirituality as political consciousness. In this chapter, the address calls on the spirituality and connectedness of all living beings:

We are shown that our life exists with the tree life, that our well-being depends on the well-being of the vegetable life, that we are close relatives of the four-legged beings. In our ways, spiritual consciousness is the highest form of politics. . . We believe that all living things are spiritual beings. . . We give greeting and thanksgiving to the many supporters of our own lives—the corn, beans, squash, the winds, the sun. . . We walk about with a great respect, for the Earth is a very sacred place. (Lyons, Mohawk, and Barreiro 1978)

In relation to this thesis, I utilize sacredness as it is described above. Sacredness is connection to the Earth, the supporters of humanity (“the corn, beans, squash, the winds, the sun. . .”), and the four-legged beings. While some Indigenous traditions have deistic figures, I mainly foreground the definition of sacredness as a quality of the Earth. Later after establishing that “the Earth is a very sacred place,” the address warns against those who do not respect the earth in the same way, particularly those who colonized North America.

In an effort to critique Christian settlement, colonization, and ongoing resource extraction still occurring today, editor José Barreiro published several of John Mohawk’s essays in 2010. John Mohawk contributed to *Basic Call to Consciousness* and was born into the Turtle Clan on the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation. The book which resulted from Barreiro’s publication, called *Thinking in Indian*, echoes *Basic Call to Consciousness*’ concern regarding Western domination of the land. Defining colonization, Mohawk writes, “the definition of colonialism needs to be expanded in the consciousness of the peoples of the planet Earth. Colonialism is a process by which indigenous cultures are subverted and ultimately destroyed in the interests of the worldwide market economy” (Mohawk 2010). Following his critique of colonialism as the subversion of Indigenous cultures and their destruction in the market, Mohawk alternatively articulates a deep understandings of how people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, should be connected to the universe. In the chapter titled, “The Sacred in Nature: Mythology Can Change Minds,” Mohawk writes:

The issue is not, however, whether the universe is more complex than our brains. The universe, in a metaphorical sense, is our brain, and vice versa. The human species is not apart from it; it is a part of it. . . Our consciousness is not separate from, but a product of, the universe. We are not superior to nature, but rather its fellow traveler. . . (Mohawk 2010)

Mohawk articulates two ways in which we, humans, are connected to the earth: 1) metaphorically, our brains are the universe and vice versa, and 2) that in the connection between the universe and the brain, humans are “fellow travelers” with nature. Deloria’s understanding of sacredness in time and space that I explore in this chapter are mostly based in the relational principles articulated in *Basic Call to Conscious* and John Mohawk’s work: that humanity is part of creation and in position with the Earth as an equal. The logic behind utilizing the frame of relational ontologies, rather than kinship or relatedness, is to underscore the different aspects of relatedness as Mohawk articulates above. One, that relationships with the land emphasize a particular way of being in relation (as equals), and, that in the plural “ontologies,” these relations can be multifaceted and reciprocal.

Vine Deloria Jr.’s seminal publication, *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, explores how land extraction reduces our ability to walk as fellow travelers with nature and particularly, for Indigenous peoples to practice spiritual traditions on sacred land. *God is Red* is a quintessential document for understanding the frames and ideologies of Native spirituality, and was published several years prior to *Basic Call to Consciousness* in 1972. I highlight this piece because in it, Deloria Jr. outlines spatial and temporal understandings of sacredness. The distinction between spatial and temporal understandings of sacredness, as Deloria Jr. will unpack, is central to my work.

While I pull mainly from Chapter 4: “Thinking in Time and Space, Chapter 5: “The Problem of Creation,” and Chapter 16: “Sacred Places and Moral Responsibility,” Deloria Jr. covers an expansive intellectual terrain in *God is Red*. In the book, he discusses topics ranging from the United States’ colonial domination as manifest in periods of war to Native peoples’ understanding of sacred landscapes. Methodologically, Deloria Jr. draws broad

connections between Indigenous communities while avoiding essentialization by citing specific cases, lands, and peoples

Regarding time, Deloria writes that “the beginning and end of time are of no apparent concern for many tribal religions” (Deloria Jr 1973), and because of this, a tension emerges between experiences defined as “what happened here” or “what happened then.” By creating and utilizing settler time, which relies on *temporal* understandings of land, Deloria argues Western entities are able to exploit scared *places* for resources.

One of the main temporal events which created the tension between “what happened here” or “what happened then” is that of creation. Deloria Jr. explains that “Indian tribal religions [like Christianity] also held a fundamental relationship between human beings and the rest of nature, but the conception was radically different. For many Indian tribal religions the whole of creation was good, and because the creation event did not include a “fall,” the meaning of creation was that all parts of it functioned together to sustain it” (Deloria Jr 1973). In realizing the impact the notion of impurity or the fall had on Christian relations to the land, Deloria Jr. highlights a semantic tension in Biblical literature between dominion and domination. A small semantic edit in language leads to differences in the way people interact with the earth—domination lending itself to the exploitation of land. This semantic difference, originally found in Genesis, also causes ambiguity surrounding the role of non-human life forms in practices or ceremony. Deloria Jr. contrasts this with Indigenous religious practices, which invoke the phrase “all my relatives” in order “to invite all other forms of life to participate as well as to inform them that the ceremony is being done on their behalf” (Deloria Jr 1973). The relationship between peoples, animals, and non-human life I have previously called relational ontologies. In

*God is Red*, Deloria argues Indigenous peoples understand relational ontologies and “creation as an ecosystem present in a definable place” (Deloria Jr 1973).

Deloria further explores how the United States extracts sacredness from the land by rejecting Native people’s access and connection to the space in Chapter 16, titled “Sacred Places and Moral Responsibility.” After World War II, Deloria Jr. establishes that Indigenous places which held spiritual importance were increasingly harder to access, as the “introduction of corporate farming practices that have placed formerly submarginal lands under cultivation, more extensive mining and timber industry activities, and a greatly expanded recreation industry. . . have severely impacted the use of public lands in the United States” (Deloria Jr 1973). Deloria Jr. highlights a case study of a 1988 Supreme Court Case, *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*. In 1988, tribal religious leaders requested access to three sacred sites in Northern California that were endangered by the building of a 6-mile road. The sacred location, known as the “High Country,” “was the center of their religious and ceremonial life” (Deloria Jr 1973). The Supreme Court ruled against the Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association, turning “the tribes down flat, ruling that the Free Exercise clause did not prevent the government from using its property in any way it saw fit and in effect rolling back the religious use of the area completely” (Deloria Jr 1973). Deloria cites this case study as a concrete example of the way in which settler states restrict Native access to sacred lands and consequently, the physical practice of spirituality.

Settler entities not only accomplish the extraction of sacredness from Indigenous lands through the pure rejection of Native people’s access to the land, as described by Deloria in *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, but also via temporal markers and labels. In the Preamble of *Basic Call to Consciousness*, Onondaga Chief Oren Lyons discusses how



Christianity was a major player in the first waves of colonization. These waves created the first temporal markers and labels related to land ownership. Chief Lyons writes, “We were stigmatized as ‘heathens,’ ‘pagans,’ and ‘barbarous infidels,’ uncivilized and incapable of rational thought. But above all, we were not Christian. Using these self-serving declarations, the European Christians moved rapidly to establish Christian domination over the entire Western Hemisphere” (Lyons, Mohawk, and Barreiro 1978). Even in the chapter on spiritualism, authors acknowledge that prior to embarking on discovery of new lands in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity and Christian peoples “attacked those beliefs [European nomadic peoples, who believed in forest and land spirits] and effectively despiritualized the European world” (Lyons, Mohawk, and Barreiro 1978). The domination of peoples for resource extraction continued when Christian settlers advanced a Doctrine of Discovery and positioned the Americas as “terra nullius” or empty land. Ignoring the Indigenous peoples living there during settlement, lead to the active erasure of Native birds, plants, and Indigenous peoples (Lyons, Mohawk, and Barreiro 1978).

Settler entities label the land using ahistorical terminology such as mundane, regular, private, and empty (among others). Extracting the historical significance of the land to Native peoples, the label of private renders land ahistorical. A contemporary case study from 2015 highlights how “terra nullius” and temporal markers still exist today. The Dakota Access Pipeline is an oil line that spans from the Bakken Fields in North Dakota to Illinois. It transports crude oil across the American landscape and crosses the Missouri River, threatening the drinking water for those on the Standing Rock Reservation and all those downstream. When the Dakota Access Pipeline was planned in 2015 and built in 2017, the company contracted to build the line rejected the historical significance of the land by using the terminology “private” (Energy Transfer LP n.d.). While Energy Transfer Partners argues the pipeline is not on sovereign

territory, the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation alternatively voices the pipeline desecrates sacred burial grounds and violates the Fort Laramie Treaty, which establishes the Standing Rock Sioux's rights to the land. The categorization of land as private is one way in which the process I call de-historicization acts out in a contemporary context related to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. The idea of de-historicization was first developed in a piece by Hannah Appel on oil extraction in Equatorial Guinea. To briefly summarize her argument, Appel claims that the infrastructure of oil rigs and oil companies have dehumanized the supply chain behind oil extraction (Appel 2012). Dehumanization of the product results in an entity that can be packaged and transported without the consumer's knowledge of its production. Relational ontologies, which espouse deeply ingrained relations to the land, are destroyed and de-validated using temporal makers that mark land as ahistorical.

Interestingly, the distinction between “what happened here” or “what happened then” does not explicitly support my previous set up of Indigenous time as space-time, as Deloria focuses on how settler powers use time in a negative way to establish power and extract resources from sacred lands. Spatial understandings of land, in *God is Red*, are mainly connected to physical places and land. I am not an expert in spatial studies, yet I am aware that scholarship does exist on space-time which positions the hyphenated version as a “third space.” Space-time is also contended in discussions of nationalism and ethnicity (Alonso 1994). In addition, it is important to note that settler or Western understandings of time are not homogenous, just as Indigenous voices lie on a spectrum. The enactment of settler perspectives, such as in cases of settler time or settler labelings of space, operate within systems of power and oppression—therefore engendering the frames as oppressive. For the discussion of my work on food and sacredness, I will mainly utilize the work of both Mohawk and Akwesasne Notes, who formulate

the dynamic relationship between space and time as a larger theme spanning Indigenous theory and ways of being.

In this discussion, the question arises: what is space? Instead of defining space in the introduction, again, I relied on Deloria's definition of "what happened here." In doing so, I left the definition of space rather ambiguous. "What happened here" is primarily connected to the sacredness of land, rather than less physical things.<sup>7</sup> However, I will argue that the definition of space can be expanded beyond that of geographical locations. In the quote above I cited from *Thinking in Indian*, Mohawk writes, "Our consciousness is not separate from, but a product of, the universe. We are not superior to nature, but rather its fellow traveler" (Mohawk 2010). I will not debate whether consciousness exists and if it does, what space it occupies. What I will discuss is the way in which Mohawk positions consciousness as an extension of the universe—an extension into space. Sacredness, perhaps, could exist within the space of consciousness as well as the space of land. I will not delve much further into the conversation regarding consciousness as space, yet this digression was important as the definition of space I use relies heavily on land-based paradigms. There are other ways to position space, yet for the purpose of this project, I will reference space using Deloria's broader definition of "what happened here." As I will discuss later, food sovereignty often conceives of space as land-based as well. Space, regardless of its placement in consciousness and/or land, *changes in time*. Time governs how one completes traditional practices and moves in space. The land itself evolves in time. Rather than exploring Indigenous temporalities, *God is Red* Deloria distinguishes settler time from time which governs the natural processes of life on Earth and Indigenous temporalities.

---

<sup>7</sup> I refrain from writing immaterial here, as the philosophical debate regarding materiality is not something I want to get into in this work.

Several scholars within Indigenous studies have espoused different implications of settler time on the Indigenous body, expanding on Deloria Jr.'s focus on the oppressive implication of settler time on sacred lands. The exploration of Mark Rifkin's book titled *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* explores how Native peoples can have their own temporalities. Rifkin unpacks how that process might occur in light of the dominance of settler time. Rifkin further solidifies how oppressive settler frames of time exist and function—as they not only render the land “terra nullius” but the people irrelevant as well. He writes, settler frames render Indigenous peoples both “irrelevant,” leading to a justification of colonialism, as well as “domestic” through forced integration of Indigenous peoples into the settler state. Grappling with how the term I call “dehistoricization” fuels oppressive infrastructures, Rifkin's exploration of Indigenous experiences of duration is extremely useful.

In the Acknowledgements section of the book, Rifkin writes that “this book began while I was watching the movie *Lincoln*. I found myself wondering about the mute appearance of Ely S. Parker and what it meant for thinking about how Native peoples fit within the story of the Civil War as an epochal break in U.S. history” (Rifkin 2017). He goes on to say, that his “interest in periodization turned phenomenological” (Rifkin 2017), in that he became less concerned with the “narration of time than about how it is lived” (Rifkin 2017). In the next chapter, I will critique the phenomenological method of Durkheim and Sundermeier as extracting the humanity and implementing “otherness” within frames of sacredness. Rifkin's phenomenological exploration does not rely on essential frames, and from this, it is important to note that the method of phenomenology is not inherently flawed but can be paired, like any system of analysis, with racist ideologies.

Rifkin, in his first chapter on Indigenous orientations, articulates an argument similar to Deloria Jr.—that Indigenous peoples still are oriented by place, to the “collective experiences of peoplehood, to particular territories” (Rifkin 2017). He goes on to reject the homogenization of Indigenous experiences of time, something which I also seek to affirm. To challenge the oppressive nature of settler time, Rifkin positions his work as responding to the generative question: “what does it mean for Native temporalities to have their own flow—as coherent yet changing, affected by other flows but not the same as them?” (Rifkin 2017).

Rifkin attempts to answer this question by demonstrating how the settler state constructs itself within time while simultaneously situating Native peoples as “the other” using temporal rhetoric<sup>8</sup>, i.e. terms such as incoherence or misplaced. In the second chapter on “The Silence of Ely S. Parker,” Rifkin writes about how the state constructs an image of its geopolitical cohesion. The United States, as part of the construction of its identity, narrates settlement as a series of “quasi events.” Rifkin writes:

Conversely, one could trace the history of how the state generates geopolitical cohesion for itself in any given moment by projecting a futurity predicated on expansion and invasive settler inhabitants. Native peoples and sovereignties appear as a temporal aberration within a geography defined by the normalization of settler law. The projection of the inevitability of the union—the geopolitical cohesion of the United States—as the framework for temporal experience depends on a cross-referenced and mutually defining set of perceptions, sensations, and processes of backgrounding that can be described as settler (colonial) time. From this perspective, the history of settlement in the nineteenth century appears less as a series of eruptive episodes or armed conflict than as a more slow-motion temporality of expropriation—a series of quasi-events, largely enacted through the treaty system. (Rifkin 2017)

---

<sup>8</sup> This temporal rhetoric refers to people, rather than land based temporal rhetoric previously.

The inevitability of time and the union, as Rifkin documents in the above quote, contributes to the oppressiveness of settler time. Positioning Native peoples as a “temporal aberration” allowed for settlers to create a cohesiveness amongst their time: a “mutually definition set of perceptions. . .that can be described as settler (colonial time)” (Rifkin 2017). The United States, as operating within settler time and a “slow-motion temporality of expropriation,” appears as a complete totality. In answering the guiding question of the book—reiterated, what does it mean for Native temporalities to have their own flow—Rifkin posits the fluidity and dynamic nature of Native experience, juxtaposed with settler time which situates itself as a monolith. Indigenous temporalities, spirituality, and concepts of sacredness are therefore, not “reducible to participation in a singular, given time” (Rifkin 2017).<sup>9</sup>

Throughout this chapter I have detailed how Indigenous systems of thought, through Akwesasne Notes’ *Basic Call to Consciousness* and John Mohawk’s *Thinking In Indian* position humanity in relation to the sacredness of Earth. The Earth’s sacredness, in these works, is not disputed but rather acknowledged as a given. In Deloria and Rifkin, I have unpacked how settler understandings of time have rendered the sacredness of space as well as people invisible. This rendering is done, in one way, through the process of de-historicization—allowing settler powers to extract resources from the land and thus render its sacredness non-existent. In the following chapter, I will explore how Western categories of thought in the field of religion have contributed to a static image of Indigenous spiritual traditions. In addition, I will discuss what it

---

<sup>9</sup> While one might argue that settler time, as well as Indigenous temporalities are homogenized, Rifkin makes the argument that settler time constructs itself as monolithic to assert power/dominance over Indigenous experiences of time. I think it can be argued that settler time is essentialized as a total entity, yet, it is done so because of its the oppressive and suffocating nature. In this work, it is important to note why settler time is conceived as a total entity—because is it an oppressive structure. In relation to Indigenous time, which is not oppressive, settler time’s monolithic nature is not completely misrepresented.

means to decolonize one's theoretical frames and how decolonial theory contributes to greater visibility of Indigenous authorship and dynamic understandings of time.

*Chapter 2: Western Understandings of Religion and Continued Settler Time Frames*

Previously foregrounding Indigenous scholarship on the issue of sacredness, in this chapter I seek to unpack the category of religion and how Western scholars within religious studies contribute to static portrayals of Indigenous spirituality and peoples in time.

I seek to understand how the category of religion constricts Indigenous scholarship and grapple with how the inclusion of Indigenous traditions in the general category of religion is changing and evolving. As part of an effort to move beyond Western scholarship, I will critique and re-evaluate the usefulness of Western frames presented by authors I encountered in my religious studies education: Émile Durkheim, Gerard van der Leeuw, and Theo Sundermeier. These authors have been foundational in my education as a religion major, and part of deconstructing their work will aid in my development as scholar as I move forward in grappling with issues of sacredness and spirituality in food.

In this chapter, I play with the with the argument (my argument) that Religious maximums should be expanded to include Indigenous spirituality, to combat the discipline's previous exclusionary policy on Native peoples' traditions and beliefs. This move is done in an exploratory way—I will say this, and will repeat it later, but I am in no position to categorize Indigenous spirituality as solely a lifeway or solely a religion. What I hope to do, is debate whether or not Religion can discard its exclusionary policies and include Indigenous ideas on sacredness within the discussion. In order to explore this possibility, I call on Indigenous scholar Jace Weaver. Weaver writes about word religion (in this case, lower case r) in relation to Indigenous spiritual practices as an evolving category which has the ability to be inclusive rather than inherently exclusive.

Using Mohawk's *Thinking in Indian* and Akwesasne Notes' *Basic Call to Consciousness*, I have established that Indigenous scholars who write on relational ontologies articulate a vision



of the Earth that is sacred. It is a presupposition, not a negotiable. In the discussion of relational ontologies and sacredness, one of the first relevant frames of reference is that of religion. The question can be raised: are relational ontologies religions? There are two theoretical frames which are necessary to discuss in order to unpack the relationship between relational ontologies and religion. The first is the definition of Religion and the other is on the on the inclusion of Western scholarship on Religion (as an exclusionary mechanism).<sup>10</sup>

First, what is religion? When initially researching the connection between Indigenous religions and ecology two years ago, I encountered The Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale. The Forum is a multi-religious project that seeks to “create a new academic field of study that has implications for environmental policy and environmental humanities.” To do this, the Forum has produced publications and articles, organized more than 25 conferences, and produced an extensive website detailing several major religious traditions and their understandings of ecology. Under a heading titled “World Religions,” a drop-down menu includes faiths such as Buddhism, Bahai, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Shinto, and Indigenous. While Indigenous is listed under the section for “World Religions,” author John Grim, co-founder and director of the Forum, writes that. . .

. . .indigenous religions do not constitute a “world religion” in the same way as, for example, Buddhism or Christianity. Central to indigenous traditions is an awareness of the integral and whole relationship of symbolic and material life. Ritual practices and the cosmological ideas which undergird society cannot be separated out as an institutionalized religion from the daily round of subsistence practices. The term, “lifeway,” emphasizes this holistic context that grounds the traditional environmental knowledge evident in the cosmologies of indigenous peoples. (Grim n.d.)

---

<sup>10</sup> In the introduction, I drew the distinction between religion and Religion. In it, I defined Religion as a Western construct used in the process of self-making and therefore othering. It is inherently exclusionary in nature, while I wrote that religion (lower case r), is a category which constantly changes and makes room for the inclusion of other practices and beliefs which might not be canonized as “world religions.”

Grim claims Indigenous rituals do not constitute world religions in the same way because their practices are unable to be separated from daily life as an “institution.” To note, I use ritual here as Grim uses the term in the above quote. There are discussions within the anthropology of religion on the usefulness of the term ritual as a category to describe Religion, as it can be used in an exclusionary manner to constrain the limits of spiritual systems which do rely on ritual as a centerpiece. I do not use ritual in the rest of the piece or prior to this, as I have kept in mind the debate and dissatisfaction regarding the use of the term. I generally use practice or tradition to refer to what one does to enact their beliefs or ideologies.

Presenting Indigenous relations to the earth and ritual as a lifeway instead of a religion presents both benefits and disadvantages. In a separate article titled “John Grim on Standing Rock: ‘This is Not Only About Water, It’s All About Water,’” Timothy Brown interviews Grim and further explores the benefits of dissociating the word religion from Native traditions. He says, “the use of the word “religion” here is really problematic. I find the word “lifeway” much more helpful. Lifeways are the values that pervade the way they interact with the world, with one another. . . The Lakota concept is to stand in reciprocity, to deal with the need to bring to bear one’s values on the world” (Brown 2016). Grim wrote this in the context of the Dakota Access Pipeline build, which began in late 2016.

The term Religion holds Christian and Western connotations, and as Grim claims, might be too simple for the complexity of Indigenous lifeways. However, excluding including Indigenous practices from religion rather than Religion (which is already based on exclusion), can also pose issues. These issues stem from *why* Indigenous practices are excluded. As stated in the block quote above from the Yale Center for Ecology and Religion, Grim argues that Indigenous practices do not constitute world religions because they cannot be institutionalized. The “institutionalization” of religion stems from a Western perspective, which I will argue in

line with Wilfred Cantwell Smith's book titled *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind*, is a false premise for understanding the meaning of religion itself.

Central to Grim's distinction between religion and Indigenous lifeways is institutionality—one cannot separate religion out “daily round of subsistence practices” and therefore, Indigenous lifeways “do not constitute a “world religion” in the same way as, for example, Buddhism and Christianity” (Grim n.d.). This definition is flawed in two ways: the assumptions in his definition of institution and the pure institutionality of non-Western Religions. To address the first critique, what do we infer by using the word institution? If the definition of institution includes fellowship, a body, the act of starting something, or an established law or custom, Indigenous lifeways could very much be involved in a process of institutionalization. Indigenous lifeways were stripped, through colonization, of their holistic context and concepts which form the foundation for life broadly. The act of reclamation can even be considered the re-establishment of a custom or fellowship. Using the term institution to situate Indigenous tradition as separate from the category religion ignores the transformation of Indigenous spirituality through colonization and reclamation. It also ignores the multidimensional use of the term institution and the evolution of the word religion overtime. Rejecting the use of religion to describe Indigenous tradition solely based in the argument of institutionalization is not fully constituted. The category of Religion can be rejected for other reasons, I address later.

In addition to my above critique, I will challenge the pure institutionality of what Grim considers world religions. How do we categorize culture in antithesis to religion? Is the line—between religion, culture, politics—as clear cut as we think in the West as it is in Indigenous contexts? I would like to say no. I will say no because, while the term lifeway or cosmology

might be more constructive in the discussion of Indigenous interactions with Religion (capital r), academically, the terms have been used for exclusionary purposes. Specifically, in the debasement of Indigenous knowledge and the creation of the category of a static “other.”

Eurocentric academic systems have typically created dichotomies based in the perception of validity and self-definition—i.e. inspired by the work of W.E.B. Du Bois on double consciousness, to define one’s self or culture is done by the perception of the other as inferior (Du Bois 1996). The distinction between Religion and cosmology stems from the West’s fascination with boundary making, which colonization demonstrates through the construction of the self, borders, and enslavement. The dualism of Religion and cosmology stems from the perception that Indigenous spiritual practices are less than because they are not as complete or established. Religion therefore, defines itself in relation to cosmology, which is outside of the delineations of Religion.

In order to conclude my critique and discussion of Grim’s work, I call on the malleability of the category of Religion. In summary, Grim argues against the categorization of Indigenous lifeways as religious due to the fact that Religion does not encompass the intricate understanding of Native peoples’ lifeways. However, I argue that based on the history of colonialism, the exclusion of Indigenous lifeways from the term Religion *more often* signifies a belief in the inferiority of Indigenous practices than a respect for their complexity. The category of religion, as an inclusive practice, is malleable currently as scholars debate the strictness of categories and the relational word have to time.

How do I substantiate this claim, that Religion *more often* signifies a belief in the inferiority of a practice than a respect for its complexity? Authors crucial Religious studies as a canonized field, such as Émile Durkheim, Gerard van der Leeuw, and Theo Sundermeier, essentialize Indigenous spiritual practices and peoples—participating in the categorization of

peoples as timeless via correctness and presumed “otherness.” The devaluation of Indigenous spirituality through exclusionary categories reflects back to the ability of Indigenous peoples, traditions, and beliefs to evolve in time as dynamic and complex. Western scholars simplify Indigenous peoples in space and time through the label “totemic” and other.

I will first start with looking at Émile Durkheim, whose sociological approach to religious systems changed the study drastically. Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* is a classic read for any introduction to religion course. In the text, Durkheim breaks theological tradition and claims that religion is a product of society, rather than God. His analysis becomes less useful when defining the term religion. He claims, “a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, i.e., things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them” (Durkheim 2001). In addition to formulating religion as a moral entity with a community called a “Church,” Durkheim ranks Religions in a hierarchy based on the integration of richer ideas and feelings in the system of the tradition. Specifically, his classification of totemic religions contributes to the Western dualism of major and minor traditions, with Indigenous ontologies often landing a spot on the bottom. Durkheim writes that:

Fundamentally, there are no religions that are false. All are true after their own fashion. . . . Granted, it is not impossible to rank their hierarchically. Some can be superior to others, in the sense that they bring higher mental faculties into play, that they are richer in ideas and feelings, that they contain proportionately more concepts than sensation and images, and that they are more elaborately systematized. (Durkheim 2001)

While important for certain theoretical shifts in religious studies, Durkheim’s categorization of “advanced” Religions having “higher mental facilities” does not support the complex world views, relational ontologies, and construction of time found in Indigenous ways of being. Durkheim’s sociology of Religion is a useful frame for understanding the social and the religious, but the term “totemic” espouses a racist and hierarchical view of Religion. In addition

to the racial undertones of the work totemic, Durkheim's hierarchy of Religions situates practices which fall at the bottom as exempt from historical advancement or tradition. De-historicization plays a role in Durkheim's theoretical model, as I will argue, the term "higher mental facilities" does not allow for the creation of new ideas or feelings because the premise is based in anatomy<sup>11</sup>. The limitation of a practitioner's anatomy restricts their practiced religion from growth or fluidity. While scholars attribute Durkheim's reliance on totemic language to a discrepancy in translation<sup>12</sup>, Durkheim uses the French terms "le totem" and "L'animal totémique" in the original text. Durkheim's method of data collection and use of the word totemism to describe Indigenous practices were also criticized by his contemporaries.<sup>13</sup>

Like Durkheim, Gerard van der Leeuw's *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* relies on the language of totemism. *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* is a phenomenological approach to understanding religion in the world. Van der Leeuw is particularly interested in the phenomenon of humanity's interaction with the divine. I read this piece originally in a course on the Philosophy of Religion, and it was positioned as one of the first phenomenological approaches to religion in the philosophy. In the work, van der Leeuw centers the appearance of religion to the quality of power. He writes that power as "intimacy with the wholly unfamiliar, enables us, if not to explain, at all events to understand animal cults and Totemism" (Leeuw 2014). In contrast to Indigenous vocalizations of the sacred, which are grounded in physical and knowable things like the Earth, ingredients, and animals, Van der Leeuw's argument that

---

<sup>11</sup> There might also be a mind-body dualism at play in this quote, based on the difference Durkheim makes between "higher mental facilities" and "sensations and images."

<sup>12</sup> Author Warren Schmaus, in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Social Sciences*, argues this in favor of all of Durkheimian models—"the problem [discrediting Durkheim's social and political theory] has been compounded by theorists building on unreliable translations, which sometimes go so far as to translate a French term with its exact opposite in English" (Schmaus 2016). Schmaus' scholarship, as well as the work of Steven Lukes who wrote "On Translating Durkheim" in *Why Concepts Matter: Translating Social and Political Thought*, primarily focuses on how translation has contributed to the debasement of Durkheim's political and social theory. These authors do not focus on the translation of the term totemic. In three translations I have read of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translators have utilized the term totemic. The particular translation I chose to use for this thesis is accompanied by a reflection from the translator, Karen E. Fields, titled "On Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*: The Scholarly Translator's Work." For more information on the translator's process, you can find the reflection in the *Journal of The Historical Society*.

<sup>13</sup> Refer to author Arnold van Gennep.

“totemic” religions are based in “intimacy with the wholly unfamiliar” seems to miss its mark. A phenomenological approach to Indigenous religion as totemism diminishes the complexity of non-Western traditions in both time and space—as solely reliant on an external force for justification or as simply less codified in comparison to Western traditions (or non-totemic religions).

In this section, I have mainly critiqued the way in which language impacts the perception of Indigenous peoples’ traditions as “less systematized” or lacking “higher mental facilities.” In addition to meaning which might be lost in translation, the argument could be made that these theorists used frames of reference like “totemic” because it was the norm during the time. I will not dispute that the language used to refer to Indigenous peoples has changed overtime, but I will not excuse the racism in these works as contemporary scholars also critiqued their frames and language.

So far, I have discussed Durkheim and van der Leeuw. I mentioned previously Theo Sundermeier, a German theologian who is still alive today. Sundermeier’s article titled “Religion, Religions” is a principle work in philosophy of religion courses. His useful quote which I will pull on concerns the maximum and minimum definitions of religion. The process of drawing maximums engages with discussions on what lies outside of religion and the categories scholars construct (Sundermeier 1999). What becomes defined as a quality of the religious could be the presence of the holy, a God, a language, exclusion (my definition), etc. A maximal definition of religion extends the boundaries of what is considered religion; so, something like a cult could be categorized as religious depending on how far the maximum is. Sundermeier writes,

. . .maximum and minimum definitions (e.g., “Religion is intimacy with the holy”) can be understood in either an inclusive or exclusive sense. . . It makes a great difference whether religion is defined functionally from the sociological point of view. . .or from

that of students of the phenomenology of religion who advocate a substantial or real definition and to a large extent refrain from value judgements. (Sundermeier 1999)

Despite the above caution about value judgements, Sundermeier makes sweeping claims about universal aspects of religion which do not fit non-Western models. On the same page as the quote above, Sundermeier argues “the prerequisite. . .is the separation of heaven and earth; it is the basic experience of human beings and the mythological preface of all tribal religions” (Sundermeier 1999). Sundermeier’s definition of maximal frameworks is useful to combat the exclusion of belief systems based on race, language, or a lack of [insert qualification], but his own minimal definition demonstrates that Western categories of religion are still prevalent in contemporary scholarship as his article was written in 1997 and officially published in 1999. In Sundermeier’s definition, the “separation of heaven and earth” presumes the separation of sacredness, space, and perhaps time. The segmentation of time and space in Western religious frameworks oppose Indigenous perspectives on space-time.

While the sociological perspective of religion revolutionized the object of religion—from God to society—and maximal definitions of religion are useful to incorporate Indigenous traditions in discussions of practice, my work is in opposition to Western authors who categorize and partake in Religion by degrading non-Western forms of spirituality. Authors such as Sundermeier and Durkheim have contributed to the essentialization and debasement of non-Western traditions broadly, but it should be noted that these are only a few examples of essentialization in scholarship. There are many other religious scholars whose frames are Eurocentric (Derrida), as well as authors whose frames are Eurocentric but do the work to reject the language of totemism (Arnold van Gennep).

In addition to the essentialization of the Indigenous body in Western scholarship, it is worthwhile to note how the dichotomy between minor and major Religions formed through the genealogy of the word itself. In Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s magnum opus, *The Meaning and End*



*of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind*, he argues that the term religion is confusing and disorienting. Written in the 1960s, Smith’s argument is still relevant today as we, society and academia, continue to define what constitutes a religion. By tracing the genealogy of the word religion, Smith exposes that colonial expansion and Western periods of thought—like the Enlightenment and the rise of Christianity in the West—created the term “religion” in order to differentiate between the correct practice of Religion and those that were incorrect, blasphemous, and “other.” In the context of colonialism, Western entities encountered different ways of ritual and not only bestowed names to these practices but also implanted the term “religion.” Prior to contact with the West, Smith argues, practitioners of Hinduism and Buddhism did not have a word for religion in the vocabulary of their practice or ideology (Smith 1963).<sup>14</sup>

In the ages leading up to the Enlightenment, religion semantically shifted from use as an adjective in a Western context—from “the Christian religion,” to a noun, “Christian religion”(Smith 1963). Smith argues this switch obfuscated the meaning and role of religion in our language as well as in society, by assigning religion a general quality and an essence outside of the specific practice of Christianity. In *The Meaning and End of Religion*, Smith advocates for a serious re-evaluation of the term Religion—as the conceptual framework for understanding the religious is Western and othering in origin. According to Smith, Religion alone does not have an essence outside of the specific ritual practices and ideologies of individuals.

The way in which Smith traces the development of the term Religion exposes the benefits and disadvantages of using the word religion to describe Indigenous lifeways. While I will not go as far as to claim we should disregard the term religion or even religious studies, Smith’s

---

<sup>14</sup> Smith himself does not alternate between using Religion as a function of exclusion, using a capital R, and religion as a category open to the inclusion of different beliefs and practices. The capitalization of the term Religion in this section is an extension of my classification/categorization of the term from the Introduction.

analysis of the word Religion is useful for this thesis. By understanding the Western imposition of the term religion, Smith claims scholars can understand the fluidity and categorizations of religion—such as major and minor traditions—more easily.

Unfortunately, Smith still uses Western phrases such as faith and belief while criticizing the old and proposing new frameworks. Anthropologist Talal Asad heavily critiques Smith's conceptual framework and rhetoric for its reliance on Western individualism. Later in *The Meaning and End of Religion*, Smith argues that scholars should only focus their analysis on the individual practitioner and not the community of practice. While Smith is useful for this thesis in terms of acknowledging how Western entities have relied on exclusion in order to create the term religion, his work is positioned in a particular era of religious studies which I will try move beyond through decolonial frames. Informed by Smith and Asad's scholarship, I argue the word religion constantly evolves as well, which allows for the inclusion of traditions which do not historically have a place under its umbrella.

My argument regarding Indigenous ritual as religion has one more crucial point. I argue for a maximal framework, incorporating Indigenous ritual into a discussion of religion due to its historic exclusion from the pantheon of "valid"—as they are deemed by academia and Western Religious systems—Religious traditions. This is not an all-encompassing framework but as I further engage with authors such as Vine Deloria Jr. and Jace Weaver, I would like to open the *possibility* that Indigenous spiritual practices are in fact religions. This action is in protest to the dominant paradigm that Indigenous practices are minor traditions, unable to sit among the Religions of the world as complex, complete, and valid. If the term religion does not suit a particular community or group, this is not a call for a forceful label. I am in no position as a scholar, activist, or person to advocate for the imposition of labels on practices. It is merely a call

for the inclusion of Indigenous practices in a serious discussion of what has the potential to be religious.

Jace Weaver stands in favor of expanding what “fits” within the framework of religion and questions Religion as a rigid category distinct from culture. Jace Weaver, Cherokee scholar, is the founder of the Institute of Native American Studies at the University of Georgia. In *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*, Weaver discusses Native traditions and beliefs using the term religion. In doing so, Weaver also recognizes that Native spirituality is a total practice, inseparable from culture and life: “traditional Native religions are integrated totally into daily activity” (Weaver 1997). In the Introduction of *That the People Might Live*, Weaver recognizes the historical aversion Indigenous authors have in using frames of reference related to theology (Weaver 1997). Yet, Weaver freely uses the word religion in an Indigenous context. In light of Weaver’s stance, my work to define the category of religion (as an inclusive framework) needs to also include a caveat that categories constantly change and evolve in time. Defining different forms of religion based on histories of exclusion or inclusion is useful for stabilizing the nature of the category in relation to my work on sacredness, time, and food.

Weaver’s piece highlights the diversity of Native scholarship and perspectives on the term religion and contends with the changing definition of religion over time. For the purpose of this thesis, I will refer to Indigenous traditions as religions, life-ways, *AND* ways of being. If a particular group of peoples prefer a term not included above or in the English language and have expressed this, I will refer to their practices using the preferred word. Later in the discussion of the Sioux Chef, I will explore how Sherman uses these terms more fluidly and in conjunction with one another.

### *Chapter 3: Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Time*

Western scholarship has discredited the frames of Indigenous scholars and colonial powers have de-historicized the land from its sacredness. Decolonial thought has introduced the possibility of decolonizing one's minds and actions. Food sovereignty operates in a similar way in the world of food. Reacting to the colonization of food ways and the corporate entities that dominate the food system (Nyéléni Food Forum 2007), food sovereignty emerged as a way to reclaim one's relations to the process of growing food, the worker, and the food chain as a whole.

In this chapter, I document how Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS) emerged on the international stage as well as how the movement writes or alludes about time. In relation to IFS, I present the history of the concept of sovereignty and how it became tied to food as a packaged and modular term, "food sovereignty." Food sovereignty, like religion, is another Western category operating within my work. Because I acknowledge the Western roots of the word sovereignty, I grapple with how food sovereignty relates to Indigenous scholarship on recognition and power using Glen Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Coulthard 2014). Coulthard is one of the Indigenous authors I cite who does not in fact, have an visible issue using Western scholarship as he engages with Hegelian and Marxist philosophical models—in both respect and critique. I unpack how Marx's theory of four-fold alienation relates to food sovereignty's ideological rhetoric, as well as explore some of the tensions produced by the neoliberal market and the commodification of sacred things in time—such as land, food, and traditional ways of preparing dishes.

The food sovereignty movement was created by a peasant group called La Via Campesina in 1996 at the Tlaxcala Conference. Generally, the term was coined to reference the producer's centrality to the food system and autonomy over the means and ends of production,

land, and livelihood. La Via Campesina is an umbrella movement that incorporates 182 peasant related organizations across 81 countries. On their interactive website, La Via Campesina lists its connections to more than 200,000,000 peasants worldwide (What Is La Via Campesina? - Via Campesina n.d.). In 1996, the group defined food sovereignty as a “concept and framework that both challenges the foundations of the current agri-food order and proposes a set of concrete alternatives for both theory and practice” (What Is La Via Campesina? - Via Campesina n.d.).

Eleven years after La Via Campesina coined the term food sovereignty, the Nyéléni Food Forum published the Nyéléni Declaration. The Declaration of Nyéléni is the foundational text for the food sovereignty movement as it outlines what and who the movement is fighting “for” and “against.” The Declaration was produced by a collective of 500 farmers and food producers from 80 countries. The Declaration writes, under the subtitle of “what we are fighting for, that “. . .all peoples, nations and states are able to determine their own food producing systems and policies that provide every one of us with good quality, adequate, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food” (Nyéléni Food Forum 2007). Despite the broad goals expressed in the Declaration, the ways in which food sovereignty initiatives are carried out relies on the local context. The goals and subject of the food sovereignty movement, as defined by the Nyéléni Declaration, are varied and multiple—“. . .we value, recognize and respect our diversity of traditional knowledge, food, language and culture, and the way we organise and express ourselves” (Nyéléni Food Forum 2007). Food scholars, like Hannah Wittman and Alison Alkon, have affirmed that there is no one “right” way to structure or conduct a food sovereignty movement.

Both La Via Campesina and The Nyéléni Food Forum operate on an international level, serving a variety of populations—Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The term food sovereignty is modular in the sense that it is the foundation for further models of engagement. It is important to

note that the basis of food sovereignty is entangled in international frames of development and funding, as often food activists use the term food sovereignty to advance agricultural and environmental policies in international forums.

In regards to time, The Declaration of Nyéléni as well as La Via Campesina do not establish time as limiting in an international funding perspective. Rather, The Nyéléni Food Forum addresses the effects and potential of the movement to evolve in time. The Forum establishes time as a positive force for the future of food sovereignty initiatives. In the Declaration, The Forum writes, “Food sovereignty gives us the hope and power to preserve, recover and build on our food producing knowledge and capacity” (UBC Learning Circle | Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health n.d.). The Forum does address, in the section titled “What we are fighting against?”, how international financial institutions engage with settler time in a exploitative way. The Forum writes against the decimation of knowledge production and its capacity, particularly focusing on technologies which “undercut our future food producing capacities, damage the environment and put our health at risk” (Nyéléni Food Forum 2007). The Declaration foregrounds time as a positive force, despite its ability to aid corruption, in the introduction of the piece and at the end of the Declaration with the exclamation, “Now is the time for food sovereignty!”

Indigenous communities around the world have adopted the aims and terminology of the food sovereignty movement. Particularly, the frame of the movement aids in the struggle for Native land sovereignty, food security, and cultural preservation. While there is no one set definition of Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS), The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty has collected four key ideologies which guide manifestations of the movement in North America. The Working Group operates out of North America and was founded in 2006 as

a brainchild of the B.C.<sup>15</sup> Food Systems Network Annual Gathering. The collective includes non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples, farmers, traditional harvesters, policy makers, academics, and non-governmental organizations. I have chosen to use this definition of Indigenous food sovereignty as several Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars cite this definition on published work on IFS.

The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty identifies the four main goals of Indigenous food sovereignty as: “the recognition that food is sacred; participation in food systems; self-determination; and supportive legislation and policy” (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty 2006). These qualifications have been used by scholars in food scholarship, including in an article by Dawn Morrison, founder of the B.C. Food Systems Networking Group. Morrison adopts the language of the Working Group on IFS in her article titled “Indigenous Food Sovereignty: A Model for Social Learning” in *Food Sovereignty in Canada: Creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems*. Morrison has “ancestral ties in the Secwepemc” territory and has an academic background in ecology and business management (UBC Learning Circle | Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health n.d.). The definition set by Morrison and the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty has framed the scholarship of academics writing about Indigenous and non-Indigenous food sovereignty, including Canadian scholar Hannah Wittman.

Hannah Wittman is a Canadian scholar from the University of British Columbia, whose approach to food studies informs my own. She writes that all food sovereignty movements, including Indigenous food sovereignty movements, should be viewed not “as an established paradigm/concept but rather a potential new framework emerging from a diverse set of contemporary grassroots production practices and political approaches” (Wittman 2011). In

---

<sup>15</sup> B.C. stands for British Columbia, the Canadian state.

Wittman's article titled "Food Sovereignty: A New Rights Framework for Food and Nature?," she establishes food sovereignty movements as causing an "epistemic shift" from the economic language of food security programs to a consumer-oriented food rhetoric (Wittman 2011). Food security, Wittman writes, was established as a post-war principle in order to address the eradication of world hunger. Positioning itself as opposed to food security's sole focus on world hunger, food sovereignty highlights the cultural and political aspects of the food system in addition to economic frames.

Wittman situates food security as operating within a corporate or neoliberal economy (Wittman 2011); later in this piece, a tension that emerges in the restoration of Native practices is the interaction of tradition with modernity and the commodification of the sacred (of land and ingredients) for sale on a neoliberal market. According to Wittman's article, food sovereignty does not engage with the language of neoliberalism. Citing the Nyéléni Declaration, Wittman substantiates her claim of an "epistemic shift" as the food sovereignty movement fights against "Imperialism, neo-liberalism, neo-colonialism and patriarchy, and all systems that impoverish life, resources and eco-systems, and the agents that promote the above such as international financial institutions, the World Trade Organization, free trade agreements, transnational corporations, and governments that are antagonistic to their peoples" (Nyéléni Food Forum 2007). In order to flush out the distinction between food security (a corporate/neoliberal food regime) and food sovereignty, Wittman creates a chart which establish how the two frames approach certain attitudes towards food, such as 'feeding the world,' 'environmental stewardship,' and the 'role of agriculture in advancing national development.' For example, Wittman establishes that food security/neoliberal food regimes perceive environmental stewardship as: "Protected areas, national parks, and environmental regulations are sufficient, as long as they do not harm the potential for the expansion of agricultural export crops" while food



sovereignty regimes see environmental stewardship as: “Agriculture and environmental policy cannot be separated; sustainable agriculture protects biodiversity and leaves space for conservation areas” (Wittman 2011). Rather than changing the topic of food activism or policy, i.e. environmental stewardship, hunger, or national development, food sovereignty pitches an expansive approach to food regime issues, through cultural, political *and* economic terms.

While economics—in terms of hunger—is not at the forefront of the food sovereignty movement, it is worthy to note that the movement does advocate for just food systems in economic terms related to fair compensation and trade. In the chart Wittman creates, the section on ‘the role of agriculture in advancing national development’ positions economic growth as a product of the fair treatment of workers. Food security, conversely, situates the means as economic security and the byproduct as worker justice. The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty acknowledges that “Indigenous food systems are best described in ecological rather than neoclassical ecological terms,” yet writes that in fact, advocating for food sovereignty in Indigenous communities addresses food security in a radically different way.

The food sovereignty movement is building around the world and while there is no universal definition, it can be described as the newest and most innovative approach to achieving the end goal of long term food security. Indigenous food sovereignty is a specific policy approach to addressing the underlying issues impacting Indigenous peoples and our ability to respond to our own needs for healthy, culturally adapted Indigenous foods. Community mobilization and the maintenance of multi-millennial cultural harvesting strategies and practices provide a basis for forming and influencing "policy driven by practice." (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty 2006)

Instead of fueling the distinction between security and sovereignty that academics, in understanding food sovereignty, have created, the Working Group positions IFS as achieving long term food security through the cultural understanding of foodways. In addition to positioning food security as a long-term goal, the Working Group establishes that there is a

policy component to Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives related to self-determination and land sovereignty. The Working Group’s definition establishes policy as informing local practice, and establishes a dialectic, cyclical relationship between policy and practice—as policy informs practice and from this, practice informs policy in a continual cycle in time.

The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty situates time as important aspect of resource preservation. On the main page of their website, The Group displays a medicine wheel<sup>16</sup> that center lands as the connecting factor between health, economics, sustainability, generations and youth. The medicine wheel represents “a powerful learning and teaching tool. . .balance, wholeness and interconnectedness between all four quadrants” (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty 2006). The Working Group articulates the importance of relational ontologies using the image of the medicine wheel, echoing themes present in Mohawk’s *Thinking in Indian* and Akwesasne Notes’ *Basic Call to Consciousness*. The group writes,

Indigenous food systems include all of the land, air, water, soil and culturally important plant, animal and fungi species that have sustained Indigenous peoples over thousands of years. All parts of Indigenous food systems are inseparable and ideally function in healthy interdependent relationships to transfer energy through the present day agriculture based economy that has been developed and industrialized through the process of colonization. (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty 2006)

The Working Group highlights the how time functions throughout multiple generations “over thousands of years,” as well as how space-time is conceived within agricultural systems.

Animals, plants, and humans are interdependent on one another in both space and time—as peoples transfer energy through the present into the future and rely on the space of the land to continue healthy relationships outside of a colonial, agricultural system.

While the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty offers a broad framework to understand Indigenous relations to the land in space and time, within an indigenous context the

---

<sup>16</sup> Image can be found in Appendix IV.

application of food sovereignty mirrors the diversity of Indigenous groups in the United States. Native communities across the United States pair cultural and linguistic restoration with the reclamation of foodways and ingredients. This being said, there are also terms within Indigenous languages which refer to communal proceedings regarding food (Kamal et al. 2015). For example, within the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, “wechihituwin is used in place of ‘resource’ to provide a more nuanced and spiritual significance to land, water and food, as well as the life living within each” (Kamal et al. 2015). The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, in the precursor to the definition of IFS, acknowledges:

. . .the language and concept of food sovereignty has only recently been introduced in Indigenous communities, the living reality is not a new one. Indigenous food related knowledge, values and wisdom built up over thousands of years provides a basis for identifying four key principles that guide the present day food sovereignty movement in Indigenous communities. (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty 2006)

The usage of the term “food sovereignty” within communities with distinct terms for environmental reciprocity, decolonization, and food itself, can adopt a colonial, Western quality as an exonym if used without consent from the community.

The ideology of food sovereignty, in rejecting the neoliberal market place and uplifting the producer, echoes Marxist terminology. Prior to discussing some of the tensions which are produced via the specific application of Indigenous food ways in the neoliberal market, I would like to unpack Karl Marx’s theory of alienation. Marx’s theory of alienation originally stemmed from *The Communist Manifesto*, and in 1970, philosopher István Mészáros’ published *Marx’s Theory of Alienation* which expanded the field’s theoretical understanding of Marx’s work. I mention Marx in this thesis not to fit Indigenous philosophy into Western models, but to see how Western philosophy on communism might bleed into the rhetoric of The Nyéléni Declaration, which is the larger frame informing Indigenous food sovereignty movements. In addition, the Declaration was created on an international stage with feedback from both Western and non-

Western producers—so the integration of Western concepts is not unlikely or out of the picture for the general frame of food sovereignty that impacts all iterations of the movement.

Particularly, Marxist undertones stand out in these quotations from the Declaration of Nyéléni (Nyéléni Food Forum 2007):

1. In the section titled what we are fighting for:
  - a. “. . .there is genuine and integral agrarian reform that guarantees peasants full rights to land, defends and recovers the territories of indigenous peoples. . .where it guarantees the right to territory and self- determination for our peoples. . .”
2. In the section titled what we are fighting against:
  - a. “The privatisation and commodification of food, basic and public services, knowledge, land, water, seeds, livestock and our natural heritage. . .”
  - b. “The internationalisation and globalisation of paternalistic and patriarchal values that marginalise women, diverse agricultural, indigenous, pastoral and fisher communities around the world. . .”

The commodification of food and the privatization of land, resulting in the “marginalisation” of the agricultural worker as referenced in 2b, echoes Marx’s theory of four-fold alienation. In the four-fold theory of alienation, Marx claims the worker is alienated from the product of their labor, from the productive activity itself, from their “species-being,” or humanity as a rational animal, and from fellow workers. The layering of alienation contributes to the exploitation of the worker in the capitalist system and the accumulation of wealth by the rich. Related to scholarship on food sovereignty are general theories of sovereignty, which are often land based and framed with both mainstream understandings of Marxist philosophy and Marx’s theory of alienation.

Native scholars have already made the connection between sovereignty in terms of land-based understandings of political territory and Marxism. Scholar Glen Coulthard utilizes and contests Marxist ideas to discuss the settler state. Glen Coulthard identifies as Yellowknives Dene and is a professor in the First Nations Studies Program and the Department of Political

Science at the University of British Columbia. Coulthard's book, *Red Skin, White Masks: The Rejection of the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, maps the historical trajectory of recognition based paradigms in Canada by drawing on Franz Fanon's analysis of decolonization and Karl Marx's theory of primitive accumulation (Coulthard 2014). Coulthard argues, settler states rely on acknowledgements and calls to reconciliation to ameliorate years of Indigenous land dispossession. Despite exclusion from the fabric of society, Native peoples are forced to seek recognition from the settler state in order to receive any political rights or land claims. Coulthard argues settler states control Indigenous rights, sovereign land, and monetary benefits from land extraction—particularly using the method of recognition. These practices are a “seemingly more conciliatory set of discourses and institutional practices that emphasize our [indigenous] recognition and accommodation” (Coulthard 2014).

Importantly, practices of recognition do not have to rely on physical violence in order to reproduce colonial power dynamics. Coulthard claims Indigenous peoples are forced to subscribe to models of recognition that are “asymmetrical and non-reciprocal,” as the sovereign state retains rights to the land and resources rather than Native populations. Coulthard argues, countering Marxist philosophy on primitive accumulation, that the ultimate goal of the colonizer is land dispossession. Coulthard cites the Dene Nation's struggle for self-determination in the 1970s and 80s as historical evidence to support his theory that recognition seeks land, rather than *labor*<sup>17</sup>. According to Coulthard, Marxism is limited as land dispossession more adequately describes the birth of capitalism, not labor or class relations. Coulthard's main criticism of

---

<sup>17</sup> A quick note. When referring to Indigenous peoples, alternating levels of sovereignty are in play in the United States. Creating the distinction between sovereign nations, reservation, and peoples is a legal precedent that is set by the settler state—sovereign Indigenous nations are technically sovereign bodies, like a country, with which the United States can form treaties. Reservations are often state allocated plots of land, where Native peoples do not have total control over the resources of the land or the public works serving residents. These technicalities are settler ideals and a part of the toxic system which Glen Coulthard terms the “politics of recognition” (Coulthard 2014).

sovereignty is that the settler state forces Indigenous peoples to negotiate their livelihood through land, and that from this, recognition is granted in a limited way.

Discussions on sovereignty and the politics of recognition are important for Indigenous food sovereignty movements as the same colonial mechanisms operate in food as they do in politics or legal systems. The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty describes the policy component of IFS as attempting “to reconcile Indigenous food and cultural values with colonial laws and policies and mainstream economic activities. . . [providing] a restorative framework for policy reform in forestry, fisheries, rangeland, environmental conservation, health, agriculture, and rural and community development” (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty 2006). Reconciliatory policies, as well as self-determinant policies, are found within the condensed tenets of the Indigenous food sovereignty movement. From Coulthard’s discussion on recognition-based paradigms, the question arises: *Can we really use the word sovereignty to talk about food?*

In an article from Indian Country Today titled “Sovereignty of Everything, the Power of Nothing,” David E. Wilkins documents the rise of the word sovereignty—as he claims it is one of the most important and “unifying concept across Indian Country” (Wilkins 2015). Wilkins is a law professor at the University of Minnesota and specializes in Indigenous governance and federal Indian policy (Regents of the University of Minnesota 2019). He credits the popularization of the term sovereignty to another classic work by Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins* (Wilkins 2015). Wilkins asks the question, which I think is necessary to ask prior to applying sovereignty to any food-related context: Is the term sovereignty overused to the point of being null in meaning? Wilkins writes:

We now have intellectual sovereignty, fashion sovereignty, rhetorical sovereignty, artistic sovereignty, energy sovereignty, and even food sovereignty. . . Each of these endeavors has value. But, intelligence, fashion, rhetoric, art, energy, and food are not sovereign.

Peoples are sovereign. Attaching the term to a concept does heighten that concept's importance, but after a while, this liberal usage also devalues the fundamental meaning of sovereignty. . . Academics are some of the worst offenders, tacking the word onto just about anything they want to promote. It's like overusing an exclamation point or all capital letters—after a time, it is just a device that no one takes seriously. (Wilkins 2015)

The main issue Wilkins contests is the subject or agent of sovereignty. The person, who he believes has the ability to be sovereign, is non-existent in terms of “intelligence, fashion, rhetoric, art, energy, and food” (Wilkins 2015). In contrast to Coulthard's critique of sovereignty, which is based in the negotiated form of land and power that settler states impose on Native peoples, Wilkin criticizes the over-use of the term that results in an obfuscated and null meaning even in its reclamation. According to Wilkins, when the subject of sovereignty becomes obfuscated, the meaning does as well. The context, I would argue, is slightly different for food sovereignty movements. Within food sovereignty, the consumer is oriented at the center. The person who defines what and how a food system works is the consumer. Perhaps one step removed from the producer is the actual terminology of food sovereignty, yet semantically, so is the term sovereignty from the people who are sovereign. For my scholarship, it is useful to recognize that while the phrase food sovereignty is modular, the roots of sovereignty are based in Western frames of land rights. The “over-use” of the phrase, as I mentioned previously, adopts a colonial quality if Western scholars impose the frame on Indigenous groups who do not identify with IFS. However, the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty has acknowledged that time is generative and restorative. Frames of sovereignty are used as vehicles to advance Indigenous forms of autonomy in the market and over land. When time is perceived as productive, the “over-use” of the word sovereignty becomes less concerning as Indigenous peoples are able to morph and mold the term to fit their needs on a local and international scale.

Throughout this chapter, I have alluded to a tension present between the ideological frames of food sovereignty and the application of IFS. While both groups acknowledge the

diversity of food sovereignty movements, the commodification of food under the guise of food sovereignty poses an ideological tension: can a food reclamation project be considered an IFS movement if the product and producer willingly partake in the neo-liberal market? Several Indigenous food sovereignty movement—like Winona LaDuke’s White Earth Recovery Project that advocates for the preservation of Native rice or manoomin—commodify products for sale on the current market. While food scholars argue the commodification of Native tradition achieves sovereignty by relocating the cash flow to Indigenous economies, I am critical of the insularity of the Indigenous and neoliberal market. The Sioux Chef is another group of Indigenous chefs who sell their product in markets impacted by transnational corporations, the World Trade Organization, and neo-liberal policies. In the introduction, I mentioned that the question of space-time presents several tensions, such as the dialectic between time serving as limited/important and intergenerational/cyclical. In the IFS movement, I have underscored how Indigenous organizations have more so foregrounded time as important and intergenerational than limited. In the next couple chapters, I will explore how modern and traditional practices are impacted when sacred items are commodified for sale on the market.



*Chapter 4: A Brief on Methodology and Introduction to the Sioux Chef*

Prior to discussing the theoretical tensions produce by space-time and the economy, I will first debrief the story of The Sioux Chef and my methodology for collecting data to address my theoretical pursuits. I first encountered The Sioux Chef at Terra Madre: Food for Change, a Slow Food Conference held every other year in Turin, Italy. Slow Food is an international movement that supports food sovereignty initiatives and advocates for “good, clean, and fair” food for all. Slow Food International was founded in 1989 in Italy in response to the establishment of the first McDonalds in Milan and a perceived decline in local food traditions. Since then, Slow Food has spread across the globe as a popular movement that addresses the environmental, social, and political issues within the food system. Like food sovereignty, Indigenous peoples in North America have adopted and operated under the guise of the Slow Food Movement. Slow Food invites members—including activists, students, community organizers, producers, farmers, chefs, etc.—to a collective gathering and celebration called Terra Madre. In September 2018, I attended Terra Madre as a sponsored United States delegate.

At the conference, I sat in on several lectures to learn more about Indigenous food sovereignty through Slow Food Turtle Island, the Native Slow Food chapter of North America. Sean Sherman, the co-founder of the Sioux Chef, spoke on a panel titled “Indigenous Chefs: Why They Are Key Players in the Food System.” In addition to Sherman, Indigenous chefs from Papua Indonesia, Tanzania, and Russia spoke about their experience “educating and inspiring consumers.” After this lecture, I attended a dinner hosted by the Sioux Chef, the Indigenous Food Lab, and NATIFS: North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems. All of the aforementioned organizations are initiatives Sherman and his team founded in order to support and sustain Indigenous cuisine. From my experience at Terra Madre, I was inspired to write about The Sioux Chef as Sherman’s passion and knowledge about Indigenous food ways shined

through during his lectures. His work is inspirational, and in the room, most people felt his charisma and intention.

Initially, when I began this project, I wanted to interview members of the Sioux Chef's team and ask: "How does your religion/spirituality/oral traditions impact your work with food? And does your work with food enhance your spirituality? Is food spiritual to you?" The team comprises of chefs across Indigenous nations and peoples of North America, including those who identify as "Anishinaabe, Mdewakanton Dakota, Navajo, Northern Cheyenne, Oglala Lakota, Wahpeton-Sisseton Dakota" (The Sioux Chef n.d.). Unfortunately, I was unable to make sustained contact with the Sioux Chef's team and instead, I have compiled a data set of eleven written articles and interviews with Sean Sherman<sup>18</sup>. In an effort to explore how the organization positions and advertises itself, I have looked at seven articles The Sioux Chef listed under the tab "press" on their website. Technically, there are eight articles listed. The link to the article from *Native Peoples Magazine* was defunct as their website is under construction, so I am looking at the seven articles available to the public as of February 2019.

I sourced four supplementary interviews from a search result in Google, and intentionally looked for more recent articles, post 2016, as none of the articles/interviews that were posted on The Sioux Chef's website were posted after 2016. These articles are from various news sources as well as an independent blog site, and include articles and interviews. Items in this set include articles prior to 2018, before Sherman published *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*, and interviews after the publication date of the cookbook. The second set of articles is useful in the sense that I am able to track both Sean Sherman's changes in ideology and The Sioux Chef's growth as an organization. It is important to note that none of the articles listed on The Sioux Chef's website were written after 2016, and so the data set that I have compiled is supplementary

---

<sup>18</sup> Interviews are a post with question and answer, while articles cite from interviews the author conducted but also add narrative/content separate from the interview.

both in terms of content and perspective (time wise). I have intentionally chosen articles in the supplementary set from a variety of sources—including those with a clear mission of decolonization (*Cultural Survival*) and others which are less justice/Indigenous studies oriented (*Food Print*).

In this chapter, I will document my methodology and give an introduction to the different organizations—like The Indigenous Food Lab and NATIFS—that Sean Sherman created to supplement his original work with *The Sioux Chef*. In addition, I will tell the story of Sherman’s life through qualitative data sourced from his cookbook and the interviews in my data set. In the following chapter, I will explain some of the variables I looked at in the interviews and explore how spirituality manifests in *The Sioux Chef*’s public facing image. Screenshots from the *Sioux Chef*’s website can be found in appendix 1.

Supplementing my interview set, I will be using observational data from Terra Madre and the dinner I attend that was hosted by the Indigenous Food Lab. The dinner showcased ingredients and cuisines from across indigenous North America, and from this, I hope to explore how food itself can be considered a form of data expression in its taste (*Data Cuisine | Exploring Food as a Form of Data Expression 2016*).

There are some limitations to exploring the organization of *The Sioux Chef* that I would like to preface this chapter with, as considerations on the part of the researcher. One, there is difficulty in being nation-specific with the *Sioux Chef*, as the organization serves various Indigenous communities and showcases the work of Native chefs from across North America. In an interview published by The Cargo Collective in a publication titled *The Third Rail*, Sherman writes that “originally, I started off just wanting to focus on Lakota, then I shifted in Minneapolis to groups here, the Dakota and Ojibwe, and now we’re shifting our focus to all of North America, from Mexico all the way up to Alaska” (Jonathan 2016). However, Sherman

continually recognizes that while the organization serves a variety of Native communities, each group has different cultures, traditions, and local ingredients. In a 2015 interview with *The Splendid Table*, Sherman claims that although he “grew up on the Pine ridge Reservation in South Dakota (I’m Lakota), I wanted to really focus on the regionality of it. Since my business is here in Minnesota, I wanted to focus on just Dakota and Ojibwe” (Russell 2015). Throughout this chapter, I will continue to explore a trend that also prevails in the general food sovereignty movement: the tension between collective knowledges/idealistic frameworks and local implementations.

In order to explore the outward image the organization creates for itself through interviews and articles, it is important to spotlight the main speaker and representative of the group, founder Sean Sherman. Sherman is an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe and grew up on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In 2014, Sherman founded The Sioux Chef, a catering company focused on preserving and revitalizing Native cuisines of the Dakota and Ojibwe in Minnesota. The Sioux Chef’s story was initially picked up by NPR in its founding year and since then, Sherman has shared his work at the United Nations, the Culinary Institute of America, Yale University, and abroad. The Sioux Chef has a large following on social media. The group has garnered 32,000+ likes on Facebook, 7,300+ followers on Twitter, and 16,000+ followers on Instagram (as of February 2019). In addition, various news sources including BuzzFeed subsidiary TasteMade and AJ+, a subset of Al Jazeera Media have interviewed Sherman about his work and The Sioux Chef.

The catering business uses local and regional ingredients sourced from regions near Minneapolis, yet the mission of the organization extends beyond sourcing practices. The group is “committed to revitalizing Native American Cuisine and in the process we are re-identifying North American Cuisine and reclaiming an important culinary culture long buried and often

inaccessible” (The Sioux Chef n.d.). With his life partner Dana Thompson and Minneapolis’ Little Earth of United Tribes Community (Burton 2017), Sherman launched a food truck, called the Tatankatruck, in 2015. In 2016, the Sioux Chef founded a non-profit called NATIFS, which stands for North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems. NATIFS helps “bring healthy Indigenous Food to communities across Turtle Island” (North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems 2016). The non-profit has two main foci: Indigenous food ways education and Indigenous food access. In 2019, the team is planning to open a restaurant in Minneapolis called the Water Works as an extension of the mission of NATIFS (Burton 2017).

Another subsidiary of NATIFS is The Indigenous Food Lab. The Indigenous Food Lab is an Indigenous 501c3 restaurant, education and training center, and a research and development hub for Indigenous food knowledge. NATIFS’s hopes to create “indigenous food satellites,” which are pop up educational centers and restaurants around North America dedicated to supporting tribal food business, strengthening communities via knowledge, and creating opportunities for Indigenous food producers through workshops and pop up restaurants. In an interview with *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, Sherman states that “our goal for Indigenous Food Labs is to have a large education training center open as a public restaurant and help open other smaller food entities. . . [we will] help them build healthy Indigenous food entities for their community that can spur jobs and help bring foods that are culturally relevant to their particular place, land, history, and people” (Al-Sulaiman 2018). NATIFS will oversee the creation of their pop-up restaurants for five years in order to assess the sustainability and longevity of the ventures. The Sioux Chef, NATIFS, and The Indigenous Food Lab operate in conjunction and while each organization’s mission is specialized, broader themes like the restoration of Indigenous food ways, empowerment of Native producers, and promotion of healthy foods, are manifest in all the subsidiaries.

In 2017, Sherman published his James Beard award-winning cookbook titled *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*. In the introduction, Sherman provides readers with a graphic that serves as the guiding model for all work at The Sioux Chef. The model emulates the Sioux Chef's logo as well as the medicine wheel from The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty.<sup>19</sup> The model includes, like the principles of IFS set by the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, four foundations of Indigenous food systems. These include: 1) removal of colonized thought, 2) reconnect spiritually, mentally, and physically with the natural world, 3) understand and build Indigenous foundations, and 4) regain, retain, share, and practice knowledge. The logo of The Sioux Chef is divided into four categories based on the aforementioned foundations. In the top section of the model on Indigenous wisdom, spirituality and tradition are linked with a forward slash. Following this image, Sherman discusses his experience at Terra Madre, to supplement the broad strokes drawn in the graphic above which one could argue categorizes Indigenous food ways too generally. He writes: "At the Terra Madre, Shiilong, India, in 2015, a gathering of more than six hundred indigenous delegates, we realized that our work in mapping our own indigenous food systems applies throughout the world. Every day our work becomes richer and more interesting as we travel and meet with elders, indigenous chefs, historians, researchers, health professionals, and food justice advocates" (Sherman and Dooley 2017).

Sherman began his culinary journey at a young age, recalling the foods his family grew, cooked, and ate. In an interview in *The Third Rail*, Sherman recalls his childhood and gathering local plants growing up on the Pine Ridge reservation.

Well, my parents got divorced when I was pretty young. My mom moved us off the reservation when I was about twelve, so I started cooking at home for my sister and myself when I was eleven, since my mom had to work a lot, and then I got my first

---

<sup>19</sup> Image can be found in Appendix II.

restaurant job when I had just barely turned thirteen. I pretty much did everything — dishwashing, bussing, prepping — but I always worked in the back of the house. So all through high school and college I worked in kitchens. . . Growing up on the reservation, when we were kids, we gathered things like chokecherry and timpusla, which is a prairie turnip that grows wild all over the plains. It’s a pretty traditional food for the Lakota. (Jonathan 2016)

In a similar vein, Sherman writes about living on his grandfather’s ranch in the introduction to his cookbook *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen*. While their freezer was always stocked with meat from the ranch and his grandmother had a small garden with fresh vegetables, he remembers their “shelves were lined with government-issued canned corn, canned carrots, canned peas, canned salmon, chipped beef, saltines, white flour, and bricks of bright orange cheese” (Sherman and Dooley 2017). His grandmother’s vegetables “were a treat, not the norm” (Sherman and Dooley 2017).

Sherman writes that while living on the reservation, he felt very connected to his identity as Oglala Lakota, as he attended powwows, holiday parades, and school events. His grandparents also spoke fluent Lakota, despite being forcibly enrolled in the boarding school system in the United States. Sherman’s great-grandfather grew up on the plains and ate Native foods while “his grandparents were the first generation to be taken from their families, forced into boarding school, have their hair cut, and be stripped of their language and culture” (Rivera 2017). Food serves as a colonial tool as much as the removal of dress, language, and land do.

In an article from *Saveur*, David Treuer, author of *Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life*, underscores how the killing of Native foods pairs hand-in-hand with poverty, colonialism, and high prevalence of diabetes within Native communities in the United States. Treuer writes, “In the Plains in the 1800s, the U.S Army hunted tens of millions of bison to the point of extinction, specifically to defeat the region’s tribes. By killing the food—from coast to coast—the government defeated Native Americans” (Treuer 2016). Sherman affirms Treuer’s

sentiments, writing in his cookbook, “controlling food is a means of controlling power” (Sherman and Dooley 2017). In addition to Indigenous scholars, food scholars equally recognize the potential of food to serve as an oppressive tool, one that extracts and replaces cultural traditions, as well as the potential of food to serve as a decolonial tool. As Sherman advanced through his culinary career, the recognition of food’s potential to be a connecting point and vehicle for reclamation undergirded his work with The Sioux Chef, the Indigenous Food Lab, and NATIFS.

When his parents divorced, Sherman moved off the reservation and began working at restaurants as early as thirteen. In his early twenties, Sherman moved to Minneapolis and became the sous chef at Broder’s Pasta Bar. While he enjoyed working in restaurants and soon became an executive chef, Sherman recalls becoming increasingly burnt out “under the weight of soul-crushing pressures, the long, long hours and late, late nights” (Sherman and Dooley 2017). On a break to Mexico, he had an epiphany:

. . . I tasted how food weaves people together, connects families through generations, is a life force of identity and social structure. After seeing how the Huicholes held on to so much of their pre-European culture through artwork and food, I recognized that I wanted to know my own food heritage. What did my ancestors eat before the Europeans arrived on our lands? I saw North America as a whole, with vast and varied landscapes, ancient migrations of peoples and agriculture whose methods and techniques spread northward with the corn cultures. I saw the deep connections to nature, to the entire ecosystems of the indigenous groups. . . As I began my research, I realized how grossly underrepresented Native American foods are in the United States. (Sherman and Dooley 2017)

Explaining the organization’s intertribal approach, Sherman writes “I saw North America as a whole, with vast and varied landscapes, ancient migrations of peoples and agriculture whose methods and techniques spread northward with the corn cultures” (Sherman and Dooley 2017).

When further researching Indigenous food ways in the United States, Sherman mentions that the



book *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden* served as an intellectual and personal inspiration for further ethnobotanical and culinary research. Realizing that a respect and connection to Indigenous ingredients was “coded in [his] Native DNA,” Sherman moved back to The United States. In 2014, he relocated to Minneapolis to form The Sioux Chef on what he calls “a pure leap of faith” (Sherman and Dooley 2017).

Sherman's confidence and passion about The Sioux Chef was clearly communicated at Terra Madre in 2018. Curating a dinner with chefs from the Indigenous Food Lab, Sherman and his team showcased the flavors and ingredients of Native North America. All of the ingredients used were harvested in the United States or Mexico and shipped to Italy. The dinner was held on an enclosed sidewalk outside of a French style restaurant. The crowd was mainly Western and white, yet there were Indigenous leaders present who attended Terra Madre as delegates and speakers. They occupied three tables and sat together. Since the dishes were made without flour and sugar, the sweetness in the dishes was more subtle but left a clean taste on your tongue. What cannot be expressed in words, is very much expressed in the physical preparation and taste of Sherman's dishes. The construction of his memoir as a cookbook fosters a dissemination of knowledge and communicates a hope for the future: community re-formed as a result of sharing. The food that I tasted at Terra Madre is one manifestation of knowledge sharing. The “gastronomic data” that I hope to cultivate in this thesis is one that relies on taste as a vehicle and manifestation of culture. As an outsider, the tastes—the crunch of crickets, the richness of Native varieties of bean and blue corn—are limited to my past experiences with food. That is why, now, I will turn to data that I collected from interviews with The Sioux Chef to supplement the conclusions drawn above.

### *Chapter 5: Interview and Article Data Collection*

While Sherman's food, in its gastronomy, displays one form of dedication to Native ingredients, The Sioux Chef has also constructed an identity through social media and interviews with media outlets. In an effort to gauge the foregrounding of identity of the organization, I decided to code for the prevalence of language and key words in eleven articles. I have selected several key words and coded for "mention of," meaning if the phrase was present in the article, particularly in direct quotations from interviews with Sherman. While not all the sources I listed were purely interviews, some were articles which dispersed Sherman's interview throughout the text, I coded for "mention of" words based on quotes from Sherman himself. In the charts on page fifty nine, the name of the publication is listed on the top row, while the variables are located in the first column. The variables I chose include are mention of pre-colonization/reservation foods, mention of fry bread, mention of minimalism or un-modernist cuisine, mention of modern, mention of *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden*, mention of spirituality, and mention of connection to the earth/plants/ingredients.

It is important to note that I am using Sherman's interviews to represent the orientation and views of the organization, The Sioux Chef. Sherman founded the organization and in the interviews with The Sioux Chef, Sherman assumes the role of the main speaker. I acknowledge this position limits my conclusions regarding the organization, and further work to supplement my initial ground work should include interviews with the staff of the organization. My work paints a picture of The Sioux Chef in line with the public image the organization promotes using Sherman as the most visible leader.

The seven articles available to the public that were listed on The Sioux Chef's website under "press" include pieces from *The New York Times*, *The Splendid Table*, *NPR*, *Cowboys and Indians*, *The Atlantic*, *Saveur*, and *Indian Country Today*. The articles are not listed in

chronological order in the table, but rather in the order they appeared on The Sioux Chef's website. The supplementary articles I chose from Google are listed in separate table below, with the same format and variables. The articles in the supplementary section were sourced from *The Third Rail* (an independent blog of The Cargo Collective), *Food Print*, *City Pages*, and *Cultural Survival's Quarterly Magazine*. Data tables are included below, the first documenting articles from The Sioux Chef's website and the second, addressing the supplementary articles.

Articles on Website	The New York Times	The Splendid Table	NPR
Year	2016	2015	2014
Mention of "pre-colonization/reservation foods"	No	Yes	Yes
Mention of fry bread	Yes	No	Yes
Mention of minimalism or "un-modernist cuisines"	Yes	Yes	No
Mention of modern	No	Yes	No
Mention of <i>Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden</i>	Yes	Yes	No
Mention of spirituality	No	No	No
Mention of connection to earth/plants/ingredients	Yes	Yes	Yes

Articles on Website	Cowboys and Indians	The Atlantic	Saveur	Indian Country Today
Year	2015	2016	2016	2016
Mention of "pre-colonization/reservation foods"	No	No	No	No
Mention of fry bread	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Mention of minimalism or "un-modernist cuisines"	Yes	No	No	No
Mention of modern	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Mention of <i>Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden</i>	Yes	No	No	No
Mention of spirituality	No	No	No	No
Mention of connection to earth/plants/ingredients	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Supplementary Articles	The Third Rail	Food Print	City Pages	Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine
Year	2016	2017	2017	2018
Mention of "pre-colonization/reservation foods"	Yes	No	No	No
Mention of fry bread	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mention of minimalism or "un-modernist cuisines"	Yes	No	No	No
Mention of modern	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mention of <i>Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden</i>	No	No	No	No
Mention of spirituality	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mention of connection to earth/plants/ingredients	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The purpose of including these charts in a humanities thesis is to understand if the idea of *food as spirituality* is at the forefront of the Sioux Chef's public image, or if a conceptualization of food as a decolonizing vehicle or a tradition is more prevalent. What I hope to illuminate by looking at the articles on their website, is what type of image the organization creates for public consumption. Other variables, which might skew the presentation of The Sioux Chef's story, such as comfortability with the interviewer and the underlying motives of the news source, I have not controlled for. In this sense, none of the variables are statistically significant because I

am not running regressions or controlling for independent and dependent variables. However, I am looking at the prevalence of language used in the articles as the pieces are displayed for the public online by The Sioux Chef. The variables I have looked at and will contrast, concerning the mention of spirituality or the mention of connection to the earth, will have significant implications for my conclusions regarding spirituality and Indigenous traditions.

The first variable I coded for was pre-colonization or pre-reservation foods. I have included the variable pre-colonization or pre-reservation foods in order to explore the prevalence of language regarding a return back to tradition. Only two out of the seven articles on the website and ¼ of the supplementary articles mentioned the term pre-colonization or pre-reservation foods. Summarized best in Sherman's interview with The Cargo Collective in *The Third Rail*, the idea of "pre-reservation" refers to using Native ingredients and methods that predate contact with European settlers. Sherman explains: "When we say pre-contact a lot of people think of the year 1492, but that year doesn't have anything to do with the peoples in this region, where contact was in the 1800s, which isn't really that long ago. I'm just looking at the food systems of my great-grandfather's era, basically" (Jonathan 2016).

The second variable I have coded for is fry bread. Fry bread is included in order to gauge if the dish is conceived by the author of the article, and by extension the public reader, as a key component of Indigenous cuisine. Fry bread is a dish that is somewhat self-explanatory; it is dough fried in oil, shortening, or lard (Frybread 2019). It can be served with sweet or savory toppings, or eaten alone. I particularly wanted to look for the mention of fry bread as Sherman juxtaposes the dish with his cuisine. In the introduction to *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*, Sherman explicitly addresses why fry bread is not included in the cookbook under a header titled "(NOT) FRY BREAD". Fry bread, Sherman writes, originated 150 years ago as a product of displacement and forced relocation of Indigenous communities by the US government. When

forcibly removed from their lands which provided sustenance and hunting/gathering grounds, Native peoples had to rely on government subsidized products like flour, sugar, and lard. Because of this painful history, Sherman claims that “fry bread represents perseverance and pain, ingenuity and resilience” (Sherman and Dooley 2017). Five of the seven articles listed on The Sioux Chef’s website juxtaposed Sherman’s cuisine with fry bread. Three out of four of the supplementary articles mentioned the dish as well. The data set above complements Sherman’s statements in the cookbook regarding frybread; while fry bread is considered typical Native cuisine, it is in fact a product of colonization and pain. Sherman does not mention how frybread serves as a form of comfort or symbol of reclamation for many Indigenous communities, despite its colonial roots. Maternal lineages and maternal comfort are often evoked when eating frybread, of which Sherman does not discuss. Underscoring the role frybread occupies in Native communities, Sherman strategically places The Sioux Chef’s reclamation of Native ingredients and health and in antithesis to frybread (regardless of its positive connotation within Indigenous communities as a source of comfort, pan-tribalism, and/or reclamation).

Frybread is not a traditional dish, yet it has come to symbolize tradition, comfort, as well as colonization over time. The tension between tradition and innovation, as seen in coding for frybread, manifests in all Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives. In order to examine this tension in The Sioux Chef’s work, I have coded for the mention of two variables: minimalist/un-modern and modern cuisine. Sherman, in several of the interviews, refers to his food as “un-modernist,” in that his team tries to keep things simple while using techniques from the past. As Sherman establishes food’s sacredness in the introduction of The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen, exploring time related variables will help unpack how sacredness is both linked to the land and to knowledge/ingredients in time. In his interview with *The Third Rail*, Sherman explains what the term means:

We try to keep things very simple. We've been using the term un-modernist cuisine a lot, because it's just about keeping these foods really simple. I think to myself, if I was here 250 years ago, in this exact spot, what foods were around me and what were people eating? Having the skills that I have as a chef, I try to understand what I can do with this food and what can I make with these things, that's my approach. I try to figure out what people were storing away for the winters and holding on to. (Jonathan 2016)

Sherman wonders about the context of food as it related to the land, i.e. "250 years ago, in this exact spot," as well as grapples with how to use the current, accessible ingredients to take a unique approach to his cooking (in the now). Despite Sherman labeling his food as "un-modernist," in four of the seven articles listed on the Sioux Chef's website and ¾ths of the supplementary articles Sherman also uses the term "modern" to describe his cooking, dishes, or work. In order to see how prevalent specific and traditional records of cooking were in the articles, I coded for the book *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden*. Three out of seven articles listed on The Sioux Chef's website included a reference to the text, while none of the supplementary articles included references. Despite low mentions of the *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden*, Sherman cites the piece as being influential in his decision to pursue cooking traditional ingredients with a modern twist. In the article by *Saveur*, David Treuer writes about an underlying tension in Sherman work as it pertains to labeling The Sioux Chef a modern take on Indigenous cuisine. That is, what does it mean for something to be authentic?

The balance between preserving traditional practices and pioneering innovation raises the question of authenticity. The question in this sense is not an essentializing one, i.e. it does not function to exclude others from membership or community. Rather, it is a question about the future of Indigenous identity. In response to Sherman's pop-up events and food summits, Treuer writes,

Many have expressed a feeling of connecting to it on a primal level. Sherman's food gets at the private worry of all modern Indians—that our story is one defined by loss: loss of

land, loss of culture, loss of a way of life. And yet, we remain. We exist as modern Americans and Indians, and become people simply descended from Indians? (Treuer 2016)

Treuer continues to address the concern of authenticity and change, as Native peoples who attended Sherman's dinners saw the story as defined by loss. If identity was only salient in the face of forced integration, or the settler narrative, what constitutes someone or something as Indigenous? Treuer argues Sherman's food reminds Native communities of their identity, as it is manifest in the land.

Sherman's food suggests that all is not lost. In fact, it says much remains. It's around us—the amaranth on the side of the road, the berries and fruit growing over our head. Of course, ingredients alone don't make a cuisine, much less a political statement. Rather, Sherman and Thompson's intentional approach is a reminder to focus on the richness of our surroundings and the earth from which we came. (Treuer 2016)

The question, then, of authenticity and identity, can be explored in a dynamic, generative way through Sherman and Thompson's<sup>20</sup> intentional reclamation of Indigenous food ways. Sherman's enterprise, as Treuer explains, approaches the question of authenticity in antithesis to the dominant narrative of exclusion surrounding conversations of it. Sherman subversively challenges the dominant narrative of authenticity by focusing on ingredients related to us in space and time, reminding consumers “to focus on the richness of our surroundings and the earth from which we came,” not on the political debate of membership and identity.

Spirituality, as a facet of Sherman's approach to food sovereignty, engages with a balancing act between tradition and innovation in order to arrive at a dynamic form of authenticity. In the foundations to understanding Indigenous food systems as outlined by Sherman in *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*, the third pillar incorporated reconnecting with the spiritual world using the term “spirituality.” How the language of spirituality manifests, as it

---

<sup>20</sup> Treuer is one of the only journalists, from the data set I created, to continually recognize Thompson's role in the organization.

could be “in the richness” of the natural environment, varies throughout the articles in my data set. In coding for the mention of spirituality and the mention of connection to the earth/plants/ingredients, I was intentional in noticing when food was deemed sacred or spiritual using the rhetoric of spirituality. I did, however, code for the term spirituality as it was mentioned in *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen* (Appendix 2).

What narrative is the most visible, and is food and spirituality a central part of the image The Sioux Chef conveys on their central hub for information and media? None of the articles listed on the organization’s website referred to the notion of spirituality (or the term spiritual), but in each, Sherman mentioned connection to the land and its ingredients. In supplementary articles pulled from *Food Print* and *The Third Rail*, Sherman explicitly uses the term spirituality to describe food. In Sherman’s interview *FoodPrint*, the interviewer asks how one’s perspective and relationship to food changes when you think about it spiritually. Sherman replies,

I think indigenous communities all share a very deep spiritual connection with the food and the plants and the animals around them. . . I think for indigenous communities there’s always been an immense amount of spiritual connection with the food around you. It’s a religious and belief system that is really built around being thankful for food and understanding how important it is that you’re a part of the ecosystem, and not to trying to overtake it and force it to do things. (Saracini and Food Print 2017)

The communal aspect of food, as it is shared as a sacred piece from the land, relates not only with Sherman’s perception of food having a spiritual connection but also to nutrition and culture. In Sherman’s interview with *Cultural Survival*, he briefly mentions that “food really defines who we are on so many levels, nutritiously, regionally, spiritually, culturally” (Al-Sulaiman 2018). In addition to mentions of spirituality in media interviews, Sherman prefaces *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen* with an ode to all the Indigenous peoples who suffered at the hands of colonialism, including a collective ode to “our ancestors” (Sherman and Dooley 2017). The dedication also calls on the next generation to “carry the flame of knowledge and keep our



traditions, our foods, and our medicines for generations to come” (Sherman and Dooley 2017)—connecting food with future generations displays the fluid nature of space-time as I discussed in the first two chapters. Space-time and relational ways of being with the Earth extend the present into the future, and through food, Sherman articulates concern for the experience of future generations via their foodways, health, and traditions.

The last chapter of the cookbook intentionally focuses on connecting with ceremonies and traditions (terminology pulled from the cookbook itself), in which the authors and readers are collaboratively able to “create a calm, sacred place to celebrate Mother Earth’s gifts” (Sherman and Dooley 2017). In Chapter 1, I discussed the relevance of the term religion in describing Indigenous life ways and traditions. In the various quotes from *The Sioux Chef*, it is interesting to note that Sherman uses a multiplicity of phrases—including religion, tradition, ceremonies, sacred, and spirituality—to paint a complex picture of his relations to and with the Earth.

Spirituality is not at the forefront of *The Sioux Chef*’s public image rhetorically and Sherman, unless asked, does not always jump straight to discussing the spiritual implications of food reclamation. However, I will argue that from the data I have pulled, it must not be misconstrued that the sacred or spiritual aspects of food have no central purpose or function in Sean Sherman’s various initiatives. Sherman’s understanding of food—as intertwined in a system of traditions, history, and religion—is evident from the qualitative data sourced from the interviews above and text from his cookbook.

In the induction, I set out to answer three questions. The second, was related to whether or not relational ontologies and spirituality are central to food sovereignty movements. The answer for the case study of *The Sioux Chef* is a complex one. Yes, relations to the earth and other peoples are central for Sherman’s reclamation of Indigenous food ways. However, the

language surrounding spirituality and relational ontologies is fluid and not always rhetorically grounded in terms like spirituality or spiritual.

When looking at the public facing image of the organization, the sacred nature of food undergirds the method and application of food sovereignty and reclamation. The main issues, that Sherman wishes to address, are food as culture, medicine, and business empowerment. Overall, the recognition that the earth is sacred is inherent in Sherman's philosophy as well as in the ideology of his non-profit NATIFS, but the ideal serves as a platform for kick-starting conversations surrounding reclamation that are not rhetorically related to spirituality—like culture restoration and health.

*Chapter 6: Conclusions on Religion, Food, Sacredness, and Time*

To recap the guiding question of my work, I seek to explore how Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS) movements relate to *time and sacredness* using the case study of the Sioux Chef. Following a theoretical discussion of sacredness, space-time, and religion, I conclude that that IFS and the Sioux Chef approach the question of time and sacredness in multifaceted ways. First, it is worthy to note that in the study of The Sioux Chef, both land and time based paradigms of sacredness are important for Indigenous food sovereignty movements. Indigenous food sovereignty movements deal with sovereignty, as a land-based paradigm, as it evolves in time. Whether or not the movement relies on land or time more heavily, can be debated throughout its development. The main point I would like to make is that sacredness is both linked to the land and to knowledge/ingredients in time. In the case study of The Sioux Chef, Sherman expresses that land and the locality of ingredients are central for the preservation of Indigenous culture in the future. Both space and time govern how Sherman articulates and enacts the initiatives of The Sioux Chef.

In the introduction, I mentioned that I was interested in exploring the tensions of time as limited/important and intergenerational/cyclical within IFS movements. Interestingly, Indigenous food sovereignty positions time as limited only when settler entities use it in an oppressive way. In the Declaration of Nyéléni, The Nyéléni Food Forum understands time as intergenerational and restorative. The tension between time as limited and cyclical only seems to arise when non-Indigenous peoples utilize settler time to understand IFS movements or project doubt on the efficacy of ingredient reclamation (i.e. the antagonist: since time is limited, there is no reason to preserve/save ingredients).

The Sioux Chef details the oppressive nature of time more specifically in a discussion of colonization and modernization. Sherman articulates that the history of food has been

oppressive—the reliance of Indigenous communities on government subsidies, on sugar, flour, and lard are equally as damaging as the boarding school system and land removal. The history of colonization produced limitations to Sherman’s knowledge, which “in some cases, Mr. Sherman has had to rely on his imagination to fill culinary gaps” (Rao 2017). The Sioux Chef recognizes time’s limiting abilities and colonial manifestations of time, but does not grapple with the limited nature of ingredients frequently in public settings. One other way in which The Sioux Chef grapples with the limitations of time is when discussing modernity and the future of Indigenous peoples, yet still Sherman falls back on the possibility of the future to be more generative than the past. Several examples of the generative aspects of Sherman’s project include his hope for the future generation, as well as his goals for The Sioux Chef. As mentioned before, Sherman hopes through training, the new generation can “carry the flame of knowledge and keep our traditions, our foods, and our medicines for generations to come” (Sherman and Dooley 2017). In order for this to exist, Sherman articulated in 2015 that the . . .

“ultimate goal would be to help set up some kind of Native American training center. I can envision having a center—almost like a cooking school—that would teach people an education on Native American farming, foraging, preservation techniques, salt-making processes. . . the different styles that people were traditionally cooking like clay cooking, earthen oven cooking” (Russell 2015).

Through the creation of the North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems and the Indigenous Food Lab, Sherman has been able to realize his goal for an educational training center that supports Indigenous, food entrepreneurs and develops research on Indigenous food knowledges.

In addition to Sherman’s general positive rhetoric surrounding the future, Sherman’s section on “(NOT) FRY BREAD” in *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen* and his promotion of Native food businesses contribute to a larger futurism: to increase health, nutrition, and financial opportunity for the next generation(s). The Sioux Chef, as an organization, positions itself in

relation to time in a dynamic and intergenerational way; the movement forward in time, allows members of the organization to imagine a future where Indigenous business owners across the continent are able to showcase and profit off of their cuisine in order to escape poverty. In response to the tension of commodifying sacredness, Sherman relies on the belief that the commodification of Indigenous cuisine results in greater amounts of wealth for Indigenous communities, creating a sub-economy within neoliberal frames for Indigenous peoples. The commodification, therefore, is not a negative aspect of his work as he sees the products of his work as benefits Indigenous communities. If Sherman's work advances the trope of Western audiences buying into Indigenous practices to engage with the exotic or different, I will leave up to Indigenous scholars to debate and discuss.

The Sioux Chef exemplifies a key component of Mark Rifkin's work—Indigenous communities have varying temporalities that do not have to be reduced to one, particular moment. Rifkin writes in *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*, "Native peoples' varied experiences of duration can remain nonidentical with respect to the dynamics of settler temporal formations" and because of this, "being-in-time" is "not reducible to participation in a singular, given time" (Rifkin 2017). The organization approaches time as dynamic—balancing between the tensions of time as limited/important and intergenerational/cyclical—and in doing so, does not produce further tension with broad scale global issues, like climate change, that cannot be solved solely by the organization. The intergenerational aspect of food knowledge and preparation The Sioux Chef relies on, helps support the notion that Indigenous temporalities occur in layered ways and can do so through generational knowledge on food.

One of my original contributions to the field of food studies is connecting scholarship on Indigenous food sovereignty to that of time and sacredness. As I have argued previously,

Indigenous authors and food scholars articulate the foundational sacredness of the land and food. There is no debate whether or not land and food are sacred in Indigenous world systems. Sacredness, as it exists within space-time and all its tensions, appears as an important ideological tenet in Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives and the work of The Sioux Chef. Unlike the broader IFS movement which foregrounds sacredness a major tenet, The Sioux Chef understands sacredness in space-time as a guiding ideology yet publicly emphasizes, via rhetoric, other principles of IFS: such as health or cultural restoration. This conclusion underscores how sacredness operates in a covert way, while the pressing needs of the community are put forward in public facing statements on health and cultural restoration.

Throughout this thesis, my dialogue has been focused on tensions created by scholars and disciples. The tension between the category of religion and cosmology, ideology and application, tradition and novelty, time and space all appear in my thesis. Tensions will always exist as movements oscillate in disciplines that are changing as a result of decolonization. Decolonization spurs these tensions perhaps due to the fact that, as Dunbar-Ortiz would say, “the methods of decolonization prefigure its aims” (Dunbar-Ortiz 2016).

Whether or not food sovereignty is a pre-figurative politic, I cannot answer within the scope of this thesis. However, another novel contribution this thesis brings to the field of food and Indigenous studies is the analysis of food sovereignty using Rifkin’s frames of settler time. As far as I am aware, there is limited scholarship on food sovereignty and the limitations of time, particularly in how settler economic entities, like transnational and neoliberal, establish food as timeless and the land as mundane (i.e. not sacred). Bringing into conversation Deloria Jr., Rifkin, and The Sioux Chef reveal complexities in how Indigenous food sovereignty movements approach sacredness in time and space. In the future, I wish to further explore how transnational corporations position themselves as “geopolitical totalities,” like the settler state does according

to Rifkin, and how this position might hinder Indigenous food sovereignty movements using temporal and spatial frames.

Ultimately, the abbreviated conclusions that I draw regarding sacredness and time in IFS movements and The Sioux Chef are:

1) Both The Sioux Chef and Indigenous food sovereignty movements perceive sacredness as existent in space and time, or space-time. Deloria Jr.'s framework of sacred land is relevant for Indigenous food sovereignty movements, yet time also contributes the how sacredness and sacred items—like ingredients, water, animals—can be accessed, discussed, and used. Time governs the way in which ingredients are preserved and sourced, making time an underlying factor in the efficacy of Indigenous food sovereignty movements. Indigenous temporalities, as advanced by The Sioux Chef, do not publicly acknowledge the tensions time produces. Debating whether or not limited access to resources impacts The Sioux Chef's work does not in fact advance Sherman's work in preserving and using Native ingredients. Instead, tensions between the limited and cyclical nature of time, modernity and tradition, sacredness and capital, allow Sherman and The Sioux Chef to create their own temporalities and narratives in time. Particularly, these temporalities center around the vision of food and diets for future generations. I argue that one of the reasons why the tensions of time are not as glaring in the public image of The Sioux Chef, is because Sherman creates their image as evolving within those tensions in a generative way.

2) The spiritual nature of food is integral but not always central to Indigenous food movements and with The Sioux Chef, the language of sacredness and spiritual/spirituality is fluid, in that Sherman incorporates phrases such as religion, ceremony, and tradition in the discussion of sacredness. The nature of sacredness pervades the work of the organization, as rhetorically cultural restoration and health are foregrounded. The emphasis on cultural

restoration and health does not discredit the possibility that these terms are entangled with Sherman's perception of the sacred. Using articles and interviews conducted by a variety of sources did not allow me to parse out the complexities and nuances of the relationship between the sacred, health, and culture in Sherman's perspective.

The next step in this research is to explore comparative cases—to draw connections between the way in which other Indigenous food sovereignty movements and chefs approach time. Another expansion which would benefit this work is in conducting my own interviews with the staff of The Sioux Chef, in order to paint a more complex picture of the organization's approach towards time, sacredness, and food.

In addition to these next steps, I would like to end by proposing that the field of religion can benefit from studying discussions of time within food studies. Food studies and religion both deal with the issue of exclusionary categories—the category of “food sovereignty” and “religion” are encompassing and can become restrictive when utilized by scholars as monoliths. Categorizations can be useful, as the larger categories we have help us ground our lives and make sense of the world, but when thought of as static they become constrictive. Exploring the malleability of religious categories, as The Sioux Chef does through the local application of Indigenous food sovereignty, could benefit the field in moving forward towards a more inclusive and decolonized curricula. I hope to continue researching how time, sacredness and food operate in generative ways with other interdisciplinary scholars in the future, using this piece as a springboard for those discussions.



## Appendices I-IV

### APPENDIX I

**THE SIOUX CHEF™**  
HOME ABOUT SOCIAL CATERING COMMUNITY PRESS CONTACT

**PRESS**  
Browse the many great articles written about our work!

**THE MOVEMENT TO DEFINE NATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE**  
By Tejal Rao, August 16, 2016  
**THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Lake Traverse Indian Reservation, N.D. — The moon was full and the chokecherries were ripe in the southeastern corner of North Dakota. "It's the one smell that shoots me back to being young," said Sean Sherman, as the berries boiled under a red-veined foot.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT NYTIMES.COM](#)

**THE SIOUX CHEF IS HELPING BRING A NATIVE AMERICAN FOOD CULTURE INTO THE MODERN WORLD!**  
By Jennifer Russell, March 27th, 2015  
**THE SPLENDID TABLE**

Chef Sean Sherman grew up on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. His business, The Sioux Chef, specializes in Native American food — specifically the pre-reservation foods of the Dakota and Ojibwe people who lived on the Great Plains.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT SPLENDIDTABLE.ORG](#)

**THE SIOUX CHEF IS PUTTING PRE-COLONIZATION FOOD BACK ON THE MENU**  
By Serri Gracie, October 7, 2014  
**NPR**

Like most chefs, Sean Sherman practically lives in the kitchen. But in his spare time, this member of the Ojibwa Lakota tribe has been on a quest to identify the foods his ancestors ate on the Great Plains before European settlers appeared on the scene.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT NPR.ORG](#)

**MINNESOTA CHEF SEAN SHERMAN, BETTER KNOWN AS THE SIOUX CHEF, IS GETTING BACK TO HIS NATIVE AMERICAN CULINARY ROOTS.**  
by José R. Ralat, December 28, 2015  
**COWBOYS & INDIANS**

Sean Sherman is just back in the States after showcasing Native American food in Milan. There wasn't a piece of fry bread in sight. Instead, there was smoked rabbit and duck. There was amaranth and purslane. His cooking techniques were modern, his plating contemporary.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT COWBOYSANDINDIANS.COM](#)

**THE SIOUX CHEF REVIVING NATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE**  
by Nicola Twilley & Cynthia Graber, November 1, 2016  
**THE ATLANTIC**

Pasta, sushi, tacos, samosas, and pad thai: In the U.S., enthusiastic eaters will likely be able to name traditional dishes from a wide variety of cuisines around the world. But most of us couldn't name a single Native American dish from any one of the vast network of tribes, cultures, and cuisines that spread across the U.S. before Europeans arrived. Today, farmers, activists, and chefs are trying to change that.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT THEATLANTIC.COM](#)

**A RENAISSANCE OF INDIGENOUS FOODS**  
By LORETTA BARRETT ODEN (POTAWATOMI), Jan/Feb 2016  
**NATIVE PEOPLES MAGAZINE**

In the early 1990s, when my son, Clay, and I were in the process of opening the Corn Dance Café in Santa Fe with the plan to serve only pre-contact Native American foods, we were faced with the multifaceted dilemma of what foods to serve, from which tribal groups, and where to get the ingredients.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT NATIVEPEOPLES.COM](#)

**THE SIOUX CHEF SPREADING THE GOSPEL OF AMERICA'S FIRST FOOD**  
BY DAVID TREUER SEPTEMBER 9, 2016  
**SAVEUR**

You wouldn't believe how hard it has been to explain what indigenous food is," chef Sean Sherman tells me. "I've had the same conversation over and over. I have to go back to the beginning all the time." For Sherman, a Sioux chef championing indigenous food, going back to the beginning means talking about the unbroken presence of Native people in the Americas, and the food systems that once nourished them.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT SAVEUR.COM](#)

**SIOUX CHEF HAS A PLAN: INTRODUCE TRADITIONAL NATIVE CUISINE ONE REGION AT A TIME**  
Lynn Armitage, September 1, 2016  
**INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY**

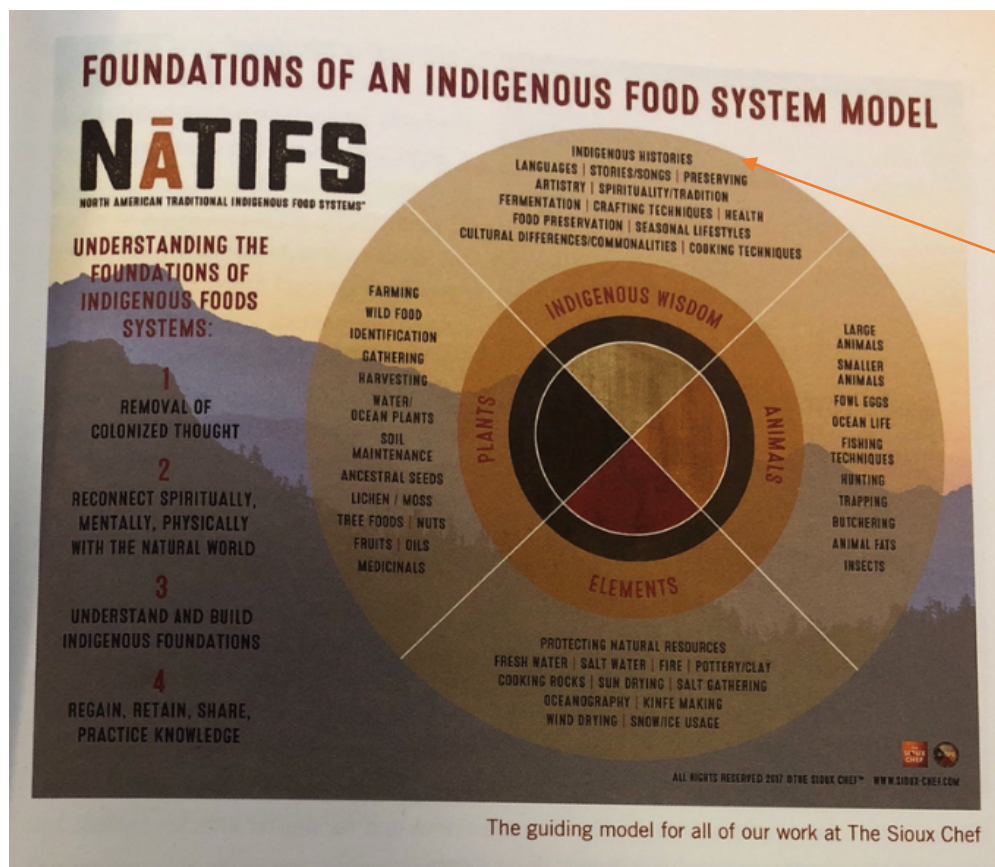
When you think of Native American cuisine, what comes to mind? Indian tacos? Buffalo burgers? Frybread? While beloved by many Natives and certainly tasty, these dishes are not the traditional foods of Indian country, claims Sean Sherman, an Ojibwa Lakota chef on a mission to re-introduce regional Native American cuisine through The Sioux Chef, a Minnesota-based consulting and catering company—and restaurant in the making.

[READ THE ARTICLE AT INDIANCOUNTRYMEDIANETWORK.COM](#)

**THE SIOUX CHEF™**  
ABOUT / CATERING / EVENTS / SOCIAL / PRESS / CONTACT  
info@sioux-chef.com | 612.486.CHEF (2433)

Screenshots of The Sioux Chef's website, the "press" tab.

## APPENDIX II



Logo (left) sourced from The Sioux Chef’s website. Foundations of an Indigenous food system model (right), which emulates the organizations logo, was sourced from the Introduction of *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen* (Sherman and Dooley 2017). Arrow highlights mention of the term spirituality/tradition.



## APPENDIX III

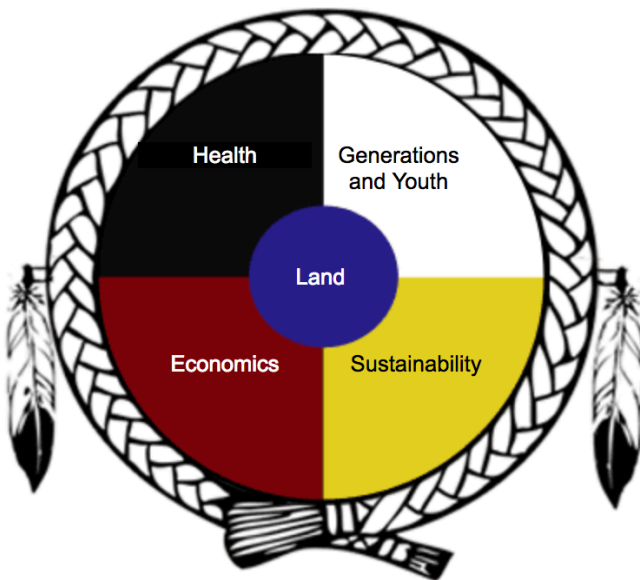
The first image on the left depicts the location of the dinner, which was outside of a Café in Torino, Italy. The image of the left was the first dish of chilaquiles and tortillas messicane, from Mexico. The items on the side of the corn patty are roasted crickets. The next two menu items were substituted, since I am an vegetarian and both were meat heavy.





### APPEDIX IV

Medicine wheel from The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty's website.



*Works Cited (AAA Style)*

Alonso, Ana Maria

1994 The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism, and Ethnicity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23(1): 379–405.

Al-Sulaiman, Salma

2018 Decolonizing Our Diet: Sioux Chef. *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/decolonizing-our-diet-sioux-chef>, accessed February 28, 2019.

Appel, Hannah C

2012 Walls and White Elephants: Oil Extraction, Responsibility, and Infrastructural Violence in Equatorial Guinea. *Ethnography* 13(4): 439–465.

Brown, Timothy

2016 John Grim on Standing Rock: ‘This Is Not Only About Water, It’s All About Water.’ Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. <http://environment.yale.edu/news/article/john-grim-on-standing-rock/>, accessed February 24, 2019.

Burton, Monica

2017 Upcoming Minneapolis Restaurant Will Focus on Indigenous American Cuisine. *Eater*. <https://www.eater.com/2017/9/18/16326826/sioux-chef-new-restaurant-minneapolis-water-works>, accessed March 2, 2019.

Coulthard, Glen Sean

2014 *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. U of Minnesota Press.

Data Cuisine | Exploring Food as a Form of Data Expression

2016. <http://data-cuisine.net/>, accessed March 4, 2019.

Deloria Jr, Vine

1973 *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*. New York: The Putnam Publishing Group. <https://fulcrum.bookstore.ipgbook.com/god-is-red-products-9781555914981.php>, accessed March 3, 2019.

Du Bois, W. E. B.

1996 *The Souls of Black Folk: WITH “THE TALENTED TENTH” AND “THE SOULS OF WHITE FOLK.”* Penguin Classics. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/292303/the-souls-of-black-folk-by-w-e-b-du-bois/9780140189988>, accessed March 19, 2019.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne Amanda

2016 The Relationship between Marxism and Indigenous Struggles and Implications of the Theoretical Framework for International Indigenous Struggles. *Historical Materialism* 24(3): 76–91.

Durkheim, Émile

2001 *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Carol Cosman, tran. Des Moines Public Schools.

Energy Transer LP

N.d. Dakota Access Pipeline Facts. Dapipelinefacts.Com. <https://dapipelinefacts.com/>, accessed March 4, 2019.

Frybread

2019 Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Frybread&oldid=883632122>, accessed March 19, 2019.

Grim, John

N.d. Indigenous | Religion | Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology. <http://fore.yale.edu/religion/indigenous/>, accessed February 24, 2019.

Jonathan, Thomas

2016 Interview with Chef Sean Sherman - Jonathan Thomas. *The Third Rail*, Issue 7. <https://cargocollective.com/jonathanthomas/Interview-with-Chef-Sean-Sherman>, accessed February 28, 2019.

Kamal, Asfia Gulrukh, Rene Linklater, Shirley Thompson, Joseph Dipple, and Ithinto Mechisowin Committee

2015 A Recipe for Change: Reclamation of Indigenous Food Sovereignty in O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation for Decolonization, Resource Sharing, and Cultural Restoration. *Globalizations* 12(4): 559–575.

LaDuke, Winona

2017 Recovering Our Land to Decolonize Our Food. *In Land Justice: Re-Imagining Land, Food, and The Commons*. Justine M. Williams and Eric Holt-Giménez, eds. Food First Books.

Leeuw, Gerardus Van der

2014 *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*. Princeton University Press.

Lyons, Chief Oren, John Mohawk, and José Barreiro

1978 *Basic Call to Consciouness*. Akwesasne Notes, ed. Book Publishing Company.

Mohawk, John

2010 *Thinking in Indian: A John Mohawk Reader*. José Barreiro, ed. United States: Falcrum Publishing. <https://www.amazon.com/Thinking-Indian-John-Mohawk/dp/1555917380>, accessed March 3, 2019.

North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems

2016 NATIFS. <https://www.natifs.org/>, accessed March 2, 2019.

Nyéleni Food Forum

2007 DECLARATION OF NYÉLÉNI. <https://nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290>, accessed February 26, 2019.

Rao, Tejal

2017 The Movement to Define Native American Cuisine. *The New York Times*, December 21. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/17/dining/new-native-american-cuisine.html>, accessed March 4, 2019.

Regents of the University of Minnesota

2019 Wilkins, David. Text. University of Minnesota Law School. <https://www.law.umn.edu/profiles/david-wilkins>, accessed February 26, 2019.

Rifkin, Mark

2017 *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*. Duke University Press. [www.dukeupress.edu/beyond-settler-time](http://www.dukeupress.edu/beyond-settler-time), accessed March 1, 2019.

Rivera, Erica

2017 Meet the Sioux Chef: Sean Sherman Wants You to Taste the Original American Diet. *City Pages*. <http://www.citypages.com/restaurants/meet-the-sioux-chef-sean-sherman-wants-you-to-taste-the-original-american-diet/457545803>, accessed February 28, 2019.

Russell, Jennifer

2015 The Sioux Chef Is “Helping Bring a Native American Food Culture into the Modern World.” *The Splendid Table*. <https://www.splendidtable.org/story/the-sioux-chef-is-helping-bring-a-native-american-food-culture-into-the-modern-world>, accessed March 2, 2019.

Saracini, James, and Food Print

2017 Chef Sean Sherman of The Sioux Chef on Indigenous Food Systems. October 18. <https://foodprint.org/blog/chef-sean-sherman-of-the-sioux-chef-on-indigenous-food-systems/>, accessed February 28, 2019.

Schmaus, Warren

2016 *Durkheim and the Methods of Scientific Sociology*. Routledge Handbooks Online. <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315410098.ch2>, accessed April 8, 2019.

Sherman, Sean, and Beth Dooley

2017 *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen*. University of Minnesota Press.

Simpson, Audra

2014 *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*. Duke University Press. <https://www.google.com/search?q=mohawk+interruptus&oq=mohwak+inter&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.3151j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>, accessed March 3, 2019.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell

1963 *The Meaning and End of Religion*. Fortress Press.

Sundermeier, Theo



1999 Religion, Religions. Karl Müller, Stephen B. Bevans, and Richard H. Bliese, eds. *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* 24. American Society of Missiology Series: 387–397.

The Sioux Chef

N.d. The Sioux Chef | Revitalizing Native American Cuisine / Re-Identifying North American Cuisine. <https://sioux-chef.com/>, accessed March 2, 2019.

Treuer, David

2016 The Sioux Chef Spreading the Gospel of America's First Food. SAVEUR. <https://www.saveur.com/sean-sherman-sioux-chef>, accessed March 4, 2019.

Tuck, Eve, and Wayne K. Yang

2014 R-Words: Refusing Reseach. *In Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities*. Django Paris and Maisha T. Winn, eds. 1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road London EC1Y 1SP: SAGE Publications, Inc. <http://methods.sagepub.com/book/humanizing-research-decolonizing-qualitative-inquiry-with-youth-communities>, accessed March 3, 2019.

UBC Learning Circle | Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health

N.d. Indigenous Food Sovereignty – Dawn Morrison | UBC Learning Circle. <https://learningcircle.ubc.ca/2011/02/02/indigenous-food-sovereignty-dawn-morrison/>, accessed February 26, 2019.

Weaver, Jace

1997 *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.amazon.com/That-People-Might-Live-Literatures/dp/019512037X>, accessed March 4, 2019.

What Is La Via Campesina? - Via Campesina

N.d. Via Campesina English. <https://viacampesina.org/en/who-are-we/what-is-la-via-campesina/>, accessed February 24, 2019.

Wilkins, David E.

2015 The Sovereignty of Everything, the Power of Nothing. IndianCountryToday.Com. [https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/the-sovereignty-of-everything-the-power-of-nothing-7q5bRXaa0k2aPiRJ\\_mX9A/](https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/the-sovereignty-of-everything-the-power-of-nothing-7q5bRXaa0k2aPiRJ_mX9A/), accessed February 24, 2019.

Wilson, Angela Cavender, and Michael Yellow Bird

2005 *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*. School of American Research.

Wittman, Hannah

2011 Food Sovereignty: A New Rights Framework for Food and Nature? *Environment and Society: Advances in Research* 2: 87–105.

Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty

2006 Indigenous Food Systems Network | Indigenous Food Systems Network. <https://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/>, accessed February 24, 2019.