Beyond Blood and Belonging: Alternarratives for a Global Citizenry

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English in the Graduate School of Duke University

2011
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation, Beyond Blood and Belonging: Alternarratives for a Global Citizenry, considers how communities depict collective identity through the metaphor of blood. I chronicle how language, images, and stories circulate through novels and the oral tradition, science writings and legal writs, mainstream media and popular culture to form a paradigmatic story of biological belonging that I call “the blood narrative.”

The blood narrative is a story about identity rooted in a reference to the biological makeup, in short a story where biological belonging to a community is determined by the metaphor of blood. I show how the tendency to articulate belonging through the metaphor of blood crosses cultures as well as disciplines. Expressions such as full-blood, 1/8 Choctaw, or mixedblood attest to the presence of the blood narrative. The most recent manifestation of the blood narrative has emerged around DNA, and characterizes both stories where genes stand in for belonging to communities and in new work in population genetics that places an emphasis on ancestry. My particular interest lies in the relationship between these biological metaphors and citizenship, a legal and political form of belonging. Typically, American citizenship has made the claim that it is separate from the biological, but my dissertation explores how the biological informs that citizenship discourse and with what consequences.
Biological citizenship, different from the legal and political citizenship of nations, is a term that has emerged at this nexus of the biological and communities of belonging. I bring a literary critical perspective to this intersection, attending to the language and stories in a variety of media and genres, with a particular emphasis on novels, which, I argue, uniquely reflect the story of the nation. The particular novels I analyze also emphasize transnationality, thereby presenting not only a national story but relations between nations mediated by story. Novels allow for the expansion of narrative in ways beyond verse and short prose in their length, which allow for the treatment of larger histories and development of narratives both based in the nation but that create something beyond the nation as well. Bringing the methods of literary criticism to such diverse texts as legal writs and scientific writing allows me to pay particular attention to language, metaphor, and story that has been missing from the discourse. The circulation of these terms makes them conventional and therefore useful for the narratives, but the examination of how the circulation occurs is useful to understand the blood narrative as foundational. I also bring to this work my background in biology, which helps me to understand the science more fully as it circulates through the narrative in DNA stories. Native cultures highlight the contradictions at the heart of political belonging in the U.S. between citizenship and the biological, especially through their status as nations within the nation. The clash of the blood narrative with other ways of understanding identity and belonging is especially pronounced in Native American communities because the
citizenship issues are already fraught with historical tensions. The introduction of biotechnology and the related DNA narratives have produced a dual reaction in Native communities, in oral culture and practices as well as in literature that this project seeks to explore and engage.

This dissertation consists of an introduction and four chapters in which I identify and track the relations between blood and belonging, through the issues of citizenship and genomics. The introduction, The Relations of Blood and Belonging, takes an historical look at the blood narratives that have preceded the identification of DNA. I trace the blood narrative through different cultures and disciplines, providing an introduction to this pervasive narrative. In the first chapter, Regulating Narratives: Constrained Citizenship and the Force of Legislation, I examine both historical legal documents and modern tribal constitutions. A 2007 amendment to the Cherokee Nation constitution exposed differing biological understandings of identity within the Cherokee Nation and the relationship of that issue to the legal form of belonging. I chronicle how that decision still echoes in the Cherokee Nation and further afield in Indian Country and the United States, as well as the circumstances that led to the decision. This chapter focuses on how differing conceptions of citizenship (political belonging) underwrote the irresolution and exploitation that characterizes the relationship between the United States and Native nations. This chapter also explores the diversity of models of belonging within Indian Country by examining the three federally recognized Cherokee
tribes, their differences and similarities. While each Cherokee tribe has different citizenship requirements derived from their tribal sovereignty and influenced by the blood narrative, the Cherokee Nation amendment excludes descendants of the Freedmen from their citizenship and reinforces the blood narrative, thereby contributing to a self-termination of the tribe.

In the second chapter, The Future is Now: Blood Narratives and DNA, I turn to contemporary genomics and its introduction into this discourse, and show how DNA builds on the blood narrative and its relationship to political belonging to instantiate communities. I am concerned in this chapter with how blood narratives inform discourses of citizenship and how biological citizenship highlights the tensions between U.S. and Native cultures as well as tensions within Native cultures. DNA works as a new tool of colonialism continuing the exploitation of indigenous communities through the colonization of their bodies, and the flora and fauna of their lands, a new form of colonization termed biocolonialism. I am interested as well in how the adoption of biotechnology, including ancestry testing, by Native communities highlights the problems of internalized blood narratives.

Finally, after presenting the problems arising from the blood narrative, I turn to the modern literature as a production site of alternative narratives of belonging. Here, Native literature revises the blood narrative with the tool of DNA, and creates other narratives of identity, all while critiquing the legal and scientific definitions of identity
and belonging. I call these narratives “alternarratives” because they provide an alternative to the reigning narratives of identity and belonging, with focus on the Other, the alterity of the Native American. These alternarratives in turn provide other ways to understand citizenship, both political belonging and other modes, including the relationship to the dominant U.S. culture. Two authors are the focus of these two chapters: Gerald Vizenor, a White Earth Anishinaabe wordsmith, in chapter four, and Thomas King, a Cherokee novelist, in chapter three. I analyze the work of each writer with the help of the lessons learned in the chapters on citizenship and genomics to produce a greater understanding of blood narratives, and their ramifications, and to demonstrate the healing power of stories. For each author, I focus on two novels, Vizenor’s *Heirs of Columbus* and *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* and King’s *Green Grass, Running Water* and *Truth and Bright Water*. I argue that the alternarratives offer answers to the problems highlighted by the struggles seen in the previous chapters. These narratives can offer an alternative to the blood narrative in providing a foundation to belonging in its myriad forms.
Dedication

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends, whose love and support have made this work possible and important.
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1. Introduction: The Relations of Blood and Belonging

Over dinner one evening, an American Indian community member and I were discussing citizenship laws and the future of American Indian nations. She was particularly concerned about the two nations from which she hails, including one of the most populous tribes in the United States. When we came to the issue of blood quantum requirements, which are regulations by some tribes requiring a defined amount of Indian or tribal blood for citizenship, we discussed the fact that one of her nations has a requirement of one-quarter tribal blood, which limits the citizenry. After discussing this limitation and the problems inherent in using blood quantum, my friend said “We know the flaws and problems of using blood quantum; but what else do we have?” This project seeks to answer that question: what narratives exist to articulate identity and produce belonging, as citizenship and other forms, in American Indian nations?¹

In order to answer this question, this project first examines how the compounded use of blood as a multiply referential figure creates a narrative of identity. This dissertation considers how communities depict collective identity through the figure of blood. I chronicle how language, images, and stories circulate through novels and the oral tradition, science writings and legal writs, mainstream media and popular culture to form a paradigmatic story of biological belonging that I call a “blood narrative.” I

¹ In the end, that question leads to another of what narratives might be possible as well, but that is for another text.
show how the tendency to articulate belonging through the figure of blood crosses cultures as well as disciplines. While not all figurative uses of blood are expressions of a blood narrative, this figure has been especially poignant for writers. Overall, this work focuses on how biology is used in articulations of political belonging: how and with what consequences blood narratives inform the discourse of citizenship. As a literary critic, I have come to a deeper understanding of how stories shape our experience of the world and help us to incorporate new forms of knowledge into our existing paradigms.

For centuries, blood has served as a figure of speech (metaphor, metonym, and synecdoche) for nation, nativity, heritage, class, family, kinship, and ancestry, among other referents, and those figures have existed in varying relationship to the literal substance. In the American context, blood has a long history, but it comes to America as an imported notion from Europe. Upon invasion and subsequent settlement, Europeans brought with them methods to divide and conquer the peoples in America. Although many divisions already existed in the tribes at the time of contact and throughout the time in which the United States was established, Europeans brought the new idea of blood as a figure for identity, both personal and communal. Expressions are a major indicator of this correlation—such as fullblood, breed, and 1/16 Chickasaw—and

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2 At least since the move away from the four humors of the body for theoretical and philosophical application, the blood has been biologized, and therefore the conflation had to wait for another scientific discovery.

3 This importation has its roots in the Enlightenment and precedence in the four humors including the residence of blood being the heart, itself another figure for emotion and identity.
the inclusion of such ideas within the literature provides evidence of the pervasiveness of the figure beyond expressions and into larger stories, as can be seen in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise* or the earlier works of James Fenimore Cooper. These stories exemplify what particularly the American nation and its citizens told themselves about themselves, but especially about their differences from others and differences within the nation. In many ways, Americans are not extraordinary in the use of this narrative, as these imported notions were exported to other parts of the globe as well.

Currently the centuries old narratives circulate connecting blood and identity are reaching new extents as a result of advances in technology. It is at this current moment that blood as a figure encounters the literal blood and testing thereof. This testing itself is important because of how it breaks the literal substance down into bits of information, which are then taken up and redeployed along with the figures rhetorically. At the point of the genomic age, where genetic testing and analysis not only of blood, but also of other somatic cells is becoming increasingly common, the figure of blood becomes further complicated by the introduction of the substance.

The resulting stories of genomics and genetics are constructed around the same faulty reference as blood, and therefore do not provide an effective narrative of identity and belonging but merely reproduce the divisions of the past figure of blood. Many indigenous groups are aware of these problems. The National Genographic Project intends to track human migration through comparing samples of indigenous Y-
chromosomes worldwide. In response to this project, the Incan people issued a statement about their objection to such genetic testing and its implications for their individual and community identities: "The Q'ero Nation knows that its history, its past present, and future, is our Inca culture, and we don't need research called genetics to know who we are. We are Incas, always have been and always will be." While the Genographic Project’s purpose is to understand human migratory patterns, this reaction by this indigenous people demonstrates the tension between the figure of blood as it has been used to define and make claims about identity and the actual substance of blood including the attempt to substantiate identity claims through genetic testing. The Q'ero Nation stakes its claim here to define its identity and to narrate its own past, present, and future without genetics, or even the older standby of blood.

In her work, *The Poetics of DNA*, Judith Roof discusses the way in which narratives of DNA have been used to reinforce older ideas about identity. I agree with her, but also argue that these DNA narratives are inherently connected to this flawed figure of blood and the narrative that develops around it. DNA analyses of blood conflate the metaphorical and the literal because they attempt to substantiate that

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metaphorical in the literal, claiming through ancestry testing, for example, that one’s tribal or racial heritage can be determined. However, race does not exist biologically in human beings, and the conflation of the metaphorical and the literal bring the issues of positing identity through either use of blood into question. If identity is more than biological, more, that is, than a string of As, Ts, Gs, and Cs, then the narrative of biological identity must account for the environment, sociality, nurture, and even changes or mutations that happen over a lifetime. Having seen how this conflation of identity and biology informs belonging, particularly in the form of citizenship around the concept of blood quantum, community members must recognize this conflation and its effects, which means that the story, the narrative of identity, can no longer be about blood, but instead it must be one that creates identities and belonging through other means.

This introduction presents the idea of a blood narrative, its definition, how it has circulated in literature, and especially how it informs a narrative of identity on both personal and community-wide developmental levels. Particularly, these uses of blood inform the legal forms of belonging created by American Indian nations in the form of citizenship, through regulating what kind of blood matters to the law, and by testing the blood of the parents of a potential citizen. In the complex figure of blood quantum, many American Indian nations have based the category of legal belonging, citizenship. Other nations also utilize other references to Indian blood and even descendancy, which
incorporates the figurative referents of blood into a new term, to manage this category. This basis in blood leads to breaking points of the applicability of the figure, including the point at which a call for blood to be a part of the nation leads to a blood test, both a logical extension and an overextension of the figure to the literal. My dissertation comes out of this tense space of blooded belonging for American Indian peoples, and it begins with legislation and citizenship decisions because these decisions demonstrate the influence of a blood narrative on the past, present, and future. This narrative need not be the only one that influences citizenship decisions, therefore the second half of this dissertation brings forward some of those alternative narratives and applies them to understanding identity and belonging within the community. These narratives are chosen not because they are the only alternatives, but because their focus on storytelling and stories self-reflexively demonstrates the power of changing the stories by which people live.

The first chapter of this dissertation examines how a blood narrative has been involved in differentiating between people on tribal census rolls, which then affects the citizenship of their descendants in the modern moment, in the case of the Freedmen of the Cherokee Nation. The second chapter examines the way in which this figurative use of blood has been extended to a requirement of maternity and paternity testing of potential tribal citizens of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
The project then turns to the alternative narratives, which I term alternarratives, that can inform changes in national citizenship. These changes would include embracing emigration, adoption, multiplicities, and looking towards the future through the concept of survivance. These alternarratives can even ameliorate the problems of blood as a figure, in full recognition of them, to generate entirely new narratives to understand current relations between people, to turn to traditional stories and work around the problems of blood, or to do something new that mels multiple approaches. All of these approaches can be taken by citizens, storytellers, and governing bodies in efforts to create a narrative of identity that need not be based on blood but that embraces an understanding of the universality of humanity. Then, those alternarratives can inform how we construct communities, nations, and other groups and forms of belonging. These alternarratives are explored in the last two chapters through the work of two Native American authors, Thomas King (Cherokee) and Gerald Vizenor (White Earth Anishinaabe). I attend to particular novels that present pantribalism, survivance, and multiplicities of identities as alternatives through their focus on the act of storytelling and on the power of stories to change the world.

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Survivance is a term used by Gerald Vizenor to encompass a state of being, like dominance, with its focus on survival. This concept is discussed further in the chapter on Vizenor and his work.
1.1 Defining Terms

Throughout the history of the Europeans’ colonization of indigenous peoples, definitions have been crucial—they have been used by colonizers to oppress and within arguments by indigenous peoples to fight that oppression. In other words, the colonizing struggle is crucially a struggle for the power to define and, ultimately, to narrate. Many struggles evidence this need to define, and they are reflected both in the narratives that emerged as prevalent, such as blood, as well as the variegated terms reviewed in this project. Chad Allen coins the term “blood narrative” to refer to the way that identity is constructed through story, here with blood standing in for identity.

Allen writes in his work Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts that his reference to “blood narrative” harkens back to N. Scott Momaday’s (Kiowa) use of blood memory in his novel On the Way to Rainy Mountain. This connection leads Allen to his concept of “blood as narrative/narrative as blood,” which he uses to explain how identity is constructed through story. In articulating his use of blood narrative, Allen goes on to explain the problematic terrain of both blood and indigenous identity claims:

Discussions of indigenous “blood,” for example, often raise disturbing issues of essentialism, racism, and genocide….Government officials, social scientists, and indigenous minority peoples themselves have disagreed over whether biological kinship, language, culture, group consciousness, community endorsement, personal declaration, or some combination of these “objective” and “subjective” criteria should be used to recognize “authentic” indigenous status. (Allen 15)
Noting the history of blood as a term fraught with biological, racist, and historical implications, Allen is interested in the ways in which indigenous writers create an identity resistant to a blood narrative but that might utilize the same trope of blood. The alternative that interests him, in other words, entails the strategic revision of a blood narrative. Even in referencing the questionably subjective and objective criteria for indigenous identity, he presents many of the figurative correlates of blood, exemplifying the problematic and storied connection between blood and status. Biological kinship, distinct from other forms of kinship, as well as language and culture serve as objective criteria for identity in Allen’s reading; however, those criteria are complicated by the subjective criteria of group consciousness, community endorsement, and personal declaration. The objective criteria have clear correlates to blood figures, but so does group consciousness in its relation to memory in the blood and other such notions. Allen takes the trope and Momaday’s phrase further and inserts it into a “blood/land/memory complex” that works as a more useful descriptor of the subversive use of blood by indigenous authors. Allen’s “blood/land/memory complex” is not restricted to one of its many factors of blood, land, and memory as it brings them all together to create something greater than the parts, but also Allen’s complex is not a

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7 Chadwick Allen coins the “blood/land/memory complex” as a concept that can be more layered than simply “blood as narrative/narrative as blood” and the complications he adds to that understanding are land as it functions as place/space and residence for an indigenous people, and further the idea of memory, not only complicated by lineage as in “memory in the blood” but also complicated by land, by the importance of place. This multivalent approach helps to understand connections among indigenous, such as Allen presents in his work about Maori and Native American indigenous.
story. It is a component of stories, a catalyst with which to change other stories. A reliance on blood, as figure or literal substance, presents a limited understanding of belonging. By complicating the identity and reflecting not a simple difference but a multifactorial result, other understandings, even the complex Allen describes, can allow for multiple forms of belonging that are not mutually exclusive, but more identity inclusive. Therefore, while Allen does not deeply interrogate “blood narrative,” what he does present demonstrates that in a more nuanced construction, blood can be useful. In this way, Allen demonstrates alternarratives. Constructed from the outside, this narrative has become internalized in complicated ways by American Indian peoples, who at once utilize the term but resist its carried meaning.

Within American Indian Studies, many definitions build upon each other, such as blood quantum building upon blood, connected as they are through a struggle between settler/colonizer and indigenous groups to define and narrate. The definitions to follow provide further descriptive and comprehensive understandings of blood narrative and other concepts important to this project. Blood quantum refers to the purportedly scientific measurement of blood that relies on the idea that at a certain point in a person’s lineage, one ancestor was fully some race, ethnicity, or nationality. Blood quantum as an idea and practice is not limited to Native American tribes, but has a large

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8 These ancestral lineage traces assert themselves on a fallacy of purity. The new research also utilizes endogamous groups to construct lineage, which are groups that do not have a history of marrying outside of their group. These lineages are not confined to the factors above, but include region and religion as well (Robert Cook-Deegan, personal conversation and communication).
amount of purchase throughout the United States, in part because of its relation to the settlement of these lands, and it undergird conflicts worldwide where people divide along blood lines. The idea behind blood quantum rests on the need to assert difference between peoples, thereby dividing them and conquering them further, and establishing a particular people at the top of the hierarchy, to which the others in their divided state aspire. Blood quantum has also led to the idea of hypodescent, or the “one-drop rule,” which is used mostly in reference to African Americans and works as a means to maintain separation, sometimes despite intermarriage and parental self-identification.\(^9\) Using the idea that one or more ancestors were fully some race, ethnicity, or nationality, the descendants’ percentages are calculated to reflect a one half contribution from each parent to each child. For example if four grandparents all identify as German, and the two parents also identify as German, then the offspring will also be identified by someone operating from this classic identity paradigm, and to those who understand blood narrative as it operates within the world, as German and as “full-blood.”\(^10\) Anthropologists John H. Moore and Janis E. Campbell note that “Blood quantum, of course, is only loosely related to real genetic heritage and is based on the fiction that one inherits ‘blood’ equally from the male and female side” (499). Their article on blood

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\(^9\) Hypodescent, or one-drop, is the concept that with one drop of black blood, a person is completely black. Conversely, depending on the place, one-drop of American Indian blood is usually not enough to claim or be recognized as Indian.

\(^{10}\) While this example is concrete, I chose German to call attention to the malleability of the nation, importance of history and the way in which “full-blood” is itself a figure not an actual reference to biology or identity.
quantum and ethnic intermarriage provides a way to think beyond the “half and half” metaphorical contribution of parentage. In a very real sense, no “blood” is contributed by the father, but his DNA contribution provides a portion of the instructions for the offspring’s DNA to use to create blood. A more accurate division references half of the DNA, but then the determination has to be made if the figure of blood can work as a strict corollary to DNA in parental contribution. While blood and DNA define different referents, their figurative and literary conflations demonstrate the power of narrative to flatten and remove that difference. This fallacy continues to drive away other ideas, and remains instantiated in legal records. Here both the literal and the figurative blood operate in legal records; however there are other ways of defining belonging, such as through adoption or naturalization. For American Indian tribes, many of the records of grandparents and other ancestors and their recorded blood quanta appear on particular legal documents known as base census rolls.11

Legibility serves as an initial struggle of American Indian peoples, and census rolls provide a place in which to be legible to the Federal government. Base census rolls refer to the general category of census records taken of Indian tribes at various points throughout the United States, from which tribes and the federal government then

11 Blood quantum was recorded in a number of ways for different rolls. Some involved eugenicist measurements, such as the White Mountain Chippewa (Jill Doerfler, Ph.D. dissertation), while the Dawes Rolls involved determinations made in a tent, where the census maker determined visually the blood quantum, and applicants were also evaluated by a community leader (Theda Perdue and Michael Green, The Columbia Guide to Indians of the Southeast.)
determine the lineage of an Indian person, a current citizen, or an applicant for citizenship. The rolls were typically prepared by agents of the federal government as census documents. These records included a blood quantum listed for each person, which could then contribute to the calculation of blood quantum for the current citizen or applicant. Each individual census roll has its own storied history, but many of these records indicate an initial cut of who is in the tribe and who is not. There are many stories that go along with the recording of these rolls, including new family names\textsuperscript{12} and movement of persons from one roll to another\textsuperscript{13}, but suffice it to say that the older rolls have flaws that have become magnified, not forgotten, over time. Examples of base rolls include the Dawes Roll created between 1898 and 1914, which encompasses most of the Oklahoma tribes and was used in order to create a list of Indians for land allotment, and the Baker Roll of 1924, which includes the members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and was created as part of the community’s efforts to gain recognition. These rolls then became a basis for recognition of tribes and individuals, mediating their belonging through paper. However, people who do not appear on the lists or people who do not descend from the lists may still have identities as tribal, although not legal identities as such. Ancestors made choices to not be put on a list. These choices are well

\textsuperscript{12} If the applicant came to the census table without all of the information desired, they or the census taker might make it up on the spot, like a colleague of mine whose family has the name Belt because of his ancestor’s pride in that article.

\textsuperscript{13} In her research on Okah Tubbeh, a Creek Freedman and performing artist, Angela Pulley Hudson has encountered this movement in the archives and related stories of it at the Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth, NH, 2009.
known in communities, and even claimed, as “undocumented” tribal ancestors. This choice regarding a mediated political belonging does not necessarily mediate the identity of an individual, or their inclusion in tribal life however. One may be involved and not on the rolls, or one may be able to prove their tribal connection and petition for citizenship despite the choice of those who came before. These acts of personal autonomy parallel acts of sovereignty by the tribal nations.

The struggle to speak for one’s self precipitates the struggle to speak for one’s group, and the struggles for sovereignty always return to that need to be heard, particularly to be seen as well as separate, distinct, and self-governing. Sovereignty is the exercise of authority that is independent of outside interference. Nations have sovereignty to establish constitutions, determine their citizenry, make and enforce laws, as well as to protect those citizens within their sovereign territory. In the case of American Indian nations, the particular ability to determine who can and cannot be a citizen is of utmost importance to this work, because of the regulation of who is and is not “Indian” by citizenship standards, as well as how tribes arbitrate false claims of legal belonging and maintain the overall integrity of the nation’s sovereignty through their citizenry. A sovereign nation should also be able to regulate its membership through multiple channels, including removal of citizenship but also naturalization into the
nation. Many traditional methods exist for naturalization, including cultural adoption and belonging conferred by proper cultural respect and participation.14

Three different terms have been and continue to be used to refer to those who belong to tribal nations in a legal sense. Citizenship has become the most powerful as it incorporates the sovereignty of the nation. Enrollment, while also referring to the procedure to become listed on the rolls, can also be used particularly to demonstrate the listing with the tribe. Finally, membership had been the typical terminology prior to the late 1970s, when many American Indian nations reclaimed their sovereignty and their right to self determination, and still is used throughout communities and literature.

Other relations to the tribe include unenrolled, banished, and disenrolled people. Unenrolled individuals will rarely have identities or belonging as citizens in the tribal nation. One way to remove citizenship is through “disenrollment” where the member or the member’s whole family is removed from the records. Disenrollment happens when names are taken off the current tribal census roll by various means, including tribal council votes, at large votes, or other less public means. Some tribes even perform disenrollment by “purging the rolls” of people who no longer live in the community through membership rolls.15 This act has a definitive subtext about place and belonging,

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14 Orphan, intermarriage, familial, and other forms of adoption are still practiced in many tribes. Cultural belonging may be accorded by the stomp grounds or other spaces within a tribe or nation, but they do not connote political affiliation or belonging necessarily.
15 Many of the current California Indian tribes are performing such disenrollments of elders, artists, and by force of their disenrollment, their families as well (Artist Informant at the NAISA 2011 annual meeting).
including a judgment about urban Indians, migrations, and exogamy. These are individuals who have scattered from the community at different times and may have lost political ties to place but may still maintain affective ties. Banishment is another way to mediate citizenship, and this method also connects place to the nation in that the offender is forced to leave the bounds of the nation as well. Banishment can or cannot affect citizenship in a tribal nation, especially for the nations with residency requirements, but it effectively declares a right of sovereignty and exiles a person out of the sovereign lands of the nation. Given the control of that territory, banishment can happen as well to non-tribal peoples living on tribal lands. Tensions stemming from this complicated set of terms emerge in the diverse understandings of American Indian identity as racial, ethnic, and/or political. Personal declarations and other claims of identity do not always index a legal belonging, but may often refer to ethnic, heritage, cultural, community accepted, or linguistic belonging.

Another struggle around issues of being legible, seen, heard, and overall, able to define oneself, occurs around the many and multiple terms available to describe indigenous peoples. There are different advantages and disadvantages to utilizing tribal or pantribal (also known as panethnic and pan-Indian) terms for identity description. Tribal identification is more specific, accurate, and personal than pantribal identification. However, if one comes from a very small tribe, it may be useful to align with a larger group. This alignment may be regional, such as Southeastern Indians, California
Indians, or Alaska Natives, or it may be national or continental, such as American Indian or Native American, or it may be a global reference that crosses borders, such as indigenous. All of these terms can refer to the same person, but may be usefully deployed in different situations to build coalitions and alliances, or to differentiate and educate about tribal differences, histories of intertribal warfare or marriage. Others have argued against the universalizing nature of the panethnic identifier by stating that it further undermines national sovereignty in favor of an unanchored identity. The use and preference of one over the other is not “wrong,” but each has its own distinct advantages and disadvantages, and used together a person may obtain the best of both tribally specific and panethnic claims of identity. Certain panethnic terms of “Native American” and “American Indian” (or simply “Native” and “Indian”) are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation. Herein each term refers to the same population, the self-identified census group of Native American Indians.\footnote{First Nations is also used, primarily in Canada, to referent the primacy of the Native nations, but they also use the construct of nation which will be deconstructed later as an imported concept.}

That earlier struggle over sovereignty as well as how this self-identified census group of Indians define themselves contributes to another definition about land and its occupation. Indian Country refers to the territorial distinction of lands within the United States that are occupied by, held in trust for, given to, and remain inhabited by American Indians. While that definition is concrete and informs the jurisprudential
application of the term, Indian Country also serves as a more nebulous term referring to anywhere that Native Americans are and what they are doing or what is being done to them. Indian Country in this latter sense includes federal and state tribes, as well as unrecognized tribes, their communities, lands, and activities.

Tribal federal recognition refers to the relationship between the federal government and the Native American nations within the bounds of the U.S. Recognition is a legal concept wherein the U.S. government “recognizes” the sovereign community of Native Americans. While this sort of understanding might seem de facto as the tribes were here before the settlers, history, intermarriage, miscegenation, and genocides all happen from the points of contact, creating differentiated and graduated communities. Therefore, many tribes still struggle to gain recognition from the federal government, and the current petitions for such recognition require the satisfaction of seven criteria. These detailed criteria for tribal recognition include that “the entity has been identified as American Indian on a substantially continuous basis since 1900,” “has existed as a community since historical times,” and “membership criteria.”17 The final item mentioned does not include any stipulation of blood quantum, nor is that term written elsewhere in the regulation, thereby freeing up individuals and collective communities to define and narrate themselves not through blood or blood quantum, but

17 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 25, Volume 1 Chapter 1, Part 83.7 (See Appendix for full text).
through a story of their own. Anthropologist George Castile describes the problem of these BIA criteria in conflict with the community’s definitions by stating:

Proof of a historical continuity is insisted on, not the groups’ own unbroken sense of peoplehood, but the extent to which they have consistently made it visible to the others. They must be ‘seen’ in the records of government, common report, churches—somebody other than themselves must vouch for them and not lose sight of them. (Castile 746)

Here Castile highlights the conundrum of the term “recognition,” the issue of having to be seen from the outside not constituted from within. This kind of recognition is complicated further by the fact that states also have rights to recognize Native nations, including those not recognized by the federal government. A nod to states’ rights, this difference produces a noticeable tension for those tribes seeking full federal recognition, those that already have that recognition, and those who have no recognition at all.18 Federal recognition, for the members of the tribe, comes with material consequences. It means being recognized as Indian people, including access to Indian Health Services, certifying artwork as “Indian-made,” and applying for Federal scholarships intended specifically for Native Americans. For the tribe, it means being able to apply for federal grants for programs and to expand their tribal ventures to casinos, logging, and fishing.
Of course, who qualifies as Native American also becomes an interesting negotiation; after recognition of the tribe, the individual members also have a level of recognition by the federal government. Determination of citizenship remains at the discretion of the tribes themselves, as such is inherently a sovereign power, but has been largely influenced by the federal government, including influence from a blood narrative of identity. For purposes of its internal programs that require a minimum blood quantum for services, the United States government relies on a proof of identity termed the Certificate Degree of Indian or Alaska Native Blood (CDIB). This certification is controlled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which is the federal department charged with oversight of Indian tribes, and currently housed in the Department of the Interior. While the tribal recognition regulation does not stipulate the use of CDIB, its existence forces a particular narrative for membership upon tribes.\footnote{Originally (1824-1849), this department was housed in the Department of War, and was later transferred to the Department of the Interior, the other bureaus of which include the Land Management, the National Park Service, and the Office of Surface Mining.}

The BIA describes this certification as follows:

A Certificate of Degree of Indian or Alaska Native Blood (CDIB) certifies that an individual possesses a specific degree of Indian blood of a federally recognized Indian tribe(s). A deciding Bureau official issues the CDIB. We issue CDIBs so that individuals may establish their eligibility for those programs and services based upon their status as American Indians and/or Alaska Natives. A CDIB does not establish membership in a federally recognized Indian tribe, and does not prevent an Indian tribe from making a separate and independent determination of blood degree for tribal purposes. (Department of the Interior: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 25 CFR Part 70, RIN 1076-AD98)
In this description, one can note that the CDIB has to be issued for a “federally recognized tribe,” thereby differentiating those tribes that are only state recognized. This statement reinforces the separation of powers between the federal government and Indian tribes as separate sovereign jurisdictions by saying that these CDIB cards are issued for the purpose of establishing eligibility for services and programs, ostensibly only those administered by the federal government, specifically for American Indians. However, many intertribal programs and private organizations also use CDIB as a criterion to determine participant eligibility. The use of these criteria reflects the need by the organizations to have some validation of American Indian identity, and for them, blood quantum works as both a limiting factor and a widely recognized marker. Individual recognition of Indian peoples, here as determined by blood, is itself caught up in the Federal recognition process: only those whose Indian blood is from “a federally recognized Indian tribe” can have a CDIB, while others would be muted, becoming people who do not belong, at least to the system as set up by blood and knowing (again). A deciding Bureau official issues the CDIB. The BIA issues CDIBs so that individuals may establish their eligibility for those programs and services based

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20 Many All-Indian basketball tournaments require some proof of identity, which can include the CDIB card; powwows will also require vendor certification to sell “Indian-made” items; some privately administered Native American scholarship programs, such as Catching the Dream, require one-quarter blood quantum. On the other hand, many programs run by private agencies for underrepresented minorities, including American Indians, do not require such proof of identity, for reasons such as, “we do not require the African American and Latino/a Americans to provide such certification.” The Mellon-Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF), when it was the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship, worked on this non-discriminatory basis. (Rudolph Byrd, Co-Director, MMUF, Emory University)
upon their status as American Indians and/or Alaska Natives. In their constitutions, and as an aforementioned exception to CDIB, tribal nations can perform their own computations for membership purposes. Of course, this blade can cut both ways and be either more inclusive or more restrictive in the blood quantum rules and the recalculations more or less generously including Native identity in the form of blood quanta, by including other bands or tribes or requiring indisputable proof and allowing only those listed on rolls. Understanding blood quantum and descendancy are important because these methods control understanding of identity before DNA, and are what DNA analysis builds upon for tribes, carrying forward the compounded problems of both concepts. This choice means they continue to accept certain notions of identity.

In “The Commodification of Indian Identity,” George Castile describes the developmental process of nations that created new forms of belonging: “Large territorial states, however, had emerged, and some were generating more complex heterogeneous ‘citizenship’ notions” (Castile 743). While these notions were more complex, they were also heterogeneous, multiple in their dimension, including such notions as native-born citizenship, resident alien seeking citizenship, and second-class citizenship. In order to differentiate the promises made to Americans, though not all of them, Castile writes

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21 Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Appellate Court, August 16, 2010; Dennis Tappen, Angela Ayling and Skykur Graveratte case against tribe’s failure to recognize their own tribal documentation of blood quantum.
“Toward all ethnic minorities (except blacks), the promise [of Lockean Enlightenment notions of the perfectibility of man] was one of eventual equality through assimilation” (Castile 744). If only he could be more like the white man, the Other too would be viewed as equal, no longer different or lesser. Assimilation has to do with physically blending in as well as not standing out culturally or otherwise. “It was under these circumstance (sic) that most Native groups were forced into bookkeeping by ‘blood’ and into ‘standard’ kinship reckoning—no matriarchies need apply” (Castile 744). The differences noted herein by Castile about what is left out when Native groups attempt to assimilate are telling: kinship has to become standardized, and the bookkeeping by blood then has to reflect the definition of the colonizers. Joanne Barker suggests that the effects of “making indigenous people ‘governable’ by roll or certificate or blood allows the United States to reinvent its power to govern indigenous people as citizens ‘of a particular kind’—as those who can be enrolled, recognized, qualified, and eliminated” (32). These hyphenated, modified citizens are engaged in a particular relationship with the United States government that in and of itself jeopardizes that citizenship. The federal power over them itself connects to the imported notions of blood, an extension into larger effects, but also demonstrates the power of the figure to influence understanding and undergird legislation.

The federal government retains one form of control over even federally recognized tribes in the form of termination. Termination was a policy that began in the
1950s in an attempt to end the trust duties of the United States government to Indian tribes that it considered able to take care of their own needs without assistance. This thinly veiled disguise of treaty breaking meant that many tribes were removed from legal existence, not by their own rules but by an intervening national power, and many still fight to be recognized again. Ada Deer spearheaded a successful campaign for re-recognition of her people, the Menominee, which finally occurred in 1972. She also served in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and helped bring an end to the overall Termination Era. In 2010, the Shinnecock Tribe became the 565th tribe recognized by the US, and the Lumbee tribe continued its struggle for recognition only to have their bill die in the Senate again.

These nations demonstrate the ongoing struggle that occurs even today, but the statement of CDIB opens up other avenues for recognition of tribal nations in how it describes recognition of individuals. The powers left to sovereign nations mean that this federally issued CDIB, as noted by the Department of the Interior, “does not establish membership” in a tribe, nor does it “prevent an Indian tribe from making a separate and independent determination of blood degree for tribal purposes.” This last clause provides space from which to observe a blood narrative at work and also to intercede in

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23 The seventh criterion of Federal recognition states that the tribe has not been terminated by an act of Congress, which the Lumbee were, so their fight involves attention to that policy era and its persistence in the regulation.
its workings. While the federal government may use blood quantum and demonstrate other effects of a blood narrative, the Indian nations can base citizenship on another narrative, even within the letter of the US regulation and as a radical act of sovereignty. This certification of an identity based on a blood narrative, seen in the construct of blood quantum, fails to have a concrete bearing on tribal citizenship determination, but nevertheless tribes are able to create a blood quantum irrespective of the federal government’s calculations, or to not use this blood narrative at all to understand identity and its relation to citizenship.  

Overall, how the people of the tribe are defined from within and without affects their access to services and incentives, but participation in the community does not require citizenship, and other narratives exist to support different definitions, even emerging through outside programs. Tribal calculations and narratives will only be effective within the tribe unless the federal programs and services also utilize these narratives instead of requiring a certain blood quantum, such as one quarter for scholarships. In its own slightly radical act, the Indian Health Services (IHS) provides services to “members, enrolled or otherwise.” This language means that anyone with a CDIB can be treated at IHS, including the unborn and yet to be enrolled. Yet there was a

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24 This idea is perhaps more like what Chadwick Allen describes in his blood/land/memory complex, or as the narrative has been used on the White Earth reservation in Minnesota which Jill Doerfler chronicles in her dissertation, distinguishing between cultural and census meanings of fullblood and mixed blood.  
hotly contested proposal from the US government in the late 1980s that would have changed all of that by only allowing those Indians with one-quarter blood quantum or more to receive services. In their article “On Changing Indian Eligibility for Health Care,” three medical scholars conclude that

[T]he proposed regulation may set in motion a process of ultimate termination, albeit long term and subject to change, of providing organized health care to Indians. If the current demographic trends continue and the regulation is enacted, as time goes on, fewer and fewer Indians will qualify for benefits. Eventually, service units will no longer be justified on the basis of dwindling service populations while an ever-increasing number of Indians will lose their health care benefits. To the Indians it will represent yet another broken promise. (Bashshur, et al 693)

The contradiction that these scholars pinpoint is that the “dwindling service populations” would be in direct contradiction to the fact of “an ever-increasing number of Indians,“ and this differentiation between the service population and the Indians by the Federal government serves to further divide and conquer, reinforcing certain blood narratives based upon notions of authenticity. Bashshur et al demonstrate that these two groups are one and the same; however, when one group is artificially defined and augmented it becomes dwindling, while the overall group actually increases. The ultimate termination these scholars refer to provides a reminder of the trust relationship between the federal government and the tribal nations, and the way in which such regulations based on blood quantum would reduce both the obligations of the federal government and the total population of the tribes, furthering the policy of termination through other means.
A federal tribe that uses a minimum blood quantum for determining citizenship in their nation will face a perpetually decreasing population. This decreasing population effectively reduces the trust obligations of the federal government to tribes and leads to termination of tribes; however, here the tribe diminishes itself with the tools given to them, such as the base census rolls and blood quantum determined by the BIA. Even if that blood quantum is refigured by the tribe, it will perpetually decrease. However, a new strategy has been explored by the White Earth Anishinaabe—and analyzed by Jill Doerfler—that proposes blood quantum be “reset” every few generations, noting explicitly the imprecision of the figure, and adjusting it to reflect a fullness of culture instead of any racial reductions. In many ways, the Native nations that refigure and redetermine blood degree for tribal purposes note the fact that a blood narrative and its expressions have no stable basis in fact, and they further use that instability to fashion the term for their own purposes, similar to what Allen chronicled in his project. In these ways, DNA could be used by Native nations as a tool of resistance.

However, the DNA ancestry testing, as well as maternity and paternity testing, of the present moment demonstrate that such figures of speech are taken for facts of identity in many places. This conflation causes even efforts at resistance to backfire,

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26 Jill Doerfler presents this idea as emerging in her research on the constitutional reform at the White Earth Chippewa reservation.
because these attempts to resist manage to reinscribe the same narrative of blood that
the people resisting are attempting to move beyond by controlling their own definitions
and narratives. Tribes have even turned to DNA testing to confirm their citizens’
relations27 and to try to establish their community’s existence for recognition.28 These
moves can work towards the ultimate termination of the tribes, protecting the imported
notion while attempting to protect the integrity of the tribe through an extension of that
narrative.

Overall, this review of terms demonstrates the complicated terrain in which a
blood narrative is at play, but also shows how language and narrative affect identity and
citizenship in American Indian nations.29 These terms are deployed in various ways,
and I choose to deploy Native particularly as it is concerned with the “alter” and the
alternative, when it comes to narratives that are produced. This construction has led in
turn to the term “alternarrative” to refer to those narratives produced by both the “alter”
and the Native subject, involving alternatives to the dominant narrative of blood.

1.2 Counternarratives versus Alternarratives

Literature plays many different roles in culture and society. In roles such as
imagining pasts, futures, and human relations, literature deploys and redeploy cultural

27 The Alabama Coushatta tribe asked for this testing of certain families that did not agree with the reigning
government’s policies (personal communicant would prefer to remain anonymous).
28 The Gabrielino/Tongva of California and the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina both are using DNA in
different manners to support their petitions for federal acknowledgment.
29 While other critical approaches seek to differentiate these terms, I am attempting to reflect the terms at use
in the texts, by the authors, and by the communities.
and social narratives—such as blood, race, and values—which then interface and feedback with other constructs of culture and society, such as science and the law. This dissertation focuses on narrative and how it operates in society, with the main focus on blood as an overarching narrative, but also turns to the redemptive potential in literature to find alternatives to this particular narrative in society. Further, literature brings what is and what has been together with narratives of what could be. Some of these projective narratives premise themselves on hope, others on ruin or even apocalypse, but all are united by their focus on change.

A counternarrative and an alternarrative have inherently different purposes, but they also both have relations to dominant narratives, including a blood narrative. Understanding the difference between these two concepts is important to my argument. A counternarrative focuses on the direct countering or revision of a dominant narrative. For example, Custer’s Last Stand holds a particular place in American history and as such a significant event in relations between Americans and Indians, it has been continuously storied. A counternarrative would propose that Custer’s Last Stand is not primarily a loss by US Calvary, but instead that Wounded Knee is an unprovoked attack on Indian people in the Battle of the Greasy Grass. Even in the counternarrative, an important move is made in naming the battle differently from the popular reference or the US Calvary designation, through a focus on the importance of place instead of a particular person. These are both interpretations of the same incident; however, one
privileges the US military as protagonist with Custer as fallen hero and the other counters it with the Indian perspective. The latter narrative reacts to the former, which is itself well established historically. The counternarrative argument is therefore premised upon a reading and writing itself mired in the dominant narrative that is being countered. An alternarrative, by contrast, provides an alternative that does not react to a dominant narrative, but rather provides an entirely different story, without reference to a culturally dominant narrative. An alternarrative of this same historical incident could focus on the Ghost Dance and how its attempt to restore Indian people led to a greater understanding of pantribal community, thus providing a way to sustain the people. This alternative focuses on a story of survival, innovation, and hope instead of destruction and death grounded in people and place. Another alternarrative example would be origin stories that differ from the Judeo-Christian Creation or the Big Bang theory.30

A blood narrative of identity cannot sustain culture and society, therefore alternarratives must be utilized in attempts to sustain both culture and society. I use the term “alternarrative” here instead of a term such as “counternarrative” for a few

30 For further example, one example of a simple alternative, which also has a double meaning, occurs through an adapted practice of some Christian American Indians around Ash Wednesday. Smudging is a traditional practice to bless someone with the smoke of sage, most commonly, or other dried plants such as sweetgrass or cedar. On Ash Wednesday, this practice can combine with the Christian practice of placing ashes on the forehead leading to the play on words of “get smudged” with reference to both Ash Wednesday and the traditional blessing. This double blessing and doubly signifying phrase represent an alternative adaptation of both spiritual practices.
reasons. First, my focus is on alternative ways of understanding identity, sovereignty, citizenship, and rights, and not only ways to counter those dominant narratives, including blood. A counternarrative focuses on challenging the hegemony and dominant narratives, but an alternarrative provides a new way for understanding that does not overemphasize the prevalent narrative by directly countering it. The “alter” here also refers to the alterity of the marginalized peoples of America; it is not limited to American Indians, but includes other groups who are oppressed by this blood narrative and whose identity formation goes beyond it.³¹

The choice of alternarrative instead of counternarrative is complicated and related to my focus herein on Native American literature. While the latter term is utilized from feminism to Critical Race Theory, in disciplines such as law and anthropology, and even by many Native American studies scholars, I resist it here for the same reason that legal scholar Matthew L.M. Fletcher says he uses it: “When employed by CRT scholars as a response to prevailing understandings about the experiences of minority people, this narrative often is referred to as counternarrative” (American Indian Education, 6). As a “response” narrative, the counternarrative does little more than react, producing the overall effect of merely trying to survive, despite the prevailing narrative. Instead of a response kind of narrative the effect of which is

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³¹ Defined as “the quality or state of being radically alien to the conscious self or a particular cultural orientation,” this term provides particular salience for Native American Indians and the indigenous clash with colonization.
survival, I embrace the idea of *survivance* as put forward by Gerald Vizenor in an interview with radio show host Jack Foley:

> Survival suggests more of a reaction, and that's that. It's tied to something and describes the circumstances of a response, a survival. My idea is that we understand what dominance is, a condition; we know it in many, many forms in time and place and circumstance. We need a word like dominance that speaks and is understood in the context of our will to live.\(^\text{32}\)

It is this idea that drives my construction of “alternarrative,” a term based not on the counternarratives that are derived for the benefit of responding to current situations, but instead is derived from the literature produced by Native Americans. While other scholars have built on this knowledge and connected it to the literature of other marginalized groups, I believe that the idea of survivance and its practice throughout Native literature provides a new point of understanding. Each kind of narrative has its possibilities and limits, and novels allow us to explore those possibilities and limits through the communities they construct. Alternatives operate without the premise of blood as the only kind of relation, and an alternarrative opens up identity to be multiple, to be additive and multiplicative. In counternarration there exists the possibility for the refiguring of ideas, terms, and acts, but this concept of alternarrative moves it beyond merely opposing (“countering”) to producing a newly doubled or radically alternative form. The literary repercussions of a blood narrative and its operations in society

demonstrate different purposes for which the struggle to define and ultimately to
narrate is waged, and Benedict Anderson’s idea of nation demonstrates where an
alternarrative could intervene, though other examples will show how a blood narrative
has persisted.

1.3 Literary Repercussions

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson highlights the way in which both
novels and print culture have contributed to national development for modern nation-
states by providing the means to connect the citizens and their imaginations with the
ideals of the nation. Anderson states, “In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the
following definition of nation: it is an imagined political community—and imagined as
both inherently limited and sovereign” (5-6). These particular qualifications of
“imagined” and “political” help define the particular limits of the community that is the
nation. Anderson’s overall concept that the nation is an imagined community highlights
the importance of imagination in defining the nation. A community may be brought
together by similar identities, but when that community becomes political and
transforms into a nation, it is at once marked by and must move beyond those
affinities. Despite the differences that emerge, the nation develops out of a community

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33 Anderson goes on to refine his definition by explaining what he means by describing the community as
imagined—because all of the members do not know each other and therefore must imagine the rest of the
community. Here we can also start to resolve the questions of terminology, as one would be a member of
the community in comparable fashion to being a citizen of a nation. To clarify, “it is imagined as a
that thrives on the idea of equality and a common identifier. The imagined community is also “limited and sovereign,” meaning that the relation of a nation to other nations and even to itself is within the limits, the boundaries. This note on sovereignty is particularly important in the Native American case, as again, one of the major sovereign powers of these nations is the power to regulate membership. Further though, it highlights the requirement of the nation to be sovereign and maintain connections and recognition from other nations. While membership decisions may be discussed, condemned, or lauded from within and without, the only way to change them is from within the tribal government. Anderson’s concepts, while situated in the discipline of anthropology, have their own development in literature and the studies thereof.

Anderson notes “The novel and the newspaper provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation” (25). He also notes that these modes are two forms of imagining, returning to the importance of imagination and especially these literary forms as ways to present how the nation would like to see its ideal. Anderson also presents important information about how blood was used in community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (7).

Anderson clarifies these qualifications by stating; “The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them…has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations” (7). Further, “it is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm….nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state” (7).
formation of nations; however, he posits that language has a larger hand in that process:
“from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and…one could be
‘invited into’ the imagined community. Thus today, even the most insular nations
accept the principle of naturalization, no matter how difficult in practice they may make it” (145, emphasis in original). The modern nation as a construct starts not from the
literal blood or even land, but particularly from language. In this way, the discourse of
nation, as Anderson presents it, ostensibly challenges the discourse of blood by moving
to a larger frame of imagined connections. However, Anderson notes that blood creeps
into the discourse of nation through those very narratives that help inform the
imagination of the citizens – the novels and print culture. This statement returns us to
the idea that the stories, of which blood itself is only one, are where the nation started
and therefore are also the place where interventions in the imaginings of the nation may
take place. In the case of Native nations, stories may unlock new possibilities for
imagining both the nation and its citizenry.

In the early 19th century, after the establishment of the American nation through
the writing of the Constitution, and during a continual Westward expansion, writers
such as James Fenimore Cooper looked back at the history of the nation’s development
to comment on his current moment.\(^{35}\) Set in the 18th century, the language and stories

\(^{35}\) It is worth noting that the Constitution only has three references to Indians and one reference to tribe, which leads to a lot of debate about language when matters come before the Supreme Court.
that Cooper includes in *The Leatherstocking Tales* evince a desire for narratives about contact, American Indian others, and white men “playing Indian.” 36 *The Deerslayer* focuses on the early adventures of his protagonist, Nathaniel “Natty” Bumppo, but is the fourth book in the series. Natty is a frontiersman, also known as Hawkeye, and while he normally travels alone, he takes up at points with a fellow gruff traveler named Henry “Hurry” March. At the outset of the novel, an insertion of different opinions between the two men highlights the way in which skin color stands in for identity in the narrative:

> “Here’s three colours on ‘arth; white, black and red. White is the highest colour, and therefore the best man; black comes next, and is put to live in the neighborhood of the white man, as tolerable and fit to be made use of; and red comes last, which shows that those that made ‘em never expected an Indian to be accounted as more than half human.” “God made all three alike, Hurry —” “Alike! Do you call a nigger like a white man, or me like an Indian?” (50)

While Hurry, the stereotypical white racist, delineates the differences between races, leaving the red man not “to be accounted as more than half human,” the protagonist can do little to change his tune but to say—and be cut off in saying—that they are all God’s creations. At the time of his writing, Cooper would have been aware of the Constitutional clause declaring slaves to count as only 3/5 of a person; his inclusion of a character who believes Indians are not to count as half a person is quite telling of the times. Then again, most Indians did not count at all in 1841; they were considered

36 Philip Deloria presents this idea of “playing Indian” in his text of the same name, and Rayna Green presented ideas that Deloria builds on in her article “The Tribe Called Wannabe.”
neither citizens nor aliens of the United States: wards of the state at best. In his interruption, Hurry puts himself in a questionable space where he does not refer to himself as a white man, but also where he disdains the too close comparison with an Indian. Hurry appears to the reader as a white man—although he does not fully confirm this idea, perhaps indicating mixture—and his reliance on the visual leads us to believe he is highly invested in his own appearance as white. Natty, on the other hand, while wholly confirmed as white, has some experience in a Native community and incorporates that experience into his personality, thereby playing Indian. It is only play, though, because Natty does note the difference between himself and Indians when it comes to scalping, a tradition he finds disturbing, as it offends his moral sensibilities.

While Natty plays Indian, Hurry continues to rely on his visual perception to alert him to the identity of others: "'Now, skin makes the man. This is reason: else how are people to judge when a creatur', or a mortal, is fairly seen, you may know at once what to make of him’" (59). This belief that one can obtain understanding of another, can gain knowledge of their identity based on the information provided only by the visual cues, reflects both a larger problem that persists in America (evident in racial profiling as well as assumptions of race, gender, and sexuality) and an attitude that has

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37 In 1924, all American Indians were granted citizenship in the United States through the Indian Citizenship Act of that same year, also known as the Snyder Act. Previously the 14th Amendment had granted some Indians citizenship, but it did not extend to the whole of the indigenous of America. This Act takes the population as a whole connecting all of the indigenous of the US through this legislation.

38 Scalping as a practice was rarely performed by Native Americans, but was popularized by white settlers who also practiced it on all peoples.
not adequately changed in 170 years. This common notion expressed in 1841 reflects the past and the present as well; even as new technologies for understanding human beings emerge, the idea prevails that the visual distillation of DNA known as the phenotype reflects the whole of the genotype, the complete set of inherited and mutated genes in DNA, as evidenced by references to socially constructed race stemming out of skin color. Although Americans particularly claim to be united, the simple ways Americans categorize other people by their parts shows that as a nation and as a people, Americans still stand divided. Human beings indicate these differences in many ways, particularly literature, not just in America, but also throughout the globe.

As Momaday had presented “memory in the blood” and Allen had interpreted that to refer to “blood as narrative/narrative as blood,” other writers also seek solutions to the use of a blood narrative as evidenced by Cooper’s writings. Like Momaday, James Welch (Blackfeet/Gros Ventre) subverts expressions of blood to reflect more than an immediate personal identity, but to use the expressions to hearken back to a memory held within that figure. In his 1974 novel, Winter in the Blood, Welch’s main character has an epiphany that he describes as “The answer had come to me as if by instinct…as though it was his blood in my veins that had told me” (160). This idea straddles the line between an older blood narrative and a revised narrative by which to understand identity and the relationship that identity has to lineage, presenting a blood memory that need not be racial. Central to this quotation is its focus on an answer, a solution to
the problems of the world that are in the stories already known, already kept in the blood. However, these stories are not used to separate and contribute to maintaining power relations, but instead they provide potential for redemption. Like Doerfler’s recognition of the malleability of blood to be reset for White Earth Anishinaabe citizenship and Allen’s presentation of the “blood/land/memory complex,” this use of blood connects back to Momaday as well as to a remaking of blood and its referents for the purposes of the indigenous.

While these authors and their novels present re-imaginings of the nation through their writings, community members are also presenting their own differential usages of blood to reimagine the nation. Anthropologist James Hamill presents the ubiquity and refiguring of blood as it came up in his research:

Blood was a part of everyday life for these Oklahoma Indians in the 1930s and 1960s. They used it to identify themselves and others and they attached political and cultural meanings to it. Blood indexed significant characteristics and assumptions of various blood quanta. In many cases, blood quantum identified citizenship and rights of citizenship for these Indian people. It provided education, protection of the law, and right to land that non-Indians did not enjoy....political decisions within Indian communities often were conceptualized in terms of blood. (Hamill 279)

Here, Hamill uses blood discourse to refer to political and cultural meanings of blood, thereby opening up the referents of the narrative; however, the end of this statement leaves room for concern about how blood structures political decisions. Even before the elision of the literal and figural referents of blood that attended the contemporary interest in DNA and ancestry testing, these community members demonstrated that
same elision in how blood indexes particular characteristics and how terms of blood were used to reflect blood quanta. Hamill points out the malleability of the idea of blood as he emphasizes its operation as a symbol. Even after all of the useful analysis of why blood is a problem for defining the boundaries at which identities emerge, however, he ends his essay on a hopeful note: “Contemporary Indian people in Oklahoma, as their sovereign rights become more clearly defined and the concept of race becomes more problematic, are questioning the use of blood as a sufficient condition for a claim of Indian identity” (Hamill 281). Once a blood narrative is questioned enough times, alternatives to the standard have to be brought forward and tested.

1.4 Blood Narrative to DNA Narrative

The evolution of a blood narrative leads to DNA being utilized similarly to blood in order to configure stories of identity and belonging, thus creating a DNA narrative of identity that is itself influenced by a blood narrative. Without the reliance on blood, as both a figure and literal substance, the narrative framework for science to pursue questions of identity in genetics would not exist. And despite the nature and nurture arguments, DNA narratives like blood narratives reify identity into only a person’s genetic heritage, denying both their environmental influences and those familial genetic

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39 Even in the elections and how signage about the candidates presented their blood quanta directly because for many decades, candidates for tribal office would put up signs for their campaigns that listed their blood quanta in an attempt to index their cultural connections. John Ross, the chief that led the Cherokee to Oklahoma in Removal, for example, only had 1/8 blood quantum, demonstrating that the connection between that figure and cultural as well as political ideas changed over time.
markers they did not inherit because of size limits within the genome. Overall, this connection between a blood narrative and DNA leads to the continuation of blood narrative in the use of genomics to understand being and belonging, as it is used by American Indian and other nations. Particularly, when this compounded blood and DNA narrative is used on indigenous populations by others in power, it emulates the colonialism of the past, which in and of itself is caught up in capitalism, and the combination with genetics creates a new colonialism of the flora, fauna, and human bodies of indigenous territories - biocolonialism. Moreover, this colonization of the flora, fauna, and human bodies of indigenous territories, reflects the effects on power and ownership inherent in the connection between capitalism and colonialism. When indigenous peoples use DNA, they may do so in ways that recognize its limits and therefore utilize it only to supplement knowledge instead of replacing it, but they may also use it to the detriment of knowledge already had of maternity or even traditional knowledge, replacing that knowledge with the “facts” from the DNA, whatever they may be. If Native peoples and nations replace traditional knowledge and understanding with scientific knowledge, traditional knowledge is risked and can be lost, but if it is used as one of many tools, traditional knowledge can possibly be enhanced.

DNA testing has already become a possible way of determining tribal identity and ancestry, and different tribes have come down on both sides of the issue, for and against its use for helping to determine citizenship, as well as recognition. Using DNA
testing for tribal identity predicates itself upon an unquestioned use of a blood narrative over time to determine Indian identity. While I focus on the context of the United States, many of the ideas herein could be adapted and applied to other indigenous communities throughout the world as they encounter biotechnology, in general, as well as conversely how indigenous understandings of belonging may impact biotechnology.

After reviewing the science and its many uses, I present another possibility for how citizenship might be determined utilizing a biological paradigm, with emphasis on its potential as an alternarrative.

Ancestry testing analyzes genetic sequences in connection to one another, and clusters of these sequences occur within certain population groups. Three different kinds of tests are used to establish ancestry – genome wide, mitochondrial, and Y-chromosome testing. Each uses similar technology to compare their DNA to a potential parent or to a variant considered indicative of a geographic population. Analyses of single nucleotide polymorphisms, known as SNPs (“snips“), test for changes in the genome, whereas mitochondrial DNA testing presents maternal connections, as mitochondria are passed to the child from the mother in the egg but not from the father to the child in the sperm. Y-chromosomal testing presents connections along a male lineage. Many of these sequences can be identified in peoples as common, in which case they can become Ancestry Informative Markers, or AIMs, identified in scientific analyses.
pioneered by Mark Shriver, Rick Kittles, and others. These markers have been shown in recent research to create clustering maps that mirror some national boundaries, supporting ideas of difference on both sides of these lines. Despite the many uncertainties involved in this research, the public has been treated to its possibilities in such famous examples of ancestry testing as Henry Louis Gates’, Oprah Winfrey’s, and Chris Rock’s very public efforts to establish their genetic and genomic ancestries.

Ironically, SNPs and AIMS do not even code the majority of a person’s inherited DNA and the most sampled parts of the genome in ancestry testing are the mitochondrial and Y-chromosome DNA. Kimberly TallBear has shown how ancestry analysis misses entire parts of one’s lineage as well as how the use of blood as a stand in for “race” is problematic for American Indian nations, which are not racial constructs, and their claims to sovereignty, which are not based on race. In the case of American Indians, Rick Kittles noted that very few AIMs have been identified for Native Americans, so one cannot test the blood of an individual and consider them ancestrally connected to particular American Indian tribes. Further, this testing, which cannot connect a current genome to a larger sample of the human population from the

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geographic area of North America, truly cannot connect a person to a specific political unit, or tribe, from which he or his ancestors might have come.

In a 2005 article in *WIRED*, Brendan Koerner wrote about attendance at the Descendants of the Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes conference where results of DNA testing on the Descendants were being reported by Rick Kittles. Koerner also interviewed Descendants at this conference, including their reaction to the testing that indicated Native American ancestry for some but not for all and not always to the amount they had previously thought. In contextualizing his piece, Koerner notes:

So far, reams of historical documents and legal briefs have gotten the Freedmen nowhere against a century-old document created by clueless white bureaucrats and enforced by men the Freedmen once considered brothers. The question is whether a tool created by molecular biologists will have any more luck. (4)

Here the tension between how playing within the system of paperwork has not worked as a source of proof for the Freedmen and their claims to citizenship, but also how they view the call for blood as something that can be answered with an analysis of the actual substance that could connect them to their ancestors on a roll. This question still remains, but Koerner goes on to give more information about how the ancestry testing that utilizes a genome-wide analysis can be useful for the Descendants’ struggle for recognition, but notes an important caveat:

The genome-wide technique scours the entire genome for "ancestry informative markers" that indicate "biogeographical ancestry." Statistical software then analyzes the data to determine what percentage of genes comes from where. This is the test of choice for the Freedmen. The good news is that it's exhaustive. But
it's also the most expensive option, and it still can't trace a Native American’s roots back to a particular tribe. (5)

This inability to trace back to the particular tribe is related to not only historical issues regarding movement and removal of tribes from certain places and to other places, but also endogamy within tribes but not necessarily a particular tribe and exogamy out of any tribe, as well as the political existence of the tribe as opposed to that of an ethnic group.

As I have noted, some tribes have embraced DNA, a rewriting of blooded connection, to help prove identities of members or of the group itself. Other tribes have outright rejected the prospect of utilizing DNA to identify members. This use of DNA predicates itself upon an unquestioned use over time of a story that relies on blood, whether figurative or literal, to conceive of identity—here, a determining blood narrative. Many argue that blood as used in blood quantum is a figure, as in the phrase “Indian by Blood” from various census rolls. However, DNA concretizes that idea and complicates its ability to be a figure, making it refer to the literal substance. DNA and the narratives thereof emerge from this vexed tension of figure and literal, carrying some poetic ideas while having actual concrete referents. Many advertising campaigns, particularly in the United States, make use of the figurative referent of “DNA” for their products, tying those objects of capitalistic consumption to a larger history of blood narrative and forwarding such DNA narratives into the future. For example, a 2011 Jeep
television advertising campaign references DNA to show how important ruggedness is to the brand: “it is in its DNA to be tough,” goes the metaphor; however, as a manufactured automobile, Jeep does not have any DNA to speak of in such a way. The identity uses of blood and DNA have now become a marketing strategy, removed from even the biological, further complicating their referents and obscuring other narratives of identity. Blood and DNA can turn a legal identity and its concurrent belonging into a biological, conflating the two irrevocably. However, one might utilize the biological in an alternative narrative that opens up possibilities of connections between imagined communities, instead of limiting them through problematic conflations.

**Biological Citizenship**

“Biological citizenship” as a term, concept, and idea, is still evolving. At times it, and terms like it, reaches the limits of what it can encompass, refer to, and define. Clearly, this idea can either be quite useful or quite limiting, because it can further limit ideas of citizenship or it can open up the definitions, even biologically based, of citizenship to move beyond nation-states to communities and even species or larger level connections. Further, the multiple definitions of this concept are also infused with the current narratives of law and science. After a review of the current fluctuating definition, this discussion will clarify how biological citizenship could extend to American Indian nations, but also how it could be extended without reliance on national boundaries.
Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas define the concept in their article, “Biological Citizenship,” by first stating that “Citizenship was fundamentally national.” They go on to question how that foundation has been tested in the modern era:

Many events and forces are placing such a national form of citizenship in question. The nation can no longer be seen as really or ideally, a cultural or religious unity, with a single bounded national economy, and economic and political migration challenge the capacity of states to delimit citizens in terms of place of birth or lineage or race. (1)

Rose and Novas’ introduction of the concept opens up possibilities for biological citizenship as they work to understand the breaking of “a cultural and or religious unity,” which they concede may have been more ideal than real, and which is especially the case in America, a land of nations within nations, subcultures within supraculture. They go on to point out the challenge to states and their limitations on citizenship of “economic and political migration.” These migrations connect to diaspora and other migrations that affect the confined political unit of nation. In this background, Rose and Novas present the idea that “the capacity of the states to delimit citizens in terms of place of birth or lineage or race” contributes to the idea of biological citizenship by connecting together the space (place of birth), descent (lineage), and phenotype (race) noted at a person’s birth. All of these categories, biological and otherwise, are used specifically to limit citizenship not to necessarily expand it, while it could be otherwise.

Rose and Novas go on to connect their idea to that of Adriana Petryna, who first uses “biological citizenship” to present the case of victims of the Chernobyl nuclear
disaster. In her work, Petryna discusses the shuffled state and status of the victims, which had put them in peril for years, and how they began to articulate the need and desire for compensation from the government for the effects on their health, the biological fallout of the nuclear disaster. The claim here is that their biological health is tied to their citizenship; if the biological was affected by the state, their citizenship should ensure protection and care from that state. Petryna figures this care in terms of capitalist debt and recompense. Rose and Novas continue to utilize capitalism in their construction of the concept. Further, this articulation allows for the possibility of a citizenship organized around biology producing advocacy and belonging that could be more sustainable, even after achieving equal rights for different groups. The citizens and their needs remain unheard by the leaders who do not value their bodies once they are damaged, and those leaders have the power to maintain that difference. Yet even the state’s security responsibility to those individuals accorded citizenship returns as a key concern.

Cheryl Harris and Kaushik Sunder Rajan both take up the issue of value in their respective works, “Whiteness as Property” and “Genomic Capital.” In these articles, the authors dismantle narratives to show how race is valued in the former case and how specific genes are valued in the latter. The focus of these articles demonstrates that there

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are measures of value and property related to the body that gain their value through
interaction with other social situations, and the articles are important for understanding
what is valuable about biological citizenship and what is beyond ideas of capitalistic
value. The concepts presented in these articles about how race and genes are valued
demonstrate that value depends upon a system as well and even that system is storied.
The value of citizenship is manifold, but it can also be individual, so the storied
construction of group belonging must connect these values. Rosalind Pollack Petchesky
helps in articulating the relations between these parts in her piece on “The Body as
Property” which examines the ways in which the body is and is not property across
multiple cultural and legal lines. Petchesky does not advocate for a dismissal of the
language of capitalism, but an expansion of its frame of reference, especially in relation
to property. Similarly, I advocate for an expansion, and not a narrowing, of the new
idea of biological citizenship, particularly in moves away from capitalism, which carries
with it narratives of colonialism including blood, differential human value, and
ownership. The notion of the body as property itself presents the fact that colonialism,
capitalism, and the new biocolonialism—though not necessarily biological citizenship—
are caught up with each other and with blood narratives.

In an expansive definition, biological citizenship can be useful in understanding
the relations among peoples, and perhaps even species, leading the governing body to
be not a group of people within a nation or state but instead the earth itself, whereby
responsibilities are had to one another and to place, and rights are accorded not by other people but by belonging to the earth as global citizens. Biological citizenship itself can gain such expansion through connections to other terms currently circulating that attempt to expand how we understand human relations and the role of the earth in governing the actions of inhabitants. Rayna Rapp, Deborah Heath, and Karen Sue Taussig present the term “genetic citizenship” in an article that deals with sites of activism, affinity, and prejudice related to genetic difference. Their “genetic citizenship” concept allows for ways of creating citizenship outside of the state, particularly related to what those groups united by genetic citizenship intend to promote, produce, or advocate. Biological citizenship can be expanded as well with this allowance. While older stories of blood concentrated on one element, one humoral fluid, the new stories of DNA focus on an aspect of life inclusively that occurs in every somatic cell of the body and most of our fluids, humoral or otherwise. Rapp, Heath, and Taussig have commented on this transformation in their work on genetic citizenship and genealogical dis-ease, evidencing the evolution of concepts, which can lead to an expansive definition of biological citizenship, where the connections include not just DNA or genes, but can be any biological similarity. Rose and Novas highlight their choice of “biological citizenship” instead of the similar “genetic citizenship” because “genetic citizenship is only one possible articulation of a longer, and more diverse, array

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of ways in which citizenship has been linked to or articulated in biological terms” (38).

Rose and Novas’ idea that there are more articulations of biological citizenship also proves useful in thinking about a biological citizenship that could be based on shared inheritance of a specific genetic signature (a set of identical genes) across peoples or even other populations, or even on the shared biological basis of genes. If all life has genes, then the relations expand as does the citizenship, perhaps threateningly, to other possessors of genes. Rose and Novas highlight the history of relations between citizenship and “biological terms,” and their use here of “term” connects those relations to rhetorical deployments, to narratives. Their biological citizenship, as well as blood narratives, relies on this relation between the biological and the narrative that then connects to legal identities. These need not require each other, and biological citizenship could operate as an organizing principle for narrative that then drives the construction of legal belonging and other identities. Biological citizenship, like the stories and storytelling of Thomas King and Gerald Vizenor, could also provide an alternarrative if the story is told right.

1.5 Chapter Synopses

This dissertation not only demonstrates where the insufficiency of blood arises and is questioned, but also seeks out those alternatives that might be tested as a new basis for understanding identity and belonging. The literature in which the alternarratives are imagined is one such testing ground, and others would be the tribal
policies and legislation, and the everyday practice of refusing blood as the reference and searching out new paradigms for understanding identity and belonging, particularly for American Indians and American Indian nations.

Blood has been used to code difference including race, interethnic affiliation, national distinctions, and in these ways it leads directly to belonging, particularly the legal form of belonging to a nation, understood as citizenship, as well as community and group belonging. The effects of this narrative on belonging are nowhere more acute and apparent than in American Indian nations, pan-ethnic identification, and belonging in Indian Country.

In order for American Indian nations and other communities to continue, as nations or other constructed forms of belonging, blood can no longer be the basis of identification. Instead an alternative narrative, or many, must emerge to help facilitate identity and belonging. Unencumbered sovereignty, biological citizenship, and multiple identities articulated through pan-ethnicity and survivance are all alternarratives examined as themselves multiple possibilities for producing sustainable and continuing global citizenship.

Blood as a figure and then blood as literal substance utilize the same narrative to influence identity and similarly damage constructions of belonging, particularly in its legal form. I explore these similarities through the cases of the Cherokee Nation Freedmen and the DNA testing of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. In “Regulating
Narratives: Constrained Citizenship and the Force of Legislation,” I examine both historical legal documents and modern tribal constitutions. A 2007 amendment to the Cherokee Nation constitution exposed differing biological understandings of identity within the Cherokee Nation and the relationship of that issue to the legal form of belonging. I chronicle how that amendment still echoes in the Cherokee Nation and further afield in Indian Country and the United States, as well as the circumstances that led to the decision. This first chapter focuses on how differing conceptions of citizenship (political belonging) underwrote the irresolution and exploitation that characterizes the relationship between the United States and Native nations. This chapter also explores the diversity of models of belonging within Indian Country by examining the three federally recognized Cherokee tribes, their differences and similarities. While each Cherokee tribe has different citizenship requirements derived from their tribal sovereignty and influenced by a blood narrative, the Cherokee Nation amendment excludes descendants of the Freedmen from citizenship and reinforces a blood narrative, thereby contributing to a self-termination of the tribe. This chapter examines how a blood narrative affects the past and present as seen through legislation.

In the second chapter, “The Future is Now: Blood Narratives and DNA,” I turn to contemporary genomics and its introduction into this discourse, and show how DNA builds on the blood narrative and its relationship to political belonging to instantiate communities. I am concerned in this chapter with how blood narratives inform
discourses of citizenship and how biological citizenship highlights the tensions between U.S. and Native cultures as well as tensions within Native cultures. DNA works as a new tool of colonialism continuing the exploitation of indigenous communities through the colonization of their bodies, and the flora and fauna of their lands, a new form of colonization termed biocolonialism. I am interested as well in how the adoption of biotechnology, including ancestry testing, by Native communities highlights the problems of internalized blood narratives. This second chapter examines how a blood narrative affects the present and will affect the future without interventions, as evidenced by the pursuits of genomics towards indigenous people and the ways in which genomics is used by indigenous nations. Here I explore further the theory of biological citizenship, and how it might be useful in Indian Country for understanding the work that blood does and what else might bring people together in ways that are cohesive instead of divisive.

Finally, after presenting the problems arising from the use of a blood narrative, I turn to contemporary literature as a production site of alternative narratives of belonging. Here, Native literature revises this blood narrative with the tool of DNA, and creates other narratives of identity, all while dissecting the legal and scientific definitions of identity and belonging. I call these narratives “alternarratives” because they provide an alternative to the reigning narratives of identity and belonging, with focus on the Other, the alterity of the Native American. These alternarratives in turn
provide other ways to understand citizenship, both political belonging and other modes, including the relationship to the dominant U.S. culture. Two authors are the focus of these third and fourth chapters: Gerald Vizenor, a White Earth Anishinaabe wordsmith, in “Alternarratives in the Writings of Gerald Vizenor: *Heirs of Columbus* and *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57*,” and Thomas King, a Cherokee novelist, in “Thomas King’s Alternarratives at the Border.” I analyze the work of each writer with the help of the lessons learned in the preceding chapters on citizenship and genomics to produce a greater understanding of blood narratives and their ramifications, and to demonstrate the healing power of stories. For each author, I focus on two novels: Vizenor’s *Heirs of Columbus* and *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* and King’s *Green Grass, Running Water* and *Truth and Bright Water*. For Vizenor, the alternarratives reside in understandings of survivance and how changing (or replacing) a blood narrative has to happen through the act of storytelling in order to heal the community. Further, though, Vizenor demonstrates that blood narratives have affected global relations and identities that cross nations. The two texts in the Vizenor chapter demonstrate a redemptive use of genomics when it is used with a new story, and an examination of the global identities affected by a blood narrative and how multiply narrated stories can move beyond these limits. King in particular utilizes alternarratives that can be described in terms of multiplicity of identity, including his own project promoting the advantages of pan-tribalism. The two texts in the King chapter demonstrate identity development over time and the power of
stories to change the world. I argue that the alternarratives offer answers to the
problems highlighted by the struggles described in the preceding chapters. These
narratives can offer an alternative to a blood narrative by providing a foundation to
belonging that need not rely on blood but privileges the importance of stories and the
act of telling stories, getting the story right, to change the world.

As it operates in American Literature, and particularly in American Indian
Literature and communities, a blood narrative produces citizenships and identities that
are self-limiting, and these forms of belonging reinforce that same master narrative, a
common story of power of one group over another; here of blood. The limits imposed
on identity by these relations are a problem because they prevent greater understanding.
New narratives that resist the idea that blood mediates belonging exist and are
emerging, and in these creative works of literature lays the possibility for redemptive
and new understandings, and forms, of citizenship. These new narratives can provide
other ways to understand our relationships to one another and our overall belonging, be
that to a nation, a land, an affinity group, each other, or globally.
2. Regulating Narratives: Constrained Citizenship and the Force of Legislation

A sovereign nation amends its constitution by a vote of the people. The amendment means that a small part of the population is no longer considered citizens. Those affected appeal, claiming they can satisfy the new requirements but they utilize new technology and old documents, and again they are rejected by the nation. Other nations get involved, claiming that this nation is breaking pacts and being discriminatory.

While this scenario could take place anywhere, this chapter will analyze its instance in an American Indian tribal nation, the Cherokee Nation located in the modern US state of Oklahoma, which recently voted to remove citizenship from a group known as the Freedmen. Freedmen is the term used to describe former slaves who became a part of the Five Civilized Tribes, and their descendants. The case study of the Cherokee Nation (CN) amendment demonstrates that more than issues over blood quantum are at play and at stake, and the clash between the CN and Freedmen revolves around a problematic blood narrative. The Cherokee Nation, and any tribal nation, has the sovereign right to determine their own citizenry and their requirements for citizenship. Legislation and membership requirements for tribes reveal the influence of a blood narrative. By analyzing the conflict and the ways that regulations affect citizenship and
ideas about belonging generally, I show that another narrative is needed to undergird citizenship and reflect belonging for CN and other tribes.

In March 2007, a special vote came to the citizens of the Cherokee Nation about the status of the Freedmen and intermarried whites. The proposition up for decision was a constitutional change that would mean that the Freedmen and intermarried whites were no longer admissible for Cherokee Nation citizenship, but instead that right would be reserved for those who could prove themselves to be Indian by blood. In the case of the Shawnee and Delaware peoples who remained CN citizens, Indian by blood. In the vote, the Freedmen and intermarried whites were removed from the citizenship Rolls, which are based on the Dawes Rolls of 1906. The CN does not have a terminal blood quantum requirement, but with this amendment, Indian blood became an obvious requirement. This move by the voters of the Cherokee Nation presents a conception of Cherokee identity that ties history and belonging into a blood narrative—a story that relies on blood, whether metaphorical or physical, to conceive of identity. This overly determined conception of identity, both personal and communal, produces a number of effects evident in the legislation and other places. Belonging in the CN includes both community affiliation and recognition, but also refers to the legal form of belonging known as citizenship. When a blood narrative undergirds the community identity, the

belonging of that community is also influenced by that blood narrative. When a blood
narrative undergirds community identity, that blood narrative also influences
determinations of belonging, through citizenship and other means, to that community.

Many consider American Indians as a “race,” a socially and politically
constructed identification, with the individual tribal identifications taken as ethnic
identifiers. However, this understanding of American Indian identity is limited,
especially given the complexities of politics, recognition, and relationships of tribes with
the Federal and state governments, which other ethnicities can only come near achieving
through organizations, caucuses, or other groupings that tend to be panethnic. A racial
understanding of American Indian peoples also precludes the citizenship of tribal
nations from being based on anything other than the faulty biological reasoning that
created “races” in human beings. Instead, understanding tribal citizenship as like other
modern national citizenships, such as that of the United States, helps to facilitate
understanding of the possibilities of who is American Indian. There exists a racial or
ethnic understanding of the term, in how it is used in the United States census among
other places, that ties American Indian identity to ancestry and descent, but there is also
the legal identity of tribal citizenship. These delineations of identity are overlapping.
The way in which identity is discussed by those involved in this case study, as well as
the different legal stances, contributes to the understanding that the CN citizenship
decision may have been more about individual identity than cultural belonging. A
person, or a nation, may have many overlapping identities and these identities cohere
into affiliation and different kinds of belonging. The belonging accorded by citizenship also produces a legal identity that may in turn feed into other forms of belonging.

Many current membership requirements rely on blood to create belonging by requiring a certain blood quantum—or descent from a blooded ancestor—for citizenship. American Indian citizenship implies identity unlike other nationalities because at least in part of a blood narrative. The slippage between the kinds of belonging—such as legal, ethnic, community—illustrates the overlap and incompleteness of the current paradigms. American Indian citizenship, which need not imply citizenship in the nation, implies identity unlike other nationalities thanks at least in part to a blood narrative. The slippage between the kinds of belonging—such as legal, ethnic, community—belyes the overlap and incompleteness of the current paradigms. Overall this examination reveals both the inadequacy of blood narratives to configure identity and belonging, and the lack of a monolithic discourse of citizenship in both the U.S. and American Indian nations.

This chapter explores the interactions among history, law, and policy and shows how a blood narrative emerges from the effort to regulate belonging at the level of citizenship in these areas. The CN has been forced to defend its sovereign right in the US court system, where those Freedmen and intermarried whites whose citizenship was removed have sought reinstatement of that citizenship. The Freedmen base their appeal on the grounds that the document that accorded them citizenship was not the 1866
amendments to the CN constitution, but the Treaty of 1866 between the United States and the Cherokee Nation. This debate has been waged not only in the courts, but also in the media, on the internet, and has now involved the United States Congress. The Freedmen’s reaction to their disenfranchisement by the CN derives from this blood narrative as well as a larger American understanding of identity that ties blood to race and nation, and further conflates these concepts. They uphold this blood narrative in fighting the amendment on the same terms. This blood narrative registers an outmoded premise; it is an artifact of an earlier moment in which cultural contact among white settlers, natives, and enslaved peoples generated confusion about the nature of belonging across the cultures. The Freedmen utilize not only history but also genetic testing in order to construct the story that clashes with the one presented by the Cherokee Nation, to present their side of who ought to belong to the CN.

The current situation concerning the Freedmen and the Cherokee Nation comes from a longstanding tension in Indian Country about how tribes can construct citizenship that will sustain the people and the nation. This narrative of blood that is included in the logic of the Dawes Rolls and in the understanding of tribal membership may have been useful at the time for retaining a recognizable Cherokee Nation amid challenges from a colonizing action, but the division in the Dawes Rolls between the Cherokees by Blood and the Freedmen reinforced an idea of difference and an allocation
of resources that undermines the expressed ideals of the Cherokee Nation in modern times.

Each interest group in this case constructs its own story about the past—its own history—that generates an understanding of and justification for its claim about the nature of the CN and who does and ought to belong to it. The CN utilizes ties to the land and historical documents, such as the Dawes Rolls, that legitimate those ties to construct identity and belonging. The CN continues the story, through which it has constructed those claims, in its modern attempts to change citizenship. What I show over the course of this study is that a blood narrative is not adequate to reflect the diversity in identity and belonging of this modern nation and its desire, as well as the desire of the people, to have a narrative that will preserve them and their culture into the future. Citizenship can take many forms outside of the legal construct explored here, one of which will be explored later. Further though, belonging can take on many forms. Even without the formal, legal recognition of the tribe, the Freedmen may maintain community affiliations and belong to stomp grounds or Indian churches, other forms of connecting their tribal identities to their cultural practices.

Many questions emerge around the issue of the Freedmen and the Cherokee Nation constitutional change: what is at stake for each side (the Cherokee Nation government, the citizens of the Cherokee Nation, and the Freedmen) in the decision to retain, or to remove, citizenship? What are the benefits of citizenship, especially for
someone who is not marked as “Indian by blood”? What are the implications for identity, especially racial or ethnic claims of identity? And most importantly, what anxiety does this tension expose not only for the Cherokee Nation, but for Native American Indian nations overall? My project is motivated by my effort to understand how narratives of blood inform identity and are then utilized in determinations of belonging constituted by citizenship and other forms of community affiliations.

2.1 Looking Back

Descent, blood quantum, and blood narrative all have nuanced differences and relations to history that I explore in this section. The current conflict registers the effect of both blood quantum and a blood narrative on the original laws of the Cherokee people. Even without a minimal blood quantum requirement, descent requirements for CN citizenship rely on similar ideas of culture conveyed through biology, but which cannot be proven except through documents that themselves include the touch of human error. While descent has its usefulness for tribal citizenship, it does not provide a comprehensive and sustainable basis for determining identity and belonging of community members. Blood quantum also affects how other Cherokee tribes that use the same or similar census rolls present their understanding of identity and belonging. The basis for belonging of blood quantum does not allow for immigration that marks modern nations, but instead reinforces the inaccurate biological notions of race and their correlation with tradition and culture.
History and legal documents have marked the change from the Cherokees being a matrilineal clan kinship system to the modern Cherokee Nation citizenship system. The Cherokee matrilineal clan kinship system meant the continuation of the tribe occurred through the mothers. The children of Cherokee women were considered Cherokee, no matter who the father was, and perhaps in response to situations, while not common, where the father was not identifiable. The early laws of the Cherokee Nation, which were first recorded in 1808, track a changing attitude about community belonging, as mixed children from the union of a Cherokee woman and a white man and then a Cherokee man and white woman gain acceptance, and citizenship. However, after contact, more exogamy with colonizer and settler groups eventually led to an 1825 resolution that allowed for “acknowledgement of the rights of the children of Cherokee men and white women ‘as equal to all the immunities and privileges enjoyed by the citizens descending from the Cherokee race, by the mother’s side’ (Laws of the Cherokee Nation 57)” (sum. in Strickland 217-8), meaning the children of these unions would be considered Cherokee. However, in these early laws, the union between a Cherokee person and a “negro,” and the offspring of such, are not recognized as legal unions or citizen productions.

These early laws led to the first Cherokee Constitution in 1827, which has been subsequently altered by both amendments and treaties. In the Treaty of 1866, the U.S. required the CN to incorporate the Freedmen and their descendants as well as the
Shawnee and Delaware peoples into the Cherokee Nation as citizens. At the same time, amendments to the Cherokee constitution conferred citizenship on these very same peoples. Which document ensures citizenship to the Freedmen is unclear, and each document provides a basis for the argument of the Freedmen and CN, respectively, setting treaty rights against sovereign rights. However, the courts are set to sort out this discrepancy.

These initial expansions of belonging through the use of early laws, documents, and constitutional amendments continue to the Dawes Rolls. These Rolls inscribe history, and undergird the policy used to regulate identity and belonging. The influence of a blood narrative on the current policy stems from the complicated history of the Dawes Rolls. These census Rolls, compiled throughout the Five Tribes between 1889 and 1914, with the Cherokee Nation Rolls being completed in 1906, were a way to document all of the members of the tribal nations before these nations were to be dissolved, along with Indian Territory, in 1907. Happening nearly 70 years after Removal, the creation of the Dawes Rolls excluded many Cherokee and Freedmen who were not in the Territory to receive their allotment, nor to be recorded on the Rolls. The Dawes Rolls present a particular narrative of Indian identity, and they too have a textual history and set of stories that help to define who is and is not Indian, by blood and by policy. The history

1 The Shawnee and Delaware peoples were incorporated into the Cherokee Nation at this time as reparations for the Cherokee Nation siding with the Confederacy during the Civil War, whereby the Cherokee Nation was required to give up a section of land for occupation by these two newly removed tribes and to subsequently incorporate them into the citizenry of the tribe, tying their citizenry to land.
of the Dawes Rolls involves various means of deriving blood quantum and marking to
denote those varieties. It creates more than a record of the Dawes census but also a
record of how belonging operated at the time, through modifications that occurred to
the documents themselves. The Dawes Rolls are notoriously flawed, with inaccuracies
in blood quantum, roll placement, and exclusion of whole families. Some individuals
were listed with the Dawes Commission by their neighbors, with inaccuracies in blood
quantum that are passed down to their descendants. One good example of these
inaccuracies in recording of blood quantum is that of Redbird Smith, a well-known
spiritual leader who did not agree with enrollment, but whose neighbor listed him on
the roll, where he was recorded as a “full-blood, 4/4.” This blood quantum reflected his
cultural completeness, but he was part-white by his ancestry.

The information that the Dawes Rolls contain and convey over time suffers from
these errors. The Cherokees were listed on the Cherokee by Blood Roll while Freedmen
were listed on the Freedmen Roll. Historians have recorded names that were literally
cut off one roll and put on another, usually a transfer from the Indian by Blood Roll to
the Freedmen Roll. I refer here to “Indian by Blood” instead of “Cherokee by Blood”
because this practice extended across the tribes. The thinking behind these documents
was to inventory the tribes, as it was believed that the tribal nations would no longer
exist when Indian Territory no longer existed with its transformation into the state of
Oklahoma in 1907. While thinking that the separation of Rolls might not matter once the
Indian tribes were dissolved has been expressed to explain the different Rolls, if that were the case, it would have been just as simple to keep all names on the same list and not have so much differentiation. However, it helps us to understand the current conflict to turn back to initial Dawes Rolls, with their separations, and the maternal descent rules; this look backward helps to understand what is at stake in the future from what we do in the present. Blood quantum as a documented connection to the tribe accrues a kind of property value when associated with identity.² Part of the value comes from the legal inclusion in belonging to the nation. The information that the Dawes Rolls contain and convey over time suffers from these errors. The Cherokees were listed on the Cherokee by Blood Roll while Freedmen were listed on the Freedmen Roll. Historians have recorded names that were literally cut off one roll and put on another, usually a transfer from the Indian by Blood Roll to the Freedmen Roll. I refer here to “Indian by Blood” instead of “Cherokee by Blood” because this practice extended across the tribes.

The Federal thinking behind these census documents was to inventory the tribes, as it was believed that the tribal nations would no longer exist when Indian Territory was transformed into the state of Oklahoma in 1907. One reason for the separation of the Rolls that has been expressed is that after the tribes and Indian Territory were

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² Cheryl Harris discusses how this value is implied in society in her law review article “Whiteness as Property.”
dissolved, it would not matter who was on what Roll. However, if that were the case, it
would have been just as simple to keep all names on the same list and limit
differentiation. Instead the separation and various categories of information indicate an
intent to document differences, real or constructed. The current conflict can be
understood better by turning back to the initial Dawes Rolls including their separations,
and the Cherokee maternal descent rules; this look backward helps to demonstrate what
is at stake in the future from what we do in the present, and in the past. Blood quantum
as a documented connection to the tribe accrues a kind of property value when
associated with identity, where part of the value comes from the legal inclusion in
belonging to the nation.

Being listed on the rolls conveyed to that person and their descendents a
particular kind of belonging, while certain notes could also endanger their belonging
and that of their descendants. Blood quantum tabulations and which Roll—Cherokee or
Freedmen—the ancestor was listed on, impact current descendants as the Cherokee
Nation works to construct a citizenship that best reflects their cultural and documented
identities. The Rolls include notes for the category of the applicant, such as Adopted
(A), Intermarried White (IW), Doubtful or Denied (D), Freedmen (F), Freedmen
Doubtful or Denied (FD), Freedmen Rejected (FR), and Not Registered/Non-Resident
(NR). These categories attest to the Dawes Commission’s understanding of who was
and was not a part of the community, and how they established differences through
race, geography, and kinship. While a blood narrative had been operating, the Dawes Rolls codify it so that it becomes legible in a way that it had not been previously. That solidification of a blood narrative into these legible documents creates not an enforceable law, but instead a flawed basis of policy. The current unamended article of the CN constitution stipulates that citizens of the CN “must be original enrollees or descendants of original enrollees listed on the Dawes Commission Rolls, including the Delaware Cherokees of Article II of the Delaware Agreement dated the 8th day of May, 1867, and the Shawnee Cherokees of Article III of the Shawnee Agreement dated the 9th day of June, 1869, and/or their descendants” (Article IV, Section 1). This language includes the Freedmen and their descendants as it does not differentiate between the Dawes Rolls, but even using the Dawes Rolls has its problems.

The taking of Indian lands happened through many methods, and the misrecording of blood quantum as well as the allotment system itself produced many excess Indian lands of which settlers took possession. If an Indian by blood was recorded as “mixedblood,” which meant less than one-half Indian blood, than that person could have ownership over their land allotment. Owning one’s land gave them the ability to transfer the title of their land, and many deeds were quickly lost to debt, greed, and land grabs. On the other hand, if blood quantum was recorded as greater

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3 The category of Doubtful is interesting given that a separate Rejected category exists, even for the Freedmen, demonstrating there was an inconclusiveness to even this census work.
than one-half Indian blood, a guardian was given the land allotment, until the Indian should be deemed fit by the U.S. government to handle land ownership. This situation led to duplicity and greed by the guardians. Many allotments were lost in this way as well, and the allotment system itself produced surplus lands that were not given to the tribes, but instead were freed up for settlement. When these Rolls were recorded, errors in blood quantum tended to favor not the Indians, but the incoming settlers and soon-to-be citizens of Oklahoma. Overall, these inaccuracies in the recording system would cause further problems with the tribal citizenry as well as producing a weakened land base, and a weak base of policy.

2.1.1 Blood and Land

While many different paradigms have been used, identity and belonging rely on stories, history and documents, as well as legislation. Land has played a major role in understanding how these concepts are all tied up with one another, as have the notions of race and nation.

In particular, the land base of the Cherokee Nation is a fourteen county area, and many of the programs and services, including some scholarships offered by the Nation, are restricted to those citizens residing within this land base. This residency requirement eliminates much of the Cherokee Nation citizenry, though there are programs directed at these “outland” Cherokees, and in fact those citizens who reside outside of the Nation now have two at-large representatives to the tribal council.
However, given the history of who constituted a Cherokee citizen, this enlargement of belonging bespeaks a recognized need to adapt tradition to modern times, as evidenced by even the early laws reacting to changing times. Historically, only those Cherokees residing within Cherokee lands—established and transformed by many different treaties—were considered Cherokee citizens. When the Dawes Rolls split the Cherokee Nation citizens of Indian Territory into individual land holders who no longer lived on tribal lands per se, the understanding of who had a stake in the Cherokee Nation changed, and the citizenship adapted. The land holders were free to move around and reside outside of the Cherokee Nation lands, while still retaining their citizenship. Citizenship codifies belonging in ways that utterances, affirmations, or stories of identity do not. Land plays a particularly significant role in this process as well, but as we have seen, legislation can also control who does and does not belong to a community, in the legal form of citizenship or in other forms.

2.1.2 Cherokee Belonging

It is too simplistic to say that citizenship in this case stands in for race, because it does not. There are larger narratives at work that resist this generalization but which when influencing policy produce similar results to racism. The current conflict between the Cherokee Nation and the Freedmen involves both the original and new policies around citizenship, thereby carrying this blood narrative forward uninterrogated. This blood narrative, which is itself contradictory, underpins these questions of belonging,
and it continues to determine the nature of these debates and policies. The conflict, which in part is an effect of new technologies, has brought out some of the contradictions of the original policies.

Specifically, analyzing the rhetoric around the debate brings forth these contradictions as well as makes evident the operation of a blood narrative here. For example, in discussing the citizenship vote of 2007, Principal Chief Chad Smith stated:

“The Cherokee Nation’s citizenship policy is one of the most open and inclusive in all of Indian country. Of the 270,000 Cherokee citizens, there are many who are racially black, racially white, racially Hispanic and racially Asian. However, each one shares a common bond of having a Cherokee ancestor on the base roll of 1906. Regardless of their race, they are citizens of the Cherokee Nation and are accepted and are part of the Cherokee family.” (Chief Chad Smith, ICT, Mar 9, 2007)

Here Smith points out that the construct of race is not the core of Cherokee identity as racial “others,” who have Cherokee ethnicity in their ethnic admixture, are accepted as citizens. Further, Smith highlights the “open and inclusive” nature of the “Cherokee Nation citizenship policy,” that like other policies can change. This term does not really capture the sovereignty implicit in the situation, but it does belie the mutability of the connection between the people and the government. Neither American Indians nor African Americans had needed the concept of race to join their members before, but contact created new situations resulting in slavery and tribal removal, as well as pan-ethnic identification. However, this identification merges race, nation, people, and land as concepts, and many failed in attempts to tease these concepts apart. One’s identity
does not always insure belonging to a community, and community belonging itself does not always rely on identity. In the case of the legal belonging of citizenship accorded by a sovereign nation, identity can play as small a part as it does in the United States conception, which is widely inclusive of many identity groups, or as large a part as is evident in the use of blood quantum rules. How this belonging is constructed is important in understanding a blood narrative’s effect on policy for both the U.S. and the Cherokee. Further, Smith’s emphasis on the “common bond” between the citizens does not pinpoint an ethnicity or race, or common beliefs and values, but instead a common connection to a census document that has existed for a century. Again, the Dawes Rolls and Cherokee identity are linked to citizenship, but through this problematic blood narrative. Smith here systematically distinguishes citizenship and being a “part of the Cherokee family” from any particular racial construct, thereby presenting a construction of Cherokee identity that does not reduce to biological blood. Instead this presentation of blood appears to be connected to the census documents and therefore maintains a kind of history with the biology, but also an emphasis on the recording itself, the way in which the people were made legible through the recording of blood. These are overlapping and often contradictory ways of understanding Cherokee Nation citizenship.

Two examples will demonstrate how these paradigms of identity and belonging operate in the CN, along with their limits and misconceptions. These examples are
intended to show the ways in which community interaction augments belonging: whether one can or cannot represent the tribe, or whether one can or cannot learn the language of the tribe, makes a large difference in both personal perception of identity, and community representation.

The Miss Cherokee program, while limited to unmarried females, emphasizes education and integrity in its requirements of contestants. The program also requires one quarter blood degree or more of Cherokee blood for eligibility (www.cherokee.org/Culture/7/Page/default.aspx). Interestingly enough, this program does not appear to require citizenship in the Cherokee Nation, but instead focuses on the importance of blood quantum and education as values that represent the Nation, presenting phenotype as the important characteristic for entrants rather than political affiliation. A Cherokee woman might be EBCI, or UKB, or even Lakota in legal affiliation, but if she is at least one-quarter degree Cherokee blood quantum, then she is eligible to be Miss Cherokee Nation. Many old correlations have been made over time between being “fuller blooded” and being more cultural or traditional people. Blood quantum, given its inaccuracies, reflects neither genotype nor phenotype, but this use of blood quantum intends to draw from those women who may look more phenotypically “Indian.” This example highlights the restriction of possible representatives are restricted and the importance of visual representation of blood as it is expressed in phenotype, correlating higher blood quantum with those women who will look “more
Cherokee, ’although they may not be politically or culturally involved in the affairs of the nation. The next example demonstrates desires to limit services based on legal belonging.

A recent legislative proposal highlights the issues even within Cherokee Nation regarding a tribal program – Cherokee Language Immersion Program. The program serves children from kindergarten through fifth grade currently, with the goal of providing the students with education in Cherokee language that will be an important and incorporated aspect of their life. These children must reside within the CN in order to attend the school, but their parents choose to put them in to the program and the CN pays for the program and has an on-site facility for production of learning resources. A councilwoman proposed in June 2009 to limit the language immersion program to only those children who are members of federally recognized tribes. While there was particular fiscal and cultural protection logic to the councilwoman’s proposal, there was a backlash from the community that played out in the pages of the local newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix. The community members noted how the restriction of the program, the language, and its speakers would only serve to hamper the Cherokee language revitalization movement. Further, there were parents of immersion students who wrote in and lamented the small number of students in the classes as well as the paltry number of students who would be removed from the current classes, an action which would do little fiscally for the CN as well as one which would stigmatize those students who were
removed as those who do not belong. Even if these children are residents of the Cherokee Nation and speakers of the Cherokee language, if they do not have federal tribal citizenship (Cherokee or otherwise), they would be removed from the language class and the social groups to which they had become accustomed. This proposed legislation implies that federal tribal citizenship is what defines a true Indian, and that any true Indian, whether Cherokee by blood or not, would be enabled to learn the Cherokee language, but anyone else, even a state recognized Indian, or an undocumented Indian, would not be eligible to learn and use the Cherokee language. For the government, restrictions on services make sense from a logistical standpoint, in that the Cherokee Nation cannot provide services for their citizens from Tahlequah to California to Germany, but they also help define parameters of who is most a part of the Nation and who exists as more peripheral (literally) citizens. Use of residency requirement also highlights the importance of the connection to land and ancestors who also resided on that land, and the connection between citizens within the CN who share that home, who reside in Cherokee communities. However, the idea that the language should only be restricted to those people who can prove enrollment in a Federal tribe limits the future of the tribe by walling off the language into an esoteric knowledge and the narrative behind that limit itself derives from a blood narrative that first informed who is and is not an enrolled Indian.
To see the pervasiveness and diverse applications of this blood narrative, and its effects on policies, I turn now to the different ways of determining legal belonging among the federally recognized Cherokee tribes. The Cherokee Nation, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the United Keetoowah Band all are Cherokee peoples, but their tribal nations have developed over time, history, and space. The CN and UKB are located in northeastern Oklahoma, having been there since well before statehood and back when this area first became Indian Territory. The EBCI remained in the traditional homelands of the Cherokee, the Great Smoky Mountains in modern day North Carolina. Each has different criteria for determining citizenship, but also varying criteria for determining different types of belonging. The two other federally recognized bands of Cherokee Indians maintain minimum blood quantum requirements.

Whereas the Cherokee Nation has had to limit programs for its citizens while maintaining a fairly open citizenship policy, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians restricts its citizenship while leaving many of its services open to anyone who may be in need. The UKB Constitution states in Article IV, Section 1 that “the membership of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma shall consist of: All persons whose names appear on the list of members identified by a resolution dated April 19, 1949, and certified by the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency on November 16, 1949; Provided, that within five (5) years after the approval of this Constitution and Bylaws, such roll may be corrected by the Council of
the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.” Further, in Section 2, it states “the governing body of the Band shall have power to prescribe rules and regulations governing future membership.” This latter clause means that unlike the CN where a vote of the people was utilized to change membership requirements, the UKB Constitution authorizes the governing body to alter any of the rules and regulations. That governing body has currently established a one-quarter blood quantum requirement for any descendant from that 1949 Roll. Unlike the CN though, the UKB does not require UKB citizenship for all of its services, including a Cherokee language immersion childcare facility, elder meals and care, and other just-in-time services for the community, whether they are UKB citizens, CN citizens, another tribal citizen, or not. This inclusiveness provides a larger community even with limited legal belonging, creating new narratives while still holding on to the blood narrative.

In contrast, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) utilizes a different roll known as the Baker Rolls of 1924 and also requires a blood quantum of one-sixteenth. While less blood quantum is required than those of the UKB citizens, the EBCI tribal members still must maintain more than simple descent from the Baker Rolls. Even on these documents, many petitioners were denied and the reason given is listed as “not involved in the community” (Baker Rolls). This stipulation highlights an important and unnamed criterion for citizenship—active and most likely residential involvement in the community as a component of belonging. It also highlights the simple fact that
applications were denied from individuals (and families) who may have been ethnically Cherokee but were not involved in the community. This distinction meant that the real requirements for belonging at the time of the Baker Rolls had included not a biological understanding of identity alone but also a geographical and social component to the legal identity of citizenship. These examples demonstrate a range of belongings of which the Cherokee Nation case study allows closer analysis. This diversity demonstrates the large influence of a blood narrative and how it underpins policy decisions for many peoples. Even when not termed blood directly, the prior influence of blood narrative on enrollment decisions and eligibility, for example, belies a system that cannot extricate itself from the effects of this blood narrative.

2.2 Cherokee Nation and the Freedmen

The case study here is an intertwining of history, identity, and belonging. These strands are themselves made up of legislation, land, and misconceptions about biological difference. Both the Cherokee Nation and the Freedmen weave stories to encompass community; they have different visions of that community and use different tools to construct it. However, each story fails to be comprehensive enough to sustain the nation into the future. By using a rhetoric of identity to defend alterations in Cherokee Nation legal belonging, a blood narrative persists. In attempts to substantiate this rhetoric and the call for blood, the Freedmen turn to genetic testing to prove their
descent from a Cherokee by blood, drawing attention to this blood narrative, but not
overturning or replacing it.

### 2.2.1 Calling for Blood

The argument by the CN derives its sovereign right to determine citizenship
requirements from the CN constitution. It is here that the CN argue the Freedmen were
first incorporated into the tribe and also here that the amendment removes the
citizenship eligibility of the Freedmen descendants without a recorded Indian ancestor.

In connection to the CN constitutional amendment and the controversy that
ensued with the Freedmen, the CN has launched its own public relations campaign on
its website. Herein, they present their story about sovereignty and about what is
currently termed not the Freedmen Controversy or Freedmen Citizenship Issue, but
instead the Non-Indian Citizenship Issue. This title conveys the CN truth more solidly
than the other titles, and it addresses too the fact that this vote affected not only
Freedmen descendants but also the descendants of intermarried whites.4

Three years after the vote, the CN reports the story of the Constitutional
amendment on their governmental website by saying:

The Cherokee Nation voted on March 3, 2007 to amend our Constitution to
clarify eligibility for Cherokee citizenship. An overwhelming majority voted that

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4 Admittedly, those latter descendants were many fewer (9) than the Freedmen (2867) but it is important not
to elide the effects of the amendment vote. The intermarried whites and their descendents tend to get left
out of this discussion, as many of their descendents, by virtue of being “intermarried” would also have
ancestors on the Dawes Rolls; however, this vote impacts more than the Freedmen, though the Freedmen
have been most vocal in fighting the outcome.4
to be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, you must be able to trace your lineage to one Indian ancestor listed on the base roll of our people, also known as the Dawes Roll. Our Constitution has been amended accordingly. (www.freedmen.cherokee.org)

The first sentence of this statement highlights the idea that the CN needed to “clarify” the terms in the Constitution referring to eligibility for Cherokee citizenship. While this statement still refers to an amendment, the wording implies that the Freedmen and intermarried whites may have been “unclear” as to their ineligibility for citizenship, not that they had been eligible for citizenship previously and that that citizenship eligibility was being amended. The statement then notes that an “overwhelming majority” voted for the clarification. In a linked webpage, the CN further expounds upon this description through a timeline of relations between the CN and the Freedmen, and their descendants, which presents the date of amendment as:

March 3, 2007 - The new Constitutional amendment is approved by 77 percent of the vote. To be eligible for Cherokee citizenship under this amendment, one must trace back to a Cherokee, Shawnee or Delaware ancestor on the Dawes Rolls. Citizenship is colorblind and has nothing to do with race and everything to do with whether one is an Indian. (www.freedmen.cherokee.org)

The website timeline here clearly delineates differences between “race” and “Indian,” supporting the earlier point that race is not a useful concept for understanding American Indian peoples and nations, who are culturally and politically distinct but cannot be encompassed by race. Further, in this statement, the “overwhelming majority” becomes a clear “77 percent of the vote,” which elides the number of voters. In a 270,000 citizen nation, only about 8700 votes were cast, and while the amendment
passed by a 3 to 1 margin with 6693 voting for it and 2040 voting against it, the “overwhelming majority” of the citizens did not vote at all, while 2% voted for the amendment. The 77 percent referred to is of those who voted, not those who are citizens, and not those who are eligible citizens to vote in the election. In reporting the results of the vote, the CN says “2,867 Freedmen descendants and 9 Intermarried Whites descendants who had become citizens since March 2006 are disenrolled after being citizens for less than one year” (www.freedmen.cherokee.org). These statements highlight that these individuals had been citizens “for less than one year,” a qualification that refers back to the issue of eligibility and its clarification, and that undermines their claims. The reference here is to the fight for recognition waged by many Freedmen, following the 1976 Cherokee Nation Constitution’s ratification, which they did not win until 2006. This statement also has appended the idea that “citizenship is colorblind and has nothing to do with race and everything to do with whether one is Indian,” which attempts to move the decision of the amendment away from a biological notion of belonging founded in race, to the slippery identity of “Indian.”

As defined, in at least thirty-three different ways by the Federal government (Beckenhauer 164), Indian refers to a biological construct, but can also refer to those involved in and recognized by a community. Further, in a kind of circular logic, many American Indians, theorists, and politicians argue that an “Indian” is someone enrolled in a federally recognized tribal nation and therefore the understanding presented that
citizenship “has everything to do with [being] Indian” turns back on itself: to be a citizen one must be an Indian, to be an Indian one must be a citizen.

When Chief Smith comments on the vote itself, he presents an interpretation of what led the CN voters to vote for change:

So why did the Cherokees vote in record numbers to require a common ancestor on the Rolls of the Cherokee Nation by blood? We all know that there are too many Cherokees to provide with per capita payments from gaming proceeds. The vast majority of Cherokees do not use the services of health care, housing and education. It seems that many Cherokees chose to exclude non-Indians because of a sense of identity. Cherokees are Indians. They are the indigenous and aboriginal people of this land and there is a commonality of history, language, heritage and culture. It finally came to a point that non-Indians were claiming to be Cherokee when, in fact, they are not. So the vote was an affirmation of identity as Indian for those voting. (Chief Chad Smith, ICT, Mar 9, 2007)

Smith does a great job in this argument of addressing potential claims and benefits of citizenship, especially as they are understood outside of Indian Country. The return to this rhetoric of identity, and in a sense ethnic fraud, is telling as well. Smith goes on to comment that “it seems” the vote was “to exclude non-Indians because of a sense of identity.” Smith’s focus on identity, later “an affirmation of identity as Indian”, highlights the focus on this abstract idea. The Indian identity that Smith refers to also encompasses the Delaware and Shawnee peoples, whose citizenship this amendment protected, even while those peoples sought to assert their own tribes as separate, distinct and federally recognized rather than continuing as Cherokee citizens. A particularly interesting aspect of this debate connects to anthropologist James Mooney’s cataloguing
of Cherokee history and myths, where he notes that “The Cherokee have strains of Creek, Catawba, Uchee, Natchez, Iroquois, Osage, and Shawano [Shawnee] blood, and such admixture implies contact more or less intimate and continued” (Mooney 234). Based on this source, Cherokee blood itself lacks a purity as associated with blood. It is the introduction of the Dawes Rolls that fixes a particular notion of purity upon the construction of Cherokee blood, a notion that was never truly applicable.

The Freedmen’s reaction accepts this blood narrative and attempts to answer the CN’s call for blood; however, when the Freedmen accept this blood narrative they inherently accept defeat. The narrative has to change from being one based on blood in order for the policies to reflect the expressed values of the CN in its belonging, inclusive or not of the Freedmen based on values, not on Rolls.

2.2.2 Answering the Call

The Freedmen’s appeal stems from the claim that they were granted citizenship through the Treaty of 1866, which both the Cherokee Nation and the United States Federal government signed. In attempting to remove the rights of citizenship from the Freedmen descendants, they argue that the Cherokee Nation is breaking the treaty. While the United States has broken many treaties over time, if this tribal nation broke the treaty, it would also have greater implications for Indian policy as well as consequences for the CN that the US does not itself suffer when it fails to meet treaty obligations.
Marilyn Vann leads the Descendants of the Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes Association, and has published a list of facts, which presents the Freedmen side.

Therein, she answers frequently asked questions, such as who are the Cherokee Freedmen:

Cherokee freedmen are people of African descent who have rights to Cherokee citizenship since 1866 (and in some cases prior) based under a treaty between the US government and the Cherokee nation, the amended 1839 constitution and the present 1976 constitution. The freedmen were either former slaves of the Cherokees or were free mixed black Cherokees who generally did not have citizenship rights prior to 1866. (www.freedmen5tribes.com)

Vann’s description highlights from the beginning the differentiation of the Freedmen as “people of African descent”; however, this fact alone would not bar them from citizenship by the description given by the CN, as long as they also could prove descent from an “Indian ancestor listed on the Dawes Rolls.” Vann also presents the importance of history, by pinpointing specific dates and documents from which the Freedmen derive their claims to Cherokee citizenship.

Vann goes on to answer the question as to who is eligible for Cherokee citizenship:

All persons who were listed on the Dawes Rolls and their descendants, during the early 1900s have the right to Cherokee citizenship based on the 1976 constitution. The Dawes Rolls of the Cherokee nation have several sections – Delaware, Cherokee by blood, Cherokee Freedmen, etc. (www.freedmen5tribes.com)

Here Vann highlights the importance of the differentiation made by the Dawes Commission in recording the census, but she also highlights a “common bond” among
the Freedmen, the Delaware, and the citizens of the Cherokee Nation. She also connects the Rolls to the 1976 CN constitution. For the Freedmen, Vann states that the changes made by the Cherokee Nation vote contradict past inclusion of the Freedmen and their descendants.

This issue here is larger than these two groups, as the US Federal system has gotten involved through both the courts and Congress. The issue of sovereign right versus treaty right regarding citizenship is being adjudicated in the Supreme Court, and Congresswoman Diane Watson (D-California) has spearheaded an attempt to sanction the CN for this decision by cutting off federal funding to the tribe and seeking to terminate what is arguably the largest tribe in the US. This legislation not only has a strong backing from the Congressional Black Caucus but also has huge implications for all tribes in the US. At this time, these appeals are still undecided and in committee, but the developments in these areas will resound in Indian Territory. While this debate as a historical and legal argument will be settled in the courts, the narratives produced and reproduced on the sides are important in how they will propagate through time, and how they will change or remain the same with technological interventions.

In the courts, they are arguing that their citizenship is protected by treaty rights. While the fight wages in court about whether citizenship rights as they were previously understood can stand, or if the sovereign right lies with the CN voters to decide who can gain membership, the lineages of the Freedmen are being brought to the court of public
opinion as well as the citizenship office. If the Cherokee Nation wants proof of Indian
blood, the Freedmen will show it—through documents or DNA.

These documents, however, are not always genealogies traced from the Dawes
Rolls. Many come from family stories, as well as research about particular ancestors
who may have done something famous, or infamous, and therefore have more
documentation within the records about their deeds and identities. Therefore the
narrative of identity they produce does not comport with the standards established by
the CN, producing a challenge to the CN’s sovereignty, which itself derives in part from
the Dawes Rolls. The Freedmen expose the fact that there are more Cherokee peoples
than merely descended from or recorded within the Dawes Rolls, and these exceptions
question the authority of the current Cherokee Nation to truly represent the people.

Given the turn by the Cherokee Nation to a rhetoric of identity that is predicated
on blood, it follows logically that the Freedmen sought to answer the questions of
identity and rights to citizenship on both legal and biological grounds. When the
Freedmen challenge this blood narrative being predicated upon the Dawes Rolls by
supplementing these stories with genetic testing, they draw attention to this blood
narrative as the basis for CN identity. With genetic testing, the Freedmen seek to stretch
the bounds of the capacity of blood to determine identity by moving it into an era when
testing someone at birth could prove if they were or were not eligible for citizenship.
These DNA ancestry tests delineate allelic variation frequencies in and between communities, and the tests’ producers claim some of these variations mark ancestry from particular Native American tribes, or even particular African tribes, depending on who is seeking what ancestry information. Here, technology is being used to address the problems of the Rolls, including the division between Freedmen and Cherokee by Blood, as well as the failure of the Rolls to be conclusive and inclusive. Although I do not believe that these tests have any bearing on the citizenship decision, they do manifest an attempt to address blood’s use as the mediator of identity and citizenship in requirements of Cherokee (or Indian) by blood. This move complicates the understanding of Indian blood because it means it cannot be a metaphorical reference for either party; the CN have stated a requirement of it for citizenship and the Freedmen carry it further to establish its biological viability.

The genetic testing appears to offer a remedy to these historical flaws of the Dawes Rolls by providing a biological marker for Cherokee identity, which could therefore be used for determining Cherokee citizenship. However, the Cherokee Nation has ruled that genetic testing results are not suitable documentation for citizenship applications. They do so for good reason too, not only the sovereign right, but the idea that just because one has blood does not mean they have involvement in the community, education of and/or practice of the culture and its values, language use, or any of the other signs of Cherokee identity. Then again, neither does blood quantum, though there
is a longstanding implied connection between cultural authenticity and bloodedness for Indian peoples, as well as many other colonized peoples, evidenced by the Miss Cherokee example.

By using genetic testing to validate citizenship, the Freedmen biologize identity in ways that may or may not have been intended by the CN in their citizenship decision. Instead, the CN may be capitalizing on the Dawes Rolls’ errors in order to expand the biological understanding of blood to a more metaphorical meaning; however this attempt to stretch the literal into the figure inevitably reproduces the same problematic effects. This expansive reading allows for a better understanding of the CN reaction to the Freedmen’s use of genetic testing. The reaction by the CN to the genetic testing evidences that the CN does not mean biological blood, but the “blood” invoked then must still be specified. It appears to be the “blood” of the “Indian by blood” Dawes Roll, meaning it is both metaphorical and literary, biological and literal, and yet none of these things at the same time.

2.3 Looking Forward

These reactions demonstrate that the Cherokee Nation and the Freedmen are at a standstill, with each side calling for change, for a kind of citizenship that perpetuates the Cherokee Nation and sustains the Cherokee people. This standstill generates the question of what tools can create such a citizenship, and what criteria that citizenship would be based upon. The CN voters are saying that blood is the only characteristic that
proves relation to the Nation, and the Freedmen are trying to satisfy that requirement while appealing the basis of their citizenship.

I contend that the reaction of both sides to using blood only perpetuates the problem of defining citizenship by sacrificing cultural values, and the anxiety that must be addressed concerns how the people go on. How does CN create a Nation that will continue to have Cherokee cultural values, and how do the Freedmen contribute to or complicate that project? The CN and the Freedmen seek a construct of identity and belonging that reflects cultural values and stories but that is not overly determined by blood. Inherently, the CN will determine its own citizenry and I support that sovereign right. I do however contend that they have to address the looming contentions that as large as the CN has become, it does not attend to its responsibilities to the citizens, nor do they know who they are, and the party line is not the only history, or the only story of the principal people, the Ani Kituwah. The narrative of blood quantum and “Indian by blood” is no longer working for Cherokee peoples.

Overall, each tribe relies on different stories to protect their sense of belonging in the place they live in, as that belonging is tied to place, at least in part. The concerns raised herein tie these stories to other tribes that seek citizenship reflective not of an abstract concept of blood, but of cultural values. The stakes in these debates about belonging and how it should or should not be related to blood are high, and the value of decisions for citizenship criteria, as well as their sustainability for the future of the tribe
are important and have to be decided by each tribe. After much analysis, the controversy that has emerged between the Cherokee Nation and the Cherokee Freedmen appears to be less about identity as Chief Smith argues, or genealogy per se, and more about the stories that we live by and use to establish our communities, as well as to protect them. This contradiction bespeaks a desire for a new narrative to undergird policy and accommodate modern nations that is predicated not on blood, not on documents, not on land, but instead on a story that encompasses (or more closely approximates) belonging. The next chapter explores why blood does not work for these purposes, but also why awareness of the biological component of citizenship can allow us to create a narrative or use an existing one to better understand identity and how we belong to one another. This move and countermove by the CN and Freedmen provoke certain questions: What does genetic testing do to address the use of blood in determining belonging? What does genetic testing do to address the problems of the Dawes Rolls? Is it more inclusive? What are the flaws? These questions will be addressed in much more detail in the following chapter.

This controversy highlights the tension at play within Indian Country about who is and is not Indian and what kinds of belonging that law, ethnicity or culture ascribe to that identity. In the end though, the traditions offer a way out. The endurance of the oral tradition, and the healing power of stories—to correct clerical errors in the Dawes
Rolls or to elucidate the tradition associated with belonging—offers a solution to the problems encountered through the use of a blood paradigm for identity and belonging.

There is a story told in the Cherokee Nation that undergirds an acceptance of movement, of a people who can be diasporic and yet have ties to the land, a kind of belonging, in a particular place. The story, “Journey of the Cherokees,” is presented in Cherokee and then described in English, though it is not a direct translation: “It tells of a land that was surrounded by water that was undrinkable; how they sacrificed from temples; how the earth shook and the mountain tops opened up and fire issued forth – how the land began to sink into the water that surrounded them.” (7) One of the origin stories of the Cherokee people, this story tells of the people leaving this volcanic island in the south and traveling north to a land mass. Here the people cross four large rivers, over the course of centuries, while living with different peoples, until they come to “the place they had come to inhabit [which] is now called the Great Smoky Mountains” (8). Based on this version of the story, the Cherokee people had a history of migrations and movements to new lands, including their mountain homeland.

This story is also noted by James Mooney as told in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), but not as a complete separate origin/migration story nor with any geographical particularity assigned to it. Mooney notes a migration story where the Cherokee cross four rivers, but remarks more on how it relates to the Biblical Moses story and other missionary tales that have been amalgamated with traditional stories.
instead of how it may have a basis in actual migrations (Mooney 428-9). Mooney particularly points out that while four is significant for the Cherokees, the particular rivers or movement that might be referenced in this tale are not immediately discernable either in their particularity of place or specifics given in the narrative. This story conveys a sense of perpetual migration and diaspora that would be especially useful to the Cherokee Nation in the modern state of Oklahoma, but less useful to the Eastern Band, who maintain homeland claims in the mountains of the modern state of North Carolina. The different lands of the tribes, though they are the same people essentially, leads to the use of different stories. Relying on stories that contend they arrived in the Smoky Mountains, and not that they have always been there, is more problematic for the Eastern Band and their stakes in that homeland. This lack of precision in the stories is both a function of time and interpretation, but also of the relation between narrative history and identity. This story has nothing to do with blood, but has everything to do with how one identifies with place and tradition and creates belonging from those identities. While this story serves some, it does not serve all, demonstrating that other stories are needed for the people.

Before the identity, there is the story. Before the genealogy, there is the story. Before the blood, lies the story that allows for our belonging.
3. The Future is Now: DNA and Tribal Citizenship

Unlike the Cherokee Nation (CN) and their call for blood as a figure, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) has turned their call for blood into a direct requirement of DNA for citizenship. The situation of the Cherokee Nation and their Freedmen demonstrates not only the influence of a blood narrative on legislation as well as the surrounding controversy and its rhetoric, but it also demonstrates the problems inherent in using census rolls for current citizenship. Passed in 2010, Tribal Ordinance 277 requires all citizens and applicants for citizenship to produce maternity and paternity DNA testing results to prove their parents are who they say they are and that they are all descended from the tribal roll, known as the Baker Roll and completed in 1924. These rolls have their own histories, and that of the Dawes Rolls has been discussed, but similar errors and omissions occurred with other census rolls throughout tribes. The Baker Roll undergirds the EBCI’s enrollment criteria, and while the issues with enrollment are similar to that of the Cherokee Nation, a recent enrollment audit revealed not only problems with the rolls and records keeping, but also led to the legislation that problematically requires DNA. This chapter explores the story of turning to DNA to demonstrate the continued effects of a blood narrative, but further shows how this essentialization of tribal identity through DNA is one step down a genetically deterministic path.
Further while the Freedmen case study evidences the problems of the multiply signifying figure of blood particularly as an influence on the legal form of belonging, the case of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians’ turn to requiring DNA testing of citizens and applicants for citizenship evidences the complications that the figure of blood encounters when faced with the literal substance. The layered narrative of identity cannot be supported by the literal substance and its analysis, because that removes important referents for that identity, for example, culture, language, and history. Requiring DNA makes citizenship strictly a biological category, connecting an applicant to previously recognized citizens through DNA alone, not family, not kinship, and not story. This limited category need not be so as a “biological citizenship” can be imagined that does not continue the limits of a blood narrative. However, to do so, the story told has to be taken into account, and this case evidences the need for a new story, an alternarrative. Finally, the chapter examines the possibility of an alternarrative in this concept of biological citizenship.

3.1 Requiring DNA: Case study of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

Passed by the EBCI Tribal Council on June 3, 2010, Tribal Ordinance 277 requires members of the tribe whose eligibility is in question and particularly new applicants for membership to produce DNA tests, at their own expense, to prove their claims of both maternity and paternity. While not the first tribe to utilize DNA testing in this or other
manners, the turn to DNA to substantiate the uncertainties of belonging proves problematic in its narrative, legislative, and scientific bases.

Unlike the Cherokee Nation, the EBCI do require a blood quantum for enrollment: 1/16th as calculated from the Baker Roll. During the first decade of the 21st century, enrollment has been limited through a restrictive and changing application process as the tribe examined its own enrollment processes through an audit that led to this new policy intended to help protect the membership. In relation to the blood quantum requirement, this new policy intertwines both the figurative referent of blood in blood quantum and the literal referent in DNA, a move that can only perpetuate the problems of the past by reinserting them in the present and future.¹ The Baker Roll, which has served as the point of origin to determine membership in the tribe, continues to serve that function within the new policy. One change is that to verify claims that they are listed on or descended from the Rolls, an applicant must also provide DNA testing confirming their maternal and paternal parents are truly their parents.² This legislative development has a significant back-story however, and it is necessary to understand how this point was reached, and why the same problems will continue.

The call for DNA began in a call for reform so that the tribe would have a better system of enrollment, and so that their membership would not need to be audited again

¹ The movement from blood narrative to DNA narrative and the problems concordant with that conflation are detailed in the Introduction.
² The second Baker Roll, making it Rolls, is the Baker Revised Roll that includes those who are born and therefore become enrolled following the 1924 completion of the original Baker Roll.
in the future. In 2002, the EBCI passed a referendum to audit both the currently enrolled members of the tribe and the system of enrollment itself. This move came out of a history of contested belonging in the community, dating at least back to the creation of the tribal rolls, which included just over 3100 names of which the tribal council challenged more than 1200. The creation of the rolls themselves had issues similar to those of other nations, but at the point at which it becomes the governing document of membership, the Roll is a legally enforced document. The call for the audit comes at a time of economic prosperity in the tribe, where enrollment benefits include per capita payments from the tribe as a result of casino profits, access to healthcare, and the right to live in and own land on Qualla Boundary. In 2006, the EBCI contracted the Falmouth Institute, an outside consulting firm, “to determine the condition, status, completeness and accuracy of the enrollment records of the tribe.” This audit produced evaluations of record maintenance but also evaluations of the system and census basis of the enrollment records, inconsistencies, and recommendations for the future. The Cherokee One Feather newspaper published the report of the enrollment audit on October 11, 2009. This dissemination of the audit report reflects the importance of sharing the information with the community through the print and online media, and the tribe also held meetings to discuss the audit in the tribal council district communities. As this audit

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3 Tribal Council has expressed concerns that this audit, given its time and fiscal costs, should be done most completely so that it does not have to be repeated in the future, particularly in the near future.
http://64.38.12.138/boards/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=40729
4 Enrollment Audit for EBCI, reproduced in Cherokee One Feather, 10/26/2009.
was of the people themselves, it was important to give the results to the people in public forums, as well as to discuss the next steps of using the information. But first, the Institute and the tribal council had to be sure the people knew what the audit found.

3.1.1 Outside Concerns and Recommendations

The audit report begins with a statement from the consulting firm about the most important application of the information they have generated: “It is critical that one of the primary results of this type of project is a renewed dedication by the tribe to the development of and adherence to strict file and records management policies and procedures” (COF, C4). Even in presenting their findings, the Institute proffers that the key next step for the tribe is better maintenance of the files and records themselves. The files and records of applications, rolls, and enrolled citizens were the primary content of the audit, and any discrepancy in their information could also affect the process of the audit. When seeking DNA as corroborating evidence, the tribe perverts this logical next step by not attending to all the current documents and by seeking more information and documentation that they have not proven the ability to protect, which shows that the ways in which they think they might best protect and secure their membership are ways that will only reproduce the same problems.

The analysis by the Falmouth Institute points out that the records, including that most important record, the Baker Roll of 1924, were not considered reliable and were not preserved properly as original source documents. While further documentation,
corroborating and supporting the application, emerge as important concerns, the
protection of those documents, from the Baker Roll to birth certificates, and the
sustainability of such practices are imperative for tribal sovereignty. The Falmouth
Institute notes that “[u]pon review of the files in cabinets designated as the Baker Roll
files, it was discovered that the files contained very little information on each member
and that the files, as recognized by the Enrollment department staff, were not a reliable
source of information” (COF, C4). As the standard and sole basis of lineage for tribal
membership, these lacks and doubts cast suspicion on the integrity of the membership,
because if these records can be corrupted then the membership of the tribe, and in turn
the sovereignty of the tribe, can be brought into doubt. For example, in the original
Baker Roll applications, the committee had various rulings, including “Contested,”
meaning that the applicant’s eligibility for membership and therefore her citizenship
was contested by the committee supervising the creation of the Roll. However, “[t]he
applications for these “Contested” members were not available to the Audit team”
(COF, C4). Reviewing any discrepancies in the original contested applications was not
possible, thus undermining this overall audit of the whole membership. A major
finding of the report is that the Baker Roll, the foundation of EBCI membership and legal
identity, has discrepancies throughout:

The information contained in the Baker Roll is assumed to be the complete and
accurate benchmark data from which genealogy, blood degree and membership
eligibility is to be calculated. During the review and entry phase of the project
certain Baker Roll inconsistencies were discovered. Though the Baker Roll

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information is considered unimpeachable, there are a significant number of inconsistencies between the information found in the Baker Roll and the corresponding record information in the Enrollment Department’s database. Most critically, a number of members indicated to be Baker Roll enrollees show a differing blood degree on the roll than in the Enrollment department data. (COF, C5)

By referencing “inconsistencies” the Institute does not call these errors—as the Roll is “unimpeachable”—but does find a multitude of unverified information in the membership records, particularly inconsistencies in blood degree. Miscalculations in blood degree could change the legal identity of a person in either direction, included in or excluded from the tribe as a result of the blood quantum requirement. The focus by the auditing team on the assumption that the Baker Roll is “complete and accurate” and moreover that it is “unimpeachable” highlights the document-based inconsistencies of a significant number of discrepancies in other record information, particularly around the tense literalized figure of blood degree, where most of the inconsistencies occur. Yet, the mere existence of the inconsistencies in the “benchmark data for genealogy, blood degree, and membership” undermines the overall enrollment system. Further, the Institute noted “The fact that obvious inconsistencies exist in the presentation, understanding and final form of the Baker Roll constitutes a major obstacle in this analysis. Resolution of these issues must be completed before any other data resolution efforts can commence” (COF, C5). What the Institute makes clear in this statement is

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5 These requirements have changed over time, so the particular application has to be paired with the policy that was in place at the time of the application.
that, to their analysis, the data is key and corruptions in that information have to be clarified before the data can be utilized for any changes in membership. A major concern at the start of this long project, which is reflected in the desire to use DNA, is that this audit should not need to be repeated in the near future; however, such discrepancies in the information mean that it will inevitably have to be revisited, at least in relation to how and why the Baker Roll is used as the major governing document for membership. These discrepancies also force the question of what narrative that membership is based upon. Overall, this tension reflects the fact that the narrative must change now or the current problems will be repeated with the retelling of an old story of blood, domination, separation, and termination.

While the tribe extended the information from the audit both to the community through the Cherokee One Feather and to policy formation through Tribal Ordinance 277, the Falmouth Institute made many of its own recommendations to the tribe. Noting the limitations exerted on their analysis by the state of the records and current policies, the Institute called for more information before other actions were taken in regard to the tribal membership. Specifically, before the tribe could try to remove members from enrollment, they first had to have all of the present data, as well as those records of the

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6 While more information was later requested by the tribe in a drilling down of the data so that specific cases noted as actionable could be acted upon, even after initial requests of supporting birth certificates and other documents, the Falmouth Institute was not supplied with more information. Overall, the audit found 2251 actionable files ranging from a missing birth certificate to inadequate blood quantum to no connection to the Baker Roll. The EBCI Tribal Council later requested and received a breakdown of this information.
past, certified. The Institute’s major recommendation connects the importance of the

Baker Roll with the overall work of the audit:

The Baker Roll is considered the foundation of the membership of the Tribe. It is the basis from which all membership decisions arise. As such, its security, storage and preservation should be a priority in securing this critical data for future generations. The Baker Roll currently resides on top of a file cabinet in the Enrollment File Room with no protection or security. No efforts have been made to restore the document, its damaged pages or to insure that the pages remain in sequential order or do not become separated from the body of the document. The Tribe should give immediate attention to securing this invaluable document. (COF, C4)

As this audit report indicates, the narrative basis of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is quite similar to what was seen in the Cherokee Nation and includes similar historical problems of preserving and verifying information pertaining to the citizenry.

And while the narrative that did not work for the Cherokee Nation might be able to work for another tribe, the incumbent issues reveal a self-perpetuating problem. However, given the concern in the audit and in the ordinance over “securing” the tribe, its membership, and the documents thereof, that security will still be endangered by the use of a blood narrative. Not only does information have to be certified, it has to be preserved for future references, audits, and evolutions of the tribe’s membership policies. This preservation has to occur not only in terms of actual security, which can literally secure the membership against fraud, but also in measures to prevent damage to the documents from fire, theft, and other possible calamities. In the digital age, these documents could be secured through scanning and back up technologies. While this
latter proposition could be expensive, the loss of the original documents would be more costly to the longevity and sovereign integrity of the tribe. References in the future would be of daily necessity, but future audits seem inevitable given that the base has flaws. The future evolutions of the information and of the tribe’s membership and policies, though, can be based in another narrative. These thoughts are premised on the idea that this document, and not anything that came before, is the “unimpeachable” source of citizenship, but that fact could be disputed and changed, though the Institute refrains from proposing such an idea. Instead, the audit report goes on to make recommendations of how to preserve and reinforce the information in the records through corroborating evidence.

Throughout the files inconsistencies were found, even beyond the Baker Roll though possibly stemming from them as well, and this lack of corroborating evidence exemplifies the problems in the enrollment process that have led to the audit. They do not however address the narrative that would call for their existence to substantiate the citizenry. In an attempt to address inconsistencies in birth certificates (missing, multiple, incomplete), the Institute recommends that the tribe can try “requesting or accepting other corroborating documentation” (COF, C5). Throughout the whole report, this statement is as close as the Institute comes to recommending DNA testing. However, they never state DNA as an option or recommendation, and it is one solution to corroborating evidence of parentage put forward by the tribe itself. In fact, the
Falmouth Institute and their report address the similar problem of blood quantum, which is itself compounded, not addressed, by the new call for DNA.

Blood quantum has been and will continue to be a problem for determining identity, particularly as DNA testing becomes an option for tribal nations to use in membership decisions. The auditors, who aim “to be the premier provider of culturally relevant education and information services for North American Indian tribes and organizations,” include a large section on the issue of blood quantum and even they present it as a problem that will continue to trouble the tribe in the future. In a move that reflects the interrelation of the concerns and recommendations of the Institute, they end their analysis with conclusions that the issues of blood quantum and legal identities will continue to be a problem and they argue that having clear and consistent policies as well as corroborating data is necessary for the future viability of the tribe:

The issue of conflicting blood quantum calculations, alleged calculation errors and accusations of impropriety in documentation make blood quantum and its calculations the thorniest of issues. It has led many groups to question the viability of the blood quantum requirement as membership criteria for enrollment of future generations of tribal members... the questionable reliability of initial blood quantum calculations and the accuracy of subsequent calculations and marshalling of blood from other sources has been and will continue to be hotly contested issues. (COF, C5)

The errors in the original data contaminate the whole of the process, creating downstream problems and resulting in the need for constant vigilance. These problems

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7 Falmouth Institute – Mission Statement (http://www.falmouthinstitute.com/about.html).
can be resolved through the use of a different narrative from a blood narrative, through the use of different requirements from blood quantum. However, the EBCI extends this blood narrative through their requirement for DNA testing, bringing with it the attendant problems.

3.1.2 Inside the Ordinance

The audit itself has led to many problems regarding what might happen with those citizens whose enrollment is challenged, but also how the citizens can or should meet the challenge to their identities and belonging. The Tribal Council and the membership had supported the referendum to look into the tribe’s enrollment and its policies, and the tribal council considers the ordinance the logical conclusion to the audit. However, the audit itself does not involve references to utilizing DNA as the ordinance does. Instead the Falmouth Institute presented its concerns about both the state of the records and the enrollment system, as well as recommendations for changes that would secure the tribal membership through records and the people themselves. The particular language of the Tribal Ordinance demonstrates the issues of security, authenticity, and documentation that they hope to address by stating both their sovereign power to make such a change: “the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is a sovereign entity with the authority and powers to establish and regulate membership and enrollment in the Tribe,” and by making citizenship contingent on DNA testing: “in furtherance of the protection of the Tribe’s membership it would be advantageous to
require all applicants for Tribal membership to submit DNA results proving eligibility for membership as part of the application process.” The ordinance clearly states the stakes that the tribe has as a “sovereign entity” in “regulat[ing] membership and enrollment” and further states that this move is for the “protection” of the tribe. However, the equation of DNA results with “proving eligibility” is where the ordinance, and the logic, start down a path of biologically deterministic identity. While interpretation by the enrollment committee will still play a role in the ruling on the application, the use of DNA results to prove parentage and thus descendancy and lineage from the Baker Roll delegitimizes the knowledge provided by the applicant and privileges any biological connection—and bloodedness—over and above cultural, residential, or other environmental conditions. One of the reasons for contesting original applications for membership on the Baker Roll was lack of involvement in the community, a non-biological factor, so why the turn now to the biological, to the concrete referent of blood and DNA?

Since even before the audit, Chief Michell Hicks of the EBCI has been a major supporter of using DNA for reducing inconsistencies in the Baker Rolls. In an interview about the audit for the Smoky Mountain News, Chief Hicks stated that “going forth DNA is the only way to correct this issue. I’ve said this since day one” (Morris, Giles.
Since the start, before the audit ever had data much less analysis or conclusions, Chief Hicks leaned towards using DNA to rectify the concerns of enrollment. However, the desire to use DNA is telling and reinforces a blood narrative of identity utilized in blood quantum determinations and reliance on descendancy. JoAnne Barker, Eric Beckenhauer, and Kimberly TallBear have all pointed out the inadequacy of using notions of race and population—connected conceptually to blood quantum and descendancy—to understand indigenous peoples, but what other alternatives do we have than continuing down the rabbit hole of blood? If our kinship connection is biological, what ideas do we have that are not blood or DNA to understand identity and belonging? Culture is arguably environmental, and in the classic nature versus nurture argument, both contribute to individual and tribal identity. Even given that race is not biological, but a social construct, tribes need to create a type of belonging that honors ancestry but also adapts to changing contexts, including nationalism.

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3.1.2.1 The uses of DNA for citizenship

Is there a place for DNA in citizenship determinations? The tribal council of the EBCI clearly thinks so, but this move makes citizenship and belonging biological and legal instead of cultural or social. The language of the legislation is important in how it demonstrates both what the council hopes to obtain from the testing and how they will use that information. Specifically, within the enrollment application requirements, it now states that “Each enrollment application must be completed… [with] the following:…. The results of a DNA test, from a lab acceptable to the Enrollment Committee, establishing the probability of paternity and/or maternity by the parent(s) through whom lineage is claimed for an applicant.”\(^{10}\) Here and later, the “probability” of the lineage is important, as sciences present concepts in such terms, and because the whole of a person’s genome cannot reflect all of their ancestors and relations.

However, this use of DNA by the EBCI to substantiate maternity and paternity opens the doors to such unsupported claims of ancestry and belonging. Overall this need for documentation in support of claims helps in questioning the usefulness of biological ancestry, or blood, for understanding cultural and political affiliations of individuals to tribes, or other forms of belonging. In a later section of the Ordinance, the specific requirements for the DNA testing are described:

\[(a)\] Testing must occur directly between the applicant and the alleged mother and father unless the parent is unavailable for testing through no fault of the

applicant, (b) When a parent of an applicant is unavailable for DNA testing the Enrollment Committee may accept the certified results of a DNA test between the applicant and both of the missing parent’s biological parents (applicant’s grandparents) to establish the probability of relatedness to the grandparents, (c) A certified copy of the test results must be submitted by the testing lab directly to the Enrollment Office, (d) The applicant is responsible for all fees related to the DNA test.

The inclusion here of “alleged” parents differs from the earlier listing of requirements, but also includes the probability of relation with grandparents if a biological parent is unavailable for the testing. Someone who comes to this step without connection to their biological family, parents or grandparents, for various reasons, will be unable to satisfy it at all, thereby barring their citizenship, although through no fault of their own, effectively limiting the citizenry. Referring here to the “alleged” mother and father not only makes this more of a legal than biological relationship, but also inherently questions the parentage of the applicant. While the legislation questions the biological, its incorporation of the legal language of affiliation conflates those two positions, further making the legal belonging of citizenship into a biological category. This wording constructs the applicant as dishonest until proven otherwise, further putting the onus of proof upon the applicant instead of the governing body. When one starts with these kinds of premises, the results are bound to continue to the legal and biological conflation. In and of itself this conflation might not be an issue, but given the figurative and literal conflation of blood, blood quantum, and DNA, this vexed belonging inevitably reproduces the problems which the EBCI hopes DNA will solve: protecting
and securing the membership for the future. Finally, the applicant’s responsibility “for all fees” makes this testing, over and above submission of other supporting documents, a matter of fiscal investment in order to be recognized as belonging to the tribe. All told, this requirement relies on a blood narrative that reifies blood and equates it with tribal identity; here particularly a lineage that says little to nothing about the upbringing of the person.

3.1.3 Inside Concerns

The move to protect the tribe with DNA testing requirements in membership applications has ripple effects within the tribe and other connections to the findings of the audit. While tribal members have stated that this move will cause skeletons to be let out of the closet, many still support the move. This “skeletons in the closet” concern should not be overlooked, as the concerns include the possibility that the testing will reveal that siblings are unrelated and that parents have been unfaithful, and it raises the specter of the skeleton of the “true” biological parent who has not been involved in the child’s (even adult child’s) life. Not only might that new knowledge change how a person understands his family, it will also change how he understands himself and his identity, genetic and otherwise. This information could fractionate families by both blood degree and by eligibility and membership, changing the sense of belonging that

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may have accompanied what had been a coherent family unit. Instead of the group, it can become each individual for himself. This concern is again compounded by the blood quantum requirement, but even descendancy without blood quantum, as seen in the Cherokee Nation, is not necessarily a solution. Both blood quantum and descendancy act as overdetermining bases for the tribal membership.

Larger concerns about identity and genetics emerge with the implementation here of the DNA test requirement of those seeking recognition from their tribe, and particularly the notion inherent to that concern that DNA is determinant of tribal identity, whether directly divining that identity from a person’s genome (and, by reference, the tribal population’s) or allowing the certification of “identity” to occur through these tests. In the EBCI case, the DNA in question is only being used to establish paternity and maternity, but another document can present that information to the enrollment committee. Lived experience of the family will determine identity and tribal community belonging in ways that genetics cannot. The traditional knowledge of culture is not in blood, blood quantum, or DNA, or any other such referent and therefore cannot be measured for enrollment purposes.

Identity has many layers, and the genetic layer is only one part of a whole. The case of adopted children demonstrates this problem particularly well. Under the EBCI tribal ordinance, this testing is required of all potential members, without exception: “DNA testing [is] required for all applicants, including adoptees.” This move
essentializes identity into the genetics of maternity and paternity; even with adoptions, the biological parent’s status as tribal member(s) or not comes into question and, of course, affects the fate of the child, regardless of the adoptive parents’ status. This construction presents that identity and belonging associated with such, here the tribal citizenship, is only biologically determined. While this DNA test does not divine a Native American identity, it does open the door to relying on genetics to determine tribal identity particularly in adoptions. As Benedict Anderson suggests in his conceptualization of nation, the need to allow for immigration, naturalization, and change is imperative for any nation, and I would add that it is particularly so for tribal nations in the United States, or within other settler nations. Citizenship criteria will remain, but the narrative basis should also incorporate provisions for adopting outsiders, a move akin to immigration and naturalization as it emphasizes having cultural knowledge and respect, as well as a sponsoring family. Changes, in the form of exogamy as well as diaspora, have to be taken into account when determining who constitutes the citizenry of the nation, as well as who or what might identify someone as Indian with or without belonging to a nation. This latter change calls into question who

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12 Importantly, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which was instituted in order to combat the adopting out of Indian children, privileges family for keeping children within the tribe, not necessarily enrollment. The policies related to this legislation might be useful in refiguring belonging as well for tribes.
13 For example, Barack Obama was adopted into the Crow Nation in 2008, with the parents Hartford and Mary Black Eagle, who were present at his inauguration in 2009. This move also communicates an age-old effect of adoption (and marriage): tying important families together.
or what can really determine one’s identity: DNA tests, tribal governments, legislation, policy, community, or self?

3.1.4 Changing the Story

One of the major concerns regarding this tribal ordinance is the possibility of its implementation over a larger span of ancestral time. In other words, currently the concern is mother and father and possibly grandparents. However, a DNA test cannot discern the total ancestral connections between an individual listed on a base roll and a current descendant. This ordinance opens up the dangerous possibility for ancestry testing of people who hope to demonstrate connections to ancestors listed on the initial roll through DNA. Further, the requirement of 1/16th blood quantum adds another concern: because blood quantum is part of the larger blood narrative, it cannot be verified, particularly in a total summation. These problems trouble the usefulness of biological genetic ancestry, or blood, to tribes for understanding cultural and political affiliations of individuals, or other forms of belonging. This legislation by the EBCI halts the evolution of identity and discriminates against those who do not have a connection to an inconsistent census roll, the Baker Roll of 1924 in this case. In this case, using genetics and altering the understanding reproduces acts perpetrated on Native Americans for centuries: acculturation, termination, essentialization, blood quantum rules and eligibility restrictions. Inherently, given the lack of evidence supporting the
DNA testing, the proof of identity provided by DNA testing should not be used by tribes to determine membership.

The EBCI use the audit to implement a controversial means of validating the citizenry. In effect, they are producing solutions to the symptoms of blood quantum and rolls that are used to understand identity, which are themselves evidence of a blood narrative at work. But they are also producing other problems while failing to address the central issue of a blood narrative, because DNA essentializes identity in ways that blood quantum, rolls, and figures do not. While this legislative action attempts to produce a solution to the problem behind the enrollment audit, it reinstates the base problem in reifying the rolls and biologizing identity. However, biological citizenship exists as a possible solution to understanding biological connections that are not blood necessarily. Although it too may bring about incumbent problems, it would address the desired biological connections for producing belonging.

The legal form of belonging is only one aspect of identity, as the two concepts work in a reciprocal relationship where “who you are” involves “where you belong” and “where you are” involves “who you are,” but this kind of legislation takes on the problems that can emerge from that relationship, and the narrative underlying it, and looks back at the past in an attempt to fix the future. But what would looking ahead to find the solution create? Biological citizenship presents a way to look ahead, while attending to the past and the connections between biological identities and belonging.
Further, a biological citizenship may itself act as an alternarrative for understanding the differences in identities and belonging, but it may also allow for a different alternarrative basis to create other identities and belonging. These alternarratives could then change how the policies of the present prepare for and sustain American Indian nations into the future, instead of looking back at (and overlooking the narrative basis of) the problems of the past and present reliance on blood.

3.1.4.1 The use of the biological for citizenship

The move by the EBCI to utilize the technologies of science to help address their enrollment problem speaks to a larger interaction between indigenous peoples and the sciences, including anthropology and biology, and the practitioners of those fields who have taken many narratives, samples, and artifacts from indigenous peoples over the years. Citizenship is not the only place for biotechnology to be used by tribes. Involvement in research is another place where tribes could benefit from advances in science. However, the risks and benefits of tribal involvement in research can be seen through the stories of the Havasupai and uses of their blood to perform studies to which they did not consent, the banning of all genetic testing by the Navajo Nation, and the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) established by both the Navajo Nation and the Cherokee Nation to review proposed research with their citizens, and the other IRBs working with tribes for their subject protections. Even in this area outside of citizenship, scientists have responsibilities to their “subjects,” to the people, and protections of those
subjects are the responsibility of boards of governance. The ability to determine
citizenship also carries with it the responsibility to protect those who legally belong, and
to defend choices to not do research or not include certain people in research, or not
include them in the nation. When biological markers, such as blood and DNA, are
utilized to determine citizenship, the responsibility falls on the government to determine
the biological rights of the people, although they might also articulate such rights. As an
alternate possibility for both citizenship and for an alternarrative positioning, “biological
citizenship” provides a concept with some possibilities for Indian Country.

3.1.4.2 Citizenship, biological and otherwise, in Indian Country

Citizenship consists of a form of legal belonging, and the term “citizen” has been
taken up by certain tribal nations instead of “members” to highlight their enrolled
members’ relation to the community and their national practices, including “rights,
privileges, and duties” incumbent on that citizenship. However, the notion that
citizenship exists only as a legal way of belonging is restrictive. There are other forms of
belonging, such as cultural or political, or even biological, that can be useful ways of
understanding our relations and our citizenships. Citizenship, as a form of belonging,
maintains ties to the nation but does not exclude itself from being smaller than or larger
than the nation. For indigenous communities, this kind of multiple citizenship is even
written into the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which
states in Article 33 that:
1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live.

2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.

Thereby, indigenous peoples can determine their own membership not on rolls imposed by another nation’s government, but in terms “in accordance with their customs and traditions.” This clause allows for citizenship in the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma to not be restricted only to enrolled citizens and their descendents, but also to those who have attended the Green Corn Festival for four years continuously and observed the proper way of being at the ceremony during those times. Similarly, the stomp grounds of the Muscogee and other tribes allow for acceptance and offerings of a place to belong on traditional stomp grounds if one apprentices herself to the grounds and properly observes the traditions, and one can even belong to more than one grounds if they fulfill their responsibilities of belonging at each. These different variants of citizenship allow for an expansion of the notion, to encompass the multiple ways a person might belong.

In turn, biological citizenship is another embodiment, quite literally, of understanding belonging; it is not the only way to belong or to describe one’s citizenship, but instead one of many ways. In presenting the indigenous peoples’ rights to self-determination, this UN document also licenses a dual citizenship, a way in which indigenous citizens

14 These instances of challenges to national proscriptions of citizenship were described to me by Tol Foster (Muscogee) and a Cherokee friend who would prefer not to be named.
can maintain cultural citizenship and can concordantly hold citizenship in the settler nation, the “States in which they live.” Both within and beyond the “State,” indigenous peoples hold the right to belong to their multiple communities, which may lie within another State, but “the beyond” is that they have citizenship beyond only being a citizen of that State. Other people have this right as well, if different terms are imagined for “citizenship” around notions of belonging that are not necessarily constrained by the bounds of the State. In order to move beyond the state, biological citizenship provides a means of connecting people across borders as well as having multiple citizenships.

Biological citizenship can be taken further in thinking about the ways in which kinship—biological, indigenous, fictive, and created—presents ways of constructing membership, of recreating states through the included (or excluded) citizens. Culturally, Cherokees have adopted members of other tribes in efforts that promoted both peace and biodiversity, as well as provided means for understanding the languages and mores of other peoples. This kind of adoption still goes on and is related to the belonging accorded to individuals at the Green Corn Festival and stomp grounds. Most importantly, though, this adoption creates kinship where none had existed before: where the biological (modern scientific) constructions of kinship would not put them. This indigenously created kinship would most closely align with the “fictive kinship” ascribed to godparents and unrelated uncles and aunts. However, that construction is limited because in many cases the “fictive” part of the kinship is derogatory and
normalizing. If one calls those non-relatives, who are also extended kin, “Uncle Jay” and “Aunt Billie” then the term is understood to connote respect and affection, and while not legally adjudicated, the honorific title has attendant kinship obligations. The knowledge of the created nature of the kinship remains, but need not be indicated or reinforced as the kinship itself is what is important.

Other limits on kinship exist in modern nations as well. Daniel Justice elucidates certain Cherokee kinship obligations in his recent work (“Go Away Water!” in *Reasoning Together*), which highlights that limiting kinship even to the human world denies many creation stories and the relatedness of others (broadly defined) to ourselves. If we can think about these relations, these kinship structures, as applicable to nations, then we must have land, and its flora and fauna, and we must recognize the relations among all on that land, within and without of borders and boundaries of belonging. These relations in turn bring together and enhance concepts of genetic and biological citizenship by adding the layer of kinship broadly constructed to these understandings of belonging. This expansion also draws upon Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities” both in the vastness of the described, and in the fact of migration that has taken many out of their space/place but still connects them through a legal or other form of citizenship, and particularly through the need to imagine the whole of the community, including those not known but who belong. Affinity citizenship, where citizens group together based on commonalities in culture, particularly in the transition
between empire and nation-state, might also offer a way of understanding these connections.\textsuperscript{15}

The broader terminology of biological, instead of genetic, citizenship through Rose and Novas is more useful for the project at hand, which seeks to provide options for understanding belonging in and beyond American Indian nations. Biological citizenship refers to the relations that arise currently and in the past that connect biological aspects of personhood to citizenship, legal relation to a nation, or similar collective identity in a group, where members connect particularly through their biological connections. This definition opens up more possibilities, and that potential informs my use of this definition. Biological citizenship presents another way of understanding belonging, with or without the state or nation. Through blood, genes, disease, research, and in turn through communities, the move to the biological can present hope by opening up new possibilities, though it also comes with the potential for harm, as can be seen by the turn to the biological of DNA in the case of the EBCI citizenship reforms.

\textbf{3.1.4.3 Connection between biological citizenship and literature}

The narratives that drive current concepts of citizenship, in its narrow definition applied broadly, can work to construct a new kind of eugenics. Based in science, the

idea of tying people to one another biologically comes laden with the past, but provides other potentials of its larger uses, unencumbered of this prejudice. Shedding or revising these blood narratives, or even approaching with alternative narratives, biological citizenship could be a way for understanding one another on new terms, in relation to a new version of state. Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak articulate the relation between the nation-state and belonging in their discussion based text, *Who Sings the Nation-State?*, which takes down the curtain between power and language and allows for an examination of the nations constructed through narratives. These national narratives include “blood” and other biologicals, as well as of belonging. Awareness of these narratives can lead to understanding with which the narratives can be overturned to allow for new possibilities, for alternarratives to emerge.

3.2 *Conclusion*

Overall, thinking about biological citizenship in terms that do not privilege capitalist associations with the concept, but also do not disavow them, is key to creating future narratives of belonging. Further, these narratives will help to understand how those core ideas are themselves corporeal but mutable, and also how as “global citizens” we can think about the globe as resembling a state, and remake our relational stance in light of that understanding. To continue the thread of kinship, the relation to the globe is not new for many indigenous peoples, who maintain a relationship with the land, understanding that there are costs and revenues in the interactions with others. If we
can move to this construction of truly thinking about the global relations, causes, and effects of problems, perhaps then we really will have become global citizens, with all of the concordant “rights, privileges, and duties” therein to the globe and to each other. Every different citizenship and way of belonging creates a new set of give and take of rights and responsibilities that does not have to conflict but can coincide, compromise, and complement. Tribes utilizing DNA to confirm tribal membership eligibility could be an empowering act of sovereignty, but the way in which it has played out for the EBCI merely reinforces a blood narrative and perpetuates the problems of the past.

The consequences of the current DNA narratives resemble the problems we have seen in biological research in the past, and being on the great new frontier of science means that Institutional Review Boards do not have the ability to see where science will boldly (and bodily) go and to protect us from those eventualities. If we recognize the narratives for what is new but especially for what is old, we can deploy new narratives, new ways of understanding ourselves, and discover what makes up each of our parts and connects us to one another and to other species. These answers are not merely ATGC combinations of DNA, but instead pull nurture into the equation to think about the social relations, how those are mediated by law, and how science, literature, and law condition one another. While biological citizenship could act as an alternarrative, as a

16 Although I do applaud their attempts and recognize that without these safeguards, the projects that would take place would offend much more than ethics, morals, and stories of multiple truths.
way other than blood of understanding identity and belonging, the specific roles of stories and storytelling for producing and propagating such alternarratives, and others, should not be overlooked. The next two chapters will examine two novels from two American Indian authors, Gerald Vizenor (White Earth Anishinaabe) and Thomas King (Cherokee), who present different alternarratives that focus on the important roles of stories and storytelling in changing how we understand the world and therefore how we proceed in it with legislation, scientific pursuits, and belonging.
4. Alternarratives in the Writing of Gerald Vizenor: *The Heirs of Columbus* and *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57*

4.1 Introduction

In 1969, N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa) won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction with his novel *House Made of Dawn*. The novel follows the story of an American Indian soldier returning home to the Jemez Pueblo community after World War II and struggling with his future decisions, as well as changes in himself and the world. Momaday develops in this text the concept of “memory in the blood” or “blood memory” that connects generations of people to traditions, and that he argues links all Native American peoples. Many critics note Momaday’s Pulitzer Prize as the beginning of the Native American Renaissance in the arts, particularly literature, but Natives were contributing to the literature and arts of the Americas for centuries before 1969. The acceptance of these contributions came more easily at this time, with Momaday’s success laying the groundwork for many more writers to be published and their works to be studied.

Gerald Vizenor (White Earth Anishinaabe) can be considered one of these writers, and he has been and remains quite prolific. Vizenor writes in a style that reflects the trickster tradition of the White Earth Anishinaabe, his people, as well as trickster traditions of other American Indian tribes. This trickster tradition means that Vizenor uses humor in a kind of tease to present and refigure concepts, theories, and figures from throughout English literature. This humor works to distinguish between the truth and fiction of those narratives, and to bring forth Vizenor’s own narratives. By
tease, I mean to reflect the tradition of the tease as explained by Roland Barthes as a way to reveal and hide at the same time, to never show fully but to encounter an aspect of language, history, or story to expose a part yet unseen.¹ Tease is also the term used by Vizenor to describe the subversive work of his characters and stories. In his work, Vizenor teases American traditions and ideas—and even movements by modern American Indian nations—through prose, verse, and mixtures of nonfiction and fiction.² He corrects misinformation about his tribe (The People Named the Chippewa), examines the disconnection between urban Indians and the reservation (Dead Voices), and follows pilgrims on a moral journey (The Heirship Chronicles). His body of work is expansive and still growing, but this analysis focuses on two novels that he produced in the last generation, and that engage blood narrative through genomics and peoples around the globe: The Heirs of Columbus and Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57. Survivance is Vizenor’s overall project, and these two novels demonstrate that a blood narrative separates and support survivance through the act of storytelling, which liberates in its application to such problems.

Vizenor’s project in much of his writing, and particularly in these two texts, is to imagine an initial act by tribal peoples for survival, as opposed to a reaction to colonial

¹ Roland Barthes presents a version of a particular kind of tease in his analysis of the striptease in his Mythologies.
² See Kimberly Blaeser Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition (1996). In her argument, Blaeser focuses on the elision and lack of distinctions that Vizenor makes in his works between truth and lies, highlighting the multiplicity of truth and the importance of humor to Vizenor’s project.
power or narrative. He terms this work “survivance,” and that concept figures prominently throughout his work as he develops and applies it. Benjamin Carson parses this term and its relation to stories by stating that “narratives of survivance…function as an act of resistance to dominant cultural narratives” (444). However, survivance and its narratives were not coined to describe reacting or simply resisting – resistance itself comes across not as a function but a side effect, not a directive but natural outgrowth of the acts for survival. In his own words, Vizenor describes survivance as “more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are an active presence” (Fugitive Poses, 15). This act mediates the tension between oral storytelling and the written word that Vizenor also inherently encounters in his texts. To distinguish, narrative here refers to a written text and story refers to an oral telling. Vizenor presents many definitions of survivance throughout his works, evoking its adaptability as well as its value as an alternative. In an interview with Jack Foley, he defines survivance as opposed to survival:

Survival suggests more of a reaction, and that’s that. It’s tied to something and describes the circumstances of a response, a survival. My idea is that we understand what dominance is, a condition; we know it in many, many forms in time and place and circumstance. We need a word like dominance that speaks and is understood in the context of our will to live.4

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Here, Vizenor’s survivance refers to a condition, not the reaction of survival. This condition operates throughout different times, places, and circumstances, supporting not a reaction but an attitude that contains “our will to live.” Similarly, counternarratives are understood as reactions to dominant narratives, whereas alternarratives provide an initial alternative condition of narrative, not a response to dominance, but here an act of storytelling for that condition. In her critical text examining Vizenor and his works, Kimberly Blaeser comments that Vizenor “incorporates the shadows of history and thus forces the reader’s recognition of the way all historical accounts depict only possibility and probability, not actuality” (Blaeser 95). These kinds of depiction in Vizenor’s texts allow for the alternative imaginings of history as well as narratives of identity, all through a condition of existence that acts for survival and that depicts multiplicity and storied belonging, not that relies on blood.

Vizenor provides a critique of a blood narrative in his texts, and presents alternative narratives for understanding identity, for both Native peoples and global citizens. He takes concepts, such as memory in the blood, and attempts to see what happens when we consider the place of mixedblood persons, like him. Does home exist in the same way for these peoples? Do they live in two worlds? Do they create yet a new home or world to live in? While Vizenor counters aspects of a blood narrative and its misuse throughout his texts, the texts themselves are not entirely devoted to such a counter project; instead the counter operates as both a tease of those narratives and a
grounding of his imagined narrative in a familiar reality. This grounding lends credence to the ability to imagine differently from a given set of premises, to think about what other narratives one can operate by while aware of the dominant narratives such as blood, thus providing an alternarrative. Vizenor’s concept of survivance works as an alternarrative that responds to these questions about identity, but there are many ways to enact that survivance even through the general act of storytelling. These two novels present different methods and engage the long reach of blood narrative in genomics and global relations.

In both his 1991 novel, *The Heirs of Columbus*, and his 2002 novel, *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57*, Vizenor teases blood memory and proposes alternarratives to problematic blood narratives. In the former novel, he confronts blood as a tangible reality of genes and stories, and in the latter he brings forth a conception of memory and production in order to help understand the relations among all peoples, especially in the wake of World War II. These novels imagine different alternarratives for understanding being and belonging without reliance on blood; their methods vary but the storytelling that both do serves the project of survivance. While both novels provide storytelling methods for survivance, they utilize different tools including naming, resources, and the landedness of belonging, demonstrating the multiple ways that alternarratives can be created and utilized to understand identity.
4.2 The Heirs of Columbus: “Stories in the Blood” to Gene Therapy

In *The Heirs of Columbus*, Vizenor describes “stories in the blood,” a concept that operates differently from both “blood” and the concept that N. Scott Momaday articulated regarding “memory in the blood.” In the latter, Momaday conceives of a biological connection between tribal peoples that carries with it historical memories. Vizenor’s concept of “stories in the blood” utilizes blood in a way that allows stories to be shared by the heirs and to be newly generated through storytelling, as well as for all of those who have the signature of the blood to carry the responsibility of those stories. Blaeser elaborates on this distinction by stating that “Vizenor employs the term ‘primal memory’ (as opposed to the ‘racial memory’ N. Scott Momaday has spoken of)…The issue for Vizenor is not race but established patterns of thinking, what John Dewey called ‘funded experience’: ‘those memories, not necessarily conscious, but retentions that have been organically incorporated in the very structure of the self’” (Blaeser 127). What Blaeser elucidates here as the “established patterns of thinking” against which Vizenor works by using primal memory is more simply put as part of a blood narrative, including the elucidation of those patterns as “funded experience.” Even Dewey’s definition as cited here by Blaeser utilizes the biological references of identity and citizenship as “organically incorporated,” which can also be read as an understanding of how this kind of concept is co-opted and utilized to carry forward the determinist notions of blood. Vizenor’s stories in the blood operate in a way that redefines genetics
and posits blood and genes as agents of healing not of divisive narratives. These stories and the novel itself connect to the current struggles of indigenous peoples against science, particularly as is demonstrated by the Indigenous Peoples’ Council on Biocolonialism (IPCB). Different from Momaday’s “memory in the blood,” the IPCB articulates another approach to the use of a blood narrative, and particularly the way in which such a narrative influences science and its use of Native communities. This organization works against the continued colonization of indigenous peoples, flora, fauna, and territories. They provide a comparison to think about what is being done currently by indigenous people to deal with the operations of a blood narrative in the world, in the form of biocolonialism, alongside Vizenor’s imagined possibilities. In relation to modern tribal concerns, this novel’s alternarrative imagines different ways to construct and exercise sovereignty, including its impacts and relationships to scientific research and innovation.

In *The Heirs of Columbus*, Gerald Vizenor revises the historical account of Christopher Columbus and his relationships to North American indigenous peoples through the particular and peculiar inheritance of genes. The heirs of Columbus, who also constitute a tribal community, claim such relation through a genetic signature that they share with Christopher Columbus. Written and published before the

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5 The term signature is used in genetic and genomic studies to refer to a set of genes that produce certain traits, such as the genetic signature of stem cells or of certain diseases.
quincentennial of Columbus’ “discovery” of America and a decade before the complete mapping of the human genome, Vizenor imagines not only Columbus’ impregnating a Native woman on his first voyage—thus the tribal heirs—but also that his voyage of discovery is a homecoming to his own Mayan roots. Columbus himself is an heir to a genetic signature from those Mayan ancestors, which he will later reencounter on his homecoming to the new world. This genetic signature connects him not only to ancestors but also to the future descendants, the titular heirs who encompass a tribal community.

In order to provide a different approach to narrative and sovereignty, Vizenor creates a postmodern experimental novel that moves throughout time and place, but that focuses not on discovery but on healing. Vizenor begins *The Heirs of Columbus* with an epigraph from Jean-Paul Sartre’s “What is Literature?,” which Sartre wrote to work through his discontent with the failures of standard and traditional literature in his time to imagine differently, and which leads him to the conclusion that writers must write for a free public audience. Vizenor uses this epigraph to preface the act of his work both towards survivance as well as acts that address Sartre’s call for free public discourse along with imagination. Vizenor’s text demonstrates narrative’s power to change the world, and in so those changes, exposing the narratives that have been operating, which Sartre states in his time as: “We are no longer with those who want to possess the world, but with those who want to change it, and it is to the very plan of changing it that it
reveals the secrets of its being...” (1). Both Sartre and Vizenor claim here that narratives change the world, and in their changing it, the narratives that have been operating are exposed and overturned. In the novel, confronting blood as a literal substance allows for an interrogation of blood as a figure as well, including how it cannot hold up to scrutiny but that it can carry another narrative as a literal substance than figure. While it can happen in the opposite way, where the narratives are exposed and knowledge of their operation leads to the change, Vizenor’s project of survivance privileges an initial act not a reaction, so this latter process would be less likely to be his referent. From the novel’s outset, Vizenor suggests that when the world is changed by the people, the prior construction of that world becomes obvious. Sartre elaborates by stating “We want the man and the artist to work their salvation together, we want the work to be at the same time an act; we want it to be explicitly conceived as a weapon in the struggle that men wage against evil” (1). Vizenor enacts this desire by being both man and artist, developing characters that work as both men and artists to create salvation, more explicitly termed healing, in this text.

Stone Columbus leads the heirs with his wife, Felipa Flowers, and daughter, Miigis, until Felipa’s untimely death. Felipa is murdered in London where she goes in an attempt to recover the bones of Pocahontas and bring them to the tribal lands for reburial. The heirs constitute a faction of the Anishinaabe tribal nation, from which they will later secede and establish their own nation not on Anishinaabe lands but on the
open sea in a floating casino. After her murder, her social justice work for the heirs is memorialized in the naming of their casino after her. The floating casino also houses other tribal enterprises, including a nail salon and genomic research facilities. The heirs run these facilities with the help of outsiders hired by the heirs, mongrels close to the heirs, and later by biorobots engineered by outside scientists. Mongrels, the name by which Vizenor refers to various animals with spirits and connections to human beings, also figure as prominent characters and they are an earlier part of the lineage that includes Christopher and Stone Columbus, stretching connections back not only among humans but among species. Certain conflicts propel the action of the novel including factional differences between the heirs and other Anishinaabe, clashing desires of Felipa and those who also want the remains of Pocahontas and Christopher Columbus, the struggles to establish the tribal nation and its enterprises, and a central conflict of a moccasin game played for the future of the tribe. This moccasin game occurs between the heirs and Windigo, who has been frozen for many years but exists as a constant threat throughout the novel, leading eventually to a game for their future, and in turn the future of all people. The key to this game of chance ends up being the act of storytelling that can change the world.

The alternarratives of this novel look back and forward in time and allow for alternative constructions of identity and community that need not rely on a blood narrative of difference, but instead can use blood to create connections. The heirs use
their genetic inheritance to enable their own storytelling, and present the combination of
their inherited genetic signature and the power of their storytelling as regenerative, as a
way to heal the next generation. In particular, the heirs’ genetic therapy enables a
healing of a blood narrative alongside the deployment of a new narrative where blood
connects, species lines are crossed, and the story makes all the difference.

The stories in the blood, which are not racial but instead original and generative,
provide one of the tools for this act. The stories in the blood enable the tribal gene
therapy when put together with the genetic signature of survivance, thereby coupling
the set of genes with the act-driven notion of survivance to propose that the trait this
signature may code for is indeed survivance, for behavior of the whole collective of cells.
Put another way, the telling of the stories in the blood activate the genetic signature so
that it might perform its set function. Further, this genetic signature, which brings
together Christopher Columbus’ genes and Vizenor’s overall project, specifically
provides the means to create an initial action by indigenous people in regard to genetic
research. By acting with regard to the condition of desiring to live, and in turn, live on
through heirs and stories, the tribe sets the example for how indigenous people can deal
with genetic research by not simply reacting to actions inflicted upon them but by
practicing survivance and initiating their own acts, such as storytelling and pioneering
research. The concept of survivance that Vizenor posits and utilizes in this text also
responds precisely to Sartre’s call for work that is both an act and a weapon against evil.
In this text, the evil that men struggle against takes on many forms, but can be generally understood as that which maintains the conditions for understanding history, story, and identity in fixed manners. Weapons in this struggle for Vizenor include the stories in the blood and the genetic signature of survivance.

4.2.1 Stories in the Blood

Through this novel and the repetition of the “stories in the blood,” Vizenor frames the new knowledge of genes and the old knowledge of stories as positive sources for re-building history and building future politics for Native Americans. In an age in which genomics, intellectual property and possession of the constituent parts of one’s own body have become intertwined, these stories provide a bridge between traditional healing and gene therapy. The stories in the blood posit a solution of the past that can also be passed on to the future. Unlike a blood narrative, the “stories in the blood” operate openly and are only told at certain times and for certain purposes, instead of being perpetually in the background of social relations. These limitations connect these stories to traditional Native American storytelling; while the restrictions vary by tribe, there are certain stories only told during certain parts of the year, or during certain parts of a person’s life. “Stories in the blood” act as the antithesis to a blood narrative. Instead of inculcating difference, they open up the possibilities of inclusiveness and evolution for both identity and community by their adaptations, history, and their tease of the concept of blood as a figure or literal for identity. The particular stories in the
blood that Vizenor refers to are traditional tribal knowledge and only exist in the act of
telling, not in the written narrative of the text, therefore the term refers to stories that are
never known to the reader, leaving their possibilities open.

In an entrepreneurial spirit, as well as an enactment of survivance, the heirs run
their own genetic research facilities known as the Genome Pavilion. This place is
connected in a large complex to the Felipa Flowers Casino and other tribal enterprises
on their estate established on a barge off of Point Assinika. In the Genome Pavilion, the
architecture mimics the structure of DNA itself thereby exhibiting the relation between
form and function: “The scientific pavilions were laced, one to the other” (132). This
edifice reflects the microbiological, demonstrating the importance of not one strand or
another, not one building or another, but the connection between them. Dr. Pir Cantrip
is selected as director of genetic research because “the heirs were pleased with his true
mind to heal children, those who were the lonesome mutants of a chemical civilization”
(133-4). This researcher truly wants to apply the signature of survivance to the goal of
healing, and to do so he will need to know its specific code as well as to replicate it:
“Doctor Cantrip and his research team had discovered that there were seventeen genes
in the signature of survivance; the heirs, shamans, and healers carried an unbroken
radiance, a genetic chain from the first hand talkers of creation. Millions of these genetic
signatures were copied in vacuum clean laboratories” (132-3). After discovering the
enduring genetic signature of survivance, Cantrip and his team copy millions, similar to
vaccine production, utilizing a blood product to remedy the effects of past history and identity politics.

In order to share their science and technology, researchers from other nations are invited to the heirs’ Genome Pavilion to tour the facility. Dr. Pir Cantrip asks the heirs to be there as well, in efforts to educate the tribe about the research, enable their feedback into the research process, and facilitate engagement between the people and researchers. In this presentation, Cantrip explains how the stories in the blood influence the research:

The genome narratives are stories in the blood, a metaphor for racial memories, or the idea that we inherit the structures of language and genetic memories; however, our computer memories and simulations are not yet powerful enough to support what shamans and hand talkers have inherited and understood for thousands of years. (136)

The “genome narratives” or stories in the blood and the signature of survivance operate differently. As stated, these exist separately but can work in a symbiotic relationship to heal. By comparing “our computer memories” and “shamans,” Cantrip frames the idea that culturally inherited knowledge has a value that cannot be equaled yet by new technology; they both tell stories from different sets of “facts” but the act of storytelling brings together the stories in the blood and the genetic signature in an act of survivance. The connection between “the genome narratives” and “racial memories” presents race as involving a sense of community and as passed on by the stories in the blood, not the traditional sense of race as a tool of discrimination. Here, Vizenor provides a counter to
traditional understandings of race, and advocates the use of a refugred notion of race in
relation to the tribal peoples, connecting it through the racial memory of Momaday’s
concept. This notion operates as a counter to the social construct stemming from
perceived biological differences to reconceptualize a human race that shares memories,
instead of racial classifications of human. These memories, like genes, are inherited with
each succeeding generation, allowing for the idea that memories become stories, which
in turn become histories. These connect, rather than separate. The act of the
storytelling, passing on through generations in memory or in writing, protects the
stories in the blood and allows them to create the survival for which they were intended.
One of the stories in the blood is the revised history of Christopher Columbus and his
connection to the heirs, and this narrative relies on the creative imagination to enable the
alternative means of constructing identity and community.

4.2.2 Christopher Columbus

Uniquely, Vizenor revises Christopher Columbus and claims him as an
indigenous diasporic person returning home instead of an interloper in America. While
countering the historical narrative, Vizenor also works in trickster humor to create an
entirely different vision of Columbus including quoting Columbus’ diaries in support of
that vision. Blaeser explains that “[f]or Vizenor, merely rejecting the errors of historical
accounts and relegating Columbus to the past would be both too simple and too
unsatisfying, an absolution without the benefit of new revelation and without the
pleasure of humor” (Blaeser 95). In other words, Vizenor uses the historical figure of Columbus in his novel to create an alternarrative in which Columbus is another character who neither knows his own story, nor has an awareness of the larger story to which he has historically been a part. Vizenor takes this lack of awareness, as well as the awe and regard with which Columbus and his voyage have been known, and revises that story into a narrative that enables Native identity to create a positive form of belonging from history and genetics.

The genetic signature itself becomes a disputed fact from the beginning of the novel when critics and other scientists come forward to question its authenticity, and it remains one beyond the novel as the story forces readers to rethink their world through a new storied relation to genes. Storytelling exposes something about the world, thereby allowing its change, another permutation of Sartre’s call to action, which Vizenor enacts by exposing the operations of a blood narrative. The heirs claim the genetic signature is identical between Stone’s blood and blood from Christopher Columbus’s remains. Scientifically, this astonishing finding holds within it a great contradiction: how does mitochondrial DNA, passed on by the mother alone, connect two men across centuries? This correlation shows how genetics might revise our identity narratives and therefore requires a reexamination of what is meant by lineage as well as inheritance, particularly from the perspective of the heirs. The genetic information is a tool, a part of the story that is changing how Christopher Columbus is
understood. For the heirs, a genetic signature shared by two men would imply not necessarily a direct male relation—that is tracked through the Y-chromosome—but instead implies a shared maternal relation. In a matrilineal society, where lineage is conceptualized from the mother not the father, that which connects two men is woman. The inheritance is not of the man, though rhetorically it is tied to Columbus, but instead refers to the genetic signature from an earlier mother, “from the first handtalkers of creation”. Women maintain the connections, and the signature of survivance inherently comes from them. Vizenor uses this turn in logic to stretch the imagination, to force one to see beyond the described connections to the other relations that existed, or currently exist, in order to produce that described situation. Vizenor’s story prompts the reader to think about how this particular story is told and how that narrative compares with other stories coming out of the genome age and around the time of Columbus’s quincentennial about American identity and belonging as well as genetic predispositions, and how those are or are not related to nature, nurture, or yet unnamed principles. The genome age allows reflection on identity from what our genes can tell us – yet these are just one more story, a genetic identity story that can or cannot inform belonging. Columbus’ quincentennial looks back at contact and the kinds of mixture and identity and belonging that then emerged.

The proposed relation of the two men through mitochondrial DNA is also discussed during the tour of the tribal heirs’ genetic research facility. Dr. Cantrip
receives a question from a visiting researcher about this connection: “‘Doctor Cantrip, would you review your scientific methods and explain why you considered mitochondrial genetic research, which depends, as it does, on a mother?’” (134-5).

Cantrip replies, “‘Christopher Columbus has the same genetic signature of survivance, we have concluded from laboratory and computer studies, as the hand talkers and his namesake [Stone Columbus] five centuries later’” (135). This idea and question connects to an earlier statement from the narrator that “[Columbus] inherited the signature of survivance and tribal stories in the blood from his mother, and she inherited the genetic signature from maternal ancestors” (28). Both the maternal genetic and narrative inheritances are needed in order for the gene therapy, the healing through genetic material, to occur. This “lineage” remains questionable to the visiting scientists, but Cantrip further explains that the research demonstrated that “‘there is no sequence divergence in the seventeen gene signature of the mitochondrial material, and we are secure that our studies of nuclear DNA confirm the signature’” (136). While mitochondrial DNA differs from the nuclear DNA both are of value for identification purposes, but significantly Cantrip posits here that the mitochondrial DNA may have influenced, and perhaps changed or mutated the DNA of the nucleus, which is differentiated cellularly from mitochondrial DNA and which has a different evolutionary history. Therefore he posits that one will find copies of the signature in the
nucleus as well. Overall, this thesis by the director implies the power of the mitochondrial DNA to heal and to affect the nuclear DNA, thereby connecting men, women, and all global citizens. This healing signature, and the stories that activate it, all connected by Christopher Columbus and the tribe of his heirs, undergird an alternarrative of identity and belonging. The community relies on sovereignty to enable belonging as well as to provide a legal argument for resource protection, and for their enterprises such as genetic research.

4.2.3 Tribal Sovereignty

In the novel, Vizenor establishes not only a new history and identity for Christopher Columbus by connecting his genes to a North American tribe, but he also creates sovereignty for the heirs. While describing Columbus’ entry into and reproduction in the New World, Vizenor notes “Five centuries later the crossblood descendants of the explorer and the hand talker declared a new tribal nation” (4). The explorer himself, while returning home to his indigenous roots, was already a crossblood, but his similar descendants do something no other group has done. They “declare” their nation, without the recognition and acknowledgement of another national power. This act is described by another local media source, Carp Radio, that notes it “was on the air with the first live broadcast of the creation of a tribal nation”

*Mitochondrial DNA is only passed on from the mother in the egg cell as sperm cells do not have mitochondria, and therefore do not have mitochondrial DNA. Nuclear DNA is the DNA of the cell’s nucleus, where the chromosomes are housed.*
(123) when the heirs declared themselves separate and established sovereignty upon the casino barge. This quotation demonstrates particularly the concept of “the creation of a tribal nation” that emerges from a relationship of history to the present, specifically the relationship between Columbus and his heirs and the interrelation of media and nation. Instead of relying on the federal conceptions that a tribal nation must have been established prior to contact, this deft wordplay implies that tribal nations can and are yet to be established, with or without the Federal government. While US governmental regulations focus on preceding conditions of land occupancy and group unity, Vizenor theorizes not only a factionalized tribal nation, but also one that enacts sovereignty and determines its own membership irrespective of roles and genealogy, choosing to base it instead on those who need to be healed and those who can heal. Disputes within tribes are common, but the choice here to enable a tribe to separate and declare its sovereignty, a result in part of different views on the narrative basis of being and belonging, makes this novel an alternarative. Instead of relying on the Federal regulations, this community presents its own survivance and embarks on its own enterprises following the claim to their own sovereignty.

Similarly, the Metis people of Canada, who are descendants of various tribes and intermarried settlers, fought for their right to be recognized, but still had to work within

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7 In the Federal US acknowledgment process, tribes must satisfy seven requirements including proving their existence as an historical tribe, either before contact or who were established as existing with contact and ensuing treaties and documentation of the tribe.
and react to the system of recognition. Metis peoples, which in and of themselves exist as a result of colonization and therefore are not dated to before contact, still have to prove certain aspects of history and identity to the government for recognition. Vizenor instead presents here a state removed from others yet welcoming to them:

[Point Assinika] was claimed by the heirs as a free state with no prisons, no passports, no public schools, no missionaries, no television, and no public taxation; genetic therapies, natural medicine, bingo cards, and entertainment were free to those who came to be healed and those who lived on the point….Bingo would pay for local services, and games of chance would heal the wounded and the lonesome. (124)

This nation constructs itself on a bingo barge anchored in international waters, which no one owns and which everyone may enjoy, thus the tribal heirs provide a way for everyone to enjoy their community, and then to fund and support their genetic research. Vizenor focuses here on those trappings that many modern nations, tribal and not, adorn themselves with, such as passports, but also historical markers of relations between nations and between governments and their citizens, such as prisons, missionaries, and taxation. I call attention to the denial of passports, prisons, missionaries, and taxation to highlight how Vizenor constructs this new tribal nation with its attention directed to advanced technology, traditional practices, humor, and

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8 A tribe of mixedblood Indians in Canada, resulting from exogamy between Natives and settlers. Still wanting to retain their difference and their own nation, they fought for and declared their own First Nations. Louis Riel was a major figure in this fight, and also figures in this novel as someone to whom others compare Stone Columbus.

9 Recently the Haudenosaunee use of tribal passports was highly publicized, with the net result being a loss to sovereignty as other nations such as the US and UK refused to acknowledge their sovereign right to produce passports. However, the struggle itself brought attention to the discrepancy between acknowledged and exercised sovereignty.
chance. Here a tribal nation not only claims its own sovereignty, later recognized by a friendly Federal judge, but also claims the use of new and old practices to ensure adaptability and survival. The new “free state” promotes free service and denies many of the ones that would require taxation, which they also deny, subsisting and supporting services through donation. Similarly, they willingly donate their own gifts, including the resources they have that are necessary for healing. The heirs are dedicated to many methods of healing, through the resources particular to their community. Vizenor demonstrates possibilities available when operating via an alternarrative for this tribal community, moving beyond the bounds of blood, domestic dependent nationhood, and positioning themselves as controllers of resources instead of victims of capitalism.

4.2.4 Resources

The literary lineage of the “stories in the blood” simulate the genetic lineage through the sense of property that exists for both the genes and the stories themselves, which are explicitly property of those who have received them as inheritance or gift from the previous generation. While the specific types of property differ in this case

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10 “The sea, the air, and the like, cannot be appropriated; every one may enjoy them, but none has an exclusive right in them. Property, considered as an exclusive right to things, contains not only a right to use those things, but a right to dispose of them, either by exchanging them for other things, or by giving them away to any other person, without any consideration, or even throwing them away. Property is divided into real property, and personal property. Property is also divided, when it consists of goods and chattels, into absolute and qualified. Absolute property is that which is our own, without any qualification whatever. Qualified property relies on the possession of said property. Property is again divided into corporeal and incorporeal. The former comprehends such property as is perceptible to the senses, as lands, houses, goods,
between corporeal genes and incorporeal stories, they both are a part of personal property. Memphis Stone, a mongrel heir, emphasizes this relation in her defensive claim that “My genes are personal” (135). By claiming the personal nature of her genes, not to be shared with public research projects, Memphis asserts the community and individual rights to protection of property. This speech act is particularly intriguing because Memphis Stone, while seen from the outside as human, is seen by the heirs in her true form of a mongrel panther, thereby linking directly the personal of indigenous genes to human as well as other species. Understanding the Native relationship to DNA and genes allows outsiders—especially researchers and the media—to begin to see the many relationships involved in genetic research, not just populations and their resources, but people and their bodies, people and their relations to other species, and other species in relation to their environments. These relationships are extremely important for understanding the use of resources by indigenous peoples and from indigenous lands.

For centuries, the looting of resources has been a plague upon American Indian communities, and reactions to that looting have led to various protections through legislation and other means. Community protector in her own right, Felipa Flowers

merchandise and the like; the latter consists in legal rights, as choices in action, easements, and the like.” (Legal Definitions: [http://www.lectlaw.com/def2/p100.htm](http://www.lectlaw.com/def2/p100.htm))
addresses the problem of resource robbing, highlighted by both biocolonialism and legislation such as NAGPRA during her life: “The shamans, the bear and beaver, and now the earth must survive the diseases of the fur trade...Not so the new fur traders can consume our blood, shadows, and sacred stories” (47). While the fur trade initially devastated the resources of North America when more animals were killed than necessary, thus endangering food supplies, the “new fur trade” revolves around “blood, shadows, and sacred stories.” These resources are more personal to the indigenous peoples, but also this statement from Felipa highlights the importance of surviving the diseases of this trade; in other words, it is not only the trade that is a problem, but the “diseases” that travel with it, including the blood narrative that enables it and allows for the desire of indigenous blood and stories. Vizenor’s alternarrative turns towards the world of that disease and towards the need for the healing of the world, trade, diseases, and survivors. In his storytelling to change the world, its functioning again reveals itself for the man and artist to redeem together.

Many of the arguments behind these trade controversies posit the objects, remains, and samples as sacred, but Vizenor clearly states that “The animals are stories in our blood, and the stories have the power to heal, and the power to heal is comic and has never been sacred” (71). The difference here between the sacred and profane or

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11 Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was enacted in 1990, making the fight for it coterminous with Vizenor’s writing of The Heirs of Columbus and the quincentennial.
comic is clearly differentiated, but it is done not at the expense of the argument for the sacred but in support of it. In *Shadow Distance*, Vizenor writes clearly that while others have argued the sacred and profane are not differentiated for Native Americans, they clearly are through traditional and modern stories that do or do not encompass certain subjects. While the Western concepts of profane encompass sex and excrement, the Native concepts of profane do not, so those are not off limits in stories; however, discussions of the sacred stories are precisely so because they may be misappropriated. Vizenor’s statement of the relation between the animals and stories highlights that their salvation is not sacred but comic. The relations among the animals, the stories, and healing all connect to tribal humor, not tribal religion, again subverting the standing dominant narratives. These links among animals, human beings, and stories return us to the biological link of DNA, which can be a story itself and which can only be understood through stories, but when utilizing that story about man one must remember the relations to other organisms— not separate, but always a part.

The heirs directly address the issues of modern story creation in part by considering these biotechnological innovations as valuable as traditional stories through their connections to the stories in the blood. Nostalgic conceptions of American Indians have placed even the contemporary peoples perpetually in the past, and have concretized traditions. However, traditions have to evolve with the people: “Gracioso, for instance, believes that ‘seasonal resurrections create new stories in the blood, stories
that honor new memories, a new inheritance” (18). Gracioso, an heir, presents the resurgence and new invention of stories to provide healing, perhaps for mutations yet unknown. This connection is itself quite interesting because at a scientific level, blood does change from person to person as it is passed down, as mutations and genetic crossings occur from the different genomes. Therefore the creation and renewal of that resource—instead of its dwindling to nothing without endogamy and homogeneity as purported by limiting blood narratives—layers onto the alternarrative created to allow for a conception of blood that does not limit but expands. Here when blood is taken as the literal referent instead of the figurative referent conflated with the literal, an alternarrative can be generated. This conception draws upon indigenous ideas of identity, and the relation between the overall belonging of a community to the belonging of its constituent parts, including animals, stories, and blood. These particular ideas about all of one’s relations in the natural world figure prominently in understanding why and how the cooptation and outright taking of indigenous knowledge and genetic material has been understood by community members, and connects Vizenor’s imagined resistance to ongoing struggles in and beyond Indian Country.

4.2.5 Biocolonialism

In publications intended to educate indigenous communities about the dangers of biocolonialism, the Indigenous Peoples’ Council on Biocolonialism (IPCB) defines the concept of biocolonialism as the taking and misuse of flora, fauna, and human bodies,
including their constituent parts such as blood and genes, and they posit some responses to this new colonialism. Frank Dukepoo, former director of the IPCB, explained the group’s response to genomic research as stemming from a clash of world views: “To us, any part of ourselves is sacred. Scientists say it is just DNA. For an Indian, it is not just DNA, its part of a person, it is sacred, with deep religious significance. It is part of the essence of a person” (Interview, San Francisco Chronicle, 1998). This understanding of genes as both personal and cultural property underlies the fight waged by the IPCB against biocolonialism and the ethnically targeted genomic research that leads to it.

The IPCB identifies many aspects of research, particularly genetic research, as problems for indigenous communities that require solutions that are actionable in part because of sovereignty. For example, the IPCB states “When the research impacts the entire community, which is always the case if the research is “population” or “race-based” research, this is a real problem” (IPCB 34-5). This statement highlights the idea of population versus people, a distinction that influences what indigenous people can do to protect their genes, or have been able to do to protect any part of their collective bodies. The type of genetic research that has focused on “populations” or “race” has looked at indigenous people and racial Others not as human but as themselves a resource. Studies that treat individuals as subjects and peoples as populations inherently deny their particularities, boiling them down to data instead of community

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participants or people themselves in need of something other than data for survival. This objectification is related for indigenous peoples to interests they had historically in the resources particularly of their territory. However, when the population itself claims its identity as a people and as owners of the research, they too can control the research agenda, investigating their own claims and hypotheses.

The IPCB lists many suggestions for what indigenous people can do in response to the continuing genetic research. For example, the IPCB states: “First and foremost, indigenous peoples must regulate any activity that potentially may result in the extraction of genetic resources from these people or their territories” (IPCB 34). Through this regulation of potentially dangerous projects, the IPCB’s instructions are responding to the past extractions of resources, genetic and otherwise. In this statement, the IPCB clearly indicates the concerns for indigenous flora and fauna, the plants and animals native to an area, but the territory of the indigenous body is also implicated through reference to the genetic resources of the people. The sovereign territory of a tribe has typically been whittled away by another governmental power, but allowing it to be further invaded by researchers undermines sovereignty claims, to the land and those genes that reside upon it. Further, this sovereign territory provides for the sovereignty of the tribe to exercise its laws within its boundaries, including the boundaries of the body, another imperative that IPCB states as: “tribes must exercise their own sovereign power to regulate [genomic research] in order to protect themselves and their people”
(IPCB 34). This sovereignty allows tribes to not only protect the resources of their territory, but to also declare that territory as a nation. Another way that Native tribes can prevent biocolonialism, at least to some extent, occurs when they themselves take control of the resource at hand, research of it, and applications of that research, particularly to benefit the community.

Compared to the publications on genomics by the IPCB, Vizenor’s imagined history and use of genes to heal creates an alternative and additional approach to genomics. This novel helps us to imagine what further possibilities might be available for real world solutions between indigenous people and genetic research particularly through the act of telling another story, one of people not populations. Vizenor’s stories in the blood invoke an active role for Native Americans in the genetic research that the IPCB calls “a given. It will continue” (IPCB 34). Given that the research will continue, the people and communities must become involved in and educated about the practices of research, prevention of research harms, and survivance for the people. Vizenor’s community of heirs provides a narrative way in which to enact these protections, preserving the people so that they too “will continue.”

4.2.6 Stories in the Blood + Signature of Survivance = Genetic Therapy

The “signature of survivance” brings together the stories in the blood and genetics, but also marks a will towards life and the future, with a connection to the past. Vizenor connects this genetic signature to his concept of survivance and further links it
to a capacity to heal. Vizenor’s overall project of creating and enabling survivance as a practice in indigenous communities is connected to the deployment of survivance through the genetic signature. Survivance exists in the genes as they act in gene therapy and other capacities to create survival, literally through reproduction and the drive behind that towards survival. Vizenor uses this signature to complicate the difference between memories and genes, as well as to develop his idea of construction of stories in the blood as distinct from Momaday’s memories in the blood. He demonstrates the relations between these two narrative bases in the tribal edifice where they are joined together in the Genome Pavilion: “The sides of the blue pavilions were radiant at night, and the massive computers hummed and sounded the beats of memories, the genetic signatures of survivance” (132). Here Vizenor correlates the “beats of memories” with the genetic signature, yet mediates them through computers, contradicting a blood basis for either. A response from a Native media outlet provides one perspective on the signature of survivance from the larger Native American community: “The Ojibwe News reported that the signature was an ‘estate antidote to terminal blood quantum creeds’” (132). This “estate antidote” comes from within the community, quite specifically from the land/the estate, to obscure the problem of “terminal blood quantum creeds,” which exist in many tribes to limit membership; however, by being “terminal” they have an endpoint, a reduction of the people of that blood to no one, thereby producing their own
termination. By using the signature to heal the children of their mutations, the heirs also provide for the obfuscation of blood quantum in general and as a means of determining belonging. By providing all of the children with the signature of survivance, a genetic connection to a tribe and to Columbus, their tribal blood is ensured and they are genetically and rhetorically tied to the beginning, discovery, and continuation of America. The heirs are united by blood, literally the genetic signature, but the focus on survivance means their continuation depends on them acting for that survivance, through enterprises such as the genetic therapy involving the storytelling. Instead of a blood quantum or the version of blood encoded in descendancy, Vizenor’s alternarrative proposes a clean slate approach that remediates the past and enables future connections.

Throughout the text, Vizenor develops the claim of the heirs that their genes have the power to heal, through the combination of the signature of survivance and the stories in the blood. Overall this conception of blood stories that heal instead of harm or divide offers an alternarrative to a blood narrative of dominance and difference. While it does posit difference, Vizenor also envisions the heirs as healing others in the world and sharing the signature with those who need it. While directly challenging a blood narrative of Indian identity, Vizenor also imagines a relation between blood and story

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13 Termination was a Federal policy practiced in the 1960s and 1970s to eliminate the Federal responsibility to Indian tribes by terminating their recognition, then therefore the responsibility.
that resists the popular blood narrative and presents an alternative imagining. He writes early on that “The Heirs of Christopher Columbus are serious over their names and resurrections; the heirs come together at the stone tavern each autumn to remember the best stories about their strain and estate, and the genetic signature that would heal the obvious blunders in the natural world” (4). Here the reference to “the best stories about their strain and estate” calls to attention both the biology of their “strain” and the use of land in terms of “estate.” By focusing on the best stories, which in and of themselves are oral and not a part of the written novel, the heirs work out alternative imaginings to how biology and land can influence both identity and belonging, where biology is not a determinant but merely a variable and land exists as one possible home. However, if a community driven movement leads to a new territory, or water estate in this case, that movement and new territory can still enable community and in fact can be considered part of the natural evolution. Vizenor has Columbus himself enacting such a homecoming to his Mayan roots, though the larger European settlement would have disrupted this narrative. The possibilities of the best stories are not limited by being inscribed into the novel, but open to change and innovation.

The original homelands of the heirs map onto the lands of the Anishinaabe, but they declare their tribal nation in international waters between the US and Canada. The move to a water estate allows the heirs to ground their new nation in a homeland yet uninhabited for a nation whose citizenry grows with each healed person. The heirs
provide willingly the unique signature of their blood to others, through genetic therapies and stories, in order to “heal the obvious blunders.” This healing simulates the “proofreading” that occurs in DNA replication, and while mutations still happen, some of the obvious blunders are corrected and not passed down.\(^\text{14}\) This method then can be applied to narrative, where the alternarrative heals the other stories of their obvious blunders and past mutations.

The method of healing lies in the genetic signature inherited by the heirs from Christopher Columbus, and the stories in the blood. The migration, and origination, of the genes are described by Cantrip, who explains the biological occurrence of this signature:

> There are, as you know, four crucial substances, adenine, cytosine, guanine, and thymine, in a deoxyribonucleic acid molecule, and three billion codes and signatures. These four letters are held together in a signature by their opposites, the biochemical codes are bound by their own opposition, and here is where the shaman and the trickster touch that primal source of humor, imagination, and the stories that heal right in the antimonies of the genetic code. (134)

The nature of the signature itself, bound by opposition thus held together by tensions and complements, allows it to heal, which is the application the heirs put it to for the betterment of indigenous peoples. Cantrip’s relationship to the signature and to the project itself reinforces the biological nature of the signature and its useful application, to healing Native children. These Native children have lost the signature of survivance.

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\(^{14}\) DNA polymerase performs a kind of proofreading function during replication by replacing mismatched or miscopied nucleotides with the appropriate replicant.
through mutation caused by a non-natural, chemical civilization. This mutation further
indicates a loss of the stories, their inheritance mutated into another narrative, one that
also requires alteration to enable the healing of the children. The heirs prevent exterior
intervention into their genes by performing the research and its applications within their
own community, thus preventing biocolonialism. Unlike research that has been
performed on indigenous populations, this research is done by and for an indigenous
tribe of people, and further unlike other research they bring in the sick children for
healing and invite in other researchers to learn about their work. These dissimilarities
gain them both admirers of their works but also detractors and critics who would like
things to return to the old ways.

4.2.7 Critics and Admirers

The alternarrative of the heirs and their research is threatening to many other
groups but also acts as an inspiration to people throughout the globe. One threat that
they pose involves funding and restrictions put on research by governmental
institutions, through legislation and grants. Cantrip calls attention to these bounds by
stating:

The research on polymerase chain reaction in gene copies, genetic therapies,
intron, and intromission, for instance, was unwarrantable and banned in most
nations to protect the interests of major pharmaceutical companies. (132)

In a space beyond the safe zone bounded by these restrictions, and far from corporate
funding, the heirs of Columbus perform their genetic research. The idea that nations
work “to protect the interests of major pharmaceutical companies” by restricting certain research outside of those establishments might seem preposterous, yet it occurs even today with the biocapital of genes, patents, and pathogenic genomes, from which the companies could profit.\textsuperscript{15} In fact, the research discussed as “unwarrantable and banned in most nations” is basic research, not advanced patent-dependent research, making the ban even more preposterous. By sharing the knowledge, the heirs prove that their goal is healing rather than a desire for profit from gaming and genes. This altruistic leaning troubles some outsiders, and even those who could be considered insiders: the tribe that judged the heirs to be non-tribal.

The heirs base their alternarrative of identity in their stories and genetic signature, but the way in which they declare sovereignty and utilize that narrative and its parts threatens other tribes. The tribe from whence the heirs ostensibly came views them as a threat to their tribal sovereignty, particularly because of their resistance to Federal understandings of Indianness: “There were tribal fascists who would abolish the heirs, their bingo, humor, and certain words, such as crossblood, and the genes of survivance; there were government agents and investigators who would overturn the new nation” (131). While agents of other governments would simply like to eliminate

\textsuperscript{15} Many companies patent disease genes and whole genomes as they view them as biological substances off of which they can capitalize. Diamond v. Chakrabarty made this patenting and commercialization, but a recent decision against Myriad Genetics endangers this specific biocapitalism. The ruling on corporate citizenship also complicates these ideas by giving corporations not only their own form of belonging but the rights concordant with citizenship even when their responsibilities do not appear to be met through taxes and other means.
the new tribal nation, these “tribal fascists” are against the heirs and the tenets of their nation, as well as terms that could endanger their own tribal nations. By not playing the game laid out by the Federal government, the heirs not only attract the ire of those tribes who do, but they also bring the structure of the world, and how another tribe chooses to reinforce it, into question. Again, Vizenor’s novel responds to this call by Sartre for the literature and the man to redeem the world, together through the artist. This unwanted attention leads to further criticism of the alternarrative basis of identity and community for the heirs. Here, crossblood refers to Vizenor’s reclamation of breed and mixedblood to connect it to a biodiverse crossing of two bloods, a term that calls attention to purity as a problematic construct and posits that this crossing is perhaps more valuable than a pure “fullblood” strain. Further, crossblood is a word that causes the other tribe concerns, and which has particular associations to the leader of the heirs:

“Stone Columbus, as you know, is the son of Binn Columbus, and that white man who refused to disclose his name; genealogical records confirm beyond a doubt that he is a crossblood, although he has never been enrolled as a legal member of the tribe, because his grandparents Truman Columbus, an assumed surname, were opposed to the political reductions of identities,” the investigator reported to the tribal president. (156)

Here Vizenor presents the classic way in which genealogical records “confirm” seemingly biological concepts of bloodedness. Further though, Stone rejects the legal identity of tribal citizenship, but still maintains a tribal identity through culture and practices. Much has been made of the termed discrepancy between tribal citizenship and tribal heritage in coding identity, but here we see a position announced a generation
ago that denies that kind of absolute difference. Vizenor’s stance also clarifies the relation between family, values, history, and political identities, in that the statement is qualified with information about the grandparents’ status, their thoughts regarding that status, and their choice of that status. Blaeser notes that “Vizenor’s mixedblood characters… celebrate that state, create from it new mixedblood identities, and exist in and are depicted in a comic mode” (Blaeser 158). The celebration of the mixedblood identity refigures the concept of mixedblood from a pejorative to an identity worthy of exaltation, humor, and creation, all of which are useful elements to alternarratives.

After the death of his wife, Felipa, and in the midst of the success of the heirs’ tribal nation, Stone Columbus becomes close with the Carp Radio talk show host who reports on both the nation and his work. While still honoring his wife, Stone and his daughter adapt their family for its survivance. Stone’s relation to modern tribal ideas of identity is further fleshed out by the host who declares:

“Stone resists the notion of blood quantum, racial identification, and tribal enrollment. The heir is a crossblood, to be sure, but there is more to his position than mere envy of unbroken tribal blood. Indians, he said, are ‘forever divided by the racist arithmetic measures of tribal blood.’ He would accept anyone who wanted to be tribal, “no blood attached or scratched,” he once said on talk radio. (162)

Here the positionality of crossblood is contrasted to that of “unbroken tribal blood” that incorporates a critique of blood quantum, racialization of Indians, and the enrollment
Instead, Stone proposes to “accept anyone who wanted to be tribal,” a concept that does not therefore entail a desire to be “different” but a desire for a certain set of shared values. For Stone, and many others, the reliance on a blood narrative for undergirding the legal identity of tribal citizenship is a problem that can be remedied by removing the ability to differentiate “tribal blood”: “[Stone] points out how many people have faked their tribal blood, ‘so if it’s so easy to fake blood then why bother with the measures?’ His point is to make the world tribal, a universal identity, and return to other values as measures of human worth, such as the dedication to heal rather than steal tribal cultures” (162). This quotation clarifies the relation between tribal identity and values, in that anyone can be tribal, but when it comes down to understanding the difference in people on a level of values and worth, that is not related to stolen culture but to a dedication to healing. Once we acknowledge our own universal identity, and how that connects us one to the other and each to other organisms, we can reimagine groupings, values, research, health, and the relations among all of these reconfigured concepts.

Not all view the heirs and their work as threatening, and many embrace the possibilities for alternarratives. One way in which the admiration instead of the fear of

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16 Mark Rifkin refers to the process of straight-lining lineage as “how American Indians became straight” positioning it against formulations of American Indian kinship as queer, as argued in his When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, The History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty, Oxford UP, 2010.
others spreads is through the Native news outlets that carry their story. While the

*Ojibwe News* reports the hope of healing, another media source, Carp Radio, reports:

That the heirs would give their genes to save the world is neither ironic nor
moronic, as they believe their unique genes are healers. Such noble ambitions,
however, are not without critics. Leading scientists are skeptical, to put it kindly,
that a ragtag group of rebellious, uneducated mixedbloods would be the actual
selective heirs of a ‘genetic signature’ from Christopher Columbus. (130)

The power of this report lies in the descriptions of the heirs, and in the statement “That
the heirs would give their genes to save the world is neither ironic nor moronic, as they
believe their unique genes are healers,” which presents the philosophy behind the work
the heirs do. That work does not have a lie as a front or stupidity as a backing, but
instead it has belief in the healing powers of a story, in this case a new story given along
with the genes that in turn create a new history, allowing for healing from previous
existences. Further, the skepticism of outsiders reveals the necessary faith held by the
heirs, simultaneously about the research and the traditions. While “civilization” might
be acting upon the citizens, favoring another narrative enacts a revolution, a side effect
of which is countering a blood narrative, but the force of which is the desire to heal a
society harmed by that civilization as a result of chemical and ideological pollutants.

The heirs received admiration for the sovereign establishment of their nation,
their games of chance, and their use of genetic therapies. In reporting on the nation,
including its creation, Carp Radio also solicits such actions of survivance from its
audience, and inadvertently also helps bring in donations:
That the new nation honored humor and common sense, and was dedicated to heal children without taxation, inspired millions of citizens who contributed more cash to the gene banks than they had ever given in the past to television evangelists. Carp Radio encouraged citizens to open gene banks with their cash in every state to further the research on survivance in the New World. (124)

The support coming in the form of cash is helpful to run the services the heirs had promised to the local community, but also to help them expand their care to the global movement of people journeying to be healed. The encouragement from the local radio station for other “citizens” to open their own gene banks “in every state” also reflects movements to retain possession over one’s own parts when it comes to research and allows for a very broad interpretation of state and citizen. The concept of biological citizenship, defined as a responsibility of the state government for the biological wellbeing of its citizens and reflexively as the biological constitution of a nation’s citizenry, encodes a century’s old narrative for defining citizens through their bodies with a contemporary intervention to speak to the relation of rights and responsibilities. Here biological citizenship could not only have wide license and reference but also the ability to encode previously unrecognized identities. Unlike biologized citizenships before it, this construction could allow for research to be used to further political and cultural identities in connection to their biological components, similar or different.  

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17 Omi and Winant describe the relation between the government/state and their investment in creating and maintaining biologized systems of belonging in their seminal work *Racial Formation in the United States.*
This change in turn could lead to an alternarrative to undergird global citizenship as opposed to a citizenship that relies on national borders.

Most importantly, the alternarrative of The Heirs of Columbus posits that one cannot heal with just biological ideas or with stories, but with a combination. Not only does one have to address the obvious problem of blood as it is figured biologically and genetically, metaphorically and literally, but further how it circulates through narratives. In order to heal those “lonesome mutants of a chemical civilization,” the treatment by the heirs’ signature of survivance requires the stories in the blood to be animated. One innovation that the heirs’ make in order to support their healing practices is to utilize biogenetic robots that were given to them by another researcher. These robots are taught the stories in the blood and can also create their own, in order to energize the signature of survivance and produce health. The combined act of storytelling with genes creates a gene therapy that heals: “Panda and three new biorobots were trained to heal with humor; their memories held the best trickster stories, and modern variations, that would liberate the mind and heal the bodies of the children” (158). Both traditional and modern stories are needed for this healing and both parts of the healing process can utilize technology instead of simply suffering from it. The relation between these two tribal elements is described as “This story energy somehow influences the genetic codes and the children are mended in one way or another” (164). Like most therapies, the exact mechanism is not known; however, it is understood that a relation between nature
and nurture, blood and narrative, occurs that is not divisive but reparative. This alternarrative allows for survivance, particularly by presenting an expansion of biological citizenship that does not utilize territory or residency, or even lineage, but connects all people who want to be healed and move forward with a genetic signature that is activated by stories told, not written. In combination story energy and the genetic signature, nurture and nature, oral and somatic, heal mutations in the future generations by changing their mutated genes to the genetic signature of survivance, providing treatment to the effects of a chemical civilization. This combination and how it plays out in the novel enable the alternarrative. Identity can be healed from a blood narrative even by using blood anew, with the powerful act of storytelling to allow for a new or yet unheard identity and community to emerge. This tribally performed research and genetic therapy provide an imagined solution to the problems that the IPCB describes and works against.

Vizenor’s story, overall itself a healing vision of genomics, posits an indigenous solution to biocolonialism by having indigenous communities in control of both the research of the genes and stories within the blood and how that knowledge is applied. In the wake and aftermath of countless genetic forays into indigenous bodies, a response is a great start, but not quite enough. The wealth of genes and the stories in the blood that Vizenor imagines in *The Heirs of Columbus* inspire actions of survivance, moving towards life and enabling narratives of identity for future generations, which all produce
the survival of the community, particularly one worth living and perpetuating through subsequent generations. Claims to ownership of genes and other resources must be made and respected from the outside so that the research can continue in a way that is responsible to all peoples. These claims and a changed story, an active storytelling of an alternarrative, enable survivance to happen so that the people will continue as well.

These novels articulate the power of storytelling as an act particularly aligned with survivance. In *The Heirs of Columbus*, Vizenor deals with the discovery of America and its legacy of colonialism, including how that legacy manifests in a scientific agenda. He posits a sovereign nation that disrupts the narratives of history by arguing poetically that blood means nothing without stories, in other words, the nature of the biological is nothing without the nurture of the environmental. By contrast, another set of tools emerges in the novel *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* to present an alternarrative that allows for identities to cross major waterways, borders, and belonging to encompass bodies of many forms. In *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57*, Vizenor presents storytelling as a solution to the problem of moving beyond nations to understand belonging, moving instead towards a universal identity not differentiated by blood but unified by stories. Here, Vizenor constructs an alternarrative for all peoples in the space of Asia and connects the themes of identity and community through a common humanity, a global citizenry like that which Stone Columbus calls for in the name of a universal identity. This novel enacts the healing and ideas brought forward by *The Heirs of Columbus* in a different
way. Columbus created one kind of transcultural society through his “homecoming” but other cultural interactions and future identities and their attendant narratives are explored in *Hiroshima Bugi*. Anthropologist James Clifford’s *Routes* explores transcultural societies and the problems that emerge from these interactions, including the tensions that diaspora brings to belonging. Clifford’s conception of travel and its relation to translation demonstrates the very difficult narrative space that Native American literature always occupies, but which Vizenor’s text pronounces more acutely by engaging Asia.

In *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57*, Vizenor explores questions of mixedblood identity through the character of Ronin Browne, the product of a union between an American Indian occupation soldier and a Japanese bugi (boogie) dancer. In this way, as in his novel *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*, Vizenor positions his Native ideas in Asia, bringing into question the relationship between Native Americans and Chinese, and here between Native Americans and Japanese. *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* furthers the project of disintegrating borders, with particular attention to the production and reproduction that occurs between America and Japan following the Second World War.

### 4.3 *Hafu in Two Worlds: Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57 and the (Re)Production of Nuclear Fallout*

*Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* is a collection of stories from the life of Ronin Browne, divided into thirteen story sections with each followed by an explanatory section called a Manidoo Envoy, which translates roughly to messenger of god. These explanations of
Ronin’s mixed genre text are appended by a resident of the Manidoo Hotel, which is located in the American Southwest. Ronin meets this resident when he goes in search of his father, a former occupation soldier who has died before Ronin’s arrival. Vizenor presents the novel as a product of Ronin and this resident.

Ronin’s father was a White Earth Anishinaabe, like Vizenor, and his mother was a Japanese bugi/boogie dancer; they met during the American occupation of Japan following WWII. The stories move throughout time from before Ronin’s birth, including memories of his conception, to his movement away from and return to Japan. While growing up in Japan, he is abandoned by his father for the US and his mother for her devotion to the emperor, thus finding himself in an orphanage. After running away from the orphanage, he seeks companionship among lepers and mongrels in a park of atomic ruins, perpetually caught between communities, trying to figure out where he belongs. Identity, story, and history take on different guises in this text, not as clearly labeled “stories in the blood,” “heirs,” or “signatures of survivance,” but instead as attention to how Vizenor uses naming, the production and reproduction of nuclear war, and the role of borders. These themes allow for a different alternarrative from that constructed in The Heirs of Columbus, where Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57 focuses on multiplicity and attention to time to create alternative relations of identity and belonging that do not rely on blood. Even figures familiar from other texts by Vizenor, such as mongrels, take on slightly different forms in this mixed-genre novel. Survivance still
functions here but the acts of storytelling operate differently through these mixed methods.

**4.3.1 Naming as Act**

Similar to “crossblood” as a term in *The Heirs of Columbus*, the Japanese word for half, *hafu*, was applied to the progeny of unions between Japanese women and occupation soldiers, distinguishing them as halfbreeds. This kind of division contributed to their differentiated valuation in Japanese society, and similar to crossblood, it also becomes a resisted term. Vizenor’s use of hafu/half-breed characters forces us to think about the questions of their roles, where they belong, and who they are, which then become self-referential: how do we understand ourselves and how do we belong to each other in this world, and what if we were to become a united world of mixed persons, survivors, and even lack differentiation between species, much less races? These questions build on answers seen in *The Heirs of Columbus* but head down one new path of many possible acts of survivance, or creation of alternarratives.

Naming takes on an important role in this novel as it connects peoples and stories. Ronin Browne is the son of Orion “Nightbreaker” Browne and Okichi, a child who is orphaned by their choices and who lacks land (Ronin), but also who is related to other Brownes of Vizenor’s stories, including Almost Browne and other heirs in *The Heirs of Columbus*. The Browne family names serve as a connotation of a person of color, aligning the Browne of Japan with the Brownes of White Earth, the Browne heirs, and
other browns throughout the globe. Ronin refers throughout the text to the character Ronin in Akira Kurasawa’s film of the same name, connecting him directly to Japanese popular culture, that itself has become consumed by the broader global public. Ronin is also called Ainoko and Hafu, words referring to his status as a mixedbreed, and his chief consorts are lepers and reincarnated mongrels. These mongrels were once humans, but have been reincarnated here particularly as dogs, a device which Vizenor uses to highlight the relationship between people and animals. Finally, Ronin is called Mifune after the actor Toshiro Mifune who starred most frequently in leading roles for Akira Kurosawa’s films, thereby tying Ronin to the arts and the enticement, the tease, of a simulated reality.

In the Manidoo Envoy following each story, the messenger and companion of “god” carries forth the explanation of the stories. In explaining Ronin, the envoy connects him to the tradition of blood memory: “Ronin creates personal connections to nature in his stories, and, at the same time, he could be seen as ‘unclean’ because he associates with lepers, and teases the memory of blood as a presence. Shinto notions of pollution include the avoidance of blood and death” (63). Ronin mocks the “memory of blood as a presence” and this teasing removes the idea that this memory and this substance could have metaphorical references but that both and together they are present within the world, literal instantiations. Through these connections to both nature and impurity, as blood is understood in the Shinto religion, Ronin also presents
his dual nature, the worlds he straddles that focus on blood or view others as different, as full of death. Instead, his movement between these two worlds allows him to understand the connections between people, not the differences; polluted or pure, halfbreed or fullblood, the larger point is that all have blood and all are in this together, with memories.

Although Vizenor’s use of hafu in this narrative invests it with different, expanded meanings, another term and name has emerged in Japan as a remedy to the deteriorating language of hafu. The new term is bi, which refers not to the binary division of whole or not, but the bi of double, of both. While the binary of black/white is limiting, bi is a term that opens up the discourse. This term allows the individuals of two cultures to claim them both without diminishing one or the other, becoming more than full, becoming double. Here the doubled person allows a way to maintain heterogeneity and difference, while expanding into multiplicity. This claiming of bi performs an act of naming that also produces survivance.

4.3.2 Landed and Landless Belonging

The storytelling continues to explode binaries with a turn to land and how it connects, separates, and is divided by people. Vizenor draws together people to think about the relations not only between those with and without land, through Ronin, but

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18 The NASSS seminar in Literature and Culture brought up this movement for the children of mixed unions to declare not one or the other identity of their parents as their own, but to claim and live both.
those who are indigenous to lands: “The Ainu tease their origins in the presence of kamuy spirits of nature, not racial theories, and create in their stories a culture of survivance. The Ainu moshir is an imaginary “homeland of the spirits and nature that provides the shadows, smoke, fish, animals, salt, tattoos, dance, and songs to the people” (137). While an imaginary homeland, even in the mind there is freedom allowed to the people who are shunned and need a space to maintain for their own survival. By illuminating a new way of understanding origins, not in the racial theories of blood, but in a return to nature, the envoy points out how the Ainu culture produces survivance – an act of survival, not a reaction, but an initial movement, an origin story and perpetual practice to go on. The moshir homeland holds importance because it is here that the particular parts of nature that inspired their culture remain and support their performance of those acts and practices that constitute survivance. These acts and practices thereby constitute an alternarrative for identity and belonging.

When describing the lineage of storytellers he is following, Ronin tells about Nightbreaker and Ranald MacDonald. Gretchen Murphy presents the conflicted story of Ranald MacDonald and his mixed heritage, how he learned about it, and how he negotiated his identity.\(^{19}\) MacDonald was the first Native American in Japan, and Murphy parses his identity confusion over his tribal ancestry as well as his own changed

\(^{19}\) Gretchen Murphy, “‘A home which is still not a home’: Finding a Place for Ranald MacDonald”. ATQ (The American Transcendental Quarterly), Sept, 2001.
national identity, as the movement of the 49th parallel changed him from Canadian to American. The Manidoo Envoy describes MacDonald as someone who did not know himself, nor understand some of his names:

Ranald MacDonald discovered much later that he was native. He never knew his mother. He had accepted the native nicknames, “Little Chinook,” and “Little Chief,” as an affectionate tease, but did not think of himself as a native or mixedblood Chinook. “He stated that it was then he decided to go to Japan, of which he had heard and read, and from which he was convinced that the North American Indians originally came,” wrote William Lewis and Naojiro Murakami, editors of Ranald MacDonald. (140)

Here MacDonald discovers what people had always been trying to tell him and seeks an origin for the people with whom he was both fascinated and related. MacDonald’s idea connects the origins of the Native American Indians and the Japanese peoples. Vizenor has him directly encounter the Ainu, the indigenous people of Japan, but Vizenor does not differentiate between MacDonald’s work with that group on the northern island of Hokkaido and his travels throughout the other islands and peoples of Japan. The historical man was captured and imprisoned upon entering Japan, but later went on to teach English to interpreters. While Vizenor takes poetic license with this figure, his deployment of Ranald MacDonald as encountering the Ainu more directly makes his point about the connection between Native American and Asian peoples, a connection in the alternarrative that allows for global citizens to not be bound by residence or borders.
4.3.3 Atomic Time

All of these acts of naming and finding belonging help us to consider our own naming practices, but also what is meant by naming something as pure and something as ainoko or hafu. The naming practice extends to a renaming of time, to the calendar that starts when the atomic bomb explodes on Hiroshima, Atomu 1, 08:15. Here Vizenor has calendar time restart and encompass the effects of the bomb. In particular Native American thought, the exploding of the nuclear bombs – both at test sites in the American deserts/Native homelands and on Hiroshima and Nagasaki – entered us into another world. Various southwestern tribes believe we currently inhabit the Fourth World or Fifth World depending upon their tribal traditions (Maya and Hopi for the Fourth and Pueblo peoples for the Fifth), and whether one counts the nuclear bombings as moving us forward or awaits all out nuclear war to make that transition.\(^2\) The homelands of these particular tribes were the test sites for many American made nuclear devices, as well as the land from which uranium and plutonium, along with other minerals, were removed for use in such weapons. On a scientific level, the exploding of the nuclear bombs also literally changed the carbon in the world, by releasing neutrons that encountered nitrogen atoms, turning them into carbon-14 atoms, increasing that kind of carbon. On so many levels, after the bomb, the world would never be the same,

\(^2\) Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) elucidates this understanding in her creative collection of American Indian women writers – *Spider Woman’s Grandaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women* (1989).
and Ronin reflects that change in a conception of time that connects to the Native philosophy. Ronin has this new calendar system noted on his chest in an invisible tattoo that blooms in the onsen, the natural hot springs common throughout Japan and used as baths. Literally, he takes this calendar system into his body, similar to the way the radiation of the bombs was taken into the bodies of those killed and those who survived. This tattoo connects him to the Ainu, and the content of it connects him to the hibakusha, the survivors, thereby expanding his community connections.

While there remains a lot of homogeneity in Japanese culture, despite the identifiable American influence, there also exists the differentiated group of indigenous people known as the Ainu. These people and their relations to other indigenous peoples as well as the group of atomic survivors demonstrate alternarratives for creating community belonging. The invisible tattoo that Ronin has on his chest is imagined as a marking of the Ainu, and Vizenor uses this figure to directly connect them to the atomic survivors, the hibakusha, who also are marked as different. Ronin writes about the hibakusha, “the survivors of the atomic bombs, [who] were shunned by their own government” (68). This shunning of the survivors is mirrored in Chernobyl and led to the coining of the term biological citizenship by Adriana Petryna to understand the responsibility of a government to citizens that were harmed biologically by its actions; in other words, for Petryna the term defines citizenship in regards to the biological bodies of the citizens and the related rights and responsibilities between citizen and nation as
connected by the biological, here health and well-being for those affected directly or
indirectly by the actions of the government. To take that idea further, it is a concept that
forces us as citizens of the world to think about how we are responsible to one another.
Another product of the nuclear bombing and its fallout is that all the people and
characters in the novel become, in a way, atomic or atomu. Ronin’s love interest, Miko,
is referred to as “an atomu bugi dancer” (86), connecting her in spirit to Ronin’s mother,
and all other women bugi dancing between worlds – love and tradition, oppression and
modernity – as well as connecting her to the atomic bomb that ties together America and
Japan. Like the signature of survivance, atomu here offers a rhetorical variation for
everyone to have, causing them all to be different and yet the same, healing them from
the differentially valued identities of the past and telling a story of a future people.

4.3.3.1 A Time to Belong

Time continues to trouble Ronin as he seeks to define his identity without
reliance on certain borders, as from his conception, his identity had defied national and
political boundaries. This trouble with time contributes to his renaming of time, but that
comes after a struggle during his childhood as he worked to find out about his identity.
In an exchange with Sumo, the head lady of the orphanage where he grows up, Ronin
asks: “What future?” Sumo, who has taken Ronin’s driftwood sword, replies “When you
are adopted.” Ronin retorts “No, never, never” to which Sumo replies “Weapons are
not our future.” Ronin ends the exchange by saying “Take my soul” (31). Sumo
reminds Ronin that weapons are not our future, not in swords, not in bombs, and not for Japan. Ronin questions this disarmament of the nation and argues that Japan should arm itself to ensure peace and its future. However, at this point in the novel where he tells stories from his youth, he does not believe he has a future as he does not believe he will be wanted, and therefore adopted, because of his mixed heritage. In other words, he does not believe he belongs, thereby tying both identity and belonging to time and his understanding of it in the present.

Yet he does get adopted, not by a family but by a whole community: the White Earth Anishinaabe Nation, thereby attaining belonging and developing his identity. The community of his father takes him in as their own, yet he remains in Japan telling his stories. He ventures to the United States once, not the White Earth Reservation but to the retirement home of his father, whom he finds has passed. There, at the Manidoo Hotel, Ronin tells stories to his father’s friend, who collects them and appends a “Manidoo Envoy” to each story to provide textual and contextual analysis and that whole narrative is the book held in the hands of the reader. Vizenor distinguishes here between the locations of where his stories are written down—at the Manidoo Hotel—and where they are told—in the Peace Park in Hiroshima. There exists a tension between the oral storytelling versus written storytelling but the application of the act, here also in support of survivance, mediates that tension. The adoption by the community, by another nation creates a kind of dual citizenry but more so an acceptance
in two worlds. Ronin himself becomes transnational, gaining acceptance in both the White Earth Reservation and Japan, or at least a small part, therefore performing the identity of bi. In attempting to understand himself, Ronin adapts a story and quotation from the famous African-American dancer who was a sensation in Europe, Josephine Baker: “’You have white skins but black hearts,’ she told the other dancers and then walked out of a racist theater. ‘I have a black skin but I have a white heart’” (31). Ronin imitates this quotation by stating: “My skin is hafu, but my heart is mine, not an orphan heart” (31). While Baker’s words do different work, Ronin’s attachment to them and revision for his own purposes evidence his relation to others and to larger systems that would differentiate peoples based on inaccurate color schema. Baker discerns the associations between black as bad and white as good, and understands that skin is a physicality but that the figurative heart reflects the value of that color more clearly than skin. Ronin moves away from color to thinking about hafu and ownership, but more so the belonging accorded with the claim. He abridges and adds to her storied quotation, but relates a similar sense of imposed difference that the possession of identity and belonging ironizes. Even before he is adopted, he knows the differences between what people see and what he feels about himself, and inherently he knows he belongs somewhere, and with luck, multiple places. This reference and adaptation contrasts the visual perception of others and one’s own self identification. Again, the marked body of the bi or hafu is highlighted, connecting them further to the hibakusha. Both are products
of the bomb and the relationships forged following their explosions, whether survivors or other cultural outcasts. The relations between nations, reproduction between their citizens, and the movement of citizens between places leads to another tense issue that Ronin’s adoption into the White Earth Anishinaabe Nation highlights.

While naming and time have clear connections to identity and belonging, as well as the evolution of those concepts, the legal constructs of citizenship and adoption play into identity and belonging in other ways. Vizenor’s narrative brings up issues of adoption between Asia and the US, particularly as this is a male being adopted, against the trends of adopting Asian female children, and an exacerbation of the issue of adoption between the nations. For American Indian communities, adoption itself is a heated issue. In the decades following the world wars, and as yet another way to slowly terminate the identities of Indians and their communities, Indian children were adopted out to primarily white families. This removal of the future generations led to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978, which was passed to "protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families" (25 U.S.C. § 1902). Exogamy still plays a major role in the lives of American Indian peoples as they are the group who marries out most, and primarily marry white partners.  

incorporates. His narrative enables survivance by not utilizing blood in the same way that produces divided homes and communities. While Ronin resides in Japan even after achieving belonging on the White Earth reservation through adoption, this dual citizenship demonstrates the multiple identities of those existing simultaneously regardless of residency and borders. He is both Japanese and American Indian in Japan, belonging to both the Peace Park and the reservation, having belonged to the orphanage and to the history forged between the nations by the atomic bombs.

4.3.4 Atomic Relations

The production of the atomic bombs includes a new relationship forged between the U.S. and Japan that continued with occupation, leading in turn to reproduction in the form of births, unions, and narratives, and that results in a transnationality between the two nations. Japan becomes a part of America’s story and memory, as America also becomes a part of the memory of Japan. This relationship becomes harder to distinguish as a result of migration both before and after the bombing. Ronin objects to some of the ways in which this narrative is told, and he works to create a new narrative, countering directly the one that offends him by vandalizing the Peace Museum. Ronin believes The Peace Museum holds false memories of the past, and he carries out multiple acts of defacement to express his thoughts. He lights the Pond of Peace on fire, and he takes acid into the museum and removes the words of the peace letters that are etched onto metal. He lambasts these letters saying: “Some letters seem to be sincere, but the
ideology of peace makes bad poetry…The museum elevates the peace letters, the
government solicits a free ride on the passive road to peace, and, at the same time, there
are tricky moves to contract nuclear weapons in the country” (81). While at other points
Ronin points out that the pose of peace and disarmament are problematic situations for
Japan, these “tricky moves to contract nuclear weapons” emphasize a lack of
authenticity in a duality. At once, Japan is trying to be passively peaceful and
secretively aggressive, demonstrating a multiplicity that undermines the community not
that supports and expands it. Particularly, Ronin disagrees with the idea that Japan
should be and remain disarmed. This position of Japan mimics that of the tribal nations
that are under the protection of the U.S. and therefore operate with abridged forms of
sovereignty.

Following this protest against the peace letters, Ronin writes a confession for his
acts against the museum in its guestbook. In the Manidoo Envoy, the narrator notes that
“Ronin’s confession was written under this plaintive note, one of hundreds in the
dialogue book: ‘My name is Anna and I am visiting from the U.S.A. I am Japanese but
was born in the U.S.A. After the exhibit, I feel very angry and ashamed at my own
country. I pray for the world to come to peace. I also pray for this occurrence to never
ever happen again anywhere in the world’” (53). Anna “feel[s] very angry and ashamed
at [her] own country” but whether that country is the U.S.A. or Japan she does not state;
if she is mad at both, and if she therefore identifies with both as indicated by her
qualified statement, she constructs an identity based in a divisive, border-defined narrative instead of the alternarrative of Ronin’s identity and belonging. This indeterminacy also lends support to Ronin’s negotiation of multiple identities as liberating instead of the mutually oppressive identity that emerges in Anna’s case. Her presence speaks to the transnationality and the disruption of national boundaries as they have been used to define identities previously, thus highlighting the importance of the alternarrative produced through Ronin by Vizenor.

Changes in time, and the world, are not the only particular instances of the production/reproduction of nuclear war. These products include memories as well as people, diseases as well as divisions. In understanding the changes to the world brought about by nuclear testing and the bombs dropped in Japan, the nature of all of our homelands has changed—some more than others—and not only do governments have responsibilities to the people continually affected, but the people have responsibility to each other to remember. Vizenor reminds us that not only was there an awful loss of human life, there were shadows of their presence burned onto the sidewalks, there were those who survived, and there were those who were forced into the nuclear fallout only to suffer its effects over the years to come.  

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22 Both Japanese citizens and American occupation soldiers of the occupation were exposed to the nuclear radiation in the fallout zones.
Ultimately, understanding the memory of our past, the different perspectives both real and imagined, helps to connect peoples not only across the Pacific Ocean, but also throughout the globe. The production following nuclear fallout speaks to the endurance and transformation of those memories, but also to the future – children of American occupation soldiers and Japanese women, Japanese people living in the U.S., and Japanese Americans living all over the world, perhaps even back in Japan. It is this future that the memories shore up and protect, a product much less dangerous than radiation and much more powerful as a human force. The production of literature as well helps us to imagine and understand these memories and to use them not to live in the past, but to better understand our present, and prepare for these futures.

4.4 Conclusion

Overall, Gerald Vizenor presents remedies to modern narratives, including a blood narrative, through his stories. Through survivance, Vizenor presents alternarratives that are not theory but practice; in other words, he advocates action, not reaction, survival and adaption, not acculturation. These two novels present methods of enacting that survival through the act of storytelling, which works to redeem blood and history but also creates stories for the identities yet to come which will also need narrative by which to find belonging. Together, Vizenor and King address problems of utilizing blood narratives in culture and practice and present alternative imaginings of those stories for the people to go on. While both novels provide storytelling methods for
survivance, their different tools for that act include sovereignty, the act of naming, the importance of resources, and the usefulness or not of land. These tools show that alternarratives can be created in many ways and subsequently incorporated diversely into understandings of identity and belonging.

As noted, many writers followed N. Scott Momaday and the “Native American Renaissance,” finding wider appeal to national, hemispheric, and even global audiences. Vizenor has followed in a prolific manner in support of his project that indigenous people, and people in general, must act and must live in the condition of survivance. Yet, many others also follow in Momaday’s footsteps and provide different tribal and literary traditions for their alternarratives. Another such writer who offers alternarratives to a blood narrative is Thomas King (Cherokee), who writes prolifically and comically about peoples indigenous to the Americas, all while privileging the importance of multiplicity in identity. He does so by engaging issues of pan-Indianism, borders, visual recognition, and vampire projects. While tribally his people are not at a major national border, his work examines the US/Canadian border in *Truth and Bright Water*. In *Green Grass, Running Water*, King confronts the legal border and other legal identities, as well as visual constructions of Indians in Hollywood and beyond. His methods and greater project also differ from that of Vizenor, but the diversity of these alternarratives attests to both their necessity and their usefulness for identity formation and belonging determinations. Further, this diversity attests not to limits of
alternarratives but possibilities and openness. Vizenor and King do not demonstrate
two sides of a coin or other binarized options, but provide different methodological and
ideological bases for alternarratives to blood. King allows us to return to Cherokee
traditions and stories, but with a twist, as Vizenor has shown us some of the diversity of
Indian Country, King goes on to demonstrate some of the universality of indigeneity.
5. Thomas King’s Alternarratives at the Border

“Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous.”

In his text *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*, Thomas King writes this line about the danger and wonder of stories, and he goes on to enact its duality throughout much of his fiction. A mixed-blood Cherokee author also of Greek and German descent, Thomas King currently lives and works in Canada. As versatile as Vizenor, King has made a mark on both American and Canadian literature through various media including his fiction, radio show, and essays. King’s methods for creating alternative narratives differ from Vizenor’s methods, in their interwoven presentation and his use of art to subvert the dominant culture. His work demonstrates that both art and science revise history, with literature as a mediator. Jose Saldivar states that such “constructing of oppositional versions of history for many ethnic American writers relates to a desire to challenge the narrow Anglocentric concept of ‘tradition’ and the linear view of history on which it is predicated” (*The Dialectics of Our America*, xv). By creating a literature that imagines the possibilities of art and exposes the faults of science, King contributes to a new tradition. His novels intertwine multiple tribal traditions, a comic movement that works to subvert ideas of purity and advocates instead ideas of multiplicity and pan-Indianism. Comic here refers to the way humor is used to present the primacy of Native storytelling, the upending of Western narratives, and the multiplicity of identities. This chapter will explore two of King’s novels: *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993) and *Truth*
and Bright Water (1999). As evidenced by the titles and themes of his texts, King engages legal issues of tribes, tribal and national identities, and border issues. King’s major project of pan-Indianism offers an alternarrative for American Indian identity and belonging through attention to the power of stories.

Pan-Indianism refers to the movement for Natives to identify as a panethnic group, irrespective of borders, tribal affiliation, or status. For King, pan-Indianism or pantribalism presents solutions to a blood narrative through the presentation of other narrative possibilities, and that project is supported in different ways by both of these novels in their presentation of strategies for radical, redemptive stories and storytelling. Some literary critics have argued that King’s work produces counternarratives to Judeo-Christian origin stories, while I argue that elements of his stories—including the privileging of tribal literature and origin stories, the use of Cherokee language and culture, and the four Native elders who defy time, space, and gender—combine to produce alternarratives. King utilizes both counternarratives and alternarratives in his texts to ground the reader, revise dominant narratives through countering, and provide alternatives alongside those revisions. In this way, King weaves together the narrative strands of the novel into an alternarrative for identity and belonging that does not rely on blood. This method allows that dominant narrative to be razed, cleared, and a new narrative to be erected, or an original alternative narrative to regain visibility.
Green Grass, Running Water is concerned with narratives that mediate identity – legal, canonical, Judeo-Christian – including the tensions within and between these identities. King posits the solution of stories, particularly Native narrative, through the use of an interwoven narrative method where multiplicities in identities are honored. Further, Green Grass, Running Water explores how multiple narratives weave together, how characters can defy time and space, and how one can produce alternatives even while engaging with dominant narratives. The novel brings together stories from various characters within the frame constructed by Coyote and the narrator, and those stories include Blackfoot Indians in the Canadian town of Blossom and their reserve, as well as traditional stories told and adapted to contact with EuroAmerican stories. These threads of the novel are united by the four main characters, Native elders who have been put into a mental hospital in the United States for telling their stories, and who exceed the boundaries of identity, time, and place through their stories. Here, the dominant narrative encompasses a blood narrative presented in oblique terms, primarily demonstrated by the borders and boundaries of time and space and exceeded by the existence of multiple identities. The four main characters not only perform their multiple identities but also tell stories that are intended to “fix up the world” that has become bent by other stories and events. This novel encounters the effects of a blood narrative on multiple identity claims, and the second novel discussed provides a more in depth alternative to both blood and DNA narratives.
In the later text, *Truth and Bright Water*, the interrogation of the visual and the application of art to change the visual world work together powerfully to present an alternarrative. *Truth and Bright Water* is a coming of age narrative that deals with how one navigates borders of identity and presents art as a redemptive medium. *Truth and Bright Water* contains one central undifferentiated narrative, where the central conflict focuses on solving the mystery presented in an initial scene. The setting of this narrative is between Truth, a town in America, and Bright Water, an Indian reserve in Canada, with the main characters moving between the two in attempts to solve the mystery at the center of the plot, and to balance their own lives. The main characters are Tecumseh and his cousin, Lum, their parents, and an infamous member of the community, Monroe Swimmer, who has become a world renowned artist. The story is told from Tecumseh’s perspective. Here, King incorporates a character named Monroe Swimmer who is an artist and who alters history, art, landscape, and the overall narrative of Indian identity. Like the four Native elders who guide the four sections of *Green Grass, Running Water* who are attempting to “fix up the world,” Monroe Swimmer of *Truth and Bright Water* is also trying to fix the world, although their methods and grounding differ for achieving their congruent goals. The other characters of *Truth and Bright Water* help Swimmer and attempt to fix their own lives that are bent and broken from divorce, domestic abuse, and the border division. Major markers of the Native narrative that King employs here are a lack of separation between narrative times and the denial of borders. King engages
the evolution of a blood narrative into DNA through a Vampire Project scene, but he
deals with the effects of a blood narrative on identity through his major project of pan-
Indianism. The alternarratives created here help to undergird identities that need not be
broken by contact, and need not only react to it in the form of counternarration, but can
deploy an alternative that is affirming and original.

For King, time figures importantly and is connected to the enduring power of
narrative and narrative’s ability to transcend and alter time, as the characters move
through the narrative time and place of Judeo-Christian stories, 18th, 19th, and 20th
century American literature, contemporary American media, Native time, and a present
time of the novel. Preceding the four sections of Green Grass, Running Water is the frame
story involving Coyote, an American Indian trickster figure, and a narrator referred to as
“I” who interacts with the four Native elders. Within each section, the stories of the
multiple characters are braided together, interrupting one another, but then creating
together something greater than they are a part. The four Indian elders transcend the
frame, moving easily between both narrative spaces and even other narrative spaces of
film and television that are referenced in the central narrative, into which Coyote also
crosses. This movement reinforces the interrelatedness of the characters, their stories,
and connections through narrative times – legendary, Biblical, contemporary, historical,
and flashbacks. The loss of a character in each text allows exploration of the bounds of
life and identity, as well as the relations maintained or disrupted by that death. With his
focus on so many borders and boundaries, King allows the reader to rethink the usefulness of national, ethnic, and gender borders as we move towards a globalizing society, one in which citizenship implies a relation to the earth, not only to a bounded state. This chapter argues for King’s creation of alternarratives alongside counternarratives that liberate identity through the options of multiplicity and universality, a kind of global citizenship.

5.1 Alternarratives at the Border

Through an aside in his text about the power of stories, King highlights the problem of the US/Canadian border and why it is not useful for Native narratives: “the border doesn’t mean that much to the majority of Native people in either country. It is, after all, a figment of someone else’s imagination” (*The Truth*, 102). This statement about the border can be extended to refer to other borders imposed on indigenous peoples. King, however, works to make this figment generative as it is violated, disregarded, and populated by the stories of the indigenous people crossed by the border. In their co-edited text *Border Crossings: Thomas King’s Cultural Inversions*, Arnold Davidson, Priscilla Walton, and Jennifer Andrews argue that much of King’s work accomplishes a counternarrative through the use of inversion, revision, and comic play. An inversion refers to the narrative elements being switched from expected positions, such as an inversion of subject and object, for example positing the Indians as in power, thereby inverting the power dynamic. Further that proposition would also involve a revision of
the historical record. Another example of a revision is when King alters traditional Cherokee or another tribal story to make it useful in his narrative, such as changing the Earth Diver from a beaver to a duck. Finally comic play refers to small narrative moves that cause humor, such as the changing of Adam to “Ahdamn.” King performs all of these moves, but even the comic play is of a more sustained narrative depth, all of which contribute to alternarratives.

These critics are invested in presenting King as a counter but in the end, their language utilizes the term here of alternarrative, thus indicating that both are occurring in the text. They argue that King upholds boundaries as part of their counternarrative argument, yet these boundaries retain the image of the dominant narrative required by the counternarrative to provide its countering, whereas an alternative narrative does not require such boundaries to be maintained, especially if the goal is to displace the reader from their normal orientation into an alternative one. Therefore, the text fails to dislodge these boundaries not because it does not have alternatives, but because it needs to operate within a familiar field of view, and the argument of these critics also needs these boundaries to be maintained. In discussing how “Native writers creat[e] a Native universe,” King even notes that “For N. Scott Momaday, the answer, in part, was to write a novel in which aspects of an unfamiliar universe stood close enough to parts of the known world so that the non-Native reader, knowing the one, might recognize the other” (*The Truth*, 108). King employs a similar strategy in his stories, throughout which
he enacts and reiterates “the truth of stories [which] is that that’s all we are” (The Truth, 2). Further, the inversions and revisions operate alongside alternatives to weave both a counternarrative and an alternarrative together, not only a counternarrative and dominant narrative. Many strong points are made throughout the argument of these critics, but gaps emerge as well that I find generative, in that the concept of alternarrative helps to fill in these gaps. Particularly, it allows alternarratives to weave into the spaces that are not critically clarified by the concept of counternarrative. The discrepancies produced throughout their argument weaken the idea of counternarrative, whereas the primacy of Native stories, as well as the variability of these stories and their storytellers then supports the alternarrative of a multiplicity of identity and belonging.

Davidson and colleagues present King’s use of Coyote as part of his counternarrative strategy, but the privileging of Coyote’s creations and Native storytelling inform a reading of alternatives instead. These critics continually make the connection between the novel and counternarration: “In Green Grass, Running Water, Christian mythology is resituated when the Native elders and Coyote attempt to tell counter-na(rra)tive versions of the creation story” (Davidson et al 53). Conversely, I argue that the Native elders, who are the main characters in this novel, are not only telling counternarratives of the Christian creation story but upending it with Native creation stories, which the novel posits came first, and the novel then presents a culturally adapted narrative through the storytelling by the Native elders. The Native
elders reinvent the narratives of the Garden of Eden and Noah, among others, but they always begin not with the Judeo-Christian narrative, but with a Native story. This precedence in the midst of the woven fabric shows adaptation and countering, as well as the prior and future existence of alternarratives throughout this text. The production of the alternarratives is connected to the oral tradition of storytelling and the flux inherent in that tradition, as the storyteller adapts the stories for the audience, for the season, and over time. Conversely, written texts remain fixed, and even this novel struggles with that tension as it works to evidence the benefits of storytelling in a written form.

Overall, a countering of a master narrative is interwoven with an alternarrative in King’s texts, upending, not simply resisting, its dominance. In understanding these narratives as interwoven, I seek to demonstrate that both the countering and the alternatives play a role in the creation of alternarratives for understanding identity and belonging. They also present themselves in multiple ways throughout the text. The interweaving itself indicates the importance of the multiplicity that will play out in the novels, and interweaving provides a visual referent for the way these multiple narratives work together.

### 5.1.1 Interwoven Narratives

King opens *Green Grass, Running Water* with an origin story that provides the genesis of GOD. He writes: “In the beginning, there was nothing. Just the water” (1). Then “Coyote was there, but Coyote was asleep” and he was dreaming, and one of his
dreams “got loose and runs around” (1). After waking Coyote with its noises, that
Dream begins to think and it claims to be “in charge of the world” and interrogates
Coyote as to his identity and importance, which then leads that Dream to think it is
Coyote. However, Coyote tells that Dream that it can be a dog, which is “almost as good
as Coyote” (2). However, that Dream gets confused and backwards and thinks it is a
god, and makes big noise to be a bigger “GOD” (3). This frame demonstrates how
Coyote contributes to the world’s becoming bent, and in need of fixing. Here King
utilizes traditional Native characters to construct a modern tale that presents another
version of the origins of the Judeo-Christian God and Creation. In Green Grass, Running
Water, the first character introduced is Coyote, demonstrating King’s privileging the
Native narrative, itself an alternarrative, before ever moving into any counternarratives.
Coyote is a trickster in many Native traditions, though notably he is not the trickster in
Cherokee storytelling, and in this novel, he is trying to learn how to tell stories, and
following the path of destruction caused by that dream creation.1 The frame that King
constructs here, like other boundaries, becomes violable during the narrative, when
Coyote, a narrator who refers to herself as “I” (as in “I says”), and the four Indians cross
into the narrative space of Blossom and the Blackfoot reserve. While the Indians have
been at the mental hospital telling their stories, King has interwoven other stories about

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1 Jisdu (Rabbit) is the trickster in traditional Cherokee stories. His character is related to Brer Rabbit and
those stories from African American traditional stories, reflecting influences and similarities in storytelling
across the cultures.
the inhabitants of Blossom and the Blackfoot reserve, so the crossing of the Indians into this space immediately connects these narrative strands.

The trickster character is expected to be both jester fool and wily epicurean, therefore his mocking of the dominant narrative is anticipated. The criticism and scholarship can reflect the ambition of the novel and acknowledge the precedence of Coyote and mockery as one action, with storytelling (alternarrative creation itself) as another action, instead of reenacting the dominance of a master narrative by privileging its dominant perspective. Jarold Ramsey’s text Reading the Fire: Essays in the Traditional Indian Literatures of the Far West presents a similar idea: For many Native tribes (e.g., the Navajo), ‘the telling of a story amounts to the actual creation or re-creation of a reality’ (Ramsey 34)” (qtd. in Davidson et al 178). When Coyote and the four Native elders tell their stories, they inherently create alternarratives within the text and for the reader. The alternatives transgress boundaries of gender, nationality, race, and species all through the character of Coyote.

5.1.2 Multiple Stories and Multiple Storytellers

The characters of the novel are introduced in broken strands, moving from one part of the story to another and weaving them back together. The four Indians of Green Grass, Running Water, also referred to herein as Native elders, operate as multiple genders and identities, and they lay the groundwork for narrative to allow multiplicities. However, they also reject certain identities that master narrative forces
attempt to put upon them, thereby exhibiting that not all identities apply, particularly those that create a singularized identity. A universal identity, like that proposed by Vizenor’s character Stone Columbus, would provide a universal commonality but not deny multiplicity, whereas over-reliance on blood creates a one-dimensional identity, like those resisted by these Native elders and storytellers. The elders are first met outside of the narrative time and space of the central plot as the storytellers who appear to be with Coyote and the narrator when he dreams up GOD; however, their stories become about them, thereby placing them both into the outer narrative space and into one of the strands of the interior narrative. Their narrative depictions begin the four sections of the novel, privileging Native literature as the preeminent narrative instead of Judeo-Christian and canonical American stories, and are then interwoven with the stories of Blossom and its people. These four elders are called Lone Ranger, Ishmael, Robinson Crusoe, and Hawkeye. Over the course of the novel, the reader learns that these storytellers are within the frame of the novel as well as outside of it; inside of the frame they have been institutionalized for their storytelling, for their attempts to fix the world. They tell their stories after they have walked out of the mental hospital, which is under the direction of Dr. Joe Hovaugh. Here, they are known as men with the names Mr. Red, Mr. White, Mr. Black, and Mr. Blue. They have left the home of the mental hospital and are telling their stories in efforts to “fix up the world” that has been bent by other stories and actions. Their stories also cross into the world that includes the town
of Blossom and their mental hospital, which Dr. Hovaugh and Babo leave to find the elders. By placing Native literature as an older and indigenous American literature, incorporating Cherokee language and culture, and reinforcing the importance of the multiplicity of stories and storytellers, King demonstrates the power of stories told to be alternarratives. While similarities in storytelling connect the four sections along with these themes, the details and differences of the stories unite the novel.

Each storyteller attempts to tell the story that will fix the world and each encounters similar problems with other narratives. “In the beginning there was nothing. Just the water” (1) begins each section, including the frame story of Coyote and his backward dream dog. Then each story has a woman falling from Sky World towards the water. She goes on to encounter white counterparts and subordinates as well as Judeo-Christian and canonical stories. The interactions proceed in the same ways each time, and at the end of their storytelling, each elder’s story winds up placing them in the same place – Fort Marion. This ending indicates a failure in confronting and changing the dominant narrative that has intruded into the Native narrative. Fort Marion here refers to both the prison camp in Florida where Indian internees produced ledger art, and the mental hospital out of which the four Native elders have escaped. The struggle between identities put upon a person and identities presented by that same person occurs for each of the four Indians and demonstrates the role of alternatives. Not only do they have to counter the stereotypes others attempt to impose upon them, but they
also try on other identities, make them their own, and maintain the Native identities that preceded the contact. In other words, they can acculturate, adapt, or find an alternative.

One strategy that King utilizes to forward his project of embracing multiple identities, presenting the primacy of Native literature in America, and allowing for alternarratives is to have Cherokee language and culture occupy central elements of the texts. The four Native elders speak Cherokee and lead off their stories with a Cherokee invocation, the water divination ceremony. The use of this ritual situates the stories but also mimics the kind of out-group feeling produced for Natives by non-Native canonical texts, particularly those that are augmented by King, as these Western stories in particular utilize Native people and practices without knowledge of the same people and practices. This inversion allows for the generative spread of the understandings necessary for belonging. Alternatively here, Native practices stand apart from the understanding of the narrative by a general reader. Each of these sections begins in a similar way by invoking an important color and direction in the Cherokee syllabary.

Within the text of the novel, the Cherokee phrases are transliterated from the syllabary, making them slightly easier for those less familiar with the words to reference in a Cherokee dictionary or translation engine, or even to simply recognize in a Romanized

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2 Davidson et al note the use of this ceremony in their text.
3 Sequoyah invented the written Cherokee language in the 1810s and when he shared it with the tribal council and it was disseminated throughout the tribe, a vast majority of the citizens were literate within a short few months. His system focused on syllables instead of an alphabet, and allowed for communication to occur more clearly within the tribe through means such as the Cherokee Phoenix newspaper.
phonology. While these words have meanings in translation, written in the Cherokee syllabary, they exist as knowledge restricted to only those who can read the syllabary. The use of Cherokee connects the text to those who have an understanding of the syllabary text and its history from Sequoyah (George Guess) to its current usages in Cherokee communities.4 Each section begins prominently with Cherokee words for a particular color (red, white, black, and blue), which correspond to the names the Indian elders are known by in the mental hospital, and a cardinal direction (North, West, East, South). Davidson and colleagues argue that these directions “represent the four sacred directions of the earth and the circle of life, giving a symbolic circularity to the novel” (Davidson et al 47). In following the directions, however, one will notice that a circle was not actually created, but the movement was North, West, East, and then South, not North, West, South, and then East which would create a counterclockwise circle. They create a kind of top-down circle, which itself may reflect the influence of contact, but might otherwise reflect the errors of the storytelling by not creating a balance.5 The imprecise circle itself conveys that the ceremony did not move in a counterclockwise direction intended to create balance, perhaps why the elders have not been successful in

4 Sequoyah’s English name was George Guess, who is a character referenced in Truth and Bright Water by Rebecca Neugin, a girl whom Tecumseh meets at the Indian Days event.
5 The movements do reflect a connection to the Christian practice of crossing oneself (North, South, East/West – with the order of the latter depending upon denomination), perhaps indicating a change through influence or acculturation one way or the other.
fixing the world. Instead, at the end of the text, they begin anew with Coyote trying to help tell the stories, which itself brings a different balance to the novel by returning in the end as the beginning to what Coyote dreams and says. Metacritically this analysis of the role of storytellers, balance, and particularly the importance of the retelling of the story, which itself will cause change, demonstrates the reflexivity of the text regarding its own power and intention. By telling a story in a new way as analternarrative or a counternarrative, the story can change the world. The stories told by the elders enact this change, though with an homage to King’s understanding that stories are powerful, wonderful, and dangerous. Change can be destructive, as well as, and sometimes before, it can be constructive.

5.1.2.1 Red/North

The first section is narrated by the Native elder known as Lone Ranger, who is perceived as a Native man, an elision of identities that are negotiated, transgressed, and used by the characters as needed. This section begins with the Cherokee words for Red and North, and the first story told has First Woman falling from the Sky World and differentiating herself from the Judeo-Christian story of Eve and the Garden of Eden. In fact her story begins before Eden, thus before the Judeo-Christian Creation, positing that

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6 The dancers at stomp grounds travel in a spiral that moves in a counterclockwise direction, a movement that has been argued to be a physical way to balance the world. Conversely, at the powwow grounds the movement of the dancers is almost always in a clockwise motion.
7 First Woman in Cherokee traditions is Selu, the Corn Mother, and the Cherokee women tended the gardens in traditional Cherokee society.
Native cultures preceded that origin story. First Woman enters the story, followed by her garden, and “she lives there with Ahdamn” (40). Ahdamn attempts to name everything in the garden with names that are not appropriate to their object, foreshadowing the misnaming that will occur throughout the text. First Woman is eating an apple in her garden while that backwards dog dream threatens her, so they decide to leave the garden because there is “no point in having a grouchy GOD for a neighbor” (74). First Woman’s dominance over Ahdamn is clear, particularly when they encounter the dead and live rangers. First Woman has ownership of the garden, makes the decision to leave, and protects their unit in the face of danger. Ahdamn bends things. Here the naming of her partner plays upon cultural and gender differences, as well as comic play in language. Upon leaving the garden, they encounter dead rangers, and then live rangers who want to arrest them for the deaths of the dead rangers and take them to the jail at Fort Marion. Given this circumstance, First Woman dons a mask and informs them that she is the Lone Ranger. Here she transcends not only gender but also race, moving from a Native woman to a white man, and presenting her partner Ahdamn as Tonto, thereby changing his perceived relationship to her and his race as well. This crossing of boundaries presents a utilization of the dominant narrative by the Native person for protection, for her own needs. This protection fails though when the Lone Ranger removes her mask and she and Ahdamn are taken to Fort Marion in Florida because they are both now seen as Indian. First Woman/Lone Ranger also
transcends narrative time and space with the other Native elders by appearing not only in the story being told but also as the teller, narrating the interwoven origin story/canon revision/inevitable fate from the frame story and then crossing into the interior narrative of the novel in Blossom and Dr. Hovaugh’s mental hospital.

5.1.2.2 White/West

Each story begins anew, attempting to tell the right story and unbend the world and trying to not repeat the mistakes of the previous stories. The color and direction of this second section are White and West in Cherokee. Like the story of First Woman, the second story of Changing Woman, as told by the Native elder called Ishmael, has her falling from Sky World into a world where there was only water. Well, water, and a boat covered in poop. Scatological humor emerges frequently in Native literature, and the use of it here highlights that which may have been missed in Judeo-Christian tellings of stories about Noah’s ark – two of each animal will produce a lot of excrement. When falling, Changing Woman manages to land on Old Coyote and not the poop of the ship, but then she encounters Noah. This Native woman differentiates herself from the identity that Noah attempts to impose on her by resisting his urges to make her his new wife. For this refusal and for talking to the animals on the ship, which Noah labels “nearly bestiality,” she is put off of the boat. Her resistance in turn finds her stranded on an island, where she is picked up by Ahab and his ship the Pequod, where they ask her to identify herself. When she tells them she is Changing Woman, the man who has
welcomed her onto the boat, Ishmael, tells her “[t]hat just won’t do…Queequeg. I’ll call you Queequeg. This book has a Queequeg in it” (218). Here the importance of the legibility of the Native person, and her stories, becomes evident in the tension between the oral storytelling and the written literature. Changing Woman replies “Ishmael is a nice name” (218), and from the storytelling, the reader knows this name is taken by the Native elder. While transitions in gender are common in the identities of the elders and more easily accepted by others in the narrative, transgressing race is not always accepted. Not only does this story resist a Native revision, but it resists revision primarily because it is written. Thus, in an interesting move, King positions the oral tradition against the written literary canon, and highlights the strength of the oral tradition to adapt and articulate multiple, changing identities. On the ship however, the fluidity of identity is not accepted, but the Native elder finds an outlet to express her identity as Changing Woman as well as Ishmael. Pushing the boundaries of expectations further, Changing Woman resists a heteronormative stance and even the homosocial space of the ship, and turns to a lesbian relationship that crosses not only the boundary of “acceptable” relationships but also of species by trysting with Moby Jane, the great black whale. Here too there is a transgression of race, as this whale is associated with blackness (as contrasted to the well-known literary whiteness and maleness of Moby Dick). For all of these resistances, counters, and alternatives, Ishmael/Changing Woman also is taken to Fort Marion.
5.1.2.3 Black/East

When the Native story encounters the Western story, it also encounters “Christian rules.” The “rules” of Christianity are construed here as boundaries that contain but also the outcomes that are possible. Following on these boundary crossing adventures, King moves from countering the Judeo-Christian to only the Christian, with a transition into the stories of the New Testament, previously foreshadowed by the “Christian rules” that are invoked by that backwards dream GOD and Noah, and violated by the Native women in the first two sections. In the third section, marked as Black and East, Thought Woman falls from the sky but finds herself meeting “A.A. Gabriel” who wants her not to be Thought Woman but instead to be Mary, because “Thought Woman” is not on the list. Again this lack of written representation exposes a measure of legibility of Native people and positions oral narrative against textual canons, and highlights the connection between naming practices and Christian destination. The Native woman again refuses one identity offered to her, and moves on to another part of the story. After leaving the archangel (A.A.), she floats the river into an island where there is a man who appears to have gone crazy. He sees Thought Woman and announces, “It’s Friday!” To which she can only reply, “No…it’s Wednesday” (325). She goes on and claims the name of Robinson Crusoe and its concurrent identity, refusing again the subordinated position typically ascribed to the Native character, Crusoe’s mate Friday in this case. Further, her double refusal here
highlights those identities she and the other Native elders do claim for themselves as authentic and narratively grounded. Each of their refusals and claims are different, but all are multiple, resisting singularizing narratives and identities. Instead they guide the interweaving of the narratives and occupy the multiple identities carried along with those narratives. Here, the Indian Robinson Crusoe narrates the story, but like those who told a story before him, his telling is not quite right. When Robinson Crusoe and the newly encountered Friday head to Florida and Fort Marion, they do not accomplish the task of fixing up the world, therefore the fourth story has to be told.

5.1.2.4 Blue/South

The final iteration of the origin story comes from Hawkeye and is preceded by the Cherokee words for Blue and South. In this story, Old Woman falls from the sky and encounters Young Man Walking on Water. The followers of this Jesus figure—the term for which he cannot remember—are trapped on a boat in a rocky sea. The waves are having fun and the boat is having fun, but the people are getting sick and are very scared, so Young Man proposes that he can perform a miracle and save them. While Young Man does not try to put another identity upon Old Woman—such as Eve, Noah’s wife, or Mary—he does attempt to ignore her and her existence. Old Woman refuses this denial of her identity. The narrative demonstrates that his attempted miracle does not succeed. It also demonstrates that he does not understand the problem, perhaps indicating why his solution of a powerful miracle does not work. Old Woman notices
that the waves and boat are excited and happy, not malevolent, and that in order to stop
the rocking that both parts are participating in, she will have to calm them down. She
offers her help to Young Man but he refuses her multiple times, so finally she goes
ahead and plays calming music to steady the sea and the boat anyway. Young Man
claims responsibility for the “miracle” and his disciples of course believe him because
“that other person is a woman” (390), a logic that the followers easily acquiesce to and
which emphasizes the tension regarding women’s roles between Christian culture and
Cherokee culture. This scene also highlights the tension between ages, as Old Woman is
not respected by Young Man, at the same time as it posits the precedence of Native
stories prior to Christian stories. After leaving Young Man, Old Woman encounters
another canonical text of America and refuses the identity of Chingachgook that
Nathaniel “Nasty” Bumppo attempts to give her. He explains why he names her so: “I
can tell an Indian when I see one. Chingachgook is an Indian. You’re an Indian. Case
closed” (433). Nasty’s logic makes all Indians the same, which actually serves to
differentiate King’s project, because his pan-Indianism does not make all Indians the
same but allows an additional layer of identity. Nasty winds up shot, after threatening
Old Woman and Old Coyote with the same fate, and then Old Woman meets the real
Chingachgook, another Indian, and they are confronted with soldiers who want to know
who killed Nasty. Before his death, Nasty had again tried to rename her with names he
had in a book, and when the soldiers arrive they attempt to find Old Woman’s and
Chingachgook’s names in a book as well. At this point, she accepts the name of Hawkeye, though the text notes “It sounds like the name of a white person who wants to be Indian” (437), critiquing James Fenimore Cooper’s additional name for his protagonist, who plays Indian. Old Woman’s alternative identity directly opposes non-existence, as her hesitant claiming of the identity of Hawkeye counters the interpretation that the racial other can only be literally the other one.

The repetition of these movements makes it clear that there exist multiple ways to counter as well as multiple alternatives, all of which contribute to alternarratives. Influence goes both ways, and when interwoven, the accommodation of multiple identities emerges. The narration and the narratives that King deploys in Green Grass, Running Water demonstrate one method to create an alternarrative, but it is not the only alternative, and King explores others throughout his texts, which also indicates that one alternative or counter narrative will not be the right fix for all individuals and communities, and for the narratives by which they live. In Truth and Bright Water, King articulates another approach for how to use the power of stories as they are a form of art and their telling, or tellers, are thought of as a form of entertainment.

5.1.3 Art and Revision

King utilizes a different alternarrative strategy in Truth and Bright Water, where he builds on the power of stories by exploring the power of art more generally. In discussing Natives and storytelling as “entertainment” instead of “art,” King notes:
“Strange world. But maybe being entertainment isn’t so bad. Maybe it’s what you’re left with when the only defence you have is a good story. Maybe entertainment is the story of survival” (The Truth, 89). This focus on story subverts the outside perception of art as entertainment, and Native people as such entertainment, and privileges art and the Native people who make it in stories and otherwise as both “good” and particularly “of survival.” King demonstrates these different perspectives, as well as the idea that everything is not as it appears to be, through Monroe Swimmer, a character that leaves the reservation and returns, bends genders by appearing as both and neither, and revises history through corrections to paintings and buildings. Swimmer paints Natives back into landscapes, returns the buffalo to the Plains, and educates a boy about the power of art to change even the world they inhabit.

Frequently, recognition of people, places and things is ascribed to the visual sense. However, “recognition” comes loaded as a term for American Indians, from the recognition of one’s people and nation to the recognition of one’s identity as well as the recognition of rights within all those spaces. Misrecognition occurs when either one sense is perplexed by the presentation, when one sense disagrees with another, or when something is not as it first appears to be. The central misrecognition in this novel occurs around gender, and how that category is determined by a visual evaluation of the individual. When Tecumseh and Lum stumble upon a mystery one night around the same time that Swimmer returns to town, they have the germ for their own imagination
and their search for answers, including the stories they divine to fill the void that
demonstrate the power of the alternative narratives, both for their own identity
construction and their connections to relatives. Tecumseh’s parents are separated and
he has a very close relationship with his cousin, as both are teenagers and Tecumseh’s
only sibling is much younger than them both. Lum’s father is abusive, and he spends
much of his time outside of his home out on the reserve. One of the main connections
together. One night, the cousins catch sight of a woman dancing on a cliff and tossing a
bundle into the river, which they later discover is a skull. The mystery of this event,
linking them and the landscape, guides the narrative as it demonstrates each boy’s way
of dealing with the challenges of growing up, the border crossed between adulthood
and childhood, the negotiations of their own identities and the relation of those to
activist projects.

In this novel, King plays with the American preoccupation with truth through
the town named Truth on the American side of the border across from the Canadian
reserve town of Bright Water, with the Shield separating the two. The river called the
Shield creates the boundary between these two towns, a natural feature that serves an
artificial function, a Shield that protects one side from the other. Key landmarks are
described and ascribed to specific spaces at the outset of the novel: “The church sits on a
rise above Truth, overlooking the river and the bridge” (1) and “[t]he Horns, like Truth and the old church, are on the American side of the river” (2). These placements locate not only the natural fixtures but also the artificial addition to the landscape, not within the reserve but close enough to strike. This additional edifice will itself become a part of the natural landscape, if only in fooling one sense or another.

Monroe Swimmer returns to Truth and Bright Water after purchasing the old church in Truth, into which he moves. He then sets to work in fooling the sense of sight by removing the edifice from the landscape. Similar revisions to existing art have made him famous. Monroe states that his project is “‘to save the world’” (131). He plans to accomplish this feat through such acts as bringing back the buffalo through art, just as his other acts that made him “famous” contributed to the reclamation of history, and in many ways creating a different vision—an effect on sight—of those stories. Tecumseh inadvertently becomes the assistant to “Monroe Swimmer, famous Indian artist” when his curiosity leads him up to the old church. There Tecumseh notes, “I go around the church a couple of times before I notice it doesn’t have a door. The windows are there and the steeple is there, but the part of the church where you would expect to find a door has been painted away” (44). Before seeing Monroe, he already sees the work the artist has done to remove the church and the history it represents from the landscape and memory. Tecumseh remarks further that “[i]t’s tricky climbing steps you can’t see, but when I step inside the church, I can’t see anything in there either” (45). He finds the
stairs after running into them, causing his sense of touch to reel where his sense of sight can differentiate nothing from the surroundings. After entering the church, he finds its interior has been painted to a complete darkness, an absence to replace the massive amounts of space taken up by the church both in the mind and in history of the two towns. There he finds Monroe, who offers him the job of his assistant. While he accepts, Tecumseh remains preoccupied with the illusion of the disappearing building and the mystery of the woman on the cliff.

When outside again, Tecumseh describes what he does and does not see: “I stand on the platform, close my eyes to squint, and stare at the church from different angles to try and figure out how Monroe has managed the trick” (49). Convinced that it is a trick of light, art, or magic, Tecumseh augments his vision through squinting and observing the church from different angles, but in the end, he can see that “‘The church is gone’” (221). When he cannot figure out the trick for himself, he asks Monroe about his work as an artist and how he became famous. Monroe tells him that he was never really an artist but he admits, “‘What I was really good at was restoration…Nineteenth-century landscapes were my specialty’” (129). He remarks on what he restored in the paintings by stating: “‘The new paint wouldn’t hold. Almost as soon as I finished, the images began to bleed through again….You know what they were?…Indians,’ says Monroe. ‘There was an Indian village on the lake, slowly coming up through the layers of paint. Clear as day’” (130). The focus on the visual and the impossibility of the paint to defy
that vision not only reveals the history that the painting attempted to cover over—as if the Indian village was never there—but also parallels the church painted into the landscape; both attempt to cover over history, but the truth denied peeks through either in a return or other startle to the senses. The revisioning and rewriting of the history that art presents and that the empty landmarks of the church and boarding school, his next intended disappearing project, represent are Swimmer’s actual project, the way in which he is fixing the world. Monroe Swimmer creates antidotes to the “vanishing Indian” and the haunting of the towns by the edifices of assimilation, but the original disease still leaves marks. Swimmer’s overall project involves more than removal, as he also returns something to that canvas.

By altering the landscape through effacing, literally, the church and hoping “the buffalo will return” (135) in imitation of his false buffalo, Monroe uses imagination and revelation to bring about an alternative history through which to create an alternative reality and most importantly with which to construct an alternative future. However, even he recognizes the problems in his own plan, such as when he notices that Tecumseh is “fooled” by the iron buffalo, he whispers to him that “Real buffalo can spot a decoy a mile away” (136). Given the many issues in Indian Country involving authenticity, in turn related to recognition, this statement implicates more than just the buffalo. However, this “spotting” again relies on the visual identification of the real and “the fake,” and in particular the fake that can cause harm as a decoy would do. More
satirically, Monroe remarks about his restoration work in museums throughout the Western world what many Native people still know today: “I don’t think they wanted their Indians restored...I think they liked their Indians where they couldn’t see them” (247). By keeping “their Indians where they couldn’t see them” under drawings and in museum drawers, the writers of history keep the Indians both under control and out of mind, where they do not have to deal with Native issues. If they remove Indians from their sense of sight, they validate their blissful ignorance, even though they licensed it in the first place. King’s writing provides a visual they cannot deny. Like his character reconstitutes history through art, King rewrites a perspective of history in his literature, where he restores the Indians and their modern lives. These movements of return and removal counter the removal and insertion of other narratives, but they also open up the space for the alternarratives to be seen and heard as well. Like the four elders in Green Grass, Running Water, Swimmer’s actions to fix up the world are an ongoing process and project. Swimmer and the four elders have other similarities in how they transcend boundaries and bend not only the world, but also gender and recognition lines.

At the end of the novel, Tecumseh discovers that Monroe Swimmer, “famous Indian artist” and the man he has been working for all summer, was actually the “woman” that he and Lum saw on the cliff that night, and that the skull had come from a museum. The scene where Lum learns the truth about the mystery and their confusion shows him moving outside of his male dominated actions into a more mothering role.
Tecumseh tells Lum that: "'Monroe rescues [the bones] from museums,'" and as Tecumseh speaks "'Lum cradles the skull in his arms and smoothes the bone with the sleeve of his shirt.'" Tecumseh goes on to explain that "'Anthropologists stick them in drawers, Monroe steals them back'" (255). While Lum cradles the skull like a real child, he hears that the person he thought was a woman tossing it into the Shield was actually a man. Here a blurring of gender roles occurs around a visual misrecognition. This confusion and yet another disappointment in Lum’s life, coupled with his obsession with the skull and the death it represents, leads him to various crises of identity and of life itself. King alludes to this ongoing misrecognition partway through the narrative when Tecumseh sees someone come into the church: "'The prairie light is blinding, and at first, I can’t tell if it’s a man or a woman. But it’s Monroe’s voice’" (192). His confused recognition is clarified by his sense of hearing, which tells him not the gender, but the specific person to whom the body and voice belong. These visual misrecognitions underlie a story that troubles what one sees and what one feels, what one is composed of and how that substance is analyzed. Moreover, King deploys this bending throughout his work to trouble binaries and to encourage rethinking of conceptualizations of gender, borders, and singularizing identities.

5.1.4 Pan-Indianism

King writes about the power of stories to affect the world in his text The Truth of Stories, and much of King’s work enacts this power by creating alternarratives, such as
his project of pan-Indianism. In fiction, which itself tests the bounds of truth and stories, these ideas are enacted, such as in *Green Grass, Running Water* through Dr. Hovaugh’s concerns about the Native elders and through their revisions of canonical fiction, which is itself contrasted with the Christian narratives and rules. Stories within the novel cause the world of the novel to change, evidencing King’s idea that stories are powerful and can change the world; that change can be for better or worse, but stories have the power to elicit evolution. The change itself is wondrous, but it can also be dangerous. The change can destroy and kill, but the power is in the ability of the stories themselves to adapt and thereby produce such adaptation in the world.

Dr. Hovaugh worries that the four Natives, who have left the mental hospital he presides over, will have an aberrant effect on nature and non-nature. He sees a correlation in the history of their escapes and major incidents in the world, from Krakatau to Mount Saint Helens (47-8). His concern itself establishes a relationship between this figure of GOD and the Natives; Joe Hovaugh is in charge of the Natives, but they can bend their identities to defy his control, and they tell stories that contributed to his existence. In the stories the elders tell, they and their characters encounter Christian rules, reflecting the control of Dr. Hovaugh and GOD, but they continue to manipulate their multiple identities to reject identities put upon them by those Christian rules that seek a binary. While Natives always return to the seat of Christian power in the end, the mental hospital/Fort Marion where all of the other crazy
stories and storytellers are gathered away, they maintain the power to leave at their will with simple deployment of an alternative identity. King also deploys other sides of Christian stories as counters, alongside the alternative narratives of the Native origin stories. King’s countering narratives present GOD as a backwards dream laying claim to someone else’s garden, Noah as womanizer, and the Young Man Walking on Water as unable to perform the miracle necessary to save his disciples, although he does obviously manage to walk on water. By presenting the incongruencies and unaddressed errors and inequities of Christian narratives, King counters them but also opens up the space for his Native characters and their alternarratives to also bring about change.

These models of multiplicity, from identities and community continuity to gender bending and border crossing, all contribute to King’s larger project of pan-Indian identity and tribal power. King establishes and pursues this project of pan-Indianism through the use of Cherokee language and culture, a Blackfoot location, and invocations of multiple tribes including their stories and practices. He advocates for this additional layer of identity, not as an alternative to tribal identity or national identity, but in addition to those and other identities, as a newly amalgamated community to which the individuals have rights and responsibilities. While it has been argued that panethnic identification happens at the expense of the tribal identification for American Indians, King uses multiple identities to prove that both may be had at the same time, along with

8 The Blackfoot are a tribal people found in Canada; the Blackfeet, another tribe, resides in the U.S.
many more identities. It is the problematic singularizing and focus on purity (or clearly declared division) that contributes to the idea that one identity (pan-Indianism) undermines another (tribal). In fact, the use of multiple tribal traditions at once promotes pantribalism, supports multiply tribal persons, and protects the traditions of the tribes from undue scrutiny and publicity by obscuring the referent as necessary.

In *Green Grass, Running Water*, the tribal homelands are those of the Blackfoot in Canada, the language and some ceremonies used are Cherokee, and the Indians referenced who were historically taken to Fort Marion were Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Caddo. However, the traditions of the Sun Dance and even the stories told belong to yet other tribes and are shared by multiple tribes. Many tribes have stories of a woman falling from the sky who lands on a turtle and then desires help from the animals to find land. Which animal successfully finds that land differs, and King consciously confuses the traditions in ways that both protect and reinvent, whether through the production of a new or a blended narrative. For the Cherokee, *dayunisi* (water beetle) found the land and brought it back to the surface. In similar stories of a woman falling from the sky and an animal diving down to find mud that will become the earth for her, the animal is beaver; in the story quoted on the Cherokee Nation website, they say it is muskrat; and for King in this narrative, duck is the earth diver who brings the mud to the surface. Daniel Heath Justice writes about the Earthdiver stories utilized in *Green Grass, Running Water*, noting the occurrence of a similar story in
the Iroquois confederacy and the Blackfoot, but as King is Cherokee, Justice and I both trace his use of the story as based in the Cherokee story, not the one on the Cherokee Nation website but the one found in James Mooney’s *Myths of the Cherokee*. As Justice argues, King’s use of the duck obfuscates tribal traditions, presents an example of a story that has changed with the teller, particularly here with an animal figure that reflects movement north and south and is equally at home on the water or the land, all of which parallel King’s position as outland Cherokee. These revisions and obscuration of tribal details enable the community by allowing for it to be expansively inclusive not only in terms of space, or residency, but also culturally in ways that need not depend on blood or descendancy. Further, I contend that this move allows for the formation of multiple layered identities, of which pantribalism is a part. By enacting multiple identities, King opens more space for alternarratives.

Different imaginations of nation, community, family, and identity mark the Native characters within *Green Grass, Running Water*. Alberta is a college professor caught between two lovers and her desire to have a child but not a husband. As Davidson et al argue “Alberta creates a space for her own version of motherhood, one that is not tied to marriage or the perpetuation of a national citizenry” (Davidson et al 173). Important here is her resistance to perpetuating a national citizenry, at least as it currently stands and is referenced by these critics. Further though, this insight allows reflection on how the characters do or do not perpetuate standing identities, and how
they may or may not literally reproduce themselves as citizens. Alberta had wanted a child, but when she starts showing all the signs of pregnancy she does not know who the father could be. Coyote has given Alberta her pregnancy, but without a traditional human biological father. Coyote defends his actions to the four elders: “‘But I was helpful, too,’ says Coyote. ‘That woman who wanted a baby. Now, that was helpful’” (456). Alberta and her pregnancy become especially poignant in light of the Christian stories interwoven of immaculate conception. The story remarks that this time was not the first where Coyote caused such a pregnancy, leading the four Indians to lament his action because “‘we haven’t straightened out that mess yet!’” (456). The supernatural parent of the child here is not GOD, American, or Canadian, but truly a pan-Indian entity, who in turn will contribute to the identity of the child. While humor abounds in this novel, important traditions—and humor that may be inherent to them—also emerge as ways to confront and resist inequality.

Alberta’s cousin Latisha has had an awful marriage to an American man named George Armstrong (whose relations to Custer are implied), and they have had two children. She fights with him constantly during flashbacks to their marriage about the national identification the children should have that, in the present tense of the novel, are a mixture: Canadian, Blackfoot, with an American father. Davidson et al argue that Latisha also discovers alternative models of cultural identification that move beyond the national paradigms in which George situates her and her children. As noted earlier, Latisha is visited at her restaurant by a group of tourists, including E. Pauline Johnson, a mixed-blood (Mohawk and English) writer and
performer, who openly celebrates her mixed heritage. As part of Latisha’s tip, she receives a copy of a Johnson text, *The Shagganappi*, which calls for Native peoples to acknowledge and take pride in their Indian identity. (Davidson et al 168)

These critics highlight the importance of the text’s referring to other texts in order to help the characters direct their lives. Particularly here, *The Shagganappi* and its author E. Pauline Johnson represent “alternative models of cultural identification that move beyond the national paradigms.” The critics here posit cultural against national; however, they thereby remove the space for the Blackfoot identification to be national, as well as cultural. Here, tribal is differentiated from national. However, tribal identity can also be national, and King’s larger project that these critics do not acknowledge is that the children are all three, and how they negotiate their identities in turn reflects their cultural being. One must acknowledge these multiple aspects of tribal identity – national, legal, cultural – to understand the relationship of that identity to other national identities, tribal identities, or panethnic identities. King’s alternarrative helps negotiate this multiplicity without sacrificing any parts.

### 5.1.5 Border and Boundaries

As an outland Cherokee who has migrated not only past the borders of tribal homelands and removal lands but all the way to Canada, King utilizes borders and boundaries to emphasize the divisions political markings enact as well as to draw attention to the narratives connected to these lines. Particularly, the liminality of the borders and boundaries in both texts allows for the exploration of a blood narrative.
Much of the discussion of multiple identities explains this encounter with dominant narratives and their control over the imagination. The emergence of alternarratives at the borders indicates the lack of a countering relationship between the alternative and a blood narrative. Even when encountering a blood narrative directly, *Truth and Bright Water* demonstrates the power of a counternarrative to draw attention to that blood narrative while still presenting alternatives to understanding identity and community belonging. Here, King utilizes a comic inversion of research on indigenous peoples and stereotypes of both the researchers and the Natives in order to counter blood as an organizing narrative of identity. Scientific analysis of blood carries with it a particular narrative of identity associated with blood, and this narrative impinges upon the analysis of that blood. Further, this blood narrative and the scientifically based information produced may not be in line with narratives of belonging, be they legal, cultural, national, or otherwise.

By including a scene about “Vampire Projects” that seek Indian blood to validate a hypothesis, specifically here about migration, King brings a scientific narrative into his novel for interrogation.⁹ A “Vampire Project” refers to research that takes blood but does not give back to those people and communities from which it takes. Underneath its veneer, this Vampire Project like many others relies on the narrative of the vanishing

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⁹ The Human Genome Diversity Project, which sought to collect samples from various groups that it considered more genetically pure than others, and was termed a “Vampire Project” by many of the indigenous and other groups from which it sought to take blood.
Indian. Like Franz Boas at the turn of the 20th century, these projects at the turn of the 21st century are cataloging bits and pieces (literally) of indigenous peoples so that biodiversity will not be lost, so that the biological data of Natives will not vanish. While eating at the local diner and gossip stop, Miles, a Blackfoot Indian, describes an article he is reading in the newspaper:

“It’s a story about a research team from the University of Toronto traveling around Canada and the States, collecting blood from Indian people. There’s a picture, too, of a doctor holding up a vial of blood and looking at it the way you see people looking at glasses of wine in those old black and white movies on late-night television. The project has something to do with genes and DNA.” (166)

The others in the café go on to ask Miles the point of the Vampire Project, to which he replies, “‘They’re trying to find out where Indians came from’” but his friend Gabriel retorts that you “'[d]on’t need a blood test to see that’” (167). While exiting the diner, Miles cautions Tecumseh, “‘I’d watch out if those research boys show up here…They sound like real blood-thirsty savages’” (168). The protagonist of the novel finds himself involved here in a modern kind of storytelling, not only where the storytellers of the diner are countering various narratives, but where they offer up an alternarrative from which Tecumseh can learn. This scene resounds with critique of the narrative of science, particularly in its attempts to replace indigenous creation stories with scientifically proven, historically situated stories of migration across the Bering Strait, which Vine Deloria Jr. critiques in Red Earth, White Lies. The beginning summary of the project makes no differentiation between the peoples in the United States and Canada, at once
recognizing their continuity as peoples, but more so recognizing the sovereignty of scientific knowledge to exceed borders and other boundaries. Native nations exceed these demarcations as well. The comparison drawn about the photograph accompanying the article creates a direct understanding of the term “Vampire Projects” wherein the Indian blood in a vial parallels the wine in the glass, a sick sustenance to feed one particular scientific agenda. At the end of the article though, perhaps as a critique of the presentation of science in the media, it is stated that “the project has something to do with genes and DNA.” What that particular something is though, the speaker does not at first comment upon. The links that science works to make between DNA, genes, and human migratory patterns devalues Native stories of creation, which preceded not only the science, but the narratives that operate within the science. In Green Grass, Running Water, King asserts the primacy of the Native origin stories through the repetition of the Earth Diver stories. Back in the scene from Truth and Bright Water, Gabriel particularly notes that you “don’t need a blood test to see” “where Indians came from” which returns the reader to the notion of knowledge derived from the senses, particularly that of vision. One can see that Indians come from all over, from one another, and from their own assertion of identity and refusal to vanish.

The expression at the end of this scene returns the scrutiny of stereotypes—such as the vanishing Indian, noble savage, and Indian princess—back to those who are stereotyped. By calling the researchers “blood-thirsty savages,” Miles connects the
literal seeking out of indigenous blood and its use to support “uncivilized” old narratives of identity to the stereotype of marauding natives. As was seen in the inversions of the Native women elders to be the protagonists of canonical American texts and of their sidekicks to be changed from subservient indigenous into white men, the inversion here of referring to the researchers as the savages highlights the presumed reliability and civility of their work, while allowing that they and their work might be the real objects to fear instead of their subjects.

5.1.6.1 Water and Power

Water is extremely important for Cherokee people, and figures prominently in both of these novels. In *Green Grass, Running Water*, it is the waters that run making the grass green allowing for the treaties to continue. “In the beginning, there was nothing. Just the water” (1). It is the water divination ceremony that begins the stories from the four elders. The water flows, creating change, soaking people in a storm, creating puddles that absorb cars, and the water also signals the primacy of the Native stories, over and above those Christian stories. It is the water that the dam holds back, creating a lake but damaging nature, as the lack of a river is killing the trees. It is upon the water of that lake that three automobiles set sail in a comic revision of the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria, to break through to a New World, a new narrative. It is the water unleashed when the dam is destroyed that kills Eli Stands Alone.
The dam that holds back the river, that should be running as the title suggests, meets resistance not only from Eli in the form of injunctions against its operation and expansion, but also from the narrative forces of the novel, which are working to undo the taming of the wilderness, and the violation of the treaty clause invoked by the novel’s title as well. The dam itself, and particularly the relationship had therein between water and power, is utilized by King in grander ways than a reversion to nature undominated and national lines undrawn; instead, he presents it as a marker of power both in its potential to create energy but also its symbolism of national and corporate power. While theoretically the dam would use the water to make electrical power, it does not operate in the story thanks to the Native resistance, and therefore stands as a multiply signifying symbol of power for the Canadian government, the corporation, and the town, but does not actually produce any power. The water here symbolizes the power of the Natives, and itself connects importantly to the Native narratives interwoven. Here too, in the end, is the water – freed of other powers and the boundary that attempted to force an identity upon it that it resisted, instead choosing another identity, without constraints. Here the water operates like the Native women elders by both resisting acculturation and presenting their primacy – the river ran before the settlers came, and it runs again in the end, enabling the treaties and the sovereignty of the people.
In *Truth and Bright Water* though, the power of water to separate is seen, through the river that separates the American town and the Canadian reserve, with tribal members living on both sides of the water divide. This natural border becomes not only a national division through tribal lands but also a division marking the difference in life and death. The border and how one crosses it figure prominently as the older technology of a hand driven bucket serves as the most direct path between Truth and Bright Water, given the unsuccessful building of a bridge between the two towns, the ruins of which provide another extremely dangerous way to move between the towns. Otherwise, to cross at a proper American/Canadian road and border station, one has to drive many miles out of the way. This latter kind of crossing may be more modern, but brings with it the concurrent issues of modern nations, regulations, and racism. The Natives in King’s novels encounter problems when they cross at border checkpoints, where many of the guards practice discrimination, but also where the Natives risk such discrimination through side jobs of smuggling goods across the border. These encounters highlight the ease with which they pass through boundaries that are not so guarded throughout the narrative, from gender to multiple identities and even between stories, by contrasting those borders where these transitions and passing are not allowed or are physically prevented. These negotiations at the borders and boundaries focus the reader’s attention on the role of these liminal points for narrative and identity formations.
5.1.6.2 Death – The Threat of the Border

As the Shield represents protection between Truth and Bright Water, it also represents the threat of death by water and the boundary tied to that change. A common circumstance that both novels encounter is death. In *Green Grass, Running Water*, Eli Stands Alone is killed by the dam breaking. In *Truth and Bright Water*, the whole plot revolves around the search for the narrative of the skull found, and that skull demonstrates that death pervades the narrative. Eli’s death allows for the life cycle of the narrative and the river to continue, and a balance is struck in the story between his death and the child to be born of Alberta thanks to Coyote. Conversely, the role of death in *Truth and Bright Water* helps to carry the narrative forward, as a haunting of the boys—both literally and figuratively—and it leads to the death of both Tecumseh’s dog, Scout, and his cousin Lum.

For Lum, competing narratives and the object of the skull mark the space along the river that exists between life and death. This space exists for all people and it is a leveling force and a narrative impact that allows people to be united through story. The skull clearly represents death, but the river represents the potential of death through drowning. More obliquely, the river as national division point represents a death to the tribe, which has to negotiate the division placed upon its people – some to the United States and some to Canada. This division is felt clearly at both the northern and southern borders of the United States as tribes older than these nations have to negotiate
the borders put upon them. The transnationality of their communities threatens the narratives of the nations. Lum negotiates his relationship as a tribal community member both within the borders of identities offered to him and within the borders of these other nations. Tecumseh, his mother, and Monroe Swimmer all align themselves with their Blackfoot traditions, working against the national line drawn upon them. They cross over the Shield as they please, live between both the town and the reserve, and work to fix the world. Lum’s negotiations pitch him between extremes of masculinity, femininity, but also occur mostly outside of the community, alone with the skull, actions which lead to imbalance.

Daniel Heath Justice argues this border division and the difference in the two cousins serves as an educational narrative of the Cherokee people. By carrying the skull around with him, Lum crosses over to the land of the dead, whereas Tecumseh remains within the world of the living even while a ghost from the Trail of Tears reaches out to him. One leads to an end while the other connects the past to the present in an arc that stretches out to the future. In Lum’s case, Justice notes that “[t]he skull catches Lum’s attention in particular, and he remains fascinated with it through the course of the story, an unhealthy interest in death and the unknown that ultimately drives him toward self-destruction” (Justice 173). By focusing on the figure of haunting in the skull, Lum endangers his life from the moment he encounters it. Justice describes it as “unhealthy,” which itself signals an imbalance. Conversely, Tecumseh’s encounter with the ghost of
Rebecca Neugin, a survivor of the Trail of Tears, helps him balance the past with the future offered by Monroe Swimmer. Justice describes the balance that Rebecca seeks, and how she and her search bring balance to Tecumseh: “Rebecca’s search is for realignment, the balance that comes with creation and healing. She walks upon the Beloved Path, seeking balance in a world between life and death, the past and present, remembrance and erasure” (176). Unlike his cousin who both lacks a balancing force and disconnects from those relations who could help keep him on the path, Tecumseh encounters and follows both Rebecca and Monroe into the alternative possibilities that they offer for a counterhistory and for a future narrative. Through the story told and produced by the interactions of the characters, an alternarrative emerges.

The death of Eli Stands Alone demonstrates the potential price of resistance and the need for others to continue the values of the community just as he pursued the fight of his mother before him, while the death of Lum demonstrates the price of looking too much at the past in attempts to understand the present. In order to move forward, Tecumseh demonstrates that one must honor and learn from the past, but work to make the future different. Lum on the other hand has an unhealthy association with death and the past that leads him to cut short his own future. King’s use of death in these different ways demonstrates the power of past and present resistance through counternarratives and the power of alternarratives to create a different future.

10 The Beloved Path refers to the traditional Cherokee way of seeking balance in life.
5.1.7 Transcending the Border

King’s major project of pan-Indianism offers an alternarrative of American Indian identity and belonging through attention to the power of stories. Despite scholarly criticism that posits King’s work to be that of counternarration, this chapter has shown that King interweaves counternarrative with alternarrative to resist a dominant narrative of blood and its discourse. In order to enact alternarratives, King presents Native literature as the indigenous literary tradition of America, in its oral traditions and its ability to adapt with multiple tellings and storytellers. These storytellers in turn have multiple identities, both an alternative and counternarrative argument to the limited understanding of identity and community belonging as singular conditions. In *Green Grass, Running Water* and *Truth and Bright Water*, King utilizes Cherokee language and traditions, the trickster Coyote, borders and boundaries, as well as death, water, and power to understand the relationships caused by contact and a blood narrative that singularizes identity. In *Truth and Bright Water*, King strategically presents both counters and alternatives in his narration to recognize not the Indian as other, but the Christian, canonical, and traditional museum practices as the Other and to offer up alternarratives for Indian, mixed, and settler identities. All may be had by a single person, and his characters demonstrate movement between multiple identities. Prominently, the main characters in both novels claim their goals to be to “fix the world” and they do so through different methods, including the primacy and endurance of
Native stories and the power of stories to overcome the problems of the border and blood for identity and belonging. This goal is King’s project of pan-Indianism, one that he accomplishes through powerful stories that are both wondrous and dangerous, art and survival.

5.2 Beyond Blood: Global Citizenry

Over the course of this dissertation, I have chronicled the prevalence of a blood narrative to influence identity and belonging through its terms and effects on legislation and scientific pursuits. Those influences are particularly concerning for the future around the issues of blood quantum and other concepts like descendancy that perpetuate the same problems and are utilized in determinations of belonging. In American Indian nations, many of these determinations of belonging are also decisions about citizenship. Utilizing blood narrative to determine belonging constrains it unduly and will only lead to an end, not survival or survivance. Other narratives can be utilized in order to develop identity and belonging that moves beyond blood, either the rhetorical referent observed in the case of the Cherokee Nation and the descendants of the Freedmen, or the literal referent at play in the case of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians’ new reliance on DNA testing. While each tribe maintains the sovereign right to determine citizenship, the use of genetics should be thought out thoroughly before its limitations are applied. The stories and storytelling, and focus on the power of those acts, provides a potential solution to the problems of using blood to understand identity.
and belonging – telling new stories and the existence of those alternarratives produces another understanding of identity, leading to new configurations of belonging. Balance has to be restored at the level of the story, the narrative that organizes life, not only at the use of biotechnology and legislation, in order to sustain communities.

While the alternarratives provided through the stories and storytelling of King and Vizenor are some of the options available for moving beyond blood, they are not the only ones. Other narratives exist and are emerging to negotiate identity and belonging in both contemporary society and the societies that will be made in the future. While the figure of blood will not necessarily ever leave us, its conflation with DNA can be addressed and those new narratives may emerge differently. Identity and belonging both involve multiple parts and multiple claims, and honoring those multiple truths can provide “what else we have” with which to determine citizenship in American Indian nations, other nation-states, and belonging more generally in other communities. A global citizenry is emerging and the claims of that global citizenry to identity and belonging need not be bounded by blood or nation, but can be bound by place and by the rights and responsibilities accorded by life. Other narratives and more analysis still have to be created, unearthed, and operated by in order for the people to remain and to continue.
Appendix A

[Code of Federal Regulations]

[Title 25, Volume 1]

[Revised as of April 1, 2005]

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[CITE: 25CFR83.7]

[Page 256-259]

TITLE 25--INDIANS

CHAPTER I--BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

PART 83__PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING THAT AN AMERICAN INDIAN GROUP EXISTS

AS AN INDIAN TRIBE--Table of Contents

Sec. 83.7 Mandatory criteria for Federal acknowledgment.

The mandatory criteria are:

(a) The petitioner has been identified as an American Indian entity on a substantially continuous basis since 1900. Evidence that the group’s character as an Indian entity has from time to time been denied shall not be considered to be conclusive evidence that this criterion has not been met. Evidence to be relied upon in determining
a group’s Indian identity may include one or a combination of the following, as well as other evidence of identification by other than the petitioner itself or its members.

(1) Identification as an Indian entity by Federal authorities.

(2) Relationships with State governments based on identification of the group as Indian.

(3) Dealings with a county, parish, or other local government in a relationship based on the group’s Indian identity.

(4) Identification as an Indian entity by anthropologists, historians, and/or other scholars.

(5) Identification as an Indian entity in newspapers and books.

(6) Identification as an Indian entity in relationships with Indian tribes or with national, regional, or state Indian organizations.

(b) A predominant portion of the petitioning group comprises a distinct community and has existed as a community from historical times until the present.

(1) This criterion may be demonstrated by some combination of the following evidence and/or other evidence that the petitioner meets the definition of community set forth in Sec. 83.1:

(i) Significant rates of marriage within the group, and/or, as may be culturally required, patterned out-marriages with other Indian populations.
(ii) Significant social relationships connecting individual members.

(iii) Significant rates of informal social interaction which exist broadly among the members of a group.

(iv) A significant degree of shared or cooperative labor or other economic activity among the membership.

(v) Evidence of strong patterns of discrimination or other social distinctions by non-members.

(vi) Shared sacred or secular ritual activity encompassing most of the group.

(vii) Cultural patterns shared among a significant portion of the group that are different from those of the non-Indian populations with whom it interacts. These patterns must function as more than a symbolic identification of the group as Indian. They may include, but are not limited to, language, kinship organization, or religious beliefs and practices.

(viii) The persistence of a named, collective Indian identity continuously over a period of more than 50 years, notwithstanding changes in name.

(ix) A demonstration of historical political influence under the criterion in Sec. 83.7(c) shall be evidence for demonstrating historical community.

(2) A petitioner shall be considered to have provided sufficient evidence of community at a given point in time if evidence is provided to demonstrate any one of the following:
(i) More than 50 percent of the members reside in a geographical area exclusively or almost exclusively composed of members of the group, and the balance of the group maintains consistent interaction with some members of the community;

(ii) At least 50 percent of the marriages in the group are between members of the group;

(iii) At least 50 percent of the group members maintain distinct cultural patterns such as, but not limited to, language, kinship organization, or religious beliefs and practices;

(iv) There are distinct community social institutions encompassing most of the members, such as kinship organizations, formal or informal economic cooperation, or religious organizations; or

(v) The group has met the criterion in Sec. 83.7(c) using evidence described in Sec. 83.7(c)(2).

(c) The petitioner has maintained political influence or authority over its members as an autonomous entity from historical times until the present.

(1) This criterion may be demonstrated by some combination of the evidence listed below and/or by other evidence that the petitioner meets the definition of political influence or authority in Sec. 83.1.

(i) The group is able to mobilize significant numbers of members and significant resources from its members for group purposes.
(ii) Most of the membership considers issues acted upon or actions taken by group leaders or governing bodies to be of importance.

(iii) There is widespread knowledge, communication and involvement in political processes by most of the group’s members.

(iv) The group meets the criterion in Sec. 83.7(b) at more than a minimal level.

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(v) There are internal conflicts which show controversy over valued group goals, properties, policies, processes and/or decisions.

(2) A petitioning group shall be considered to have provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate the exercise of political influence or authority at a given point in time by demonstrating that group leaders and/or other mechanisms exist or existed which:

(i) Allocate group resources such as land, residence rights and the like on a consistent basis.

(ii) Settle disputes between members or subgroups by mediation or other means on a regular basis;

(iii) Exert strong influence on the behavior of individual members, such as the establishment or maintenance of norms and the enforcement of sanctions to direct or control behavior;
(iv) Organize or influence economic subsistence activities among the members, including shared or cooperative labor.

(3) A group that has met the requirements in paragraph 83.7(b)(2) at a given point in time shall be considered to have provided sufficient evidence to meet this criterion at that point in time.

(d) A copy of the group’s present governing document including its membership criteria. In the absence of a written document, the petitioner must provide a statement describing in full its membership criteria and current governing procedures.

(e) The petitioner’s membership consists of individuals who descend from a historical Indian tribe or from historical Indian tribes which combined and functioned as a single autonomous political entity.

(1) Evidence acceptable to the Secretary which can be used for this purpose includes but is not limited to:

(i) Rolls prepared by the Secretary on a descendancy basis for purposes of distributing claims money, providing allotments, or other purposes;

(ii) State, Federal, or other official records or evidence identifying present members or ancestors of present members as being descendants of a historical tribe or tribes that combined and functioned as a single autonomous political entity.
(iii) Church, school, and other similar enrollment records identifying present members or ancestors of present members as being descendants of a historical tribe or tribes that combined and functioned as a single autonomous political entity.

(iv) Affidavits of recognition by tribal elders, leaders, or the tribal governing body identifying present members or ancestors of present members as being descendants of a historical tribe or tribes that combined and functioned as a single autonomous political entity.

(v) Other records or evidence identifying present members or ancestors of present members as being descendants of a historical tribe or tribes that combined and functioned as a single autonomous political entity.

(2) The petitioner must provide an official membership list, separately certified by the group’s governing body, of all known current members of the group. This list must include each member’s full name (including maiden name), date of birth, and current residential address. The petitioner must also provide a copy of each available former list of members based on the group’s own defined criteria, as well as a statement describing the circumstances surrounding the preparation of the current list and, insofar as possible, the circumstances surrounding the preparation of former lists.

(f) The membership of the petitioning group is composed principally of persons who are not members of any acknowledged North American Indian tribe. However, under certain conditions a petitioning group may be acknowledged even if its
membership is composed principally of persons whose names have appeared on rolls of, or who have been otherwise associated with, an acknowledged Indian tribe. The conditions are that the group must establish that it has functioned throughout history until the present as a separate and autonomous Indian tribal entity, that its members do not maintain a bilateral political relationship with the acknowledged tribe, and that its members have provided written confirmation of their membership in the petitioning group.

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(g) Neither the petitioner nor its members are the subject of congressional legislation that has expressly terminated or forbidden the Federal relationship.
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Biography

Jessica Dawn Bardill was born on August 8, 1983 in Nashville, TN to Christie Ferguson Bardill and John Patrick Bardill. She is the youngest of their three children. She attended Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia from August 2001 until May 2005 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, Summa cum Laude, with an honors thesis entitled *The Influence of the New Tongue: History, Identity, and Local-ity in the Pidgin Literature of Hawai‘i*, and a Bachelor of Science in Biology. She has published in the Center for Responsible Genetics’ journal *GeneWatch*. Her work at Duke University has been supported by a number of internal and external sources: The Woodrow Wilson Foundation’s Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Humanistic Studies (2005-2006) and Travel and Research Grant (2009), the Duke Endowment Fellowship (2005-2009), the Social Science Research Council’s Mellon Mays Graduate Initiatives Grants for Predoctoral Research (2008-2009) and Graduate Studies Enhancement (2009-2010), Conference Travel Grants (2006-2011) and the Walter L. and Isobel Craven Drill Summer Research Fellowship (2010). She was also a Fellow of the Preparing Future Faculty program (2009-2010).