

### Sherman Slipstream: (Dis)Associating Settler Time

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As I read the Board of Anthropological Research expedition reports, our family records from the SA Museum, State Aboriginal Records and SA Link-Up, *I am transported*. I am with my family at the hands of the scientists being measured, bled, poked and prodded as their object of fascination-titillation-subjugation. I am standing before Inspector-‘State-Ladies’ and Probation Officers being inspected, watched from shadows, and shamed in the great Australian assimilation-experiment.

–Natalie Harkin, “The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives: Memory in the Blood,” 11

Native peoples occupy a double bind within dominant settler reckonings of time. Either they are consigned to the past, or they are inserted into a present defined on non-native terms. From this perspective, Native people(s) do not so much exist *within the flow of time as erupt from it as an anomaly*, one usually understood as emanating from a bygone era.

–Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*, vii

In the spring of 2021, the remains of over one thousand Indigenous children were located on the grounds of multiple former Canadian residential schools, including St. Eugene’s Mission School, Marieval Indian Residential School, and Kamloops Residential School. Reports mark these as “discoveries” as if something previously unknown or unseen has finally been made known or visible. According to “settler reckonings of time,” these children are “emanating from a bygone era,” constantly consigned to a dead-end past, as Rifkin’s epigraph explains. But Indigenous peoples subjected to state- and church-run boarding schools have known and seen the effects of these sites of incarceration for centuries (Trafzer, Gilbert, and Sisquoc 2; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 3). These children are testament to “a past that is not past”<sup>1</sup> that ruptures the flow of settler time. Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations (FSIN) notes, “These children are sitting there, waiting to be found” (Austen and Bilefsky). Cameron’s words indicate that these children are present, not past. Even though they are “sitting there, waiting,” they are active not passive, making themselves known and demanding to be acknowledged.

Although St. Eugene’s, Marieval, and Kamloops were operated by the Roman Catholic Church and not (directly) under the auspices of the settler government, these children’s experiences no doubt resonate with those of Indigenous students at the hundreds of other boarding schools that operated throughout Turtle Island (e.g. North America) well into the twentieth century. Such schools have rightly been considered “death factories” for “the most vulnerable portion of the Native population,” who were seen by whites as more assimilable than their adult counterparts (Keller 8; Trafzer and Loupe 21). While perhaps not a *physical* “death factory,”<sup>2</sup> the Sherman

Institute—a Native boarding school located in Riverside, California—was far from a healthy living environment, since “separating children from their parents for the purpose of assimilation” and “eliminating traditional lifeways for the sake of ‘civilization’” is decidedly unhealthy, itself a certain kind of death. Indeed, “deceased pupils were usually buried at the school’s cemetery,” a space carved out of “a one-acre plot of land” in “the southwestern corner of the school farm” (Gilbert xxviii; Keller 8; Trafzer and Keller 160). In this way, youth buried at Sherman were kept like the ones “sitting there, waiting” at St. Eugene’s, Marieval, and Kamloops. On the one hand their “voices are silent” and yet, on the other hand, “their voices live on” (Keller 9).

I am dedicated to exhuming the voice of one such Sherman Institute student, one who was kept but at the very least released alive: my paternal grandfather, Louis Ornelas, or Grandpa Louie as he was affectionately called. Grandpa Louie exists mostly in stories, narratives, family histories, pictures, and memories. His image sits in a dusty picture frame, on a dusty shelf, in a dusty corner—or an even dustier realm in the corner of my mind. I only met him in person on a few occasions as a child. So his image has been warped since those moments. Yet sometimes I slip into the bending stream of time and meet Louis. This is a story of one such instance, similar to that of Narungga scholar Natalie Harkin’s account of being “transported” to moments throughout Harkin’s family history of navigating Australian settler violences.

This essay attempts to trace the ripples of Native and Indigenous slipstream, (ancestral) memory, and (dis)association, through critically fabulated accounts of Louis’s years spent at Sherman, my family’s own oral history, and the official chronicle of the Sherman Institute. I argue that Native boarding schools were meant to *dissociate* Indigenous children from culture, language, tradition, kinship, and lifeways. Yet through the power of science fictional time travel or, more accurately, Indigenous slipstream, I am able to associate (rather than dissociate) with my grandfather’s traumatic experiences and survivance. As a feeling and witnessing of a past that is not past, this essay serves as an Indigenous refusal of hegemonic time and history as well as an affirmation of Indigenous knowledges and realities.

Dominant settler conceptions of time view it as “a linear ordering of the flow of experience” (Al-Saji 339). But Indigenous thought would have it that memory and remembrance have their own “natural current” that is sovereign from this progressivist flow (Vizenor 103). This is why I am drawn more to “slipstream” as a concept than “time travel” to explain my experiences of associating with Louis, because the latter implies that the past is a separate place on a linear timeline that can be *travelled to*, perhaps requiring elaborate Westernized machinery, know-how, and technology. Instead, the tendency or genre (if one could call it that) of slipstream has been categorized as being, well, *slippery*. Called “assemblaged,” “hybridized,” “permeable,” “porous,” “incomplete,” “disruptive, experimental, and counter-realist,” with “no fixed or even provisionally demarcated boundaries,” slipstream is in good company with Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and modes of thinking about and with time (Butler et al. 12; de Zwaan 2; Frelik 27; Rossi 346; Rossi 355). It is widely (and falsely) believed that Bruce Sterling coined the term “slipstream” in the ‘80s<sup>3</sup> as a way to disparagingly “refer to mainstream works that take advantage

of sf tropes” and later “referred to any sf- or fantasy-like work published or marketed outside the genre, or written by non-genre writers” (Wolfe 19). Sterling himself said that at “the heart of slipstream is an attitude of peculiar aggression against ‘reality.’” Slipstream texts, according to Sterling, “tend to sarcastically tear at the structure of ‘everyday life’” and tend “not to ‘create’ new worlds, but to *quote* them, chop them up out of context, and turn them against themselves.” Although the originator’s commentary has been debated (and rightly so), I adopt Sterling’s definition insofar as this “tearing,” “chopping up,” and “turning against” is precisely the utility—rather than the failure—that slipstream yields.

Indigenous speculative fiction and, in particular, slipstream could be said to foster an “aggression against ‘reality’” and take things “out of context” by refusing hegemonic time, history, and narrative structure. Grace L. Dillon (Anishinaabe) specifies that “Native slipstream” is similar yet distinct from Sterling’s settler slipstream: “Native slipstream views time as pasts, presents, and futures that flow together like currents in a navigable stream. It thus replicates nonlinear thinking about space-time” (“Imagining” 3). While there may be some overlaps with slipstream as a “catchall” term in “other contexts,” Native slipstream is a “reflection of a worldview” and a “cultural experience of reality,” therefore differentiating it as a uniquely *Indigenous* epistemology (Dillon, “Imagining” 3-4). And it is certainly “nothing new,” as Dillon also tells us that “incorporating time travel, alternate realities, parallel universes and multiverses, and alternative histories is a hallmark of Native storytelling tradition” (“Native” 345). Indigenous science fictional elements are, therefore, an affirmation of Indigenous knowledges and realities that help to navigate the current of ancestral memory. Just as a single drop of water becomes indistinguishable once it slips into a stream, I see the pasts, presents, and futures of my grandfather and I as flowing together.

What I remember of Grandpa Louie is minimal and vague. As a small child, I visited his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he lived with my paternal grandmother, Rafaela Concepción (or Connie, for short), and my aunt, who acted as caretaker to them both in their old age. I was fascinated by their single-story house full of knick-knacks and sweets in an arid desert climate, a far cry from the overcast, wet environment of my childhood spent in Portland, Oregon. When I was in New Mexico, I thought of (space) aliens, Area 51, and *The X-Files*. I was also, for the first time in my life, entirely surrounded by my brown family members: grandparents, aunts, and cousins. I barely knew them, yet I felt the need to connect with them and was drawn to this place they inhabited. Louis never seemed particularly interested in me, however. He was quiet and withdrawn, hunched over a bowl of food, more fixated on it than the people around him. At the time, I attributed his stoicism more to his age and declining mental and physical health. My father told me that Grandpa Louie had, on numerous occasions as a septuagenarian, found himself lost and confused in various parts of Albuquerque. His dwindling memory was exacerbated by several small strokes. Now I wonder if his alienating demeanor was also a symptom of retreating into his own bodymind as a coping mechanism for the trauma he endured in his formative years.

*I am 8 years old and I have just watched a documentary television show about alien abduction. The image of a grey’s face filling up the screen is still burned into my eyes as I retire to bed on the*

*fold-out couch in my grandparent's living room. I lay awake for the next several hours thinking about how close I am to Roswell, New Mexico, the supposed proximal location of a 1947 sighting of an unidentified flying object. My sleep is fitful, as I envision strange lights and visitors in the room.*

On one hand, my 8-year-old self sympathized with this elderly man. On the other, the stories my own father told me about their relationship deeply troubled me. Many of my earliest memories of Grandpa Louie were tinged with the upsetting accounts of my father's childhood. He was candid about the physical and verbal abuse that he and the rest of the family endured at Louis's hands. My grandfather's anger was explained by my father not as the result of a generational norm ("That's just how it was back then"), nor as one individual's irrational tendencies ("He was a sonofabitch"), but as the tragic, but logical outcome of Grandpa Louie's own subjection to violence, death, and grief starting at a very young age. As Kaba and Hayes remind their readers, "it is hurt people who hurt other people" (69). Or as my father put it, Louis enacted "trickle down abuse." I was told that Grandpa Louie had been placed in an orphanage as a child, only to have later gone into the U.S. armed forces,<sup>4</sup> where he was deployed to Pearl Harbor and witnessed the events there on December 7, 1941, as well as participated in the Pacific theater of World War II. Early life abandonment and post-traumatic stress seemed the likely culprits to characterize his actions later on.

*I am 13 years old and I live in Fontana, California, in 1960. I have spent the school day worried about being held back yet again for speaking Spanish, my mother's native tongue, in class. I proceeded across the street to my after-school job working in chicken coops for 50¢ an hour, nauseating work that leaves me with a ripe odor of bird droppings. Other children bully me, cut me, and call me "smelly," a "dirty Mexican," or worse. Despite these things, what I fear most today is going home to my father, his rage, his belt. Neither my siblings nor my deferential mother can help. So I go to my room to avoid any interaction.*

However, what was recounted to me throughout the first three decades of my life was not the entirety of what Louis endured. In the summer of 2017, as I was preparing to enter a PhD program in the fall, I travelled to the Pacific Northwest to attend a ceremony to scatter my late sibling's ashes into the ocean. During this trip, my father informed me that he had found the name and location of the place his father was held as an adolescent: the Sherman Institute in Riverside, California. After some initial web searches, I realized that the "orphanage" that Grandpa Louie stayed at was, in fact, a Native boarding school. Although he survived the Sherman Institute, he was literally and figuratively orphaned—not only were both of his parents deceased when he was released from Sherman as a teen and thus he had no immediate biological family to return to, but he had also been indoctrinated and assimilated into white supremacist, settler colonial societal and linguistic norms and was therefore orphaned from his culture. My father and I don't have firsthand accounts of Louis's experiences at Sherman because, as my aunt put it, it was a terrible place and a terrible time in his life. He didn't *want* to talk about it. But it's not hard to imagine, considering the reverberations of these experiences throughout our family's history. For example, there was a deep fear and obsession in my father's family about him and his siblings being molested by strangers,

which leads my father and I to presume that Louis was abused or witnessed abuse by fellow classmates and teachers at Sherman.<sup>5</sup> It's also not hard to imagine Grandpa Louie's experiences if I utilize Indigenous slipstream<sup>6</sup> to transport myself and think beyond settler reckonings of time.

*I am barely a teenager and I am alone for the first time in my life. Taken. Discarded. Trapped. Abandoned. They all mean the same thing here. My father wasn't always kind but at least we had each other. My mother and father are gone now—first my mother, then my father—so I was given a new family. Now I am surrounded by others just like me. Alone.*

Most scholarship on the Sherman Institute has, up to this point, relied heavily on archival records—themselves initially created and curated by school administrators and settler bureaucrats. Official documents tell “only one version of the truth,” though, and “are sorely lacking” in Indigenous students' voices (Keller xviii, 3). “Institutional time,” Vizenor (Anishinaabe) contends, “belies our personal memories, imagination, and consciousness” (101). Rather than accepting settler institutional history “as a factual and objectively recorded account of the past,” I align with those scholars who “view history as just another type of narrative” (Ibarrola-Armendariz and Vivanco 29). Creative counter narratives that employ a “disorientating” and “surreal maelstrom of time-traveling and body jumping” are of great use for the purposes of (re)asserting the importance and validity of Indigenous epistemologies and temporalities (Ibarrola-Armendariz and Vivanco 30, 42).

One such form of counter narrative is critical fabulation. Hartman defines this manner of speculation thusly:

‘Fabula’ denotes the basic elements of story, the building blocks of the narrative. ... By playing with and rearranging the basic elements of the story, by re-presenting the sequence of events in divergent stories and from contested points of view, I have attempted to jeopardize the status of the event, to displace the received or authorized account, and to imagine what might have happened or might have been said or might have been done. (11)

Through critical fabulation, Hartman is able to shift stories away from a primary focus on the violences done to captured and enslaved Black girls and women, and refocus to “fill... in the gaps” and “paint as full a picture... as possible” (Hartman 8, 11). More than that, though, critical fabulation insists that there are ways of seeing, witnessing, and knowing the past other than those the white supremacist, settler imaginary has provided. This is similar to the “imaginative histories” and the “remembrance past the barriers” that Vizenor urges for in the face of institutional timekeeping (101). If official accounts of Black enslavement or Native genocide are created and kept by supposed experts<sup>7</sup> in documenting human life—accountants, clergy, historians, etc.—then telling “our own stories” is an act of resistance against such claims to authority (Justice 2). We are the authors of our own lives—who better than us to narrate the lives we live? Even what has been written on our bodies from the outside is best recollected from our own unique vantage point (Harkin 4). What I hope to demonstrate is that this vantage point is not singular nor individual;



it is plural and collective. I am able to fabulate and associate with my grandfather's experiences because they are part of a past that is not past and, therefore, still present for me and other survivors and descendants of Native boarding schools.

The official history of the Sherman Institute is a narrative of white bureaucrats steeped in the violent pedagogical lineage of earlier iterations of Native boarding schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. Originally founded in 1892 as the Perris Indian Industrial School located in Perris, California, U.S. Senate funding was approved in 1900, allowing Indian agents like Harwood Hall and businessmen like Frank Miller to successfully advocate for the relocation of the school to Riverside, California in 1902, where it continues to this day as the Sherman Indian High School (Keller 1, 12; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 6; Whalen, "Labored" 153). At its height as a site of incarceration, it held youth from "indigenous communities and mixed-race Native families from California, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Oklahoma, Montana, Utah, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Nebraska" (Smithers 44). Sherman was one of twenty-five federally-run off-reservation boarding schools, the purpose of which was assimilation through education or, more accurately, indoctrination (Gilbert xxi; Smithers 44; Trafzer, Gilbert, and Sisquoc 3; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 7). Upon arrival, students were stripped, deloused, had their hair cut, and were issued utilitarian clothing (Trafzer and Loupe 25). On a day to day basis, students at Sherman would've been subjected to military-like regimentation, with half of their lessons on rote academic work and the other half spent in highly gendered vocational training (Gilbert xxvi; Trafzer and Loupe 24; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 3). Administrators further endeavored to indoctrinate Indigenous youth through "outing programs," meant to lift up these children into a settler capitalist workforce serving white communities (Archuleta, Child, Lomawaima 34-5; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 8, 10; Whalen, "Beyond" 277; Whalen, "Labored" 151). Records of children's experiences at Sherman range from excelling academically to actively resisting and attempting to run away (Archuleta, Child, Lomawaima 48; Gilbert xxvii; Smithers 46-7; Trafzer and Loupe 26; Trafzer, Gilbert, and Sisquoc, 7; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 10). Surely some students were able to gain knowledge and resources that helped them and their communities, especially once Sherman turned toward more Indigenous-affirming programming in the mid-twentieth century and beyond (Trafzer and Loupe 30; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 1-2; Whalen, "Labored" 152). Some families even consented to this process, however reluctantly (Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima 16; Trafzer, Smith, and Sisquoc 6). These experiences are not dichotomous, though, as noted by both Gilbert<sup>8</sup> (Hopi) as well as Trafzer (Wyandot), Keller, and Sisquoc<sup>9</sup> (Cuhilla/Apache). That is to say, students and their families exercised agency—though constrained—within and beyond the permeable boundaries of the Sherman Institute (Whalen, "Beyond" 277). However, just like other Native boarding schools, Sherman was ultimately founded on and acted in service to settler colonial practices of elimination—in this case the elimination of association between young people and their communities.

*I am 17, not yet old enough to enlist in the military but old enough to be subjected to the discipline of a 5:30 AM wake up and roll call starting an hour later. I couldn't say whether or not*

TRANS-INDIGENOUS FUTURITY  
(Dis)Associating Settler Time

*I enjoy my classes, but at least they provide me with distraction. The relentless cleaning and the mandatory physical activities are the same. No enjoyment. Only distraction. I need distraction. Distraction from the things I want to forget. It's only after the last roll call at 8 PM and the bugle call at 9 PM signaling lights out that I'm left inescapably isolated with my thoughts.*

Settler colonial boarding schools for Indigenous peoples the world over were meant to *dissociate* Indigenous children from culture, language, tradition, kinship, and lifeways. That is to say, young people were forced to sever ties and connections to the people, places, and selves that made them who they were and are, in service of connecting them to white supremacist, settler colonial ideologies. The verb “associate” comes from the Latin *associare* (“to unite”), itself a combination of the prefix *ad-* (“to join”) and *sociatus* (“companion”). Adding *dis-*, a Latin prefix meaning “apart,” “asunder,” or “away,” to the beginning of “associate” qualifies a move from—even destroying of—union and companionship. *Dis-* has a markedly different feel than, say, the prefix *un-*, which simply indicates “not.” To be “not united” is not the same thing as to be “apart from union.” The latter implies spatial and perhaps emotional and psychological distance; certainly all of these forms of removal and being apart are present in boarding schools (Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima 19). I don’t invoke a Eurocentric etymology as a way to eclipse Indigenous language. Rather, this terminology illuminates that settlers did exactly what their words intended. At one time united with their community and companions, Native and First Nations children were stolen and intentionally orphaned—boarding and residential schools moved apart, tore asunder, ripped away, and utterly devastated their associations. In the specific case of Cherokee students at Sherman, Smithers emphasizes that the intention of such a space was to “sever linguistic, cultural, or any emotional *connections* to Cherokee identity” thereby making it significantly difficult for youth to cultivate and maintain “a meaningful sense of self or *attachments* to family and community” (47-8, emphasis added). Other scholars describe these experiences of being “disconnected” and “alienated” from Indigenous communities and epistemologies (Trafzer, Gilbert, and Sisquoc 5-6). Even decades later, Harkin describes the “yearning” to reconnect with more than just the “archive” of colonial documentation: “I remember aching to touch something, anything more of our recorded past to understand this journey and the particular impacts of colonialism on my family” (3). The feeling of “aching to touch something” implies that Harkin and other family members were unable to and actively disallowed from touching and connecting with one another, whether across space, time, or psychic gulfs.

I have never been to Riverside, California, let alone the Sherman Institute. Yet when I first heard the more complete story of my grandfather’s childhood, I was transported to that place. No one had told me what the buildings looked like, I hadn’t yet seen the photos or read the books about it, and my father had yet to imbue in me a sense of what Grandpa Louie’s time there had been like. All I had been given was the name and a grainy cellphone photo of the line in the Sherman Institute’s ledger indicating my grandfather’s stay. So what I saw when I slipped “back” to the 1930s was alarmingly real and unanticipated. My body was “here” in 2017, located physically in the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest, while my consciousness wandered freely to the

TRANS-INDIGENOUS FUTURITY  
*(Dis)Associating Settler Time*

Southwestern coastal region in an era almost a century before I currently existed, a half century before I was even conceived. Here were children half my age, structures that have long since been transformed, if not completely razed, all swirling in my mind. It wasn't "in my mind," though, in the sense that I wasn't "imagining" it; it was as real as any memory or experience of my own. But it also wasn't "my own." Whose eyes were I seeing through? I didn't see my grandfather in these slipstream memories, so I quickly understood that I was with him, seeing with him. These snippets of life at Sherman came and went for weeks in August of 2017 as I sought to uncover more about the space and place he'd been held. Intense moments of grief followed these slips into the stream of time. Eventually the unofficial narrative buttressed the knowledge I gleaned about the official narrative.

*I am 31 years old and I haven't yet been born. I am in a school with gleaming, waxed floors, immaculately cleaned by some small, unseen hands. I am primed to enter a terminal degree program in the Midwest. The halls are cool despite the heat of the California summer blaring outside. The faculty welcome me with reassuring smiles. I am still processing the loss of my father to a train yard accident. I am still processing the loss of my sister to cancer. I see a girl about my age, round face and dark brown skin. She wears a white smock and a blank stare, unaware of my presence, absent-mindedly engrossed in whatever menial task she's been assigned. I think, "She's like me." I think, "She's nothing like me." I think we share the same fate. I wonder what she's thinking about, who she is and where she came from, who and what she left behind. There is a wooden door to a closet or an office or some other confined space that none of us can enter and none of us want to.*

At first glance, this might appear to be a form of "blood memory," but I assert that the ancestral association I experienced was Indigenous slipstream, a form of science fictional time travel technology. Blood memory or "memory in the blood" is itself a contested term, originally brought to prominence by Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday (Allen 93). In Momaday's writing, there is a "blurring" of experiences in which the writer is "coincident with indigenous ancestors and with indigenous history" (Allen 101, 106). Even in its creative and playful form, blood memory is controversial for its potential similarities to the use of blood quantum for official federal tribal enlistment and recognition (Allen 96-7; Mithlo 106). Nevertheless, Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache) claims that the term is not necessarily regressive or essentialist. "Blood relationships," Mithlo counters,

reference not only the common understanding of what is considered biological heritage or race but also, in an expanded sense, the internalized memories of communal history, knowledge, and wisdom. Blood memories are powerful political tropes mobilized to call attention to the legacies of colonialism in contexts as diverse as battlefields, boarding schools, and sacred sites. This common tribal value of multigenerational remembrance runs directly counter to prevailing Western traits of individual achievement, lack of transgenerational memory, and transcendence of one's genealogical fate and place of origin. (106)



Similar to Mithlo's warning against the "prevailing Western traits" of individualized experiences of knowledge and time, the most compelling argument for a more generous, abstract reading of memory in the blood comes from Harkin's poetic (re)telling of history. In searching beyond the official records, Harkin calls upon a nonlinear narrative relationship between past-present-future that rethinks Momaday, whose "memory in the blood... is not about genetic or biological determinism, notions of fixed identity or timeless essences, but can be understood as an evocative synonym for culture, reconstructed and reimagined on the record" (Harkin 7). I'm certainly not invested in espousing genetic essentializing or authenticating tropes that reproduce settler ideas of blood quantum. Instead, I'm interested in how Indigenous slipstream—offering *association* through alternative models of knowledge, memory, and history—operates as a kind of technology that counters settler colonial narratives.

When I recounted these experiences of slipping between time periods and consciousnesses to a white friend, they replied that it sounded like I was "dissociating." They based this on the fact that I was not fully in my bodymind, was not cognizant of (current) reality, and therefore feeling something akin to the psychological phenomenon correlated with trauma responses. Černis et al. define dissociation as containing "a subset of dissociative experiences sharing the phenomenological common denominator of a 'felt sense of anomaly' (FSA)," a "subjective feeling of 'strangeness'" that "can take various forms" (461). At first, I agreed with my white friend insofar as the invasive thoughts of settler colonialism were clearly an expression of a traumatizing history and surely weren't emotionally stabilizing. Plus, my friend has felt dissociated as a trauma response in their own life, so I trusted their firsthand knowledge. Later on, I spoke with a Sámi friend whose grandparent was also forced into a boarding school imposed by Scandinavian policies (Trafzer and Loupe 28). Relating the same experiences as well as my friend's assessment, my Sámi friend countered that rather than "dissociating" it sounded more like I was "associating." To them, I was uniting across time and space with my grandfather. I realized that they were right, that my grandfather and I were joining as companions in a shared history, separate and parallel from settler time. This reality was not "away" or "apart" from one another or from Indigeneity, as the settler colonial imperative of elimination would have it. Louis was no longer orphaned from kin and culture in those moments when I slipped to the Sherman Institute of the 1930s.

In these slips, I was chafing against the settler timeline and tearing at the fabric of coloniality in a way that Al-Saji discusses as "critical hesitation." The "chrononormativity" of time, as conceived in the West, is unidirectional and progressive, a smooth controlled surface that is dictated by particular monolithic epistemes (Rifkin 185). Critical hesitation works to question and interrupt this. When hesitating, Al-Saji describes pausing long enough to see the ways in which "the colonial past remains with the present," running parallel to and informing one another at all times (337). Hesitation then connects these seemingly discrete timelines so that those of us who hesitate within and against settler time actually perform a "*critical reconfiguration of the past*" (Al-Saji 338, emphasis in original). In other words, by stopping to acknowledge and associate with my grandfather's experiences, I was able to cause such a hesitation or rupture to

Western chrononormativity, to resist its totalization, thereby reconfiguring the past to a fuller representation of its actors. Rather than the singular, “masterly, or direct, reiteration of the past” that settler colonial history demands, hesitation is “indirect and faltering,” since “it delays a habitual or unreflected line of action” and “creates an opening into which memories could come flowing back” (Al-Saji 338). Al-Saji’s emphasis on faltering, delayed, crucially imperfect timelines, and uncontrollable, flowing memory are valid sites from which knowledge and resistance might spring. Grandpa Louie and I were in “cross-time proximity,” bridging the span of linear time as well as the gulf imposed by the forced assimilation and dissociation of boarding schools (Rifkin 131).

In some ways, Louis represents the things that I seek to abolish through my personal and professional work. He was indoctrinated into settler colonial epistemes, by complicity, force, or both, never again returning to his linguistic and cultural roots. He joined in military activity, part of an imperialist tradition. He physically and emotionally scarred the people he was supposed to care for. He retreated into an unemotive masculinity, not sharing his own experiences or feelings, let alone seeking reconciliation or healing. Still, recounting the past—not through official channels but through the Indigenous technology of slipping into the stream of ancestral memory—allows me to *associate* with, connect to, and understand this man’s troubling life. Like Harkin’s poetic exploration, I too “enter those hidden in-between places full of mystery, pain and possibility; to peel back layers of memory and flesh and liberate our stories and skin” (3). Like discussions of Native literature, “time-traveling and body-migrating devices perfectly serve [the] purpose of delving into the cycles of violence...” as well as help “to forgive those who have hurt...” (Ibarrola-Armendariz and Vivanco 42; Johnson 144). Fortunately, Louis was returned to us. Countless youth incarcerated in boarding and residential schools never made it out alive. All the same, we cannot accept that their “voices are silent,” because as Chief Cameron’s words inform us, these children are “sitting there, waiting.”

In the epigraph, Rifkin articulates, “Native people(s) do not so much exist within the flow of time as erupt from it as an anomaly” (vii). Borrowing from this notion of Nativeness as ruptive and anomalous rather than flowing with time, I maintain that it is not so much that we as Indigenous peoples are anachronistic but rather that chrononormativity is such that we cannot be explained by and contained within its current. To paraphrase Rifkin, Indigenous time is not an affirmation of settler time, reducible to, or nested within it (2). Our narratives are not (science) fictional—they are real and valid. And yet, using speculative tropes like slipstream to (re)tell our stories, our memories, and our associations, exceeds the bounds of settler time.

## Notes

1. We now lay, as Sharpe might say, *in the wake* of a half-millennia-long genealogy of violence (13).
2. Despite “funding constraints and a lackadaisical attitude,” youth held at Sherman Institute were “a relatively healthy student population” compared to their reservation and white peers (Keller xvii).
3. However, Dillon corrects this oversight by clarifying that “Anishinaabe author, scholar, and activist Gerald Vizenor (White Earth Chippewa) clearly ‘coined’ the genre in his 1978 essay ‘Custer in the Slipstream’” (“Native” 344-5).
4. Writing about World War I, Medina concludes that Sherman “students carefully weighed their decision to enlist for military duty,” many choosing to enlist “for a variety of reasons other than patriotism,” such as “economic necessity” or “experience” (65-6).
5. “Boarding schools could be violent places,” but less commonly “told are the stories of sexual abuse” (Archuleta, Child, Lomawaima 42). Considering that adolescents were sent into the world to work for complete strangers—often in the intimate proximity of whites’ homes—and were not always well supervised even when on-campus—leading to grave physical harm and even death—then it’s likely that sexualized violence also befell Sherman students, despite purported attempts to protect them (Whalen, “Beyond” 278; Whalen, “Labored” 158).
6. Dillon uses the term “Native slipstream” but throughout this essay I will refer to this as “Indigenous slipstream” (3).
7. As Harkin avers, the “supposed agents of protection and integrity determined what data was important, relevant and interesting for the record” (9).
8. In an in-depth study of Hopi strategies of coping with boarding schools like Sherman, Gilbert states that while some Hopi “saw little benefit in allowing American ways to enter Hopi society and culture,” still others “strategically learned to adopt components” (xxiii).
9. Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc refer to this as “turning the power” (*Boarding* 28).

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TRANS-INDIGENOUS FUTURITY  
*(Dis)Associating Settler Time*

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