

Enabling Decolonization Discourse: Susan Pollock

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It is with pleasure that I contribute to this collection honoring my mentor and friend Susan Pollock. As befitting a scholar of her stature, she has amassed a large body of work, though I will focus here on a three-year span of time at Binghamton University and her role as my graduate advisor. It is true that if not for her courage and patient guidance during my time in graduate school I would not have earned my degree and simply would not be where I am today. But beyond the many ways that I have benefitted individually through her mentorship, more importantly she enabled a space for the decolonization discourse of an Indigenous critique of archaeology, and this to this day is rare. I really struggled with the title for this piece as the word “enabling” implies that she *allowed* my critique to proceed, and I am sure she would be the first to point out that this does not accurately reflect her role as she saw it. Indeed, I was not going to shut up, so to speak, yet the reality of the culture of archaeology for a prospective Native student even today is either assimilation or exclusion. What are dissertation committee members if not gate-keepers assigned to enact compliance to disciplinary norms, to indoctrinate fresh minds into *acceptable* ideological views and approaches, to police our words and actions to fashion a final written product that celebrates the department, the institution, the discipline? I offer this rhetorical question to illustrate the sorts of challenges that Susan chose to confront by accepting my request to be the chairperson of my Ph.D. dissertation committee. Susan’s self-reflexive negotiation of

power, her subverting her position as academic gatekeeper, and her creation of a discursive space for radical critique within a discipline that is often hostile to Native empowerment are all a part of an important story that needs to be told.

I first met Susan midway through the first decade of the 21st century when I entered the Ph.D. archaeology program at Binghamton University where she taught as an Associate Professor. As a non-traditional graduate student, I presented a variety of unique challenges to not only the professors whose courses I enrolled in, but to the archaeologists and other anthropologists in the department that ran the show. I was in my late-thirties, and as a student of Native descent I entered a world where despite the rhetoric of inclusion and diversity Indigenous peoples were still looked upon only as either sources of inside Native knowledge, the likes of which archaeology and anthropology consumed as its mainstay, or to validate otherwise objectionable practices through little more than base tokenism. While I was as interested as any student in playing history detective in the dirt, my objective in entering the discipline was to learn how its mechanisms and theories had been used to disempower and disenfranchise Native peoples of their cultural and material heritage and voices. By the time I arrived in Binghamton University I had amassed experience in archaeological methodologies through field schools and CRM (Cultural Resource Management) work, and was ready

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to delve deeply into the theories and frameworks through which archaeology justified its repeated violation of Native sovereignty. Nor was I overly impressed with titles and degrees of established academics in general, having discovered during the course of my MA graduate research that, accolades notwithstanding, there were some pretty dull, simple scholars consumed with the collection of Native material culture and with perpetuating their notions of American exceptionalism. There was also an unmistakable ugliness behind the charade, with discursive wardrobe malfunctions that exposed the racist ideologies of some archaeologists, and the hurried damage control of others who had a vested interest in maintaining an unequal relationship and not letting the “other” find out what was really going on. I knew that my uncompromising stance would create difficulties in achieving an advanced degree, but I hoped I could convince enough instructors and students of the need to create a movement against this sort of modern-day manifest destiny, where all-things-Indian (bones, artifacts, stories, language, etc.) were viewed as the common property of the colonizers, and of anthropologists in particular. At the same time, however, I had no illusions of succeeding, having interviewed several Native students who had dropped out of the program or made it through others by pandering to the culture-vultures. To extoll his troops and vigilantes to massacre the exhausted and harmless Native refugees at Sand Creek, CO, Chivington once said “nits make lice” so spare no one (Kane 1999, 81). I thus opted to become the lice that infested the discipline, and resolved to stick it out until being exterminated rather than quitting. This is the space I was in when I first met Susan.

It quickly became evident to me when I entered graduate school that despite the lofty proclamations of inclusion and diversity beyond appearance alone, this was just a sales pitch; an ideology that allowed faculty and students

alike to proceed unproblematically, as if Natives didn’t really object to the disciplinary one-way gaze and appropriation of all-things-Indian. There were of course a couple of students who recognized this, but by and large most were too cowed by the prospect of being denied funding or research projects by the disciplinary gate keepers; those who had a vested interest in maintaining an insular view of Natives as dependent upon their “expertise” to understand themselves. Most students, however, toed the company line or were fence sitters who claimed their choice to “sit this one out” was not an actual position. After one heated classroom discussion where I questioned the value of the continued study of Native human remains, a graduate student poster, the likes of which are found displayed at annual archaeology / anthropology meetings, depicting the excavation of a Native skeleton appeared directly outside of my graduate office door. My vocal opposition to this led to a hastily called emergency meeting of faculty and students, whereby the predictable gaslighting and use of rhetorical fallacies of discourse were on full display as they defended their normative practice. It was an exercise in power, meant to remind me that archaeologists had complete control over Native ancestral bodies, over my body, and no dissent would change this. It was a way of telling me to remember my place. And there were other reminders as well. For instance, graduate student meetings were regularly convened in the physical / biological anthropology lab room, where bone residue dust was clearly visible on the tables, yet my requests for a more neutral location were dismissed outright as “another room is not available”. As I had made clear from the start, I don’t care what you do with your own ancestors (pose with them, play with their bones, measure their skulls, hit them like a *piñata*, etc.), but I wanted no part of this. It was all about disciplining the “other” and demonstrating the power anthropologists have over the objects of their inquiries.

I had heard rumors about another lab in the department used to study ancient remains, though this door was always locked. Fortunately, I was able to gain access to this lab, wherein I discovered frozen Yanomami blood hoarded and hidden away. The Yanomami of course had been requesting the return of their blood since the anthropologist Neel, working alongside Chagnon, had taken it from them in the 1960's (Borofski 2005). The Yanomami, like many Indigenous peoples, revere their ancestors and believe their deceased must be buried intact and whole, or else bad events will befall them. Neel told them their blood, purportedly drawn to "help" them combat disease, was poured out onto Yanomami soil, but of course this was a lie. Instead, and in one of the most macabre practices I have documented within the culture of anthropology, upon returning to the US Neel bequeathed vials of Yanomami blood to his best graduate students, who in turn brought the blood with them as newly hired faculty at universities including Binghamton (Borofski 2005). Apparently to avoid post NAGPRA controversy and shut down discourse before it could begin, they labeled the vials by haplogroup type rather than by cultural affiliation (Yanomami). This discursive "sleight of hand" ensured graduate students could continue to use it in their graduate projects for years, without having to confront the reality of blood and body part collections in the discipline. The blood was purportedly repatriated thereafter, perhaps due to the noise I made about the issue including a full-length documentary I directed called "Skeletons in Closets, Blood in Labs" (Broadrose 2011).

Susan was a steady presence throughout all of these controversies and debates, and where she didn't bark as loud as the disciplinary guard dogs, her comments were thoughtful and spot on, and I gained a great deal of respect for her cool demeanor and quiet wit. As mentioned earlier, in the time it took me to complete my course requirements I had become quite disillusioned and questioned my desire to

effect change in academia. The famous quote from Audre Lorde, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" began to resonate with me, and as such my focus shifted from eliciting change within the discipline to disrupting, provoking, and exposing their lies (Lorde 1983). Guided by my understanding and embrace of the ideology of the Situationist International and my love of punk rock music and ideology, I opted to interrupt the dehumanizing spectacle of archaeological appropriation of all-things-Indian. At this point, earning a Ph.D. in archaeology became secondary to documenting the various mechanisms archaeologists use to achieve their Indian *booty*, and to sharing with Native communities the sort of backstage discourse that has been carefully hidden from their view.

I figured I had nothing to lose and endeavored to continue my critique until I was forced out. It was clear to me that by attacking the disciplinary dogma of certain instructors and advisors I could provoke an emotional response whereby the underlying truth, hitherto hidden behind the archaeology sales pitch, would bubble forth in angry, unscripted discourse, so of course I subjected Susan to this as well. Nothing that I learned about archaeology to this point had really surprised me, having heard many horror stories from Native people about bone-licking, culture-vulture archaeologists coming to steal their ancestors' bodies, and having read every Vine Deloria Jr. book and essay he ever wrote. That is until I observed Susan's responses to my critique. Some of the other instructors had given lip service to my critique, but they never seemed to practice what they preached, and as soon as I was out of earshot resumed their role as cheerleaders for archaeology, selling their product to paying students. Susan, on the other hand, responded with thoughtful self-reflexive discourse, telling me about her own struggles with the discipline, with power, with hierarchies, and this in turn prompted me to rethink Lorde's quote. I came to realize that while I couldn't use the tools of the master to dismantle the house of

oppression, I could use the very same tools of westernized discourse to disrupt the one-way gaze through the underrated power of embarrassment, through the exposure of the tweed jacket neo-cons and armchair racists, and this in turn just might compel some aspiring students to effect change within the culture of the discipline.

Suffice to say she gave me hope, and this hope propelled me. I'm not talking about that sort of naïve feel-good hope, as I had long abandoned the notion that powerful anthropologists who made their career and fortunes studying the "other" would somehow come to see how their discipline continued to perpetuate inequality through their appropriation of all-things-Indian. Susan, however, kept stressing to me that I could do both; wage my critique AND receive a piece of paper conveying a Ph.D. degree. As I wrapped up the classroom requirements and began formulating my dissertation, there was no question in my mind that she would be the best dissertation chairperson for my project, and I was honored that she accepted. Despite this, the challenge was to create a committee of archaeologists that were willing to reflexively confront their role as academic gamekeepers, and it was clear to me from my experience with the discipline of anthropology and subdiscipline of archaeology that this would not be easy. On the surface this system gives the illusion of power by allowing students to choose experienced practitioners to evaluate their work. The game in graduate school is to attach oneself to a senior practitioner who will reward you with research and funding opportunities. Of course, the reality is that if the student works on projects that validate the senior practitioner's theory or methods, the opportunities for funding and completion of the degree increase. I mitigated this in two ways; by proposing a project that required no funding (all archival from repositories in Indian country), and by choosing Susan as the chairperson for my dissertation committee whose research projects and field work were completely different than my own.

Reinhard Bernbeck, a radical scholar who also taught at Binghamton University at the time agreed to join my committee, as did Kurt Jordan from Cornell University who had done some amazing collaborative research with the Haudenosaunee. The problem was that Susan was not the most senior on staff at the university, and as such she convinced me to include a more senior archaeologist from Binghamton as well to give my project the backing it needed in order to successfully receive a degree. At first, I was reluctant, having been at odds with this particular archaeologist's approach and attitude towards American Indians, with the view expressed that archaeological knowledge always trumped Native considerations and concerns. Additionally, I worried that my new committee member did not have the stomach for this sort of prompted self-reflection, nor the stamina for that matter. But it was the latter that gave me encouragement. This senior archaeologist had been around for a long time and was not far from retirement, so I figured I would simply write so much that my new committee member would doze off and leave much of my critique unread. Having come from a working-class background, I reckoned I could easily outwork most students and faculty alike.

Susan was instrumental in helping me navigate through this necessity without compromising. Instead of perpetuating a system of inequality through digging up artifacts and amassing more meaningless data destined to sit in boxes on dusty shelves at repositories far away from the descendants of those that crafted them, I opted to "dig" the culture of archaeology instead. Archaeologists have routinely dismissed Native views of past and present, using the tools of westernized scientific discourse to exclude the *quant* and *primitive* views of pastness, relegating such views as secondary at best. My proposed project involved reversing the gaze to determine if archaeology followed its own rules of westernized discourse, the likes of which have been used to dismiss Native ways of telling. If

not, then archaeology is simply story-telling, and the exclusion of Native involvement in the construction of their own pasts must be seen as an effort to maintain hegemony over all-things-Indian and to protect scholar's vested interest in the profitable enterprise of Indian studying. In other words, guided by Susan's thoughtful, self-reflexive mentoring, I cast doubt on Lorde's assertion and employed the tools of archaeology and rules of westernized discourse to prompt archaeology to turn its attention to itself, or as I like to refer to it: to coax the serpent to swallow its own tail.

I first put this approach to use on my required graduate exams, composed of questions compiled by my newly formed committee, by refusing to answer directly while also challenging the premises of the questions. In other words, I answered their questions with my own questions. Susan understood what I was doing, though the detractor on my committee systematically dissected my responses to both my graduate exam responses and the first chapter of my dissertation. As predicted there was a certain level of franticness to this committee member's responses, which included a full repertoire of discursive fallacies used as a thin veil for an obvious sense of disciplinary entitlement to the body of data known as American Indians. Not people, but simply data. Below are some examples to illustrate the sort of challenges that Susan helped me navigate through.

Committee member: "I do not like this term (*that archaeologists claim to "commune" with the dead*). No archaeologists claim that the past really speaks to them."

Me: *Despite your problem with this phrasing there are many examples where archaeologists do in fact claim this: "plant remains tell a story similar to what you get from animal bones and shells" Nancy White-Archaeology for Dummies 2008; "What Bones Tell Us" H. Shanks-Biblical Archaeology Review 1999; "Ancient Bones Tell Stories" Curet and Stringer 2009; "to let the skull tell its own*

story" Jennifer Hamilton 2009; "reburying the bones of Kennewick Man would forever silence the stories he could tell us of his life and times" Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban-Ethics and the profession of anthropology 2003, and so on and so on. There are MANY who claim this in writing, so I am unclear why you would state this!?! Earlier you said the suggestion that American Indians have a problem with the archaeological treatment of their dead sounded "disingenuous" to you. Here when I assert that claims of material culture and human remains speaking to archaeologists sounds "simply disingenuous" to me, you want to edit it out. Why? I understand that it might be upsetting knowing some anthropologists speak and think this way, but it is a reality and to say none do so is disingenuous on your part.

Committee member: "This is reading like a 'kiss and tell' tabloid that I find inappropriate in a dissertation."

Me: *Do ethnographers talk about the hidden, sometimes sordid details of a culture being studied? Are the internal workings of this culture of archaeology not open to outside eyes? You liken this to a tabloid as if there is not data backing it up, yet I cite mountains of data.*

Committee member: "If all knowledge is biased / relative, then ethics must be as well. So why would there be any problem?"

Me: *Because good anthropologists surely must adjust to differing socio-political contexts, understanding that their "object of study" might actually think that what they (anthros) do is unethical with regards to their ancestral remains, right?*

Committee member: "How is exploitation determined; and especially if there is no objective knowledge?"

Me: *This is an interesting discursive counter-strategy. You suggest that if there is no objective reality, then on what basis do Indians define exploitation? Politically is the answer! I never said there was no objective reality, I said archaeologists*

are overstating their ability to see an objective reality and are doing so through discursive tricks and, to borrow your term, sleight of hand spins. I show exploitation through a number of different strategies: 1) direct testimony from Indians 2) the rhetorical strategy of intensification and substitution (detailed in chapter 3). For example, would there be any objections to 150k bodies of Jews stored museums in the U.S.? Would the in-the-name-of-science argument be justification for the implied ownership of these bodies by scientists? Would this be considered exploitive? Simply substitute any ethnicity and see the absurdity here.

Committee member: "I believe this repetition you use so often is not grammatical."

Me: The repetition is called an asyndeton and by eliminating conjunctions between words, phrases, etc. a more emphatic, climactic effect is achieved. It is in fact an acceptable and grammatical syntactic structure, and I am well prepared to deal with the grammar police as needed.

Committee member: "What is achieved by emancipating Indigenous peoples from the anthropological gaze? Should there be no anthropological gaze at all? Would that insure emancipation? Or would journalists and missionaries determine how the other would be represented?"

Me: These questions assume that Indigenous peoples can't effectively represent themselves, which is blatantly paternalistic and just a continuation of the processes of colonization. You also assume that the anthropological gaze is better than the others, yet I document in this work how voyeuristic anthropologists are little more than sensationalist journalists, and faith based archaeological norms that lack supporting data (e.g., Bering Sea land bridge "theory") are not uncommon. In terms of discourse, you employ an argument from adverse consequences (scare tactics), a rhetorical and speculative fallacy, that in effect asserts that bad things will happen if Indians are released from the gaze, and that they should just accept this condition as things could get much worse.

Committee member: "Don't you use much the same approach as those you criticize – innuendo, general citations to complex arguments, etc.?"

Me: I am critiquing archaeology and archaeologists, and thus am consistently using the tools that they employ, be they trowels or rhetorical structures. Is there something wrong with that? If so then you are attempting to minimize my critique through the use of the "raising the bar" argument which I will discuss in detail in the methods chapter. That is, you are asking me to be better than other archaeologists, else my critique somehow has no meaning. Lastly your placement of this here in the text can be viewed as a red herring or strategy of misdirection (see upcoming methods chap.) where the importance and content of Benedict's (and Watkins') assertion is diluted and the subject derailed.

Committee member: "Why should we assume that conflict between archaeology and native Americans means that something is very wrong with archaeology? Deconstruct this assumption, and explain it."

Me: Let me turn this back at you. Does the fact (see Benedict and other Indigenous scholars quoted in this dissertation) that American Indians have been distrustful of archaeology for as long as archaeology has been around, imply that things are very good in archaeology? Is conflict with American Indians, from whom north American archaeologists get the majority of their cultural material, something that archaeologists think is a very good thing? This is the fallacy of the least plausible hypothesis (methods chapter), and illustrative of the power of the discipline to ignore those who question its legitimacy.

Committee member: "what is the point of deconstructing such a negative representation? The representation constitutes the critique."

Me: But that is your bias as a non-Native practitioner. What view of anthropology/archaeology am I allowed to deconstruct? It's

necessary cut through the PR representation of the discipline, and present how this all looks from the outside.

Committee member: “You present a representation of anthropology/archaeology that is devastatingly negative.”

Me: *I present the reality, regardless if it is positive or negative. Are you saying that the Indians are simply wrong about all this, or that they should not articulate this because it is devastatingly negative? Should scholars avoid the truth in lieu of sensitivities? Do I get a degree for being a cheerleader for the discipline?*

Committee member: “You simply assume that the death and mortuary ideology advocated by current activists who identify as descendants of the dead, have the right to establish what is appropriate treatment of the remains, and any alternative is unethical. You do not discuss or justify this position. I believe that the argument that anthropology must be bound by the mortuary ideology of each respective ethnicity must be made, not assumed.”

Me: *Here you identify American Indians, the majority of which do not believe the bodies of Indians should be used for anthropological purposes, as “current activists”. Is Choctaw scholar and archaeologist Joe Watkins simply a “current activist”? This ignores over a century of American Indian objections to the anthropological practice of taking bodies from graves. This is also a subtle ad hominem and used to discredit Natives. You also state that these are people “who identify as descendants of the dead”, which suggests you don’t believe there is a basis for this relatedness or that archaeologists do not think living Native people were descended from the bones they dig up. So too by referring to “current activists” and people who identify as descendants, you present a homogenous representation of American Indians, while at the same time chastising me for articulating a “monolithic” relationship between anthropology and its objects of inquiry.*

Committee member: “I find many of your representations to be biased to the degree of being ‘straw men’ created to be easily knocked down. I am concerned by your use of innuendo as well as vague and poorly documented assertions. I find unacceptable the vague and broad net you seek to cast with inclusive phrases such as ‘the likes of’. While AIM may imagine archaeologists as snickering thieves motivated by ghoulishness and greed, I find this quite inconsistent with my personal knowledge of many archaeologists and anthropologists. If you are going to assert that archaeologists exploit Indians, I think you have to make this case too. How? In what manner. The assertion does not resolve the issue.”

Me: *How many different ways do I need to document the exploitation of American Indians by anthropology? Have you actually read the chapter? I’ve detailed Boaz, Hrdlička, Kroeber, Chatters, etc., I’ve talked about the FACT that there are over 160k bodies located in various museum repositories and labs, bodies which apparently lack cultural affiliation as if they are not American Indian. Are they Euro-American bodies? I have detailed how these institutions are not in compliance with the law (NAGPRA), and will continue providing concrete examples of the way in which anthropology exploits Natives. Yet you characterize this as all just an assertion, and that groups like AIM are simply imagining that they are being exploited, and that the assertion does not resolve the issue. You acknowledge there is an issue in the last sentence, something you seem to deny in the rest of the paragraph, but that by pointing out or making assertions I am not helping matters? Lastly, you claim your personal interactions with the same archaeologists that I critique proves I am wrong, yet if I cited my own “personal interactions” with others as the basis for my interpretations you would (and have) claimed I was not being scientific. This is clearly a double standard!*

Committee member: “I know Ken Kennedy only in passing (who was the anti-spokesman in a popular film on NAGPRA), but I

accept his sincerity as a scholar standing up for knowledge in the face of repatriation legislation.”

Me: After analyzing Kennedy’s discourse, filled as it is with euphemisms and derogatory statements about “current activists”, I disagree with your assessment of him and suggest you are creating a representation of him as a “sincere scholar” who is somehow fighting the “good fight” for all of humankind against those politically driven people who “claim” to be descendants. This representation is of course at odds with his actual practice. I am curious as to how you are able to determine his sincerity if you know him “only in passing” and have not read his sense-of-entitlement nonsense?

Committee member: “The development of modern medical knowledge was achieved through illegal thefts of many bodies from European cemeteries following the Enlightenment glorification of science and challenges to religious doctrines. While science is not perfect, it took the thefts of many bodies and what were then illegal dissections/autopsies to develop basic medical understandings, like the function of the heart and other organs. Your insistence on the absolute authority of religious/ethnic ideologies of death of decedents would have prohibited the growth of medicine in the west, and if universally accepted today, would prohibit autopsies, organ donation and transplant, human anatomy classes involving dissection, and much more.”

Me: Wow! Your phrasing of these objections as religious and ethnic is quite telling. Why are these not human rights issues? In addition, you mischaracterize the position I use, as if I care one way or another what non-Native’s do with their dead. Once again, I repeat what American Indians have said all along, do whatever you want to your own, but leave ours where they lay. You assert the growth of western medicine was only possible through the theft of bodies, and by extension Indians who disagree with this are just in the way of progress. I cannot accept this. Especially when this assertion

is never actually backed up by hard data. In what ways has the anthropological theft of Native bodies from graves helped humankind? Do you believe that the medical knowledge gained through the Nazi experimentation on Jews and others was an end that justified the means? Additionally, despite claiming in your comments throughout my chapter that anthropology has been benign, that I have “created a representation” of anthropology that is not true, you seem to acknowledge this by bringing in the theft of European bodies and their use in producing western medical knowledge. That is, you are attempting to justify a practice that you claimed didn’t exist. In terms of argumentative structures, you use the fallacy of false cause, where the desire by American Indians to curb what they have consistently thought of as an extension of colonialism, that is the sense of entitlement to conquered people’s lands, graves, artifacts, stories, etc., is or would somehow have stopped the development of medical knowledge leaving the world in some pre-enlightenment sort of stage. To use your own words... I require more than just a blanket assertion for this to be believable!

Committee member: “I find this position archaic and unrealistic. A more nuanced discussion is required. Furthermore, I believe that 19th century racism was dispelled in large part by knowledge created by anthropologists. This was a motivating factor in the collection of human remains that contributed importantly in the construction of knowledge used to dispel racism. I doubt that Native Americans would have the legal rights they have today were it not for anthropologists and their studies of human variation, living and dead.”

Me: This is just speculation though, unless you have data to back it up, right? Should Indians start applauding the same anthropologists who lied to them, stole from them (concrete events) because you believe they would be much worse off without such deceptive ghoulish behavior? Amazingly, to me you suggest the collection (euphemism) of Indian bodies (a practice you questioned as actually occurring earlier), against the will of living Indians (whose

identities you have already called into question), was actually not a racist side effect of colonialism, but instead served to eliminate racism towards them!?!

Committee member: “Does that justify the theft of human remains? I cannot issue a simple *yes* or *no* affirmation, and believe that this is a complex and important issue that requires discussion. Representations that refuse to engage with any positive contributions and achievements of anthropology do not seem very useful, enlightening, or profound. They seem to be straw men arguments that avoid the hard issues.”

Me: Do you think the opposite is true as well, that to only dwell on the positives (power’s non-stop narrative about how good it is), and not to engage in the legacy of anthropology (a legacy that I will show continues), is useful, enlightening, or profound?

Committee member: “I believe that anthropologists took advantage of natives whose ideologies were not written into law of the time, to appropriate ancestral remains, and much more, for study.”

Me: But surely as an anthropologist you recognize that cultural laws/norms are often codified in ways beyond western written systems!?

Committee member: “Laws are changing, but there is room for critique and examination. But any critique of anthropology that ignores the racism against which 19th and early 20th century anthropology struggled, and that ignores the anthropological voice of relativism and multiculturalism (certainly not always successful), and other important achievements, seems to me to misrepresent the discipline, and ignore the reality in which anthropology emerged, as well as its beneficial impact on the world.”

Me: You are attempting to mandate that I serve as a cheerleader for the discipline, as it does so well

on its own, and unless I comply then I cannot wage a critique. Hmm... I guess Hitler did build an extensive road and train system as well as that popular car the Volkswagen. Oh, and the trains ran on time as well! According to this logic I must include such positives of the Nazi regime before getting to the critique.

Without Susan’s mentorship and encouragement, I simply do not believe I would have been able to effectively counter the committee member’s alarmist critiques. She emboldened me to continue to reverse the gaze, to subject such disciplinary public relations discourse to reality, to stand up to this well entrenched spokesperson and apologist for anthropologies mistreatment of Natives. This is not to say that she didn’t critique my work, but she did so in ways that helped me improve the strength of my argument, whereas the committee member clearly was trying to derail and change the course of my research. After reading my first chapter and receiving my critical response, some of which I included above, the committee member went silent as predicted. Susan mentioned to me that I might want to edit down the length of some of my chapters so that it might be publishable in book form, however I explained that my approach in dealing with disciplinary guard dogs was to wear them down with words that darken the sky like arrows. She of course understood what I meant and didn’t object again to the nearly eight hundred pages of my dissertation. I don’t know if the dissenting committee member actually read the whole work, though it seems unlikely. Over the two years of writing, the committee member did not proffer any more critiques until just two months before my scheduled defense, “*I cannot in good conscience support this dissertation, and recuse myself from your committee. The archaeologists you critique are friends and I do not believe your assessment of their works.*” This last-minute recusal must be seen for what it was, a final admonishment meant to silence me and protect the discipline from such undue scrutiny. Fortunately, Susan was right there and step-

ped in. Given the deliberate abruptness of the refusal and the obvious biases of the recused committee member, she determined that I could substitute an outside reader. Thus Jolene Rickard, a Tuscarora nation member and professor at Cornell University, filled my committee vacancy at this late hour and allowed me to successfully defend my dissertation and receive a Ph.D. in archaeology.

Ultimately, I went on to secure a post-doc fellowship at the New York Historical Society, and a tenure track teaching position at UMass Dartmouth, where I have educated thousands of student and faculty alike through hard data and case studies, about the real relationship between archaeology and American Indians. In both cases her strong letters of support allowed me to get my foot in the door. My dissenting committee member was incorrect in claiming my critique had no value, and Lorde's view

of the master's tools was simply not applicable. Indeed, I am demonstrating this by directing a collaborative archaeological field school at a site on my campus, using the tools and methods of archaeology to address research questions of interest to the Mashpee-Wampanoag, while providing a discursive space where Native and non-Natives can come together, dig, talk, and share their different experiences. I have found that most of the students that I have taught, while largely uninformed in general about Native peoples, are appalled at the treatment American Indians have received at the hands of anthropology. It is no stretch to say that I would not have been able to continue this discussion/critique/revolution without the patient guidance and friendship of Susan Pollock, and I know she will continue fighting the good fight in this next chapter in her life. Thank you for everything Susan! *Nya:wëh!*

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