Counterstories from the Reservation:
Indigenous Americans Speak Back

1. Title: Counterstories from the Reservation: Indigenous Americans Speak Back

**Abstract:** In Elizabeth Johnston Ambrose’s “Using Rhetorical Analysis and Trauma-Informed Pedagogy,” she argues for “the powerful ideological role that story telling plays” in the healing process of those who have suffered trauma. It is beneficial, she argues, to “become active participants in disrupting the narrative monopoly so long held by the oppressors” (p. 45). With that in mind, and with Aja Martinez’s (2020) *Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory* and Condon and Faison’s (2022) *Counterstories from the Writing Center* as models, this workshop will gather Indigenous people, scholars of Indigenous rhetorics, and anyone interested in counterstory methodology to participate in what will eventually become an edited collection of counterstories from the reservation that speak back to the dominant narrative told about indigenous peoples in both the academy and other professional settings.

### 2. Facilitator information:

For each facilitator (your group needs at least two), include a paragraph with the following information:

Facilitator #1

* Name: Heather N Hill
* Pronouns: She/Her
* Affiliation: Northwest Missouri State University
* Email address: Hhill@nwmissouri.edu
* Bio statement/background (What expertise do you bring to this project?):

Dr. Heather N. Hill is card-carrying citizen of the Cherokee nation with an expertise in anti-racist pedagogy and linguistic equality. She is an assistant professor and the Writing Program Administrator at Northwest Missouri State University, where she teaches courses in academic writing and linguistics. Her research interests include linguistic diversity in America and its influence on the classroom, anti-racist writing pedagogy, and approaches to teaching for transfer. Her publications have appeared in *The Writing Center Journal*, *WLN: Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, *WPA: Writing program Administration,* as well as others. Her expertise for this particular project comes from her experience as a Native American in higher education as well as her research on counterstory methodologies, sociolinguistics, and anti-racist teaching.

Facilitator #2

* Name: Kimberly Gail Wieser-Weryackwe
* Pronouns: She/her
* Affiliation: University of Oklahoma
* Email address: Kimberly.G.Wieser-1@ou.edu
* Bio statement/background (What expertise do you bring to this project?):

Dr. Kimberly Wieser-Weryackwe is a Professor of English at the University of Oklahoma as well as affiliated Native Studies and Environmental Studies faculty. Her book *Back to the Blanket: Recovered Rhetorics and Literacies in American Indian Studies* waspublished by OU Press in 2017 and is part of the Recovering Languages and Literacies of the Americas Initiative, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Dr. Wieser-Weryackwe is one of the co-authors of Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective, named one of the most important books in the field in the first decade of the 21st century by the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Dr. Wieser-Weryackwe has co-edited four publications on anti-racism in rhetoric and writing studies in the academy with Drs. Ersula Ore and Christina Cedillo–special issues of *Composition Studies* and *Present Tense* along with symposia in *College Composition and Communication* and in *Rhetoric Review.* Wieser-Weryackwe and Cedillo recently edited another special issue with Dr. Rachel Jackson of *College Composition and Communication* and have another special issue planned, this one of *constellations,* with Dr. Ana Milena Ribero. Dr. Wieser-Weryackwe serves as one of the co-chairs for American Indian Caucus for NCTE/CCCC and as a Managing Editor at *Constellations: A Cultural Rhetorics Publishing Space.* She will serve as the Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor of Rhetoric at Louisville in Spring 2024.

### 3. Primary Contact: Heather Hill, Hhill@nwmissouri.edu

### 4. Description (please include a Works Cited):

In Elizabeth Johnston Ambrose’s “Using Rhetorical Analysis and Trauma-Informed Pedagogy,” she argues for “the powerful ideological role that story telling plays” in the healing process of those who have suffered trauma. It is beneficial, she argues, to “become active participants in disrupting the narrative monopoly so long held by the oppressors” (p. 45). With that in mind, and with Aja Martinez’s (2020) *Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory* and Condon and Faison’s (2022) *Counterstories from the Writing Center* as models, this workshop intends to highlight the stories of Native Americans in order to disrupt the dominant narrative about Indigenous peoples in higher education and the workplace. The end product of this work will be an edited collection of Indigenous counterstories.

Martinez (2020) asks (and answers) the important question: “Are all marginalized narratives counterstory?” (p.17). While the answer is somewhat complex, it comes down to whether or not the purpose of the narrative is to follow the tenets of Critical Race Theory and to explicitly work towards social justice. So, in that case, the answer is no; not all marginalized stories are counterstory, because counterstory is a methodology of CRT, and has always had the aim of foregrounding the stories of people of color. The emphasis is on countering what Martinez (2014) calls the “stock story” or what others may call the “dominant narrative.” “Stock stories” according to Martinez:

feign neutrality and at all costs avoid any blame or responsibility for societal inequality. Powerful because they are often repeated until canonized or normalized, those who tell stock stories insist that their version of events is indeed reality, and any stories that counter these standardized tellings are deemed biased, self-interested, and ultimately not credible. Counterstory, then, is a method of telling stories by people whose experiences are not often told. Counterstory as methodology thus serves to expose, analyze, and challenge stock stories. (38)

Although Aja Martinez’s idea of the counterstory (2014) was specifically coming from a CRT perspective, in Wonderful Faison’s (2023) interpretation of the purpose of a counterstory, the point is to let people hear the voice of anyone typically not invited into the conversation. Therefore, in this project, we want to tell the stories of Indigenous peoples whose voices have been unheard on their subject. Will every project be a counterstory as defined by Martinez? Probably not, but we take a broader understanding of counterstory as a “talking back” to dominant narratives. In doing so, we hope to further the work on counterstory itself.

We hope to gather Indigenous people and scholars of Indigenous rhetorics to participate in what will eventually become an edited collection of counterstories from the reservation that speak back to the dominant narrative in both the academy and/or other professional settings. The intended audience for this work will be Indigenous scholars and others working in Indigenous rhetoric or counterstory methodology and for allies or those who want to be allies in academic/professional contexts.

In addition, for attendees of Watson, we are open to having people join our session that are not doing Indigenous rhetorics or writing from Indigenous perspectives. Any attendees who are interested in counterstory methodology are welcome to join our workshop, even if those projects may not end up in the collection.

Works Cited

Ambrose, E. J. (2022). Using rhetorical analysis and trauma-informed pedagogy to disrupt the

lie of “Love the way you lie.” In J.E. Marshal & C. Skibba (Eds.), *Trauma informed pedagogy: Addressing gender-based violence in the classroom* (pp. 41-62). Emerald Publishing.

Condon, F., & Faison, W. (Eds) (2022). *Counterstories from the writing center*. Utah State

University Press.

Faison, W. (2023). Counter-stories from the writing center: Intersectional theory and practice.

Conference on college composition and communication. Chicago, IL.

Martinez, A. (2014). A plea for Critical Race Theory counterstory: Stock story versus

counterstory dialogues concerning Alejandra’s “fit” in the academy. *Composition Studies*, 42(2), 33–55.

--- (2020) *Counterstory: The rhetoric and writing of Critical Race Theory*. National Council of

Teachers of English.

### 5. Annotated schedule:

DAY 1: THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2023

11:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m. EST: Introduction of participants; introduction to the project and to counterstory methodology—what are counterstories, how do we write them, and how do we use rhetorical listening to—borrowing a quote from *White Men Can’t Jump—*“hear Jimi,” to process and internalize this form of testimony that may directly contradict the paradigms through which we are accustomed to operating; work on summary/synopsis of the full project; brainstorm ideas for individual chapters or articles using counterstory methodology.

1:00 p.m. EST: Lunch with your group

2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. EST: Continue working on synopsis of the full project; continued work on chapter proposals or article ideas; sharing of resources on counterstory or Indigenous rhetoric; create annotated bibliography for project.

DAY 2: FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2023

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. EST: Breakfast & work with a partner or group of 3 to get feedback on what you have been working on or continue working on ideas. Return to the full group to share what you have been working on.

12:00 p.m. EST: Lunch break

1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. EST: Begin working on CFP for the edited collection; continue working on the annotated bibliography.

Optional social activity: If possible, screening of the Osage-informed counterstory *Killers of the Flower Moon* (*KOTFM)* and dinner at Kim’s condo or a larger space depending on attendance and the availability of the film. Osage people’s origin story is set at Indian Knoll in Paradise, Kentucky, making (*KOTFM)* an extremely appropriate counterstory for this event. If screening is not possible, we will definitely have a dinner and other social activities either at Kim’s condo or another location if needed for size.

DAY 3: SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2023

9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. EST: Breakfast & create the “deliverables”—the annotated bib, CFP, and synopsis with chapter descriptions thus far—for the showcase.

10:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. EST: Showcase of deliverables interspersed with lunch; debriefing on the collaborative process and conference

### 6. Modality:

Please indicate one preference.

1. In-person (Mar 7-9)

### 7. Number of participants:

We have no minimum. Maximum: 30.

### 8. Participant background:

We are particularly looking for Indigenous scholars or people working in Indigenous rhetorics for the edited collection, but for the purposes of this conference, we are open to anyone who is working on or who would like to learn more about counterstory methodology. Non-Native participants who would like to learn *from* Indigenous counterstories will be encouraged to explore *KOTFM*, the Indigenous experiences of Kentucky and the Watson, or the counterstories told in the workshop by BIPOC participants. This helps us all work toward reconcilation and healing.

### 9. Preparation:

No preparation is required, but if participants are interested, it might be helpful to read Aja Martinez (2020) *Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory* and/or Wonderful Faison and Frankie Condon’s *Counterstories from the Writing Center.*

### 10. Final-day deliverable:

We will present an annotated bibliography of counterstory work and applicable Indigenous rhetorics. We will also present our CFP for the edited collection and working synopsis of the book with the chapter descriptions thus far.

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### 11. How will participants get credit?

For those who wish to have a chapter in the collection, their proposals will have first priority. Also, those who help us work on the CFP or the synopsis of the book will be thanked in the acknowledgements. We are also open to adding a 3rd editor for the collection if someone gives significant contributions during the sessions and would like to continue working with us on the project.

### 12. What happens after the conference?

After the conference, we will send out the CFP and begin collecting proposals. The facilitators/editors will also begin working on the book proposal.

### 13. Working and learning environment:

This project is in direct opposition to white supremacist ideologies. Counterstory is a methodology of Critical Race Theory. We are writing from an anti-racist and inclusive perspective and one aimed at healing and reconciliation for BIPOC and our allies in the academy/professional settings.

### 14. (IN-PERSON PROPOSALS ONLY) Space and material needs:

I think the only thing we will need is wifi and a room with a projector and screen. A white board or a flip chart and markers would also be handy. We would also want movable furniture so that we can be together in a big circle, but also easily pair off or move to small groups when needed.