

# "SOMETHING ELSE"

## ON BEING INDIGENOUS AND INVISIBLE IN AMERICA

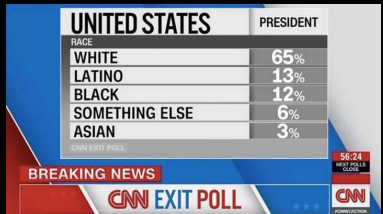
### WHAT IS INVISIBILITY?

Invisibility is one of the strongest tools working against Indigenous people in America.

Invisibility is the utter lack of or inaccurate representation of Indigenous people in fields such as legislation, media, entertainment, pop culture, education, institutional leadership and governance, census and other social demographics, economic development, and more.

Invisibility is the result of bias against Indigenous peoples and can take the form of stereotypes and mystical caricature and is perpetuated by misconception, misinformation, social ignorance, and racism.

(Klepper, 2019)



CNN Exit Poll. Presidential Election. November 2020.

"WHEN THEY DON'T  
SEE US, THEY  
DEHUMANIZE US, AND  
WE DON'T EXIST."  
CRYSTAL ECHOHAWK

27 0.4% 90%+

states make no mention of a single Native American in K-12 curriculum

(Stereotypes 1. Dennison, 2020)

or less of primetime tv and films include Native American characters

of Native American voters in democratic counties of key states flip states in favor of Biden/Harris deemed "something else" in exit poll

(High Country News, 2020)

### WHY IS INVISIBILITY PROBLEMATIC?

Key issues hurting Indigenous communities are overlooked: Indigenous peoples are adversely impacted by issues such as police brutality, domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking, and suicide

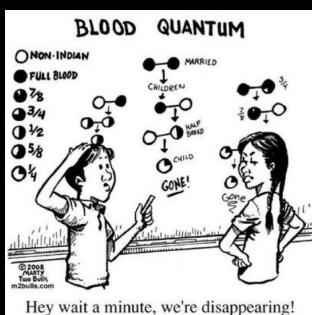
Mystical caricatures of Indigenous peoples as beings of the past, romanticized, exoticized, and as savages, steals from Indigenous peoples ability to speak for and represent themselves

Invisibility leads to erasure. Erasure of Indigenous peoples from history and education causes the general public to know little or nothing about Indigenous people, often times accepting that they no longer exist

Invisibility fuels racism against Indigenous peoples



Indigenous Peoples Day celebration. October 10, 2016. Seattle, Washington. *The Seattle Times*.



**"FUNDAMENTAL TO THIS PROCESS OF SETTLER COLONIALISM IS A PRACTICE OF DESTRUCTION. YOU HAVE TO DESTROY IN ORDER TO REPLACE."  
JEAN DENNISON**

## WHERE DOES INVISIBILITY COME FROM?

Invisibility's historical roots originate in settler colonialism

### Settler Colonialism

Settler colonialism is an attempt at genocide and cultural destruction with the intent of building space for White privilege and capitalism

### Logic of Elimination

Tools of colonialism used to eradicate Indigenous cultures

- outright genocide
- forced removal and land allotments
- blood quantum: racializing Native people with the intent to dilute "Native blood" (still legal and actively used today)
- attempted assimilation
  - outlaw Indigenous language and cultural and spiritual practices
  - boarding schools and incarceration

(Colonialisms 1. Dennison, 2020.)

## REFERENCES

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## DEFEATING INVISIBILITY

Just like assimilation, invisibility is only an attempt to erase Indigenous people. It is not successful.

- Indigenous Peoples Day is replacing and abolishing Columbus Day in cities nationwide
- Indigenous peoples are revitalizing their languages and cultural and spiritual practices
- Indigenous peoples are being elected as government officials to represent Native peoples on a national level
- tribal governments are engaging in truth and reconciliation processes with their local settler government (Dawnland, 2018).
- Indigenous peoples are repealing racist mascots across the country
- Indigenous researchers are collecting data and closing information gaps which exclude critical Indigenous representation
- Indigenous peoples are innovating economic development in renewable resources and sustainable production

# "SOMETHING ELSE"

AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES 102

INFOSHEET #1

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