

“I Know You!”: Understanding Racial Experience and Racial Practice within the Lumbee Indian Community

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Over the past three centuries, academic and public discussions of race have been divided into two distinct spheres: an understanding of race as “blood” and, alternatively, an understanding of race as that which is defined by visualization of human phenotype. In contemporary anthropological and Native American research, scholars of Native America have been mostly concerned with communities that are defined by blood. These scholars have presumed that notions of blood (or “blood quantum”) ought to structure how we (as scholars) discuss Native American existence. These scholars have, subsequently, ignored the notion that Native American peoples still live in large numbers in the U.S. South and are as enveloped in U.S. Southern racial practice and experience as both white and black peoples. In this article, through a literature review of scholarship on race and the Lumbee Indian community, and an equally important auto-ethnographic discussion of his becoming a member of the Lumbee community, the author explains racial practice and experience in the Lumbee community. He asserts that instead of being conceptualized as a “problem” (to use a term employed by anthropologist Karen Blu), the Lumbee community’s racial practice and experience provides a solution to the divide between the two racial spheres that has made it impossible to comprehend Native Americans as ongoing citizens of the U.S. South.

As a member of the Lumbee Indian community, I am aware of the multi-faceted, multi-layered nature of Lumbee Indian identity. One of the most interesting things to hear is a Lumbee person try to describe why they know (beyond any doubt) that another person, with whom they are not already familiar, is Lumbee. As many people in our community say, “I don’t know how to describe it; you just know somebody is Lum (a term that is shorthand for Lumbee)...you just know it.” When pushed to give details about why we are sure of our designation of another person as Lumbee, many of us cannot explain our actions in identifying another person as being Indian. But even without meeting a stranger, and before we know anything about them, we process a strange individual through the storehouses of our

knowledge of the Lumbee community – of our knowledge of how Lumbee Indians look – and we take action according to perceived bodily features.

Lumbee people are not just Native Americans, they are Southerners as well. With that said, they describe their being Indian not in some sense of being “full blooded” or “half blooded,” but in a more direct sense of being recognized as Indian within the Southern racial milieu. They are physically Indian in addition to being socially and spiritually Indian. This is why the context of the U.S. South is very interesting and important to include in our conversations about Native American racial practice. We must be willing to address what it means for Native Americans to have been as equally caught up in the politics, experience, and practice of race as any other persons (Black, White, etc.) in the U.S. South over the last three centuries. Examining the Lumbee Indian community adequately is impossible if we do not take into account the academic bias toward studying race in the U.S. and U.S. South in Black-White terms and the equally troubling bias in Native American studies toward “blood” or “blood quantum.” The Lumbee community’s presence as a third (or fourth) racial type in the U.S. South, and collective awareness of how we look, demand that writers on race (especially in the U.S.) reconsider the value of race as phenotype that is perceived and given importance within specific social environments. Thus, in the following sections of this article, I will introduce the reader to Lumbee voices in early 20th century anthropological research and in my own experiences. We will take a journey through previous literature of the Lumbee community, through previous literature on race, all the while using my auto-ethnography as a Lumbee Indian to help contextualize my argument. I argue that Lumbee racial practices place Lumbee people in conversation with their world as a continuously experienced and acted upon place, where critiquing what we perceive - even if it is our own bodies - is a product of our long history of being a community of people that have had to battle our invisibility in innumerable ways. My point, ultimately, is not to describe how Lumbee people look in some objective sense. Rather, I explore conversations had by Lumbee people about their physical presences, the activity of which defines the importance of race in the Lumbee community given the legacy that they represent: Native Americans living in a U.S. South that has been the epicenter of the experience and practice of racial identification for the last three or four hundred years.

Becoming Lumbee, Becoming Comfortable with Race

I grew up outside of Saint Louis, Missouri from birth to age ten. During that period, people confused me for the child of our Honduran church pastor, as a child of “Mexicans,” and otherwise. My father was stopped by police a couple times in the 1970s and 1980s. They would tell him that they were not aware that “Mexicans” were up that far into Missouri. My sister, during the heart of the First Persian Gulf “war”, in 1990, was told by a customer at a local restaurant to “go back where she came from” (we assumed to the “Middle East”). My sister was supposedly the reason her son was fighting in Kuwait.

When we moved to North Carolina a year later, and I became keenly aware of how

Lumbee people converse about how they look, I found comfort when I recognized that Lumbee people knew at least a little bit about what I went through growing up in Missouri. It is not uncommon to hear one Lumbee tell another Lumbee, “You better watch it, they will confuse you for a Mexican.” After 9/11, I was warned by a few Lumbee folks that flying out of Boston (where I attended school) would put me at risk of being misidentified as a “terrorist.” At first take, it would sound like Lumbee people recited the same hegemonic, racist talk as people in Missouri. But actually, Lumbee warnings were based in a comfortable understanding of how we perceive ourselves and how we could possibly be perceived by people outside the Lumbee community. This is a powerful juxtaposition, which verifies both anthropologist Karen Blu’s experiences in the 1960s and 1970s and the commentary of Lumbee folks who endured the anthropological inquiries of Carl Seltzer and his team of anthropologists in the 1930s – two distinct anthropological studies that have defined how contemporary scholars look at the Lumbee community. Lumbee people balance an appreciation for how we look as Lumbee people with the notion that we could be identified – or better yet, misidentified – in a world outside the Lumbee community.

When we lived in Missouri, Lumbee people visited us in Missouri. Additionally, since Saint Louis was a minor hub in the Lumbee urban migration in the mid-20th century, there were several Lumbee people who lived in Missouri whom we visited. However, I was never fully integrated into the “Lumbee world” until I moved into the heart of the Lumbee community in North Carolina. Moving to North Carolina was not important just because it was the place where Lumbee people were. It was important because Lumbee people were present in a physical form that could be touched, critiqued, and integrated into a landscape of sorts. When my parents moved us to North Carolina in the early 1990s, being around large numbers of Lumbee people who interacted by identifying with and providing commentary on the body allowed me to see race as experience and practice. For example, my sisters had been living in Robeson County for a few years before my parents and I moved there. I remembered how they interacted with me before they moved to North Carolina; but being in the Lumbee community, among many Lumbee people, on a consistent basis, had changed them. “Look, you have pretty hair,” one sister would say often after we moved. It was not just my sisters who provided remarks about my hair. When sitting down in a classroom in the Lumbee community, attending church, or joining others for a family reunion dinner, Lumbee women (usually older Lumbee women) would frequently stroke the back of my neck and state that I had “good hair.” Why did I have “good hair”? I came to the conclusion that it was good because it is Lumbee – not Black, not White. But Lumbee people were not arguing that my hair was the epitome of Lumbee hair. Rather my hair was one of the possibilities for how Lumbee hair could look and feel. There is Lumbee hair much curlier than mine, much lighter than mine, or a totally different color altogether. Likewise, Lumbee eyes come in all types of colors, and Lumbee skin comes in all types of shades of peach and brown.

I remember the first time I heard the term “eat up”. It is not uncommon to hear

one Lumbee person tell another Lumbee person something to the effect of: "Boy, you are eat up with the Chavis." (This means that one really looks like people who have the Chavis family name.) Not only did the funny dialect strike me when I first heard it, but it was interesting to see – again, on an everyday basis – how looking at and critiquing how someone looks is central within the Lumbee community to making connections and building understandings of who "we" are. Even though one person may look like a Chavis, another person may disagree and say that he or she looks like an Oxendine or a Jones (which are other examples of Lumbee family names).

These are loving, caring, and protecting practices that play a central role in facilitating relationships among Lumbee people, but which also give us the ability to engage the outside world. They are an important part of defining who is assumed to be part of the Lumbee community. For example, my wife and I have a Colombian friend whom other Lumbee people mistake for a Lumbee when she visits the Lumbee community; that is, until she speaks. Coming from Missouri, and having lived away from Robeson County many years, my speech makes many Lumbee people question my identity at least a little bit. Much like the immediacy of identification that plugged Karen Blu's Filipino friend as a possible Lumbee (Blu 2001:162), my experience as a person coming into the Lumbee community in Robeson County, North Carolina was subject to the speculation of people who were also Lumbee – not people of other races. Lumbee people identified me and incorporated me into their community, into their kin network; not only through an understanding of who I was but also through an understanding of what I was – how I looked, spoke, acted towards them, and so on. I was appreciated not just as a Lumbee person by surname or family connections, but as a Lumbee body in a historical and social context where being Indian – being Lumbee – competed with the popular images of who occupied the US South: Black and White peoples. At the same time Lumbee people were patrolling the boundaries of their community, they were also inviting new ways of seeing, hearing, and experiencing one another. Therefore, identification and appreciation of the Lumbee body was one thread – but a very important thread – in a cloth of Lumbee identity formation, reformation, and reification.

What I discovered when transplanted into the Lumbee community in North Carolina was what I had been prepared for throughout my childhood. The identity with which I had been born, having learned it through relationships that my parents had maintained when they lived outside of North Carolina, and through the way they interacted with their world in Missouri, depended on a constructive cultural positioning of the body. While most uses of the concept of "home" draw upon common land (Malkki 1992: 27), language, and cultural practices, "home" for me was also centered on the presences (or absence of presences) of certain bodies. In the Lumbee community, the inspection of my body and my whole person was supposed to unite me with those who observe me. I learned that when a Lumbee person has a good understanding of who another Lumbee person is as an entire individual (for example, with regard to history, family, how one looks, etc.), they

easily proclaim “I know you!” And if they don’t know you, but you look like a Lumbee, they ask “Do I know you?” or “Who’s your people?” Importantly however, like the notion of land in the concept of “homeland,” my body became a singular point within a large collectivity of bodies, which tied together with other elements of culture, history, and kinship mark “home.” An alternative to “homeland,” especially in what I am describing, might be “homebodies” or “homepersons.” In my experience coming into the Lumbee community, bodies of Lumbee people, along with other aspects of “Lumbee culture,” became the material through which people experienced each other and, ultimately, home.

Welcome to the Carolinas

Walking into the Alumni building at University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (the home of UNC’s anthropology department) during my first year of graduate school, I quickly became aware of the special way that my racial identity fits together with my identity as an anthropologist. As part of the presentation of ethnological research of Native Americans, in which members of the department had taken part, the archaeology staff had placed a collage on the wall that described the history and archaeology of Catawba Indian pottery. Nestled among shards of unearthened pots and diagrams of archaeological Catawba excavation sites in South Carolina were pictures of Catawba peoples from the early to middle 20th century. Immediately the faces of these people, captured softly in black-n-white photos, caught my attention. “That looks like my cousin” I said to myself. “Actually, are these pictures of Lumbee people?” I looked down at the captions beneath the photographs. This was a family whose members had the last name “Blue”. I thought again, “There are plenty of Blues in the Lumbee community.” These people, framed in this display of ethnological and archaeological research, were simultaneously being wrapped into my world and it began with a glance.

This moment has been repeated hundreds of times in my life. In the oddest places – or, rather, when I often expected it the least – I have been jarred by appearances of what I perceive to be Lumbee people. In particular, in out of the way places, my gaze has picked up the faces of people and I state to myself or another person who may be with me, “They could be Lumbee.” In this particular case in the basement of UNC’s Anthropology Department, however, the people that I saw as “my people” were situated within a very complex ethnological exhibit. As a reviewer of this exhibit, I was asked to see them as more recent craftspeople of certain pottery-making techniques that I assume date back hundreds of years. But it wasn’t the context of their being “makers of Catawba pottery” that made me aware of or interested in who these people were in the old photographs. Rather, it was their bodies that elicited interest. I recognized them as my people or as individuals who could easily be part of my community – the Lumbee Indian community. However, the context of the exhibit artificially cut off any community making abilities outside of my observation of these pictures. I wanted to get to know them myself. I would have asked them questions about their ancestors and about other ways they were possibly interlinked with the Lumbee community. I wanted

other people in my discipline and throughout UNC to understand that despite the context of anthropological science in which these people were identified, despite my being Lumbee and having no grounds to claim the craft that was identified as "Catawba," I felt a connection to these people. I looked into their eyes, and it seemed that they looked back at me as well.

The body – our perceptions of the body – has been lost in the post-civil rights discourse on race. I know anthropologists mean well to state outright that race is only an illusion, but oftentimes I think that our discussions of race have served to concurrently blind us (as scholars and everyday people) to the importance of personal interactions with one another and the bodies of one another. When I hear voices of Lumbee people from the past and discussions by Lumbee people today, I hear the conscious intertwining of two systems of thought and two worldviews. It is especially interesting when this happens while one's body is the subject. I hear Lumbee people say, "You look like a Maynor" or "You look like the Locklears". Simultaneously, they can and do say that someone has "that Chavis temper" or that someone "favors the Hammonds". In these statements, if one is the subject, their whole person is taken up and carefully placed in the constellation of Lumbee kin and community. One wants to be able to answer the question: "Who's your people?" Answering this question not only speaks to your lineage and family, but to your being the continuation of a community that has existed in the shadow of more commonly held beliefs about how people have created and maintained relationships in the US South. Lumbee people have maintained their community through a constant conversation about who, what, where, and how they are. Our ways of thinking about ourselves are not themselves unchanging; what does not change is the fact that we look at, think about, and discuss who we are. It is important that this insistence on discussing and critiquing ourselves not be seen as escapism of some sort, but as indicative of the continual interaction between two worlds that have existed in conversation for many generations: one that circulated around Native American community and the other that is often categorized as the U.S. South, with its racial categories, ways of living as a member of a particular racial group, and so on.

The Separate Spheres of Race: Literature on Race and Native America

The prolific number of ethnographies that deal with race in the United States, while extremely valuable, have yet to identify the value of racial identification or acknowledge the troubling silence about racial visualization, discussion of which is at best residual in many of these ethnographies. Even when ethnographies of race approach racial identification as it exists in everyday experiences, race is very often framed as rooted in the relationship between Black and White identities and as overshadowed by what really matters (e.g., class, economics, education, etc.). These ethnographic descriptions become grand pictures of lived experience that depict race as a straw-man of sorts that impedes our understandings of what is really important in the lives of peoples of particular racial groupings. Thus, if we talk about the legacy of racial experience and practice, it is often coded in terms that

are themselves reminiscent of the narrative of Black and White social relations in US history, and it is depicted as a non-nuclear element within lived experiences.

Thinking specifically about well received ethnographies of race in the United States (e.g. Steven Gregory 1998, Elijah Anderson 1990, John Hartigan 1999, Phillipe Bourgois 2002), racial experience is strongly situated within the economics of subalternity and in a stereotypical urban environment that, to say the least, is fetishistically framed by a reliance on a Black-White binary. This binary is only challenged by substituting the “Black” end of this binary with other ambiguous terms such as “people of color” and the “White” end of this binary by moving “people of color” into the American middle class. In practically all of these ethnographies, race is one component in a stew of American inequality. And oftentimes, because race is socially constructed, it is depicted as an obscurity over our understandings of much more complex issues of social inequality. With that said, little anthropological attention has been given to the racial experiences (much less the racial practices) of non-Black and non-White peoples. Meanwhile, since Boas’ students, little interest has been paid to racial experience in the U.S. South outside of, again, urban areas (e.g., New Orleans with its eclectic mix of identity formations and the stigma of post-Hurricane Katrina).

Despite a plethora of very valuable ethnographies of Native America and “race”, race is mostly conceptualized in these works in terms of “blood” or “blood quantum.” Various contemporary ethnographies of Native America include the politics of race in their analyses of particular Native American communities (e.g., Cattellino 2008, Lambert 2007, Sturm 2002). Race as an issue of blood quantum informs larger arguments about Native American “nation building” or “Indian resurgence,” while the concept of blood is also used to speak about the scope of interactions between Indian people within their private lives in particular Indian communities. One of the shortcomings of a few of these ethnographies of Native America, especially Circe Sturm’s *Blood Politics* (2002) and Valerie Lambert’s *Choctaw Nation* (2007), is a lack of connectivity between Indian people in their studied communities and the society from which they came in the U.S. South. If anything, only historians have tackled these connections¹, and the history of these communities as “Southern” communities has had little bearing on more contemporary ethnographic issues such as “sovereignty” and tribal-national politics. Again, while these ethnographies of sovereignty and Native American nation building are valuable for explaining the politics of more contemporary Native American “nations,” there is great need for conceptualizations of Native American identity within paradigms that acknowledge how race as visualized element and race as “blood” are equally worthy landscapes of inquiry in Native American studies and the anthropology of Native America.

The horrible situation regarding Lumbee Indian federal recognition, and the equally troubling tension between the Cherokee Nation and the Freedmen, makes one wonder if we will ever be able to see Native Americans in any paradigm outside

1 Alternatively, a great example of this connection between “removed” Native American communities and the US South is Claudio Saunt’s *Black, White, and Indian* (2005), a book that provides an explicit description of Southern loyalties and social patterns that remained present in the Creek Indian community even after removal.

the casino-establishing, nation-building, federal-recognition seeking entities that they have been described to be. The Lumbee tribal government is currently working with legal advocates to obtain "federal recognition" for the Lumbee community. This process of gaining an official stamp of approval from the U.S. Federal Government that Lumbee people are Indian is in no way a new endeavor. In the early 20th century, anthropologists were asked to come to North Carolina to research the legitimacy of Lumbee claims of being Indian (which I will describe in more detail a bit later). However, the presence of these efforts, in my opinion as a member of the community, has never been the "end all be all" of Lumbee identity. We as Lumbee people have in various ways learned to deal with the grand notion of Indianess that we have never squarely fit into. For the last century or so, we have had people approaching us and asking "are you full blooded?" – a question that requires one to at least somewhat understand the early U.S. eugenics mindset from which this question is always asked. Indeed, it is nice to hear Lumbee people critique these sorts of interactions. I have often heard other Lumbee people say, "I bet you they think we don't know where we come from." Or, alternatively, I've heard my Lumbee friends say, "Yes, we are part of the Lost Colony." Either way, Lumbee people often assert that if they "mixed" with people non-Indigenous to the United States, that presence of non-Indian blood has been only mildly significant. As a Lumbee acquaintance states with a great smile, "You know we are more Indian than most of those federally recognized folks. Look at us." Based on conversations I have had with other Lumbee people over my life, I can confidently say that our minds are always at a proverbial crossroads when asked to explain the authenticity of Indian identity: should we assert our "bloodedness" or should we assert what is more commonsense for us - that is, that we look Indian? Bloodedness seems absurd in a way. How is anyone full blooded? What does that mean? But all Indian people have been given an ultimatum of sorts: assert your blood quantum or don't exist as Indian. It's a heart breaking and insulting ultimatum.

Furthermore, thinking mostly about Jessica Cattelino's notion of the interaction between Native American communities and "settler states" that is at the crux of her book titled *High Stakes* (2008), contemporary ethnography of Native American community has focused on the notion of the interface of Native America and European colonization as being the struggle over sovereignty and the governmental and political activities that follow that struggle. However, it is apparent to me that Native American people, especially in the U.S. South, have also (if not alternatively) inherited a position in the politics of identity that is evidenced in racial practice. What has not been made entirely clear in previous ethnographies of Native Americans and race is that Native Americans maintained currency in race as it has been practiced in the U.S. South. But the evidence of that currency has been slighted by many historical and ethnographical narratives, their often privileging Native American identity as dependent primarily on a relationship between the Native American individual and the Native American tribal nation, the language of which is "blood" or "blood quantum." Race as "blood" becomes almost perfectly synonymous with the notion of community maintenance and "nation."

To prove you are Indian - to assert your Indian identity - you don't state that you look Indian. You state that you have a certain percentage of Indian blood. As a tandem, Native American "nation" and Native American "blood" become an almost insurmountable paradigm in the study of Native Americans, in very pointed ways excluding the terrain of race as visualized phenotype from conversations about the making and maintenance of Native American community. Even where the racial dynamics and racism within Native American "nations" has been critiqued (e.g. Jones 2001), they have been described in such a way that the "national" character of Indian identity has been maintained and often overshadows descriptions of racial experience and practice within Native American communities as these experiences and practices involve visualization of Native American physical features.²

In her discussion of the phenomenology of race, philosopher Linda Alcoff suggests our use of "contextualism" as a framework for discussing race. In the "objectivist" form of this framework, scholars of race would objectively define race by invoking grand and totalizing narratives of historical experience, cultural traditions, or processes of colonization. In the "subjectivist" form of this framework, they would describe race by "beginning from lived experiences of racialization [to] reveal how race is constitutive of bodily experience, subjectivity, judgment, and epistemic relationships" (Alcoff 2006: 183). She states that "such subjective descriptions . . . show how one's designated race is a constitutive element of fundamental, everyday embodied existence, psychic life, and social interaction" (ibid.). Agreeing with how Frantz Fanon (1967) and Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) insist that race has to be discussed in both subjective and objective terms, Alcoff observes that "subjectivist approaches have . . . been underdeveloped in the recent theoretical literature, even while there are many first-person memoirs and rich description of racial experience that might be tapped for theoretical analysis" (2006: 184). Alcoff's reasoning for this lack of "subjectivist" analysis is her identification of a general fear among the scholars that "phenomenological description will naturalize or fetishize racial experiences" (2006: 184). Following the logic of Merleau-Ponty, she explains how these experiences are often described in the visibility of the racial body:

Visual differences are "real" differences, and by that very fact they are especially valuable for the naturalizing ideologies of racism. But there is no perception of the visible that is not already imbued with value. And the body itself is a dynamic material domain, not just because it can be "seen" differently, but because the materiality of the body itself is . . . volatile.
(185)

Alcoff, in a discussion of "racial seeing", explains the significance of a "volatile"

2 Rhett Jones, for example, describes the Native American nation as a hiding place away from American racism. While this at first appears enlightening, at closer look it reaffirms the notion that Native American racial experiences exist on Native American territory/reservations, implying a strong correlation between Native American identity (and Native American racial experience) and an existence in communities separate from the rest of the United States.

body vis-à-vis human perception:

[P]erception has the added attribute of being, as Merleau-Ponty said, "not presumed true, but defined as access to truth" [From] Foucault we have developed a sensibility to the disciplining potential of visibility

[The] look of the other is a source of domination. (197-198)

It is important to note, however, the privileged place of the "look of the other" over the look of self or members of one's community in scholarship on race. It appears that many scholars, even those that have genuine interests in understanding the function of racial practice within particular communities, understand race in "etic" terms. By "etic" I mean that views of race – and specifically of the "pedigree" of the people being studied – were looked at from an outside, "objective," scientific vantage point. Outside of outstanding examples like Zora Neale Hurston's *Mules and Men* (1935/1990) and John Jackson's *Harlem World* (2004), "emic" views of race – where the body was/is identified in a certain way within a community – are not found in anthropological literature. Subsequently, the views of race from the "outside", "objective" vantage point are often privileged as the only gaze that can "access" the "truth" about someone or some peoples. Despite Hurston's warning in the introduction to *Mules and Men*³, a continued disparity in emic versus etic perspectives sustains the framework of race as experience vis-à-vis some obvious outside forces instead of as practice within community specific contexts. The presence of racial interaction within a local community setting does not necessarily mean that those who practice race within their local communities are being necessarily affected by hegemonic realities that have invaded their communities. Rather, the practice of race, like the experience of race, can be and oftentimes is grounded in local understandings that inform how one interacts with others racially. It is indeed difficult for someone to see these realities without intimate grounding in local worldviews.

Making sense of racial encounters within the Lumbee community, importantly, requires our not attributing them entirely to a Lumbee individual's reliance on or internalization of US Southern racial meanings. As Karen Blu points out quite succinctly in her ethnography of the Lumbee community titled *The Lumbee Problem* (2001), the Lumbee Indian community has, over generations, learned to operate within the US South. This does not mean that they have necessarily come to believe or "buy into" U.S. Southern rhetoric and ideals. Much of this rhetoric has been written in terms of racial classifications which have come to be major points of reference in the U.S. South and, consequently, have guaranteed blindness to the large numbers of Native Americans there. As Blu points out often in her text, racial classification often eliminated categories for Lumbee ancestors. She points to a long history of Lumbee ancestors dealing with their invisibility vis-à-vis these

3 "You see we are a polite people and we do not say to our questioner, "Get out of here!" We smile and tell him or her something that satisfies the white person because, knowing so little about us, he doesn't know what he is missing. The Indian resists curiosity by a stony silence. The Negro offers a feather bed resistance, that is, we let the probe enter, but it never comes out. It gets smothered under a lot of laughter and pleasantries" (1990: 2-3).

racial categories, and her descriptions point to the fact that the tension created by lack of Indian social and racial categories created other tensions, often on the individual level:

Tensions over the classification of the people later recognized as Indians rose rapidly after the North Carolina constitutional revisions in 1835, which cancelled many of the rights of free persons of color. Before 1835, Lumbee ancestors had been able to vote and a few had served in the War of 1812...As a result of a series of restrictive laws termed the "Free Negro Code" by John Hope Franklin (1943), which began in 1826 and continued to be modified into the 1850s, the Indians, who had been classified as "free persons of color" at least since the 1790 census, lost their right to vote, legally bear arms without a license, or serve in the militia...They had lost their right to testify against Whites in court in 1777, when the General Assembly of North Carolina forbade "Negroes, Indians, Mulattoes, and all Persons of Mixed Blood" to be witnesses except against each other. (2001: 45-46)

One can imagine the implications of these mandates. Not only did the "mixed" person not have a right to testify against the "White" person, but the authority of the "mixed" individual could only be turned against people who were like them. This, most definitely, festered in certain ways within Native American communities, turning Indians against themselves in certain instances. According to stories from elders around the Lumbee community who lived in the early 20th century, there was a sense that you were just as suspect of what another Indian would do to you (whether positive or negative in context) as you were suspect about what a White or Black person would do. However, importantly, these mandates may have also served to heighten intra-community awareness of "who we are" as Indian people, providing the social conditioning for preserving what before had been a very normative coming together of Native American communities to survive U.S. colonialism. So not only did Lumbee people suffer U.S. Southern racial policies together, they were partners in building identities and community structure in awareness of (but not in complete subjugation to) U.S. Southern standards of racial classification. This meant practicing racialization within the Indian community to reaffirm community members' dual identities as Indians and as Southerners.

Anthropologist Robert K. Thomas points out in his early 1970s unpublished manuscript on the Lumbee people that the "cohesion" he witnessed in the Lumbee community was identical to the "cohesion" that has helped aggregate remnant Indian groups into other new or transformed Indian communities. His argument is quite clear:

Now, Indian tribes simply do not disappear because they disappear from the records. A number of things happen to such tribes. Indian tribes are not divisions of some larger unit. Each Indian tribe is a small national group in and of itself and it is very hard to do away with whole national groups. National groups tend to persist if possible. Now, it is true that sometimes American Indian "tribes" (national groups) have disappeared through

being exterminated by military hostilities and disease. Usually, however, these factors have simply cut down the population of an American Indian tribe without exterminating them completely, although in some instances there has been extermination. On rare occasions an Indian tribe will be assimilated by the white or black population that surrounds them. This has been true of a very few Indian groups. Generally, what happens is that tribes merge together to form larger groups if they are small, and in dire circumstances sometimes they will be assimilated by larger Indian groups. The Six Nations are an example of a large confederation of tribes which incorporated quite a few small eastern Indian tribes. The Catawba are another example of such a process. . . . Indian tribes usually prefer a general peoplehood, by merging with other tribes, over against losing their local peoplehood by assimilating into white or black society. (Thomas n.d.: 40)

Thomas's opinion, however, as witnessed in the research from earlier in the 20th century, was not the norm even in Thomas's own era. There was (and, often, still is) a very strong consensus that a lack of certain information about a Native American community's background is detrimental to their claims of being Indian peoples. The "mixing" that had taken place in the U.S. South during US colonization of the Eastern United States made this lack of information synonymous with an alienation from being authentically Indian. At a later point in his text, Thomas provides his opinion on how scholars and the public have treated Lumbee people and Lumbee history:

I must put in a personal reaction here. I am getting very weary of snide remarks about the Lumbee's "Indianess." The Comanches, some Pueblos, and some Mission tribes in California are largely Mexican by blood. Some Chippewa communities are primarily French in blood and very French culturally, as well. I don't hear any snickers directed at these groups. Nor do I hear anyone say that the people in a large section of northern Italy are not "real" Italians because they are largely descendants of invading German tribes. I find American racism boring as well as annoying. (ibid.:52)

Thomas acknowledges that peoples from Europe, Africa, and the indigenous United States did interact and, most probably, "mixed". However, what Thomas gives us, most importantly, is a larger national and global map upon which to place this "mixing." Are people, who some say are "mixed," bound to this status?

Thomas's argument in his text is a firm no. His argument points to the notion that any notion of "mixing," if anything, should be deemed socially constructed. Thomas's acknowledgement that Indian people must first and foremost be seen for how they have "mixed" and "interacted" as Indians speaks to a need to consider how even if Indian people did interact with and "mix" with non-Indian peoples, the principles of their Indian community and kinship networks determined what ultimately became of their family structures, community structures, and the realities of everyday life. Indeed, Thomas leaves room for us to understand that, even in the active movement of internationally derived groups of people and the

hierarchy of race that became important in US colonial context to categorize and control peoples, Native American peoples within Native American communities might have grown accustomed to acknowledging these categories even as they lived within traditionally Native American social patterns. It was not racial categorization that empowered Lumbee ancestors. Categories of race in the South did not acknowledge Indigenous peoples. However, Indian people were privy to the practice of race, which within the community created an ability for Lumbee people to know themselves (in the context of the U.S. South) and tell others who they were.

Circe Sturm, in her groundbreaking ethnography about the Cherokee of Oklahoma titled *Blood Politics* (2002), is interested in how Native American communities may have hybridized racial understandings from the colonial environment around their communities with notions of kinship and community that are still very present and have been passed down through generations of Native American families. Her observation of visual-racial themes in the Cherokee community becomes a major point in her analysis:

Blood can stand for shared biological, racial, or cultural substance, as both Cherokee national identity and individual social identities are manipulated along a race-culture continuum. Recall, for instance, the full-blood Cherokee medicine man with green eyes, or how Cherokee citizens have elected national leaders with increasingly greater degrees of Cherokee blood as the tribal population has become less blooded since the mid-1970s. This trend toward more blooded political, social, and religious leaders shows how Cherokees have internalized various blood hegemonies and how they have become increasingly concerned with blood, both literally and metaphorically, in everyday life. More importantly, Cherokee blood has come to represent the national whole, symbolizing the biological, racial and cultural substance that Cherokees use to define the sociopolitical boundaries of their community. (142)

Sturm's take on race in the Cherokee community of Oklahoma makes it at once externally and internally important. Sturm argues that Cherokee people live with race as it exists within their worldviews as Cherokee people:

The larger point is that Cherokees have neither completely internalized nor resisted the powerful racial ideologies to which they are subject and to which they subject others. Instead, they simultaneously reproduce, reinterpret, and resist dominant race-thinking, as race is mediated through their own local and national categories of meaning. (205)

Sturm's thinking about these ideas is very important if we are to garner an appreciation of the hybridization of local, regional, and intimate Indian understandings of community with the ideas of racial identification that have defined the national-racial contexts that have surrounded Native American communities. But I would add that Sturm studied people who saw themselves in that "green-eyed" medicine man and fairer skinned tribal leaders. As scholars of race, we should be careful not to make assumptions about what does and does not

belong to a community or to reify certain racial ideals as not being "indigenous" to a particular community. Sturm seems to allude to the fact that, when all was said, "green eyes" were not Indian and were only negotiated to be "Cherokee." My point is not to make an argument about how Indian people look, but to point out that even in an argument where Sturm treads lightly on issues of hegemony and community negotiation of racial ideas, she misses the fact that Indian people – in the here and now – appreciate certain racial identifiers as part of their community and that these do not necessarily fit the stereotypes (e.g., those shown through the media) of "what an Indian looks like."

Following sociologist Eva Garroutte's study titled *Real Indian* (2003), there is not a space to talk about Native American identity or what a Native American "looks like" outside of cultural wardrobe or a debate over "Indian blood." According to Garroutte, even in the U.S. South, an individual was ultimately subject to the rules of blood quantum, placing the visual inspection of a person at the periphery of racial understandings:

In the movie *Raintree Country*, Liz Taylor's character articulates [the "one drop" rule] in crassly explicit terms. The worst thing that can happen to a person, she draws, is "havin' a little Negra blood in ya' – just one little teensy drop and the person's all Negra." That the one-drop method of racial classification is fundamentally a matter of biological inheritance (rather than law, culture, or even self-identification) is clear from the 1948 Mississippi court case of a young man named Davis Knight. Knight, accused of violating anti-miscegenation statutes, argued that he was quite unaware that he possessed any black ancestry, which in any case amounted to less than one-sixteenth. The courts convicted him anyway and sentenced him to five years in jail. "Blood" was "blood", whether anyone, including the accused himself, was aware of it or not. (44 – 46)

Garroutte follows this case with descriptions of a couple other Southern, racial cases, one of which is about a Mrs. Phipps's who discovers that though she doesn't look black, she has enough "drops of Black blood" to be designated black. However, it is at this point which Garroutte carefully distinguishes these stories of Southern racial classification based on blood, which leave room for at least modest protest dependent on the way one looks in the South, from the narrative of Indian race and blood:

Mrs. Phippe's story in and of itself is an interesting study of the way Americans link ideas about racial identity and biology. But it becomes far more intriguing when we contrast the logic underlying the definition identity in operation there *with the one that applies to Indian identity...* Far from being held to a one-drop rule, Indians are generally required – both by law and by popular opinion – to establish rather high blood quanta in order for their claims to racial identity to be accepted as meaningful, the individual's own opinion notwithstanding. Although people must have only the slightest trace of "black blood" to be forced into the category "African American," modern American Indians must

(formally produce strong evidence of often) rather substantial amounts of “Indian blood” to be allowed entry into the corresponding racial category. The regnant biological definitions applied to Indians are simply quite different than those that have applied (and continue to apply) to blacks. Modern Americans, as Native American Studies professor Jack Forbes (Powhatan/Lenape/Saponi) puts the matter, “are always finding ‘blacks’ (even if they look rather un-African), and...are always losing ‘Indians.’” (47-48; emphasis added)

As Garrouette demonstrates, even when we get into the nitty gritty of what blood and blood quantum means regarding identity with any racial group, there remains an inability to address the separate spheres within which many scholars talk when discussing race: one of these is Southern and Black/White, and the other is Indian and reserved somewhere away from the U.S. South. Even though Garrouette is explaining that issues of blood and blood quantum have operated in the South, she maintains a sense that they were always at least balanced by the idea that Southerners visually identified one another. Garrouette takes this one step further and asserts that the “biological definitions applied to Indians are simply quite different than those that have applied...to blacks.” But taking the Lumbee community into account, along with many other Indian communities around the U.S. South including the various Native communities around North Carolina, one cannot believe the assertion that Native Americans exist in different racial rule sets than Blacks and Whites. And, in a society defined in various ways as only Black and White over the past three centuries, one must assume that Native Americans in the South dealt with their place in this visually oriented social order in particular ways that have escaped popular scholarship.

Lumbee people, as I have argued, see one another and are seen by one another – so much so that we are constantly critiquing the “other” in expectation that they may be one of us. Moreover, while “race as blood” remains at the forefront of government policy, academic literature, and popular culture, it does not address the ideologies (to use Sturm’s language) that continue to inform how Native American people live with one another. (For example, whereas the Cherokee Nation and other “removed” Indian tribes are indeed involved in “blood politics,” they also share a long legacy of commitment to U.S. Southern racial practices and ideas.) In a landscape where an “Indian” body is an invisible body – where describing individuals as Indian has not been made an official practice in official governmental policies, for example – how do Indian people interact with our bodies? Describing these practices escapes the notions of “blood” and “blood quantum” that we have been asked to privilege in our studies of Native Americans and race up to this point.

The Lumbee Solution

For previous scholars of the Lumbee community, it has not been easy to explain the interface between racial practice and Native American community. In the “preface” to *The Lumbee Problem* (2001), Blu describes what makes Lumbee

people intriguing for social scientific inquiry:

A look at the Lumbee as both Southerners and Native Americans shows that some common notions about the (U.S.) South, about Indians, and about what it takes to make a viable society must be altered. If Southern racial ideology appears rigid and unyielding, its workings are far more flexible and complicated than has generally been acknowledged. The evidence of the Lumbee and many other "interstitial" peoples neither Black nor White is compelling on this point. (xii)

Blu's positioning the Lumbee people as Southerners is quite significant, and it is a point that I wholeheartedly adopt. In fact, Blu's positioning of Lumbees as Southerners helps frame the entire history of Lumbee community building:

As Southerners, the Lumbee have participated in the great events of Southern history, from the Revolutionary War, when a few Indian men fought beside Whites for independence, to the Civil War and Reconstruction, during which a guerilla band led by a young Indian named Henry Berry Lowry held local Whites at bay for several years. The Indians share with Whites and Blacks the memory of ancestors' stories about these events, if not the same interpretations of them. But of all aspects of Southern experience, the most pervasive is the system of racial classification and the institutionalized segregation of races based on it. It is within this system that the Lumbee have had to work to establish their identity. The Lumbee struggle for a separate Indian identity has had to be fought in terms of racial ideology and its institutionalization. At the same time, by steadfastly refusing to accept the classification assigned them by Whites, the Indians changed the course of events in Robeson County and paved the way for the legal recognition of other "third race" groups in North Carolina. As they have responded to changing racial and economic conditions in the state, the Lumbee have managed to exert political influence far greater than their numbers alone would suggest. (5)

Blu's description of the "problem" that Lumbee people occupy (or signify) is based on her research among the Lumbee Indian community in North Carolina during the late 1960s. Along with her former husband, anthropologist Gerald Sider, Blu endeavored to study and complete an anthropological study of the Lumbee Indians. Because of the period in which she was writing, her research was also a mirror to political conversations about race, civil rights, and equality – all topics that were political and theoretical lightning rods during the mid-20th century in the US South. Blu was also fascinated with the then-current debate over where Lumbee people fit into regional and national notions of Native American identity. Her study, following theoretical trends of the time, examined Lumbee people through the lens of "ethnicity". Blu recognizes prior scholarship on the Lumbee, and pays particular attention to the importance of geographer Brewton Berry's contribution to Lumbee scholarship. Countering the normalized use of the terms "mulatto" and "mestizo" to describe the Lumbee, Blu states that:

Any term that suggests mixed-bloodedness, such as "mulatto" or "half-

breed” or “mestizo,” a term that Brewton Berry (1963) hoped would be a “neutral” term of reference, is viewed by Indians as unacceptable and insulting. It is one thing for Indians to discuss among themselves their varied ancestry, but they resent any outsider’s doing so. This is partly because, in the South, the terms “mixed-blood” and “mulatto” have usually meant a combination of Black and non-Black ancestry. Because one cannot be a little bit Black any more than a woman can be a little bit pregnant, Robeson county Indians could not be Indians by Southern standards if they were a little Black. Indians have had a long and difficult struggle to be differentiated clearly from Blacks, and they become angry at any implication that they have not succeeded. (2001: 32)

Blu’s notion of “success” in correlation with Lumbees being “differentiated clearly from Blacks” seems a testimony to the era in which she researched. At this critical theoretical juncture, Blu pushes to complicate race in support of her own theorization and the efforts made against racism throughout the United States. Both the notion of “ethnicity” and fights against racism required that the history of race and identity, as based on how an individual’s body is visualized by other individuals, be severely challenged. Thus, in subsequent sections of her text, to support a very intimate disconnection between what Blu describes as Lumbee identity and their being called anything but “Indian,” Blu states that Lumbee people describe the “physical” body as the “least reliable” element used in identifying a Lumbee person (ibid.: 162).

However, Blu’s description of interactions with Lumbee people contradicts this. During a visit from one of her friends from the Northern United States, for example, Blu states that a Lumbee person, overcome with curiosity, asked about the person’s “nationality”. After the friend replied that he was Filipino, the Lumbee person replied: “You could be one of us” (Blu 2001: 162). Blu ignores this event when she later describes the significance of “physical appearance”:

In refusing to define membership in terms of presumed biological ancestry, either in degrees of Indian “blood” or in notions of “racially” determined appearance, the Indians have rejected White criteria and set up their own. Physical appearance is obviously significant to Indians because they know that Whites evaluate them on that basis, but *Lumbees today refuse, and insofar as can be determined in the past refused, to characterize themselves as a group according to physical appearance*. They do not refer to themselves as having “red” skin . . . and straight dark hair, for example, even though early White observers described some of them in that light. (180; emphasis added)

While Blu understands how notions of “blood” and “blood quantum” did not apply to Lumbee Indians like they did within the tribal-national infrastructure, she simultaneously misses the fact that race as visualized element was very present in the mind of Lumbee people. Blu dismisses the fact that the Lumbee person who encountered her Filipino friend opened up the possibility of accepting him

as Lumbee via the doorway of physical inspection. Additionally, she reifies the importance of how she viewed racial interaction among the Lumbee while not acknowledging that she may have not been able to contextualize or identify how and for what reasons Lumbee people used physical inspection. In an earlier section of her book, when describing Lumbee "cohesiveness," Blu quotes a young Lumbee man who is trying to explain what happens between Indian people. The man states that, "if an Indian sees another Indian, they're drawn together like – to a magnet. Indians won't stay by themselves; it's in their blood not to" (*ibid.*: 147). In this context, "Indian" is equivalent to "Lumbee". This young Lumbee man brings Native American cohesion down to the level of individual encounters. The metaphor of the magnet foregrounds an ability that Lumbee people have of recognizing one another, and it opens up a critique about what identification means within the Lumbee community as opposed to outside the Lumbee community. Thus, Blu's bypassing the identification of the Filipino as possibly "one of us" becomes a very important omission. The Filipino man is inspected by a Lumbee person and is asked if he shares the same community relationships as the questioner. When this relationship is denied – when the "magnet" did not take hold – the Lumbee person is left to ponder his being wrong about the initial recognition: "You could be one of us."

Blu, in her text, effectively presents the outline of a Native American community whose members were active in their identity making. They weren't just defined by the laws, statutes, and other confining social elements that made them act in certain ways. Rather, they needed and were willing to define who they were in a very pro-active sense. Not only were Lumbee ancestors present in the US South, they were willing to define the US South and their places in it. However, what Blu is not quite able to grasp is that in moments when Lumbee people interacted with each other and looked outward from their community, they were being proactive and using race as a tool. They were willing to look out and see who "could be" one of them via their ability to identify another person as Lumbee using understandings of how "Lumbee" people look. If Blu had seen this phenomenal aspect of Lumbee community building and kinship reification, she might have discovered that what the Lumbee community exhibited was a solution for understanding the peculiar ways that Indian community existed even in a Southern landscape which, according to media and historical sources, overwhelmingly pitted Black identities and White identities against one another.

Old School Lumbees Meet Old School Anthropology

Suffice it to say, Lumbee people have been aware of this tension – between how you talk about an Indian (e.g., according to "blood", certain cultural attire, etc.) and how Lumbee people have identified themselves in terms of how we look at and associate with one another – for many generations. Carl Seltzer, a physical anthropologist from Harvard University, conducted interviews with pre-selected

groups of Lumbee in the 1930s⁴. Members of the Lumbee community chose who would be interviewed, creating a group that consisted of Lumbee men and women who appeared to represent a broad range of Lumbee families, Lumbee community settlements, and racial features. In these interviews, Seltzer pursued several modes of inquiry: he took “mug shot” style photographs of each person with a front and side view of their head; he documented a wide range of phenotypes that he placed on a complicated chart of possible physical details; and he had each individual answer a series of questions about how they personally determined and justified the blood-quantum status (for example, 1/2, 1/4, full blood, etc.) that they claimed coming into the examination. Seltzer was working under the auspices of the Indian Reorganization act of 1934, which was written to aid the distribution of US federal government funds to Indian tribes. Seltzer’s goal was to determine who was Indian in the Lumbee community. As a hired gun of sorts, Seltzer’s analysis was directed at saving the Department of Interior from responsibility to these people as Indian people. In pursuing this goal, Seltzer most likely assumed that these people in North Carolina, even when asked directly about what made them Indian, would not be able to articulate what made them live as Indians in North Carolina. And, maybe more importantly, he knew that they could not describe their identities in ways that met U.S. government standards for being “Indian”. However, within these interviews, an array of faces appear and a number of voices speak out in very unpretentious ways about how they, as Indians in the U.S. South, preserved their Indian community borders and Indian identities in the midst of the racial pressures that defined living in the U.S. South.

In his testing, Seltzer asked a standard set of questions about where one lived, who one’s siblings were, and how long one’s parents had lived. Afterward, however, Seltzer (or whoever was performing his questioning) seems to have conducted open-ended conversations with some of those being interviewed. The answers to the questions in these open-ended conversations, as I would expect, interweave the lives of these people into a very complicated fabric of Native American identity. An example of this interweaving comes from the testimony of Hugh Brayboy, a Lumbee man from Maxton, N.C., who was interviewed on June 10, 1936. He claimed to be half-Indian. In answering a series of questions, Brayboy contextualized not just his self but also the community in which he grew up:

Q: Is there anything further that you would like to say about your ancestors?

A: No. My grandmother did say that when the white men came here, they prevailed on the Indians to throw away their language and take up theirs so that they could understand them when they traded. My grandmother said that she heard her father talk the Indian language and often my grandmother would have to go and do the trading because her father wouldn’t know whether the traders were saying fifty or seventy-five cents.

4 This study is fairly well known by experts on Native American and issues of blood quantum, the U.S. government, and early 20th century anthropology. In fact, Eva Garrouette mentions it in her book *Real Indians* (2003) on pages 58-59.

Q: Did you ever hear of herb doctors or root doctors?

A: The first doctor I ever heard of coming here was Dr. McBride. We didn't use to have doctors; the only way we got medicine was to make it. Uncle Aaron Revel was an Indian doctor and was 104 years old when he died. [He] would use herbs and stayed on missions all of the time. I have seen him rubbing folks and I have seen him give medicines that he made himself. He would sing and make motions over the people.

Q: Did you ever hear of any treaties being signed by any Indian?

A: When I was a boy they elected representatives to go to The Indian Territory. Jim Oxendine and Wash Lowry were representatives. They had to go before my grandmother, Clarissa. She was to pass judgment as to whether they were full blood Indians. Jim Oxendine was turned down but Wash Lowry could be traced back to his great grandparents and could find no trace other than Indian blood in his ancestry. Accordingly he was made the tribal delegate and went to Indian territory for the purpose of finding out how to proceed in getting recognition from the Congress of the United States. He stayed there for a few years and seemed not to have learned anything of importance. Money was then sent for him to come home.

Q: Did you ever hear your grandmother say that she ever heard of any clans among your people?

A: I don't know that I did. They didn't want you to marry negroes or white folks so that we wouldn't get mixed up.

Q. What do you know of the treaty signed by Lazy Will Locklear?

A. They told us about how much land he owned. She (grandmother) said the government was to furnish Lazy Will with a water mil and the things that go with it but they never did. (Seltzer 1936, Application 22)

Brayboy speaks in hybridizing terms in response to the questions. When asked about there being any type of "herb" or "root" doctor in his life, Brayboy remembers the first doctor that he knew the questioner would recognize as a doctor. However, he also acknowledges the question that the questioner is asking, indicating the explicit presence of Indian medicine that he witnessed in his lifetime. This hybridity is also present when discussing the role of family and kinship in his worldview. When asked about clans, Brayboy simply states that his grandmother told them that to marry white or black people was not good. However, when discussing treaties being signed in the past, Brayboy recalls the time when his grandmother gave her consent for someone to visit "Indian territory," which I assume is in Oklahoma. This consent was based on, as Brayboy notes, the fact that Wash Lowry could be "traced back to his great grandparents" and Brayboy's grandmother "could find no trace other than Indian blood in his ancestry." In his memory of events, Brayboy simultaneously speaks with the system of symbols of both being Indian and being in the world that was the segregated, hierarchical Southern United States. To interact with Seltzer, Brayboy unabashedly professes his understandings of both worlds – of a friction between his senses within his Indian community and the demands of racial commonsenses that defined the US South – even when it was

his body that was going to be the determining factor as to whether his personal, family, and community narratives were judged as Indian or not.

Additionally, it is important to note that Brayboy's description of his grandmother gives us insight into the practice of visualizing the entire person within the context of the Lumbee Indian community. It is apparent that within the Lumbee community the inspection and critiquing of the fellow Lumbee was considered to be a normal and necessary process. In fact, the history of the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, a union of Indian Baptist churches around eastern North Carolina, provides some evidence that Brayboy's grandmother may have been a leader in mission trips from the Lumbee community to Indian communities outside Robeson County, North Carolina. In a recently published history of the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, Reverend Mike Cummings states that "a Domestic Mission Board and local missionary involvement led by women brought growth in Christian missions in communities beyond Robeson County. Teachers from Robeson County gained opportunity in other tribal communities outside Robeson county and new relationships formed among several tribes" (Cummings 2008: 14). This organization, which was ratified in the first decade of the 20th century, most probably influenced or was influenced by a relationship between the Lumbee community and communities outside Robeson County. More importantly, for my argument, this stated interest with missions or representation of the Lumbee community in far off lands, which was at least occasionally led by women, affirms Brayboy's description of a grandmother whose visualization of a Lumbee community member for work "out west" is indicative of visualization that is present within the Lumbee community today.

Other testimonies by members of the Lumbee community do nothing less than turn the U.S. historical narrative of Indian presence in the South on its head. Among these interviews are the testimonies of Braxton Strickland and Britton Maynor. In Strickland's discussion of his Indian identity, he is asked: "Will you state as concisely as possible your basis for claiming $\frac{3}{4}$ Indian blood?" Strickland's answers are concise, though his words, like Brayboy's before them, tie Lumbee people into a national Native American community, while threading together the substance of what it means to talk about Lumbee ancestry. His answer to the question of blood-quantum is as follows:

My father is John Strickland, living. His father was Harmon Strickland who died about 50 years ago, and his mother Armaretta Locklear Strickland who died in 1921. Harmon Strickland's father and mother were Sanday Strickland and Peggy Locklear Strickland, whose ancestors are unknown to me. The father and mother of Armaretta Locklear Strickland were William Locklear and Mary Ann Locklear. William Locklear's father was Isam Locklear and Mary Ann's father was Allen Lowry and Allen's father was James Lowry. I am not sure of the degree of Indian blood of my ancestors but my father claims $\frac{3}{4}$. The father and mother of my mother, Elvie Jones Strickland were Plez Jones who died in 1920 who was known as a full blood Indian and Elizabeth Hodge Jones, a white woman who died

a long time ago. The father of Plez Jones was Esau Jones who claimed to be a full blood and the mother Emily Bass was a mixed blood. It is claimed that Esau Jones and his brother, Alvie, came here from Oklahoma. My father's brothers were: Pettieway, Max, Aralen, Noah, and Jim Strickland. My mother had two sisters: Mandy Jones Hunt and Julia Jones Hunt; and three nieces the children of Daniel Jones, a deceased brother as follows: Clara J. Oxendine, Lizzie J Chavis, and Melinda J Lowry. I have a brother and sister as follows: Romie Strickland and Buryl Elizabeth Strickland Lowry. (Seltzer 1936, Application 33)

Maynor goes one step further in his analysis of his family's blood quantum. He offers a description of "being Lumbee" that implies less of a reliance on an understanding of blood quantum and more on a positioning of oneself and one's ancestors in encounters between powers in the emerging U.S. nation:

To the best of my knowledge my father Jordan Maynor and my mother Martha Jane (Oxendine) Maynor were full blood Indians, and considered themselves[.] I am only making claim to be $\frac{3}{4}$ or more Indian, since they may have been a lesser degree of which I have no knowledge

I have been told that my paternal great grandfather, Henry Chavis, was the son of Hugh Chavis and Clarissa Lowry, the grandson of John Chavis. . . and great grandson of Ishmael Chavis. . . . This Ishmael Chavis, my grandfather four times removed is believed to have been a tribal chieftan, who led the fighting in a last stand against white invaders. . . . John Chavis, the son of the above is thought to be the number six on the muster rolls of the war of 1812. . . . The Clarissa Lowry who married Hugh Chavis mentioned above was a daughter of James Lowry, said to be $\frac{1}{2}$ Cherokee and $\frac{1}{2}$ White. . . . His wife was Mary Trumble (Cumbo?) said to be $\frac{1}{2}$ Tuscarora and $\frac{1}{2}$ White. (Seltzer 1936, Application 4)

At relatively the same time that scholars of race in the US South were limiting the identities of Indian people in North Carolina to their tentativeness within the racial structure of the US South, and during the actual process of having their bodies stripped of all dignity for the sake of finding out the "truth" about regional Indian populations, Brayboy, Strickland and Maynor bypassed the authority of these academic voices and the critique of physical anthropological testing. In fact, as Brayboy keenly notes in the telling of his history, the "judgment" that was "passed" onto Wash Lowery by Brayboy's grandmother demonstrated the merging of the world of kinship and community that Brayboy and Strickland knew well with the conceptions of the body being an oracle of or access to some type of truth. However, when Brayboy states that his grandmother "passed judgment" on Lowry, I am persuaded that it was not entirely based on what racial features he did or did not have. From the evidence available, Brayboy's grandmother, as a significant community figure at least in her part of the Lumbee community, was responsible for looking at Lowry's character, history, personal relationships, and physical appearance as collaborative elements of Lumbee identity.

It is important to also note patterns in how Lumbee ancestors use blood

quantum fractions (i.e. “ $\frac{1}{2}$ ”, “ $\frac{3}{4}$ ”, etc.) to describe themselves. Maynor is most decisive with the use of this fraction in his ancestral descriptions, perhaps because this notion of “ $\frac{1}{2}$ blood” somehow symbolizes how Lumbee people were defining themselves vis-à-vis U.S. society and each other. Essentially, they were half-way between two worlds – not stuck in the proverbial middle, but somehow able to communicate about themselves using their own language of kinship and the tools of race that people outside the Indian community were using. In certain cases, these interviewees took it upon themselves to discuss themselves as having more blood quantum than their parents. This did not mean, as may be easily assumed, that they did not understand fractions. Rather they took the importance of blood quantum fractions as the measurement of Indian authenticity (as exercised by the anthropologists) and appropriated this measurement to describe to what degree an individual was part of the Lumbee community. Thus, an individual whose parents moved into the Lumbee community late in their lives, and who himself or herself was raised in the Lumbee community, may be $\frac{3}{4}$ Indian while both of his or her parents may be $\frac{1}{2}$ Indian. Anthropologists would have interpreted this as indicative of the lack of proper understanding of the “blood quantum” concept. However, in reading these interviews, it is quite obvious that a child saying that they are $\frac{3}{4}$ Indian and that they come from two parents who are both $\frac{1}{2}$ Indian illustrates the ways that individuals were situated vis-à-vis the Lumbee community. A child who was born in the Lumbee community of parents who had just recently moved into the Lumbee community would have been a larger degree Indian than his parents because his bond with the Lumbee community was perceived to be greater than those of his parents who did not share such a deep connection with that same community. In this example, the language of racial blood quantum was practiced by this Lumbee person to articulate interconnections within the Lumbee community that, in the end, had nothing to do with the science of racial pedigree that anthropologists were studying. But to define themselves in that moment, Lumbee people adopted the language of their interlocutors, attempting to bridge different understandings of what Indian identity means.

The record of this vivid look into the merging worlds of Lumbee people and U.S. Southern society, however, gets lost in translation. At the conclusion of his research, Seltzer published a report – well known in the contemporary Lumbee community – declaring that only twenty-two Lumbee ancestors passed the test of Indian authenticity. The official stamp of approval from authoritative voices was starting to be officially removed in the shadow of a grand narrative that had already metaphysically and socially erased Indians from a meaningful space within the U.S. South. Despite the very upfront way that Lumbee people had tied their existence to the existence of Indian people both present in the U.S. South and absent in the far-off place called “Indian Territory,” they now became fodder for social analysts who would, ultimately, characterize their Indian identity as a manipulation of the racial rules that were important throughout the US South. Yet, despite this more well known set of results that continue to haunt how a general public views the authenticity of Lumbee identity, returning to the voices of Lumbee folks in the

past reveals that they possessed an understanding of their situation between the politics of race and authenticity in Native America and those Southern racial rules that had been artificially removed (and continue to be removed) from scholars' descriptions of Native American kinship and community.

Conclusion

What if we acknowledge that the history of the U.S. South is significantly wrong regarding race? In this article I have attempted to step into the gap between the U.S. South and Native America, with my emphasis being that race as identification of human phenotype ought not to be a singularly Southern element that is distinguished from Native American race as "blood" or "blood quantum." Rather we ought to investigate their interface and how the mutual exclusion of the two notions has hidden us from the presence of Native Americans in the South and, alternatively, "Southern" racial practices in Native America. In anthropological scholarship, Native American experiences and practices have not been conceptualized within the rhetoric of Southern racial politics or the activity that is associated with the maintenance of Jim Crow and slavery before it. It has been conceptualized in such a way that removes Native Americans from the U.S. South of post – "Indian Removal." Moreover, unlike some scholars such as historian Nell Irvin Painter, I have not been willing to view economics as the blueprint for the infrastructure of race that is present today within Lumbee community contexts. Painter's notion that race is a "handy surrogate" (2002: 6) for class is, in my opinion, based on her internalization of the same Black-White binary that has haunted anthropologists writing about race. Any ambiguity surrounding the Black-White binary is articulated as a class difference.

Rather, I would argue that "class," in its Marxist sense, may actually be a surrogate for the conversations that we are not willing to have about race; conversations about race as experience, practice, medium for human experience and social survival. Biological racism has been overturned in the social sciences and we understand that there is no biological difference between "races." However, in a world that contains great migratory movements (across national, state, local, and institutional borders), racial identification must be appreciated for its function within various parts of society. Anoop Nayak asserts that "post-race" thinking reveals that the body is not a "source" of "race truth" (2006: 423). I agree, but might we have a different conversation if the body is defined as *access* to truth by members of particular communities (as Alcoff alludes to), especially in a social and political environment where people articulate what they see in a social landscape where the body is just as important as other topographical features? People that I meet continue to not understand how Lumbee people identify one another. They almost always ask, "how can you tell?" or you look "Puerto Rican" or "Mexican." But as we see often, if anyone has ever lived or worked around Lumbee people for extended periods of time, they often say we Lumbee people have a "distinct look" that they begin to understand and identify. Often times this "distinct look" comes in triplicate with our distinct behavior and our distinct dialect. But, importantly,

people who know Lumbee people recognize Lumbee people. In a Southern U.S. which has functioned within social order governed by the reading of physical, racial distinctions, and in a larger United States that has contained various communities of people who reject the large presence of Native Americans, I think it is easy to ignore the fact that Lumbee folks look at one another and are symbols to one another, as a sort of oracle of truth for each other about the past, the present, and the future. Maybe, just maybe, Lumbee people along with the large numbers of other types of Native Americans around North Carolina and around the South have interjected their vision of the past, the present, and the future by maintaining an orientation around who and what they are, based at least partially on what they look like. Yes, Lumbee Indians might “look like” people from other racial/ethnic groups or like other Native Americans, but their shared history, community, and understanding of how they look circulate into a vortex of Lumbee identity that reinforces those relationships that are summed up with one Lumbee person saying to another about a total stranger: “They look like they are from home.”

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