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WE ALL LIVE DOWNSTREAM: RELATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND FUTURITY PRAXIS ON DISPLAY IN THE ILLINOIS RIVER VALLEY

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Abstract:

This thesis examines a forty-year t-shirt printing tradition within a Choctaw family as an example of an unexpected tool for Indigenous community building and knowledge preservation. By analyzing thirty-six annual t-shirt designs associated with a place-based kinship network centered on the Illinois River, the author applies a framework of relational accountability to show how these shirts operate as wearable archives that document kinship and place-based history. The research implements methods of personal storytelling and utilizes Social Network Analysis to quantify artistic design elements. Both the qualitative (storytelling) and quantitative (Social Network Analysis) approaches to the data reveal that inner tubes and human relatives are central to the place-based kinship network. These shirts serve as mnemonic devices that resist settler-colonial structures by treating the land and water not as resources, but as vital members of a reciprocal kinship network. Ultimately, the project argues that creative, localized practices, like annual t-shirts, can effectively repair historical ruptures and sustain Indigenous identities for future generations.

Introduction

In this project, I explore how an over forty-year tradition of designing, printing, and wearing family t-shirts acts as a tool for Indigenous community building, and the preservation of place-based knowledge systems. The focus of this project is centered on my own family and how we maintain harmony within the dynamics of our collectively owned parcel of land and the Illinois River. A series of thirty-six annual t-shirts, known as "Tahlequah Shirts," are the method by which we communicate and sustain a harmonious kinship-network. Our property is located near Tahlequah, Oklahoma, from which the shirts derive their name.

We enact a reciprocal respect between human relatives, and others that include the land, water, plants, and animals within a framework of relational accountability. We interact with the environment at a mutual level, maintaining and cultivating the land for communal recreation, hunting and fishing without destruction or intrusion. Our relationships and interactions within and between our place-based kinship network can be best described through the reoccurring phrase "We All Live Downstream" found in shirt designs over time.

The shirts, with the relationships and stories that are found in their designs, are an amalgamation of contemporary events, family memories, Choctaw tradition, and personal experience. The Illinois River is the characterizing feature of the region, and it acts as the lifeline that facilitates both the physical and intangible relationships that are present within our kinship network and on display through our shirts.

In this thesis I demonstrate that Tahlequah shirts serve a multifaceted function of visual storytelling and community preservation. They act as memory pieces (Borck 2018, 100; Colwell & Fergeson 2006, 161-166), or mobile, wearable archives of our family history, inside jokes,

cultural symbols, and environmental interaction. The design, printing, wearing, and recycling of the shirts over time is categorized as a consumption continuum, or an object life biography (Borck and Mills) by archaeologists. I will braid this idea within Indigenous systems in my thesis to describe that life history in a less colonial, consumption framework and instead examine it as a more Indigenous and reciprocal one that I term *object life relationship*. They create a reciprocal loop that strengthens the kinship networks they represent and communicate. When placed in the context of historical removal and family disconnection, Tahlequah Shirts serve as a significant way to (re)build and re(member) kinship building practices in the wake of historical rupture and erasure by settler-colonial structures.

The theoretical framework within my project is rooted in Indigenous methodologies. These inform the process of personal storytelling and the implementation of methods such as Social Network Analysis, which while developed in sociology has been applied to materials as a historical archive in archaeology. The core component of this project is relational accountability, as articulated by Shawn Wilson in *Research is Ceremony* (2008). I intentionally prioritized the use of this methodology because of my own inextricable personal connection to the project.

Relational accountability, when implemented in a research project, positions the researcher as being responsible to all forms of relationships within a project, to maintain the integrity of yourself and the community of origin (Wilson 2008). I will be working *for* and *with* the respect and dignity of myself and my family throughout the collection and analysis of the visible and metaphysical data presented in our shirts. Furthermore, I will use the concept of kincentricity (ahtone 2009) to approach the artwork of the shirts, and position the artist, my uncle Steve, as a fulcrum within a relational system of animate and inanimate relatives. I categorize the

entire object life relationship of the shirts as a futurity praxis (Harjo 2019) in which our repeated creation and wearing of shirts provides a roadmap for a surviving and thriving kinship network.

With the help of relational accountability, kincentricity, and kinship building, I use a braided approach I am calling Personal and Quantitative Storytelling. I use my own personal experience and lived experience and expertise to categorize the shirts into thematic periods and communicate the visual stories that are apparent when looking at one specific shirt or the entire collection together. I then complemented my personal narrative using Social Network Analysis. With SNA I quantified visual design elements into particularistic components. I then used these components, and aggregated categories, as nodes within a series of network maps to reveal underlying connections. These maps were a visual representation of narratives that were not easily observable within the series. When I completed my data-driven analysis, the quantitative data revealed the inner tubes that we use to float the river, and human relatives, are the most central part of our Shirt stories. I explain that this emphasizes our connection to the Illinois River, reinforcing it as a primary part of our family community and vehicle for relationship creation.

In this thesis, I categorize the Tahlequah Shirt tradition as a method of settler-colonial resistance, despite their backdrop of an annual July 4th celebration, itself a very colonial jubilee. The shirts communicate a rejection of extractive and resource-based land use, and instead incorporate the land, river, and more-than-human kin into our relational accountability framework. This changes their status from commodifiable resources into relatives. The shirt tradition perpetuates itself through their continual wearing. By doing so, we facilitate a reciprocal cycle of place-making. It is my goal to promote this project as a model for other ruptured or fractured families and communities to use creative everyday methods to (re)build

kinship networks and (re)discover Indigenous identity in the face of ongoing colonial structures. Yakoke.

Background and Idea Description

Community building is an essential part of any Indigenous framework, academic or otherwise. It is a fundamental tool to help expand understanding and empathy between individuals in a research, social, or professional setting. It is apparent that power of community is a central component to a successful academic experience, especially within the Native American Studies Department here at OU. To emphasize this point, Dr. Lewis Borck encouraged community building in each of his classes through 'ice-breaker' style questions, either led by himself or facilitated by one of the graduate students. In the 2024 fall semester, Dr. Borck asked my section of Indigenous Research Methods to share a place that holds special significance to us. I immediately knew my answer: the Illinois River.

This question and the responses it garnered made me evaluate my own response, and how it connected to my identity and Indigeneity as a whole. Northeastern Oklahoma is a unique place in Indian Country. Far removed from the state's all-too-often stereotypical imagery of flat plains and covered wagons, the region is dominated by the sharp foothills of the Ozarks, the Arkansas River, and its tributaries. One such tributary, the Illinois River, runs through the Cherokee Nation's capital in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.While this area is now located within the borders of the Cherokee Nation, it was once part of traditional Caddo and Osage domains (Agnew 2010). This stretch of the Illinois River is a very special place to me. I grew up visiting the area around Tahlequah multiple times a year, particularly in the summer. My family owns a parcel of land

northeast of town, past the old Speedy's gas station sign, down an intimidating hair-pin curve, and just off the river .

Unofficially named the "Stancampiano Resort," the densely wooded land is owned collectively amongst my mother, her siblings, and my cousins whose parents have passed. Observing the complexities of such an arrangement has influenced my conflict resolution skills, in addition to informing my decisions in life. Specifically, my cousin Bubba and I have resolved to avoid the same arguments we grew up hearing our parents enact about the property, once it is under our care. This piece of land, in the foothills of the Ozark mountains, has imprinted wealth of knowledge upon me. The surrounding hills, valleys, creeks, and most importantly, the river, are imbued with lessons, patiently waiting to be instructed to an unsuspecting mind. It is the impetus for this thesis, and my words flow through it, just as it flows through me.

One of the greatest organizing forces within Choctaw tradition is harmony, or *achukma* (Akers 2004, 43). Combined with a holistic view of environment and existence within it, harmony and balance must be consistent with all aspects of both the living and unliving world (Akers 2004, 43). This harmony is based upon inherent relationships, which were formed alongside the creation of the earth. Furthermore, harmony arises via relationships because of the relational accountability between relatives (Wilson 2008). In other words, reciprocal acknowledgement and respect within relationships is what preserves *achukma*. Relationships are fundamental to the Choctaw world, and understanding the connections between people, land, and more-than-human kin is important for ensuring harmony (Akers 2004, 43).

When author Cherie Dimaline (Georgian Bay Métis) visited the University of Oklahoma in October 2025, she described how her grandmother and other elders informed her role as a storyteller. Dimaline's grandmother told her that in response to repeated forced removals, they

could only rely on their own two hands to carry what is most important, one hand for the young, and one hand for the elders (Dimaline 2025). Everything else that you need to know, "who you are, where you've been, and where you need to be," are held within stories (Dimaline 2025). Similarly, Choctaw relationships were carried through stories amidst our removal and relocation to Oklahoma. These stories inform how communities build and thrive. How families create joy and successes. How the past helps the present to create the future. And often these stories create new stories.

This is our story. This is my story.

"Tahlequah Shirts"

For forty years, my uncle, Steve McConnell, designed a t-shirt to commemorate our family's annual July 4th celebration. This is held each year on our land near the Illinois River in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Steve was an art teacher for almost forty-five years, and his prints, drawings, and pottery can be found on the walls and shelves of our family's homes, his t-shirts folded in our drawers or hanging in closets. Although he was not Indigenous himself, Steve married into our Choctaw family. The members of his kinship network, and the subjects of his art, his wife, children, grandchildren, and extended family, are Indigenous.

Prior to colonization and assimilation, Choctaw families and clans were matrilineal, based upon mothers and grandmothers' lineage (Akers 2004, 43). Men left their own families to join their wife's family community, often living in the same home or nearby (Spring 2016). Fathers served a less involved role within the family, mainly providing protection and hunting for the community (Spring 2016). The husband of your mother's sister served a similar role and was typically referred to using the same word for father – *i̲ki* (Spring 2016). Men folded into the

family through marriage were not part of the same matrilineal line, and therefore not given the same roles and responsibilities as the brothers of their wives (Howe 2013).

Steve and my own father, Joe Ward, share this designation, and a strong relationship formed between them due to this. While my father and uncles did not need to go into battle to protect our family, they served us through hunting on the Resort and other areas in Oklahoma. The meat they harvested was typically shared among the family, particularly at gatherings or holidays. The annual harvest from my own father's garden, and the daily collection of fresh eggs from our chicken coop are also shared heartily among our family, with special deliveries made to elders. Many of our homes and properties were built in part through the work of my dad (he was a carpenter before he retired) and are decorated with Steve's artwork. Additionally, Steve was always looking for deals on tools, lumber, machinery, or any number of materials or collectables that could be used among the family or at the "Resort." After being welcomed into the family, Steve and my dad are enacting a reciprocal form of care through their harvests, projects, and bargain hunting (Harjo 2019). The shirts are another example of this practice in which Steve has used his talents as an artist to bring our family together through fun and detailed t-shirts.

Dozens of shirts are printed each year and distributed to family members and friends who gathered for the annual July 4th Celebration. Gift giving and reciprocity are traditional methods to incorporate other people into the Choctaw relationship network, creating new connections within community called fictive kinship (Akers 2004, Howe 2013). It is a privilege for non-family members or friends to be invited to the property and receive a shirt. Bringing a new friend or romantic relationship to the "Resort" is a serious matter. A level of discretion and respect needed to be present before a newcomer was introduced, particularly because of Steve's longstanding teaching position within our insular Catholic-school community in Oklahoma City.

Marriages and friendships create our wide but selective fictive kinship network. The shirts act as visual displays of the size of our family and community based around the property and Illinois River.

The first shirt was screen-printed for July 4th, 1987. Originally, the t-shirts were conceived to make a little extra money to help supplement the cost increase in the electric bill from the sheer number of guests that attended. This was one of the ways that conflict over the complex communal ownership of the property was negotiated. Over time, the t-shirts took on a less utilitarian function and became a fun and entertaining way to celebrate our family and the holiday. Each shirt typically incorporated a story or family event from the past year into the design. Referred to as "Tahlequah Shirts," these designs serve as physical signposts of tradition and wearable glimpses of our family history. While appearing utilitarian or a one-time celebratory remembrance, the time-intensive process of designing and screen-printing the shirts, and their long-term retention by family members, leads me to believe that they always were meant to communicate and build community.

I argue that the creation and wearing of 'Tahlequah Shirts' serves a multifaceted function as a localized method of Indigenous community-building and knowledge creation and preservation. These shirts, depicting family histories and memories, are rooted in place based Indigenous methodologies like relational accountability (Wilson 2008), kinship (Harjo 2019), kincentricity (ahtone 2023), and storytelling (Wilson 2008). In their most basic function, these shirts are a form of visual storytelling, manifesting the stories and memories of the relatives found within their designs and those wearing them. These shirts subvert settler-colonial expectations of what it means to be Indigenous. What it means to be Choctaw.

In the 2004 book, *Indians in Unexpected Places* Philip Deloria addresses how settler colonial expectations of Native Americans are expressed in popular culture. In the introduction, he defines expectations as an extension of the power and domination that exists between Indigenous peoples and the United States (Deloria 2004). Expectations, therefore, are a means by which pop culture can produce and negotiate racism and misogyny in media (Deloria 2004). He goes on to elaborate that often media or scenarios that are "anomalous" within western sets of expectations reinforce the ideologies that inform the expectations which are being upended (Deloria 2004). However, by disrupting the standard of settler-colonial media and producing alternative images, narratives, or experiences that center Indigenous existence, categorization can be resisted and the expectations of American society become scrutinized and questioned.

In her anthology of essays, *Choctalking on Other Realities,* LeAnne Howe reflects on similar experiences through her travels across the US and abroad, where she read excerpts of her books to unapologetic colonizers in Indiana and enthralled Japanese communities alike (Howe 2013). As she travels, she asserts her identity as a Choctaw woman in unexpected places, breaking from both pre-conceived notions of what an Indian must look and act like. She subverts generalization and assimilation narratives, simply by conversating with an Israeli settler in Jerusalem, or a Japanese bus driver in San Fransico (Howe 2013). Howe travels through space and time in defiance of expectations, living a Choctaw life in every action or inaction. Through her winding and absurdist narratives, she emphasizes that our memories are woven into the fabric of life, *okchamali* (Howe 2013). In every aspect of her life, she is the living embodiment of her memories and community.

Much like Deloria and Howe's disruption of expectations, our Tahlequah shirts communicate a disconnect from settler-colonial norms. I can be certain that Andrew Jackson, or

any number of Dawes Commission agents, expected Indigenous communities like my own family to adapt and circumvent the structure imposed upon us through force. While traditional fashion and clothing have always been used to communicate Choctaw identity (Akers 2004), t-shirts can be categorized as an unexpected method of expressing Indigenous identity in a meaningful way. Shirts are a common method of portraying belonging, ideology, participation, or marketing. They are commonplace and used by many families to commemorate holidays or reunions. But these iterations, by and large, lack the intentionality and detail of designs our shirts exhibit, and are rarely created in an intentionally place-based context. Rather than a tacky faux family crest or cartoon caricatures of relatives, our shirts incorporate more-than-human-kin and place into the artwork and therefore communicate their position within our family network. Tahlequah Shirts undermine dominant expectations of Indigenous art, fashion, and community identification; while diverting from design themes most people attribute to custom family t-shirts.

To display these deeply personal shirts, I spoke with a number of relatives, including Steve, to clarify any questions that I had about the shirts and their creation. These personal conversations, not official interviews by any capacity, were conducted to clear up any confusion about specific stories found within shirts, and frankly, to make sure I did not offend Steve or anyone else by embarking on this project. Unfortunately, Steve died in his home on the Resort last spring, after hosting a group of us cousins for a rowdy weekend. It was a sudden and heartbreaking loss, but I take comfort in the fact that he was in his favorite place when his time came. I miss him tremendously, and his passing solidified my decision to catalog these shirts using an Indigenous framework; to tell our story in an Indigenous way.

Storytelling holds and transmits knowledge; instructions for creating and propagating the kinship networks that are essential to the continuation of community. Storytelling retains the ability to mend ruptured relationships with relatives, human and otherwise. Every tangible or metaphysical mode of storytelling is a manifestation of community building and reciprocity; a way of creating and maintaining relational accountability (Wilson 2008). Examples of these kinship building practices are also found within places, songs, dances, and clothes that act as intangible and tangible archives. These are integral components of Indigenous relationships within fictional, lineal, biological, cultural, and future kinship networks. These networks, built and sustained at least in part with those intangible and tangible archives, comprise relationships between human relatives and more-than-human kin. They are the vital component of Indigenous communities, and the stories contained within.

Relationships serve as the central theory that motivates how Indigenous communities move through space and time, while stories are the vessels in which relationships travel. Storytelling, like Dimaline's novels or Steve's t-shirts, is how Indigenous folks bring their community into the future. Storytelling serves as a roadmap for not only survival, but to ensure a thriving post-apocalyptic existence. Stories (re)build and strengthen community, which (re)builds and strengthens relationships, which serve as the foundation for stories, wrapping into one reciprocal and exponential cycle. This cycle is perpetuated over time through the creation, wearing, and reuse of the Tahlequah Shirts. This is similar to what Borck and Mills (2017, 30) call a consumption continuum and is essentially an object life relationship; a way to understand the cycle of production, use, laying to rest or abandonment, and second life or heritage-based recovery of material objects. Our shirts are not simply articles of clothing or pieces of art. They

are integral components that communicate who is part of our community found on and around the Illinois River.

Through this thesis, I will explore the interwoven relationships between my family and our land. Importantly, I recognize that our connection to the land is not inherently Indigenous. My mother's family is Choctaw, and we can trace our lineage to pre-removal Mississippi through my grandmother's family, the Folsoms. We are enrolled members via this. Following the Choctaw removal to Oklahoma, and the chaos of the Dawes Commission, I do not know where my relatives lived and communed with the land beyond my grandmother's hometown of Stigler, Oklahoma. My family's history, like many Indigenous families in Oklahoma, is defined in part by this historical rupture and erasure. Some things can be tracked, while others cannot. Nevertheless, Indigenous communities have carried their stories with overwhelming strength and intentional care in the wake of the colonial apocalypse. By preserving stories through oral and written traditions as well as the material archive, ranging from interpersonal conversation to social media posts to regalia, Indigenous people have been able to overcome the pervasive structures of repression and genocide, as well as the drastic impacts of removal.

Under settler-colonial structures, Indigenous communities are living in what can be categorized as a post-apocalyptic world, following centuries of genocide, disease, removal, and relocation (Topaum 2025). As a result of settler-colonial policy, kinship networks are ruptured: families are torn apart, land is commodified and urbanized, and more-than-human kin are destroyed or killed off. The family tradition of shirt making is a means of reforming and repairing the ruptures caused by removal. Just as our Choctaw ancestors adapted and rekindled their relationships within a holistic framework following relocation (Akers 2004, 65), we are creating and preserving our own kinship networks at the Stancampiano Resort. While most of

my family does not hold a heavily critical view of the United States' mythos, it is quite ironic that the quintessential holiday of the US settler-colonial empire, its birthday, is the impetus for an Indigenous family celebration.

The property joined our family when my uncle, Michael Stancampiano, became an attorney for the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah, Oklahoma and purchased a hundred-acre plot northeast of town. Once they built and moved into their new home, Michael and his wife, Cathy, graciously hosted many family members, despite an already crowded house. By 1983, they moved once again after Michael accepted a position at the Bureau of Indian Affairs office in Fairbanks, Alaska. Following this, the property changed hands amongst the family several times, and was eventually split between my mother, three of her living siblings, and my cousins whose parents have died. Ownership has grown such that there are now seven official landowners, yet most relatives influence family events and land stewardship outside the bounds of settler colonial land ownership legal frameworks.

During this early period, land use and ownership of the Illinois River valley was largely private, with over ninety percent of land-tracts fronting the riverbanks north of Lake Tenkiller owned or developed privately in 1978 (Dept. Int. 64). The land use was and still is primarily agricultural, with lowlands being plowed and maintained predominantly for livestock pasture. Additionally, recreation developments constituted approximately 2,700 acres of usage in 1978. This is very much a colonial implementation of land management.

In his 2015 book, *Roots of Our Renewal,* Clint Carroll (Cherokee) critiques dominant resource-based approaches to land use and instead advocates for the integration and implementation of relationship-based Indigenous knowledge in environmental stewardship. Instead of a commodified resource, Carroll argues that Indigenous stewards recognize the agency

and interconnectedness of the nonhuman world (Carroll 2015, Akers 2004, 43). Departing from a contemporary colonial method of management is crucial to any attempt to properly share and preserve place-based and ecological knowledge.

Forced removal, land allotment, and federal oversight continue to shape Cherokee access to land and resources, directly impacting their ability to practice traditional environmental governance and transmit related knowledge (Carroll 2015). Loss of land underpins most of the current issues faced by the Cherokee Nation and parallels the rigid structure of land ownership faced by Indigenous families. The checkerboard pattern of land allotment severely impedes the ability of tribal nations and communities across Oklahoma to access culturally significant plants, animals, and water sources (Carroll 2015). This struggle is felt by the majority of tribal nations across the state, following numerous allotment acts and decades of systemic corruption and disenfranchisement. Yet even in this violent system, Choctaw people persevered and retained their connection to the physical and spiritual worlds (Akers 2004, 65). This connection is still present today, despite the complicated circumstances of land ownership in Indian Country.

The property is now divided into thirds, which each section being overseen by essentially a household from my matrilineal family. This division of land, while not entirely unintentional, parallels much of the situation faced by tribal nations. As time goes on, and relatives pass away, the land will be further segmented and increase the likeliness of a boundary or management dispute among the family or our neighbors. Rejecting a commodified concept of land use is the first step in rejecting a contemporary, settler colonial relationship with the land and its inhabitants. Recognizing the reciprocal nature our land stewardship, especially within a family as close knit as our own, is essential to preserving the kinship networks that are on display on our shirts.

The River Float

Each year, the central event of the weekend is the river float. The Illinois River is famous within the region for its scenic waters and booming tourism economy. In Tahlequah, various companies offer rafting, canoeing, and kayaking trips launched off the western bank of the river (Agnew 2010). Like most Southeastern tribes, Choctaw traditionally lived near rivers that were essential for travel and communication, in addition to basic survival necessities (Akers 2004, 57). Nowadays, while the river is no longer necessary for our physical or economic survival, it is still important for our family relationships and community.

For many of us, our yearly schedules are centered around “the Resort.” Trips are often planned around major summer holidays and winter deer camp, with the occasional spring break, birthdays, and bachelor or bachelorette parties. Late spring and early summer typically provide the best opportunites to enjoy the river. A shared easement, loacted on the east bank of the river, was included in the original purchase of the property. A number of landowners in the area were deeded this small strip between the road and riverbank to use as a shared, semi-private access. This means we not only have a responsibility to ourselves and the river to keep it safe and clean, but also to those who share the easement and use the river publicly (Wilson 2008). This can be categorized by some as a civic responsibility (Lees and Bang 2023). Considerations that inform how we interact with space include examining the responsibilities we have to one another, other-than-human life, and the land and water which we depend on (Lees and Bang 2023). For example, when we collect trash and forbid bringing glass or metal to the river bank, we maintain the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, the land, the water, the animals, and the plants; the full ecosystem that we interact with.

Water has always meant more than survival for Choctaw communities, though. In the past, every morning and evening, Choctaw children would plunge into a nearby river, even in the middle of winter, then gather on the banks for stories and instruction from their elders (Akers 2004, 56). While my family's float tradition is a markedly different event than the daily river plunges that children undertook in the past, it is still indicative of our family's connection to the water. More, the t-shirts reflect this pattern of storytelling in relationship to playing within the river.

A typical river float consists of using tire inner tubes for personal floatation, rather than the canoes or kayaks used by the private rental companies in the area. Conventional devices such as those leave the participant dry and out of the water, increasing the likelihood of overheating or dehydration. Therefore, inner tubes allow for greater personal mobility in addition to a cooling effect by the water. They build, in some sense, a relationship with the river. We care for it with our community guidelines, it cares for our health and comfort. The inner tubes have an added bonus of giving our float a DIY appearance that tends to separate us from the public river users with their boats and dry skin.

Filling, transporting, and distributing the tubes at the river is a group effort. A headcount is taken, ice chests are packed, tubes are aired up and patched if needed, and all is loaded into any available truck or van. Cars are then parked at our easement and designated drivers transport floaters to one of a number of different starting points. Upon unloading the cargo, the drivers take the remaining cars back to our easement and are shuttled back by someone who has elected not to float. Depending on the drop off point, the time of year, and recent rainfall, floats can last anywhere between forty five minutes to over six hours.

When newcomers are brought along, they are welcomed into an educational experience about our family and the environment, much like shivering Choctaw children on the riverbanks of Mississippi (Akers 2004, 56). Similarly, Lees and Bang (2023) describe scenarios in which tribal educators walk with communities through their environment in order to help others notice, observe, perceive, and wonder about their surroundings (Lees and Bang 2023). Floating in an inner tube is admittedly less official or composed, however the process of educating is fairly similar. The experience, though is quite different, and by floating along with the family, an individual will learn not only of the river itself, but the meaning behind each action, event and landmark. The shirts that Steve designed to off-set electricity costs as increasing numbers of relatives and fictive kin began using the property, evoke these expereiences and memories every time they are worn. They exponentially expand the breadth of the kinship network with each new printing and with each person who wears one. They create a material archive that carries a place with us as we travel throughout Oklahoma and away from the Illinios River.

The land, river, and relatives, both human and non-human, are wrapped into one kinship network, on display through our actions and the shirts. This is building community, one that is outside the contemporary standard of resource-based land use and isolated family dynamics. Our family is continuously turning toward place-based knowledge, rooted in reciprocity, accountability, and storytelling. The shirts are tangible and visible markers of our position within a wider, holistic system of living, and are used to incorporate those outside of our family into our kinship network. Each time we decide to put on one of these shirts, both in a public or private setting, we communicate this network outward, even though the knowledge imbued within the designs is only understood by those within the kinship network. We are communicating within

the network too. Family stories are preserved and relationships are strengthened when a relative wears a shirt in the presence of another.

One might believe that the frameworks illustrated throughout this thesis are inherent to how families function within themselves and, more broadly, in society, and I would tend to agree. Building community in and of itself is not relegated to Indigenous frameworks. And there is always going to be overlap between the methods (practices) found in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. However, the simple prevalence of an activity within a predominately White, European, Protestant American psyche, does not mean that the underlying methodologies (values implemented by those practices/methods) are the same.

Despite attempts to mandate a family or community structure modeled after the colonial standard, many people, especially BIPOC or queer communities, do not adhere to this systemic rigidity. Building and expanding community beyond one house is incredibly common through history, and reveals the idyllic, isolated, suburban, ‘nuclear family’ lifestyle as an abnormality (Lees and Bang 2023). Rather than disengaging from one’s own family and place-based history, there is a reciprocal responsibility to continue the legacy and identity of yourself and your people, Indigenous or otherwise (Wilson 2008). By approaching the ideas of family history and generational land ownership from a perspective framed by Indigenous methodologies like relational accountability and community based storytelling (Harjo 2019, Wilson 2008), it becomes easier to comprehend and relay knowledge about yourself and your surroundings.

While not intentionally constructed to implement Indigenous practices, our “Tahlequah Shirts” demonstrate how Indigenous methodologies can be implemented into everyday practices, transforming simple actions into powerful vessels of knowledge. This can happen implicitly, like with our shirts, but it can also happen intentionally. I hope their example can allow other families

or communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to assert agency over their own narrative and use creative methods to preserve and transmit their history and relationships in way that is contrary to the structure of settler-colonialism.

Methodology and Methods

Before I begin, I want to first differentiate between a research methodology and research method. A methodology is what underlying values determine why research is conducted. Thus, the method is the way in which research is implemented. Within much of Native American Studies' literature, the methodologies that support the methods of research are equivalent. In other words, a methodology can act as a value that informs the implementation of a method while also being used as a method of research in and of itself (Wilson 2008). For instance, relational accountability, storytelling, kinship building, and kincentricity are implemented in this project as methodologies. They are used to help establish the shirts as a Futurity Praxis (Harjo 2019), inform their curation as Native centered art (ahtone 2009; 2022; Mithlo 2023), and guide the use of Social Network Analysis in communicating the relationships present in each and all designs. In addition, those same methodologies are used as methods of analyzing the individual and holistic themes found within our shirt series.

Relational Accountability

In an academic setting, Indigenous scholars have articulated that there is a real need for Indigenous methodologies to be present within research settings, especially those involving Indigenous communities or resources. Indigenous methodologies do not define research as simply collecting data about a topic, community, or individual. Instead, researchers must prioritize working *with* and *for* the people, places, or things involved within a research project (Tsosie et. al. 2022). This means understanding and integrating the motivations, apprehensions, and questions from the community in which research is conducted and recognizing how a

researcher's own worldview develops and informs their work and connection to the ideas or individuals they are working with (Tsosie et al. 2022).

Shawn Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree) articulates a framework of Indigenous research in his book, *Research is Ceremony,* that heavily relies on the concept of relational accountability. Accountability is an essential part of any communal or personal relationship.

Wilson describes how the methodology of a project must be relational, that is, based within a community context (Wilson 2008, 99). He defines community as a set of relationships (Wilson 2008, 99). He describes being Indigenous as inherently collective because communities are built upon interconnections and interrelationships that bind people together at the family, clan, and tribal or national level (Wilson 2008, 99). These relationships, specifically my own personal family network, do not simply shape my reality, they are my reality. Furthermore, the project must be rooted in accountability as research is put into action, demonstrating respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (Wilson 2008, 99). Because this research is community-based and a community is inherently relational, researchers are responsible to all their relationships and have an obligation to maintain respect, reciprocity, and responsibility within community.

Within Indigenous frameworks, relationality and accountability are not separate though. We are accountable in all our relationships. Relational accountability will be the main framework within which this project will collect, analyze, aggregate, and present its community and place-based data. When relational accountability is implemented as a methodology, the collection and analysis of data must be conducted with an emphasis on the importance of relationships, and cognizant of their potential impact on future relationships (Wilson 2008, 118).

Because I am researching the material history of my family and our relationship with a place and its more than human inhabitants, I recognize the need for boundaries within this project. The personal and public circumstances of researching one's own family for a graduate thesis necessitates a framework that is designed and implemented to protect and respect the data's community of origin, the researcher, and the interwoven relationships found between.

Undertaking a project centered on my own extended family network will allow more in-depth research to be conducted. Intuition and estimation can more easily be relied upon when rooted within a familiar context, because I rely on personal expertise. Rather than based solely on traditional or formal Western education, a researcher's ability to utilize intuitive logic is predicated upon personal relationships, which serve as a lifetime of practice and training, thus giving them a level of expertise that is otherwise unachievable by those unconnected to the network (Wilson 2008, 119). Therefore, I am an expert. A lifetime of practice within the very social and family networks that are displayed by the shirts will allow myself to not just more accurately convey how and why certain connections and relationships are apparent but also examine them both holistically and in individual detail.

I extend the same respect and accountability to myself as both a researcher and family member. Remaining accountable to yourself is just as important as with the community. Whether it involves being brought into a community through research, or having already been a part of it, recognizing that you are an integral part of the system will ensure that you retain your own integrity and that of the lessons that have shaped your identity (Wilson 2008, 123). Extending the same level of respect toward yourself strengthens the reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the community of research by exemplifying respect and accountability at its most intimate level.

This intuition and reciprocal relationships enable me as the researcher to infer specific relationships and connects, and what information is imbued within them. Data and knowledge are not only based upon observable empirical data, such as a network or meaning map citation, but also non-empirical data like intuitive knowledge (Wilson 2008, 111). For Indigenous scholars, extra-sensory experiences like spiritual or personal events also form part of the research process (Wilson 2008, 111). This is described as "putting form to a bundle of relationships that were previously invisible" and positions it as a means of drawing knowledge and inspiration from non-sensory experiences (Wilson 2008, 111).

The goal of this research is to illustrate the form of relationships with people and place that gave rise to the shirts but also were created and sustained by the shirts. It is also to put form to the knowledge found within the details of each design, and the story depicted by the series altogether. I approached the specific components of each shirt by using reciprocal storytelling and Indigenous curatorial strategies and used network maps to create a visual map of the holistic themes present in the story of the shirts over time. By intentionally including an analysis of specific pieces and holistic interpretation of all thirty-six shirts, I recognize and elevate their role as a foundational and instructional part of my family's own identity and place within Indian Country.

Without understanding the context behind these shirts, they are simply another piece of clothing that was made for a Fourth of July party or family reunion. However, ideas are formed in specific contexts, thus knowledge of the reader or listener's own context is necessary in order to transmit the process of the idea as well as its content (Wilson 2008, 123). When writing down ideas, they become fixed objects that lose their ability to grow and change, increasing the likelihood of being taken out of the context of both time and relationship (Wilson 2008, 123).

Therefore, intimate context of the shirts and their designs is necessary to effectively communicate the family's connection to the land, water, and relatives found there. That expertise is also important because these shirts have been produced since 1987. Some have outdated, problematic, or stereotypical imagery. These can be understood within their appropriate context more clearly, while also acknowledging the uncomfortable situation, and placing them within a changing process of Indigenous identity discovery and display.

Additionally, discussions in *Research is Ceremony* describe how life must progress for research to fully present itself as ready to be worked on again (Wilson 2008, 120). I have always struggled with the idea that a few of the shirts held imagery that some might consider problematic. Having been immersed in the University of Oklahoma's NAS graduate program, one that is centered on community and reciprocity, I have been exposed to the wide array of complexities throughout Indian Country. In short, I now have the tools and the confidence to say that while these two shirts are problematic, they can be used to illustrate the complexity surrounding identity within a settler-colonial system, all while addressing the difficult reality of those specific images.

Relational accountability is an intrinsic component of this project, specifically, because of my own personal obligations to my family and our more-than-human community. The felt knowledge (Harjo 2019) and intuitive logic (Wilson 2008) that I have gained because of strong bonds with relatives, places, and experiences are what serve as the foundation for this project's relationality and reciprocity. That is to say, I am confident in the strength and depth of my relationships with my own kinship network. I use that strength, and draw upon that depth, in order to respect the needs of my family, so as to not embarrass them or misinterpret their lived

experiences and knowledge, and to save myself from any browbeating that would occur as a result.

Storytelling

Mirroring Wilson's narrative and discussion models in *Research is Ceremony,* I will navigate the academic realm and enter Indigenous spaces, not only as a researcher or author, but as a storyteller (Wilson 2008, 61). Wilson explains, as it was explained to him, that stories can serve as an indirect instruction for the listener, an answer to their questions, or a means to correct their mistakes (Wilson 2008, 48). The object life relationship of the shirts is a story being told to and through the designer, wearers, and observers. This is a way of normalizing thoughts, feelings, or experiences, while not taking on an instructing or demanding role within community (Wilson 2008, 48). Stories are kept alive and dynamic by being carried by their tellers and communities, who live as bearers and reminders of those same stories (Sium and Ritskes 2013, vi). In a literal sense, these shirts are carried on the bodies of those who wear them. The stories, therefore, are also physically carried.

Furthermore, storytelling is a reciprocal method of knowledge transmission and preservation. Both the storyteller and the audience are full participants within a relational framework. Trust and responsibility are integral components of storytelling, in order for knowledge to be properly conveyed, (Sium and Ritskes 2013, viii) Transformative storytelling is only possible when the storyteller has a sense of intellectual, social, and-or spiritual responsibility to the audience they speak to and about (Sium and Ritskes 2013, viii).

Kinship Building and Futurity Praxis

Drawing from Dr. Laura Harjo's (Muscogee-Creek) book, *Spiral to the stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity,* I position the object life relationship of the shirts, otherwise known in archaeology as a consumption continuum (Borck and Mills 2017, 30), or the design, distribution and wearing of the shirts, as a tool of futurity and method of kinship building. Throughout the course of this project, I incorporate futurity methodologies of kinship/relationality, felt knowledge, and place – both material and metaphysical – that are outlined in *Spiral to the Stars* (Harjo 2019, 211). Futurity can be best defined, in my opinion, as using the present to bridge the past and future together (Harjo 2019). The shirts act as a kin-space-time-envelope (Harjo 2019) that transcend the wearer or observers physical location and transport them to the place-based memories found within their artwork. When observed within this context, the shirts physically move through time as they are worn. They also bring past stories and knowledge, through their present wearing, into the future, simply by the continuation of our tradition.

These shirt designs are not simply landscape drawings or funny puns about a cousin or an animal. These are intentional depictions of our lives, traditions, and experiences that are created collectively among our family. They contain knowledge about the land, water, and individuals that would not be knowable without first understanding the context of our relationships to each other and the environment. *Spiral to the Stars* contains a collection of methods for knowledge production and dissemination, in addition to emphasizing storytelling and conversation to reestablish lost relationships with people, places, and ideas (Harjo 2019, 216). Processes for local knowledge production, such as talking circles, beading, or the creation of zines, are framed as small DIY methods to produce, publish, and maintain community knowledge and information (Harjo 2019, 229). She frames these processes as an opportunity to assert agency and authorship

of a collective story within the community (Harjo 2019). These same principles are present within the idea of the Tahlequah Shirts. They are not created *about* my family, but *with* our thoughts and experiences and *for* us to wear and share (Tsosie et. al. 2022). Our own stories are portrayed for ourselves literally on the clothes we wear on our backs.

The continual returning to the land, or a specific connection to place, combined with the repetition of the object life relationship over several decades, is community praxis in action. Harjo describes praxis as a process of trial and error which is acquired through continued practice over time (Harjo 2019, 200). Processes like beading, for example, improve with each iteration as the process is improved and reflected upon (Harjo 2019, 200). Similarly, the design and wearing of these shirts changed over time and is still reflected upon. This is the development of a praxis, where the practitioner gains new insight and techniques (Harjo 2019, 200). The development of praxis applies to both Steve and his artistic process, in addition to every family member and friend that routinely wears each shirt.

If one were to find a photo album of our family, and pick a photo at random, there is an almost guaranteed chance that at least one person will be wearing a Tahlequah shirt. Over time, the shirts have transitioned away from being cropped into tanks-tops, worn while working on cars, or lost in a move. Instead, while they are still frequently worn, they are treated with much more care and intention, with smaller sizes being saved for hand-me-downs and tattered or torn shirts even being converted into quilts.

Both communities and individuals carry knowledge within their lived experiences and place-based sensory memory, creating a communal sense of place. Discussing a community's relationship with place is an invaluable way to identify what the community values as assets, essential locations, and resources. These stories are what shape how a place is remembered,

known, and felt (Harjo 2019, 236). The shirts are proud examples of this in action, as they both document and display a communal sense of space and place, and include the relationships that derive their existence from within that sense. The lived experiences of both the family and the wider network of more-than-human-kin are imbued within the relationship of the shirts and tied to the land on which those experiences are made and where the shirts are worn. Both felt and embodied knowledge position the body as an archive for information (Harjo 2019, 198). Individuals can draw upon this archive to produce that embodies knowledge into artwork, and this archive is produced over a lifetime of experience (Harjo 2019, 198).

Space and place are integral parts of Indigenous identity and community. Indigeneity is rooted in relationships with the land, and both past ancestors and future generations who have already returned to the land or will be created on it (Wilson 2008, 155). Wherever Indigenous folks can be found, there can be a conversation surrounding sense of place (Harjo 2019, 236). With the overlapping histories of traditional, reservation, and private ownership, the land on which the shirt network is centered has been a part of Indigenous communities for centuries. However, to bring place back to the forefront of a community, it cannot be viewed as a commodity to be used, bought, and subsequently sold. In order to operate with the idea of land as kin, whether as a researcher, planner, or storyteller, one must first develop a community generated theory of land that recognizes non-normative relationships to and uses of the land, while disrupting conventional perspectives (Harjo 2019, 238). The land is not just an area, location, or background, but rather a living component and active participant and archivist for Indigenous stories (Sium and Ritskes 2013, vii).

Kincentricity

The shirts depict a localized Indigenous community and their interactions with place-based kinship networks. While this project seeks to illuminate their metaphysical qualities, they are still pieces of art and components of visual storytelling. In addition to futurity praxis and community building methodologies, the artwork of each shirt must be placed within an Indigenous American art aesthetic, as articulated by scholars such as Nancy Mithlo and heather ahtone. First, Indigenous Art, whether created by a Native artist, art depicting Native individuals or communities, or both, should be used to express individual identity within a complex socio-cultural community, serve as instructional materials and mnemonic references to traditional cultural values, while also transmitting intergenerational cultural knowledge and values (ahtone 2009, 375; Mithlo 2022, 229). The creation and distribution of the shirts are acts of regeneration and generosity and exemplify how the balance of reciprocity can mutually benefit the individual, community, and the well-being of the culture (ahtone 2009, 378).

An artist's community is a foundational influence on how their art is expressed. For those artists who come from communities with relationships beyond a western notion of family, specifically including the strong influence of extended family and social relatives, there must also be a consideration of how an artist, and their work, have their identity shaped by their relationship and responsibilities to the land and other-than-human entities (ahtone 2023, 47-48; Mithlo 2022, 229). A complete interpretation of Indigenous artwork cannot be achieved without exploring the extent of how those relationships are reflected in the artistic process (ahtone 2023, 49).

Steve's family, his wife, children, grandchildren, in-laws, nieces and nephews, are all Choctaw. Our influence on his artwork, and his depiction of community relationships informs his

process in a reciprocal manner. He was an elder, leader, and knowledge keeper. Steve's position as a non-Indigenous elder within a Choctaw family, and the role his artwork played in educating and strengthening our communal ties, is essential for understanding why he continued to create shirts for over forty years. He responds to his own experiences and knowledge, as well as the collective experiences of his (our) family, and creating new knowledge and experiences through his art (ahtone 2023, 51). This cycle of knowing and understanding a community and generating communal knowledge is facilitated through his art.

Steve's respect and reciprocity extended beyond the human family in which he was such an integral part. Using the term 'kincentricity,' ahtone positions the artist as a fulcrum within a system of relationships that incorporates animate and inanimate, spiritual, and metaphysical relationships that form Indigenous identities (ahtone 2023, 48). The place we situate ourselves within our families and tribal communities is rooted in a relationship to the natural world (ahtone 2023, 48).

Lucy Lippard is cited by ahtone as describing how art is intrinsically formed from nature, not as imitation but rather as a perception of relationships between humans and the natural world, emphasizing that all visual art is rooted in matter (ahtone 2009, 378*).* While the blended fabric of the shirts can be relatively traced back to the earth, I would position the wearer of a shirt as a part of the artwork and therefore rooted in matter that is directly connected to the place-based kinship network. Without a body to wear it, a shirt is merely a piece of fabric cut into a certain pattern. It is the person, and in this specific case, the relative wearing the shirt, which gives it the complete fulfillment of its purpose.

Social Network Analysis and Relationships

In addition to the artistic analysis of the shirts and their artwork, I collected particularistic data on the shirts and used those data to create network maps to integrate, display, and analyze the wide range of information present in each shirt design. These network maps are another form of visualizing the community created within and surrounding this portion of the western Illinois River watershed. Social Network Analysis (SNA) refers to a range of methods and models adopted from mathematical graph theory, which have been used to explore the structure of relationships among sets of social actors (Borck et al. 2015, 35). Archaeologists, whose methods fit well here because they analyze the history that lives in the material archive, have used SNA to analyze distribution patterns of material culture to highlight social relations between and within groups (Coward 2013, 248). Using SNA, archaeologists have been able to articulate that material culture is not only a passive reflection of social relations but can instead be considered part of the creation and maintaining of relationships (Coward 2013, 250). More complex and layered aspects of relationships, such as reciprocity, length, and reasoning can be illustrated in certain types of formulations (Coward 2013, 248-249).

Social networks, like the ones found in this project, are analyzed and visualized by producing network graphs where actors (individuals, groups, sites, objects) are depicted as nodes and the relationships among them are depicted as lines or connections. SNA is especially useful for understanding the size or density of a network to understand differences, or centrality, among nodes, and to look at the dynamics of networks over time (Borck et al. 2015, 36). SNA can be incredibly helpful in understanding unusual or complex patterns within material data. When used within an ethnographic or sociological framework, connections are produced by interpersonal

interactions (Borck 2018, 94). Alternatively, Borck defines these ties as deliberate choices made by individuals in the consumption of materials like ceramics (Borck 2018, 94).

Consumption, or the use of a material object, can be viewed as a continuum from production, to use, to abandonment or being laid to rest, to recovery, and then to a second life that is sometimes in daily use or used in heritage spaces (Borck and Mills 2017, 30). The choices involved along the continuum therefore become encapsulated within the material objects (Borck and Mills 2017, 30). These items are now representative of the decisions of individuals, and collections of materials represent choices over time (Borck and Mills 2017, 30).

If material things are seen as choices, and congregations of materials are choices through time, then the design components of each shirt reflect the choices of Steve and the family along the process of designing and wearing them, and the total shirt series reflects those choices over time. I have placed a consumption continuum within an Indigenous context of relational accountability and reciprocity (Wilson 2008) and thus expanded the process beyond a simple spectrum of commodified consumption. The object life relationship includes the artistic process, creation of the physical shirt, the repeated wearing, and eventual recycling of the shirt to another person or saved in a drawer. Borck and Mills analyze consumption patterns to determine decisions made by individuals to signify group membership (Borck and Mills 2017, 30). Likewise, the object life relationship cycle (the design patterns) found within the shirts are indicative of Steve's choices to communicate the family's position within a place-based knowledge system or larger kinship networks.

SNA will aggregate these choices into networks and reveal how patterns in the material archive are indicative of what Steve wanted to communicate with the family and anyone who wore or observed any of the shirts. To do this, the interactions between the different design

components present on shirts are plotted on a network map. Identifiable design components are displayed as nodes. Connections occur between nodes (design components) appear on a shirt together. Weight is given to this relationship by adding the number of times this co-occurrence is present.

Using the weight relationships between nodes and the nodes themselves allows us to calculate things like their centrality within the network (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1). The centrality of a node refers to the level of connectedness it retains within the network (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1).This quality is calculated by how integral a specific node is within a network, by either its number of ties to other nodes, its shortest or closest connections to others, or the frequency with which other nodes are connected through it (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1).

Degree centrality measures the level of involvement of a node within a network, as in the number of other nodes it has connections to (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1). Closeness centrality is determined by how closely connected each node is to one another and is created by "the inverse sum of shortest distances to all other nodes from a focal node" (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1). Betweenness centrality determines the position of a node on the shortest path between two other nodes, thus quantifying the flow and relationships of the nodes in the network (Opsahl et al. 2010, 2). Each measure of node centrality has specific applications, as well as specific drawbacks. For instance, degree centrality may overlook the position or closeness of a node that is connected to all others, in other words, the measure will favor nodes with many superficial connections over nodes with fewer, more substantial similarities (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1).

Closeness centrality accounts for this trend but is only effectively applicable when there are connections between all components. Thus, disconnected networks are not readable (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1). Lastly, betweenness centrality does not account for the fact that the majority of

nodes do not lie on the shortest path between two other nodes (Opsahl et al. 2010, 2). In short, each method of measuring centrality is helpful for interpreting aspects of the network with more clarity, and researchers often combine them to have a better overall understanding of the network as whole.

SNA allows researchers to examine broader social structures that emerge from extended connections in a network and move beyond that of individual interactions (Coward 2013, 249). While the data is collected by following a traditional Western science approach of splitting an object being researched into component elements, SNA fits well within Indigenous research frameworks that prioritize holism and understanding relationships to better understand individual elements by creating a quantitative framework to implement the examination of those relationships that are not easily visible. For our case study, rather than examining individual aspects of each shirt's design, SNA enables research into relationships and interactions of specific design elements and artistic themes throughout each shirt and throughout the entire series (Coward 2013, 249). SNA quantitatively reflects in many ways a relational accountability framework or praxis model, which argues that social structures created through interactions are produced, reproduced, and altered through repeated interaction. These interactions deepen and widen the network and create relationships that are often many steps removed from two elements of the network (i.e., a node that is connected to another node via three nodes that are intermediate). SNA was developed specifically to understand complex relationships like this.

Network analysis like this is helpful when working with a place as well. Researchers can gain insight into place-based interactions by using SNA to analyze different roles of actors within a location, their connections to each other, and with a wider regional network (Mol and Mans 2013, 308). For this project then, we can better examine the relationship, for example, between

land and water. Or fish and land. For my research with the shirts, the various design elements on the shirts and the shirts themselves essentially act as ‘locations’ within the network, with the entire collection of shirts behaving as a regional network and each design element as a node.

Mols and Mans describe house inventories as “an archaeological record of over 30 years of network interactions by these four actors as reflected in their home inventories.” (Mol and Mans 2013, 315-316) The shirts are a record of over 40 years of kinship network interactions by the family and community as reflected in their specific and overarching design elements. The network maps pinpoint specific interactions between shirts while displaying a holistic picture of the community. The shirts therefore become a piece of the places they are portraying, demonstrating, in a similar fashion to ceramic sherds, an attachment to place. And, like ceramics and their designs, when the shirts and their design elements are examined in relationship with each other using SNA, they produce what Borck (2018, 99) calls a meaning map. The shirts, and their relationships, like the ceramics in Borck’s example, create meaning because they are infused with memory. They are memory pieces that are intentionally being used to demonstrate connections to the past with the present to inform future generations (Borck 2018, 100; Colwell & Fergeson 2006, 161-166).

Many times, the motivation for entering an exchange is not only the desire for material resources, but also the desire to become incorporated into a local or regional network (Mol and Mans 2013, 310). Components of the shirts are intentionally chosen to connect to other designs, stories, encounters, or relationships. Furthermore, the early shirts often included elements from earlier shirts incorporated into the image or story of the newest edition, compiling components from other shirts into one cohesive and chronological narrative. Just as sherd of ceramics

represent fragments of the past, the shirt components are fragments of the family's history, our own social memory screen-printed onto a portable shirt (Borck 2018, 100-101).

Implementation of Analysis

This project analyzes the shirts in two connected, yet distinct ways. Both a particularistic and holistic interpretation of the shirts and the components of each design was implemented. A visual, art-history driven analysis of the series was done in order to process how I (acting as both the researcher and as a member of the family) might interact or interpret a shirt's imbued knowledge, as if I simply saw someone wearing one in person. A visual analysis of each shirt was conducted to communicate the particularistic and holistic themes present in the shirts as pieces of art. This process was standardized by sitting with each shirt for five minutes, and writing my own thoughts, stories, and interactions based on my own inherent, felt, and learned knowledge (Wilson 2008; Harjo 2019).

Following the visual analysis of each shirt, the components of each design, such as a person, location, animal, or tube were plotted onto a spreadsheet. There was no formal structure to this particularistic shirt observation, as I have been accustomed to them my entire life. Instead, I spent as much time as I felt necessary, typically dependent on the complexity of the design and how often I wore the shirt. I realized that I was not aware of small details within shirts I wear less often. Components and categories were continuously added as I continued to observe the shirts over time. These included base level identifiers like specific locations, objects, and relatives, such as a hummingbird, the riverbed, the Big Cabin, and the age, sex, and living status of a human. When new categories and components were added, previous shirts were re-examined for these new data. The initial observation was not timed, and I found myself returning to several of the more densely detailed designs to reexamine any overlooked components.

Once every visual component was plotted on a spreadsheet by year and total appearance, they were aggregated into nine mid-level categories: water, land, animal, bird, fish, plants, humans, tube, and phrases (text). This combined every particularistic instance of each element into weighted group values, in order to understand which types of relatives were most central or common within the series of shirt designs. For instance, combining depictions of the river, pond, and other forms of water, allowed me to more clearly identify the influence of water as both place and relative. Finally, the mid-level categories were consolidated into five high-level categories, combining all animate and non-animate components into place, human, more-than-human kin, tube, and phrases (text). I combined water and land into one place-based category to communicate their dual roles as both spacial contextualization and interactive relatives. The More-than-human-kin category encapsulates all animated and plant-based organisms found within our network. It was created to equate their position with human relatives. Classification was subjective process, based on my own intuition (Wilson 2008) and experience as a family member. Other researchers might have aggregated the particularistic data in a different manner. Nonetheless, I believe these changes would not change the interpretation of the data in a substantial way, as our same stories are present at every level of analysis.

Once a dataset on a spreadsheet was finalized, co-occurrence adjacency matrixes were created for the three ascending levels of data. A co-occurrence adjacency matrix is a symmetric numerical table that quantifies how often pairs of nodes appear together within a defined context, like a Tahlequah Shirt. Rows and columns represent the design components, while each cell indicates the frequency of an image and another image appearing together. These matrixes were used to plot the number of times a given component or category was present on a shirt at the same time as another unique component. Rather than binarize these values, I elected to

include the weighted number of each interaction. For instance, if fourteen inner tubes are depicted alongside a goat, the interaction between each tube and the goat were counted rather than a single value within a binary co-occurrence matrix. This was done to illustrate the frequency of interactions between components within individual shirts, in addition to the series overall. A weighted value enables the edges, or connections, between networks to be calculated and visualized in the network

Table 1: Adjacency Matrix: Level 2 Aggregated Data

#	WATER ALL	LAND ALL	ANIMAL ALL	BIRD- ALL	FISH ALL	PLANTS ALL	HUMAN ALL	TUBE ALL	PHRASES ALL
WATER ALL	0	19	10	12	1	17	14	24	24
LAND ALL	19	0	9	14	1	20	14	23	24
ANIMAL ALL	10	9	0	4	1	10	6	14	14
BIRD ALL	12	14	4	0	1	13	7	13	14
FISH ALL	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
PLANTS ALL	17	20	10	13	0	0	10	20	21
HUMAN ALL	14	14	6	7	1	10	0	16	15
TUBE ALL	24	23	14	13	1	20	16	0	30
PHRASES ALL	24	24	14	14	1	21	15	30	0

The matrixes were used to calculate nine different social networks using SocNet Visualizer (Kalamaras n.d.). These networks were organized by three separate measurements of node centrality: degree, closeness, and betweenness. However, the closeness centrality networks of each data set were insufficient models and thus left out of the data collection. As a result, there are only six networks on display in the following chapter.

The network maps used node size and radial placement to measure the centrality of each node. Those with the highest levels of centrality were both the largest and most physically central to the network map, while the smallest nodes were on the outermost ring. Node size was selected to more easily infer the node's centrality. A radial layout was also chosen to communicate centrality in an easily processed visual form. However, rather than a hierarchical, levels-based layout that may be easier for some to analyze, a radial layout was specifically chosen for its similarity in shape to a river float inner tube. This also allows for a less restricted

display of relationships between elements than a hierarchical one would. In the following chapter, I will be giving both an individualistic and holistic interpretation of each shirt in the series, as well as a detailed reaction to the stories and values that are present in the network meaning maps.

Networks, like the ones I implement in my research, break data up into particularistic components to more easily identify trends and relationships. Even though they break holistic data like consumption patterns or Tahlequah Shirts into components, they can be used to pull the pieces back together into a relational framework. The visualization of these relationships, like the networks that are present in this project, quantify the story of my family through the support of Indigenous methodologies. Rather than reduce the lived experience of my family or flatten the role our shirts play in creating and preserving our identity, the networks communicate the interconnectedness of our network within a place-based context.

Results & Discussion

In this chapter, I give a figurative tour of my closet. I present each Tahlequah shirt and explain their specific and interconnected stories, and what they mean to me and my family. I then separate the image of each shirt into design components and sort them into categories. Finally, I stitch the components back together like a quilt. I tell the same story, but communicate the details with two different methods: Personal and Quantitative Storytelling.

I approach this section from two inextricably linked positions. I am both a family member and a researcher. These are integral parts of my identity, as this is my story, and I am its storyteller (researcher) (Wilson 2008). These roles cannot be disconnected from one another to make an objective statement about the Tahlequah Shirts. Rather, I present a holistic visual overview of the shirt series, approaching their stories as a member of the family, with my role as a researcher informing my storytelling. After the visual analysis, I step into a reseach centered role and use SNA and the SocNet Visualizer to separate and re-aggregate the visual data present in the shirts, quantifying the overarching stories into network maps. This quantitative method was guided by my position as a member of the kinship networks at hand.

Personal Storytelling

Thirty-six shirts have been designed and distributed so far, with several central themes present through time. Each shirt contains a unique story within their design. The recurring phrases “save the…, save our future” and “We All Live Downstream” are connected to concepts of sustainability and conservation that recognize the reciprocal relationship between the place we call home and the family. We are held accountable to one another by the nature of our relationships, simply because that relationality exists (Wilson 2008). The place-based kinship

network that has grown out of our property is not a part of our reality, it *is* our reality (Wilson 2008).

Similarly, the idea that we all live downstream from somewhere implies a kind of accountability similar to Wilson's discussions. The reciprocal symbolism of a river infers that those who live upstream are accoutnable to us, and we are accountable to those who live downstream, and so on. Our own recurring imagery relates to storytelling of the river float, inside jokes, and family events or loss. Furthermore, the relationships that populate our kinship network are multifaceted and include family, friends, memories, the environment, and the knowledge associated with them (Wilson 2008). When we wear these shirts, we amplify a message of mutual care and respect, serving as both visual reminders of our lived history and a call to uphold our shared responsibility to the land.

Many of these shirts are older than I am, and their stories were given to me through the countless times I or a relative wore one to a family event. When I observe each shirt individually and the series as a whole, I read specific visual stories and infer larger narratives that formed over time. I divided the series into three thematic periods which represent three phases of growth within our family and our relationships: Finding, Placing, and Growing.

Finding Ourselves – Starting a Tradition

The first shirt Steve printed was created for the fourth annual July 4th celebration in 1987. Many details present in the shirt remain constant throughout the next thirty-five years. People floating in tubes, and the phrases "Endangered wildlife," "we all live downstream," and "celebration," are all included in the first iteration, and are reoccurring aspects of almost every shirt (McConnell 1987). The shirt is simple in style, symbolism, and narrative in comparison to later installments. It depicts a dozen friends and family partaking in a quintessential float trip,

located at an ambiguous stretch of the Illinois river. This shirt was the start of many trends that will become apparent as we progress through the years.

The second shirt printed is the first instance of a solo animal and tube combination, a design choice that would remain constant throughout the series and become especially prevalent in the 2010's and on. The top of the shirt reads: "'River Goat' a Vanishing Breed" (McConnell 1988). This is meant to represent the property's past life as Michael's homestead, and the various livestock, including goats, which were raised there. The goat is depicted standing with three inner tubes, with one hung around its neck and shoulders, and an oak branch held in its teeth. Already, Steve has centered the river float and tubes, despite the absence of water, or the tubes being used by a human relative. This goat is found in the background of numerous shirts after 1988.

By the sixth celebration, and the third shirt, Steve has followed his precedent of a solo animal dominating the design. However, this is the first inclusion of a family-based narrative. This shirt parodies taxonomy classification standards by depicting the fictitious "Mylormor Bird." This bird is a family inside joke, wherein the Mylormor sticks its beak in its own rear-end and whistles, making a call that can be heard for "a mile or more." An unknown bird call is most often ascribed to the Mylormor often at the expense of a curious outsider.

1990 sees the return of human relatives to the center of the design. Specifically, my uncles Tony and Tom, bathing in two canoes in the backyard of the Big Cabin. Once again, a fake taxonomy label is given to the "Canoe Bathers," and includes another reminder that "we all live downstream" (McConnell 1990). Tubes are also used to frame the text of the shirt, with one on each end of the titular "Seventh Annual July 4th Celebration" arced across the top of the shirt.

Figure 1: Images of Tahlequah Shirt design from 1987



Figure 2: Image of shirt design from 1988

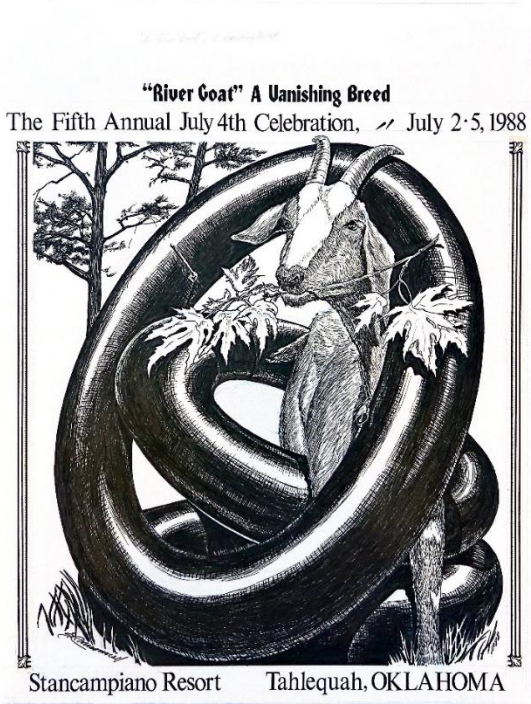
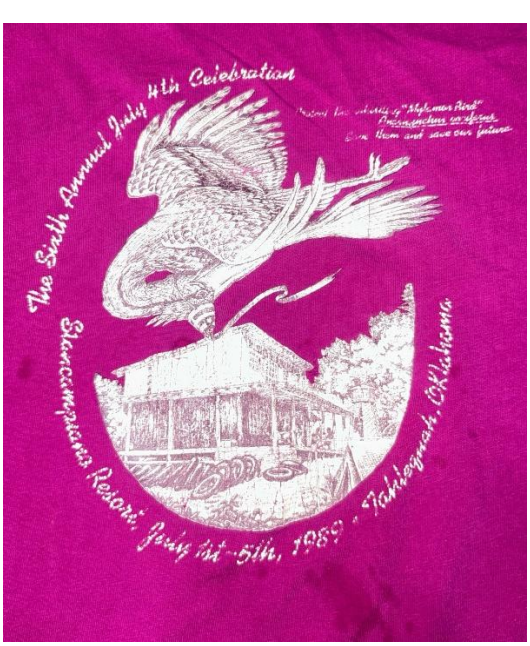


Figure 3: Images of shirt designs from 1989 & 1990





These first four shirts are an early indication of the trends and themes present throughout every Tahlequah Shirt. Steve communicated the important aspects of the Stancampiano July 4th Celebrations. He uses locations like the river and Big Cabin, human and non-human relatives, and family stories create a space for a wider kinship network to develop (Harjo 2019). What started as a fun way to celebrate a holiday, and family has become an integral part of our identity as a community.

The early July 4th celebrations and shirt prints were a period of self-discovery for the family. Relationship dynamics between family members, the more-than-human life, and the land which hosted us all were still trying to manifest in a meaningful way. My parents, newly single from their first marriages, re-connected at a July 4th Celebration in the mid-90's, leading to a twenty-five-year marriage and twin sons. Reciprocity, and bringing friends into the family with invitations and shirts grows the community network through fictive kinship (Akers 2004, 43).

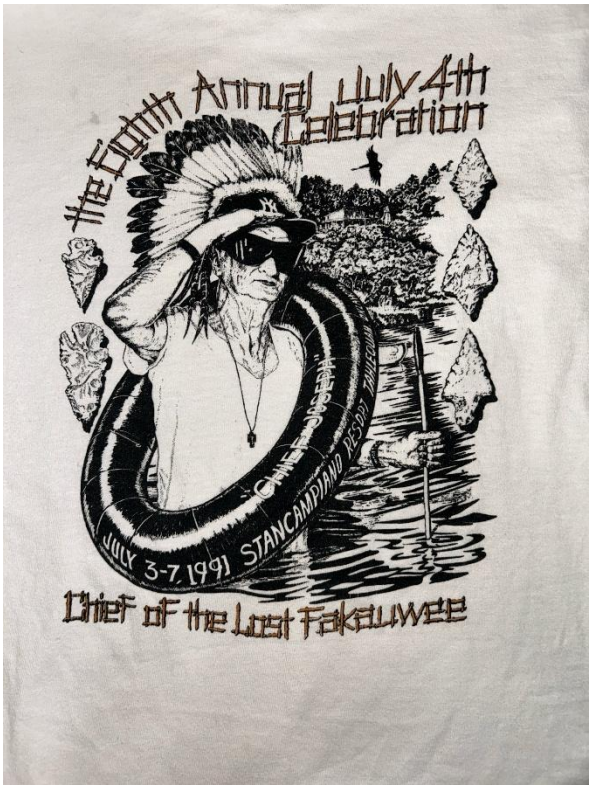
The friendship between my family and my dad led to his acceptance, first as a friend, then as a relative and father.

Around the same time, an improvised fireworks show led to a considerable brush fire on the property. Without a fire hydrant or adequate hose, the family had to resort to passing buckets of water like an old-time fire brigade. A total ban on fireworks was put in place, and the size of the fire grew with each re-telling. The cautionary tale was successful in its implementation, and the fireworks ban has been honored ever since. We have kept an intentional, long-term commitment to reciprocal safety, not just by banning fireworks, but also by banning glass and metal on the float trips and mandating designated drivers for those who have been drinking alcohol. These practices were developed over time in response to mistakes or mishaps that threatened the safety of the entire kinship network.

Within the context of our efforts to (re)discover and (re)develop our Indigenous identity, and a developing relationship to land and non-human relatives, I need to address two shirts which include imagery that could be offensive to some.

The 1991 shirt was the first of several within the series to be dedicated to a specific family member. In this case, the central relative depicted is my grandfather, my mother's father and Steve's father-in-law, Joe Stancampiano. He was born and raised in New York City by Italian and Irish parents. Due to a genetic disorder, my grandfather was blind for much of his adult life, following the discovery of a degenerative eye disease while he served in the US Army during World War Two. He is shown giving a military salute, standing waist deep in the river, with a tube across his left shoulder. He is holding his white cane and wearing low-vision sunglasses and a New York Yankees cap.

Figure 4: Image of shirt design from 1991



Despite his European heritage, he is also wearing an eagle-feather war bonnet. Beneath him is the phrase, “Chief of the Lost Fakauwee” and the tube is labeled “Chief Joseph.” “Lost Fakauwee” is in reference to a pop-culture joke from the mid to late-twentieth century and is a play on words of the phrase “fuck are we?” I do not wear this shirt in public or at family events. While I acknowledge that some of my relatives view this design with pride and respect, I feel too uncomfortable with the imagery to wear it. Other Indigenous communities, particularly those from the Great Plains with feather-bonnet traditions, may take offence at this shirt. Others may find it humorous or satirical. That is their prerogative (Stedman 1982, 240), and I am respectfully choosing to critically observe this design, while maintaining the integrity of my tribe, my family, and Steve as an artist.

Joe and Steve were both white men who married into an Indigenous family. Our separation from Choctaw community meant Steve was given little foundational knowledge of our cultural symbols and traditions. Therefore, in attempt to honor his father-in-law, and convey his position as a respected elder and family leader, Steve falls short of an authentic cultural representation. Instead, he turned to what tribal leaders looked like, according to dominant media perspectives. He selected a distinctive "Indian" imagery, rather than a Choctaw appliqué shirt, baldric sash, or beaded hat band. Instead of elevating our Choctaw heritage, he accidentally undermined it through pan-tribal stereotypes (Stedman 1982, 243).

Now, with the progression of time and a greater connection to tradition and land, imagery that is more indicative of our true heritage is more apparent in shirt designs. Traditional Choctaw symbols of Hvshi (the sun) make appearances in multiple shirts. Steve mimics curvilinear lines found in baldric sashes to create suns and spirals (McConnell 2016; 2018, 2022). He also incorporates half and full diamond patterns into the border of several design (McConnell 2010; 2014). Diamonds and half diamonds are used in Choctaw designs in reference to environmental and place-based knowledge. Full diamond bands represent the diamondback rattlesnake, which was respected and venerated for its power and dominance (Choctaw Nation 2026). Half diamond designs are also indicative of the rattlesnake but are more often associated with the hills and valleys of Choctaw homelands (Choctaw Nation 2026). The bar that runs along the bottom of the pattern represents a river or path (Choctaw Nation 2026). Half-diamonds often symbolize a journey, whether literal or the figurative journey of life's highs and lows (Choctaw Nation 2026). The journey of our Tahlequah shirts, the highs and lows of life and the learning experiences in-between are some of the stories that half-diamonds can represent.

We are no longer a “lost tribe.” Instead, we are (re)turning toward traditional imagery in order to convey our identities in a more authentic way (Hopkins 2017). Indigenous communities like my own are always learning who we are, where we are coming from, and where we are going.

The next shirt I want to address was created in 2018 to honor my maternal grandmother, Maxine. This is a different shirt than a memorial design I discuss later in this chapter. In 2018, Steve chose to honor Maxine as the matriarch of our greater kinship network. Parallelling Choctaw matrilineal tradition (Akers 2004), Maxine was the center of our family network, hosting weekly meals and gatherings at her home in Oklahoma City. Her family, friends, students, coworkers, priests, and fellow parishioners all upheld her as beloved a teacher elder of the greater Oklahoma City Catholic community. To honor this, and her Choctaw ancestry, she is labeled the “Priestess of the Stancampiano Tribe.” She has a pair of eagle and owl feathers in her hair as she is standing atop a cliff, shielding her eyes, and overlooking the riverbed below. This too falls victim to a stereotypical “noble savage” trope that many find patronizing, if not outright harmful (Stedman 1982). However, Steve does not portray her as simple, or savage, or otherworldly. He places her at the epicenter of our kinship network, not as a caricature, but as an elder and spiritual teacher.

Figure 5: Image of shirt design from 2018



Maxine was devout in her Catholic faith. She taught at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School for over fifteen years, where Steve taught art for even longer. Had there been room within the rigid, patriarchal, and celibate structure of Catholicism, she would have undoubtably served her family and community in an official "priestess" capacity. Instead, she served as catechist, a type of informal church leader that educates and sponsors new or young members of the church. She was a proud mother and lifelong educator and earned respect with a gentle but serious demeanor. She was proud of her Choctaw heritage, despite her own disconnect from tribal ceremony and community. While this image can certainly and justifiably be interpreted as problematic, Maxine gratefully accepted the shirt and understood it was created in a context of respect and veneration.

The entire series of Tahlequah shirts are evidence of the continual growth and diversity found in Indian Country. Communities and families are constantly rediscovering and revitalizing

their identities and relationships and adapting their cultural and artistic practices in response (Hopkins 2017). My family is doing the same. The shirts communicate the development and cultivation of land-based community structures and visibly portray our return to Choctaw tradition and a deepening connection to a larger kinship network.

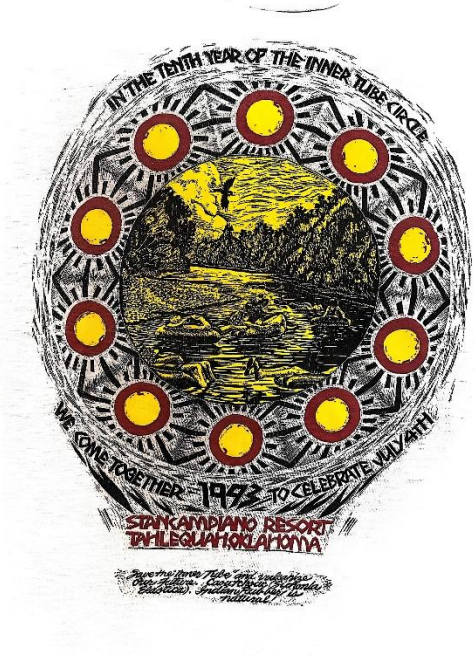
Placing Ourselves -- Place-Making and Kinship

Over time, the land itself has become a part of our tangled, multi-generational web of marriages, divorces, brothers, sisters, lifelong friends and children. Similar to the support of family members, our relationships with the earth have a direct impact on the ability of a person to develop ideas of hope and resilience (Hatala et al. 2020). A greater physical and spiritual connection to the natural world supports overall mental wellbeing (Hatala et al. 2020).

The decade between 1993 and 2003 reflects a period of place-making within the family and is visible through the Tahlequah Shirts of those years. Considerations that inform how we interact with space include examining the responsibilities we have to one another, other-than-human life, and the land and water which we depend on (Lees and Bang 2023). Once we came to understand the nature of our family's relationship to the land, we began to incorporate place into our lives and shirts in a careful way. Shirts from this period generally portray a place and communicate how we began to integrate the land into our family, beyond simply a piece of property. By observing our walking catalog of history, and intentionally listening to the stories regarding the designs, you can understand how and why we as a family interact with our environment (Barlo et al. 2021).

By 1993, the river float has returned to the center of the shirt narrative. Steve is communicating the communal nature of the activity, and this year is the first to include depictions of ambiguous children, marking the first bridge from one generation to the next.

Figure 6: Image of shirt design from 1993



The 1994 shirt shows a Ford truck that was used to transport tubes to the river. The design is full of references to other shirts, and therefore other relatives and their memories and stories. Much of the earlier shirts are layered with previous design components, paralleling an Indigenous style of storytelling that expands upon itself. With the Mylormor on its steady patrol of the skies, the truck is seemingly placed atop one of the canoe bathers, although, much like the wicked witch of the east, only his legs are visible. The Canoe Bather has been joined by the beaver from the 1992 shirt, and Joe Stancampiano has returned, without his headdress, but still wearing his Yankee cap, and can be seen comically placed in the truck's driver seat. This is probably why the truck has run over one of the canoes! 1994 is also the first shirt to depict the "Stancampiano Resort" sign which hangs over the front porch, which serves as repeated method

of place making in other shirt designs, calling the viewer back to the property and cabins (Colwell and Fergeson 2006, 161).

Figure 7: Image of shirt design from 1994

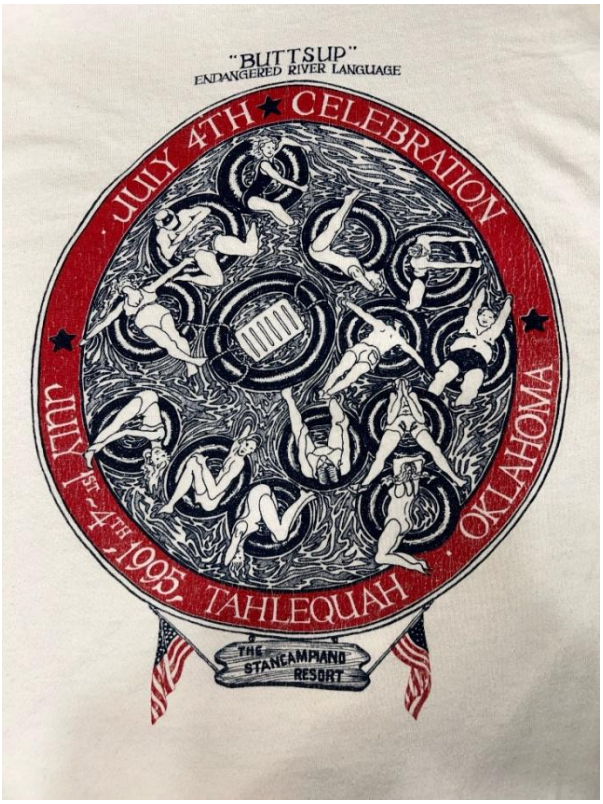


The 1995 shirt design is based on family vocabulary centered on the river float. The shirt design consists of a ringed group of tubes featuring floaters in unique poses, reminiscent of synchronized swimming (McConnell 1995). The back of the shirt includes the following:

> "'BUTTSUP': vb[ME: prob akin to ME buttok buttock; and upped, advanced to a higher level] the verbal warning cry of the first river or creek tubing member, whose gluteus maximus is struck suddenly by a low water rock, to the following tribe to raise their buttocks toward the heavens to prevent posterior injuries. – USE THE LANGUAGE AND SAVE OUR FUTURE."

As the definition clearly states, “buttsup” is a warning call to the rest of the float group. The first to bump their butt on a shallow river rock needs to tell everyone else before they feel the same pain. Since we are all individually floating, often in positions compromising our rear-end, it is your personal incentive to get yourself up out of the water. However, it is your duty to communicate the danger to others, as they would do the same for you (Wilson 2008). By respecting your own body, and the bodies of others, you can keep the float trip free from any bumps or bruises (Tsosie et al. 2022). The favor will ideally be reciprocated if another floater takes the lead positions. In the event you are at the front of the pack and fail to call “buttsup,” the browbeating you will receive will ensure that it will not be missed the next time (Wilson 2008). Once the danger has been sufficiently passed, it is now time to announce the opposite exclamation: “Buttsin!”

Figure 8: Image of shirt design from 1995

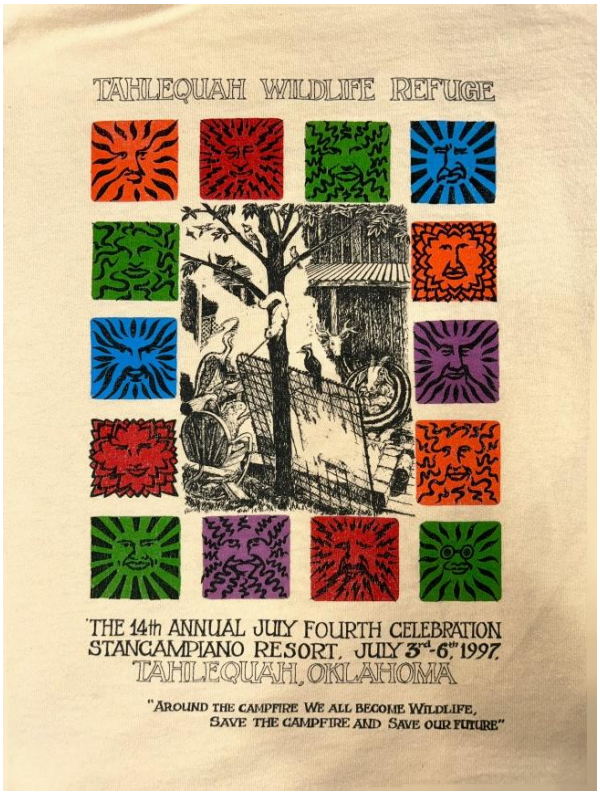


The paved road leading to the ‘Resort’, and our unpaved access, is located in the river’s flood plain. The canopy of trees blocks out much of the direct summer sunlight. Several “once in a lifetime” floods have dramatically altered the landscape (Murphy 2015). However, upon entering the driveway through the gate posted with “NO TRESPASSING” signs, the curved path carves a tunnel through the thick brush. The 1998 shirt describes this “TREE TUNNEL - So there may always be Wildlife at the end of the tunnel; preserve the ‘tree tunnel’ *Dendronus Arborus* - an endangered right of passage - and save our future” (McConnell 1998). The “wildlife” at the end of the tunnel are two children holding a tube. Steve has used this language to postion human and other animate relatives as equivalent. By preserving the trees and land, the entire kinship network will be protected.

In 1997, Steve continues to categorize both human and animal relatives as the same, and place them in a land-based relationship. The text of the shirt (McConnell 1997), reads:

> “TAHLEQUAH WILDLIFE REFUGE - *Around the campfire we all become wildlife, save the campfire and save our future*”

Figure 9: Image of shirt design from 1997

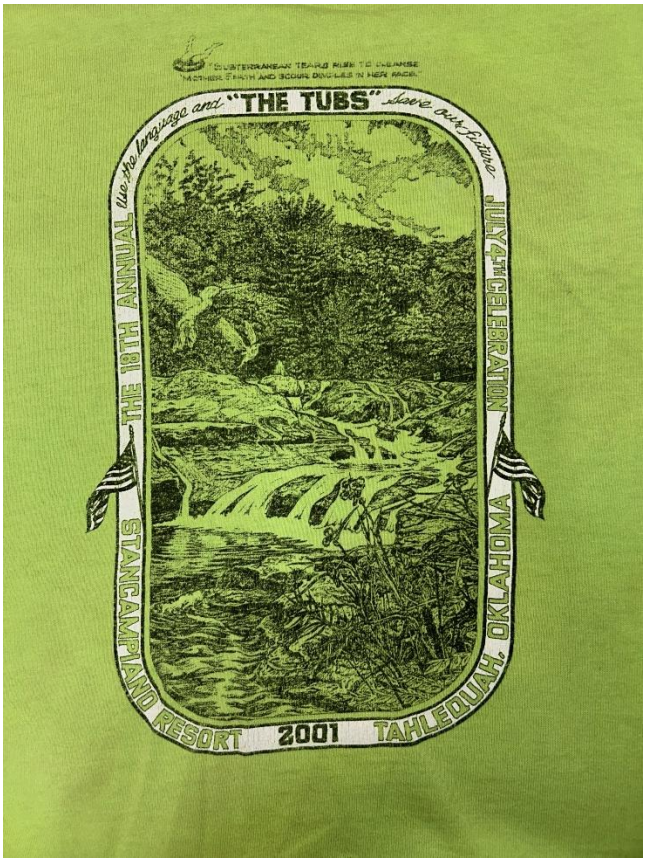


The central image depicts the fire pit behind the Big Cabin. There is a number of local wildlife circled around the fire, a beaver, heron, blue jay, woodpecker, an eight point buck, and others. Framing the shirt are multicolored squares with unique anthropomorphized faces. The diversity of the image, in both the wildlife and faces, is indicative of the biodiverse ecological region as well as the diverse population of people who visit each year. “Save the campfire, save our future” is a layered reminder to us that the community we have created with our family, friends, and nature must be respected and maintained. Tahlequah Shirts are real tangible methods of education and preservation. However, in order to move beyond simple articulation of concepts like floating or land-based research, you need to wear a shirt, listen to their stories, and maybe even float the river (Wilson 2008).

Early float stories recall a gruelling eight hour float, the likes of which has not been attempted in the decades since. The tradition of floating has given rise to familial phrases that specifically refer to landmarks, experiences, and hazards along the river. Various start and end points at unmarked locations like *Flat Rock* or *Doug's,* are named after geographic markers and family friends. Familiar locations along the river and the surrounding area have earned names like *The Tubs* and *Shotgun Island.* Furthermore, phrases like "buttsin" and "buttsup" refer to riding positions on the inner tubes

One specific landmark is what we call "the Tubs." Known locally as the Bathtub Rocks, they are a series of pools created by water erosion from a spring-fed creek (Crawford 2017). The 2001 Tahlequah Shirt depicts the pools with rolling streams of water. The typography of the shirt is ringed around the image of the location, framing it like a window. 'THE TUBS' - "Use the language and save our future" is etched within the frame, charging the family with maintaining our connection to this location (McConnell 2001). This was once a secluded spot that offered reprieve from the often busy thoroughfare of the River. Now it has been closed to the public by local authorities who aim to preserve its natural state, due to "illegal drug activity, vandalism, trespassing on neighboring properties and littering, (TNC 2024). As a result of the extractive and abusive settler colonial land use mindset, access to The Tubs was placed into a all or nothing binary. The J.T. Nickel preserve rightfully took action to prevent any further destruction of the local landmark. However, rather than implementing methods of local regulation and rehabilitation, they followed colonial preservation logic and the location is no longer accessible to the public. Aa future in which respectful interaction with the land there seems unlikely, now.

Figure 10: Image of shirt design from 2001



The Illinois River Watershed has been a point of contention within several lawsuits concerning commercial and agricultural pollution. At the apex of this issue, several relatives, including myself, became sick from the river water. Open wounds and eyes were susceptable to infection from the increasingly polluted river water. These stories are not present in shirt designs. However, the 2011 Tahlequah Shirt depicts the river and its banks covered with unused tubes. No relatives are present in the image (McConnell 2011). This particular shirt echoes the decision to forgo float trips until the issue was resolved. By the next year, we were floating the river again, and the 2012 shirt was based on a picture of the family approaching the end of a float (McConnell 2012).

Figure 11: Image of shirt design from 2011



By solidifying the position of place within our kinship network, we entered a reciprocal relationship with the land and all that lives in communion with it. Place is the central component of all Indigenous communities (Carroll 2015), and it is still the center of our diasporic, disconnected family. We have been enabled by our place-based community to expand our kinship network beyond a transactional or commodified model (Carroll 2015). It is this place-based foundation, created long before the annual celbration and visibly solidified in the Tahlequah shirts from the nineties, that enabled us to more easily incorporate and represent more-than-human relatives.

Growing Ourselves -- Expanding Community

Over half of the shirt iterations depict a solo animal, typically wearing, holding, or floating in a tube. Beginning early in 1988, 1989 and 1992, Steve used animals in his shirt designs to communicate our expanded place-based kinship network. After 2004, a steady trend of animal shirts prevailed until the end of the series in 2023, with only four shirts featuring a design focused on human relatives or locations. While a single animal is not the only component present on these shirts, they are the primary design element and are central to their shirt's imbued stories and knowledge.

Each animal has a story associated with it, which led to its inclusion on a shirt. A bull elk is shown wrapped in flat tubes (McConnell 2021) and refernces the herd of elk that was introduced to the nearby Nickel Preserve. Other stories include separate sightings of a bear and cougar. The black bear migrated onto the property in the spring of 2018. He lumbered through Steve's yard for several mornings in a row during the July 4th holiday weekend. The bear managed to get within a few dozen yards of a family friend sleeping unaware in an outdoor hammock. We learned later that he was named Jackson, and the Nickel Preserve was studying his habits with a tracking chip. Similarly, the cougar shirt was concieved when my cousin Addie allegedly saw the predator while hiking the property around Memorial Day weekend in 2023. The big cat was therefore the focal design component for that year. While the cougar has thankfully not been seen or heard from since, the summer of 2023 was characterized by tense nighttime walks between cabins. Thankfully, there have not been any tiger sightings to round out yet another Wizard of Oz reference.

Figure 12: Images of shirt designs from 2019, 2021, 2023



The shirts are themselves an invitation for others to learn and appreciate the stories behind their design. A friend or a stranger simply perceives them as another t-shirt amongst dozens potentially seen in a day. They serve as physical representations of our responsibility to each other as family members and to the land as stewards (Wilson 2008). A stranger would not know by looking at one shirt what some of the recurring images and figures represent. For example, Uncle Steve typically includes a small design of a tube with legs poking up out of it. This represents his wife, my Aunt Paula, to poke fun at her, but also to communicate the fact that she would always flip her tube every time she floated. The fact that she no longer participates in float trips, precisely because she would always flip, is also unapparent to those outside of our community. This watermark of sorts has become a signature inclusion in many of the shirts. Without asking, it is just another silly little figure that holds no meaning or value to someone outside of our built kinship networks.

Several outlandish stories are preserved through Tahlequah shirts. In particular, the 2007 edition is an illustration of a black spider monkey with a tube. Steve drew this in response to Paula's alleged sighting of a monkey on the banks of the river while they were driving into town. Others speculate she could have seen a black panther, which is also just as unlikely, in my opinion. Whatever she saw, she believed it was a long-tailed monkey, and thus the shirt was created. I cannot help but draw a comparison to the 1976 novel *Summer of the Monkeys,* in which a young boy discovers a train car of escaped circus monkeys in the Oklahoma Ozarks.

Figure 13: Image of shirt design from 2007

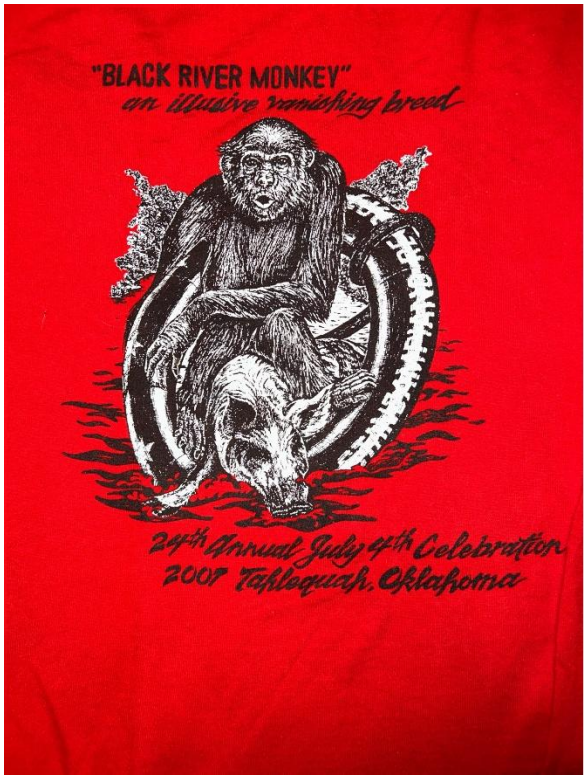
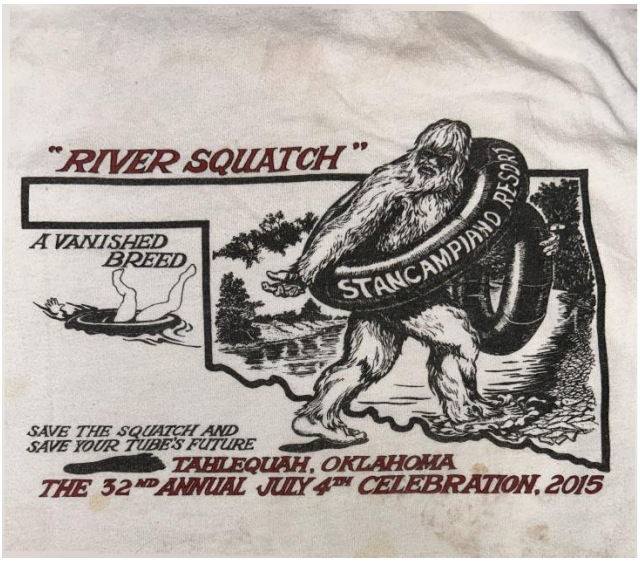


Figure 14: Image of shirt design from 2015

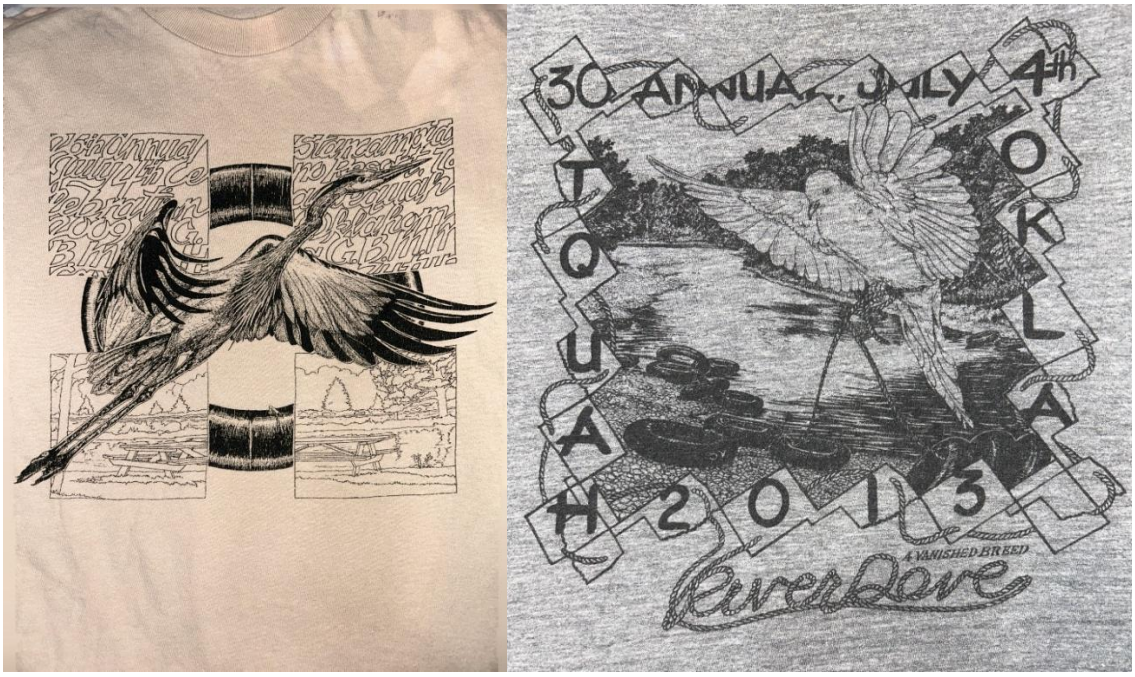


In 2015, the non-human kinships found within our network extended beyond a physical or tangible reality when a cryptozoological relative was the center of the shirt. Much to the

annoyance of my uncle Tony, who earned his PhD in microbiology, a “River Squatch” was the central design element on the 2015 t-shirt. A variant, or bastardization, of the common cryptid Sasquatch, this silly design is one of pure comedy. Steve enjoys bellowing his “squatch call” throughout the lower valley where the little cabin is located. His ‘calls’ could be heard through the thick trees, even at the top of the big hill. Steve once led my young cousin Sam on a Sasquatch hunt, leading him throughout the property, having already scouted the area himself and constructing several ‘nests’ for Sam to find.

Animals are used to communicate stories that are only apparent to our closest relatives. There are three shirts that depict a singular flying bird, 2009, 2013, and 2022. These represent women who passed in the year prior. They are flying, moving on from us to another place and time. The first in the series, a Great Blue Heron, represents my mother’s sister, Joan. A Mourning Dove, wreathed in a border that incorporates the shapes of Oklahoma and Colorado, represents my uncle Michael’s wife, Cathy. Lastly, a Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, with an interpretation of a Choctaw sun symbol, honors my grandmother, Maxine.

Figure 15: Images of shirt designs from 2009, 2013, and 2022





To an outsider, they are simply pretty birds on a shirt. They mean more than that.

Tahlequah shirts create what Dr. Harjo calls a kin-space-time envelope, guiding the wearer and

the viewer to a memory associated with the details of the design or simply the physical shirt (Harjo 2019). When we wear these specific shirts, it is a constant reminder of the relationship we shared with those who are gone (Harjo 2019). Each comment or compliment on these shirts creates ripples of the love and joy that was shared with each of these women. Through a tactile sensory experiecne, we are drawn toward the living memory of these women, our own matriarchs, and experience their love and grieve their loss, each time we wear their shirts.

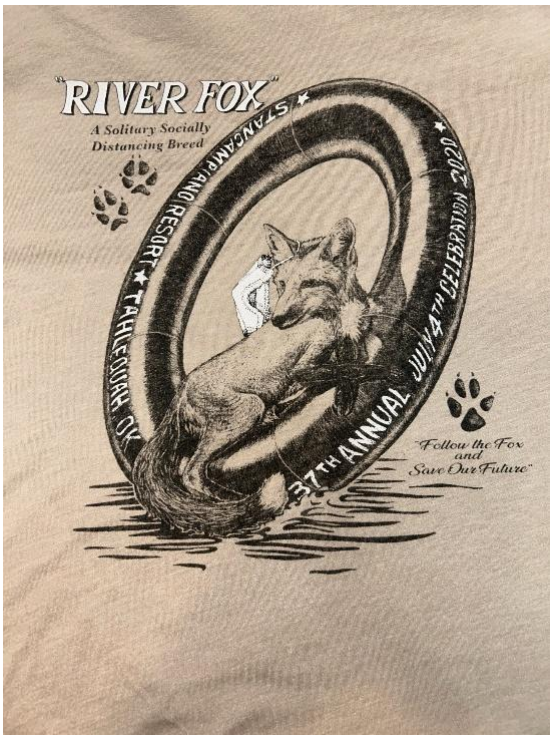
Sociopolitical events like elections and pandemics are recalled using animal relatives, and positioned as historical markers or memory pieces (Colwell and Fergeson 2006). Two examples include “MAKE THE RIVER GREAT AGAIN” of 2017 and the River Fox design from 2020. The “MRGA” design was an intentional misrepresentation of the campaign slogan of President Donald Trump, following his first election in 2016. Proud Democrats, my family had no issue wearing this interpretation of the controversial phrase. I must clarify that while the Illinois River has had past issues with pollution, it has *always* been great.

Figure 16: Image of shirt design from 2017



The design of the 2020 shirt was clearly and directly influenced by the global pandemic that began in March of that year. The shirt continues the solo animal trend, depicting a red "River Fox" which made its den under the Little Cabin when Steve and Paula quaratined there. The fox is described as "a solitary, socially distanced breed," with a medical mask hanging off of one pointed ear. The bottom right corner reads: "Follow the Fox, Save our Future." The social contract upheld through quarantine and beyond is arguably the most prevalent example of a reciprocal, realtional accountability framework within contemporary society (Wilson 2008). Through this design, the importance of understanding one's own role within a broader relational network is on full display. This is reinforced by the connection to individual action, like social distancing, to a larger ethical framework that incorporates care for interconnected kinship networks like the one found at the "Stancampiano Resort."

Figure 17: Image of shirt design from 2020



Both of these designs function as creative mediums for storytelling and historical preservation methods. Furthermore, they serve as examples of social commentary isolated within the context of a place-based framework. They promote dialogue around the pandemic and its lasting effects, as well as the decade characterized by a shift toward authoritarianism under Donald Trump and his MAGA movement. These shirts can be utilized as an educational tool for future generations to spark discussion about the context in which we live. Every relative wearing a shirt is therefore an educator, a living expert.

I am confident in my own expertise (Wilson 2008); in the felt knowledge (Harjo 2019) and imbued memory within the Tahlequah shirts. Returning to the stories depicted on the shirts, and those created while we wear them, strengthens my connections to my relatives contained within. Remembering and retelling the details pulls each story into the future and ensures that they will last even after every shirt is turned to rags (Harjo 2019). The confidence I have gained through a continued futurity praxis (Harjo 2019), and the support of my own relational accountability network (Wilson 2008), are what empower me to quantify our stories in the following section.

Quantitative Storytelling

The personal connection I have to this material is overtly apparent. Despite my intimate connection to the stories and memories present in the Tahlequah shirts, I felt that approaching the series from a quantitative perspective would help me to communicate the underlying connections between each actor printed on display in our kinship network. The use of SNA visualizes the stories and themes and relationships that are not immediately clear when wearing or observing several shirts. While each story is specific to the year in which it was designed and printed, there are several long-term, overarching themes that are observable through network analysis.

Turning Our Stories into Data

To quantify the visual data found within the shirt designs, I observed the network maps for all three levels of data and analyzed each by measuring degree and betweenness centrality. I created closeness degree networks for each level of data I collected. However, they are not included in this project. The values present, I believe, were insignificant due to the large 'distance' between over one hundred distinct actors present in the large data set. Furthermore, the themes presented by the degree and closeness networks told the same story, which can be more clearly explained though degree centrality. When the adjacency matrixes from all three data sets were analyzed in SocNet Visualizer, the following results were most apparent.

Degree Centrality

Degree centrality measures the number of direct connections a node has to others. It communicates the node's prominence or activity within the network. A node with a high degree centrality is highly connected and therefore viewed as influential because of its many immediate ties (Opsahl et al. 2010, 1).

Figure 18: Degree Centrality Network, Level 1 Data, Appendix D, Table 1

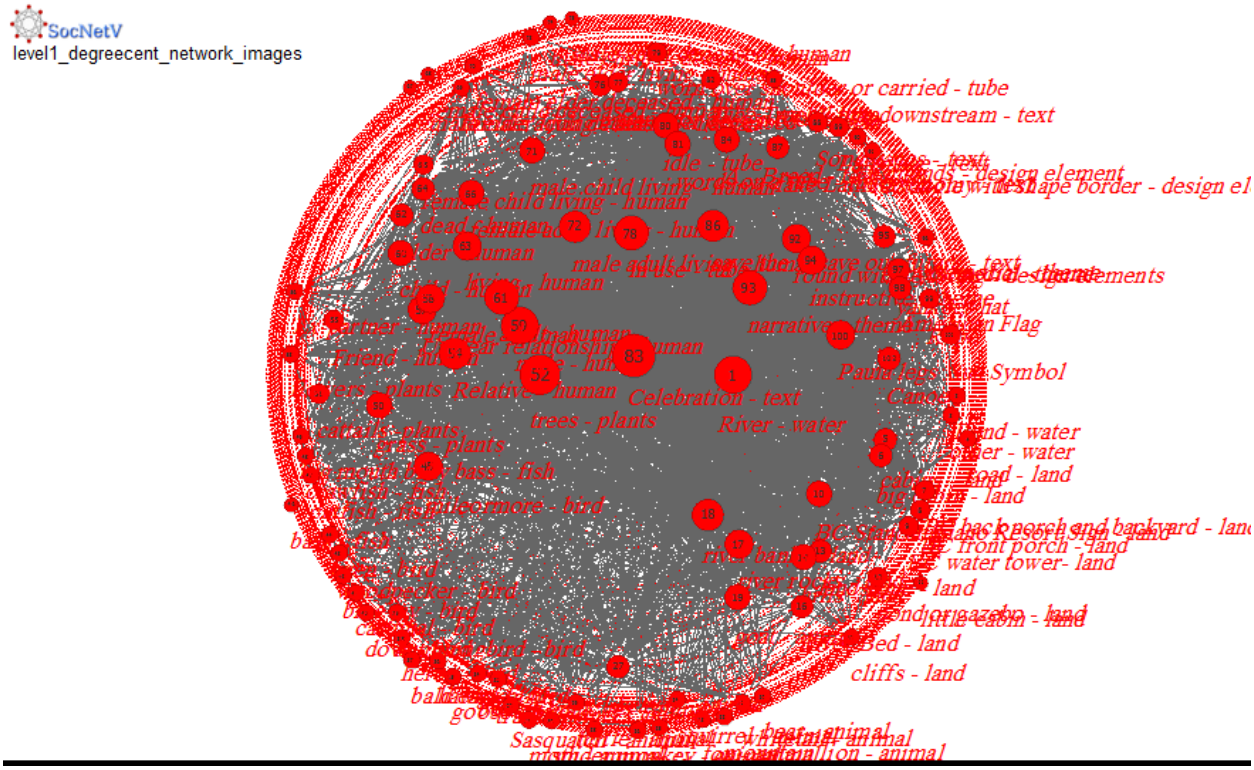


Figure 19: Degree Centrality Network, Level 2 Data, Appendix D, Table 2

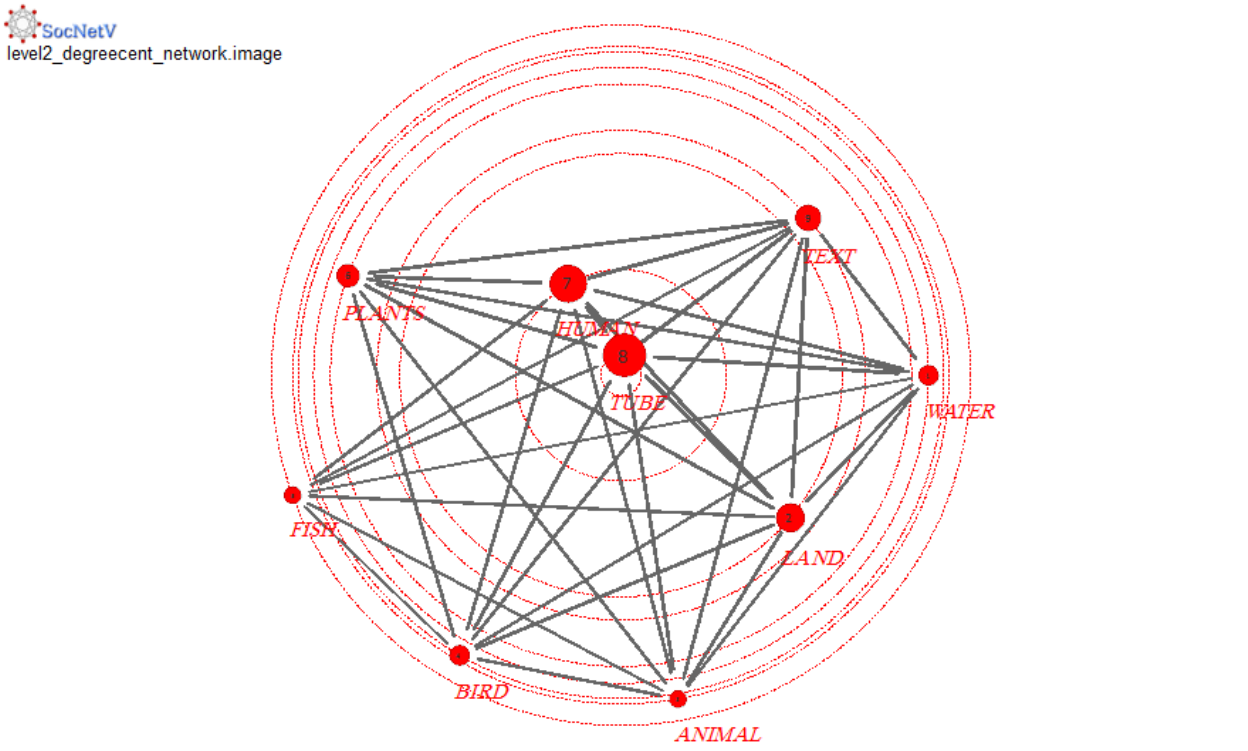
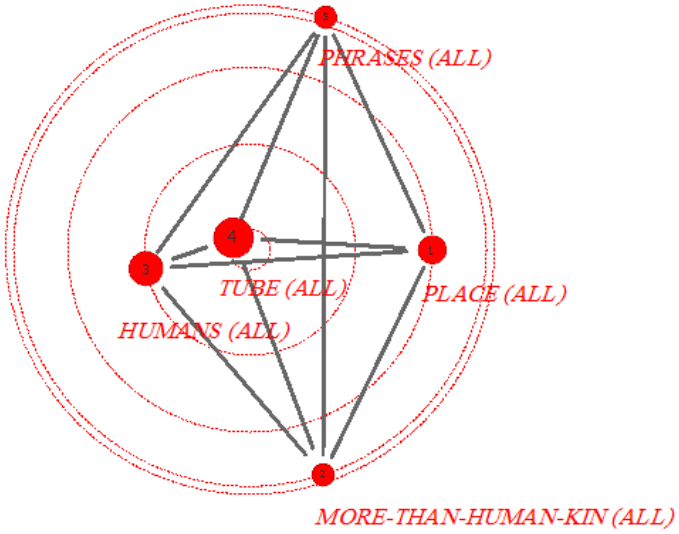


Figure 20: Degree Centrality Network, Level 3 Data, Appendix D, Table 3

SocNetV
level3_degreecent_network.image



The first network map I created was a total count network consisting of all possible Tahlequah shirt components. It is a robust and diverse network, with 102 nodes, or actors. There are so many nodes that the visual connections between each blur together (network 1). This is the most particularistic network that I created, meaning the data for each centrality measurement is very granular. Most individual nodes have very few connections, decreasing their level of centrality, or relationality within our kinship-network.

For instance, specific animals, like a beaver or bear, have very few co-occurrences with other shirt components. When aggregated into a larger category, like “Animal -ALL,” or “More-Than-Human-Kin - ALL” the combined values reveal more centrality within our community. In the total count network, "Celebration" is the most central actor. Steve put the phrase “The […]

Annual July 4th Celebration" on almost every Tahlequah shirt. Trees and River water are close in number of connections to "Celebration," centering plants and water as the most common specific visual components across all Tahlequah shirts. The granularity of this network means that the relationships between specific components are spread thinly across the shirts, with many components appearing only once, offering no additional relational data.

The middle-tier network was simplified into nine broad categories: Human, Tube, Land, Water, Animal, Bird, Fish, Plants, and Phrases (Text). At this level, the kinship network is no longer driven by specific relationships. Instead, larger themes of direct relational centrality begin to emerge. The aggregation of specific nodes shifted the centrality of components in a considerable way. When combined, all instances of a Tube, in any form or use, are now the most connected design component. All human relatives are also more central to the network after aggregation. This means Tubes and Humans share more connections to other nodes than most other combined categories, thus designating them with a higher relevance within the place-based kinship system. Furthermore, categories like Land, Water, Plants, and Phrases have a more moderate level of centrality (network 3). This caused a reduction in the overall relational centrality of Trees and River Water. However, the categories of Plants and Water increase as other plants and water types are incorporated. So, while those specific types decrease in centrality, the categories they belong to do not.

The themes present in the mid-tier network remained consistent when the highest tier network was created. Tubes and Humans dominate as central components (network 3). However, the gap between nodes is much smaller. Implementing larger aggregate groups necessitated that all categories are more integral to the design of a shirt, communicating centrality more than the particularistic definitions in prior networks.

Betweenness Centrality

Betweenness centrality measured by how often a node lies along the shortest paths between other nodes (Opsahl et al. 2010, 2). This categorizes the node as an intermediary or bridge within the social network (Opsahl et al. 2010, 2). Nodes with high betweenness centrality measurements are not always the most directly connected. However, they are crucial for connecting different nodes of the network and facilitating the flow of information or resources. While degree centrality highlights nodes that are highly connected, betweenness centrality identifies hose that hold strategic structural positions within the network.

Figure 21: Betweenness Centrality Network, Level 1 Data, Appendix E, Table 1

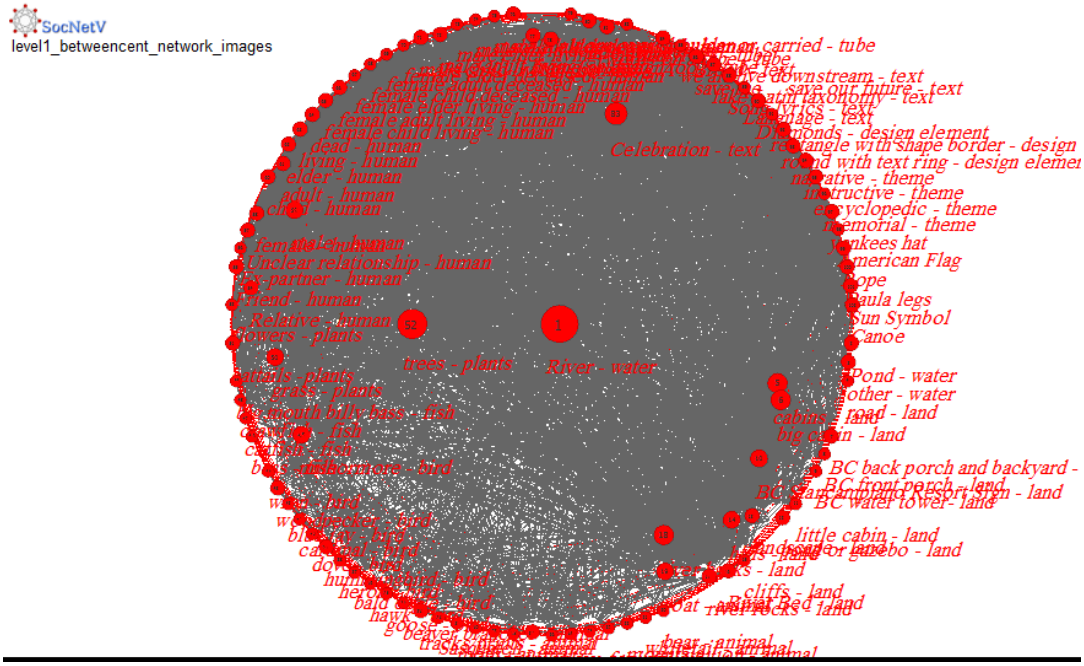


Figure 22: Betweenness Centrality Network, Level 2 Data, Appendix E, Table 2

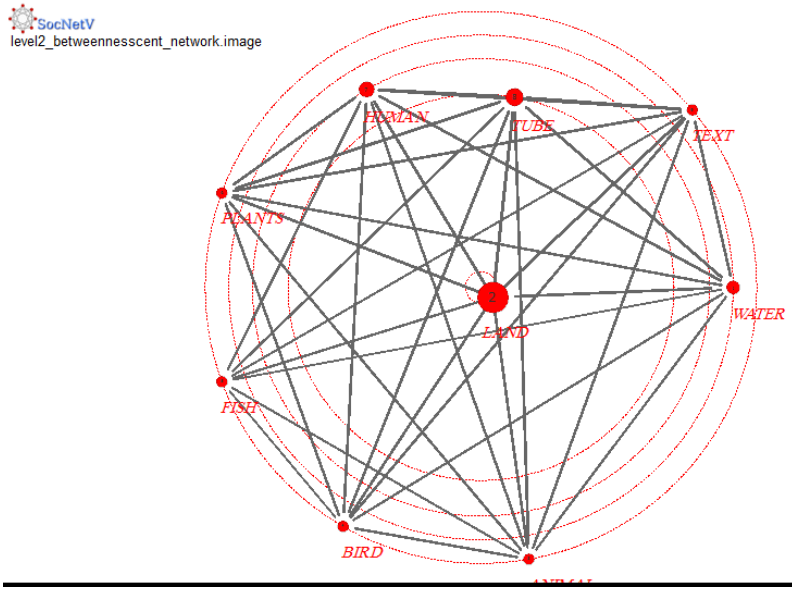
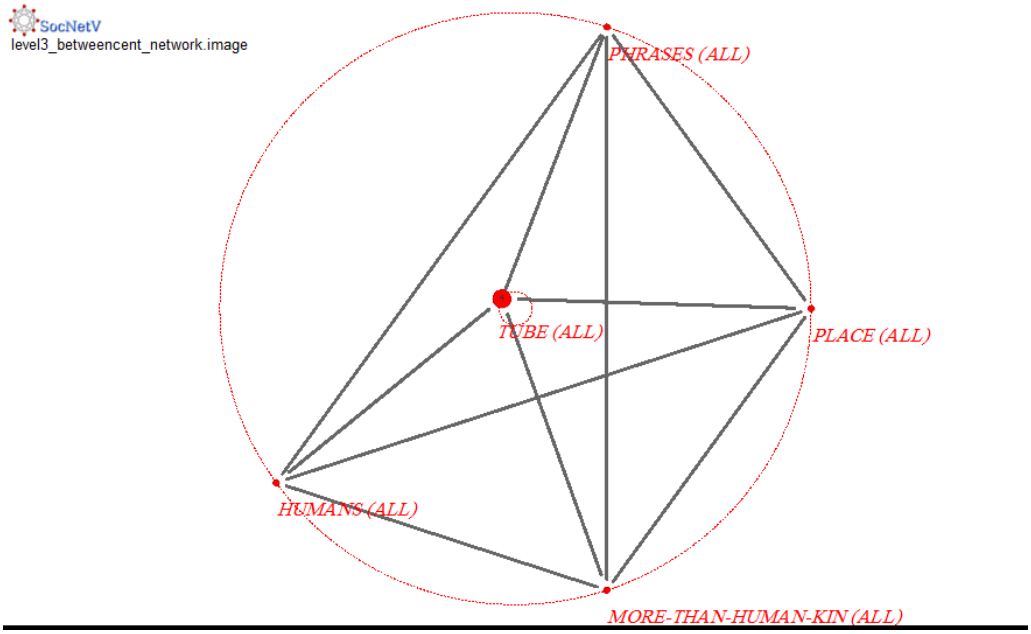


Figure 23: Betweenness Centrality Network, Level 3 Data, Appendix E, Table 3



When measured by betweenness centrality, the largest data set was dominated by one single node. River water was the primary central node out of all 102 actors. River Water had the

highest individual Betweenness Centrality (BC') of 0.615 (network 4). This means that River Water connects sixty-one percent of all other components to another found within the network. Trees and "Celebration" remain central as well, but with only around thirty-eight and nineteen percent respectively (network 4). Much like the degree centrally measured, many of the nodes in this network map do not facilitate any relationships among other components. The shirts rely on the same small number of specific visual designs to connect peripheral nodes into the network.

The mid-level network, when measured by betweenness centrality, presents a more hierarchical structure of relationship creation. Of the nine categories, Land serves as the most common bridge between components (network 5). Therefore, Land is positioned as more than the setting or background of each shirt. It is a living component of our network that actively interacts and connects with relatives. The centrality of land within this specific network reinforces a place-based notion of kinship networks. Our shirts communicate more than location. However, unlike the other betweenness reports, Tubes, Humans, and Water contribute to a modest number of relationships (network 5). Fish, Plants, and Phrases do little to connect components together (network 5).

With the highest level of aggregation, there is only a single node functioning as a relationship facilitator (network 6). Tube - ALL is the exclusive bridging actor (network 6). The cohesion of the entire high-level network is reliant on the visual of a tube. Without the category of Tube - ALL, the four other categories would be entirely disconnected from one another. The importance of this will be discussed below.

Turning Our Stories into Data, and then back into Stories

Through the visualization of our relationships with network maps, and the analysis of the present data, there are a number of narratives, both apparent and surprising to my family, that I will discuss here.

The most connected particularistic actor within the networks was the label of "Celebration." Only seven shirts were missing this word in their designs. It is more than a simple descriptive label. It is a declaration of what brings the entire extended kinship-network together. For some, the weekend is still centered on Independence Day. For others, the celebration is derived from the continued return to the area, the tradition of coming together to interact with each other, the land, the River, and the more-than-human inhabitants. "Celebration" is the guiding principle in which the family approaches the land. Some members of our family still view the US holiday as the motive for celebration, while others, including myself, view the gathering and returning to the land and river as the reason for celebrating, even if that sounds a little redundant.

River and trees serve as inanimate relatives that work as both environmental contextualization, or a form of place-making, and as interactive members of the network, specifically the River.. Land, among other animate place-making components like trees or river water, is a central connector between network nodes and relatives. Its prominence reveals it is an active and living member of our network, grounding relatives and providing a space for us to gather and celebrate The centrality of land again demonstrates how our kinship-network is more than just a location, and that the inclusion of the land as an active and living member of our network is a necessary component of communicating our identity and its continuation.

Humans are the most common form of relative present in the series; however, their prevalence is due to the group depictions of much of the shirts. Human relatives appear on less total shirts than animals, but their group depiction, emphasizing the communal experience of floating, increases their centrality within a weighted network. Animals, and more-than-human kin as a category, are not as central when aggregated together. This surprises me because of the reoccurring theme of a solo animal with a tube. However, unlike humans, animals are rarely depicted in groups, increasing their binary frequency across shirts over time, but ultimately decreasing their weighted centrality among network maps. Regardless of whether it is a human or animal, they are almost always depicted with a tube.

The water flows through every aspect of the network, connecting t-shirt design elements like they are Choctaw tribal towns. Without it, we would not survive, physically and socially

When the most aggregated data set was measured by betweenness centrality, Tubes were revealed to be the only connecting category between the other four. Without tubes, Place, Humans, More-than-Human-Kin and even text phrases would not be connected to one another. This once again illustrates the river float's importance within our family and solidifies the tubes as representative of the river.

The tubes we use in the river float are the most central component of the entire shirt series. When aggregated into one category that included every instance of a tube, it was apparent that tubes were the most prevalent of any possible actor. They represent the annual river float tradition and serve as the method of facilitation. The process, or praxis, of a river float is repeated multiple times per year but is specifically the central event of each July 4th Celebration. The prevalence of tubes throughout the shirt series demonstrates how our interactions with the Illinois River are an integral part of how our family navigates through life. Their continued

reoccurrence draws the mind of a person wearing or viewing the shirt toward the sensory experience of a float and materializes any associated stories or memories (Harjo 2019; Borck 2019; Colwell and Fergeson 2006).

The tubes also incorporate more-than-human kin into the family network. Human relatives use tubes to connect with one another and with the River. Therefore, the depiction of animals using or carrying tubes envelopes them into the float tradition. By placing both humans and animals using tubes and interacting with the River, Steve communicates the reciprocal and equal relationship we share within our kinship network.

Beyond the practical aspects of using a tube, like mobility, the tubes serve as physical and metaphorical vehicles for our connection to the River. We sit with the water, and intimately experience the depth, temperature, and speed of the water with our bodies. The tubes facilitate this physical connection. They also act as a means to enact relational accountability between relatives and the Illinois River. When we experience the physical qualities of the water, through the use of inner tubes, we know how to interact with one another and the River. We know when to wait and pray for rain, or instead, respect the speed, depth, and strength of the current by not floating. We can estimate the timeline of a given float or expect to call out “Buttsup!” to others based on the knowledge attainable through the praxis of the float. The tubes facilitate our praxis, which has created an intimate connection between human relatives and the water. When reading the centrality of the tubes within the networks, this knowledge is not readily understood without the context of our float tradition.

The tubes are material objects that are not based on Choctaw material culture, and yet they are a physical and metaphorical method of connecting members within our place-based community. Tubes facilitate the float tradition and enable a closer connection between relatives

and the river water. The shirts communicate their centrality within our network by their frequency and integration with all types of relatives within their designs. Thus, without the River and our float tradition, our kinship network could not be displayed as it is now and would not exist in the same manner.

Birds are on the peripheral of every network. Other than fish, which are rarely included at all, Birds are the least connected type of non-human being. On memorial shirts, Birds are the focal point of each design. Thus, many of the components that communicate place or relationality are left out. Their separation from other design elements positions the bird as the subject, elevating the lives they represent. The birds are not placed within the place-based network of relationships, representative of their separation through death. However, wearing and sharing a memorial shirt reintroduces our matriarchs back into the kinship-network by reviving their knowledge and memories.

Both personal (qualitative) and quantitative methods tell the same story. Human relatives are the most frequently appearing members of the community. However, they are almost always depicted in groups, typically on a float. The river float is the most central action to our family's celebration. Tubes show our prominent relationship with the river and the role it plays in bringing together every relative within the network. We use the tubes to connect components within designs, incorporate human and more-than-human relatives into the kinship network, and to directly interact with the water. The river, represented by the tube, is the most necessary factor in our survival and existence within the network (Turner 2021).

Conclusion

My concurrent roles as a family member and researcher mutually informed how I approached the Tahlequah Shirt data in this project (Wilson 2008). When I reflect on my comparison of personal and quantitative storytelling, I am pleased to know that both methods arrived at the same conclusions about my family's identity and position within our kinship network.

We are approaching our place-based kinship network through a context of celebration, which serves as both the obvious and underlying theme for every relational interaction at the Stancampiano Resort. The relationships at work within the community are dependent on authentic interaction (Wilson 2008).

The Illinois River is the lifeline of our community. It serves as the primary connection between human and non-human relatives and facilitates physical and intangible relationships within a kin-space-time envelope (Harjo 2019). The tubes we use to float the river communicate our relationship with the river and serve as visual reminders of our reciprocal exchange on display in Tahlequah Shirts (Borck 2018). Human relatives are the most frequently depicted members of our community, typically shown in collaborative groups (network 2, 3, etc.). However, animals and birds play a significant role in the overall narrative of the shirt, appearing as the central design component on over half of the entire series. They serve as equivalent substitutes and communicate a variety of stories that range from fictious or outlandish (McConnell 2007; 2015) to deeply personal (McConnell 2022).

The Tahlequah shirts give a glimpse of the varied perspectives across Indian Country, especially in a state like Oklahoma, where jurisdiction, community, and personal attitude are as

varied as the tribes that call this land home. Two shirt designs use imagery that some may find distasteful or problematic. However, the context in which they were created, combined with the changes in theme and growth in cultural connection over time reveal a continual (re)evaluation and (re)discovery of my family's Indigenous identity, and our role within a larger kinship network.

Beyond our own identities, we are working to reestablish a system of place-based knowledge. The land, River, and other living relatives are not resources for extraction or overconsumption. We reject the contemporary land use practices that dominate the region by entering a relational accountability framework that includes all forms of animate and inanimate relatives. Our continued existence and resistance are ensured against the changing settler colonial project, by creating and wearing our identity on our shirts.

The shirts are used to reform and revive our own kinship networks. I position this project as an example or starting point for families and communities who have been historically fractured by removal and settler colonial policies. By discovering and using memory pieces as a method of community continuity and continuation, relatives are drawn toward the living memories and experiences of relatives across space and time. I want this project to serve as a model for any person or community wanting to assert agency over their own identity and narrative to preserve the knowledge contained within their history and relationships.

When reflecting on the creation and implementation of this project, I want my methods of data collection and description to serve as a guide for those who might not otherwise embark on a research journey. I hope to illustrate through my own family's shirts that there are diverse and underacknowledged forms of knowledge archives within Indigenous communities, especially those who feel they are ruptured or otherwise disconnected from a larger community or

ceremony. Other art forms like sketches or photographs, or material objects like concert tickets, powwow contest bibs, or even grocery receipts tell the story of a family or community. These archives can be analyzed and discussed using the methodologies and methods I have outlined here.

I will use this project to continue the mending of my own family's ruptured relationship with our Choctaw community. Particularly because 2026 is the 250th anniversary of the United States' "independence." This year marks a major milestone for both the US settler-colonial project and my family. In response to this milestone, I want to outline here some steps I would like to take to indigenize the 2026 Stancampiano July 4th Celebration.

First and foremost, the shirt tradition should be continued with the same level of intentionality and respect given by Steve. I would like us to create new shirts or repurpose old stories that blend family memories with reoccurring or newly incorporated traditional Choctaw imagery. For instance, the inclusion or blending of origin stories or folklore with our own family origins, such as Joe's hereditary blindness or a recognition of both our Irish and Choctaw heritage, and the historical connections between those two communities. The blending, or braiding, of our histories and identities is an unexpected (Deloria 2004) way to communicate within and project outside of our family. Furthermore, I want to encourage the use of the Chahta language to describe relatives, meals, and locations. But just a simple "halito!" or "yakoke" is a foundational shift and direct action to connect with our ancestors and re-align the focus of our celebration. Additionally, I have always wanted to incorporate stickball into the regular games we play, in addition to things like volleyball or basketball.

Returning to the shirts throughout my life, and analyzing them in an academic capacity, has allowed me to categorize the physical shirts and the designs contained on them as mnemonic

tools (Borck 2018). They act as physical pieces of communal networks, and visual manifestations of stories about relatives and our interactions with the land and river. They are more than pieces of fabric. They are now a part of the places they portray (Borck 2018).

Likewise, the reminder that "We All Live Downstream," encapsulates the multifaceted concept of a kin-space-time-envelope. We are accountable to each other, as family members, but also to the more-than-human-kin and River as relatives (Wilson 2008). Our place-based network is downstream from another family or network, with another community existing downstream from our own. This also extends across time and space, as we are downstream from Maxine, Steve, and our other ancestors, while our own descendants, like Bubba's child due in October 2026, are downstream from us. Our mobile and reoccurring shirts are representative of the spectrum of our community relationality across place, space, and time, while also living as a means of connecting points along the spectrum and enacting relational accountability between them.

Tahlequah Shirts are infused with the felt-knowledge and experiential memory of our family and are used to demonstrate our continual connections to place and more-than-human kin. When the shirts are worn and viewed by relatives, they guide us to remember the feelings, memories, and stories associated with the places and relatives that are found in the designs (Harjo 2019). The futurity praxis of the object life relationship in a reciprocal, self-fulfilling process that expands our family and kinship-network that strengthens every time a shirt is worn, even if only to go buy groceries or while taking a nap. To borrow, once again, from LeAnne Howe: "our stories are unending connections to past, present, and future. And, even if worse comes to worst and our people forget where we left our stories, the birds will remember and bring them back to us" (Howe 2013).

The shirt tradition is a continual and ongoing process, even after we lost Steve in March 2025. There are not any new shirts being designed and printed yet. For now, the repeated act of wearing the shirts, and returning to the Illinois River, strengthens and empowers our relationships with each action (Harjo 2019). The relationships found within the Tahlequah Shirt designs are carried into the future to be (re)built and remembered. Our stories are fundamentally foundational to our relationships with one another. By printing and preserving our own story in visible designs, we facilitate a reciprocal cycle of place-making and community building through relationships. Each time we wear a shirt, we are always called to remember that *We All Live Downstream.*

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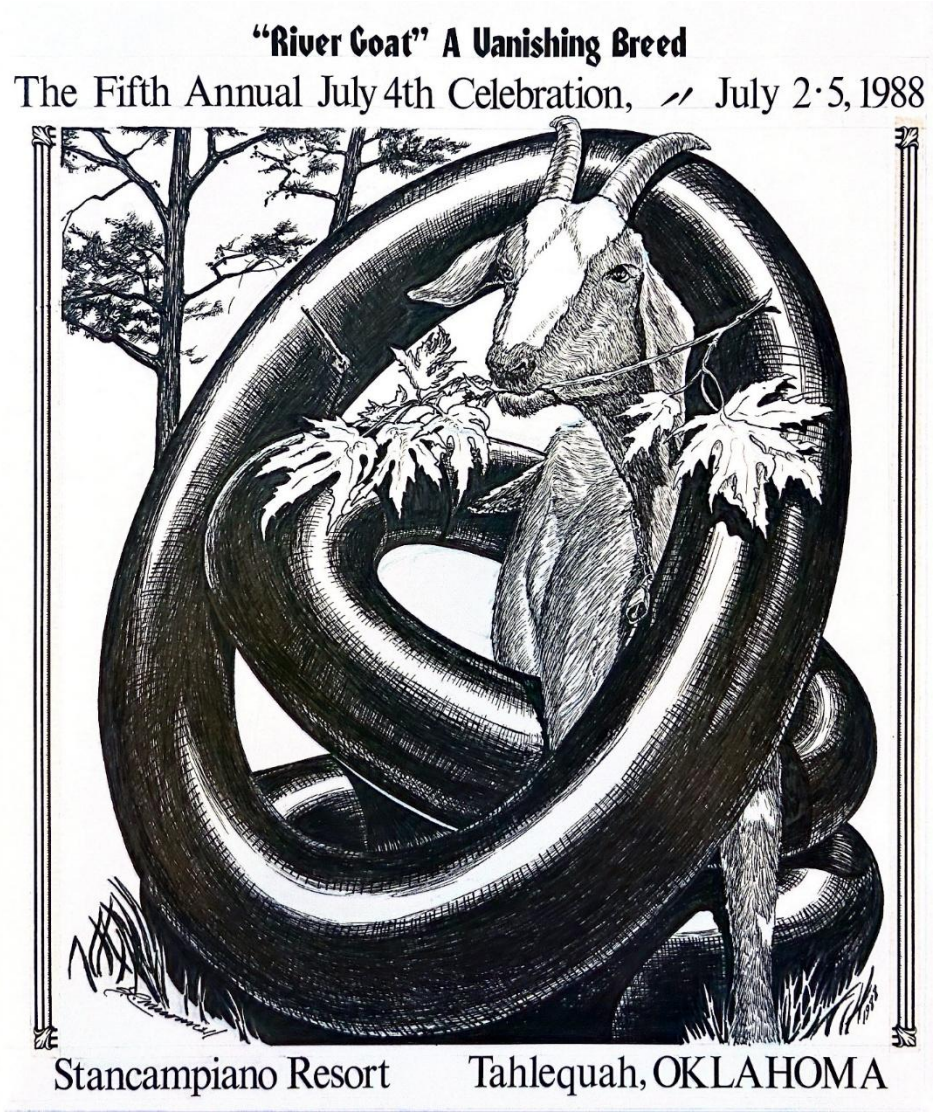
Appendix A.

Appendix A, Figure 1



Appendix A, Figure 2



Appendix A, Figure 3



Appendix A, Figure 4



Appendix A, Figure 5



Appendix A, Figure 6



Appendix A, Figure 7



Appendix A, Figure 8



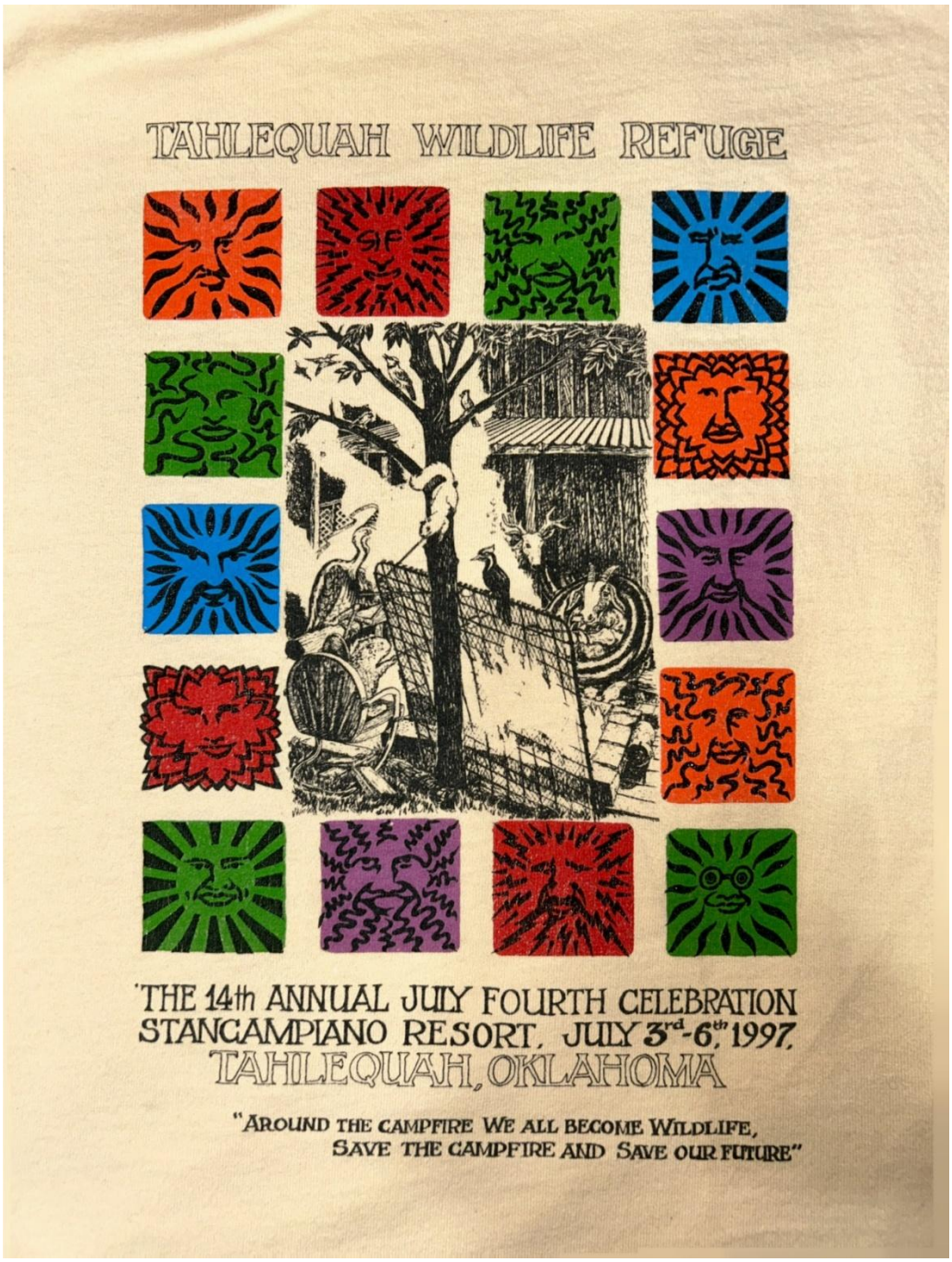
Appendix A, Figure 9



Appendix A, Figure 10



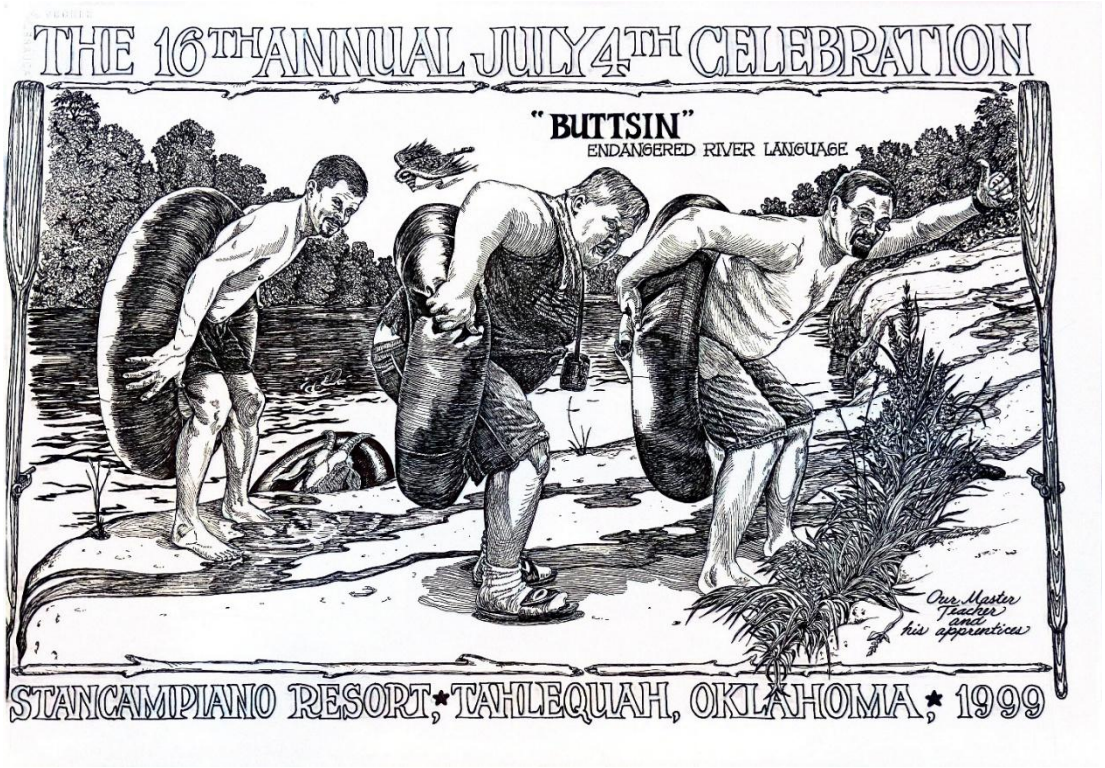
Appendix A, Figure 11



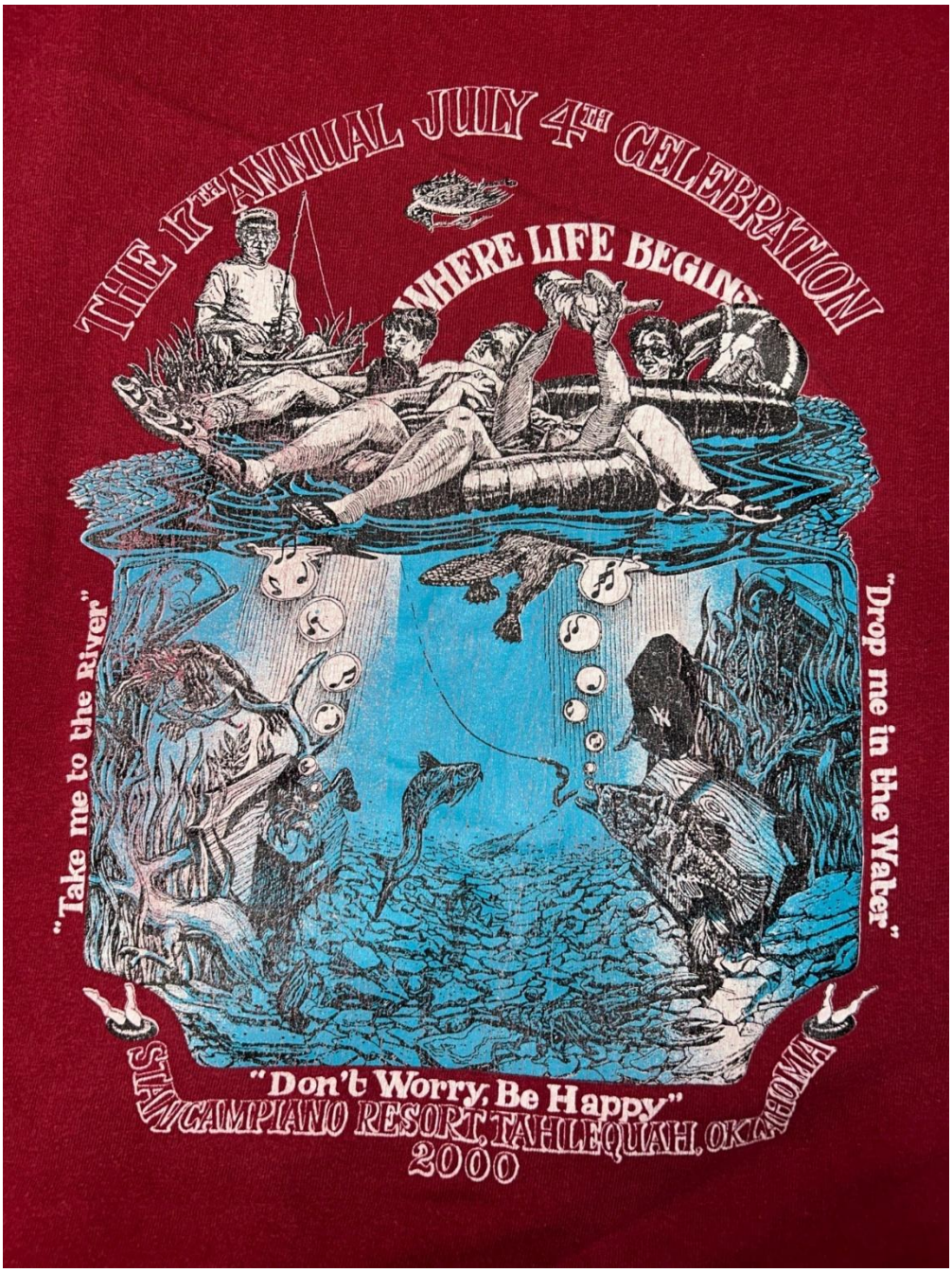
Appendix A, Figure 12



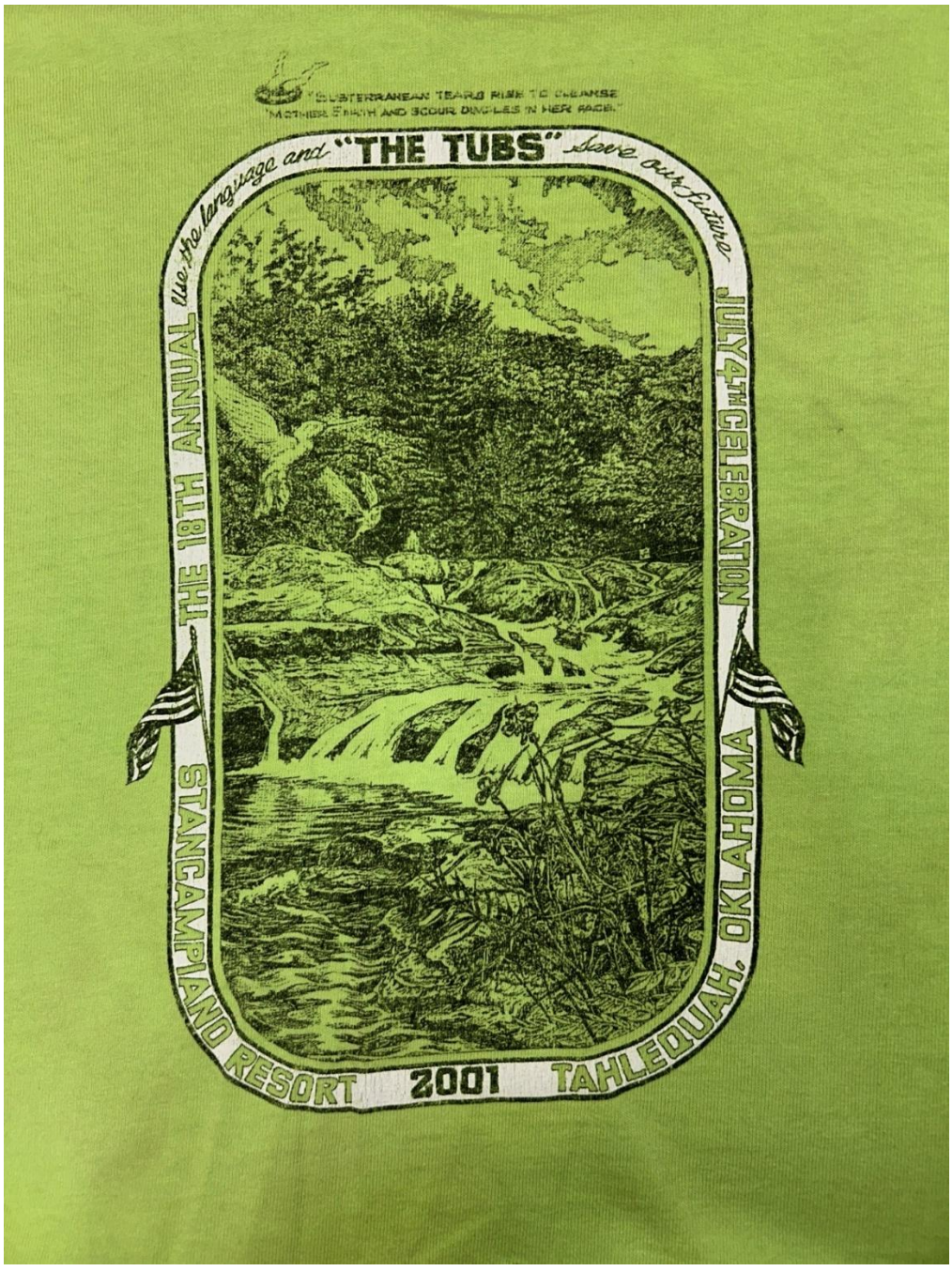
Appendix A, Figure 13



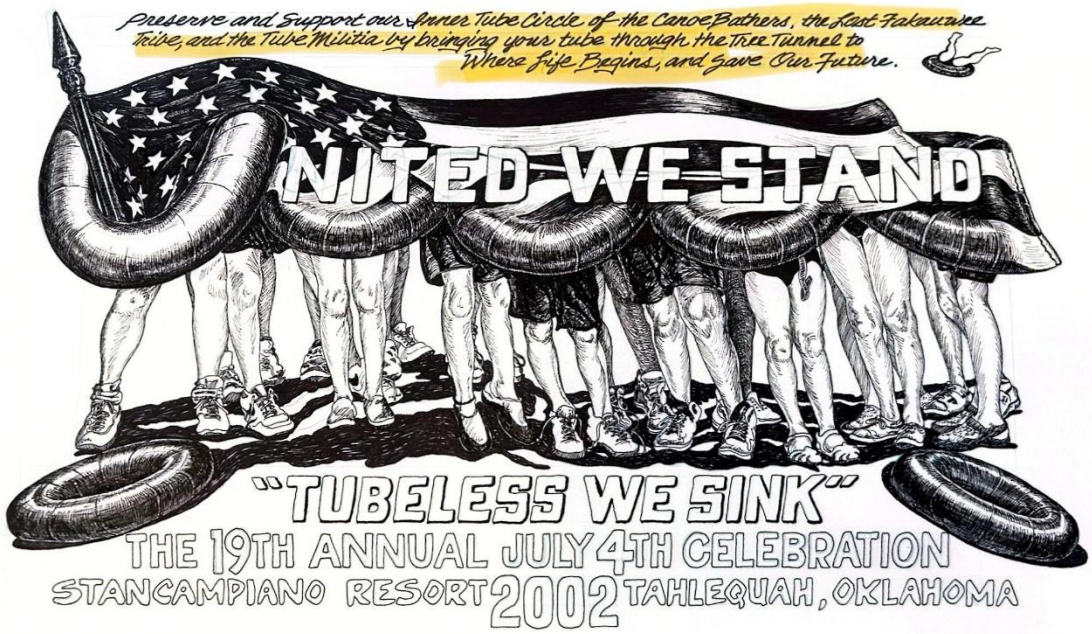
Appendix A, Figure 14



Appendix A, Figure 15



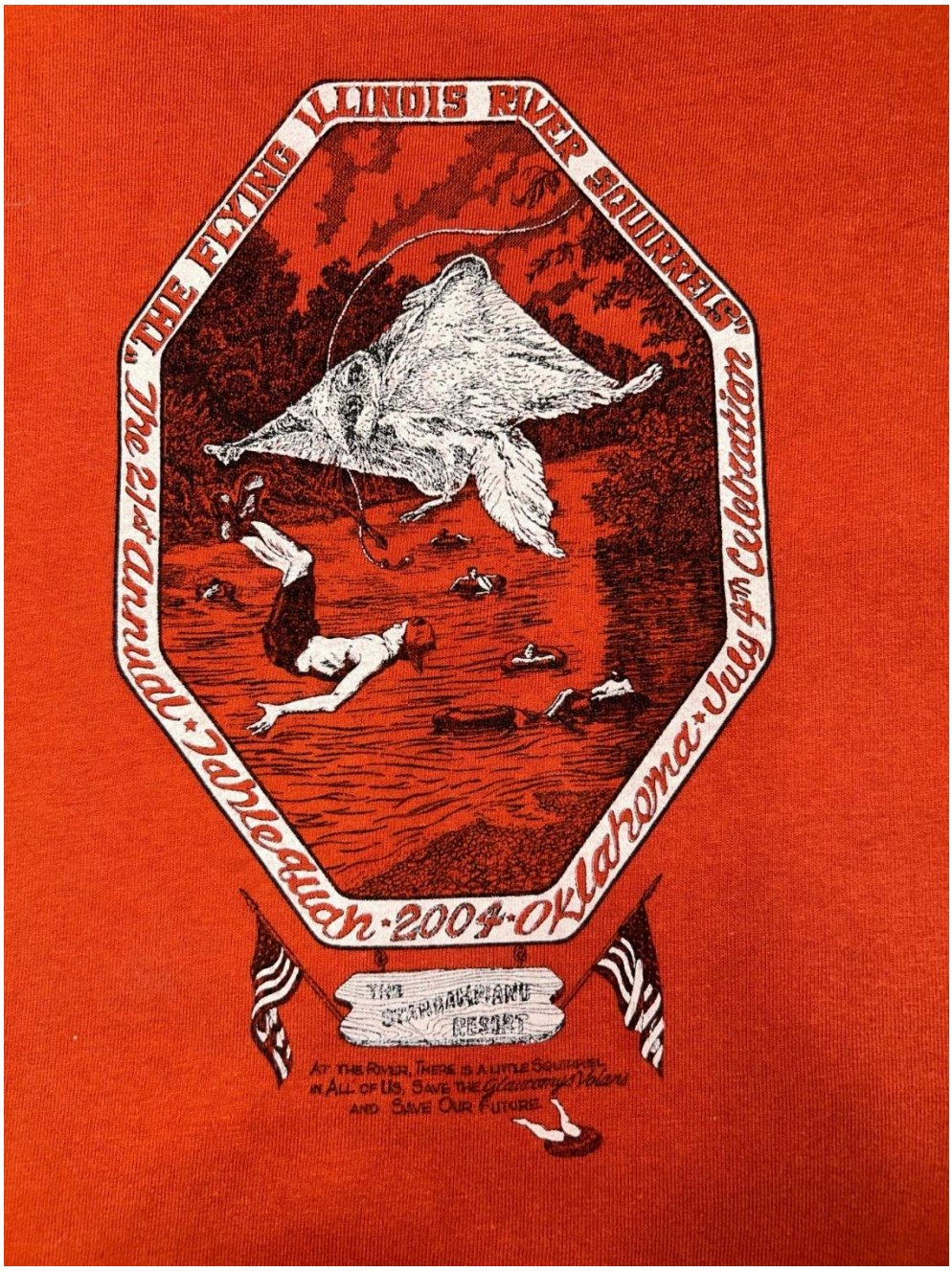
Appendix A, Figure 16



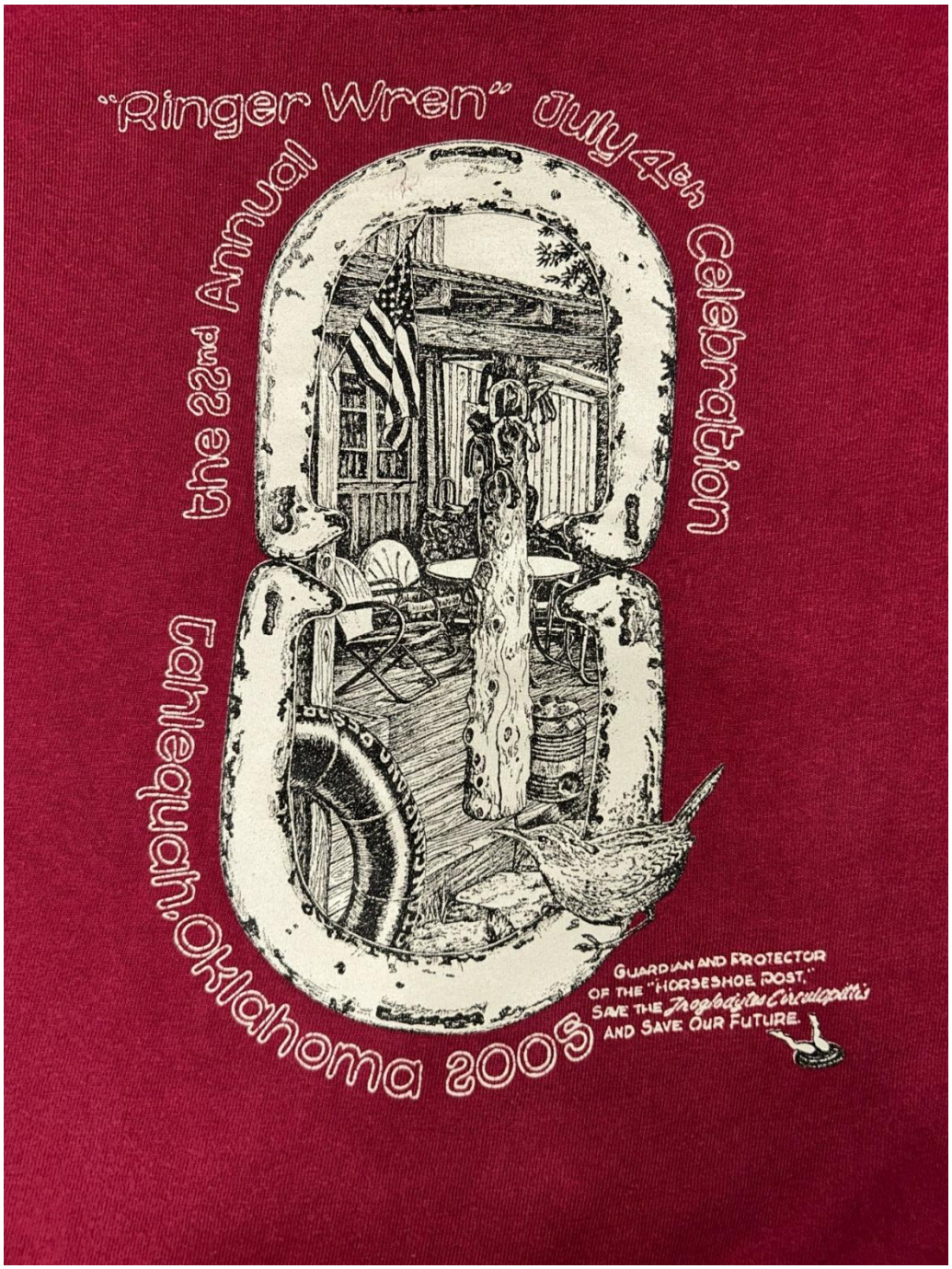
Appendix A, Figure 17



Appendix A, Figure 18



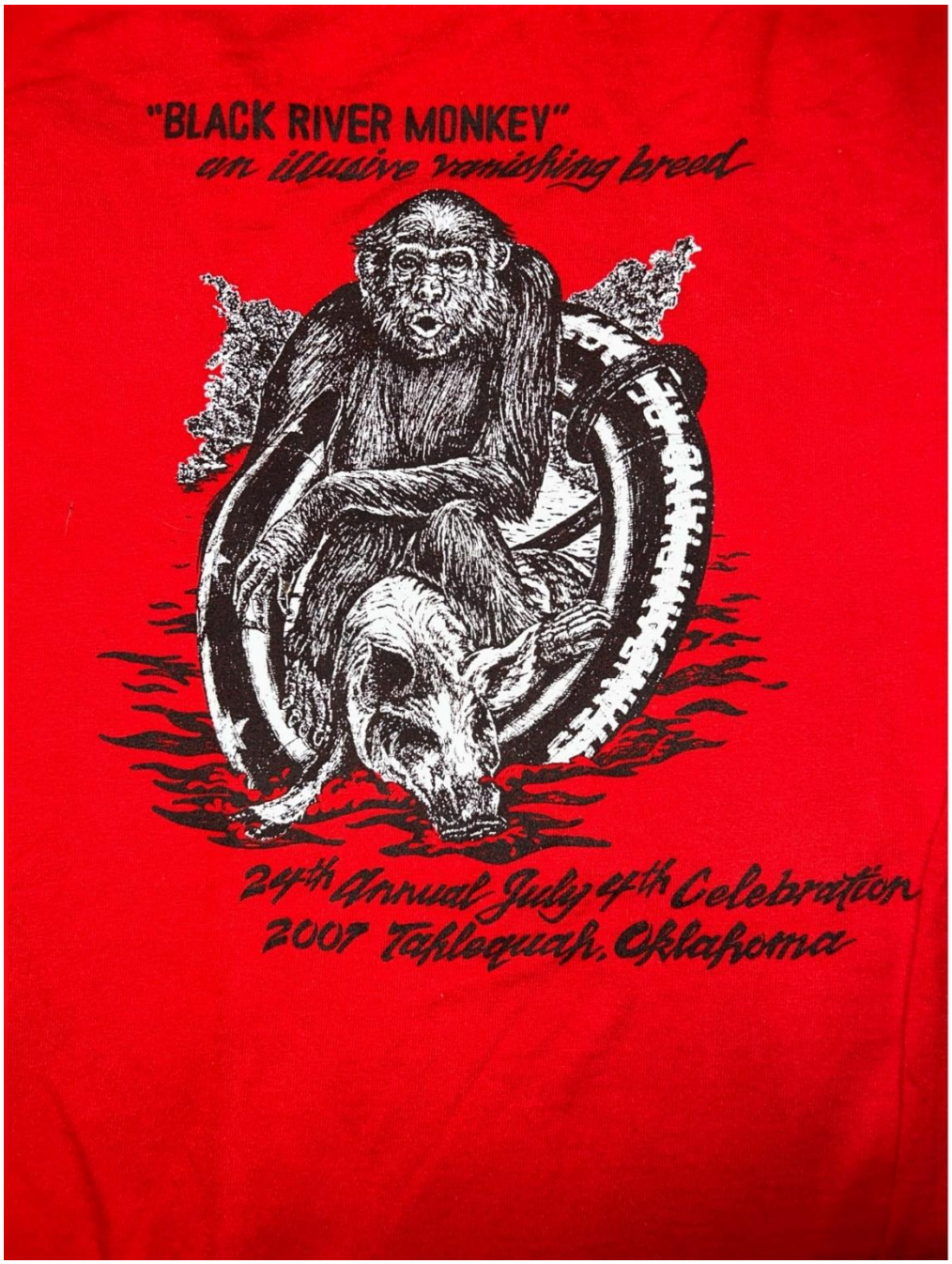
Appendix A, Figure 19



Appendix A, Figure 20



Appendix A, Figure 21



Appendix A, Figure 22



Appendix A, Figure 23



Appendix A, Figure 24



Appendix A, Figure 25



Appendix A, Figure 26



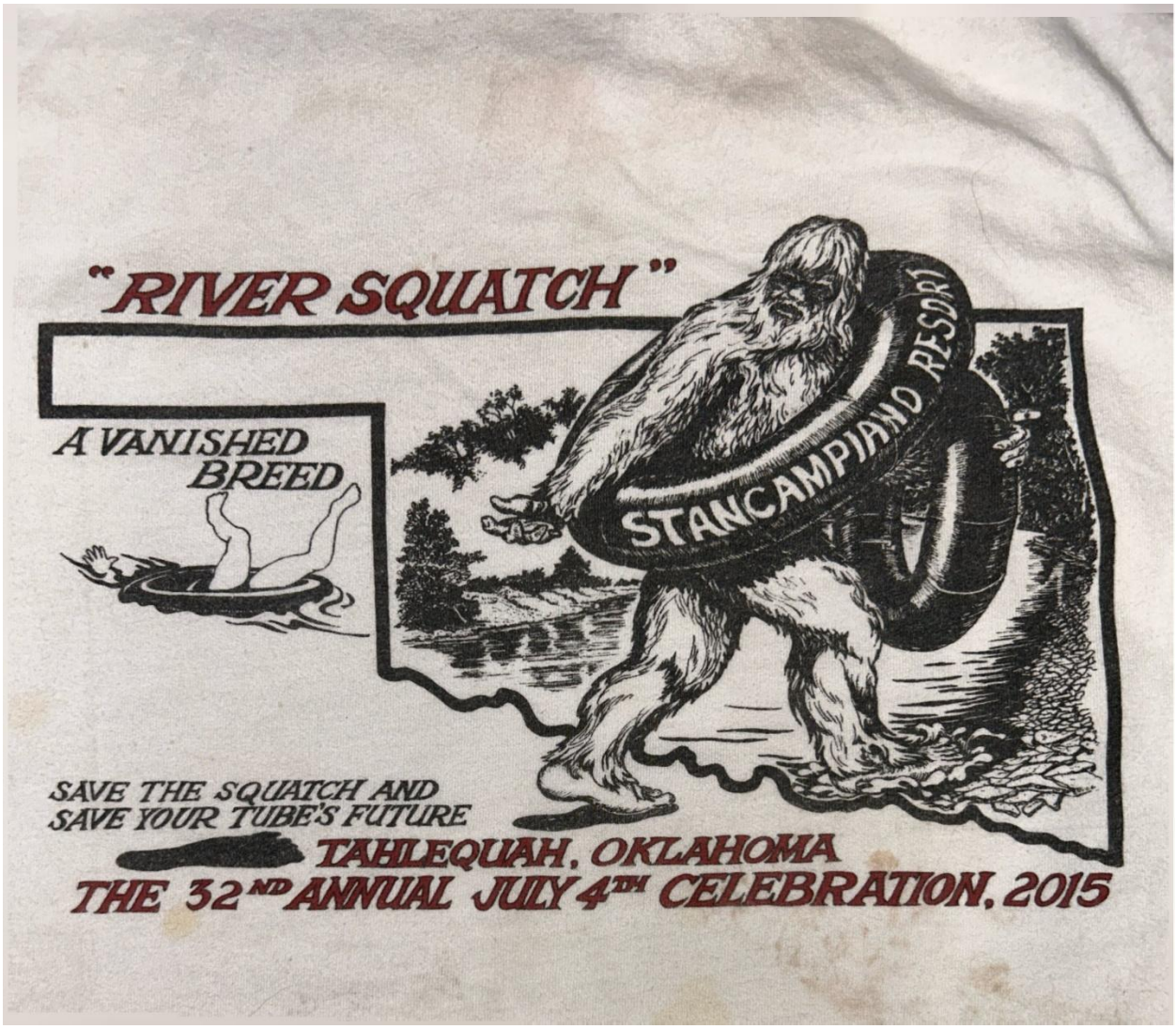
Appendix A, Figure 27



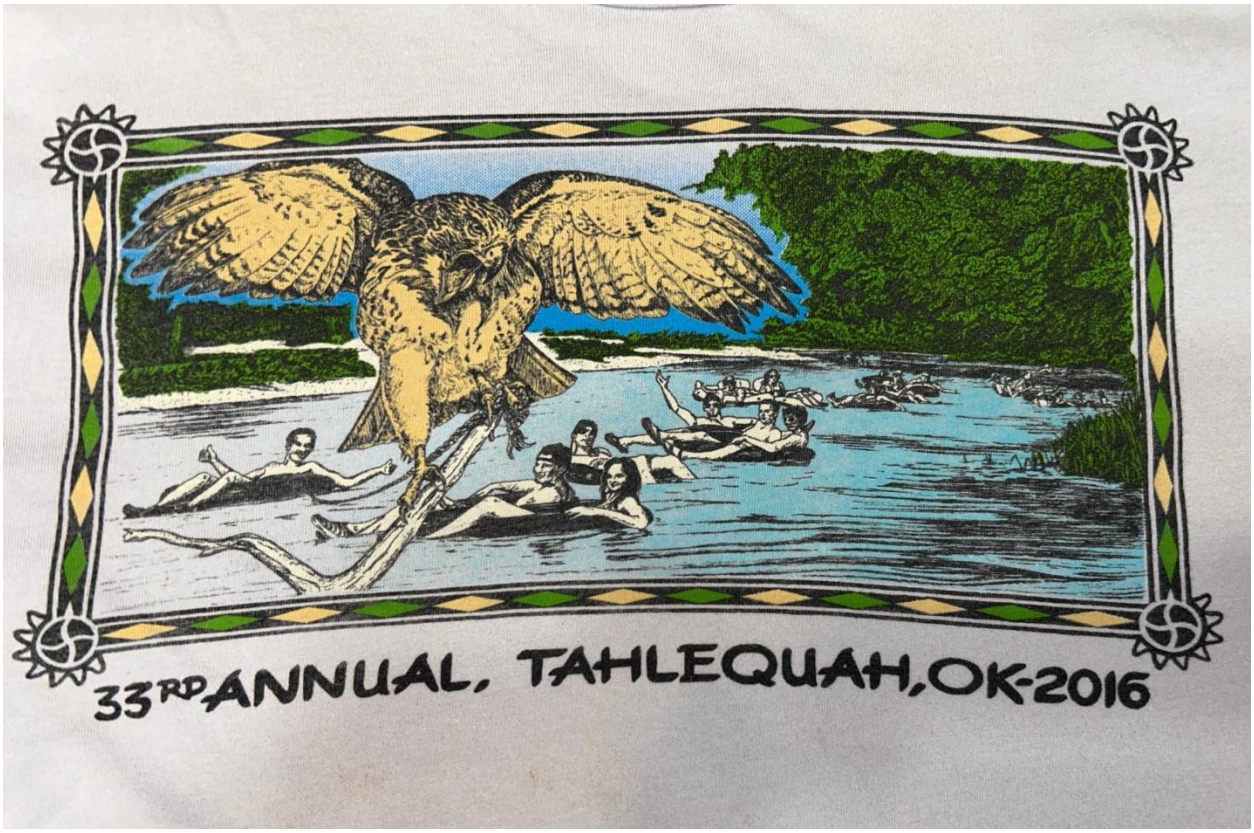
Appendix A, Figure 28



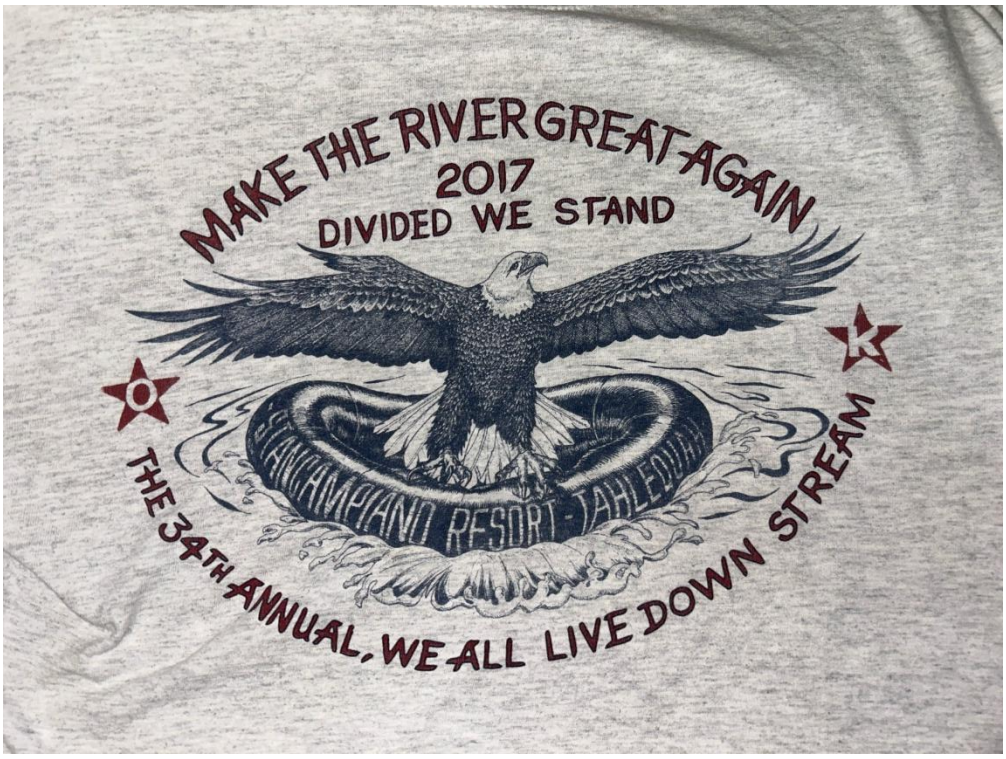
Appendix A, Figure 29



Appendix A, Figure 30



Appendix A, Figure 31



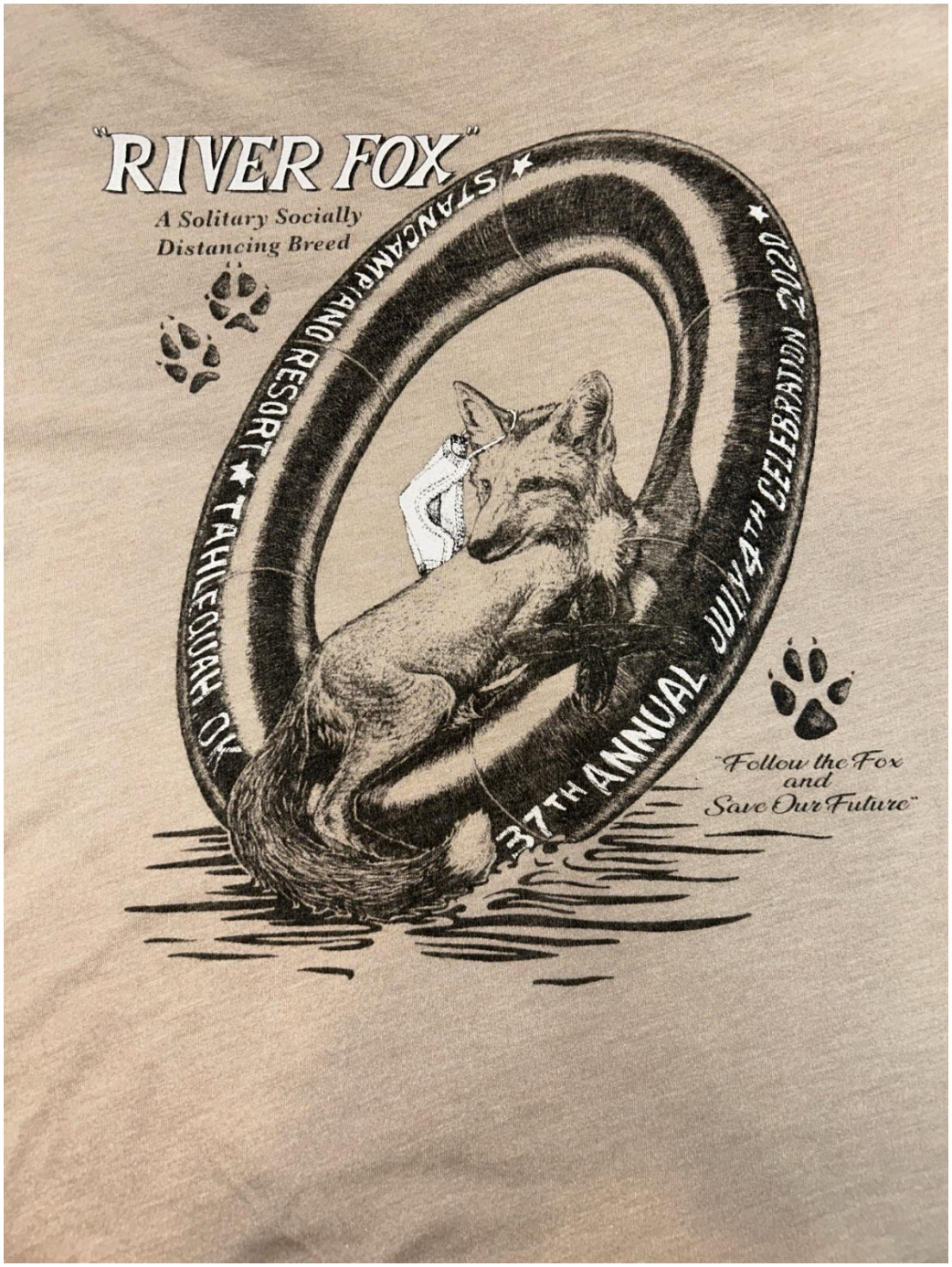
Appendix A, Figure 32



Appendix A, Figure 33



Appendix A, Figure 34



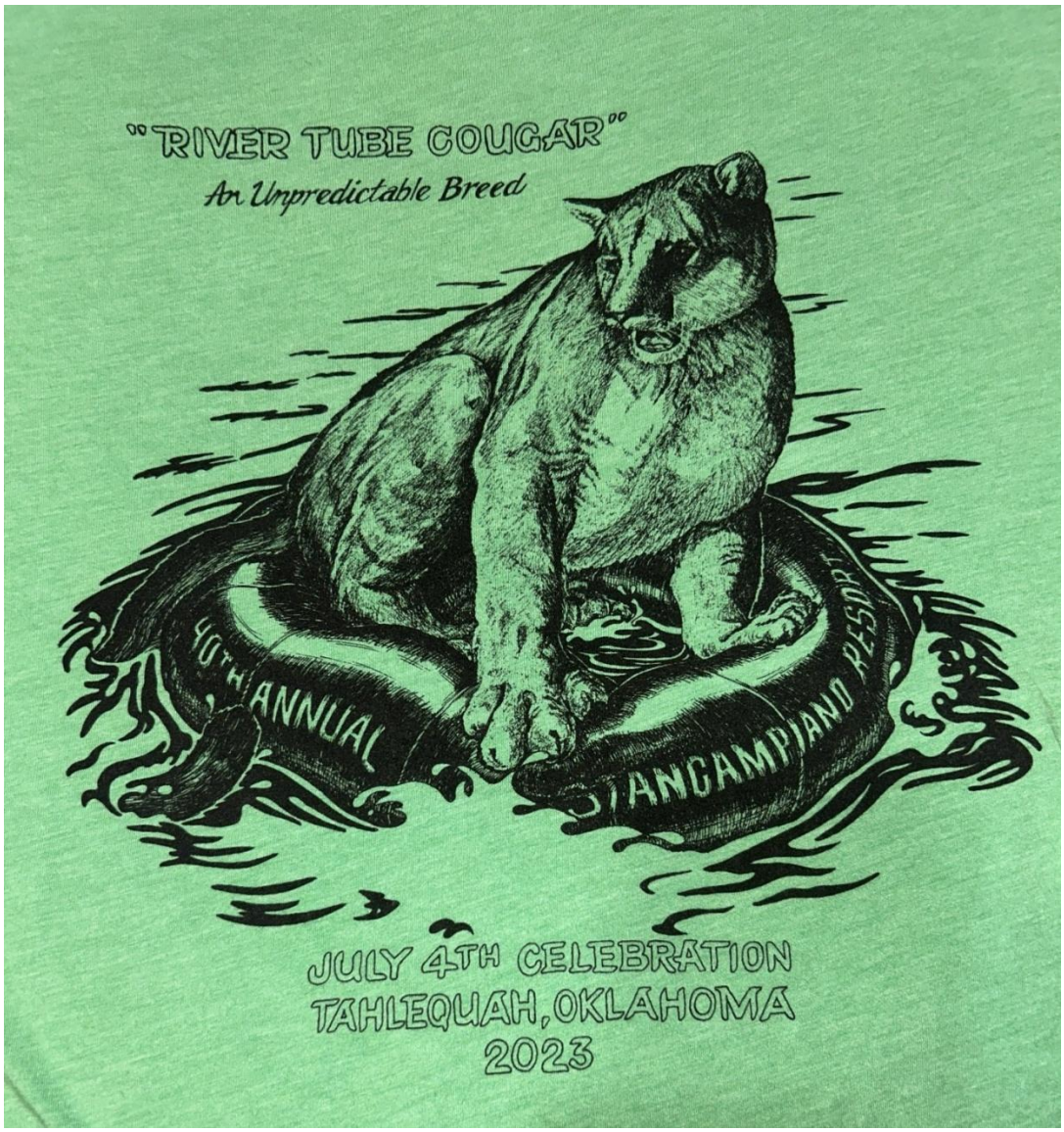
Appendix A, Figure 35



Appendix A, Figure 36



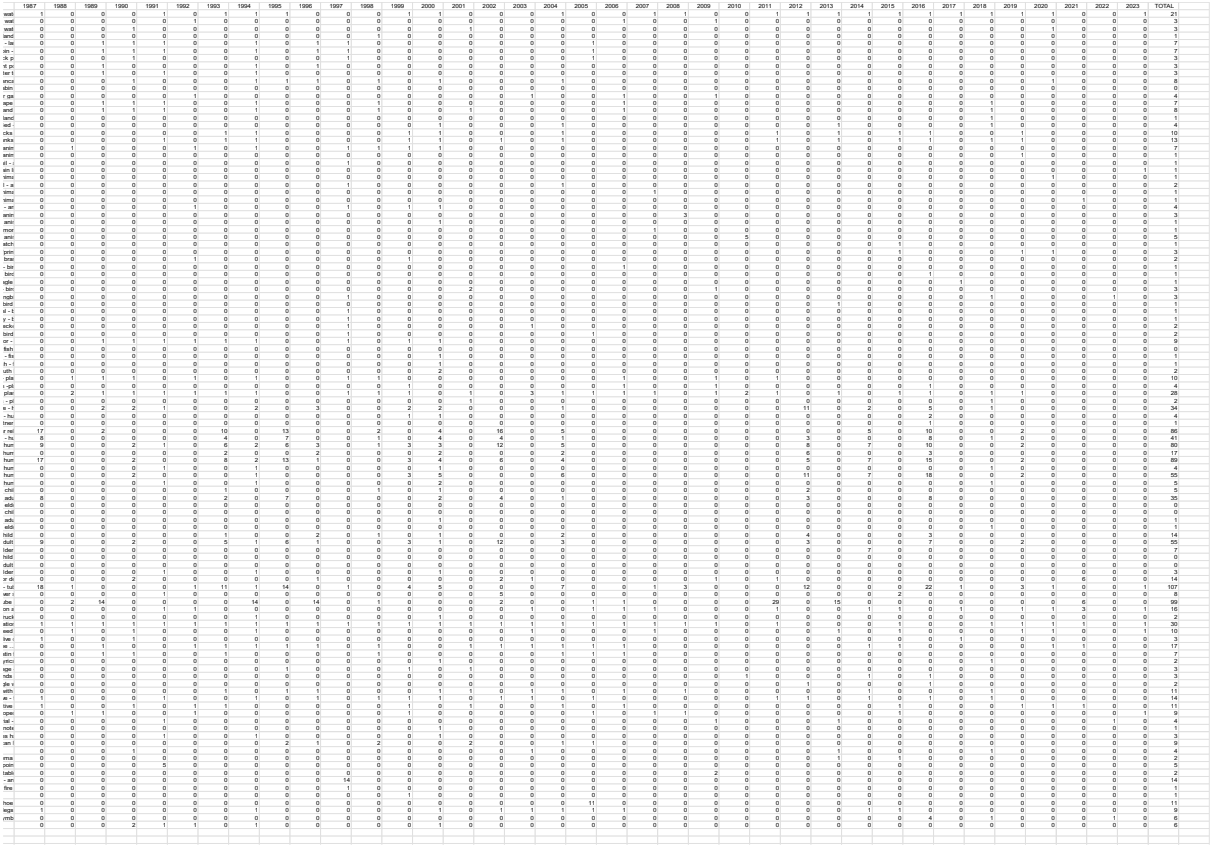
Appendix A, Figure 37



Appendix B.

Data Spreadsheets

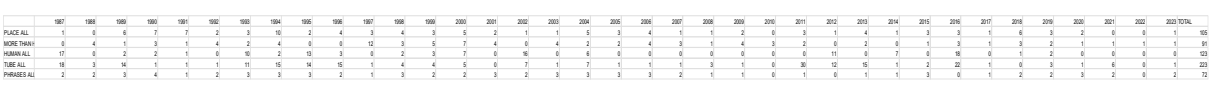
Appendix B, Table 1: Level 1 Data



Appendix B, Table 2: Level 2 Data



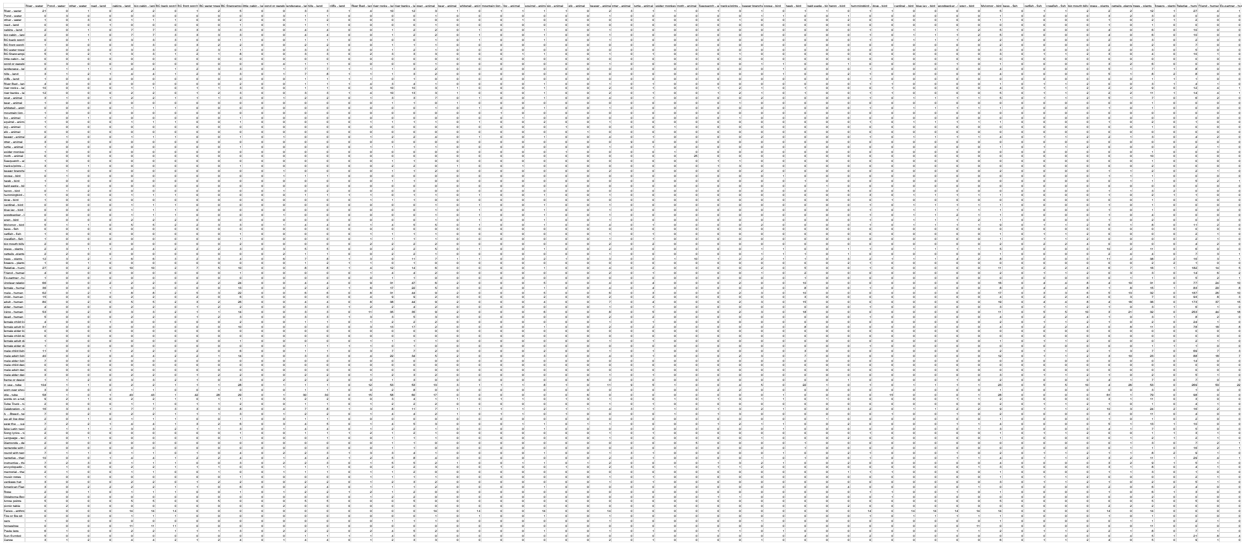
Appendix B, Table 3: Level 3 Data



Appendix C.

Adjacency Matrixes

Appendix C, Table 1: Adjacency Matrix - Level 1 Data



Appendix C, Table 2: Adjacency Matrix - Level 2 Data

	WATER ALL	LAND ALL	ANIMAL ALL	BIRD- ALL	FISH ALL	PLANTS ALL	HUMAN ALL	TUBE ALL	PHRASES ALL
	0	57	14	13	4	29	100	171	51
WATER ALL	57	0	46	67	16	119	220	578	188
LAND ALL	14	46	0	29	8	29	32	69	41
ANIMAL ALL	13	67	29	0	4	40	45	98	43
BIRD ALL	4	16	8	4	0	0	28	20	8
FISH ALL	29	119	29	40	0	0	79	243	93
PLANTA ALL	100	220	32	45	28	79	0	1454	219
HUMAN ALL	171	578	69	98	20	243	1454	0	398
TUBE ALL	51	188	41	43	8	93	219	398	0
PHRASES ALL									

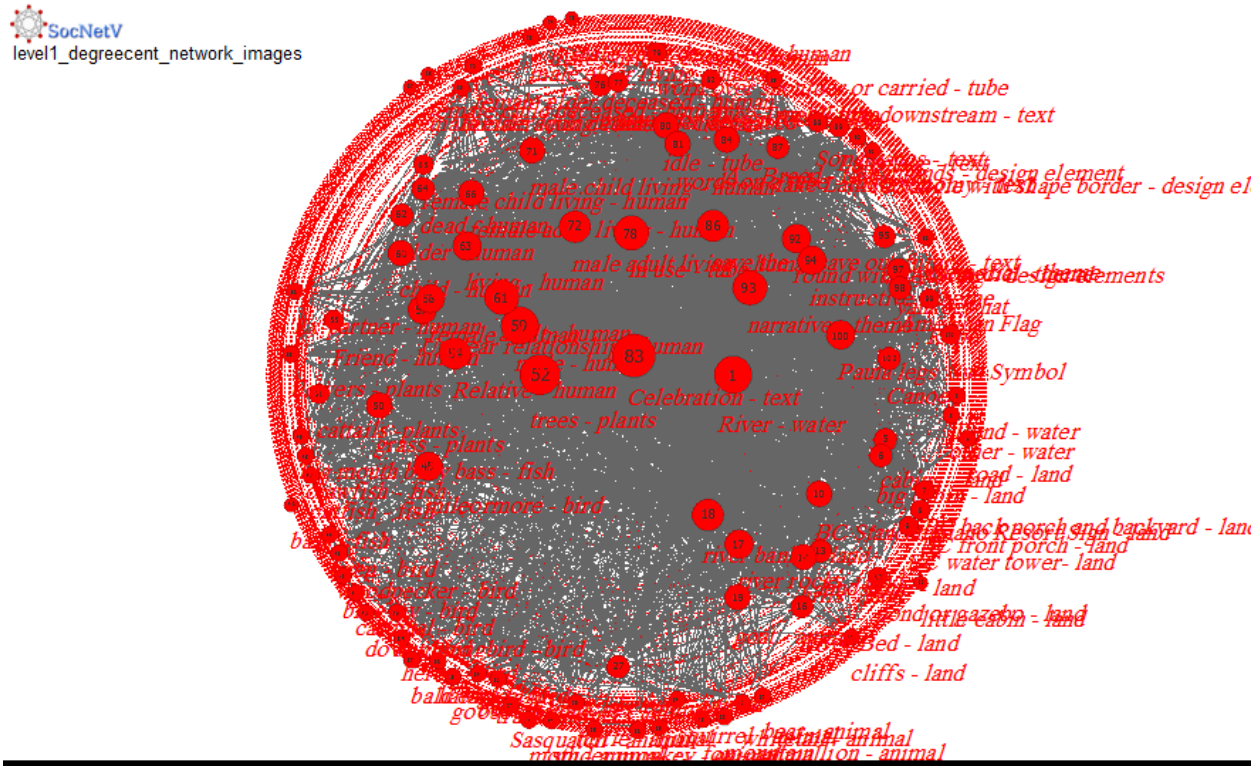
Appendix C, Table 3: Adjacency Matrix - Level 3 Data

	PLACE ALL	MORE THAN H	HUMAN ALL	TUBE ALL	PHRASES ALL
PLACE ALL	0	296	320	749	239
MORE-THAN-H	296	0	180	402	179
HUMAN ALL	320	180	0	1454	219
TUBE ALL	749	402	1454	0	398
PHRASES ALL	239	179	219	398	0

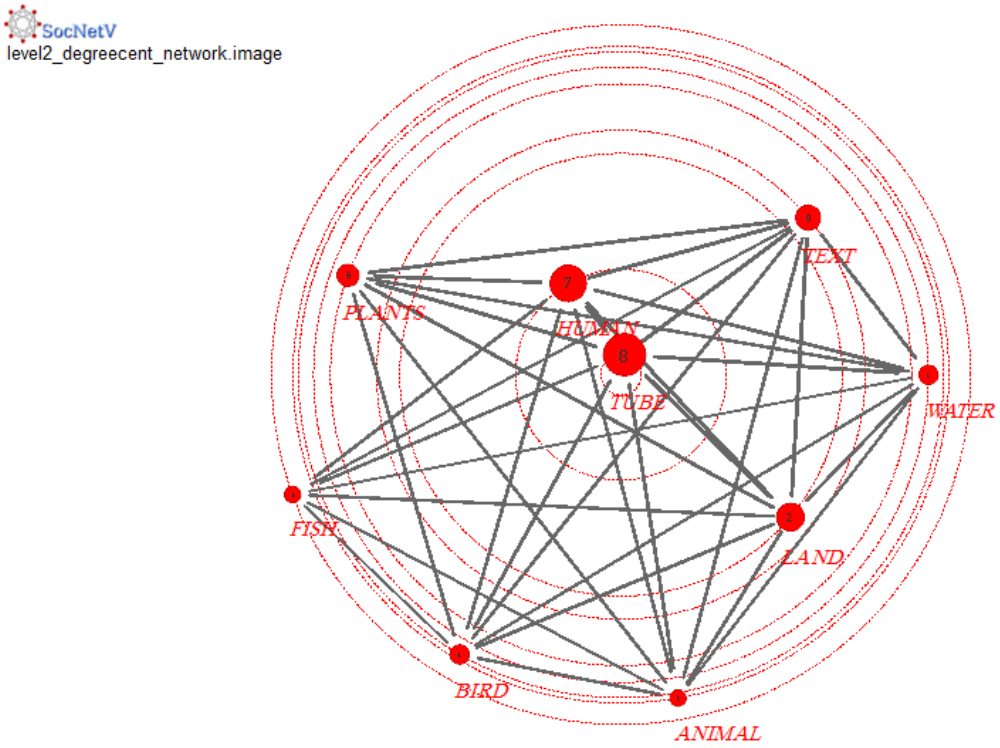
Appendix D.

Degree Centrality Networks

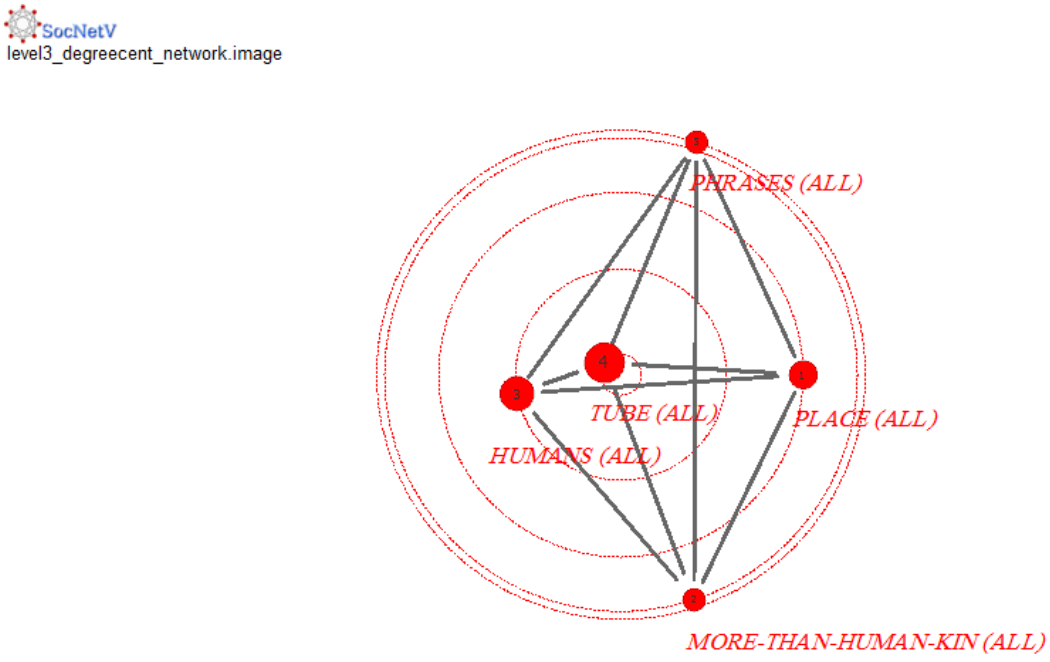
Appendix D, Figure 1: Degree Centrality Network, Level 1 Data



Appendix D, Figure 2: Degree Centrality Network, Level 2 Data



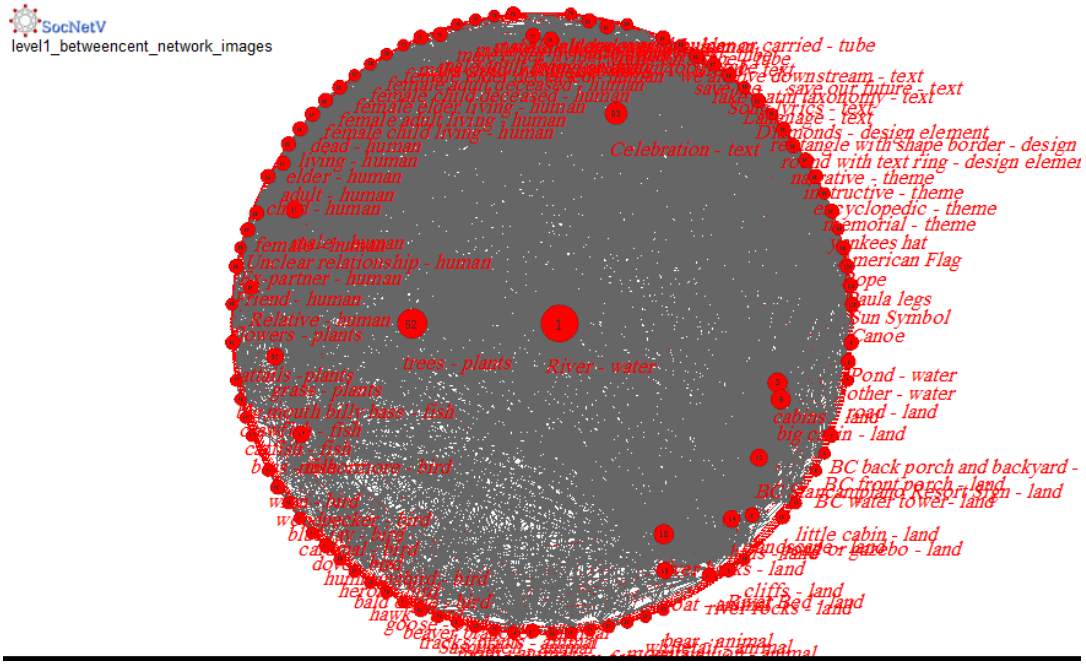
Appendix D, Figure 3: Degree Centrality Network, Level 3 Data



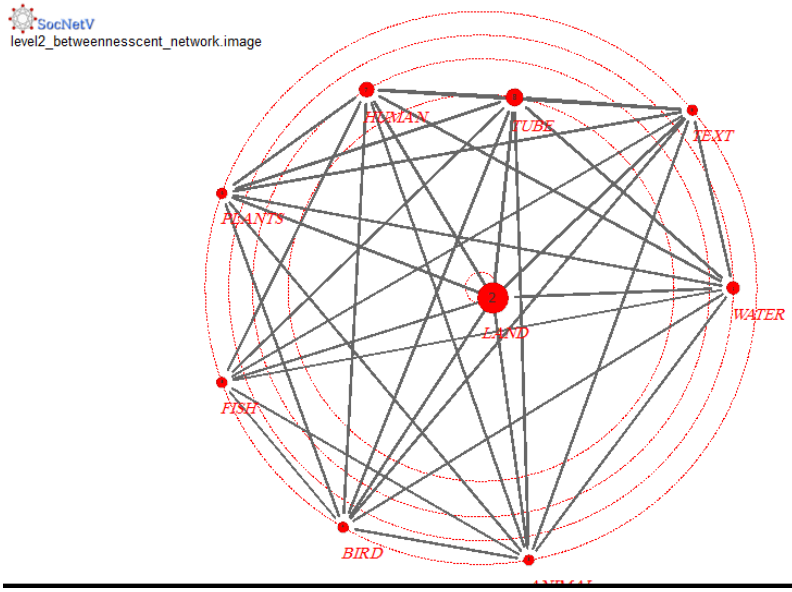
Appendix E.

Betweenness Centrality Networks

Appendix E, Figure 1: Betweenness Centrality Network, Level 1 Data



Appendix E, Figure 2: Betweenness Centrality Network, Level 2 Data



Appendix E, Figure 3: Betweenness Centrality Network, Level 3 Data

