

Extra Credit

Student's Name

Institutional Affiliation

SOCI324 Extra Credit

Your Initial Reaction to the Film

My initial reaction to "Our Spirits Don't Speak English" was one of profound shock and deep sadness. The documentary's stark portrayal of Native American children's experiences in boarding schools, designed to erase their cultures and identities, was both eye-opening and distressing. Seeing how these children were forcibly removed from their families and communities, and stripped of their language, traditions, and identities, left a lasting impact on me. It highlighted a dark chapter in American history, focused on the aggressive assimilation policies that these children endured. The revelation was disturbing, yet it was crucial for understanding the depth of the historical injustices inflicted upon Native American communities. The brutal realities of the systematic efforts to eradicate Native American cultures were laid bare, forcing a confrontation with a part of history that is often overlooked or minimized. This initial exposure to the raw truths of these experiences has underscored the importance of acknowledging and addressing these historical wrongs to foster healing and reconciliation.

Feelings and Thoughts Experienced While Watching the Film

Watching "Our Spirits Don't Speak English" elicited a complex array of emotions. As the personal stories of the boarding school survivors were recounted, my reactions ranged from deep anger to profound sadness due to the cruel treatment they endured. The film's impactful narrative, bolstered by poignant personal testimonies and insightful historical context, deeply stirred my empathy and heightened my awareness of the need to recognize and rectify the enduring impacts of these injustices. The emotional intensity of the documentary was

staggering, transforming it into an exceptionally moving experience that not only evoked strong feelings but also challenged me to critically consider the long-term effects of such oppressive educational policies on Native American communities.

What You Learned About Various Populations

The film "Our Spirits Don't Speak English" provided a profound and insightful exploration into the resilience and suffering of Native American populations. It particularly focused on the children who were subjected to the harsh and oppressive assimilation policies enforced in boarding schools. These policies aimed to strip them of their cultural identities and forcibly integrate them into mainstream American society. The documentary effectively illustrated the broader implications of these assimilation policies on the personal identities of these children and the cohesion of their communities. The enduring spirit of these communities was highlighted through their continuous efforts to maintain their cultural practices, languages, and traditions against all odds. The film enriched my understanding of the profound and lasting impact of historical injustices on Native American populations. It emphasized the importance of acknowledging and addressing these past traumas to support the healing and empowerment of these communities.

What You Learned About Your Bias

Reflecting on "Our Spirits Don't Speak English" significantly impacted my perspective, compelling me to confront and reassess my previously held biases and the limited scope of my understanding of Native American history. The documentary highlighted a version of history that is often sanitized, omitting the harsh and brutal realities faced by Indigenous peoples throughout American history. This exposure challenged me to critically analyze the narratives I

had previously accepted without question, sparking a drive to seek out more comprehensive and truthful accounts of the past. The film served as a crucial turning point, underscoring the importance of continued education and heightened awareness. It emphasized the need to actively engage with more authentic sources and narratives that honor and reflect the true experiences of Native American communities. This journey of re-education is vital not only for personal growth but also for contributing to a broader societal understanding that respects and acknowledges the complexities of historical truths.