**Book Review (Chapter 10: The Ordeal of Captain Jack)**

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*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Lee Brown is an account of the injustice, brutality and genocide perpetrated in the name of European settlement in Western America between years 1860 and 1890. The theme of this writing is to present the story of Native Americans as completely with their own words and perspectives as possible. It is a documentation of horrendous crimes against humanity in the name of settlement. From land grabbing to murder and genocide, the purpose here is to not hold anything back. The passage discussed in this paper is from a part of this book that narrates the incidents that led to the displacement and murder of the Modoc tribe from their lands of Tule Lake in Oregon, California. The theme of the book is to give voices to those victims of greed who did not have this luxury in the late nineteenth century. A more specific form of the same idea defines the passage *The Ordeal of Captain Jack* as well. The thesis, therefore, is to cite the abuse of Californian Modocs at the hands of the settlers and the US Army giving full recognition and a truer voice to the Modocs themselves. The underlying motive is to simply honor the Native Americans and their struggle against cruelty. The passage establishes in the beginning that the Modoc chief (Kintpuash or Captain Jack) was against fighting ever since settlements began on and around his lands. This idea is carried throughout the passage.

One of the more basic ways in which the passage stays true to its thesis is by detailing the events as they went down for the Modocs. Instead of focusing on the settlers and how the army went about with their justifications concerning the maltreatment of the Modoc tribe, the passage circulates around the story of the Modoc tribal chief, Kintpuash. The story is primarily that of betrayal. It exists as a full account of how a peace-loving chief was trapped in a fight with the might of the US army simply because he chose to defend his people against their guns. By keeping the attention strictly focused on the Modoc chief only, the passage does not deviate from its purpose of telling the Native American story.

Another layer to defending the thesis is the character of Kintpuash, as portrayed in the passage. It starts with Kintpuash becoming the chief of the Modoc tribe after the death of his father as a result of a skirmish with the settlers. The striking fact that even the murder of his father did not deter Kintpuash from seeking peace with the settlers sets his persona and his character in stone. Declarations of wanting friendship and co-existence with white settlers immediately after being crowned the new chief of the Modoc tribe is primary proof of who Kintpuash was as a person. The story does justice to this early reveal up until the moment Kintpuash is ambushed and finally killed. The fact that Kintpuash held regular meetings with a peace council even after his tribe had been displaced from their own land and murdered for existing is a part of the narrative that supports the thesis. However, even though the writing heavily reflects upon Kintpuash being in favor of co-existence, it never shows him as meek or submissive to the settlers. He extends a hand of friendship to the settlers and finds a way to live with them in Oregon but never expects anything less than respect in return. He agrees to leave Oregon but brings his people back in defiance when the US government does not deliver on their promises of land and sustenance for the Modoc tribe. He holds peace talks until the very end but does not give up any of his men in exchange for a better life for the rest of his tribe. He is gentle but firm. When forced to fight, he does not flee nor betray his tribe in order to secure a seat at the white man’s table. Even as Kintpuash repeatedly asserts that all he wants is for the white men to leave his people alone, he does not accept a second round of rosy promises from the US army after having seen the truth of those promises once. It is with this clear balance of calmness and bravery, that the passage paints the Modoc chief as an honorable man who wanted nothing but friendly co-existence. A constant feeling of reverence for the chief is how the passage fulfills its purpose of printing a tribute to the Native Americans.

The third and final method employed in this passage to uphold the thesis is by affirming that it was betrayal from within the Modoc ranks that brought their eventual downfall. The passage begins with steady narration of treachery and fraud as carried out by the entitled white settlers. However, as the story builds, it is clear what truly brought about the undoing of the Modoc tribe. Hooker Jim and his people are shown as the fuel that lit the fire of vengeance in Modoc hearts. Kintpuash only had to give up Hooker Jim and his accomplices to secure safety for the rest of the Modoc tribe and for himself. He never did that. However, once there was no going back for Kintpuash, Hooker Jim joined forces with the same bluecoats he was desperate for the Modocs to fight against. By declaring Hooker Jim as a traitor of his people, the passage confirms itself as a tribute to the Modocs and their chief who went down as upright people betrayed by their own.

Although telling the Modoc story and honoring their legacy are themes beautifully incorporated into the writing of this passage, there still are some minor problems that take away from the thesis instead of defending it. Instead of talking about the Modoc people with their real names, the passage consistently talks about them with their given names. These were titles given to them by their white friends. This is confusing because on the one hand, the passage is a loving eulogy to the Modoc chief and yet on the other, it calls him Captain Jack and not Kintpuash. However, when comparing the two sides, it is evident that the passage employs effective methods for protecting its thesis and other than a minor setback, it does exceptionally well.

The evidence provided here for defending the thesis is citing the Modoc chief by printing his own words as preserved in official records. By keeping the story consistent with statements issued by the chief himself, the passage asserts its authenticity and, at the same time, does well on voicing the Native American story. Through giving exact dates and a steady timeline of what went down with Kintpuash and his tribe, the passage maintains confidence and builds a sense of legitimacy for the reader. However, there can still be issues with publishing official records of the statements Kintpuash made. It is evident that official records could not have been kept without an interpreter or a translator. It is also evident that these middlemen cannot be trusted to deliver the complete truth. But then, this being the only discrepancy in the evidence that this passage provides means that its credibility still stands. Even if some of the truth did get lost during translation and interpretation, enough of it remains to support and carry the direction and the theme of the narrative as the passage tells it.

In conclusion, the passage passes in terms of supporting its thesis as well as backing it with evidence. Its revering account of the Modoc chief successfully delivers a narrative that holds the white settlers responsible and gives insights into how the non-violent indigenous tribes of California were driven to a war for survival and honor. For its readers, the passage holds doors to diversity in learning. However, it is impossible to bring a positive outcome from the learning it advocates without practical strife for ending the systematic justice in favor of the white man that, unfortunately, prevails to this day. (Patel, 2016)

# References

Patel, L. (2016). *Decolonizing educational research: From ownership to accountability.* New York: Routledge.