

Indig-nation: Anger and Injustice in Writings by Indigenous Youth

Inspired by Indigenous poets and novelists such as Adam Garnet Jones, Brandon Hobson, and Erica Wurth, a group of Tohono O'odham high school students speak their own truths through writing, spoken word, and song. After participating in a public panel about Indigenous literature, or the lack thereof, in their English classroom, students wanted their own voices to become a part of the collective of powerful, important, and widely ignored chorus of Indigenous voices in literature. Nourished by their identities as readers, these students emerge as participants in literary disruption. Stories of colorism and racism, coming out stories, border patrol injustices, educational inequalities, and stolen stories are some of the topics students explore. Wanting their voices to be heard and amplified, Indigenous youth have to make public space for themselves where there is none, calling attention to the dearth of Indigenous stories in their schools and calling attention to all of the issues that are vitally important to the continued survival and flourishing of their communities.

In this presentation, I will amplify these youth voices and discuss the particular importance of youth led literary engagement and disruption in Indigenous spaces; I will highlight not only the youth created works, but the published literature by Indigenous authors, specifically *Hearts Unbroken* by Cynthia Leitich Smith, that inspired them to activate their own spoken and written voices; and I will discuss the significant role that literary activism can play in the lives of youth outside of the constraints of schooling.