



**DISSECT**  
*AND*  
**DISMANTLE**

*An analysis of structure and narrative at the Mule Canyon Interpretive Site*

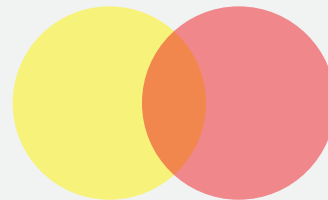
# DISSECT *AND* DISMANTLE

---

Kevin Howard  
kv.hwr@gmail.com

Design Product Studio 3520 Spring 2021  
Professor Elpitha Tsoutsounakis  
University of Utah Multi-Disciplinary Design Program

In partership with the Bureau of Land Management



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Area of analysis	1
The shade structure	3
The Kiva	4
Dualism	5
Imperialism and colonialism	7
White saviorism	8
Divided narrative	9
Dismantle	10
(Re)construction	11
Framework	12
Further development	13
Works cited	14



# AREA OF ANALYSIS



Shade Structure

Kiva

Tower

Sign Structure

Room Block

## KEY

- Pathway
- Ancestral Structures
- Western Structures

25 ft.



# AREA OF ANALYSIS

The Kiva and the shade structure share an interesting relationship because they are contrasting to one another.

The shade structure towers over the Kiva. Its robust wooden form contrasts the elegant stonework of the Ancestral structures and demands the attention of the visitor.

*Does this alter the way a visitor perceives the Ancestral structures of the site?*



Shade Structure

Kiva

# SHADE STRUCTURE

The form of the shade structure mimics that of a gazebo, which traditionally create spaces of gathering, interaction, and entertainment. Having one directly atop the Kiva could be inviting visitors of the Mule Canyon site to enter the Kiva and interact with its walls.

Additionally, gazebos became popular in the United States with the growing prosperity of the middle class in the mid-1800's.<sup>1</sup> To this day, they remain a status symbol for the White middle class.

*How does placing a gazebo directly on top of a sacred Ancestral structure shift the narrative of the Mule Canyon site?*



<sup>1</sup> "History of Gazebos." Gazebo Creations, [www.gazebocreations.com/cs\\_InfoPages.aspx?CategoryID=677](http://www.gazebocreations.com/cs_InfoPages.aspx?CategoryID=677).

# THE KIVA

The Kiva is an important part of ceremonies, rituals, political meetings, and gatherings for the Hopi Tribe.<sup>1</sup> It is a significant part of the Mule Canyon site and should be commemorated as such.

However, the shade structure towers above it, potentially obscuring the significance with which visitors of the site perceive the Kiva.



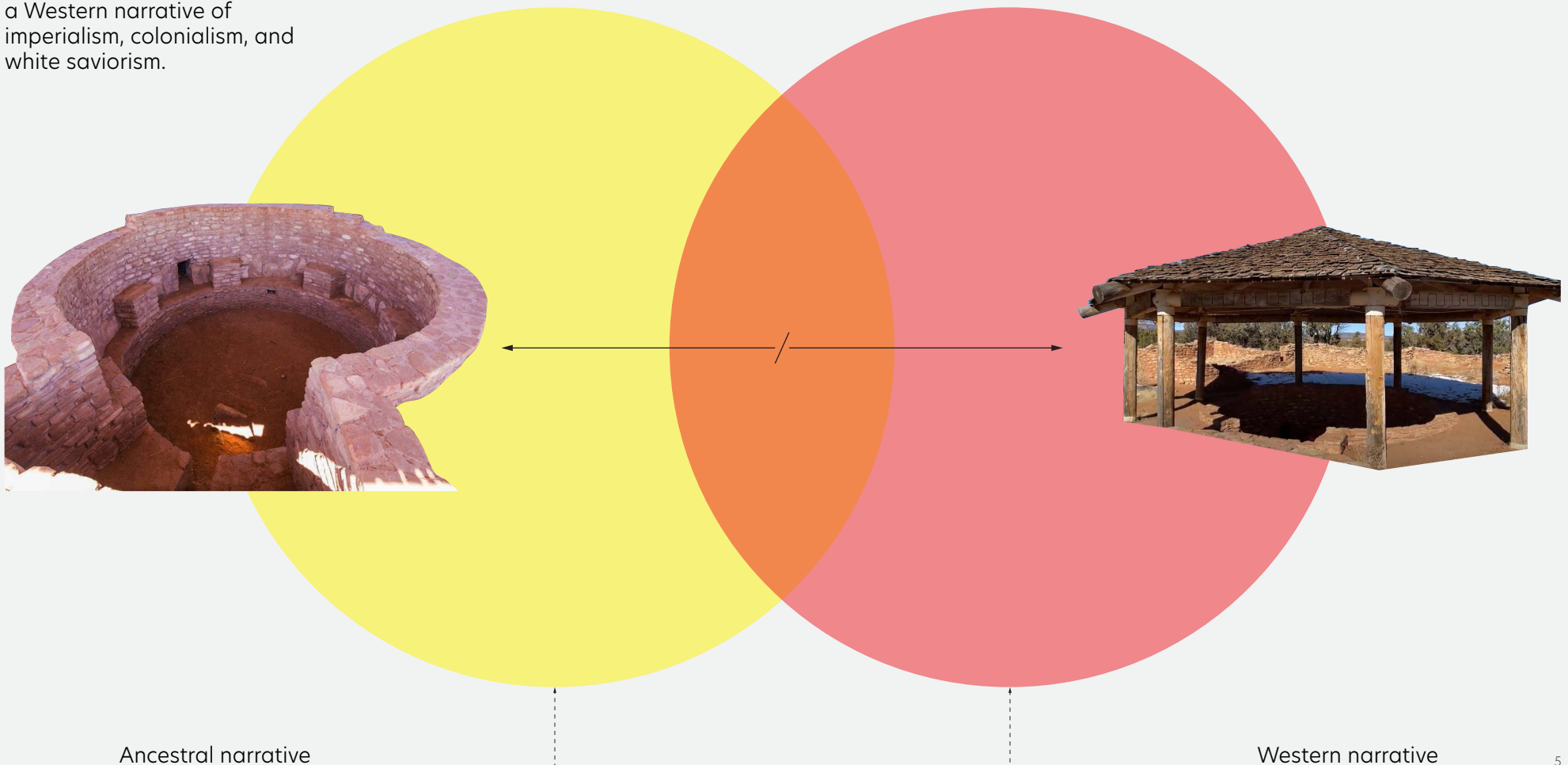
<sup>1</sup> Burns, Phyllis Doyle. "Ancient Hopi Rituals and Ceremonies - Owlcation - Education." Owlcation, Owlcation - Education, 5 Dec. 2013, owlcation.com/social-sciences/Ancient-Hopi-Rituals-and-Ceremonies.

# DUALISM

The relationship between the Kiva and the shade structure creates a dualism at the site.

A dualism is the division of something conceptually into two opposed or contrasted aspects.<sup>1</sup>

The division at Mule Canyon is between two narratives: an Ancestral narrative of respect and commemoration for tradition, and a Western narrative of imperialism, colonialism, and white saviorism.



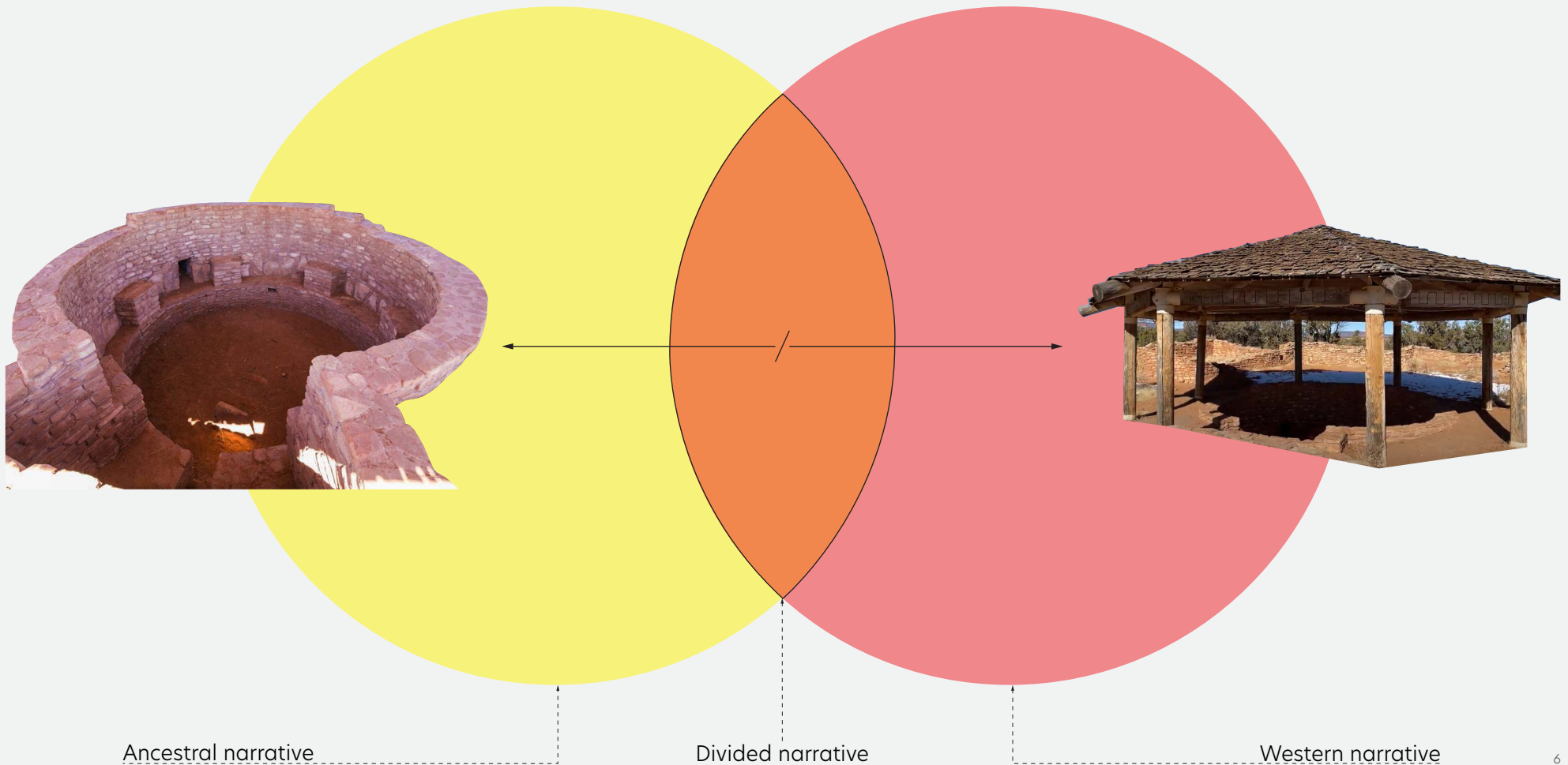
<sup>1</sup> "Dualism: Definition of Dualism by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com Also Meaning of Dualism." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, [www.lexico.com/en/definition/dualism](http://www.lexico.com/en/definition/dualism).



# DUALISM

The overlapping of the Western on top of the Ancestral creates a dualistic, divided narrative.

This new narrative likely shapes the way a visitor interprets the Mule Canyon site and thus how they will interpret the rest of Bears Ears National Monument.



# IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM

The Western narrative of the site is rooted in imperialism and colonialism. Imperialism is defined as a policy of extending a country's power and influence through diplomacy or military force; and colonialism is an extension of that policy which serves to take control of and exploit another country or peoples.<sup>1</sup>

Imperialism and colonialism disconnected colonized people from their histories, their landscapes, and their own ways of interacting with the world.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith states that, "Imperialism frames the Indigenous experience."<sup>2</sup>

*Does the wooden frame of Western architecture around the Kiva perpetuate this narrative? Does it suggest power and control over the Kiva?*

*If so, does it stand as a constant metaphor for the imperialism and colonialism that took place in the American West?*

<sup>1</sup> "Imperialism: Definition of Imperialism by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com Also Meaning of Imperialism." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, [www.lexico.com/en/definition/imperialism](http://www.lexico.com/en/definition/imperialism).

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, and Linda. Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies : Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Second ed. 2012. Web.

**"Imperialism frames the indigenous experience."**

- Linda Tuhiwai Smith <sup>2</sup>



# WHITE SAVIORISM

The Western narrative is also rooted in white saviorism, which is an idea in which white people try to “rescue” BIPOC from their own situations, or more commonly, situations that were created by white people.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that the Mule Canyon site would still be in use today if it weren't for white colonialism. Thus, white people have had a hand in creating the current situation at Mule Canyon, and then made a gesture to rescue the site by placing a Western style gazebo directly on top of the Kiva to protect it, suggesting that the Kiva is structurally inferior.



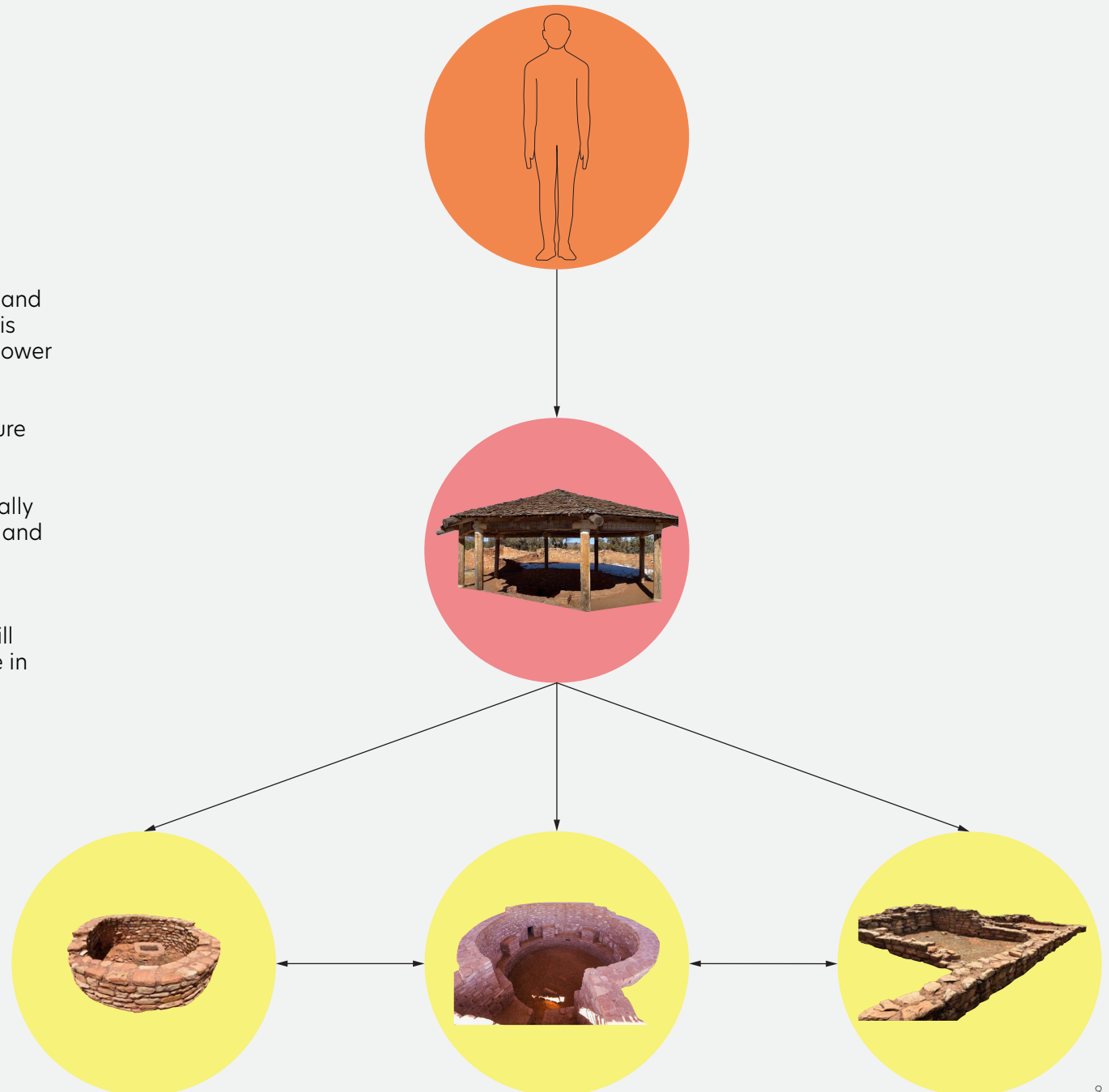
<sup>1</sup> Windholz, Annie. "Unpacking White Saviorism." Medium, Medium, 29 July 2020, [anniewindholz.medium.com/unpacking-white-saviorism-7d7b659dcbb3](https://medium.com/@anniewindholz/unpacking-white-saviorism-7d7b659dcbb3).

# DIVIDED NARRATIVE

Humans naturally internalize subtle messages<sup>1</sup>, and the message being sent by the shade structure is that it, along with the visitors of the site, have power over the Ancestral structures and artifacts.

The Western narrative around the shade structure skews the Ancestral narrative of the site, and creates a divided narrative with a lopsided hierarchy, placing the shade structure both literally and figuratively above the ancestral structures, and placing the visitor above all.

If the Mule Canyon Interpretive Site is to be an introductory site for Bears Ears, this narrative will likely stick with the visitors throughout their time in the monument.



<sup>1</sup> Windholz, Annie. "Unpacking White Saviorism." Medium, Medium, 29 July 2020, [anniewindholz.medium.com/unpacking-white-saviorism-7d7b659dcbb3](https://medium.com/unpacking-white-saviorism-7d7b659dcbb3).

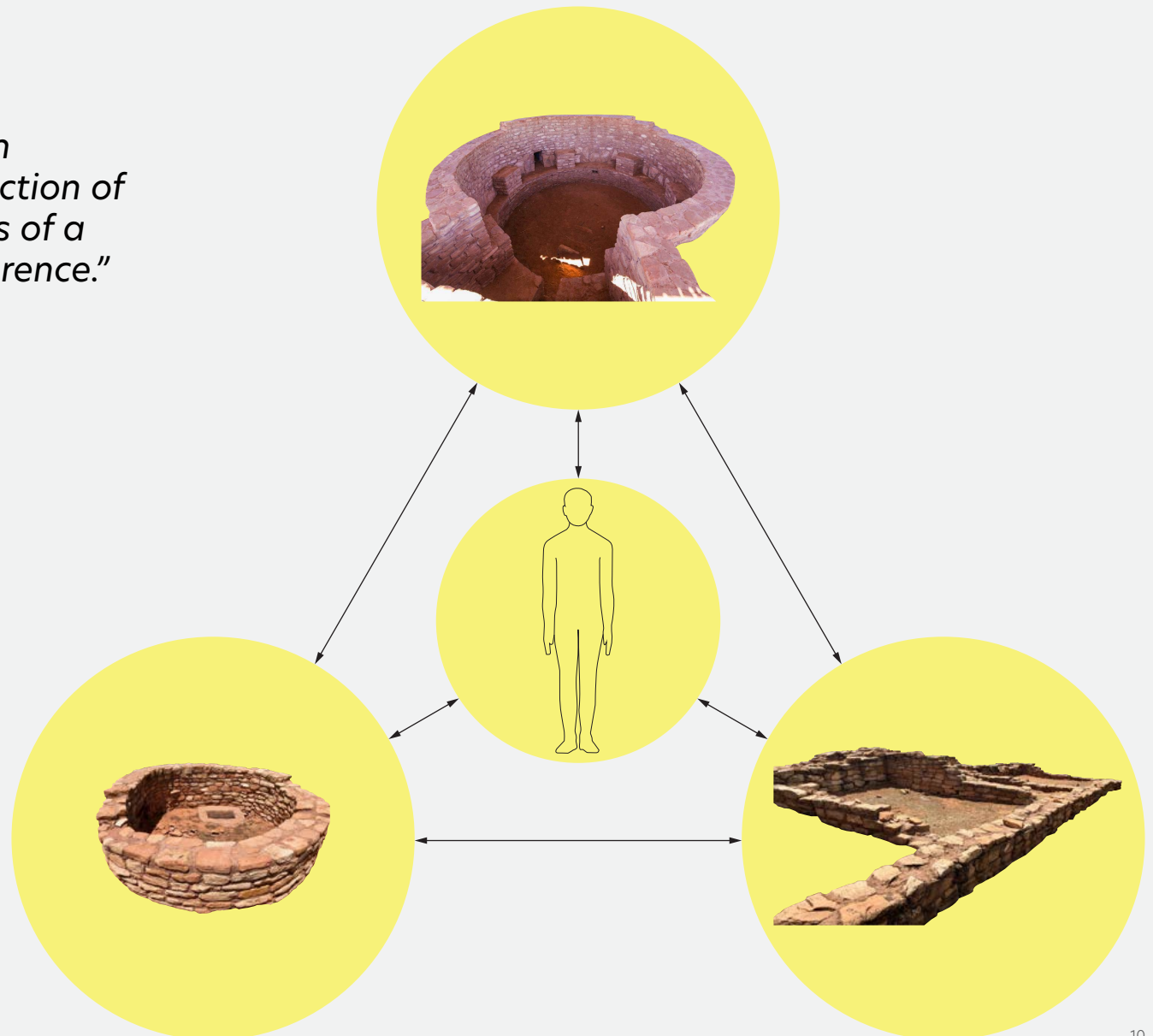
# DISMANTLE

*“Dismantling a dualism based on difference requires the reconstruction of relationship and identity in terms of a non-hierarchical concept of difference.”*

- Val Plumwood <sup>1</sup>

The dualism and the divided narrative that it creates at Mule Canyon can begin to be dismantled with the removal of the shade structure.

Removing the shade structure will allow the Ancestral site and its visitors to construct a non-hierarchical relationship of respect and mutuality that the visitors will be able to carry with them throughout the monument.



<sup>1</sup> Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge, 1993. *Opening Out: Feminism for Today*. Web.

# (RE)CONSTRUCTION

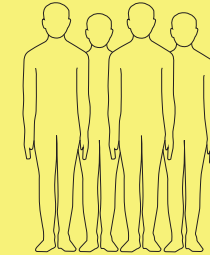
In the case that a new structure must be developed to limit erosion and sun exposure, it should be done in a way that honors the Ancestral narrative of the site and does not create a hierarchy of difference.

In order to accomplish this, the BLM, the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC), and Friends of Cedar Mesa should collaborate amongst themselves, with the Indigenous community of San Juan County, and with Indigenous architects and designers.

This will provide a broad scope of different voices, skills, and values that will be crucial in developing a new structure for the Mule Canyon site.



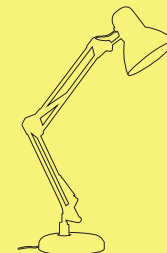
Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition



Community Members



Bureau of Land Management



Architects and Designers

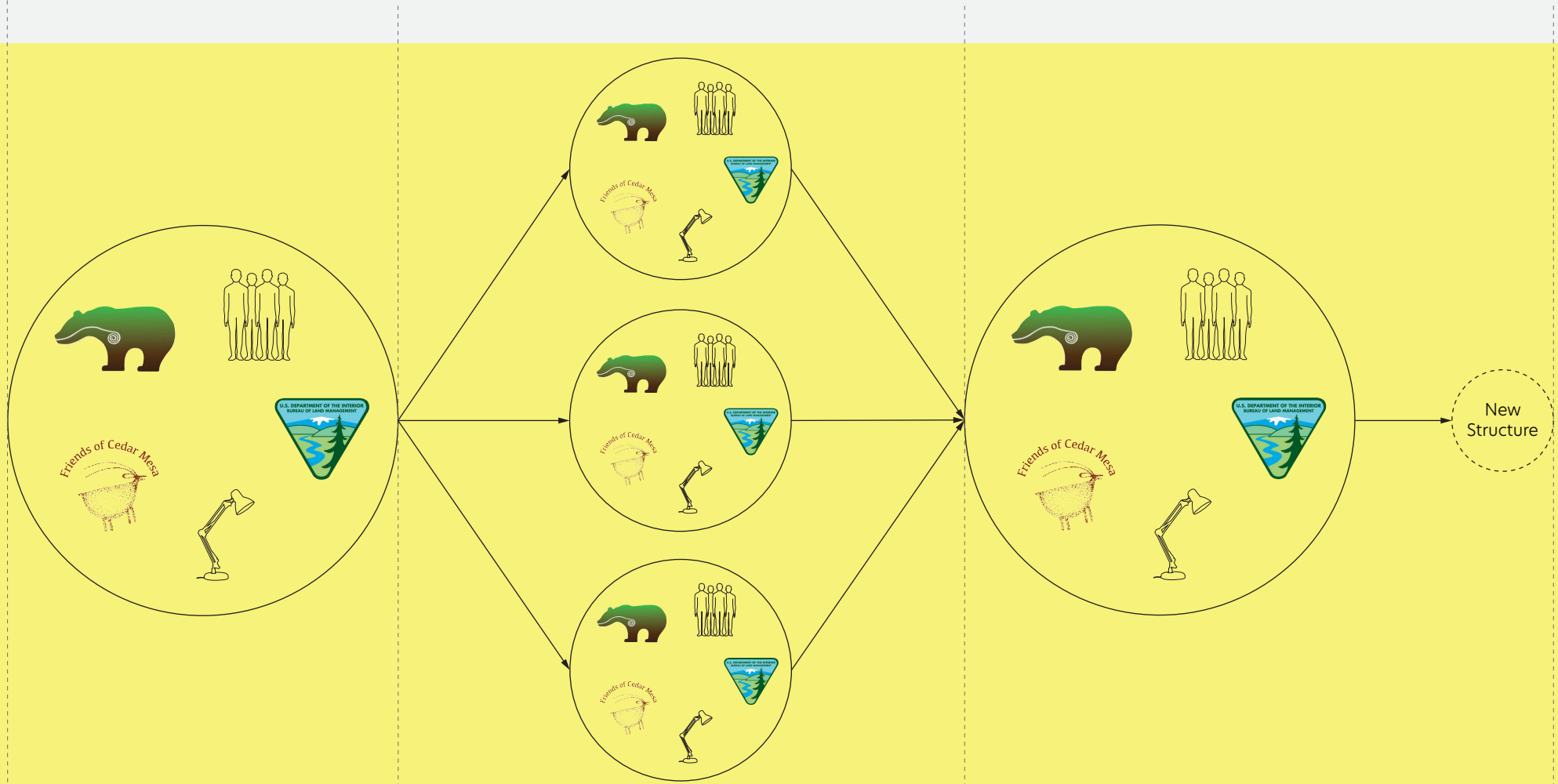


Friends of Cedar Mesa

# FRAMEWORK

This collaborative effort can take the form of a design workshop that allows people from all parties to participate and contribute their ideas.

The workshop could function similarly to the example below. This example has three different phases that all work towards the final goal of designing a new structure.



**Phase 1:** Initial meet-up, discuss goals and needs for the structure, run through workshop layout.

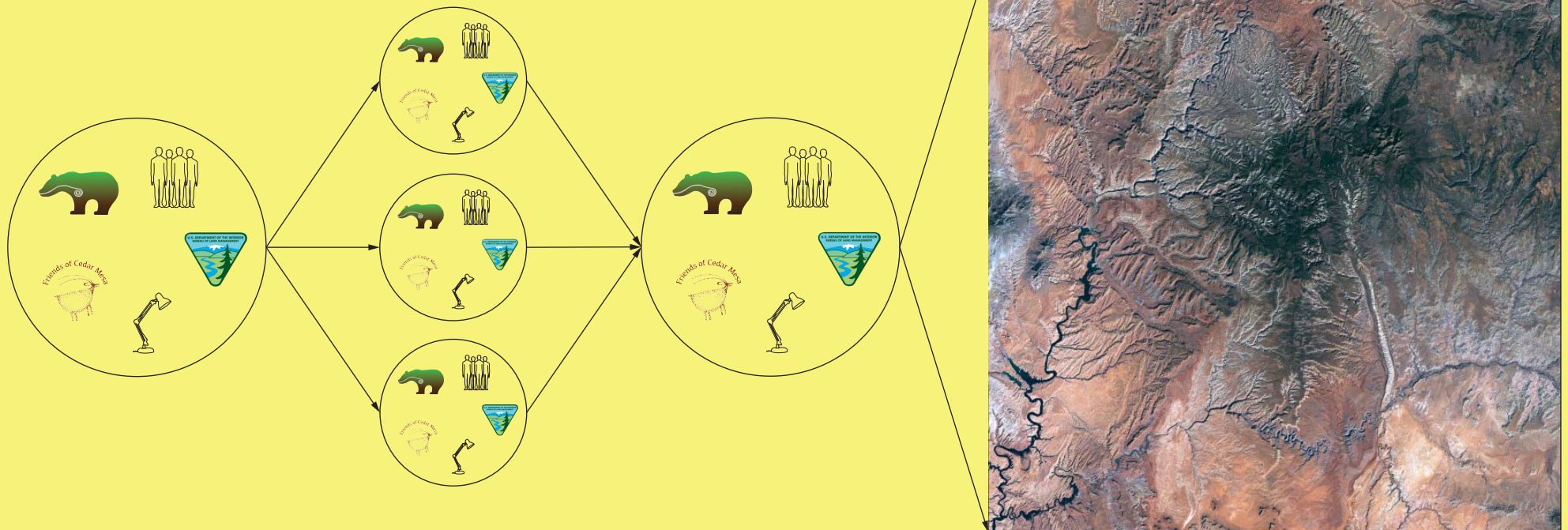
**Phase 2:** Split into smaller groups. Each group will generate one design proposal for the structure.

**Phase 3:** Reconvene and discuss each group's proposal. Synthesize designs into one final design for the new structure.

# FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

As more development occurs in Bears Ears National Monument, more structures will need to be built and more narratives will need to be navigated.

In order to ensure that Indigenous voices are at the forefront of any further development in the monument, the workshop framework can be used for projects of all types and scales.





# WORKS CITED

Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 9 Feb. 2021, [bearssearscoalition.org/](http://bearssearscoalition.org/).

"Bears Ears National Monument: Bureau of Land Management." Utah - Bears Ears National Monument | Bureau of Land Management, [www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/utah/bears-ears-national-monument](http://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/utah/bears-ears-national-monument).

Burns, Phyllis Doyle. "Ancient Hopi Rituals and Ceremonies - Owlcation - Education." Owlcation, Owlcation - Education, 5 Dec. 2013, [owlcation.com/social-sciences/Ancient-Hopi-Rituals-and-Ceremonies](http://owlcation.com/social-sciences/Ancient-Hopi-Rituals-and-Ceremonies).

"Dualism: Definition of Dualism by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com Also Meaning of Dualism." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, [www.lexico.com/en/definition/dualism](http://www.lexico.com/en/definition/dualism).

Elpitha Tsoutsounakis, 2021

"History of Gazebos." Gazebo Creations, [www.gazebocreations.com/cs\\_InfoPages.aspx?CategoryID=677](http://www.gazebocreations.com/cs_InfoPages.aspx?CategoryID=677).

"Imperialism: Definition of Imperialism by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com Also Meaning of Imperialism." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, [www.lexico.com/en/definition/imperialism](http://www.lexico.com/en/definition/imperialism).

Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge, 1993. *Opening Out: Feminism for Today*. Web.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, and Linda. Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies : Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Second ed. 2012. Web.

"Stewarding the Greater Cedar Mesa Area in San Juan County, Utah." Friends of Cedar Mesa, [www.friendsofcedarmesa.org/](http://www.friendsofcedarmesa.org/).

Windholz, Annie. "Unpacking White Saviorism." Medium, Medium, 29 July 2020, [anniewindholz.medium.com/unpacking-white-saviorism-7d7b659dcbb3](https://anniewindholz.medium.com/unpacking-white-saviorism-7d7b659dcbb3).