

**“Deep, crazy deep”: Tautologies and Turtle Lake in Alexie’s *Absolutely True Diary*”**  
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Turtle Lake’s sublime qualities of obscurity and infinity represent Arnold’s tribes’ tautological thinking, part and parcel of the original reservation system and an indication that the system’s original intent persists: to kill Indians. As Arnold asserts, “Indians were supposed to move onto reservations and die . . . to disappear.” Arnold’s inculcated thinking that he’s “a zero on the rez” indicates as much, as does the incident at Turtle Lake. Failing to recognize the horse as a symbol of their former horse culture, his tribe deems it a threat, the monstrous (223) uncanny, what Freud termed the deeply and internally familiar appearing in repellent, unfamiliar forms. In the novel, Turtle Lake is described in a manner consistent with the unconscious, “deep, crazy deep . . . forever deep” (222). According to Freud, the uncanny relates to a time when we believed “the return of the dead” was possible. Although these beliefs have been “surmounted . . . we do not feel quite sure of our new set of beliefs.” So, “when something actually happens in our lives which seems to support the old, discarded beliefs, we get a feeling of the uncanny.” Such a feeling would be consistent with the effects of colonization and include abjection. The tribes’ need to kill the horse accomplishes Kristeva’s definition of abjection: “throw[ing] off” anything “in between . . . ambiguous” interfering with their ability to be a unified whole. The horse’s return in spite of the tribe’s efforts to kill it challenges tautological thinking. As Kristeva argues, the abject never “cease[s] challenging its master” with its “sudden emergence of uncanniness, which familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not *nothing*, either.” Likewise, Arnold, concludes the horse’s reappearance at Turtle Lake indicates “people forget . . . that dead horses can magically vanish and reappear” and becomes “the only one who was brave and crazy enough to leave the rez.”