RELATIONALITY OVER COLONIALITY: AN INQUIRY INTO
DECOLONIZING SETTLER-ISMS WITH INDIGENOUS FUTURISMS

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ABSTRACT

Reconciliation between non-Indigenous/settler peoples and Indigenous peoples has become a central tenet of Canadian education. In this dissertation I examine the ways a settler-colonizer's capacity to dream a vision of reconciliation into being is fractured. The ways schooling is stuck between, the potential for education to labour a decolonial future and the crisis of responsibility that ensues when education continues to be informed by settler ideologies that reinforce white supremacy and the superiority of Euro-western knowledge, come into focus. In the first two chapters I address colonial inheritances regarding the epistemic violence embedded within normative structures of contemporary society as barriers to relationality. Specifically, shame in schooling and the way settlers engage with positionality shapes and reflects how stolen land and relationality are understood. Decolonization offers some consolation, but how can a non-Indigenous settler person unsettle colonial ways of knowing, being, thinking, and doing while operating within these systems? From there I build an argument that Indigenous Futurisms is a catalyst for new ways of questioning and practicing decolonizing work, driving Indigenous resurgence and re-imagining reconciliation as a generative and relational praxis. In the last two chapters I bring into dialogue Indigenous Futurist artwork to show how these artists' socio-political interventions foreclose colonial ideology and machinations of future without conflating the ongoing dispossession and colonial violence(s) while creating a sense of hope and possibilities for otherwise futures. Zombie counter-narratives presented by contemporary painter, Bunky Echo-Hawk and filmmakers, Lisa Jackson and Jeff Barnaby, reframe Indigenous inheritance as the medicine needed in the post-apocalyptic world. Multidisciplinary artists, Nicholas Galanin, Steven Paul Judd, and Andy Everson reimagine *Star Wars* with space NDNs (N-D-N-s) highlighting the connective tissue of Indigenous living presence in past-present-future timelines. In conclusion, I suggest that if there is to be any hope of developing a decolonizing practice and an ethical space of engagement, non-Indigenous/settler peoples must step into the void working to un-learn, within educational institutions and beyond.

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Prologue: "Our Story is Who We Are"

> Among the Wild Rose,
> where prairie Wind blows,
> the Saskatoon calls home is where I roam.
> – Ryan Koelwyn

This prologue is inspired by Margaret Kovach, who writes that a prologue is relational work; "It is a precursory signal to the careful reader that woven throughout the varied forms of our writing – analytical, reflective, expository – there will be story, for our story is who we are" (2009, p. 3-4). My chosen name is Ryan Koelwyn, but I am known by many others. Romanchuk, Streliaf, and Treutler are the surnames of my ancestors. I do not have strong relationships with my human relatives, but what I do have is strong relationships with place and fostering relationship with place was taught to me by my human relatives. I was born on the traditional territories of the peoples of the Treaty 7 region, where I currently reside. These peoples include the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai, collectively known as Niitsitapi; the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations, collectively known as the Îethka Nakoda; the Tsuut'ina First Nation; and Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. Between being born on Treaty 7 land and residing there as an adult, I was raised in a rural community on the unceded traditional territory of the Yaqan Nukiy whose community is part of the Ktunaxa Nations. My relationship to these territories has little to do with the colonial placenames, imposed boundaries, or roads that favour travel by vehicle. When I think of the places called Calgary or Creston, I see images from the land and waters, of plants and animals, and minerals and sediments. When I think about visiting, these images appear like the faces of relatives calling me home. *These images of place* have everything to do with who I am, which is to say that who I am is an extension of where I am and have been in relation to land. This has always been true for me. The pulse of this research project comes from my own desire to engage with place as a social relationship, one that has been overdetermined by colonial ideology.

On some level, before I had academic words to describe my desires to disrupt the dominant discourses of Western ways of knowing and being, I felt the unsettling from within. A sort of disorganized push-pull with norms is an underlying thread in many aspects of my life; a thread that is complicated further by my tendency, socially conditioned by schooling, to first learn about 'The Rules' by obediently following them. I adorned myself with the armor of an external image of 'a good girl' because that seemed to be the ideal pleasing adults. Internally, I squirmed, as if there were a school of tadpole in place of my insides fleeing the scene having sensed an intruder, only the boundaries of my internal pond were much smaller, fear could not be as easily diffused. As a participant in the game of life, as designed by settler-colonialism, I am an insider. I gain acceptance into and access to existing systems of power that disproportionately benefit me.

Through various phases of my life, I have contended with my position of privileges and one response of having such privilege is to seek out alternative information, perspectives, and beliefs. In my pursuit of 'the Other' which colonialism is contingent upon, I found solace in the realization that there were indeed many others beyond the Western worldview I was born into. The more I left the colonial ideology box, the more disconnected from it I felt. While distancing myself, I did not deny my belonging to the dominant culture, because this is part of my ontology regardless of how I *feel* about it, whose cultural paradigm I interpret the world through, or how much Indigenous knowledge I encounter. I am a non-Indigenous[1] person. My ancestors are European-descended peoples of the working class who, fleeing persecution, immigrated to Canada on the promise of land and religious freedom. Their settlement forcibly displaced many Indigenous peoples and directly benefited my ancestors. Through this work I am continuing to reclaim what it means to take responsibility for who I am as a non-

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[1] Non-Indigenous is an imperfect term that masks the diversity across non-Indigenous peoples, which includes: a diverse Black population, those brought to lands claimed by Canada as enslaved persons, diverse racialized migrants subject to explicitly racist immigration policies through to the 1960s and beyond, refugees from conflict, and those desired as settlers for their White European heritage. For some discussion of these terminology issues see Chelsea Vowel's *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada* (2017).

Indigenous/settler person[2] over distancing myself from the parts I am ashamed of as a non-Indigenous/settler person who benefits from and is complicit in the ongoing colonial project. Through this work, I am disrupting my coloniality by exploring what it means when my human being-ness is guided by Indigenous paradigms of relationality – living in relation to people and place.

Traversing the implications of both my objective and subjective experiences, I continuously reflect on why and how external systems and structures influence my internal understandings thereby shaping the way I experience the world. In university I came to understand this practice was a heuristic device referred to as reflexivity; a concept that undoubtedly drew me to studying Anthropology in university through an anti-racist lens[3]. An anti-racist anthropological approach is epistemologically grounded in recognizing, questioning, and dismantling the *existing* racist and colonial structures, systems, and processes of dominant society and knowledge production that are established on the belief of white supremacy. The admission of the settler-colonial *present* dismantles the historic box in which colonialism is often time-stamped and locked into. Living in a settler-colonial present underscores that there is work to be done *now*, and where there is work, there is often sweat. Yet this particular work of recognizing, questioning, and dismantling colonialism might be better characterized as inner work because of the psychological and spiritual realms of being it calls into question; sweat emerges in the continuous facing of colonial ideology and hegemonic identity.

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[2] When theorists attempt to write about and interpret who diverse groups of people are, the terms *settler* and *Indigenous* are often (mis)used in favor of "the explanatory or universal" consequently limiting the possibilities for and particularities of place and personal history (Chambers, 1999, p. 147). While I remain committed to the summons made by Cynthia Chambers to "create a language of our own" (p. 145) that speaks to the particularities of place and land that we share, the phrase "non-Indigenous/settler" is used throughout this research intentionally to acknowledge the distinction that not all non-Indigenous peoples are settler peoples. The term settler specifically references the relationship that reflects settler-colonial ontological understandings of land and place.

[3] While racism (and other forms of Othering) continues to be one of the most pervasive problems in anthropology, with a history of racism since its foundation in the latter 19th and early 20th C. and connections to the American and British Eugenics movements, colonialism and American imperialism, there have been anthropologists at every moment who have countered this racism (see W.E.B. DuBois, 1899 and Zora Neal Hurston, 1937).

I am drawn to what feminist cultural theorist Sara Ahmed calls, "sweaty concepts." It is an astute way to describe something that is indescribable because it is felt before it is thought and before words can ascribe voice or meaning. The phrase sweaty concept gives language to otherwise abstract and complex experiences that are often invisible to dominant groups. Ahmed (2017) explains, "More specifically a sweaty concept is one that comes out of a description of a body that is not at home in the world…or a description of the world from the point of view of not being at home in it" (p. 13). Through intellectual labor, sweaty concepts are sweaty because they are work (Ahmed, 2017) and they work to bring attention to what hegemonic power is dependent upon but attempts to obscure.

When I began this research project, I knew I would be studying a sweaty concept and that I would work to break down constructed hierarchies between objects and people who regularly experience objectification, and that this work would not have a tidy endpoint. Ahmed might be interested in asking, what would that *feel* like? For me that meant sweating through the feelings of discomfort and accepting responsibility for my own settler-isms. Synthesized as a question: how do I find the integrity not to look away from all that I've inherited, reproduced, maintained? This question demands that ongoing settler complicity be reckoned with. It is a question I ask of all non-Indigenous Canadians as well, all people who have come to occupied Indigenous land no matter the circumstance. The statistical category, Canadians, is problematic because it homogenizes a complex and diverse group of people who are differently implicated in the question of colonialism and complicity; nevertheless, the responsibility to address this question is shared, the responses will be as varied as the peoples. The question provokes an urgent bidding to examine the institutionalization and ideology of settler-colonialism woven throughout contemporary society and the ways in which each of us inherit, reproduce, and maintain those structures and ideas through every day lived experience. This question is sweaty because it cannot be resolved conclusively and this lack of resolution drives the work onwards, demanding a return to it again and again.

The term settler-isms encompasses the multiple manifestations of colonialism – both the ways in which power constructs meaning for the non-Indigenous or settler person and the mechanisms by which these forms of power are exercised. Lurking behind settler-isms is a multitude of colonial motivations and consequences (re)producing different forms of colonialism that coexist and morph into each other and permeate settler ways of being and knowing. Accepting responsibility for settler-isms is a collective issue for non-Indigenous peoples requiring a personal, professional, and ongoing practice, a (re)commitment to "coming to know the past" (Smith, 2012, p. 36), to redress in the present, and to re-imagining futures. The practices will be as diverse as the diversity of non-Indigenous Canadians. When appropriate, I use an ethnographic approach to trace the dance between *my* specific, idiosyncratic, and sometimes contradictory experience to highlight an example of the conceptual mechanisms within which I am inquiring, and the caution that needs to be exercised by using that as a starting place. I will not speak or make assumptions for or all non-Indigenous settler peoples in Canada, but I will work to interrogate the broader implications from my inquiry and explain how the findings may be relevant for decolonial practices and theory. My tracing of personal epistemological assumptions and situatedness with respect to methodological decisions regarding the research, has implications for non-Indigenous and settler Canadian's writ-large while highlighting the need for further research with diverse populations in relation to decolonizing settler-isms.

The move to deeply question one's assumptions and engage with sweaty concepts that are inconclusive and are sometimes contradictory and tension-filled are reoccurring themes in this dissertation; it is also individual work, or rather inner work and must be done before or at least alongside relationship development in much the same way that decolonization is required before or at least scrupulously in tandem with Indigenization. Like decolonization, questioning one's assumptions is not prescriptive work or an item that can be crossed off on a to-do list or ever marked completed: for it

too is ongoing – a relationship with self that evolves and requires renewal. It is very much sweaty work because the commitment is laborious, imperfect, and often contentious.

What I share about my personal experience can be (mis)interpreted as the framing of a good settler, whose goodness acts as a shield separating themself from complicity in a colonial project, in what scholars Tuck and Yang (2012) have called "settler moves to innocence" (p. 10). Colonial binaries such as good-bad, right-wrong play a key part in settler moves to innocence. Rather than construing my story through moral dualism, which only serves the settler-subject in downplaying their badness or highlighting their goodness, I ask that you, reader, (re)consider the question of subjectivity and join me in questioning your own relationship with the topics I wrestle, and with your own complicity and accountability, by acknowledging moments of encounter as opportunities for you to think through and enact responsibility in ways that are distinct to you. This does not mean that I am exempt from criticism. It means that this nuanced and continuous work must be done by everyone.

I still struggle with putting some of my personal experiences forward on these pages in fear of reproducing violence through settler storytelling or settler retelling of Indigenous stories. I understand that this remains a possibility and I am committed to address this in relation with whomever when it appears. I understand the non-Indigenous/settler-Indigenous relationship is fraught territory, but worse than making a mistake is submitting to my privilege that allows me to sidestep difficult topics and interactions. This does not make me a hero; it makes me a human being. When I assert my human being-ness I choose relationality over coloniality. I proceed by repeatedly responding to the question, in my writing and in thought: who are the original people of the land where I live and call home, and what are my responsibilities to these peoples, to this place? For me, the question considers where I live now, but also takes me back to the places I have come from. I share memories and experiences because they are part of who I am now and mark the beginning of a sweatiness that informed my way "of understanding worlds that are in the worlds we are in," while gesturing to the struggle of "trying not to

eliminate the signs of sweat" (Ahmed, 2014, n. p.). In sharing, I contextualize my desire for wanting to

engage with Indigeneity in a personal-historical and ethical way. Everyone in Canada lives in relation to

land and in relation to Indigenous peoples. Not everyone acknowledges this. Some Indigenous peoples

do not want relations with non-Indigenous/settler peoples. Some non-Indigenous/settler peoples

develop consensual relationships with Indigenous peoples. Some relationships between non-

Indigenous/settler peoples and Indigenous peoples have been severed by institutions, as was the case

for me with schooling.

When my formal education began, I learned about *Canada's* history, which undoubtedly framed

colonialism as a feat of heroism, but I had entered school with previously established relationships with

Indigenous peoples, whose experiential knowledge unquestionably shaped my suspicions of the

dominant narratives centering colonialism. It was not until much later in life that I could interpret these

early relationships as settler-Indigenous ones. The Reserve is one of the first places where I experienced

a sense of community outside of my home and where I formed relationships outside of my nuclear

family. I remember the way my heart expanded the first time I attended the annual Pow Wow. While

few of my schoolmates attended this gathering (I remember one), it was the short drive out of town to

the Reserve that made its outsider-status clear, even to my six-year-old self. I understood that this *place*

was in some way 'outside' of my everyday experience without understanding why. Connecting to a

sense of morality palpable to most young children, I could sniff out something was off, and this

sensation stuck with me. At school, where difference and the separation of communities began taking

shape, I wondered, why weren't some of my school friends with me, *here,* at the Reserve?

Later in my schooling, I sought to understand and bring context to the off-ness, the separation

of groups of peoples, I experienced as a child. I remember in grade five when it came to our social

studies topic on the Yukon territory, others were electively learning about the Gold Rush while I chose to

focus on Raven and Eagle and Bear in relation to the land, alongside the mandatory learning about the

Gold Rush. This was not a social justice move or demonstration of inclusivity: it was my attempt to establish connection to people and place, to people that were not represented in my classroom, school, or curriculum. Complicatedly, in the same grade and subject area, I also wrote a poem touting Canadian nationalism that won first place in a local competition and garnered me lots of praise. I was a good colonial student. Through retrospection, I see myself joining the hundreds of thousands of Canadians that did not learn much about or from Indigenous peoples "across lands claimed by Canada[4]" in school and when I did, the content was most often from the perspective of settler-colonizers and remained outside of or secondary to core curriculum. Yet, before schooling, my educative experience included learning directly and indirectly from Land, Elders, and from peer relationships with Indigenous peoples, all ways of knowing that were interrupted by schooling. From within, I supplemented my education with Indigenous teachings and content deemed extra-curricular.

Having grown up with a colonial worldview that centered my individual experience, I thought my perspectives and knowledges were shared by many. It was not until late into my bachelor's degree when I found myself in a Canadian history course that this fantasy fragmented. What drew me to the course was that it interrupted Canada's canonical history from the perspective of Indigenous peoples, as taught by an Indigenous professor. Here, observing my peers' educative experience, alongside my own, I came to realize that so much of the course content was new to them. While I was intent on going deeper, some appeared to be just beginning. This is not a judgement of my peers and I resist the presumption of having arrived at some point in knowledge acquisition as a marker of any success. I did not know then what I characterize now as the significance of this experience, as being tied to the Levinasian facing that occurred, where to recognize the Other is to demand more of myself. I can now acknowledge the feeling sense of my settler-privilege in conjunction with the loss of Indigenous

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[4] I use this concept put forth by Elaine Coburn (2016) because I understand it to push against the idea of Canada being a homogeneous land that came into existence through settler-colonial "naming and claiming." This concept acknowledges and highlights the problematic that these lands exist within a "still-colonial context" (p. 2-4).

relations that I held in my body for decades. In writing this dissertation I have come to mentally

understand that this is one of the reasons my heart swells and tears fill my eyes when I hear the

ceremonial drumbeat. It is the sound of unity, a connection to people and place, and the memory of

losing that connection, which came out of a bodily experience that is difficult. Writing about this

experience makes me sweat. For every Indigenous person who has told their story I can only imagine,

how much more sweat?

INTRODUCTION: REDRESSING RELATIONALITY TOWARDS BETTER FUTURES

Reconciliation, Hope or Hype?

Following criticism of Stephen Harper's formal apology to former Indian residential school survivors and their families in 2008, countless testimonies, documents and research have surfaced, as former Indigenous students, families, communities, religious groups, government, and non-Indigenous/settler Canadians continue to engage in a process of truth and healing (Regan, 2010; TRC, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d). The inception of my research proposal came on the heels of the establishment of and reporting by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) that was formed to provide critical review, repair, and renewal of relationships between the Government of Canada and non-Indigenous/settler peoples and Indigenous peoples, under the guiding principles of truth and reconciliation. Interested in redressing relationality towards better futures and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, reconciliation seemed like an inevitable place for me to begin my project. However, through my research and reading with Indigenous scholars, I have come to understand the problematics and complexities in addressing reconciliation as the pathway to mending these relationships.

The TRC defined reconciliation as "an ongoing individual and collective process [of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships that require] commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian residential school (IRS) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada" (TRC website, about us); however, reconciliation has gained momentum as a colonial umbrella term and with growing popularity, its meaning becomes increasingly vague. Nevertheless, with the supportive momentum of the TRC now aligning with the longstanding, fervent efforts of Indigenous resistance and living testimony, Canada's continuing assimilation attempts and subsequent trauma endured by

Indigenous peoples are now well documented (Chrisjohn et al., 1997; Fontaine & Craft, 2015; Haig-

Brown, 1988; Sellars, 2013). However, this too was just a beginning.

One of the most common critiques of the TRC and its initial reporting was a lack of clarity of

what was to happen next. Then there were recommendations to follow, presuming that people would

not only have access to but also read the 338-page summary (TRC, 2015e). I felt that TRC meetings were

overly focused on a partial truth; Indigenous peoples were invited to tell their stories and histories,

settlers generally exempted themselves from speaking the truth of their inherited and ongoing benefits

of colonialism, and until recently, the truths of systematic abuse and negligence perpetrated by

government and residential school staff were buried and repressed. I wondered how such truths would

generate reconciliation anyway. What is the relationship *between* truth and reconciliation, *between*

coming to know and embodying respectful relations?

An important criticism leveled against the concept of reconciliation is that the wrongdoers are

still in power and "many settler-Canadians continue to downplay the nature and extent of the harms of

residential schools and deny subsequent obligations to redress historic *and* ongoing colonialism as the

prerequisite for reconciliation" (Nagy, 2020, p. 220, original emphasis). Such critiques were punctuated

by Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017. It was promoted by the government as Canada

150 and in response Indigenous activists began their own counter-campaign celebrating Resistance 150.

Fellow creators of the movement, Anishinaabe traditional storyteller and teacher Isaac Murdoch, Michif

visual artist Christi Belcourt, Nēhiyaw activist Tanya Kappo, and Métis author Maria Campbell sought to

highlight the negative impacts of Canada's colonial history focused on, but not limited to, the settler

seizure of Indigenous lands. Other countering names such as Colonialism 150 and Unsettle 150 gained

traction across social media platforms inciting awareness. At the same time as Canada 150 was being

positively promoted across the country, Indigenous communities were focusing on issues such as:

missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, which has expanded to include men, two-spirit,

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual peoples, the overrepresentation of displaced Indigenous youth in child welfare programs and the startling continuity between present day government care and residential schooling, and the urgent needs for Indigenous language revitalization. All the dissent called attention to the damage wrought by government policies and colonial practices and sparked more conversations around the meaning of reconciliation and what pathways to it might look like if non-Indigenous/settler peoples were to attend to Canada's colonial history as an *ongoing* process over relegating it to some distantly related, but separate past.

The main problem with reconciliation as a term is that "before two parties can *reconcile* they must, at some earlier time, have been *conciled*" (Chrisjohn & Wasacase, 2009, p. 221). This simply is not the case of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada, where government has consistently established and maintained structures and policies that work towards the exploitation and attempted annihilation of Indigenous peoples. With reconciliation as a guiding principle, Roland Chrishjohn and Tanya Wasacase (2009) continue to expose the duplicitous nature of the TRC:

> The job of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, like that of a good marital therapist or (more appropriately in this instance) a concerned priest, is to mend the rift, heal the rift, and make two conjoin again as one. It is an interesting fable, but there is more history to *Star Wars* than to this scenario. The (ex)termination of Indigenous peoples and their unsurrendered pre-existing title to land and resources is central to the political economy of Canada; was, is, and will continue to be. (p. 222)

Chrisjohn and Wasacase challenge the reciprocal action of reconciliation as it exists in theory, however well-intentioned, and what it is capable of doing through government channels. What is the commission designed to do, and is this the best way to accomplish such intentions, or simply one of many?

Gerald Taiaiake Alfred is critical of reconciliation as a concept because he perceives "reconciliation as an emasculating concept, weak-kneed and easily accepting of half-hearted measures

of a notion of justice that does nothing to help Indigenous peoples regain their dignity and strength"

(Alfred, 2009, p. 181). Alternatively, Alfred argues for *restitution* over reconciliation. He explains:

> If we do not shift away from the pacifying discourse of reconciliation and begin to reframe
>
> people's perceptions of the problem so that it is not a question of how to reconcile with
>
> colonialism that faces us but instead how to use restitution as the first step towards creating
>
> justice and a moral society, we will be advancing colonialism, not decolonization. (Alfred, 2009,
>
> p. 182)

The stark differences in Indigenous and non-Indigenous/settler-Canadian governance and social

organization models drive Alfred to question the logic of whether these two parties are even

reconcilable in the first place.

Adding to the misleading disjuncture of reconciliation is that its ambiguous meaning shape-shifts

depending on who is asking, and who is answering. Reconciliation is inherently political; its function,

purpose, and practice are entirely dependent upon the subject, the one doing the reconciling. Critiquing

the process of reconciliation, scholar Robyn Green (2015) demonstrates how reconciliation is packaged

by the Canadian government as an economic investment that "is used to bypass Indigenous peoples'

assertations of self-determination and to ensure the economic success of the settler state" (p. 474).

Rather than providing justice, reconciliation can become a process of Indigenous re-victimization or a

method to conceal settler roles and sidestep settler guilt. If the outcome of reconciliation is marked by

better future relationships, how will we get there? Whose future imaginings will be included? One

possible future has focused on education to lead the way.

The TRC expresses an emphatic belief in the potential for education to "remedy the gaps in

historical knowledge that perpetuate ignorance and racism" and that "[e]ducating Canadians for

reconciliation involves not only schools and post-secondary institutions but also dialogue forums and

public history institutions such as museums and archives" (TRC, 2015f, p. 117). In the past, history

curricula have primarily focused on colonial nation building for Canada. Textbooks ignored existing

Indigenous nations for the most part and neglected to challenge the ways Indigenous peoples have been

portrayed through the decades, if represented at all. Prior to 1970, they were too often portrayed as

savage warriors or irrelevant onlookers soon to be extinct. The 1980s cast Indigenous peoples in a more

positive light but emphasized poverty and social dysfunction without calling for an understanding of

how these conditions emerged, and the 1990s saw Indigenous peoples as protestors advocating for

rights. However, the average Canadian lacked any understanding of the significance of rights in relation

to resisting assimilation in the education system (TRC, 2015f). Because the dominant narratives of

Canada's history have failed to acknowledge the history of colonialism, the residential school system

and ongoing impacts in textbooks, tourist guides, and in cultural consumption at large, the collective

upholds a fabricated reality, and inadvertently supports those citizens that say they know nothing about

it. For seven years, I have confronted this misinformation with my classes of teacher candidates where I

address the issue of omitted histories and ongoing impacts within existing school curricula. Student

responses reveal their own shock, sadness, rage, and shame about: 1) the long history of exploitation

and abuse and 2) their late or little knowledge about this history or the ongoing impacts from their own

schooling.

Following the TRC directives, I see potential in curriculum and public education campaigns to

inform teacher candidates and non-Indigenous/settler Canadians about the history and impact of

residential schools and ongoing colonialism to a certain extent. I wonder what it takes for educators to

enact curriculum that challenges systemic inequalities of power and current colonial practices, in ways

that move beyond the pacifying language of reconciliation and delivery of 'Indigenous content' to

conceive of restitution and incite serious decolonial action for continuing change. Moreover, because I

observed how shame, in particular, foreclosed ethical responsibility and interpersonal learning when it

arose from non-Indigenous students studying Indigenous histories and ongoing injustices, I became

curious about shame as a problematic. Students who reacted with anger seemed primed for action, even if it came with some defensiveness, they asked, what can I *do*? Students who reacted with tears needed to work through their grief by talking it out. Students who reacted with shock wanted to know more, but shame stood out because these students seemed to disappear from the conversation entirely. I did not know how to reach them, how to bring them back into relation, and could not help but notice the significance that it was 'education' that fractured our relationship.

Many people have put a lot of stock into education being the path towards reconciliation and decolonization; however, without explicitly addressing historical and ongoing colonial strategies to dispossess Indigenous peoples from land and self-determination, attempts at educating Canadians might be falling short of what they set out to achieve. The later matters because land matters. Any discussion of reconciliation without reference to land manifests a "complete disregard for, and theft from, Indigenous people by industry and the Crown" (Pasternak & King, 2019, p. 16). Indigenous land reclamation and reparations are but another logical, though a highly contested step towards restitution. Dakota author Waziyatawin (2009) assures non-Indigenous/settler peoples that there are numerous ways to conceive of this move that do not involve current non-Indigenous/settler peoples renouncing their individual property rights. For example, the return of all Crown Land currently designated as federal or national is a given, but it is not a simple task. The Yellowhead Institute's Red Paper report "Land Back" (Pasternak & King, 2019) attests that:

> [t]o this day the "Crown"—an entity that has changed radically since first contact (both in Britain and Canada)—presumes to hold underlying title to all lands in the country. Therefore, that is how the treaties are interpreted by the courts and governments, and that is how lands that have not been treated are interpreted, too. (p. 24)

As a result, Crown Land remains an institutional barrier to the possibility of land restitution and plays a key role in land alienation (colonial control of land, water, and resources), which is a major economic

driver of the Canadian economy (Pasternak & King, 2019). However, the resurgence of Indigenous governance and ongoing relationships with land persist, despite practices and policies of settler-colonial land alienation and forced dispossession.

In some cases, Indigenous resistance has translated into recognition of Indigenous rights in Canada, but it has also meant the continuation of colonization through new means because the politics of recognition tend to reinforce the state's monopoly on power (Coulthard, 2014), and no matter the extent to which Indigenous cultural and political resurgence gains momentum, the efforts to access and exploit land also continues. As the Red Paper report states, "Nearly every major study addressing abolition of the colonial relationship in Canada advocates for compensation or reparation in the form of land redistribution" (Pasternak & King, 2019, p. 25). The land back movement demonstrates that there is a critical need to support and fund Indigenous self-governing systems, traditional caretaking, and Indigenous resource management practices, and that it is about so much more than a material base; it is about confronting colonialism at its ideological root. Thus, an essential question that my dissertation takes up is, what is a way for non-Indigenous/settler peoples to work on their relationship to land and by extension, decolonization?

Suggesting a path of returning *to* the land, Celia Haig-Brown (2009) poses the question, "Whose traditional land are you on?" to her readers and to her students as a way of prompting all peoples who call themselves Canadians to decolonize their lives. Looking to the land shows the many ways every person living on lands claimed by Canada come to be part of a colonized country. She explains:

> We have stories of how we came to be here: we need to trace those stories and our place in the process of colonization—whether it is as entrepreneur, refugee, Indigenous person, adventurer, or any one of a myriad of possibilities. None of the players in these stories escape the effects of colonization, but in each case, one takes the time to think through what these effects are and what their significance is. (Haig-Brown, 2009, p. 14)

Discussions about reconciliation in Canada have focused on including the previous omissions of history

by sharing survivors' stories and formally acknowledging the history and impact of residential schools. A

less common but blatant omission is the "erasure of Indigenous peoples from the lands," and so

reconciliation with the land is an important step towards redress for *all* Canadians (Haig-Brown, 2009, p.

16). Reconciling with land requires one to think about both the land from which one comes, but also

"the land and original people of the place where one arrives" (Haig-Brown, 2009, p. 16). Indigenous

dispossession from land is an everyone problem, and respectful relations with land is an important step

towards restitution. However, if reconciliation, as an individual process of restoring harmony with

oneself and a collective process "that brings adversaries to rebuild peaceful relations and a new future

together" (Chambers, 2009, p. 286), is ascribed over restitution, it is all hype because the complexities of

institutionalized racism are ignored and binaries that serve colonialism are maintained (Haig-Brown,

2009). Thus, I proceed with a desire for education that considers land relations to be central to any

philosophical investigation into the relational possibilities of decolonizing through restitution and

restoration.

The Project: From Coloniality to Relationality

At the heart of restitution and restoration concerns is an ethical commitment to people and

place that is based on systems of communal relationships centered on land and principles of

"reciprocity, respect, noninterference, self-determination, and freedom" (Simpson, 2017, p. 8). I can tell

you that an Indigenous ontology is based on relationships or that "Indigenous relationality is recognized

as the life force…which supports and nourishes life" (Dudgeon & Bray, 2019, p. 4), but to *embody* a

relational ethos and interact with the totality of the environment as kin is a lifeway, an ongoing practice.

When all things exist in relatedness, what is more important than "being accountable to your relations"

(Wilson, 2008, p. 77)? The problem is that a colonial ontology based on measurement has rendered

itself to be the only ontology that determines our human-ness. Even though Indigenous relational

lifeways are becoming increasingly appealing and beneficial to settler-society, Leanne Simpson (2017)

contends that these lifeways are being extracted and consumed, which mirrors the extractive

relationship settlers have with land (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Without *practicing* relationality,

coloniality "removes all of the relationships that give whatever is being extracted meaning" (Simpson,

2017, p. 75). Subsequently, this study draws on Indigenous systems of relationality and situates

Indigenous knowledge systems and their underlying ethical principles as the site of my inquiry. I push

back against the extraction model and pull myself into relationship.

From here I explore the following longstanding questions, observing that similar questions have

motivated inquiries by a wide range of Indigenous scholars: What does it mean to be responsible to

others, to one's human and beyond-human relations? What can a praxis of relationality bring to

decolonization, and what gets in the way of or fractures relationality? What is decolonization anyway?

How does it result in real, tangible re-distribution of power, privilege and recourse to wrongs done? Or

does it? What role does education play in attending to decolonization, to fostering relationality; in

contributing to ongoing colonialism? I seek to bring my own lens to similar questions that have long

been explored by Indigenous scholars[5] with respect to relational responsibilities to human and beyond

human kin (for some examples see, Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in*

American Indian Traditions (1986), Georges E. Sioui *For an Amerindian Autohistory* (1992), edited

volume by Kathleen D. Moore et al. *How it is: the Native American Philosophy of V. F. Cordova* (2007),

Jacqueline Hookimaw-Witt's *The World is Ours: Aboriginal Feminism Interpreted from Women's Roles of*

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[5] Within diverse Anishinaabe traditions alone, for instance, we might turn to recent works of Nicole Bell, "Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin: Living spiritually with respect, relationship, reciprocity, and responsibility," in A. Kulnieks, et al. (Eds.) *Contemporary studies in environmental and Indigenous pedagogies: A curricula of stories and place* (2013), pp. 89-107 and Gina Starblanket and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, "Towards a Relational Paradigm– Four Points for Consideration: Knowledge, Gender, Land, and Modernity," in M. Asch, et al. (Eds.) *Resurgence and reconciliation: Indigenous-settler relations and earth teachings*, (2019), pp. 175-208.

Sacred Responsibility to the Land, 2010, and Sarah A. Nickel & Amanda Fehr's *In good relation: history, gender, and kinship in Indigenous feminisms*, 2020). I respond to these questions from a position that recognizes the ways in which schooling is stuck between maintaining colonial ideology and the desire for education to labour a decolonial future[6]. Therefore, essential to my inquiry is unsettling dominant narratives that are contributing to the maintenance of colonialism, however, I am aware that calling further attention to dominant narratives, even if it is intended to critique them, can inadvertently recenter them. Hence, I am interested in the ways in which counter narratives that Indigenous artists and activists offer as forms of resistance and resurgence foreclose colonial ideology without conflating the ongoing violences colonialism enacts.

Given the colonial history of Canada and so many persisting colonial assumptions within contemporary society, this dissertation is situated within theoretical perspectives that seek to counter oppression and promote colonial un-learning. The theoretical framework includes critiques of postcolonialism and contemporary social-political thought from Indigenous scholars, artists, and activists who draw on relational methods of inquiry within Indigenous Futurisms (IF), a movement which espouses Indigenous storytelling within the context of science fiction as a form of Indigenous resistance and Indigenous resurgence. Through my readings of IF stories in visual art, I trace the ways in which IF challenges the colonial imaginary and dominant narratives of future by Indigenizing colonial sci-fi motifs, effectively reasserting Indigenous presence, now. Through inquiry I ask how IF might assist non-Indigenous/settler peoples to come into relationality as a decolonizing practice to embody responsibility

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[6] There is a vast living literature led by Indigenous scholars (and taken up by non-Indigenous scholars) that critique educational institutions as sites that reproduce colonial ideologies (for example, Emma LaRocque's *Defeathering the Indian* (1975), Keith H. Basso's *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (1996), Marie Battiste's *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (2000), Verna St. Denis's work including "Aboriginal Education and Anti-Racist Education: Building Alliances Across Cultural and Racial Identity" *Canadian Journal of Education* 2007) 30(4), pp. 1068-1092, Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2013), and her edited volume with Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View* (2018), among many others.

in the hyper-present and accept their colonial inheritance as a call to action to imagine futures otherwise.

I begin this inquiry by replacing reconciliation rhetoric with relationality; an ongoing process of renewing relationship to people and place, which is inherently a decolonizing practice. However, I recognize that decolonization is a widespread term that needs to be consistently examined as part of that renewal. The decolonizing aspect has been popularized by Paulette Regan (2010) as "unsettling the settler within," which is realized in part by dismantling settler-colonial ideology that is perpetuating dominant narratives and facing one's privilege and participation in a colonial system that continues to exploit Indigenous peoples. Scholar Natalie A. Chambers (2009) adds to this idea of unsettling:

> …for settler peoples and their descendants to authentically participate and respond to the call
> for truth and reconciliation, we need to look, in all honesty, at our complicity in maintaining the
> status quo—the hegemonic colonial paradigms that historically, and in the present day,
> perpetrate unequal power relationships through the systemic privileging of settler peoples'
> knowledge, languages, and value. (p. 286)

As a non-Indigenous researcher who is unsettling, I think about what it means to be a non-Indigenous person learning from Indigenous knowledges through IF while responding to the call articulated by Chambers. Therefore, I aim to trace what it is like to come into relation with people and place through a decolonizing practice that unsettles colonial paradigms, while continuing to live within colonial mechanisms that perpetuate systemic and structural inequalities. I invite readers to respond to Chamber's call and perhaps reformulate questions of complicity for themselves, which are inconclusive because this questioning, or unsettling, is very much an ongoing process.

As I work to understand the colonial paradigms and mechanics that fracture relationality and reproduce and maintain settler complicity, I explore the transformative potential of unsettling and the recognition that settler privilege is the inheritance of the colonial system. Most Canadians view

themselves and their ancestors as immigrants to Canada, not as settler-colonizers because "the

hegemonic structures and practices within bureaucratic systems, and the unequal power relations that

define colonial violence, remain for the most part invisible to non-[Indigenous] people" (Regan, 2010,

pp. 86-87). This affliction is the result of intentional shaping of settler nations and ideology that convey

narratives of settler permanence, legitimacy, and certainty (Mackey, 2014). Subsequently, this

dissertation is the culmination of my philosophical *rethinking* of settler certainty and *reorientation* to

ethical engagement that imagines possibilities for a decolonial future and embodies relationality as a

lifeway. In an effort to hold this sensibility, I am guided by the cogent words of Indigenous activist

Ronald Gamblin in a blog post for the 4Rs Youth Movement (n.d.):

> In school we are all taught a one sided and misleading version of history, as a newcomer you're
>
> told to avoid Indigenous folks and neighbourhoods, when buying property you're made to
>
> believe that the land you "own" wasn't acquired through violence, but only through exchange.
>
> At every point possible your existence has been shaped to unknowingly push against Indigenous
>
> land reclamation efforts. Most people that reside in Canada are taught to avoid and neglect
>
> conversations about colonialism and its negative impacts, to be possessive of land and to be
>
> ignorant towards Indigenous folks. **This is intentional . . .** Because of this I want to let you know
>
> that it is okay for you — non-Indigenous folks — to be gentle with yourself. Take time to feel
>
> what you feel, go learn and unlearn what is necessary to work on this relationship, let go of any
>
> fragilities and then come to us with your support. At the same time, I want to let you know that
>
> you cannot expect Indigenous folks to be as gentle. Indigenous peoples have been targeted,
>
> oppressed and colonized for centuries for our land, and we're sick of it. We want desperately to
>
> get past the slow process of educating non-Indigenous folks, and put all our energy into saving
>
> the earth, our families, our kinship relationships and ourselves. If we yell at you, block you or

just dismiss you, it's because we don't have time to support your emotional and intellectual

processing. We have people to save and land to reclaim. (n.p., original emphasis)

Overview of Chapters

In chapter one, "Unraveling Shame in the Context of Schooling," I attend to the question of what

stands in the way of or fractures relationality. I trace shame as a dominant pedagogy within colonial

schooling that was intentionally implemented in the residential schooling system to assimilate

Indigenous children into mainstream settler society. I posit that this legacy of shame could be a

destructive underpinning that continues to devastate Indigenous students and counter with

contemporary anti-racist education, which is an area that could be the subject of further research. Then,

thinking about how this shame-filled history is taught in schools today, I present a potential barrier to

relationality in the form of settler-shame. Within the context of shame *resilience*, I seek to recover what

has the potential to be educational about shame; that the interpersonal quality of shame holds

possibilities for moving out of shame's isolating paralysis to open the door for re-engaging relationships.

In chapter two, "Questioning Shame, Interrogating Decolonization and Re-connecting to

Relationality with Indigenous Futurisms," I articulate my commitment to relationality that became

apparent after a pedagogical encounter more akin to a crisis point. This encounter prompted a deeper

evaluation of what it means to be responsible to others in theoretical terms before engaging with living

human beings. Henceforth, I re-engage with education that is not built towards the future I know, but

rather a future in suspension, sensitive to possibilities, and the limitations of the present. I find myself

searching for a decolonial research practice that disrupts internalized shame and colonial impositions of

knowledge without disregarding the past while also reclaiming Indigenous futures, which led me to the

emergent field Indigenous Futurisms (IF). I introduce the characteristics of IF that include challenging

colonial stereotypes, examining intersections of traditional and contemporary Indigenous philosophies

and technologies, and thinking with, as opposed to about, the past while (re)imagining Indigenous futures.

In chapter three and four I analyze and think with Indigenous Futurisms texts and images. I engage in a dialogue with these texts and images because I understand IF as a framework that enlivens and restores relationality. What I find in IF is not only a decolonizing practice, but more importantly, a re-orientation to decolonization through coming into relation with Indigenous philosophies and cosmologies. I explore two counter narratives within IF, zombies and Star Wars, which take me into a relational practice with Indigenous thought through Indigenous art that embodies resistance (challenges colonial assumptions, ideas and practices) and resurgence (recenters diverse and enduring Indigenous presence).

In chapter three, "Alive in a State of Injury: Counter Narratives of the Living Dead," I consider how Indigenous artists are using zombie imagery to reclaim self-determined futures. From an Indigenous perspective, the apocalypse of settler colonialism is a defining feature of Indigenous history that continues to affect the everchanging present and threaten the foreseeable future. With the backdrop of a pandemic, many people can imagine the end of the world, but not the end of colonialism. I propose this chapter has wider implications for all non-Indigenous/settler-Canadians. What can non-Indigenous peoples learn from Indigenous artists who, "haunted by a disappeared past while facing survival in a devastated present," work to reclaim an Indigenous future (Dillon, 2016, p. 2)?

In the fourth chapter, "Imaginary Indian to Space NDN," I reflect on outer space as a primary theme in IF, wondering if and how imagined space-exploration might assist non-Indigenous and settler-Canadians in an ethical re-conception of land restitution as part of the ongoing decolonization process. This chapter is a philosophical inquiry into the Indigenous theories and cosmologies that are inherent within IF. I look at Indigenous artists who reference *Star Wars* imagery in particular, and space travel in general, as sites of Indigenous resistance, resurgence, and living presence. What I learn from Indigenous

philosophies of land, space, and place ultimately lead me to a consideration of kinship relations, which

unlocks possibilities to re-imagine Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations now. In identifying IF as a

compelling way to engage, educate, and mobilize a decolonizing process for non-Indigenous peoples, I

return to the concept of relationality in the concluding chapter to reflect on how that concept has

shapeshifted in meaning and how thinking about relationships has evolved.

CHAPTER ONE: UNRAVELING SHAME IN THE CONTEXT OF SCHOOLING

Responding to the Articulations of Shame

Following the first of several reclamation of unmarked graves of 215 children at the former

Kamloops Indian Residential School in May 2021, renewed attention was brought to Canada's 'shameful'

history. The discoveries prompted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau[7] to say he's "appalled by the shameful

policy that stole Indigenous children from their communities." Non-Indigenous Canadians may likewise

feel ashamed and implicated in Canada's genocidal practices. Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller[8]

called it "shameful" that the Pope has declined to apologize for the Catholic Church's role in running

residential schools in Canada. And at a public forum, residential school survivor Evelyn Camille[9] shared

her experience saying, "I was ashamed to be a Secwepemc. That's what residential schools taught me,

to be ashamed of my identity." Considering the above articulations of shame, I propose that shame

becomes an affective category which obfuscates a range of dynamic affects that get expressed as shame

in order to make sense of an assumed moral objectification that we share as 'Canadians.' There is always

ambiguity when it comes to shame because what shames us depends on who we are, our positionalities,

and our relations to each other and place.

I recognize that feeling ashamed as a non-Indigenous person for inheriting the continuing legacy

and responsibility of residential schooling and the ongoing colonial project is not the same as an

Indigenous person who might be made to feel ashamed of their identity and culture through ongoing

interpersonal and institutional structures of colonialism. Cultural and internalized shame that is

manifested through the colonial project, such as experiences of residential school, affects not only those

who survived. This shame continues to be passed intergenerationally through colonial structures such as

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[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5Ev5m0NQgM
[8] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/3/no-papal-apology-in-canada-indigenous-abuses-shameful-official
[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjKgM9kgoJc

schooling, education, child welfare, the Indian Act. In this chapter I am committed to sustaining these important distinctions between conceptualizations of shame experienced by non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.

My concern is that shame is most frequently used to sum up the feelings towards the horrific realities of colonial history, including the residential school legacy. What is problematic is that the complexities that underly this history are thus put into the shame-box which becomes frozen in a normative response. In this way, shame is "congealed [as a] recognizable object that has norms associated with it" (Skopje Pride Weekend, 2020, 18:54). As a normative emotional response shame does not warrant further questioning and thus disperses and alleviates responsibility for the ongoing legacy of colonialism. This congealed form of shame releases settlers from further investigating the political, cultural, and ethical dynamics of colonization. Such a release forecloses any further responsibility. I propose that articulations of shame need further scrutiny as shame is not only an emotion but is also an affective response that lingers in the body. Given this layered understanding of shame, I suggest it is critical to further investigate and unravel the nuances of the ways in which shame gets taken up as rhetoric in discourse of redress. In this chapter, I investigate ways in which shame has become institutionalized in schooling and normalized in pedagogy and then maleficently operationalized in residential schools. The institutionalization of shame establishes the longstanding relation between shame and education that is widely ignored despite having informed, altered, and shaped schooling experiences in the past and as some would argue the present as well.

This chapter offers some possible ways to think and feel about shame in schooling, recognizing it as an integral part of what and how many of us learn and teach under the influence of Eurocentric ideology. I conceive of education as an ongoing process of acquiring and abandoning bits of knowing, being and doing through informal and formal methods. By schooling, I mean the way certain information

and ways of knowing, being, and doing are transferred and transformed as an institutionalized form of education, and school is the structural and physical place where institutionalized instruction is delivered.

My intention in this chapter is to trace machinations of shame in schooling as one potential culprit that can fracture relationality. Surely, if left unaddressed and allowed to persist, shame could be subverting Indigenous healing while aiding settler complicity and burying cultural shame premised on racist colonial beliefs within current curriculum. If education is part of the vision or 'the key' to reconciliation, as it is often referenced in both informal and formal calls to action, then education must address schooling's historical role and complicity in shaming Indigenous peoples, knowledges, and practices, followed by examinations of how shame overtly or covertly continues to inflect contemporary education in various ways. Shame, as I explore later in this chapter, becomes a pedagogy.

In the first section, drawing on several scholars who study shame, I provide a brief overview of the ways in which shame is conceptualized. In the second section I move to thinking about colonial schooling and a pedagogy of shame, first through a survey of 19th century British Public School (BPS) literature where shame-based teachings were used to create moral children according to white-British kinship values and child-rearing practices. Then, I consider the colonial implementation of Indian residential schools in Canada and the different ways in which shame is rendered within these schools. My aim is not to compare or draw explicit links between BPS and IRS. Rather, my intent is to expose ways in which shame has a historicity within schooling. While shame was used to create good British citizens in BPS, in residential schools shaming practices were used to instill a sense of cultural shame in Indigenous children in Canada as part of an aggressive assimilation strategy. The particular factors that distinguish residential schools as a genocide include racist assimilation, cultural shaming, and sexual violence with the explicit aim of isolating children to disrupt Indigenous kinship practices and minimize Indigenous resistance so that the government could systematically dispossess Indigenous lands and resources for colonial expansion and control. With this historical contextualization in mind, I identify one

way I see shame continuing to infiltrate current schooling practices albeit in new forms. Therefore, in the third section I consider how shame is obstructing education that is said to involve non-Indigenous Canadians and settlers in the reconciliation process through education. I also seek to recover shame's educational value and ask, what can shame teach us about preparing the next generation of non-Indigenous students and educators to embrace and mobilize relationality as an ongoing practice?

On shame: we all have it and we are ashamed to talk about it

The reality is shame is pervasive. It is a universal <u>emotion</u> in the sense that anyone can experience it, yet it is highly personal because what shames one person might not shame another. It acts covertly to maintain its hold, in the way that it triggers an impulse to hide and yet, despite our inclination to conceal the emotion, shame can be distinctly visible. Some people respond physically to the feeling of shame with a lowering of the head, hands covering face, facial blushing, and/or the avoidance of eye contact. Shame is also overt in the way that the emotion can be induced in someone by another person or a group, in which case shame is characterized as an <u>interpersonal</u> <u>event</u> (i.e., public shaming) that can be witnessed and repeated (a sequence of events), which leads to <u>internalized</u> shame.

Feeling shame (the noun) or being ashamed (the adjective) is a "self-conscious experience in which [an individual feels] that a weakness or vulnerability has been exposed, not only to others, but also to themselves, leaving them feeling deficient and humiliated" (Leitch, 1999, p. 1). Shame is therefore frequently tied to failings of the ideal self and can influence identity construction because it shapes behaviours and understandings of worth (Tangney & Dearing, 2003). The perception that shame is hard evidence of one's unworthiness, propels its harmful power and destructive hold (Sedgwick et al., 1995). In Brené Brown's (2012) work shame is framed as the fear of disconnection, meaning "the fear that something we've done or failed to do, an ideal that we've not lived up to, or a goal that we've not accomplished makes us unworthy of connection" (pp. 68-69). To that end, Brown (2012) defines shame

as "*the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging*" (p. 69, original emphasis). Elspeth Probyn (2005) captures the power of perceived unworthiness recalling a shame experience that most people have some familiarity with: "Someone looks at you with interest and you begin to be interested, only to realize [they are] looking at someone else" (Probyn, 2005, p. x).

It was Silvan Tomkins (1962) who articulated that shame ignites *only after* interest, care, joy, or a desired connection is fractured or goes unreciprocated. At the moment of disconnection, "the keen disappointment of loss translates into shame that attacks your sense of self: the entrails of who you thought you were are suddenly displayed for all to judge" (Probyn, 2005, p. xii). Thus, shame compels an immediate reassessment of ourselves that can potentially be self-evaluative and self-transforming or self-destructive and self-isolating. Following Tomkins' theory, Gershen Kaufman (1985) documented that shame originates interpersonally; for, "whenever someone becomes significant to us, whenever another's caring, respect or valuing matters, the possibility of feeling shame emerges" (p. 17), and "If you don't care," Probyn (2005) adds, "then attempts to shame won't move you" (p. x).

Shame is a complex emotional response, however, that is governed by dominant social norms; it may be "something incapable of being articulated as well as something prohibited from articulation" (Cohen, 1996, p. 3). As a result, Helen Lewis (1971) refers to unacknowledged shame as shame that is hidden behind other emotions such as anger, contempt, depression, denial or superiority. Kaufman (1985) agrees that shame is a "misunderstood and neglected emotion" (p. vii) because "the categories we employ for describing inner experience act as a filtering mechanism: the names we use for inner states actually filter our experience of them" (p. ix). This 'inner life,' described by Aparna Mishra Tarc (2015) as "a borderline space between the unconscious, fantasized, and representable thoughts of the [person]," is difficult to put into words (p. 38). Kaufman captures the challenge of putting words to a shame inducing event:

Shame lies hidden behind inaccurate words, symbols that fail to grasp the inner experience of

the self. Even the word shame is a rather poor one…for it fails to convey either the feeling of

exposure inherent to the experience or the sense of despair and anguish that can accompany

extreme moments of utter worthlessness. (1985, p. 7)

The names we are taught to label inner life "either sharpen perception of those events or else mask

them" (Kaufman, 1985 p. ix). The cruel paradox of shame is that even though it calls out one's desire for

connection, the nature of it imposes an impulse to withdraw, and the dominant narrative of shame

governed by dominant social norms has resulted in a 'language of shame' that reinforces and

emphasizes negative evaluations of self and disconnection from others. In shame, the self feels

defective, diminished, and unworthy.

In the universal language of shame we'd say, '*I* did that horrible thing,' which emphasizes the

self, versus guilt, which emphasizes the behavior that is somewhat apart from the self, 'I *did* that

horrible thing.' In guilt we likely feel an urge to admit our wrongdoing, feel remorse and wish to make

amends (to restore the relationship/connection), but it is significantly less likely that we will broadcast

our shame. Guilt does not affect one's core identity because it is a condemnation of actions of self (what

I did), where shame is the negative evaluation of the self (who I am). From this distinction, Lewis (1971)

determined that "In shame we become the object as well as the subject of shame" (p. 34).

Most of the time, shame originates interpersonally and "remains a feeling which is generated

and then passes on" (Kaufman, 1985, p. 8). However, following sufficient repetitions of shame

sequences, it "can become internalized so that the self is able to activate shame without an inducing

interpersonal event" (Kaufman, 1985, p. 8). Kaufman (1985) refers to internalized shame as an 'internal

shame spiral,' where shame is now experienced as a deep sense of being defective and this is the

foundation in which other feelings about the self are experienced. Drawing on Sartre's discussion of

shame, Sandra Bartky (2012) explains the interpersonal role of the Other in setting up the process of

internally induced shame. She writes:

> Once an actual Other has revealed my object-character to me, I can become an object for
>
> myself; I can come to see myself as I might be seen by another, caught in the shameful act.
>
> Hence, I can succeed in being vulgar all alone: In such a situation, the Other before whom I am
>
> ashamed is only – myself." (Bartky, 2012, p. 85)

In other words, once we have experienced shame in the presence of someone for whom we care (to

whatever degree that is) or with whom we wish to maintain a connection, we can relive that experience

over and over by becoming our own audience.

Shame inducing events can be employed intra-relationally (within the same culture), as a control

mechanism to manage desirable behaviour and ideals, and inter-relationally (between different

cultures) when one culture induces shame in another to impose an internalized <u>cultural</u> <u>shame</u>, in which

case it is often a dominant culture (the oppressor) that targets minority populations (the oppressed).

Ullaliina Lehtinen (1998) explains, "What might only slightly embarrass a privileged person might evoke

shame in the socially subordinate" (p. 61). Those who have not been shamed by their gender, class, or

race have "a privilege – either to internalize or defy the episodic dis-esteem and de-valuation"

(Lehtinen, 1998, p. 62). Cultural shame, however, is about internalizing the belief that one's cultural

identity as part of a particular and usually constructed 'inferior' group, is shameful. As part of this so-

called 'inferior' group, individuals internalize the imposed beliefs of inadequacy about the group as an

inadequacy of oneself. Then, one internalizes the ways that they are treated by those they are in

relationship with, in this case the dominant group, and *learn* to treat oneself accordingly. Third, one

internalizes these identifications, which guide their internal living and external behaviour within

dominant society (Kaufman, 1985). Of course, the stages can shift and overlap depending on the

experience, the key being that cultural shame "maintains the structure of society [through conformity]

by ensuring that the internalized [dominant] norms and rules operate through the consciences of the

[inferior] individuals" who fear rejection from the dominant group that is governing their relations (Leitch, 1999, p. 5). As cultural shame can work informally, it can also be reinforced by policies and practices.

Shaming as a schooling practice

What is interesting about schooling in this context is that shame is inherent in the process of learning, as it is conceived of by Western standards. When someone achieves a learning objective, learning is considered successful, however challenging. When someone perceives themselves as failing (actual, perceived, or feared), they can experience shame. Kaufman (1985) describes two gendered cultural scripts of shame in Western society that commonly creep into Western schooling systems. First, the 'success ethic,' which celebrates the idea of the self-made man who competes for success and is rewarded for achieving external standards of performance (Kaufman, 1985). In this script, achievement is the trademark measure of one's intrinsic worth or adequacy, where external performance becomes the measurement of self-esteem driven by fear of failure (Kaufman, 1985). Those who continually meet the standards of performance might be spared, but those who do not are left vulnerable to shame. Hailing independence and self-sufficiency, Kaufman names 'the pioneer,' 'the cowboy' or 'the detective' as the second script. These individuals champion how to stand proudly alone and have earned a symbolic badge of honor in "never needing anything or anyone" because "to need is to be inadequate, shameful" (Kaufman, 1985, p. 31). This script is particularly hopeless; valorizing the individual in isolation, devoid of need for connection, relationship, and community; we learn to be ashamed of being human. When shame inducing events are intentionally practiced in schooling, shame becomes a pedagogy.

The dunce cap is no longer used, but there are other forms of 'shame pedagogy' operating in schools, including mechanisms of selection, grading, and assessment. Some common examples of

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(potential) shame-inducing practices are:

- **Ability grouping**: Categorizing students based on their ability in particular subjects or literacies as in reading or math exposes student's weakness/strength. Regardless of the group's name, the students quickly assign meaning to the terms.

- **Peer evaluation**: Peer evaluation techniques such as exchanging papers for editing may reveal student error or weakness, e.g. if a student struggles with spelling and is aware of this, just fearing another's discovery of this limitation is possibility enough to induce shame.

- **Public humiliation**: Classroom management techniques such as writing names on the board when a violation of the rules occurs or having a child move their desk to the corner, are potent shame producers.

The risk of shame is inherent in schooling, and yet, rather than teach students how to understand and cope with these experiences, curriculum takes a pre-emptive approach to identify, isolate, and avoid risk factors of failure, recognizing that failure is a possibility, but not one 'worthy' of teaching. If curriculum refuses to acknowledge schooling's role in inducing shame, how and where will youth learn to manage and negotiate the "cringing withdrawal from others" that shame incites (Bartky, 2012, p. 86)?

The relationality of shame and its pedagogical possibilities

In shame there are fractures and wounds, but another possibility emerges as it simultaneously "recognizes connections of shared interests, even love" (Werry and O'Gorman, 2007, p. 224). To speak of shame is to call out and cultivate its relational process and for this reason shame can be productive. For Tomkins (1962), shame is always productive because it produces affects; sometimes it generates more shame and other times it furthers connection when the initial interest to connect or belong is acknowledged or reciprocated. Probyn (2005) recalls the body has a way of articulating interest, as in the desire for connection; even when you did not know you were interested, blushing is the body's way

of calling it out. Brown (2012) however, unsatisfied with the immense potential of shame to cause harm, studied research participants with high levels of shame *resilience*. By shame resilience, Brown (2012) means "the ability to practice authenticity when we experience shame, to move through the experience without sacrificing our values, and to come out on the other side of the shame experience with more courage, compassion, and connection than we had going into it. Shame resilience is about moving from shame to empathy – the real antidote to shame" (p. 74). Her theory stands that because shame is interpersonal, "it also heals best *between* people" (Brown, 2012, p. 75, emphasis added).

The four elements of shame resilience according to Brown (2012) are to, 1) physically recognize shame, feel your way through and understand the triggers, 2) reality check the messages and expectations that are driving your shame, 3) practice courage and reach out to others, and 4) speak shame because shame thrives on secret keeping and talk about how it feels or ask for what you need when shame appears (p. 75). Where shame is the fear of disconnection, these four elements work towards (re)establishing connection (Brown, 2012). Shame calls out our desire to exist in relation to others; our sense of the world and love for it is at stake, and shame captures the threat of what could be and what has been lost. An understanding of shame's relational ontology reminds me that wherever people pass time together, a shame experience is a possibility, and whether we address shame within education or not, students will still encounter it.

One enters the classroom as a teacher and/or a student with the hope that learning might happen, but there is never a guarantee. After all, education involves unpredictable interactions between human beings, no matter how carefully planned the curriculum (Biesta, 2015). Shame and education are strange bedfellows in that schooling inherently creates opportunities for inducing shame and yet, ignoring the presence and potential of shame within schooling is normalized and at worst, some educators, consciously or unknowingly have adopted shaming techniques as a pedagogy but most would never acknowledge or identify shame as part of their toolkit. The connection between shame and

schooling is something deeply felt by and intuitively known to both educators and students, but actively ignored, avoided, and suppressed (Leitch, 1999). This disconnect is reflected in the (lack of) literature, as there is little and often no explicit mention of shame's place in schooling (historically or presently). However, shame is increasingly emerging as an integral factor to be considered in the growing research on the intergenerational impacts of the IRS.

As colonization progressed and the IRS were implemented, Indigenous children were taught cultural shame through schooling and that cultural shame became, not only internalized, and transferred intergenerationally, but also institutionalized (in schooling and beyond). If education is an encounter of child and world, the residential school child came into one where 'to be ashamed' was a dominant message; however, the direct role of shame in assimilation and residential schooling has yet to be explicitly addressed. In the next section I trace how what I refer to as 'shame pedagogy' is historically tied to colonial schooling by reviewing the British Public School system, which also contextualizes how and why shame was used to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children into a Euro-Canadian way of life. Although readers might want to grasp at the potential parallels between the two systems, doing so problematically conflates two different systems where 'shame pedagogy' was practiced under completely different intentions. Gaining insight into the historical context of shame as a pedagogy, however, has important implications for educators today. If teachers are going to talk about and practice decolonization, which includes teaching students about Canada's shameful (ongoing) history then shame is unavoidable.

Colonial Schooling and A Pedagogy of Shame

The literature on British boarding schools[10], initially restricted to white-British boys, is robust and has produced the most representative examples of the internalized shame pedagogy, which is important to my work. I draw on this literature to contextualize my thinking around a pedagogy of shame, which conveys one key point of this section: that shame is inherent in the context of colonial schooling. I draw on British boarding schools to register shame as an inherent factor in colonial schooling. My intention is not to compare the British boarding school or Public School system to the Indian residential school system because there is a fundamental difference between shame pedagogy and assimilation through schooling intended for one's own culture, and shame pedagogy and assimilation through schooling that is forcibly imposed on an Other[11] culture, which I explain further in this chapter.

In the 19th century, education was seen as a path for middle-class boys to be prepared for public life. Girls were to be educated "for the drawing room" and their education was social rather than intellectual (Dyhouse, 2012, p. 44). Consequently, most upper- and upper-middle-class girls were educated in the home, while a minority attended expensive boarding schools with a non-academic curriculum (Brent-Dyer, 1959). The separation of gender and absence of girls in school[12] reflects the sexism of the schooling system and subsequent gender bias in the literature on boarding schools from this history. In his comprehensive history of British Public Schools (BPS), Jonathon Gathorne-Hardy's work provides a detailed account of the origins, organizational structures, traditions and social significance of English boarding schools (1977), and Ian Weinberg (1968) illuminates boarding schools'

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[10] When I refer to boarding schools, I do not mean all boarding schools, but specifically the British Public School (BPS) system of 19th century England that were founded for public use but are increasingly known as independent (fee-paying) schools. Public was defined as open to all boys regardless of their religion or family's residence-location or job title.

[11] In the context of Canada, the 'Other' actually consists of many diverse Indigenous groups that have been reduced to one homogenous 'Other,' which is a problematic example of pan-Indianism.

[12] Between 1870, when the Education Act became law, and 1880, when compulsory education was introduced in Britain, girls increasingly occupied schools of their own and a new genre of girls' school stories emerged; therefore, a focus on girls boarding schools is an area for further study but is beyond the limits of this particular research project (see Meade, 1894; Meade & Ludlow, 1891).

significance to sociologists studying socialization and class. Additionally, there is an extensive

examination of these schools' long-term effects on student's lives and the negative connotations

concerning larger society (Boyd, 1973). Through the written testimonies of children, historians, such as

Vyvyen Brendon (2009) and Nick Duffel (2000) have outlined the history of preparatory schools

(schooling before college or university), of which BPS are a part. These accounts show maltreatment

within the institution in the forms of extreme bullying, physical assault, and sexual abuse.

The growing psychoanalytic research on the psychological effects of boarding schools asserts

that early separation is one primary culprit for inducing trauma in boarders (Duffel 2000, Schaverein,

2011; 2015). A close analysis reveals that the feelings and experiences of shame/shaming are often

present in scholarly research on British boarding schools and within attendee's testimonies but are

rarely the focus of these investigations; sometimes the word 'shame' is used and then passed over, its

meaning unexplained or assumed. Reflecting on the dilemma of children not informing their parents of

their harmful experiences, Schaverein writes, "The child is ashamed, feeling culpable for the humiliating

experiences to which they were subjected, and this cannot be articulated, even many years later.

Boarding School Syndrome is thus established; the true self remains hidden and the child is unknown to

the parents and so is, in effect, lost" (2011, p. 144). The boarding school experience supports the general

notion that it is shameful to talk about shame, which only strengthens shame's negative hold; for, to talk

about shame would be to express the inexpressible (Berman, 2001).

Inside the British boarding school system

In 19th Century Britain, people believed that "children were the fruit of original sin . . . they were

defective adults whose sin was to be beaten out of them" (Gathorne-Hardy, 1977, p. 39). 'Spoiling of

children' or the guard against overindulgence was of deep concern, representing "the male fear of

having the boy child contaminated by the mother, and seduced into a world of softness and

emotionality" (Duffel, 2000, p. 21). This perception of the child discloses the purpose of boarding

schools as substitutions and reinforcements for society and family that were "called upon to mold

children on the pattern of an ideal human type" (Ariès & Baldick, 1962, p. 285). The purpose of

education "was to train the character, to change it, to make it wiser, more civilised, more profound,

more humane," according to colonial ideology (Gathorne-Hardy, 1977, p. 139). Schoolmasters were to

achieve this goal at any cost; they "were expected to be brutal," and the power of masters in this regard

was absolute (Gathorne-Hardy, 1977, p. 39).

The violence inflicted on children in these schools was perceived as a way of life; "but a way of

life," Gathorne-Hardy, (1977) writes, "can say something about the attitudes of those who live it" (p.

43). Examining violent behaviour shows how children and schoolmasters expected each other to

behave; like that of a game, boys played not to get caught and masters played to catch (Gathorne-

Hardy, 1997). This mentality justified violent discipline and prevented the master from feeling guilt in

executing punishment because it is the child's fault for getting caught. More menacingly, punishment

was perceived as the price one paid for civilization or as a rite of passage designed to build character.

Boarders were initiated into their school through elaborate and cruel hazing rituals that suppressed pre-

existing identities; the conditions imposed on the boy restricted his personal liberty (Wakeford, 1969).

The drive to conform was supported by uniforms, which "depersonalizes you, making you easier to

control and also stamping you with the image of the institution" (Gathorne-Hardy, 1977, p. 112). This

'stripping' process was crucial in creating a sense of solidarity among students and diminished the

importance of ties to family and previous statuses, thus eventually replacing 'kin groups' with 'class

group' (Gathorne-Hardy, 1977). Additionally, the process of stripping individual identity from

adolescents was to assimilate re-formed individuals with qualities that best represented the values of

the school, and by extension white-British culture. Pain and terror were seen as vital to this assimilation

process. In numerous accounts, ex-boarders describe the physical and emotional pain they endured at

school or because of schooling. As I read through many difficult testimonies about the school atmosphere, involving corporal punishment, school rules, and daily social interactions, I began to code different accounts of shame or the fear of shame (these interpretations are my own). Anticipated or actualized shame was fundamental to the BPS's process of molding children out of 'sin' and into moral individuals.

The initial experiences of shame at boarding school involved the disruption of family, emerging as early as the first day of school when the boy was separated from his mother. From his first autobiography, *Boy: Tales of Childhood* (1984), children's author Roald Dahl astutely narrates this all too common moment of loss on the first day that can generate shame for boarders:

> As we got out of the taxi, I saw the whole driveway abustle with small boys and their parents and their trunks and their tuck-boxes, and a man I took to be the Headmaster was swimming around among them shaking everybody by the hand.
>
> I have already told you that all Headmasters are giants, and this one was no exception. He advanced upon my mother and shook her by the hand, then he shook me by the hand and as he did so he gave me the kind of flashing grin a shark might give to a small fish just before he gobbles it up. One of his front teeth, I noticed, was edged all the way round with gold, and his hair was slicked down with so much hair-cream that it glistened like butter.
>
> "Right," he said to me. "Off you go and report to the Matron." And to my mother he said briskly, "Goodbye, Mrs. Dahl. I shouldn't linger if I were you. We'll look after him."
>
> My mother got the message. She kissed me on the cheek and said goodbye and climbed right back into the taxi.
>
> The Headmaster moved away to another group and I was left standing there beside my brand new trunk and my brand new tuck-box. I began to cry. (pp. 39-40)

Schaverien (2011) theorizes the moment of loss, described by Dahl, as the genesis of Boarding School

Syndrome, where emotional abandonment takes over one's ability to cope with disconnection. Duffel

(2000) theorizes how a child as young as 6 or 7 years old might rationalize or accept this shame inducing

disconnection, consciously or not. He describes the process as follows:

> I know Mummy and Daddy love me. They have told me so. I know it's important to them to send
>
> me away to school and that it costs a lot of money and that I should be grateful. But I hate it. If
>
> they love me, why did they send me away? Either they don't love me or there's something very
>
> wrong with me for feeling like this. If they don't really love me it must be because I am bad. If
>
> they do, and I feel like this, *it must be because I am bad.* (Duffel, 2000, p. 9, emphasis added)

Duffel's description of sense-making loss in the form of disconnection is the pathway of internalizing

shame. The confusion around parents' love and simultaneous rejection for being sent away threatens

the child's understanding of self-worth. According to Duffel (2000), the only deductions a child can come

to if they are to retain a sense of having parents is "that he is either bad or unlovable or both" (p. 9),

each of which are about the self (shame) as opposed to *actions* of the self (guilt).

Schaverien (2011) supports this notion but also recognizes that not all boarders experience

trauma or even classify their experiences at BPS as negative. Nonetheless, every boarding school child

copes with the separation from family, and many feel pressure to "keep his feelings under wraps if he is

not to become a spectacle to be ridiculed and bullied by his peers, or tormented by the chaos inside

him" (Duffel, 2000, p. 14). The possibility of becoming a spectacle magnifies the power of public

shaming. Boys quickly learn from experience or peer observation that if you are being punished it is

because you deserve it, and if you feel bad it must be concealed. For some, shame originates

interpersonally but remains a feeling that is generated and then passes on. For others, shame lingers or

becomes an obstacle to 'work around' (often masked under other emotions), which is sometimes only a

temporary solution to the repetition of shame inducing events that persistently attacks one's self-worth.

One boarder described his transformation from feeling rotten to not giving a damn as he discovered his ability to control the self as seen through other's eyes:

> I'm not such a decent person. Before, if I had done something wrong, I felt rotten for two weeks or so, you felt everyone at school knew, you felt everyone was looking at you, you just couldn't tell a lie to get yourself out of things but now I can lie quite easily and couldn't give a damn . . . They aren't interested in self discipline, they couldn't give a damn what you're really like, only what you *appear* to be like in that grey strait jacket." (Lambert & Millham, 1968, p. 44, added emphasis)

While this boarder does not use the word shame, he could be said to be referencing the inadequate and slippery language of shame in reference to having one's flawed self on display for others, a feeling which he learns to repress. In this context shame is not so much disarmed as it is used to justify lying to others (which can broaden disconnection) without the guilt. This is an example of shame losing its potential to educate. The pathway towards internalizing shame – I feel bad, so I *am* bad – is effective in the boarding school environment because students are trained to see pain and terror as vital to the conditioning process of becoming 'educated.' In addition to generating competitiveness and strict discipline, schooling taught its pupils their places in the social hierarchy. Public school students were expected to lead, however, not everyone can be a victor and where there are winners there are many more (perceived) losers who must contend with an increasingly negative sense of self, which senior boys preyed upon.

In BPS senior boys (prefects, head of prep-room, dormitory or changing room, or captain of sport) supervised most of the younger boys' day. Staff enlisted senior boys to assist with disciplinary duties as "boys usually outnumbered the staff about ten to one in the school as a whole, and fifty to one in the average school house" (Wakeford, 1969). This hierarchy also helped to reinforce the fundamental principle underlying school policies, reward certain boys with some control over the distribution of

privileges for other boys by lessening restrictions for good behaviour. These well-earned 'freedoms' had

a very particular effect, which grew into the prefect system and fagging. The fagging tradition involved

big boys, in stature and age, forcing smaller ones to be their (personal) servants, physically punishing

them if they tried to abstain or did their jobs poorly. By the 19th century, fagging was universal and had

become institutionalized, as an important "official method of assimilation to the house for new boys"

(Lambert, & Millham, 1968, p. 64). This fagging system had nothing to do with academic learning.

Rather, it focused on a particular form of socialization into the hierarchy. A main purpose of BPS was to

'build character' to 'make a man' who is 'fit to rule,' which meant creating "an individual who can both

exercise coercive power over others without any regard for the latter's rights or consent, and also obey

that power without questions if imposed upon him" (Botsford, 1993, p. 6).

The line between non-corporal and corporal punishment was often blurred, but both could

induce shame. Classroom behaviour was often managed through a form of reward/punishment, such as

issuing paper 'tickets' that signified a public shaming/beating by the Headmaster the following day

(Dahl, 1984). Witnessing another person's shaming points to the social psychology of shame that

"whenever someone is openly put to shame, we suffer even as mere observers with the person

involved. We cannot help feeling [their] shame" (Riezler, 1943, p. 459). Another example of public

shaming is flogging (also known as birching), a form of punishment using a special implement for

beating, such as a whip, stick or cane, usually in front of an audience. Observing a human body

humiliated in front of peers by an authoritative caretaker was fear-based motivation for some boys to

follow the rules; for Duffel (2000) it was the public shaming that made a lasting impression, as he recalls:

> First your offences were read out to you, next the sentence, then you had to bend right over a
>
> Windsor chair and hold onto the bottommost rung. Naturally it was painful, but somehow it was
>
> the melodrama and humiliation which was the most degrading. The requirement of thanking the

chastiser and the next day showing your stripes to your contemporaries was nothing compared

to the guilty anticipation and the ritualized procession down the stairs. (p. 17)

While flogging and physical punishment are no longer part of most Western contemporary schooling,

we continue to see shaming as an act of chastising students who commit a form of a social violation

within the realm of the classroom in order to prevent them from recommitting. Ruth Leitch (1999) offers

a comprehensive definition of shaming as "the process of actively eliciting an emotional reaction of

shame in another to the point where the individual will conform to the social norms and standards of

the culture in order to avoid the 'bad feelings' aroused," which can be applied in many institutions (p. 3).

Implementing Indian residential schools in Canada

In Canada, Britain and France began implementing the boarding school system in their colonies,

founded on the principle of assimilation and beliefs that children needed to be civilized into the social

norms of the colonizers' countries of origin. A history of biological racism among Euro-Canadians is

difficult to accept today, but "It is really only the fairly slow retreat of biological racism after 1945 and its

more rapid retreat after the Canadian government's declaration of multiculturalism in 1971 that has

made biological racism seem so remote and politically incorrect to modern-day, educated Canadians"

(Haig-Brown and Nock, 2006, p.9). In the late 19th century, assumptions of racial superiority by Euro-

Canadians were not limited to Indigenous peoples. Eurocentrism and colonial othering were built on:

…new strains of scientific racism such as Social Darwinism, the influence of British imperialist

attitudes, and the spillover from the institutionalized racism that survived the Civil War and

emancipation in the neighbouring United States combined to influence Euro-Canadian society

strongly in a racist manner. The consequences of these attitudes included legislation and

informal policies that restricted Blacks to segregated schools in Nova Scotia and Ontario,

discouragement of Black immigration to the western plains, and an aggressive campaign to keep

Asian and East Indian immigrants out of British Columbia. (Miller, 1996, p. 185)

Legalized racism has been perpetrated against several other populations in Canada. The Indian Act of

1876 and subsequent legislation and treaties imposed institutionalized racism in the relationship

between settler-Canadians and Indigenous peoples that continues today. The rationale for the

treatment of Indigenous peoples by Euro-Canadians was that "Indian culture was defective because it

was different" (Miller, 1996, p. 185). Assumptions of racial superiority and the long history of education

used "as a weapon of oppression" set the stage for IRS's to serve Euro-Canadian agendas at this time

(Chrisjohn et al., 1997, p. 81).

As noted in the Final Report of the TRC, federal policy sought "to eliminate Aboriginal

governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the treaties; and, through, a process of assimilation,

cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in

Canada" (TRC, 2015e, p. 1). Church and state joined to establish IRS as an integral part of a crusade to

eliminate Indigenous 'title to' land(s) without violating the established British policy (Chrisjohn et al.,

1997). These government and church officials held perceptions about the intellectual potential of

Indigenous peoples that were reflected in the curriculum, stressing moral redemption according to

white-colonial ideology (Miller, 1996). Education was expressed as "a policy of assimilation, a policy

designed to move Aboriginal communities from their "savage" state to that of "civilization" and thus to

make in Canada but one community – a non-Aboriginal one" (Milloy, 1999, p. 3). This language sets the

tone for how Indigenous children, under the school's so-called care, would be treated. It is no surprise

that corporal punishment and shame pedagogy would play key roles in the execution of assimilation

goals.

The Indian residential schools were also founded on the premise and principle of assimilation;

however, the residential school system was only *one* aspect of an aggressive assimilation strategy

towards intended genocide that was supported through government policy (the reserve, pass system and the Indian Act are among others). Assimilation is the process by which a minority group is *integrated* into the dominant culture, and often the minority group is meant to feel ashamed of their ways of life. Integration makes it sound like a passive or selected process, where uniting, joining, or combining implies some form of choice in the decision to come together. However, this sense of choice, is not an aspect of forced assimilation, as it was imposed in residential schools. It is certain that "Canada's treatment of [Indigenous] Peoples in general, and its creation and operation of Residential Schools in particular, was and continues to be nothing short of genocide" (Chrisjohn et al., 1997, pp. 59-60). Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and placed in residential schools that caused serious bodily and mental harm, and inflicted conditions of life calculated to bring about destruction (premeditated under funding and failure to provide health care resulted in the deaths of many Indigenous children) while under the false pretenses of institutionalized 'care.' (Chrisjohn et al., 1997).

Inside the Indian residential school system

John S. Milloy's, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1979-1986* (1999), and James Rodger Miller's, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (1996) are comprehensive books that intersperse historical details with the oral histories of the various people involved in Indian residential schools. While both accounts acknowledge the underlying method of assimilation by way of cultural shame, shame as an explicit topic in these histories of residential schooling are stones left unturned. There are other sources that address settler guilt-by-association for past and/or current wrongdoings (see Regan, 2010), and there is a general understanding that through assimilation Indigenous children were taught to feel ashamed of their cultural identity. There are several documented stories of survivors' experiences that disclose moments of feeling shame,

then and now. Subsequently, shame has yet to be taken up explicitly, publicly, and historically, as part of Indian residential schooling experiences. Thus, internalized shame continues to be seen as an individual experience, and consequently suggests an individual responsibility for healing, which disregards the institutionalization of shame in schooling, and the issue of internalized racism that is maintained by colonial systems, structures, and policies in many institutions beyond schooling. Shame as a concept does not account for the cruelty and torture of this system, but it does point to how assimilation was administered through schooling.

Daily life for Indigenous children in residential schools was highly regimented (mirroring a colonial industrial economy and hierarchal society) and discipline was harsh. Indigenous children were not only separated from their parents, but brothers and sisters were kept apart once in school. They were also separated from their culture; students were punished for speaking their Indigenous languages and ceremonial practices and traditions were banned. In the 1950s, one student at the Shubenacadie Indian School in Nova Scotia, recalls hearing someone warn that if you are heard speaking Mi'kmaw it was certain that "you'd get the shit beat out of you" (Knockwood & Thomas, 2015, p. 95). The living conditions were deplorable; buildings were poorly heated, ventilated, and maintained; diet and nutrition were poor.

Uniformity of grooming and dress was thought to be key to the 'civilizing process' with the goal for Indigenous children to look indistinguishable from middle class settlers – before and after photos were widely celebrated as an example of the school's 'success' in achieving assimilation (Miller, 1996). Many officials who established or helped run the schools believed in the cause. The church's role and perceptions of racial superiority added to the moralistic camouflage generating beliefs like Euro-Canadians were doing Indigenous peoples a 'favour' out of goodwill, as John A. MacDonald suggested in his 1885 speech. This mask is what Chrisjohn et al. (1997) argues "has served both to isolate historically the aims and achievements of Indian Residential Schooling (thus contributing to its systematic

misunderstanding), and to prevent the various victims of this strategy from comparing notes and making common cause" (p. 81).

Many pedagogical techniques were based on foreign, often opposing values. Where shame was a social tool of white-colonial society to enforce cultural norms as well as an emotion, Indigenous peoples had their own ways of maintaining balance and harmony. Author and residential school survivor, Isabelle Knockwood describes the shame-based motivation techniques used in the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, when she attended in the 1960s: "Rather than trying to inspire us to be creative or to motivate us to do well, the teachers at the school relied on orders, threats and *ridicule*. They had no interest, apparently, in anything we might have thought or felt" (Knockwood and Thomas, 2015, p. 87, added emphasis). Indigenous societies throughout northern North America practiced principles of non-interference, using warning stories to guide behaviour over physical punishment (Miller, 1996). As children carried out activities with adults they would look, listen, and learn from the adult who modelled behaviour (Miller, 1996). Eurocentric methods such as "a competitive atmosphere created by public prize-giving and exhibitions, a heavy emphasis on recitations and examinations, strict discipline, and intensive proselytizing" were harsh and unfamiliar (Miller, 1996, p. 46). Indigenous children were taught to feel shame for everything about who they were, and severe punishment reinforced this. Residential school survivor, Imelda Brooks (Knockwood & Thomas, 2015) recounts memories of the punitive schooling environment:

> I remember those horrifying years as if it were yesterday. There was one nun, Sister Gilberta, she always passed out the punishment. Every day, she would take me into the bathroom and lock the door. She would then proceed to beat me thirty times on each hand, three times a day, with a strap. She would count to thirty, out loud, each time she hit me. It's an awful way to learn to count to thirty. My older sister Grace, learned to count to fifty. I never understood why I had to get those beatings, but at the age of 37, I realize it had to be because I spoke my language. To

this day, I can't speak my language very well. But I do understand when I am spoken to in Micmac. Why was our culture and language such a threat that it had to be taken away from us with such vengeance? To be taught your language with respect and kindness by your people, then to have the White Man pull it from your heart with meanness and torture. Some people wonder why we are so tough, because we had to be, we had no choice. (p. 76)

Brooks' testimony is difficult because it serves as an example of how punishment and violence are layered into daily life at residential school.

Tracing historical accounts of residential schooling also reveals that shame was implemented as a mechanism for control and cruel form of socialization, which underpinned punitive practices used for disciplining and managing Indigenous children in IRS. In her memoir, Bev Sellars (2013) details the effectiveness of the teacher's ability to weaponize and wield violence and humiliation (public shaming or shaming that reforms behaviour in response to its threat of disconnection from the group) in (mis)shaping her beliefs. She recalls, "I believed in every way that White people were superior to 'Indians'" (Sellars, 2013, p. 112). She continues:

In addition to the daily ritual of kids getting the strap for wetting the bed, hardly a day went by without someone getting the strap for another reason. Kids were strapped in a place and at a time when all the other kids could see, and it was a battle between the kids, the nuns, and the priests to see which kid would break first. Kids tried not to cry when they got the strap or at least not to cry until they had received a few whacks. If you cried on the first whack, the other kids ridiculed you for being weak. The longer you could hold out without crying, the tougher you were seen to be. Some kids did not cry at all when they got the strap. I really envied them . . . Some of the reasons I remember getting the strap were for getting a ball that fell on the other side of the fence, talking in church, being too close to the boys' side of the playground, not moving fast enough for the nuns, and being late. (Sellars, 2013, p. 86)

Like Sellars, many former survivors retain traumatic memories of intentional humiliation and everyday violence. In Knockwood and Thomas' (2015) collection of experiences of Mi'kmaw children at Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, many boarders deliberate whether the physical pain or enduring shame was worse. The editors confirm that "More than three decades after the school's closing many students still feel a sense of violation and shame" (p. 96). One survivor compares the severity of shame she felt, which rivalled and exceeded the physical pain of beatings:

> One day, the girls were climbing on the door onto the roof and sliding down the wall and I followed them. We were playing Follow the Leader. When I was halfway up, the nun caught me. I was afraid of heights but I was even more afraid of what was going to happen to me when I came down – what the nun was going to do. The Sister had a bat. I saw the bat in her hands. When I was hanging onto the door she hit me on the bottom with the bat and I fell to the ground. She hit me again on the arm. The pain was so bad but I didn't cry. She hit me more than once. I was gritting my teeth fighting back the crying but my tears were flowing. It was fear. The most degrading experience in my life was when the Sister in charge of the girls lined up and made us hold our panties in our hands for examination. We used to wash the stains quickly and wear our underwear wet. We didn't know why we were afraid. We were afraid of the unknown. *Everything* to them *was a sin*. (Knockwood & Thomas, 2015, p. 96, emphasis added)

While again, the word shame is not used, I recognize the shaming technique present as the survivor recounts her most degrading experience. Sometimes shame is personal, meaning that what shames one person might not shame others, but when shame is institutionalized, it is no longer one's own. It becomes something of a collective responsibility regardless of when the harmful events took place or who perpetrated the harm.

The humiliation and abuse that many Indigenous children endured is horrific, and just as shame helped to keep public school boarders from speaking about their experiences in school, shame silenced

generations of residential school survivors. As Indigenous peoples work towards cultural understanding and healing, more survivor stories are shared. In *Speaking My Truth* (Rogers et al., 2012), Garnet Angeconeb shares his, showing how the impacts of the residential school experience caused him to feel a deep sense of cultural shame that followed him well into adulthood – having been married since 1978 and having two children of his own before he spoke a word of the abuse he endured to anyone. He explains:

> Because of those impacts, many of us went through a cultural identity crisis – loss of language, loss of family and community ties, loss of self-worth – to name only a few of the negative but real impacts of residential school. I myself lived through times of spiritual confusion. I lived through times of anger. I lived through times of cultural confusion. I lived through the disruption of my family relations. At one time in my life, I was *ashamed* of my culture. (Rogers et al., 2012, p. 29, added emphasis)

Acknowledging the experiences and consequences of the residential school system helps create a public and historical record for truth and redress. However, the persistence of cultural shame along with many other examples, such as the continued existence of reservations as per the Indian Act, serve as (in)visible reminders of the lingering effects of colonization; a reminder that there is still much to be done.

Corporal punishment mutated from culturally sanctioned discipline in BPS to intentional maltreatment and abuse in IRS where there is a significant difference between using physical force on the principle of conformity to shape one's own versus using physical force on the principle of ethnocentric colonial ideology of rightful dominance over a group. Where 'civilization' or 'extinction' was a primary goal of residential schooling, alleged curriculum in residential schools consisted of learning settler-colonial domestic, social, and economic skills rather than academic proficiencies as promised in treaty. Furthermore, severe punishment for transgressors takes on a different meaning in

the context of Indigenous children who were seen as 'savages' or at best, a potential labour force serving the white settler agenda.

In an earlier era of colonial warfare, Indigenous peoples were seen to be valuable, but they became obstacles when Euro-Canadian's sought to possess the land (Miller, 1996). Indigenous worldviews concerning the land (that land is sacred and cannot be owned by people) and the traditional hunting, gathering, and fishing lifestyle were considered direct threats to Euro-Canadian land policies and materialist desires, where agricultural settlement was a necessary aspect of colonization, despite the fact that many Indigenous groups also cultivated the land. Thus, settlers embarked on a mission to assimilate Indigenous peoples, in order to gain control over land, defending their actions "not by acknowledging blatant self-interest but by branding the Aboriginal way of life a waste of resources: too much land was required to sustain too few people" (Haig-Brown and Nock, 2006, p. 14).

Accompanying the institutionalized policies of assimilation was a shame pedagogy that was adopted by residential schools to rid lands claimed by Canada of the so-called 'Indian problem' and alter the consciousness of Indigenous peoples through the systematic destruction of traditions, values, and languages. Under the semblance of care and promise of education, residential schooling delivered a curriculum that stripped Indigenous children of their identity and convinced them to be ashamed of everything that made them who they were. If residential schools were the vehicles for achieving assimilation, then shame was a weapon that operationalized the message and it was always violent (different from blushing or a perceived threat of disconnection). This imposed cultural and internalized shame condemned all Indigenous beliefs and practices, and this was intentional. Shame pedagogy was a policy, not a by-product of assimilation. The British aimed to 'beat the sin out of the child' in BPS, a lesson in how to behave according to dominant social norms, and in Canada, government policies and practices proceeded to work to 'kill the Indian in the child.' The institutionalization of shame as a policy resulted in generations of Indigenous peoples having internalized colonialism. Even the assimilation

attempts are a form of ridicule because under such policies Indigenous peoples are defined by their otherness – a constructed category of 'lesser than' people – and will never really be accepted under the ongoing historical policies that legalize racism. Even as school curriculums are beginning to address this 'shameful' history, Canada is still required to respond to residential schooling and racist assimilation tactics as well as ongoing colonization, violence, and structural inequities.

Into the Present Context of Shame in Schooling

Currently, reconciliation between non-Indigenous/settler and Indigenous peoples and decolonization has become a central tenet of the move towards culturally responsive and anti-racist education in Canada. Since recommended TRC actions were released by the Final Report (TRC, 2015e), school systems across the country are figuring out how best to include lessons on the history and legacy of residential schools as well as Indigenous knowledge (perspectives, methods, languages) into curriculum. Now that the discussion and implementation of the commission's education-related calls to action are being made, many non-Indigenous/settler teachers, who are implicated in the legacy of residential schooling by way of their profession, are finding themselves fearful of 'getting it wrong,' not knowing 'enough,' or committing cultural appropriation. These concerns, while valid, can contribute to the conditions for shame paralysis to emerge and take over, which can lead to educators doing nothing at all. Teachers are not exempt from shame-inducing experiences and teacher-education ought to be preparing them better to build shame resilience: to be vulnerable and say, 'I don't know' and to bravely take up the challenge of not knowing with an understanding that there is no such thing as 'right' or 'ready' because reconciliation, or rather relationality, is an ongoing process. If teachers teaching this shameful history do not recover shame's relational potential, then students learning about this history could also get stuck in the shame of it all. The coming to know of history is another example of shame covertly persisting in schooling.

Responding to Settler-Shame

Shame would not be possible if others did not matter to us; and because others matter, oppression is not the last word on shame but only one of its ambivalent possibilities.
– Lisa Guenther, "Shame and the Temporality of Social Life" (2011)

In her influential text *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Ania Loomba (1998) references the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of **colonialism** as "a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up" (p. 1). What is notable in this definition, Loomba articulates, is the complete omission of people who may already be inhabiting the locality, thereby relinquishing "the word 'colonialism' of any implication of an encounter between peoples, or of conquest and domination" (1998, p. 2). Theories of colonialism, its nature and subsequent consequences have developed into the field of post-colonial studies, and it is from here that scholars called for the establishment of settler-colonialism as a distinct field (Veracini, 2011).

Settler-colonialism is a specific form of colonization tied to land, whereby outsiders claim land that is already inhabited by Indigenous peoples for their own (Veracini, 2011). Where an exploitation colonizer is primarily (though not exclusively) interested in Indigenous labour and resources from the land, the settler colonizer is primarily (though not exclusively) interested in land ownership and permanent settlement. Issues with settler colonialism intertwine with issues of reconciliation, as "Canada's failure to confront the profoundly colonialist, racist and sexist white settler ideologies which have driven its history has ensured an enduring legacy of deeply rooted conflicts" (Stasiulis & Jhappan, 1995, p. 127). Mark Rifkin (2014) chose the phrase "**settler common sense**," for an ideology and a system that are "symptomatic of an unstated set of [colonial] inclinations, orientations, modes of perception, forms of networking, and durable lived assemblages shaped by processes of settlement and

experienced as the stability of the given" (p. 7). For Rifkin, settler common sense renders the structure

of settler colonialism invisible and thereby perpetuates the continuation of colonial assumptions and

ideology and their largely unexamined conditions.

To seek in education what must be a philosophical reorientation to space and place, or in other

words, to move to *relationship* with space and place, requires a change in ethics. Vine Deloria Jr. wrote

about this move as "…attempting to shift the American/Western/Christian outlook from a

preoccupation with a particular history and the great concern with time to an examination of spaces,

places, and lands requires more than the relatively simple admission of guilt before ecological gurus"

(Deloria, 1973, pp. 73-74). In the foundational book, *Unsettling the Settler Within* (2010), Paulette Regan

refers to this shift as '**unsettling**,' a process that requires non-Indigenous/settler Canadians to "unlearn

our historical amnesia" and ideological settler narratives that either ignore colonialism in Canada or

portray it as a benevolent paternalistic attempt to 'save' and educate Indigenous peoples out of

'savagery' and into mainstream (and therefore modern) Euro-Canadian culture. To 'unsettle' collective

assumptions about Canada's past, which are widely comfortable by admission, is to confront colonial

violence as part of settler truth telling and to make space for counter-narratives as told by Indigenous

peoples themselves (Regan, 2010). Unsettling calls for a re-imagining of reconciliation as relationality,

"as a decolonizing place of encounter between settlers and Indigenous people" (2010, p. 12).

As I established in the previous section, the residential school system used shame pedagogy as a

weapon that followed asymmetric pathways of institutionalized power to deplorable ends. It comes as

no surprise that by today's standards the history of residential schooling is retrospectively a shameful

one. What I have observed in my capacity as an instructor and researcher is the emergence of yet

another machination of shame in non-Indigenous/settler Canadians who are learning about this history

and the ongoing violence, in school or elsewhere, from a decolonial or anti-racist perspective now.

When previously unknown or deliberately ignored facts about the histories of IRS are connected to

human faces and children's graves, perceivers who make this connection are also confronted with a powerful and uncomfortable history of shame and colonial othering that undermines many aspects of Canada's image of 'celebrating' inclusivity and diversity (and this includes teacher-candidates who might themselves be simultaneously learning while teaching on said topics). Coming to know 'Canada's shameful history' can also be a shame inducing experience that stops learning in its track or impedes the capacity to come into relation, whereas shame resilience has the potential to incite behaviours that aim to restore connection or relationships. I refer to this problem of disconnection as **settler-shame** because it is more ominous than guilt or ignorance; it can lead to an emotional/mental paralysis, a disconnection that thwarts non-Indigenous/settler Canadians from acknowledging and dismantling deep rooted colonialism in all aspects of (colonized) Canadian society.

Settler-shame is not the same as shame felt by a settler who is directly and explicitly implicated in the history of violence. Although some might recognize their inheritance of this legacy, many settler Canadians and non-Indigenous peoples claim innocence or distant themselves from being implicated in colonization. This framing perpetuates the misconception that history is isolated and contained within an inaccessible past and disperses responsibility. The labelling of residential schools as 'Canada's shame,' demands a collective response towards redress but may also allow individuals to distance themselves from the debilitating emotional responses. When non-Indigenous/settlers engage in an ongoing process of learning about Canada's genocidal practices, they face lies and omissions that are upheld through education and begin to question the grand narrative positioning Canada as inherently good or benevolent. The realization that Canada as a nation has not lived up to its ideal as a peaceful and inclusive country is part of the unraveling. There is a critical shift in the unraveling when one comes to see themselves in the present as complicit in the destructive project of colonialism that is morally objectionable. With this recognition, there is a fleshly response in which shame can highlight one's relationality, an inescapable embeddedness of one's being in the world.

In this context of unraveling and unsettling, I propose that we arrive at settler-shame through education and the realization of one's complicity. When education takes responsibility and confronts the ongoing colonial violences, the possibility of non-Indigenous settler persons' shame emerges as they come into relation with their complicity. Here, shame can be useful, however, the slipperiness of settler-shame is that the fleshy response can feel so personal that one can easily put themselves at the center of this educational encounter and stop there. Settler-shame summons the defenses, and acts consciously or unconsciously, sanctioning greed and fear to protect any of the wealth gained through the foregoing atrocities. Settler-shame is like a shadow encompassing the loathsome parts of our collective colonial history, and like no shadow can exist without a source of light, no shame can exist without love, care, interest, or connection. I do not suggest comforting non-Indigenous/settler peoples out of shame when it is felt. Rather, I see potential in working with settler-shame as a pathway for re-engaging relationships because as a pedagogy, shame holds possibility and futurity.

Instead of sanctioning education to avert discomfort in learning and interfere with settler-shame by preventing, counteracting, or inhibiting it, I seek to recover what is educational about calling it in and trusting in education to build shame resilience – the ability to move through the shame-experience with courage, compassion, and most importantly (re)connection. What pedagogical possibilities emerge when we resist the urge to avoid or hide shame-induced suffering and instead acknowledge settler-shame with an inquisitive and observant gaze and hold the shame-ridden hand back into relation? If educators are not willing to try, then unacknowledged settler-shame can threaten attempts at developing Indigenous and non-Indigenous/settler relationships, and non-Indigenous/settler peoples' relations with land, therefore, threatening possible decolonial futures.

Risking the pedagogical possibilities of shame

The potential for embodying and practicing shame resilience while unsettling the dominant-culture version of history as it has been presented in education is significant. Shame unsettles us. Within this uncertainty, the possibility to retreat into internalized shame emerges but also emerging is the possibility of shame resilience. This is the risk inherent in working with one's shame, and also what makes it a potentially applicable curricular intensity. Educators cannot know for sure which of the two will emerge, shame or shame resilience, but if it means the reimagining of reconciliation as encountering one's shame could advance into a deeper reflection on relationships and responsibility, it is a risk worth taking. The risk of working with settler-shame parallels what many teachers know but are prevented from talking about – that education always involves risk, and that the real risk lies in ignoring the risk *in* education (Biesta, 2015). The alternative, risk and shame aversion pedagogies, will only serve to cement the colonial structures that are enabling ongoing violence. Furthermore, the inclusion of unsettling pedagogies in curriculum is necessary for decolonizing and transformative learning, which can incite new ethical charges. If non-Indigenous peoples wish to 'unsettle' their comfortable assumptions about the past and open their hearts to a relationality that is to confront colonial violence as part of their own settler truth telling, we must risk interacting differently with shame.

Following education scholar Leon Benade, and the sentiment that shame can be productive, I reassert settler-shame as an ethical matter that can lead non-Indigenous individuals towards recognizing their responsibility to community (i.e., relationships). I register that a change in relational ethics necessitates changes in settler-colonial culture. The key to shame management, Benade encourages, is to "reflect a form of social responsibility as it contributes to community restoration by repairing ruptured social relationships" (2015, p. 661). Because most people are motivated to behave in coherence with their ethical ideals, can settler-shame be the impetus for behavioural change? From an ethical perspective, the Other is a necessary condition for moral interaction. Likewise, shame requires an audience, real or internalized. It is shame's relational quality and dependence on an other(s) that

makes it a powerful tool to explore potential moral dimensions of behaviour. For instance, how

difference registers with one's ethical ideal will influence their interpersonal relationships. After all, it is

relationality – living in relation to all *others* – that characterizes social life.

CHAPTER TWO: QUESTIONING SHAME, INTERROGATING DECOLONIZATION AND RE-CONNECTING TO RELATIONALITY WITH INDIGENOUS FUTURISMS

It Happened in the Middle

In chapter one I provided my foundational thinking around the complexities of shame. Because shame is relational, I see it as a potential pedagogical encounter that when treated as an entrance into (re)establishing relationships, can provoke the kind of thinking and feeling in non-Indigenous students for self that extends toward a responsibility to being in relation with place and Indigenous peoples. I move forward in this chapter with an understanding that when shame resilience is taken up in combination with a decolonizing lens, it offers a renewed mode of relationality and necessary sense of uncertainty. Eve Tuck and Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) argue that settler futurity is often about comforting settler distress, by appeasing settler anxieties with certainties about what the future will be like. Working to disrupt this sentiment of comfort, I grapple with a thinking praxis that is grounded in a commitment to decolonizing the settler within and centering Indigenous ways of being and knowing; both of which require the absolute relinquishing of certainty regarding possible futures.

In the first section I outline how an encounter with shame that 'happened in the middle' prompted me to re-engage with the research project from a critical perspective that questioned the potentiality of shame resilience. It 'happened in the middle' is a reference to the state of liminality I found myself in, where there was still time to alter that which lay on the horizon, where education *matters*. In this liminal space, I embody shame as a teacher, which guides me to the concept of decolonization as a practice that requires further scrutinization. Henceforward, in section two I trace the move from knowing to *unknowing* to reinstate the unknown as an important part in the process of decolonizing the architecture of settler colonialism**.** I propose that unravelling the layers of complexity located in notions of decolonization underscores relationality as an essential way forward to re-

imagined futures. This unravelling brings me to Indigenous Futurisms, which becomes the central

framework to sustain relationality as a theoretical underpinning for chapters three and four.

Pedagogical encounters with shame

From September 2017-June 2018, I was volunteering for a creative leadership program held in

partnership with a local high school that centered on visual arts for youth ages 13-18. They knew that

outside of my volunteer work, I was pursuing a PhD and interested in Indigenous paradigms of

relationality. I was promptly introduced to another program with a focus on leadership and life skills for

Indigenous youth ages 12-24, although it was common that family members also attended resulting in a

group of people of all ages. I became a volunteer there as well. In this program, I was exposed to social

workers, Indigenous youth-mentors, and Elders as well as Indigenous artists and community members

who came to offer their skills and experiences to those attending. I worked closely with the team,

assisting them in myriad ways.

One evening, a team lead, who I will call Curtis (pseudonym), shared his life's story with the

group. His experience as a motivational speaker and emcee artist shone through, captivating the

audience. I was struck by his ability to articulate and connect his hardships, including shame, to

colonialism and everyday resistance to decolonization and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. His

story challenged the individual and psychological understandings of racism held by dominant Canada

and underscored the importance of power relations analysis in systems of oppression, privilege, and

white supremacy. Curtis' storytelling embodied aspects of anti-racist education, though he might not

necessarily describe it as such. However, he seems to intentionally provoke and disrupt the inherent

colonial racism that follows him daily. I listened to his stories as we spent time together inside the

program, and I listened to the stories he shared publicly through his art and activism. He spoke from

experience naturally what I was attempting to theorize in terms of anti-racist and decolonizing work.

Over time he learned about me and my project too. One day I took him out for coffee and discussed in more depth the complexities of his experiences of colonial racism. Shame and shame resilience became part of this conversation. He grasped what I was getting at with the potential of moving beyond shame into shame resilience; he expressed how much he could relate to this concept because of his lived experiences. Before we left the coffee shop, we planned for me to formally interview him, and it happened a few days later, as my ethics protocol had already been approved. Curtis was very open to speaking with me about his life stories. Even though I had heard some parts previously, I noticed also that he went deeper and shared more. I asked some open-ended questions about his experience with shame, and he shared details that the researcher-me was grateful to hear and the human-me was horrified to hear; both affirmed the importance and relevance of my project.

I offered him the only thing I could in the moment and what Brown (2012) positions as an anti-dote to shame – empathy, and a great big bear hug. I expressed my gratitude to him and talked about following up. Even though we saw each other each week, we agreed to meet again under the parameters of research. However, a couple of days later Curtis called me filled with anxiety and courageously asked me not to use his story. To my surprise, he told me that he had never told anyone some of the stories he told me that day. There was not a doubt in my mind that I would honour his request and I promised that I would delete our recording and refrain from using any part of his story in my work. I apologized profusely, but the hollowed-out emptiness of apologetic words would never come close to addressing the underlying issues – issues I needed to take responsibility for. Nevertheless, he generously granted me permission to speak about the process itself should it be relevant, and it is relevant for the very important reason that it provoked my move away from centering shame resilience towards centering the notion of relationality as the core concept that underpins my work.

Because Curtis is publicly open about his life history and the impacts colonialism has had on him, I assumed that he had reached some pinnacle of shame resilience. It turns out he had, in some respects,

but not in others, and his speaking to me about shame hauled it to the surface. I left him there with gaping shame wounds, unattended. I perpetuated the cycle of shame that I was so committed to disrupt. I felt shame take up space in me too and she had a voice: "These are not my stories to tell." Curtis felt comfortable sharing his story on his own terms, not a version of it neatly packaged into someone else's research. My encounter with Curtis provoked a visceral sense of shame that overwhelmed my body. It began in my stomach and seeped into my heart immobilizing further response, until my brain could register this sensation as shame, which made me realize my lack of preparation and my failed responsibility towards Curtis and the work I was undertaking. Consumed by shame, the research came to an abrupt standstill.

My own shame crept in, in all sorts of ways. It attacked my sense of self-worth as a researcher and fed a broader anxiety about academia's purpose in the first place and whether there is any hope at all for a more ethical and just world. I already knew that a possibility of shame is more shame: this was not the revelation, although it did highlight how underprepared I was to support that possibility. What surprised me was how easily I affirmed and subsequently reproduced the dominant narrative of cultural shame used by colonizers. In my interview, I included asking about shameful experiences instead of exclusively asking about shame resilience. That is the concealed power of dominant narratives: even if you are countering them, referencing the dominant narrative first or at all only serves to reassert its dominance. Curtis taught me that the only way *not* to recenter dominance is to lead with the counter narrative and address the dominant narrative *only* through the lens of how the counter narrative works against it.

I was reminded of Indian scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's poignant question, "What must the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern?" (as cited in Williams & Chrisman, 1994, p. 90). It became clear to me that I was attempting to side-step settler-shame, as a concept, and my own setter-shame, by focusing on Indigenous resilience. Curtis was already doing the

work and practicing shame resilience. What he needed from me and non-Indigenous/settlers like me, was to do our own work because it is settler-shame that operates in service to colonialism. There is an important distinction worth emphasizing again. Settlers need to work through the sweaty concept of shame; however, this is not to say that settlers need to be comforted out of such an experience.

Emma Lowman and Adam Barker (2015) argue that if settlers wish to be other than settler-colonizers, we must "challenge ourselves to imagine relationships differently and then figure out how to try and embody them" (pp. 109-110). I see this embodiment practice as confronting, but also key to moving beyond superficial inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and voices that ultimately recirculates colonial conjectures of preserving benevolent peacemaking storylines that avoid uncomfortable questions about settler complicity in settler-colonialism and non-Indigenous/settler responsibilities in decolonizing (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As my body began to unravel my shame, I realized that I had to revisit the concept of decolonization and unpack the dilemmas underlying non-Indigenous/settler people's responsibility to place and Indigenous peoples across lands claimed by Canada.

The decolonizing dilemma

I circled this dilemma for a while, realizing the complexities of unpacking the notion of decolonization. I began to search for counter narratives and read Indigenous stories of resurgence and resilience. What could I learn about settler-shame and decolonizing work from Indigenous counter narratives? I address this question in detail and share my findings in chapter three, where I position counter narratives as a more effective practice of decolonization rather than working directly with dominant narratives. It also points to the importance of decolonizing work prior to reconciling or relationship building of any sort and particularly before Indigenizing can become a possibility. I think this point is where education has messed up. Teachers perform decolonizing curriculum with little to no time spent understanding colonialism and how education upholds it, let alone the notion of and need to

decolonize, how to go about doing so in ethical ways, and what decolonizing is not or what the limitations are. Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins (2008) helped to establish the anti-racist approach, 'learning from' as opposed to 'learning about' Indigenous peoples. Learning from is a relational practice but some non-Indigenous/settler peoples misinterpret this as an attempt to *know* the Other, which only further inscribes colonial gestures.

In their article on decolonizing education in the context of South Africa, Heloise Sathorar and Deidre Geduld (2018) note that even university students are detecting that "out-dated colonised content is being dressed-up and served as the decolonised dish of the day" (p. 1). Lurking behind the many performative decolonizing efforts of non-Indigenous scholars and educators is the failure to address the problem of whiteness and the assumption that "our efforts *will* result in a reconciled future" (Mackinlay & Barney, 2014, p. 57, emphasis added). In their article on decolonizing pedagogy in Indigenous Australian studies, scholars Elizabeth McKinley and Katelyn Barney (2014) poignantly elaborate on this decolonizing dilemma:

> In classrooms and curricula, we frequently use words like ''reconciliation,'' ''hope,'' ''action,'' and ''social justice'' as panaceas to the ongoing impact of colonialism on the daily lives of Indigenous peoples and our knowing collusion in it. We have felt comfortable using these words as non-Indigenous people working in Indigenous Australian Studies and education because they provide us with a place of belonging—a place where the performance of our identities as White settler colonials has value, worth, authority, and power. They provide us with ''immunity,'' as Youngblood Henderson (2000, p. 32) contends, from recognising and responding to ourselves as part of the problem. In our naïveté, we have ignored the White settler colonial imperatives behind our use and performance of the language and tools of critical pedagogy and transformative learning, and have consistently seen ourselves as the educators ''doing decolonizing good''—those who proudly wore their antiracist, social justice, and reconciliation

politics on our invisible White sleeves and weren't afraid to call racist praxis in education,

research, and the academy for what it was, where and when we saw it. (p. 57)

McKinley and Barney (2014) bring attention to the intrinsic mechanisms of colonialism. Once again, even

the most well-intended scholars or educators can fall into the colonial trappings of taking on a White

saviour mentality continuing to *do* "decolonizing good" that paradoxically ends up *doing more harm*

because the colonial structure remains; like quicksand, as you hover around the edge of a sinkhole, the

ground slowly pulls you in and you become submerged, part of *its* ecology. Regardless of how much you

yearn not to be part of it, your solitary stance is no match for the unwieldy force of a saturated system.

And to ignore the tangible and concealed forces and profound reach of this system is to perpetuate

colonialism, thus furthering the reach of oppression, violence and inequality.

In an effort to address this problem of whiteness, educators tend to lean into more 'doing.'

Freire (2005) calls for praxis as the continuous interplay of thinking as reflection and theory and doing as

informed action. While acknowledging this is important work, Tuck and Yang (2012) contend that an

emphasis on critical consciousness without land reclamation reduces the possibility of decolonization to

a mere metaphor. Battiste (2000) takes a summative approach arguing that decolonization must involve

a "complex arrangement of conscientization, resistance and transformative praxis" (p. xxi). Although I

believe decolonizing work is fluent in both theory and practice, it is alarming to observe that in the influx

of 'doing decolonization' the line between practice and performance is increasingly blurred, and the

superficial performative decolonizing pedagogy described by McKinley & Barney (2014) is all too often

being misinterpreted as deep decolonizing practice. Whether "doing decolonizing good" is emphasized

in theory, practice, or in combination, I suggest a different approach altogether and it begins with

reframing pedagogy as a relational encounter rather than a classroom-bound practice. When we center

being in relation there comes a moment when there is nothing more to 'do,' but when we step back

from all the 'doing' the pause interrupts the hubristic assumption that all decolonizing work is good and

will lead to a reconciled future. Suddenly, there is space to consider 'doing' something else, which is actually 'not doing,' but spending time together and fostering relational positionality to connect with the inherent encounters of possibility in education. When attention to unlearning and unsettling privilege is considered *education*, what new possibilities for decolonization emerge?

At this point in my research and with this critical view of decolonization, I ask, is there a better way to address the past without collapsing the future? I searched for Indigenous artists whose work specifically envisioned Indigenous futures, and this led me to the emerging field called Indigenous Futurisms (IF), which I outline in the third section of this chapter. For now, it is important to know that IF filled the now available space, previously occupied by settler-isms, with imagination and possibility; that explanation has become chapter three and four. It was a resurgence of hope: for futures in the making, for a continuously relevant past, for a present worthy of participation, and for the convergence of these pathways that are intentionally separated in colonial conceptions of time and space. Where I previously saw only conflict that was easily shame re-generating, suddenly there were *ways* forward, and because the future is a figment of imagination and possibilities still to come, I found new meaning in my participation in the present. This time my participation was driven by a deep sense of care and curiosity, and to learn from a place of unknowns while continuously conscious of relationality.

Decolonizing the Architecture of Settler Colonialism in Education

I was drawn to education as it is broadly conceived precisely because it is a *place* constructed for human interaction (Di Palantonio, 2016), which is intrinsically risky, not unlike the inherent risk in learning itself: the risk that you cannot predict or necessarily prepare for what emerges (Biesta, 2015). The optimistic hope of education is that such relational encounters bring human beings together, their influence on one another "work(s) to forge and sustain a common world" (Di Palantonio, 2016, p. 149). Scholar Mario Di Paolantonio writes, "education is constituted by the flow of our passing time together .

. . that through an education we are given a unique place to *become*, together…" (2016, p. 150).

However, risk is a characteristic that many Western educators are instructed to control.

Drawing on Lauren Berlant's notion of cruel optimism, Di Paolantonio (2016) writes, "There is a 'cruel optimism' in education that drives us to constantly work at improving ourselves" and that "this optimism in education quite literally indebts us to an impossible normative narrative of success" (p. 148). This optimism operates under the assumption that the measure of success or lack thereof falls solely on the individual's "acquisition of knowledge and skills that serve immediate transient interest (Di Paolantonio, 2016, p. 148), which reinforces the self-optimizing machine that works against the very purpose of education that is to forge and sustain a common world.

Gert Biesta (2012) explains it is the individualizing language of learning that isolates the individual, thereby rendering the community or collective in which the individual belongs as unimportant. Calling students learners, calling schools learning environments or places for learning, referring to adult education as lifelong learning, and seeing teachers as facilitators of learning has caused this cruel optimism to rise in recent years. Learning becomes a means to obtain something specific – one's individual survival, a linear step to securing a job – and education becomes highly curated to serve these expectations and produce things like social cohesion, a knowledge society, and 'good' citizens to work in the existing structures and systems of dominant society, which privileges individualization. Since education is mainly described in terms of learning, I became invested in thinking about how to disrupt the 'learnification' that is currently afflicting *my* education. The real risk is that it leads to avoiding dialogue, debate, and dissent, which depend on an encounter that is unforeseeable and unscripted. What is lost at the site of education when knowing and to know is prioritized above all else?

In dominant Eurocentric education, knowledge is perceived to be 'out there' for the taking; the unknown can be conquered or *conjured*: both assumptions intentionally disregard inequalities and

access while ignoring Euro-settler privileges. Knowledge is produced by rigorous scientific experiments

and institutions deemed legitimate by dominant society, and most dissent that existed and persisted

through the centuries is erased or concealed. The implications are vast, but I will bring attention to one

in particular: when certain ways of knowing become legitimate, the danger is that knowledge can be

weaponized and hierarchized, the results of which we see play out in Indian Residential Schools, among

many other examples.

Plato's, 'Cave' is an allegory that has been used as a violent framework to justify colonial forms

of knowledge; the idea that there are different levels of knowledge "ascending from sense perception to

a rational knowledge of the Forms and eventually to the highest knowledge of all, the knowledge of the

Good" (Nash, 2010, p. 95). For me, Plato's Cave speaks to the coloniality of knowledge as the result of

colonizers determining and imposing a false and conjured authority to determine which forms of

knowledge are valid and legitimate, and which forms of knowledge can be illuminated. The power of

hegemony claims objectivity for Eurocentric ideas and absolutism of Western knowledge; universal and

scientific knowledge is king, and this positioning provides settler-colonialists with immunity from

recognizing and responding to ourselves as part of the problem (Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

Decoloniality challenges this epistemic privilege of Western knowledge, pertinently insisting that it is not

enough to know, it matters how that which is known gets to be known. In other words, the methods of

knowledge production and acquisition are inherently ethically and politically charged. A key practice of

decolonizing knowledge then, becomes challenging the false authority of certain Western ideas through

a commitment to unlearning.

Non-Indigenous/settler peoples are schooled to assume that everything is in principle knowable,

and that knowledge progresses linearly and hierarchically, which doubles as evidence of success. Emilie

Cameron (2015) suggests that reframing knowledge as relational will help counter what Lisa Slater

(2019) calls "the architecture of settler colonialism," which "reproduces subjects who desire the luxury

and security of exclusive possession, while also limiting good white people's capacities to reimagine belonging, shared existence, social justice and solidarity" (p. 4). When confronted with their settler-isms, shame can arise and most often forecloses further learning. However, shame resilience offers an opportunity to restore the disconnection shame incites. Slater (2019) argues that this restorative opportunity "provides ways to renew our imaginative life and contribute to creating ethical settler-Indigenous relations that do not rely on reconciliation, recognition and resolution," but instead "give way to a potentially radical political empathy" (p. xvii).

Up to the point of my interview with Curtis, I had studied the social circumstances within which knowledge has been conceived. The production of legitimate knowledge, dominated by Eurocentric ways of knowing, is related to the social identity of the producers. To understand the forced marginalization of Indigenous knowledge I wanted to examine the knowledge producers and their social, economic, and political positions within the colonial context *always* without recentering the colonial. The process of colonization has involved denying Indigenous people's continuing existence and their relationship to land, devaluing Indigenous knowledge, and debasing Indigenous cultural beliefs and practices. Regardless of how much I rage against it, this is the process and knowledge in which I am situated. Many Indigenous peoples have resisted colonialism and continue to do so. Studying Indigenous resistance and resilience led me to the second major shift of this research: settler-colonial unlearning. As with my education experience, this dissertation is a back-and-forth dance with learning and unlearning. It is too simplistic and untruthful to speak about what is known and what is unknown as separate or unrelated. Just as one appears, the other rounds the corner. I am almost certain that this dance is not unique to my experience; the question I am engaging with is whether and how the researcher acknowledges and concedes the presence of the unknowable and the need for constant unlearning to take place.

As human beings who are holders and producers of the hegemonic discourse, the way to decolonize knowledge is to find ways to critically examine one's beliefs, prejudices, and assumptions and understandings of how they arose and became naturalized. Appropriately, education holds the potential to facilitate this kind of unlearning as part of a decolonizing practice. For Indigenous educator Marie Battiste (2013), decolonization is:

> a process of unpacking the deeper current in education: its powerful Eurocentric assumptions of education, its narratives of race and difference in curriculum and pedagogy, its establishing culturalism or cultural racism as a justification for the status quo, and the advocacy for Indigenous knowledge as a legitimate education topic. It is the channel for generating a postcolonial education system in Canada and disrupting those normalized discourses and singularities and allowing diverse voices and perspectives and objectives into "mainstream" schooling. (p. 107)

Battiste is calling for an examination of the inherent assumptions of Eurocentric curriculum and the ways privileging Eurocentric ways of knowing oppresses other ways of knowing. To heed Battiste's call is to remove colonial conceptual lenses and immerse ourselves in systems of meaning that are different, and by different I mean not colonial. It is a symbolic call to separate from what is canonically known, and enter a liminal space, like that of a void.

Entering the void

I have spent time thinking about and being in the void as a place of darkness, and as a state of unknowns. An encounter with the void is often frightening; the idea of complete emptiness or the cumulation of nothingness can be challenging to face when to know has been upheld by coloniality as an organizational foundation, essential value, and ultimate destination. The English word 'void' shares its Latin root with 'avoid' meaning unoccupied or vacant. As a non-Indigenous person, I have conceived of a

void to mean a *permanent* state of emptiness. However, as I encounter and engage with Indigenous knowledges, I do not interpret a void to mean that there is ultimately nothing at all but that there is ultimately nothing within existing human intellectual and sense perception. When I get caught up in what I know or think I know, the void is there to remind me that knowledge is constructed, and part of this colonial construction is to be afraid of something when there is no information about it. The irony is, if I know something about its parameters, i.e., how long or how often I'll be in the void, and I am guaranteed to return to some state of absolute knowns, I can tolerate my visit. I am not afraid of the void itself, but I am afraid of getting stuck there, when the reality is I am just as stuck, only my stuck-ness is a constant reaching for a mythical state of real knowledge.

The void has so much to say about unlearning. As educators we armour ourselves and attempt to equip our students with transferable knowledge, skills, and dispositions with a sort of blatant defiance that snubs the only true certainty – that none of us can predict the future – but we carry on preparing our students for a future that is trapped by contemporary colonial domination in ways of seeing, doing, knowing, and imagining. An encounter with the void demands a facing of one's assumptions informed by coloniality that pull focus away from a direct experience of how we influence one another in the immediate present. Through this encounter, the potentiality of our agency in guiding ourselves to a future is restored. The result is a kind of unidentifiable map, where there is space to transform nothingness into something educational. What if the void is not no-thing, but rather an empty space that challenges what you know upon entering? If a decolonizing practice is calling out to you, will you step into the disorientation of the void to learn something about its process and limits to its application?

Where 'Plato's Cave' reinforces the idea that knowledge is hierarchical, the Void deconstructs such thinking and presents an opportunity to go deeper into unlearning, where possibilities of decolonizing knowledge emerge. In my search for an appropriate approach to decolonizing knowledge, I

have encountered Spivak's call for "the unlearning of one's privilege" (Hutnyk et al., 1990, p. 42). In her hallmark essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (Williams & Chrisman, 1994) she unpacks the role of the postcolonial intellectual as representative of the marginalized/oppressed, where an attempt to critique the colonial and its embodiment of power, arbitrarily reinforces it, causing further alienation and voicelessness. This repercussion occurs because within the structure of domination, all forms of representation come from a privileged position; even the very act of representing the subaltern means that the subaltern ceases to be subaltern and becomes privileged (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). Her point is that the subaltern *cannot* be represented; they must speak with their own voice. For the privileged group, the task is to deconstruct all narratives and forms of representation, expose the intersections of power and ideology, and come to know the limits of representation. She writes, "In seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual systematically 'unlearns' female privilege" (Williams & Chrisman, 1994, p. 91). Unlearning one's privileged position means to adopt an ethical relation to the Other. What is at stake here is that unlearning one's privilege is one's loss even as it creates possibility not accessible in any other way.

Unsettling colonial knowing and privilege

An inevitable encounter with what knowledge is awaits, regardless of the field in which one is studying. Researchers are on a quest to know something about something. Going into my interview with Curtis I felt I knew a lot about shame and settler-colonialism but knowing did not serve me. Ultimately, my prior learning led me to acquire qualifications, knowledge and skills that would allow me to 'make it' in the research, but despite, or perhaps because of, my desire to contribute to meaningful research on relationality, I found myself troubled by recreating what I wanted to challenge. Settler colonialism and the structures and systems in which I am professionally situated continued to grant my access to power

and privilege. In the discomfort of unlearning my own privilege, I have embodied the realization that it is anathema for me to speak for Indigenous peoples. This unlearning has taught me to reframe the way I speak to Indigenous peoples in a way that there is space for them to speak that is not contingent on my presence.

As I conceptualized the problem of colonial knowing, I routinely struggled with Michael Agar's summative question, "Who are you to do this [work]?" (1980, p. 48). I latched onto my good intentions, ignoring the need to focus on difference; a mounting sensation crystalized as an unethical knot. The integrity of my research was at risk because my own privilege was preventing me from seeing how my previous knowledge is based in White, colonial, racist, assumptions, which led me to commodify so-called marginalized people's shame to further my project. How can I attenuate the power imbalance implicated in relationships with research participants, particularly when my research is with racialized people who occupy different social positions than myself? What "master narratives" (see Romero & Stewart, 1999) regarding social order are shaping my thinking? For me it became an issue of contending with what I know, where I know it from and the implications that knowing has, and opening up to what I do not know, where what I do not know leads the research going forward. Because I am positioned as a descendant of European colonizers, the production of legitimate knowledge and my own culpability in the social reproduction of that epistemology is where I find myself struggling.

The facts about my positionality remain the same, and I maintain that it is of utmost importance for researchers to interrogate, apprehend, and challenge narratives they use to make sense of the world and their position within it to name themselves. This reflexivity, it is argued (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) should be an integral step in all research; however, I am still undecided when it comes to sharing these details as part of the write up because I am not sure how to do so in a way that does not fall into the trap of it becoming a self-aggrandizing confessional or recentering the privileges which such a practice aims to unsettle (Biermann, 2011; Regan, 2010; Smith, 2012).

I began to think about the underlying intentions I held for choosing what I would share about my positionality and discovered that this practice might generate better and more realistic claims to positionality. When I started this project, I wanted to prove myself to be justifiably suitable to do it; I would have used the master narratives to substantiate and rationalize my experience, as in validate, and authorize according to colonial ways of knowing. I remain dedicated to disrupting this coloniality. This inquiry is shaped by my implicit and explicit beliefs and attitudes, and it begins with what I know, where what I know comes from lived experience and deep introspective analysis in relation to power and privilege. What I share about my knowing is partial, determined by what I deem to be relevant to this specific research project, and carefully considered in my best effort to unsettle, but not recenter, my positionality. At some point the researcher's knowing is explicitly or implicitly confronted by internal or external experiences when the narratives we use, or are a part of, no longer resonate with our present self. This crisis point invites the researcher to let go of what is certain and engage in an honest reckoning of what is unknown to establish what unlearning is necessary before going further into relation.

The imperative to stand in relation to where one comes from

My first conscious love on this Earth was with the plants I grew up with. The thing about a 'first' of anything is that you tend to remember it in detail. I swung from the flexible branches of Willow Tree across the tiny creek that snaked through the neighboring properties, vehemently ignoring any logic of parceled out plots of land before fences were eventually built. I asked for permission, first from the neighbor lady next door to access her property, and then from Mountain Ash to pick her red berries in the late summer – asking permission to take plant medicine was a teaching my mother learned from direct relationships with Ktnuaxa people, who passed the teaching on to me. Directed by some beyond-human embodied knowing, I strung the berries on cotton – years later learning this is a common Druid practice: the garlands decorated the inside of our home through Fall and Winter, before I returned them

back to the Earth, as instructed by Ktnuaxa Elders. The back deck of my childhood home was built purposefully to accommodate a mature Magnolia Tree; she was present for many of my imaginary musings. These three Trees watched over me like grandparents, but the beautiful difference is that they have outlived my human relatives, and I continue to visit them when I go home.

The return of Magnolia's blooms every spring was the first indication that life consisted of seasons and natural cycles, which gave my life structure and meaning; the Gregorian calendar was always secondary in my home. A year began in January because the beginning of any new cycle begins with darkness, like the new Moon before stepping into her fullness and long Winter nights before the Spring Sun returns to encourage new growth. From here, the year unfolded by events marked by the changes and gifts of each season: pussy willow hunting[13], planting seeds for the garden, blooming forsythia, the local Blossom Festival, asparagus season, the strawberry social, swimming in the glacier-fed lake, sleep-serenading cricket song, the Salmon festival, the infamous Fall Fair and harvest after harvest followed by drying, canning and preserving. The love I shared with plants quickly extended to the land and animals living with it. As a six-year-old, I walked the boardwalks in the wetlands with a profound appreciation for whomever had gone to the trouble of building them so that my visiting was even possible and would cause minimal disturbance to the ecosystem. On the way to the wetlands, we passed a sign with turtles descending from large to small that signaled to drivers to slow down for the area is a designated Turtle crossing; it was a visual reminder that we humans were guests on turtle territory, which reads poetically now as visitors on Turtle (Is)Land.

While I write from a place of love about my relationship to this specific land where I grew up, I also need to be clear that my intention is not to romanticize it. The takeaway from my experience is that the connection to land is spiritual, and the spiritual is entangled in the everyday mental and material

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[13] My family playfully called this hunting in reference to the action of walking through the wetlands in search of pussywillow buds to admire them, one of the earliest blooms of Spring.

realms in which human beings live too. It is also important to emphasize that my land-relationship is one of privilege, taught to me by my parents, and that is why I am choosing to speak about it. It does provide relevant background information as to how and why I have come to care about the impacts of colonialism on the ways settlers think about land. However, the same information can fuel "the lies settlers tell themselves in a bid to legitimate their own existence at the expense of Indigenous peoples and land" (Irlbacher-Fox, 2014, p. 151). Members of dominant groups often conceptualize their experiences through the use of master narratives that reinforce the legitimacy of their dominant group's social position (Romero & Stewart, 1999). Taking this into consideration, I do not want to erase my privilege and fail to acknowledge how power organizes knowledge production (Wasserfall, 1993).

Even if my land-relationships do not give me any rights to 'do this work,' they do give me some insights, however imperfect, into Indigenous people's land-relationships as deeply meaningful. It was coming to understand this subtle yet significant distinction that softened the unethical knot in my stomach and pointed to a method I refer to as unlearning – rather than recentering the colonial experience, what might I expose to unlearn about colonialism. Unlearning is not enough — exposing the harm of the system where one gains privilege is what Spivak is speaking about and it is a lifelong commitment. What assumptions are made about land as a result of colonial frameworks of place and space? Given that the logic of separate and individual private property enables colonization, what does it really mean to decolonize land? Wildcat et al. (2014) points out that "…if colonization is fundamentally about dispossessing Indigenous peoples from land, decolonization must involve forms of education that reconnect Indigenous peoples to land and the social relations, knowledges and languages that arise from the land (p. I)." There is so much unlearning to do about colonial understandings of land, and that is why I am an avid supporter of land education, as opposed to traditional approaches to place-based and environmental education, which embed Western intellectual traditions that rely on the denial and erasure of Indigenous knowledge/relations, and "…generally reproduce mythologies of innocence for

non-Indigenous students in terms of their role as settlers in colonial violence and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples" (Twance, 2019, p. 1321). Land education, "prioritizes Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and relationships to Land while addressing settler-colonialism" (Twance, 2019, p. 1321). It can be emancipatory or not depending on where you want to take it; always, it is relational.

In good relations

The Cree word *Wahkohtowin*, meaning kinship or the act of being in relation, captures the essence and importance of natural laws for how to foster good relationships (Wildcat, 2014). It embodies a worldview that everything has spirit where kinship includes human and other than human relatives (Wildcat, 2014). A set of natural laws around how to be in balance is observed, and when you begin to observe the seasons – *really* pay attention – as well as to the behaviour of animals and plants, especially the inter- and intra-actions, it becomes alarmingly apparent that human beings are the only beings that deviate from the natural laws; the only beings that require unlearning if a return to self and reconnection with nature is to be possible.

What follows is a reflection on what I (un)learned about relationships by observing nature. I am certain I could corroborate my findings with several scholars and leaders of many types, but that is not how I came into this (un)knowing, which raises the continuing issue of whose knowledge is validated in formalized education.

Excerpt from Fieldnote Journal, January 2020

Our desire (ego) draws us away from what is natural (primarily, out of relationship) and suddenly the unconscious "I" morphs into a famished one- "I"-ed creature. Confusingly it resembles you. It can feed on the mental, physical and spiritual level causing great suffering, and through its sheer will power, you begin to accept its presence as 'natural.' The subconscious creature needs you to believe that you exist in isolation and that you gain power by existing over someone or

something (nature) because that is how you (as an individual in the world) earn your

internal/external worth (money is an example of external measure). Through beliefs, this

invisible and imaginary creature comes into existence and sometimes the beliefs gain a foothold

so strong it can feel 'real' and fixed. In other words, belief equals truth, and the one-"I"-ed

character goes to work searching for confirmation of this truth out in the world (seek and you

shall find). This confirmation seems to override the logic of your conscious mind to recognise and

understand that there are multiple truths. An understanding of emphasis reveals which truth

comes into effect. For instance, I can be an individual who lives in the world or an individual that

is part of the living world. Both are 'true' but the emphasis on the former is about the individual

(I shape the world) and in the latter the individual exists in relation to the world (I adapt with the

world).

I share this reflection not to argue for one truth over the other but rather to highlight that the former

without the latter is a *partial* truth that shrinks the significance of relationship and evokes "the danger of

a single story" as popularized by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's (2009) TedTalk of the same name. She

points out that a single story is a stereotype created about subjects or peoples following the principle of

"Nkali," meaning "to be greater than another." Power is asserted not only in the telling of a story of

another person but in making that story the only possible one. Truth is not up for debate here; the

leading point is that the single story is always already an incomplete one and the implications are vast,

deeply problematic, and often violent. The single story approach helped to operationalize colonialism

and it grew like a one- "I"-ed creature, gathering power through the practice of domination, which

involves the subjugation of one people (or truth, ideology, knowledge system) to another, and

supressing alternative truths through settlement, sovereignty and/or indirect mechanisms of control.

Colonialism drives a singular modern society that espouses a hierarchy of power and binarism,

creating antithetical sides that are irreconcilable. As a result, the idea of colonialism rests on practices of

domination, including exercising power over nature. Colonial ideology rejects the idea that nature, such

as rocks, trees, rivers and weather are wonderous and alive, spiritual and divine. Max Weber

conceptualizes this disconnection from nature as the disenchantment of the world or "Entzauberung,"

which translates to 'taking the magic out' (Griffin, 1988).

I see the notion of disenchantment as a key instrument in the proliferation of colonial ideology.

Jenkins (2000) outlines disenchantment as:

> …the historical process by which the natural world and all areas of human experience become
>
> experienced and understood as less mysterious; defined, at least in principle, as knowable,
>
> predictable and manipulable by humans; conquered by and incorporated into the interpretive
>
> scheme of science and rational government. In a disenchanted world everything becomes
>
> understandable and tameable, even if not, for the moment, understood and tamed. Increasingly
>
> the world becomes human-centered and the universe – only apparently paradoxically – more
>
> impersonal. (p. 12)

Under disenchantment, the world becomes knowable and objective, "…appears only as a resource" (Di

Paolantonio, 2019, p. 612). This influential attitude further allowed an extractive approach to land and

Indigenous knowledge that helped colonizers explore territory to extract its resources, the result of

which "…did not deepen into a respect for the knowledge systems and institutions of Indigenous

people" (Drahos, 2011, p. 234). This shift in the investment of rationality over enchantment and mystery

renders the spirit purposeless and alienates the soul of human beings living within the constructs of

colonialism.

In order to possess land, colonizers became obsessed with the detachment from and separation

of spirit from land. I wonder, if colonial settlers could embody the connection to knowledge of soul and

presence of spirit in all living things, might the idea of owning land become ineffective, unthinkable?

Might the prevalent structures and systems of domination be called into question? It is hard to sustain

spirit in the midst of colonialism, and in conventional scholarship, matters of spirit are rarely addressed. The removal of spirit from knowledge and educational institutions frequently prevents Indigenous knowledge from being validated and valued. What if education was concerned with "fostering the soul," where the soul "is an ensemble of affective and libidinal forces that animates our bodies towards each other" (Di Paolantonio, 2019, p. 604)? What if the spirit of education was acknowledged to unleash a pedagogy of wonderment and learning through ceremony in the same way we teach a skill?

Indigenous Futurisms as a Response

In my search to find some semblance of hope in education and imagining futurities beyond the settler state, I turned to Sandy Grande's conception of "Red Pedagogy" (2004; 2007), which operates at the intersection of Western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge. It is also a pedagogy of hope because in that meeting space lies potential transformation. Grande (2004) clarifies that it's not "…the future-centered hope of the Western imagination, but rather, a hope that lives in contingency with the past – one that trusts the beliefs and understandings of our ancestors as well as the power of traditional knowledge" (p. 28). Inspired by the transformative potential of this meeting space, I attend to the problematics of internalized Indigenous cultural shame and settler-shame by responding to the critical juncture that through relationship one can come into experiencing shame *or* shame-resilience. Responding *directly* to shame is tricky, though not impossible, in the same way that engaging with dominant narratives can inadvertently strengthen their hold. Therefore, I respond *indirectly* to the problematics by observing the intersection of shame and IF, where varied experiences of shame laid out in chapter two in relation to disrupting coloniality meet the IF hope of imagination, where relationship is of critical importance to both.

Furthermore, at its heart Red Pedagogy is a *process*, always in the making, not a fixed point, prompting in me the realization that while decolonization is a new practice for some non-

Indigenous/settler peoples, Indigenous peoples have been doing this work since the earliest of colonial encounters and before. The seed that grows into the next sections of this work was planted well before I had any consciousness of it; exactly one year before I started my PhD when I saw Jeff Barnaby's first feature length film, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013) before its public release at the Calgary International Film Festival. If I wanted to learn anything about decolonization and move beyond shame to the embodiment of relationality as informed by Indigenous wisdom teachings, I could look to Indigenous artists, scholars and activists already doing this restorative and transcendent work. I found myself returning to Barnaby's *Rhymes* for several reasons, one being its defiant portrayal of Indigenous shame resilience, another being the grungy post-apocalyptic imagery – something about being dropped into some future aftermath while contending with the storyline that took place in the past intrigued me. Furthermore, the haunting symbolism of the gas masks as life support in a contaminated world caught my attention.

Around the same time, I started paying attention to Bunky Echo-Hawk's art and the gas masks were making an appearance in his work too; a pattern was emerging, and I followed it. The results of this thread are described in chapter three. My venture into the apocalypse led me straight into the heart of the emerging field of Indigenous Futurisms (IF), and I found myself experiencing moments of unbridled joy while rocketing to outer space and following a new rebel army of Indigenous artists that were taking over *Star Wars* and re-centering spirit and kinship at the heart of it all. Chapter four takes up this kindled joy and the possibilities that emerged. All the threads I cast in this chapter continue to weave through the remaining chapters with relationality emphasized in land, kinship, and spirit being at the forefront. I intentionally shift from an explicit engagement with shame (disconnection from peoples and place) to an implicit one that recenters shame-resilience (re-connection to peoples and place). I turned to IF to address the cycle of internalized shame and ultimately it did just that, but to my delight, it transported me further, beyond my settler-colonial imaginary and into a future that is folded into the

present – "a physical wormhole that renders the very definitions of time and space fluid in the imagination" (Roanhorse, 2018).

To survive is to image futures

In the 1990s cultural critic Mark Dery (1994) coined the term, Afrofuturism, which is part of speculative fiction (an umbrella genre) that blends the African diaspora with science, philosophy and technology. It is an aesthetic genre, and more importantly, an intersection where artists working in different media/genres "are united by their shared interest in projecting black futures derived from Afrodiasporic experiences" (Yaszek, 2006, p. 41). For Dery (1994), "the notion of Afrofuturism gives rise to a troubling antinomy: Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures?" (p. 180). One of the ways African artists did just that is by re-imagining black futures by "adopting the tropes and narrative techniques of science fiction . . . from an Afrodiasporic perspective from within the science fiction community" (Yaszek, 2006, p. 43).

In an article for the online magazine *Shameless*, Jackie Mlotek (2017) sums up the essence of the emergent genre, "the only way to survive is to imagine futures, but it's even better to create them" (n.p.). Indigenous Futurisms, the plural indicating the multiplicity of imaginations, follows suit as a form of storytelling whereby Indigenous peoples use speculative and science fiction (sci-fi) to challenge colonial stereotypes and imagine Indigenous futures. Inspired by Afrofuturism, Anishinaabe scholar Grace Dillon (2012) coined Indigenous Futurisms in the early 2000's, but arguably the genre has long been included in Indigenous literature (Sturgis, 2009). For example, Dillion's anthology includes Gerald Vizenor's Native Slipstream, Science and Sustainability from 1978. It is not the date that is significant, but that IF is situated in "ancient elements of Indigenous ways of knowing" and inserts Indigenous presence into the present, past and future(s) (Hopkinson & Muslim, 2016, p. 11).

Like Afrofuturism, IF shares its themes of reclamation, liberation and historical revisioning to reimagine futures through a specific cultural lens within the very genre whose roots in colonialism have marginalized them. According to Dillion (2012), "Writers of Indigenous futurisms sometimes intentionally experiment with, sometimes intentionally dislodge, sometimes merely accompany, but invariably change the perimeters of science fiction. Liberated from the constraints of genre expectations, or what 'serious' Native authors are supposed to write, they have room to play with setting, character, and dialogue" (p. 3). Indigenous "artists and cultural producers have steadily and increasingly given voice to dissent, creating powerful works that affirm tradition, celebrate heritage, critique contemporary power structures, and reclaim a territory for their voices" (Claxton et al., 2005, p. xii). As a result, IF critiques the way colonial history has separated Indigenous people from the 'contemporary' world and challenges Western notions of time based on values that constructed settler-colonial nation-states to validate theft of land and erasure of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, to disrupt this conception of time is to challenge settler-colonialism.

IF is also emerging as a field of study taken up in cultural studies, anthropology and visual arts, among others, with contributions made by scholars/artists like Elizabeth LaPensée (creator of Indigenous-led games and comics[14]), Jas M. Morgan (co-founder of gijiit: a curatorial collective of Indigenous art), and Skawennati (co-founder of the Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace research network). Since its inception, it is becoming a creative genre in its own right where visions of Indigenous futures are playing out in traditional art, literature, comics, digital games and other new media/text forms from the perspective of Indigenous histories, traditions and knowledges. It is misleading to confine IF to a static definition because it generates meaning beyond the sum of its parts. As a noun it is a genre and a research field that takes up the elements of colonial sci-fi tropes and imagery and Indigenizes them thereby reasserting agency of Indigenous peoples in representing themselves, their

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[14] see *When Rivers Were Trails*, 2019, https://indianlandtenure.itch.io/when-rivers-were-trails

stories and philosophies. A key feature and function of IF is how it maintains continuity through the convergence of past/present/future timeline, time-space in relation to place(s). However, what Indigenous artists mobilize through IF is even more remarkable. The best way to introduce IF is through a story. I have chosen Thomas King's short story, "Where The Borg Are" (2013) because it is representative of the genre and was written before the IF name came into form, affirming that IF is part of a long tradition of Indigenous literature and oral traditions.

An Indigenous Futurisms short story, "Where the Borg are" by Thomas King

"Where the Borg are" (King, 2013), follows Milton Friendlybear as he writes an essay for a tenth-grade history assignment on great historical moments in Canadian history. After choosing the Indian Act of 1876, a series of conversations with his grandfather unfold as they discover how the Indian Act is like an assimilation document and Europeans are like species from Star Trek: Enterprise. Milton's teacher is less than enthused by this revelation:

Milton," she said, in that tone of voice that many lapsed Ontario Catholics reserved for

correcting faulty logic, bad grammar, and inappropriate behaviour, "I'm not sure that the Indian

Act of 1875 is generally considered an important moment in Canadian history...But I am positive

that there is no significant correlation between the Indian Act and Star Trek. (King, 2013, 127)

Milton is not deterred one bit. He thinks it through: "[T]he Borg want to assimilate everyone. The Vulcans want everything to be logical. And the Ferengis are only concerned with profit . . .Klingons love to fight simply for the sake of fighting" (p. 136-137). Milton and his grandfather speculate that Europeans are an amalgamation of all these species, but when he shares this theory with his teacher, she retorts, "Christopher Columbus was not a Ferengi" (p. 138). Milton presses on, "But you told us that he kidnapped Indians from the islands of the Caribbean and sold them in the slave markets in Seville...Who else but a Ferengi would try to sell people?" (p. 138).

That weekend Milton goes to stay at his grandfather's house, and they contemplate how

Europeans and the crew of the Enterprise look alike, only Europeans are not as nice (p. 141). The

comparison sparks a revelation and Milton remembers an episode when the Borg were racing toward

Earth as Klingons, Ferengis, Vulcans and Romulans were chasing them:

> "They go faster and faster. The Borg out in front. The Federation right on their heels." Milton's grandfather paused, so Milton could catch up.

> "Like a shooting star."

> "Exactly." Milton's grandfather nodded. "And then...something happened."

> "Something?"

> "An accident. And explosion. Maybe a wormhole collapsed."

> "A wormhole! You think a wormhole collapsed and caught everyone in a high-energy gravity field?'

> "Maybe it was a faulty temporal time warp," said Milton's grandfather. "Who knows."

> "But everyone would have been...crushed."

> Milton's grandfather shook his head. "Or they were phased into particle streams, and their atoms were mixed and merged. Borg, Klingon, Vulcan, Federation, Romulans, even Jean-Luc Picard and his crew."

> "You mean they were...reconfigured?"

> "And when the dust cleared, what do you get?"

> Milton sat back and took a deep breath. "Europeans."

> "Only thing that makes any sense," said his grandfather.

> "This is worse than I thought," said Milton.

> "I never did buy that story about Columbus sailing the ocean blue," said his grandfather. (King, 2013, pp. 142-143)

Indigenous literary authors like King are known for dismantling and challenging common colonial

narratives and outright racist beliefs about Indigenous peoples in their works. "Where the Borg are" is

an example of the ways Indigenous authors (creators, makers, and storytellers in many art forms) are

subverting the stereotype of Indigenous peoples as relics of the past and disrupting narratives of

progress that inform linear conceptions of time. King is a master of that art form.

Colonial science fiction and Indigenous Futurisms as disruptor

Like the past, stories about colonial sci-fi and settler futurisms are dominated by the advance of

and reliance on technology, and the assumptions that non-Western cultures will either disappear or

assimilate. The central term linking colonialism and sci-fi is progress. In *Colonialism and the Emergence*

of Science Fiction, John Rieder (2008) writes:

> Europeans mapped the non-European world, settled colonies in it, mined it and farmed it,
>
> bought and sold some of its inhabitants, and ruled over many others. In the process of all of this,
>
> they also developed a scientific discourse about culture and mankind. Its understanding of
>
> human evolution and relation between culture and technology played a strong part in the works
>
> of Wells and his contemporaries that later came to be called science fiction. (p. 2)

Rieder (2008) maintains that "most historians of science fiction agree that utopian and satirical

representations of encounters between European travelers and non-Europeans" contribute to the

genre's prehistory (p. 2). The alien invasion or first contact theme common to sci-fi mirrors historical

colonial conquests, in which a technologically-superior society invades Earth (a so-called new location)

with the intent to expand their civilization to this area and enslave or assimilate inferior societies under

a colonial system.

The exploration of science and technology of the future, and the societal, economic, and historic

implications of such explorations in the sci-fi genre are posited to deepen a collective understanding

about the universe, which is difficult to define because it is largely unknown. The universe consists of

time and space and all their contents that include some things we can physically see, stars, planets and

galaxies, and even more of the unseen, forms of matter beyond our scope and energy bodies invisible to

the human eye, like the void. If Western science is knowledge derived from sensory perception, observation, and study (what is known), colonial sci-fi is an imaginary story based on possibilities derived from Western productions of knowledge (what is imagined). Within the dominant colonial ideology that privileges *hard* science based on the scientific method (absolute truths proven through experimentation and testing, and systematic observation), naturally colonial sci-fi stories evolved out of a desire to provide possible answers to questions humans do not know and reflect on what it means to go forward into the settler future.

In the wake of Western Enlightenment, the notion of disenchantment helps to explain the context out of which colonial sci-fi developed. If you recall, disenchantment informed Western beliefs that the world is "knowable, predictable and manipulable by humans" (Jenkins, 2000, p. 12). As a result, "everything becomes understandable and tameable," and this impersonalized approach produced a widespread loss of a sense of wonder and magic (Jenkins, 2000, p. 12). Over a century later, sci-fi emerged as a counter-culture genre offering to re-enchant its audience by instilling a sense of hope that there was more yet to discover about the world and reenact colonial fantasies. Classical elements of sci-fi such as time travel, teleportation, telepathy, space travel, parallel universes and extraterrestrial lifeforms gave rise to modern day sci-fi tropes like ancient astronauts and space pirates. IF Indigenizes these mainstream sf motifs by re-envisioning them from an Indigenous perspective, because time travel, space exploration, extra-terrestrial life, and the cosmos are not unusual themes or characteristics within Indigenous stories, and have existed long before the genre of colonial sci-fi took form. This understanding of IF prompted the following questions that consequently gave my research project new form: what happens when authors from a culture which has already survived an alien invasion and conquest reclaims the forms of science fiction to tell their own stories? How is the future being re-asserted through IF?

Alien invasions are a common trope in sci-fi writing, and according to author Drew Hayden Taylor, they are also an apt metaphor for Indigenous life in Canada. In a radio interview with CBC, Taylor says, "I don't know of another culture in North America that can really relate [to] the experience of strangers suddenly showing up and taking over everything and imposing their will on the people[15]." Most Canadians take for granted that the futures they dream of are possible and yet, hope for the future depends on the belief that options, and opportunities are available to you in the first place. Colonization has systematically limited the possibilities for Indigenous peoples, and has no doubt attempted to limit all aspect of Indigenous life, including Indigenous imagination. However, Indigenous peoples are resilient and alongside colonial accounts, they continue to tell their stories. I am reminded of the early works of E. Pauline Johnson/Tekahionwake, such as her first volume of poetry, *The White Wampum*, published in 1895. Dominant Western genres like sci-fi positioned Indigenous peoples as historic figures located in the past, and in opposition to the grand conquering escapades of White settlers, intentionally denying the rich history and ongoing field of Indigenous literature.

In the post-contact, alien invasion aftermath, a growing body of Indigenous literature bore witness to Indigenous peoples' stories, very much here, alive, and part of the present and by extension, the future. Indigenous literature reclaimed and re-established Indigenous identities that called for recognition of past atrocities and acknowledgement of the diversely *living* Indigenous literary landscapes across the country. Yet, in the colonial imaginary, Indigenous culture is not written and is fixed within pre-contact traditions, so it comes as no surprise that the vast majority of the reading public continues to have difficulties accepting Indigenous literature itself, let alone Indigenous sci-fi. Cherokee author Daniel Heath Justice (2015) paints the picture:

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[15] See "How Indigenous and black artists are using science fiction to imagine a better future," CBC Radio, November 14, 2017. https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-november-14-2017-1.4400378/how-indigenous-and-black-artists-are-using-science-fiction-to-imagine-a-better-future-1.4400425

The encounters are so similar, and so frequent, that they've taken on a predictable pattern: I

meet a stranger at a dinner part, or on an airplane, or in some other neutral setting, and in the

course of introductory small talk the stranger asks what I do for a living. When I respond that I

teach Indigenous . . . literature, the response is almost invariably something along the lines of,

"Really? I didn't know Indigenous people had literature" (note the past tense) or "So, you mean

the oral traditions/folklore/storytelling?" (p. 291)

Those who contribute to IF work against these limited beliefs, "embrac[ing] technology in all its

instantiations, from the galactic machinations presented in the compilation to game design, Indigenous

speculative fiction writing, artistic production, and the potential for space travel, whether imaginative or

cosmological" (Guzman, 2015). Developing "the understanding that technology is essential to

contemporary Indigenous constructions of selfhood contrasts longstanding notions of Native peoples as

artifacts of a bygone past" – a tedious task for IF when the later notion is so ingrained in the dominant

culture (Guzman, 2015).

Representations of intersections of Indigenous culture and technology, or an Indigenous person

in outer space are few and far between in mainstream media. In the colonial imaginary, Indigeneity and

technology are contrasting symbolic systems, but IF offers a location for Indigenous artists to contest

colonial representations with their own futuristic imaginings. When that vision is created and distributed

it acquires perceptibility and a shared sense of possibility comes into form. I have always thought of art

as not only the expression of human lived experiences, and imagination, but as an offering of an

invitation to conversation. This intersection makes me wonder, if art and more specifically imagination,

were a call to action, what does that look like? What I mean by a call to action is artwork that is not

limited to a distilled oversimplified expression included for art-sake, but rather created with the

sentiments of IF containing the following features: Indigenous people imagining themselves in the

future, and an Indigenous politic of recognition led by kinship, an ethical concept experienced within all

facets of Indigenous life. The broader problem that IF seeks to address is that there has been a dearth of

images and stories of Indigenous peoples in the future. I wonder why art is only mentioned in 1 of the

94 calls to action[16] (TRC, 2015g). How might IF strengthen the purpose of Indigenous art as self-

determined representation in the reconciliation process? The IF artworks and stories I chose to analyze

in the following chapters (three and four) seek to address this question and illustrate the radical and

transformative nature of IF as part of a larger decolonizing and Indigenizing project. I examine the ways

that these Indigenous artworks and stories are as much a tool of resistance as they are an embodiment

of resurgence.

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[16] 83. We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

CHAPTER THREE: ALIVE, IN A STATE OF INJURY: COUNTER NARRATIVES OF THE LIVING DEAD

> The downtrodden, the disposed, political radicals, and theological revolutionaries are often drawn together by their desire for a different world, whether this desire is apocalyptic, utopian, or somewhere in-between. Apocalyptic movements are often met with hostility: they are a threat to the powers that be, and their leaders, the prophets and self-proclaimed messiahs, are considered revolutionaries (think of Louis Riel). Although one is an idealized place, and the other signifies the end, utopian and apocalyptic visions are not all that far apart; often a new world can only emerge out of the ruins of the former.
> – Candace Hopkins, "Why Can't Beauty Be A Call To Action?" (2011)

This chapter considers Indigenous artists whose presence in the colonial sci-fi genre is reclaiming space for Indigenous Futurisms, using zombie imagery in their aesthetic creations. I argue that this apocalyptic movement disrupts and reimagines the cultural shame imposed upon them. Through a discourse of resistance and resurgence, Indigenous counter narratives of the living dead emerge in possible futures. "[H]aunted by a disappeared past while facing survival in a devastated present," these artists work to reclaim Indigenous *life* in a different way (Dillon, 2016, p. 2). I acknowledge that the history of residential schools is a story that must be told, but I am troubled that this too is becoming a dominant narrative, led by non-Indigenous peoples within school curriculum, when there are countless Indigenous stories that demand equal attention. Because Indigenous literature, history, and experience is important, I am driven to consider how zombies in Indigenous art might provoke new (counter) narratives which could subsequently inform educators teaching contemporary and ongoing issues including residential schooling history. How might zombie-counter legends *re*-story the meaning of legacy, a term that in this context is generally associated with a history of intergenerational trauma and shame? Drawing on the three works: Lisa Jackson's short film, *Savage* (2009); Bunky Echo-Hawk's art series 'Gas Masks as Medicine' (2004-2010); and Jeff Barnaby's feature film, *Blood Quantum* (2019), I ponder these artists' perspectives that position zombie encounters as an event that takes place within the body – in the mind, the heart, or the soul. Contrary to colonial sci-fi, I resist the assumption that zombies represent the dead or an end to humanity. Instead, I take cues from Jackson, Echo-Hawk, and

Barnaby who see healing potential in stories of virtual and simulated life, as a means to imagine Indigenous identities anew.

The Zombie in a Western Context

  While not a tried-and-true fan of the zombie genre myself, I am attracted to how zombies take shape as a monster metaphor for the power dynamics, fears, and desires of a society and the people in it. I can understand how a homogenous mass threatening humanity can stand in symbolically for a plethora of maladies, societal anxieties, and loss of meaning in past, present, and future contexts. My intention is not to provide a comprehensive reading of the zombie or its arc from horror culture into the mainstream, but to introduce the main themes, identify the relationship to colonialism, and recognize the significance of IF in complicating colonial notions of survival. My reading of the zombie and its broader societal meaning is informed primarily by my analysis and observation of zombies in select pop-culture media. I have limited my analysis of zombies to mainstream English language entertainment to trace how the symbolic nature of zombies has evolved in relationship to a Western context and distinguish this evolution from Indigenous counter narratives of the zombie.

  Most scholars, cite the origin of zombies from the Kongo word, *nzambi* meaning spirit of a dead person (Davis, 1988). In Haitian or Creole tradition zombies are often victims who have been killed by poisoning, then reanimated without speech or free will and controlled by 'bokors,' a Vodou sorcerer, usually for slave labour (Davis, 1988; Ackermann & Gauthier, 1991). Haitian tales of the living dead working in cane fields provide a powerful metaphor for the history of oppression in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the grim reality that settler-colonizers have yet to really address. As racism related to slavery rises up in the American unconsciousness, not unlike zombies rising from the dead and taking over the television screens or inhabiting the media, the last decade has been infected by a pop-culture zombie invasion. Popularized television shows in North America such as, *The Walking Dead*, *iZombie* and

The Santa Clarita Diet as well as video games (Call of Duty: Zombies) comic books, and Disney Channel's original movie-musical *ZOMBIES* are a few examples among many. It is not the fantasy that conjures the appeal in a colonial audience, but rather the strangely familiar world which the zombies occupy; the audience recognizing it as their home – under attack. The general plot: An initiating contamination emerges; the origins are often intentionally obscured or thought to be supernatural by nature. The zombie becomes a visible embodiment of an invisible agent. Many people are infected and become some version of a zombie that is driven to consume those who remain alive. A ragtag group of survivors attempt to evade the unavoidable, and civilization collapses, extinguishing all hope.

The zombie architype eludes definition because it lacks coherence of binary properties, dead or alive, suspended somewhere between. It is neither and both: living and dead, human and non-human, natural and supernatural, cultural and non-cultural. A zombie is better described than defined as a human corpse risen from the dead, reanimated but mindless. Zombie physicality has changed a lot over the decades, but generally, zombies are non-communicative (mute or reticent) and unemotional (show no mercy), have a stiff, stumbling walk (able to move but technically dead), and appear to be decaying (discoloured skin and eyes). Picture the brain-eating, head-smashing zombie image conjured from George Romero's classic film *Night of the Living Dead* (1968). There are, however, many forms, which demonstrate the flexibility of the zombie and how it is used. It is not a single symbol, but a dynamic collection of symbols, complicated by layers of overlapping and differentiating meaning. One interpretation is that the zombie personifies an unavoidable threat to humanity that exposes a limitation of our humanness and what many are afraid of: a lack of control. Zombies are feared because they attack individual autonomy by taking over bodies and minds until those living become a minority group, and human extinction becomes an unsettling and likely reality. Zombies derive strength from numbers and obtain control through 1) consumption (feasting on the living); they have an

indiscriminate, insatiable, and bottomless appetite, and 2) spread (which makes them untouchable); they have a 100 percent rate of contagion.

I see three overarching zombie stories in colonial sci-fi: the apocalypse, pandemic, and post-apocalypse. The zombie-apocalypse story is most like the plot I outlined above: The breakdown of society because of an initial outbreak spreads beyond containment. The response of authorities is slower than the spread. An army of zombies will take full control (assume power) while small groups of the living must fight for their survival. The zombie-pandemic story plays into the fear of global contagion, the virus transcends constructed borders. It can share many of the same plot points as the apocalypse narrative, only the initial contamination is caused by a medical research-lab headed by a major pharmaceutical company or the military that is secretly experimenting with bio-organic weaponry or an infectious disease outbreak, not unlike the Covid-19 coronavirus. There are many correlations between zombies and viral infections. For example, once a victim is infected, they become a carrier of the virus and can infect others they contact. A zombie pandemic tests human ingenuity to control (kill, inactivate, and contain) transmission through science and technology – a race for the cure trope certainly resonates today in a globalized pandemic as scientific researchers created a coronavirus vaccine in record time. If there is a cure to be found in these zombie pandemic narratives it tends to be biomedical. The zombie post-apocalypse story, however, evokes a bleak future of modern society in the aftermath of a complete economic, social, and political collapse. These stories tend to focus on constant survival terror. The threat shifts to include not only zombies, but also each other, as small surviving groups resort to self-preservation, a 'my life above all life' attitude arises and is used to justify inhumane violence in the name of survival.

Romero's zombie portrayal was not the first of its kind (or first ever zombie film for that matter), but it was the one that altered the landscape of the horror genre and made its way into pop culture fanfare. Acting as a historical allegory, the zombie narrative can be read in many different ways. The

larger zombie meta-narrative has been used as a metaphor for racial discrimination, communism, and global contagion, and it has also emerged as a punk rock expression, the zombie representing the ability to have a voice against the dominant structures, systems, and beliefs of modern society. "What will life be like at the end of the world?" is an entertaining question to address in various apocalyptic fiction forms, however, from an Indigenous perspective, the 'apocalypse' of settler colonialism is a defining feature of Indigenous history that continues to affect the everchanging present and threaten the foreseeable future. In response to this dynamic state of being, Indigenous zombie narratives are rising in counter-hegemonic ways.

"Coloniality survives colonialism"

A desire for an anti-hegemonic world is a sentiment that drives my interest in pursuing counter narratives that resist domination and help to establish a complex telling of *realities*, as opposed to a colonial *reality*. Counter narratives are stories that are initially less heard by much of the population, but they are no less symbolic or representative of the world which people inhabit. A counter narrative adds depth to a situation where a partial truth has become a dominant or master narrative that works to systematically limit the space in which other partial truths live, especially those that push against the norms and expectations of the members of the dominant group (Giroux et al., 1996). I recognize settler-colonizers as a dominant group in a diverse population of peoples living on lands claimed by Canada. Colonial-, settler-, or colonizer-narratives frame ideological domination in historical and contemporary colonial experiences, and also reproduce and sustain a settler colonial imaginary that denies the presence of Indigenous peoples and ultimately depends on this denial for its existence (Rifkin, 2014). Many counter narratives arise from the vantage point of those who have been historically and systemically marginalized, but this is only one way alternative stories rise up (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter stories are often framed within settler-colonialism as coming from the margins, from the

perspectives and voices of individuals who dwell there (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004), but I resist this framing, as it reinforces the social positioning that necessitates colonialism. In Canada, the settler state upholds its superiority over Indigenous peoples in part by pressing Indigenous peoples to identify "either implicitly or explicitly with the profoundly asymmetrical and non-reciprocal forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the colonial-state and society" (Coulthard, 2007, p. 439).

Jeanette Bastian (2006) reminds people that (so far) "history is written by the winners" because the winners get to archive their conquests and victories (p. 267). The largely *undocumented* history of others has been either silenced within the colonial archive or told from a colonial point of view, which has perpetuated tropes like the victimized or romanticized noble-savage. Indigenous artist Bunky Echo-Hawk interprets the perpetuation of dominant narratives as symbolic of the energizer bunny: even when injured by a counter-narrative arrow, the "Colonizer Bunny[17]" just keeps going and going. This analogy is what Maldonso-Torres (2007) means when he says "coloniality survives colonialism" (p. 243). Where colonization became a model of power framed by a system of domination structured around the idea of race, the idea of coloniality refers to patterns of power that emerged because of this model. Coloniality is pervasive because its patterns of power exist well beyond the parameters of colonial administration, transcending all constructed borders. As I established in chapter two, the entanglement of coloniality demonstrates a determined insistence of the systematic control of social and material resources including the control of knowledge. Claiming epistemic superiority, modern coloniality simultaneously seeks to rationalize austerity and dissociate all subjective worth from other forms of knowledge not familiar within its value system. Coloniality maintains continuity through dominant articulations of past, present, and future narratives of progress that organize movement along a singular axis and afford significance to colonial events while rendering others invisible (Rifkin, 2014).

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[17] 'Colonizer Bunny' by Bunky Echo-Hawk. Facebook Post. 11 November, 2008.
https://www.facebook.com/180456158653449/photos/pb.100044443719181.2207520000../1833646096667772/?type=3

Indigenous Zombie Counter Narratives

Like narratives of the past, stories about colonial futures, as depicted in the sci-fi genre, are dominated by progress, specifically the advance of and reliance on technology, and expansion or take-over of territory, following the assumptions that non-Western cultures will either disappear or assimilate. Fortunately, Indigenous artists are working to disrupt dominant colonial sci-fi tropes with the emerging field of Indigenous Futurisms (IF) that envisions the future from the perspective of Indigenous histories, traditions, and knowledges. The recent collection of IF stories, *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction* (Dillon, 2012) is a testament to this much needed disruption. The anthology, she writes, "confronts the structures of racism and colonialism *and* [sci-fi's] own complicity in them" (2012, p. 10-11; original emphasis). One of the ways IF artists work to reclaim Indigenous future(s) is by challenging colonial sci-fi imaginings/imagery and ascribing new meaning from a complex and often layered Indigenous perspective that incorporates the intersections of traditional wisdom teachings and contemporary Indigenous philosophies and technologies and lived experiences while using the same colonial tropes that deny Indigenous ways of being to critique and recreate meaning. An example of this reclamation is Indigenous artists' use of appropriation[18] to criticize or comment on coloniality/colonialism using the highly popularized imagery of the zombie.

The zombie trope in sci-fi is of particular interest to me because it is often considered modern when in fact many cultures have some version of a zombie figure and have been telling tales of the

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[18] In the context of art, appropriation is the practice of using incongruent materials or pre-existing objects or images to create new (often mixed) media pieces, found in various forms from (physical/digital) collage, Pop Art, to the "Pictures Generation" – artists who use mass media images to critique contemporary culture (see Douglas Eklund, *The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984*, 2009; and Linden, 2016). Not to be confused with 'cultural appropriation,' which can be as ubiquitous as the concept of art itself. Cultural appropriation is the representation of cultural practices or experiences by cultural 'outsiders,' the use of artistic styles distinctive of cultural groups by non-members, and the continued possession of cultural objects by non-members or culturally distant institutions (see James O. Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts*, 2008).

undead since time immemorial. I remember the first time I read about an Indigenous zombie-like

monster in Anishinaabe storyteller Basil Johnston's, *The Manitous: The Spiritual World of the Ojibway*

(2001). He describes the Manitou (a spirit):

> …gaunt to the point of emaciation, its desiccated skin pulled tautly over its bones. With its
>
> bones pushing out against its skin, its complexion the ash gray of death, and its eyes pushed
>
> back deep into their sockets … like a gaunt skeleton recently disinterred from the grave. What
>
> lips it had were tattered and bloody from its constant chewing with jagged teeth. Unclean and
>
> suffering from suppurations of the flesh, giving off a strange and eerie odor of decay and
>
> decomposition, of death and corruption. (p. 221)

Johnston's description of the Manitous conjures a similar visual depiction of zombies in colonial sci-fi in

my mind, but it is indeed a description of a type of Manitou called the "monster"[19]. Johnston (2001)

defines the "monster" (*sic*) in his glossary of terms as follows:

> A giant cannibal (or cannibals). These manitous came into being in winter and stalked villagers
>
> and beset wanderers. Ever hungry, they craved human flesh, which is the only substance that
>
> could sustain them. The irony is that having eaten human flesh, the [monster] grew in size, so
>
> their hunger and craving remained in proportion to their size; thus they were eternally starving.
>
> They could kill only the foolish and improvident. (p. 247)

This description sounds awfully familiar persisting even in current iterations of the supernatural – I think

of HBOs popular television series Game of Thrones (Martin, et al., 2012), adapted from George R. R.

Martin's (2011) novel series, whose mass appeal was in large part connected to the inclusion and

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[19] Just as narratives of the "monster" vary from place to place and storyteller to storyteller, the spelling and pronunciation of the word differ depending on the specifics of community and language. This entity encapsulates malevolence and while Basil Johnston (among others) chooses to publish this term in writing, in some traditions reciting the name would be considered inappropriate and harmful, subsequently attracting their attention, and calling it into effect. It is important to my argument to reference the tradition of the "monster," which I articulate below, however, I refer to this entity by a moniker.

portrayal of White Walkers. Once human turned supernatural ice monsters, the White Walkers, led by

their supreme leader, the Night King, make up the army of the dead, who wage war with humans in

their pursuit of erasing the memory of mankind and instilling an endless winter. The White Walkers in

the television series are taller than humans, have long white wispy hair and sinewy skin that stretches

over a skeletal structure resembling a human corpse.

Since my first reading of the "monster", I have longed to know more about it. While taking a

course on Indigenous literature in my undergraduate studies, I took up the opportunity. Only

disappointingly, though not surprisingly, I discovered that the earliest written account of a "monster" is

generally cited as Paul Le Jeune, a Jesuit missionary in the early-17th century (Eflin, 2014), a blatant

example of how colonialism would like to have us believe that things come into existence when written

down, despite this "monster" narrative existing in oral history for centuries. The zombie figure we have

come to recognize in sci-fi today resonates with a tradition of "monster" tales that are nation-specific

and part of those belief systems and therefore should not be appropriated out of context. Perhaps this is

why some Indigenous artists are embracing the fictional zombie. The IF creations of filmmakers Lisa

Jackson (Anishinaabe) and Jeff Barnaby (Mi'kmaq), and performance artist Bunky Echo-Hawk

(Yakama/Pawnee) that I explore next, disrupt colonial structures of meaning and through the zombie

imagery they reclaim Indigenous forms of expression and counter narratives.

Savage (2009): A Zombie Lineage of "Survivance"

In Lisa Jackson's film _Savage_[20] (2009), the 6-minute short shows a Nehiyaw woman singing a

traditional lullaby while a young girl is driven to an Indian Residential School in the mid-twentieth

century. The film's ambiguity of time and space deliberately leaves its viewers to contend with whether

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[20] Savage (2009) by Lisa Jackson (National Screen Institute, n. d.) can be viewed here: https://www.nsi-canada.ca/2013/01/savage/

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the woman is the child's mother or the child herself reflecting on her past – the strength of this

ambiguity is that it works as both. In English subtitles, she softly sings:

Baby's canoe is the moon.

flying through the sky, flying among the clouds.

Searching for a dream, everywhere, in her heart.

The moonbeam her guide, a shining star.

Fly, baby, fly.

But you must come back to me.

Come back to me.

The lyrics suggest that a journey away from home offers perspective – that is, when guided by

moonbeams and not forcibly assimilated into a new world. The deviation between the journey in the

song and the journey of the girl into a residential school is marked by the mutation of the mother's

gentle song into painful screams. In an interview with the National Screen Institute, Jackson explains

that she is "trying to subvert stereotypes about '[Indigenous] issues' and use an unconventional

approach to get underneath preconceptions and deliver an emotional experience" (National Screen

Institute, n. d.). The story is a heartbreaking depiction of the intergenerational trauma caused by

residential schooling; the violence of separation and subsequent loss of family, childhood, feeling,

language, and home is evident. On the one hand, trauma can be transmitted through lineage; on the

other, lineage is a passageway for cultural continuance. Ultimately, I read this scene as an expression of

hope – there is always opportunity for moments of pushing back; surveillance and colonization are

never (or rarely) complete. Like the song suggests, a way to reclaim the journey is to "come back." While

residential schooling created and enforced separation, lineage remained an ever-present source that

when embodied and heeded recreates the circle. *Savage* invites viewers to contemplate the invisible

workings of lineage; beyond the inheritance of physical artifacts, or genetics, lineage transcends time

and space. We see this in the back-and-forth cuts between mother and child, something intangible connects them, something deep within and from long ago.

Jackson's artistic approach includes the use of zombies and hip-hop dance to express the hunger, abuse, and control experienced by residential school survivors, her own mother being one. In the short, when the girl enters the residential school, she survives a physical transformation. Her body is washed, her hair is cut, and she is dressed in a school uniform. She stands center screen framed by a staircase, which I interpret as a symbol of colonial progress. The transformation symbolizes the colonial belief that Indigenous peoples were 'savages' in need of civilization and her transformed self is emblematic of the school's primary operative: to erase Indigeneity. After some time in the schools, the children become zombies, as indicated by their dead eyes, pale face, and obedient behaviour; they are devoid of any emotion. This additional physical transformation points to the role of the school designed to 'kill the Indian' through forced assimilation.

These scenes illustrate the immediate emotional effects of residential schools, but then something unsuspecting happens, as the synopsis reads: "In a place like this, there aren't many chances to be a kid. But, when no one's watching…A residential school musical" (National Screen Institute, n. d.). When the teacher leaves the classroom, the children begin to dance to a hip-hop beat. At first, the movement is rhythmic, stiff, and inflexible reflecting their zombification – a lack of agency and loss of interiority as they are controlled by an outside force. The movements gradually become looser and individual children break into improvised solo performances. The freedom expressed through dance is symbolic of residential school survivors' cultural resistance and the forthcoming hip-hop style defiantly confirms an Indigenous presence in the future.

In this short film, I see Jackson portraying lineage as a vehicle to come into connection with and remembrance of the gifts and knowledges that Indigenous peoples bring forward through the embodiment of their ancestors. Where the zombie might seem at first an odd choice to symbolize this, it

serves Jackson's commitment to reclaim a colonial trope that has consistently been used against Indigenous peoples. The dominant narrative of colonial progress (re)produced the false assumption that Indigenous cultures are "temporally fixed in an ahistorical past" and unable to transition into modernity, are therefore doomed to extinction. Resistance to depictions of "Dead Indians," as examined by Thomas King in *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (2013), is a major function of many Indigenous artists and is key to Jackson's work here in *Savage*.

The living dead in IF are only that because living Indigenous people are not supposed to exist according to the colonizer's imaginings. Working to disrupt the myth of Indigenous peoples as "The Vanishing Race" (Curtis, 1904), Jackson affirms that the zombie-children attending the residential school or their children's children will return and Indigenous culture will prevail. Utilizing the zombie imagery, Jackson re-appropriates a visual space that once appropriated Indigenous imagery in mass media; in a similar way Echo Hawk reappropriates the Energizer Bunny in response to colonizers appropriating the Trickster Rabbit as Bugs Bunny. Choosing to zombify the children in *Savage* is a beautiful and powerful statement. Jackson is communicating to non-Indigenous viewers that the undead are fictional beings in legends and despite the dominant narrative of colonialism, Indigenous cultures are very much alive. Dancing to hip-hop demonstrates cultural continuity - you cannot be a vanishing race when you are dancing to hip-hop. The idea of Indigenous peoples needing to be resurrected is nonsensical because they are still here, they have survived the unimaginable. To Indigenous viewers, she seems to be inviting a different question entirely: what does it mean to be alive in a state of injury?

I see *Savage* as part of the IF movement that draws on sci-fi to reorient the viewer's mind to the presence, resilience, and sustainability of Indigenous cultures. This is what Gerald Vizenor has termed survivance, which is "more than survival, more than endurance or mere response" (2000, p. 15). Survivance narratives are an active presence, an "active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and victimization" (2000, p. 15). Survivance is *living presence,* seen through "the continuance of stories, not

a mere reaction, however pertinent," writes Vizenor (2009, p. 85). It "is greater than the right of a

survivable name" because "it is the heritable right of succession or reversion of an estate, and, in the

course of international declarations of human rights, a narrative estate of native survivance" (Vizenor,

2009, pp. 85-86). This is no small feat, Indigenous peoples *survived*. But the colonial "apocalypse isn't a

singular event, it's an ongoing and relentless process" (Justice, 2018, p. 168), and so Indigenous stories

and survivance are continuously manifested. Jackson's film joins the canon to articulate an IF story

about presence. Her zombie offers her viewers an Indigenous way of thinking about belonging, self-

determination, and the power of Indigenous kinship to heal the spirits of the next generations. Working

against the notion of 'Dead Indians,' Jackson's work is a means of decolonizing. Contrary to Western

tropes, the zombie in IF explores what it means and what it takes to sustain life.

'Gas Masks as Medicine' (2004-2010): Protection from Colonial Harm

With the roots of institutionalized cultural shame reaching back to residential schooling and the

resulting intergenerational impact, it must be onerous at times to identify as an Indigenous person in

mainstream Canadian society. Many Indigenous peoples continue to be confronted by microaggressions

(insults, dismissals, casual degradations inflicted by a dominant culture) in their everyday lives.

Statements that repeat or affirm stereotypes about Indigenous peoples and structures that position the

dominant non-Indigenous culture as superior are widespread. Bunky Echo-Hawk shines is in his ability to

transcend certain stereotypes with subversive humour and reclaim possible futures: Indigenous peoples

are active subjects in his work, influencing and shaping their own fate. A self-proclaimed 'proactive

artist,' Echo-Hawk often uses his paintings to disclose the noble savage stereotype in unexpected ways

and transform the negative effects into productive ones - I say productive here, not positive because I

think his work does more than simply repackage a story with an alternate ending. In one piece

highlighted by the good-humoured title, "Future Leader[21]," Echo-Hawk contradicts the stereotypical

image of a lazy teen playing video games, which I see as a clever poke at a general youth culture

stereotype, a nod to the zombification of 'kids these days' who consume too much media. The lazy

youth stereotype has targeted Indigenous people, specifically. In his own words about this piece, Echo-

Hawk (2018a) writes:

> This is a portrait of a friend's son. I love the composition of this painting because it makes the
>
> boy appear to be lazy, consumed only by video games. However, I know this child is deeply
>
> involved in his language and culture. This painting is a lot like our world: you can't judge youth
>
> by simply looking at them. You can't assume they're doomed without knowing the potential
>
> they have inside. They're only doomed if we doom them. (n.p.)

More so than any other group of people living in a post-apocalyptic zombie land, Indigenous youth have

inherited a complicated job: to continue to cultivate a resilient garden with radioactive soil.

The gas masks that frequent a series of Echo-Hawk's paintings are a visual expression of

countering narratives of doom amidst and what follows an apocalypse. Working against a traumatic past

that would imply a dystopic future, Echo-Hawk appropriates the gas mask to reclaim a hopeful one

without mitigating any harms done. His paintings initially struck me as odd, perhaps even a little

disturbing: the unsettling gas masks worn by humans and animals and the neon-coloured world evoking

toxicity intersect where realism breaks the strange; he depicts a future I fear and a future that I fear is

already present. I think about where neon colours are found in the natural world, in the way neon

markings on plants and animals are visual ques for hungry predators: 'do not consume me,' they

caution. Should a predator shirk the warning, the ensuing illness is usually a lesson learned, if they

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[21] "Future Leader,' by Bunky Echo-Hawk. Facebook Post. 7 January, 2018a.
https://www.facebook.com/180456158653449/photos/pb.100044443719181.2207520000../1744316215600761/?type=3

manage to evade death. The thoughtful choice in colouring plays with duality in what is considered

'poison' to some, ultimately sustains life for another.

Then I am drawn to the title of each piece, and new meaning emerges. "Inheriting the Legacy[22]"

– amid the reality of a toxic environment, Echo-Hawk shows Indigenous people *living*, in pursuit of

carrying on, and the continuity of life through lineage. "Indian Dr. Doom[23]" – while the villainous,

fictional comic book character Dr. Doom armours himself with a mask to conceal the scared burns

beneath it (a signifier for his 'ugliness' within) and uses high-tech gadgets and sorcery as his weapon,

Indian Dr. Doom wears a gas mask to filter his breath from the radioactive atmosphere and uses a

garden hoe as his weapon. Indian Dr. Doom emerges as a contemporary Indigenous warrior. His

menacing presence mirrors the hostile environment, but the garden hoe signifies hope – in the shaping

of soil, removing of weeds, and harvesting of crops new life is cultivated. Indian Dr. Doom carries the

vision of the natural world restored. Suddenly, I am drawn into a powerful image of resistance that tells

a complex counter narrative of what it is like to *live*. In a feature for Beat Nation[24,] Echo-Hawk explains,

"…I live for our youth. I live for our future. I live to exchange ideas. I live to be a voice. I live to see, in my

lifetime, change for the better. I live for proactive action. This is how I'm living. How are you living?"

The masks are functional in that they enable protection and make life possible in a hostile or

inhumane environment, and symbolic in their association with survival: a looming threat and

unpredictable danger is within reach. The importance and nuances of Echo-Hawk's series is perhaps

ever more relevant today as mask wearing becomes a mandatory practice to help slow the spread of

COVID-19 across the entire globe. As a material object, the gas mask indicates it is an external threat

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[22] "Inheriting the Legacy" by Bunky-Echo Hawk. Facebook post. May 21, 2011.
https://www.facebook.com/180456158653449/photos/pb.100044443719181.2207520000../1744316215600761/?type=3

[23] "Indian Dr. Doom" by Bunky Echo-Hawk. Facebook Post. 6 April, 2018b.
https://www.facebook.com/180456158653449/photos/pb.100044443719181.2207520000../1838984006133981/?type=3

[24] Bunky Echo-Hawk artists statement, https://www.beatnation.org/bunky-echo-hawk.html

from somewhere out-there (not within). The post-apocalyptic landscape that accompanies the gas mask serves Echo-Hawk's commitment to make political art that addresses contemporary *colonial* issues that directly impact Indigenous peoples, such as environmental sustainability and the cultural preservation of Indigenous language and land for future generations. The de-humanizing effect of the gas mask is a play on zombification. Disguising the human attributes by replacing facial expressions with uniform, uncommunicative masks might represent how Indigenous peoples have been conditioned by dominant powers; having survived the initial 'contact event' they straddle a liminal space somewhere between dead and alive, somewhere between simulated and autonomous life. However, Echo-Hawk offers another read: the ability to be disguised by the masks, too, affords the wearer a level of anonymity to engage in nefarious pursuits. In this sense, I read the gas masks as Indigenous resistance and adaptability to an ever-changing (often threatening) environment.

The gas mask is calling for an awareness of a world at war, Indigenous peoples are still resisting colonialism; and globally we are all facing environmental devastation. Sometimes gas masks are used to administer death by inhaling lethal substances. Countering this notion of death, I understand Echo-Hawk to be offering a poetic vision of the gas mask as medicine, to sustain life through filtered breath: with access to pure oxygen one can continue to live despite airborne pollutants and toxic gases. As a result, the gas mask is protecting the vital essence of breath or Spirit within from external threat. The medicine is both preventative and antidote. The ultimate counter-narrative is that the gas mask is *Indigenous* technology; it provides protection, but the medicine is Indigenous autonomy, reaffirmed through breath, and through the continuity of life that extends beyond human life to include that of the natural world. The end of the world trope conjures up bleak imaginings of future, but Echo-Hawk finds light in sardonic humor where darkness pervades. In this way, Echo-Hawk might be alluding to the ancient wisdom that sometimes laughter (another signifier of breath/life) is the best medicine. What else is there to do at the end but laugh? Such medicine has kept many Indigenous peoples alive throughout

'colonial outbreaks.' It is medicine that withstands colonialism and the myths that served the settler-colonial agenda. In re-storying a colonial legend that was meant to displace Indigenous peoples from their lands, Echo-Hawk offers new meaning to what the 'true' legacy is for Indigenous peoples, their living-on.

Blood Quantum (2019): Revenge is Contracted in Blood

In his feature film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013), Jeff Barnaby flirts with the zombie metaphor and post-apocalyptic imagery. In his second feature-length film, *Blood Quantum* (2019), Barnaby's interest in zombies evolves into a full-fledged genre film that solidifies his trademark skill: creating entertainment (with a wicked sense of humour) and art that is also a vital socio-political critique of real historical events and relations in Canada between Indigenous and non-Indigenous/settler peoples. Set on the same fictional Red Crow Reserve as *Rhymes* (2013) a few decades later in 1981[25], *Blood* (2019) primarily follows local sheriff, Traylor and his extended family consisting of his sons Joseph and Lysol (half-brothers), his father Gisigu, and his ex-wife Joss (Joseph's mother) as they struggle to safeguard their community from outsiders seeking refuge from zombies.

The story consists of two parts, each chronicling a single day. In part one the apocalypse starts with a mysterious zombie outbreak that is affecting the surrounding settler population as the audience follows strange occurrences on the reserve. A gutted pile of salmon are the first to rise from the dead – a gesture to Alanis Obomsawin's documentary, "Incident at Restigouche," which documented raids by Quebec police at Listuguj (where Barnaby grew up) over salmon fishing rights in 1981. Meanwhile Traylor witnesses a dead dog snarling back to life, Joseph finds himself sharing a jail cell with an infected

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[25] In 1981 Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau introduced amendments to the Canadian Constitution that included omitting what is now Section 35 of the 1982 Constitution Act, which recognized Indigenous land treaty rights. Mass protests followed and the issue was eventually rectified when the federal and provincial governments (except Quebec) voted to acknowledge Indigenous land claims. See https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1719388476

man vomiting blood, and the news reports a frenzy of bites filling up the hospitals. Part two jumps six

months later and follows the survivors at Red Crow, which is now a fortified compound, as tensions over

who should be let in rise and the ravenous monsters attempt to invade. That is when the film's

distinctive feature, irony, becomes fully clear; the plot twist is that Indigenous peoples are immune to

the zombie virus that just wiped out the rest of the planet (immune but not immortal, they are

vulnerable to injury/death by physical zombie attacks). This means that all the zombies are white

settlers and the more terrifying threat to the Indigenous community is being consumed by *them*. The

threat is punctuated while watching a horde of ravenous settler-zombies tear an Indigenous man apart.

Envisioning a world where Indigenous blood bestows immunity is a radical example of

Indigenous reclamation and counter storytelling. Here, Barnaby disassembles the colonial administration

of blood quantum, a lawful genocidal practice of documenting and determining Indigenous identity

based on the measurement and exact percentage of 'Indian-ness' to determine Indigenous ancestry,

and thus rights to receive treaty and federal benefits. Part of the colonial script is to promote the

assumption that there is a benefit, cultural, economic, and otherwise, which helps to minimize the issue

of creating fractional identities that are part of a colonial structure motivated by Indigenous erasure.

Outside the film's fictional universe, the rationale of blood quantum is used to limit Indigenous

citizenship, as smaller Indigenous populations makes colonial seizure of land more justifiable and fiscal

responsibility smaller. Blood quantum is a barefaced example of how constructed knowledge is used by

dominant groups to yield their power – the very substance that keeps all people alive is intentionally

fragmented to isolate specific minority groups. Within the film's universe, this rationale is personified as

vicious white settler-zombies who are driven to consume the entire Indigenous community. Both within

and outside of the film, blood quantum defines who Indigenous peoples are and in terms of social space

and land designation, it decides who gets to be 'in' and who is 'out.' The land that was deemed less

desirable (incapable of being propagated and socially isolated) by colonial-settlers became Indigenous

reservations. Barnaby's subversive storytelling flips this colonial script and now the land deemed worthless is a refuge – the most desirable place on Earth, for all people, and permission to enter lies within the autonomous choice of Indigenous peoples. Yet even with this counterturn, he simultaneously acknowledges the historical reference to colonial-settlers infringing upon Indigenous territory.

Blood (2019) joins the cannon of a growing wave of creators making Indigenous-centered stories in spaces that have predominately excluded Indigenous presence as experienced and told by Indigenous peoples themselves. Some might refer to *Blood* as an 'Indigenous' zombie film but really it fits right in amongst all zombie films – that also happens to have Indigenous protagonists and perspective. The historical and socio-political significance of a film that positions Indigenous peoples not only as the heroes of their own narrative but also as saviours is indeed a meaningful victory. This is important for Barnaby who said in a press interview, "I don't want to make obscure, social commentary films that nobody sees. I kind of want to make blockbusters that have core messages" (Wong, 2019). Barnaby chooses to make films for a wider public audience that are Indigenous-focused, and this representation is absolutely critical in popular media because "if you look at the history of cinema, you're battling stereotypes of 100 years of native misrepresentation" (Dunlevy, 2019). This is colonialism in film, and there are stories to tell but as Barnaby put it in an interview with other Indigenous artists, "It's been a white man's game and they've been fucking it up" (Simonpillai, 2019). He recognizes the complexity of representation, which only serves to further the call for more Indigenous produced films. He goes on to explain:

> Nobody likes to be lectured. Even white people in the know about the history of Canada are still not wanting to be reminded when they're looking to be entertained at the theatre. I take tropes from popcorn films and put them in my work to dress up subversive ideas in a way that makes them palatable. My films are Trojan horses for ideas that non-Natives wouldn't normally engage in. (Simonpillai, 2019, n. p.)

This is precisely why *Blood* is an important film for 'Canada' and why Indigenous creators are the right people for telling counter stories.

At my local screening, I could make an educated guess as to who might be there because they were drawn to the zombies (those who arrived in a large 'horde' dressed as zombies) and who might be there for the social significance (intergenerational families and me, taking copious notes in the dark). Both camps got a sizeable amount of violence and dark comedy. I process some of my own enjoyment of being called out with a sarcastic imagining of Barnaby in the role of news boy standing outside the theatre shouting, "calling all white settlers, come for the zombies stay for the Indigenous rage!" In *Blood* (2019) Barnaby's representation of Indigenous is one that Indigenous peoples recognize, *live with*, but a general audience might not have seen and therefore must contend with when they do. This time around it is not the violence enacted on Indigenous peoples, as it was in *Rhymes*, but rather it is the anger Indigenous peoples endure that is new to a non-Indigenous audience.

The audience sees Indigenous protagonists on screen expressing anger and dealing with it in a variety of different ways. Showing Indigenous anger is significant because Barnaby disrupts audience expectations that have been conditioned by settler stereotypes, such as the romanticized or mystic Indian, a gentle pacifist whose stewardship with the land gives them great insights through their spiritual connection, typically this wisdom assists the main white protagonist on their journey; or the comic relief Indian, whose childlike naivety or broken English makes for cheap punch lines (Francis, 1992). In *Blood*, the Indigenous characters do hold key information, symbolized by their blood, only this time it reasserts Indigenous sovereignty. Comic relief does not rest on bastardizing anyone's character even when Barnaby develops complex characters that are as repulsive as they are poignant. He writes about the 'rez Indian' who "seems to scare a lot of people" because "a lot of them are hard-partying drunks" fuming with anger (Simonpillai, 2019, n. p.).

There is no better example of Barnaby's 'rez Indian' than Lysol, who he describes as a "self-loathing postcolonial Native person . . . [who] grew up in an environment that was trained to fucking hate him" (Crucchiola, 2020). Barnaby explores the history of colonialism through this character and imagines misogyny within the system to also be a complex part of Lysol. In an interview about the film Barnaby fleshes out the character's complexity:

> You get the impression that Lysol's mother died quite violently, or at least she met an early demise, and he's carrying this darkness around in him that manifests itself in misogyny. I felt like at some point this guy is going to turn into a barbarian and just start asserting dominance. There's a commentary on male toxicity there, but I wanted to present it in a way that didn't alienate anyone with any kind of righteous pontificating. (Crucchiola, 2020)

Then Barnaby follows up with an important observation: "…you don't really see Native villains with epic backstories in the sense that he is representative of a history rather than just his story," and a history of violence is brimming with potential for anger (Crucchiola, 2020). This commentary is an example of Barnaby's expertise at playing with colonial dichotomy, the same anger that is defensible and bold can also lead to self-destruction (Crucchiola, 2020). It is also a dichotomy that IF committedly addresses and Barnaby executes in this film; a dynamic of holding onto the anger while also letting it go to move forward.

In a roundtable interview Barnaby notes the inspiration for *Blood* is the community he grew up in and he speaks to how he strives to bring that to the screen, even if it means showing anger:

> One of the interesting things about Blood Quantum is that it deals specifically with the anger of having to deal with white people, having to deal specifically with that culture infringing upon your space. That's a real thing. . .Where is the representation of that anger onscreen or in stories? It's real sexy to be the spiritual, in-touch-with-your-ancestors Indian. But nobody wants to hear from the fucking angry, misplaced I-want-to-kill-these-white-people Indians. That's who

a lot of the people in Blood Quantum are. I need to know that those people are going to know

that they've been seen. Like, I fucking see you, man. I'm not dismissing you. I'm not sweeping

you under the rug. I love you for who you are because you made me who I am. I get my

strength, humour, storytelling and love of the language from those people. (Simonpillai, 2019, n.

p.)

This type of representation works particularly well with the exaggerated violence characteristic of the

zombie genre. As white settlers are gruesomely albeit entertainingly killed by shotguns and makeshift

axes, a Samaria sword and chainsaw, Barnaby scrutinizes racism, colonialism, and forced relocation,

matching violence with violence, and the absurd with absurd.

The violence and anger portrayed in this film are significant in that they point to another key

difference in how Indigenous artists are representing *themselves* as contemporary warriors. A colonial

stereotype reinforced an 'Indigenous warrior' trope that portrayed Indigenous men as "wicked,

bloodthirsty" militant leaders and hunters who fought to protect their families and were a formidable

threat to civilized society (Francis, 1992). Barnaby counters this threat, reframing it as one where white

zombies are invading the reserve to eat Indigenous people alive; the return of the dead symbolizes a

legacy of colonial violence. It is a metaphor that has great impact in its visual portrayal of colonialism,

where the violence of colonialism has previously played ad nauseam in 'cowboys and Indians' movies.

Barnaby subverts the bloodthirsty 'Indian warrior' crafted by white colonial storytelling (often

referenced as a singular History) and reclaims space in visual media to tell an alternative story.

An example of subverting colonial (mis)representations is in his reclamation of the iconic image

"Face to Face[26]" from the Kanehsatake resistance (Obomsawin, 2007) depicting a Canadian soldier,

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[26] Photograph by Shaney Komulainen of Canadian soldier Patrick Cloutier and protester Brad Larocque coming
face-to-face during a standoff at the Kanehsatake reserve in Oka, Quebec on Sept. 1, 1990.
https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/reflections-of-oka-stories-of-the-mohawk-standoff-25-years-later-
1.3232368/one-photograph-shaped-how-everyone-saw-the-oka-crisis-1.3232786

manufactured by the media, as a peaceful (unarmed) hero. In an early concept sketch[27] for the film, now

t-shirt logo for the film, came a black and white drawing of the image only this time the white Canadian

soldier's peaceful babyface is replaced with a withering, dead-face, and thus capturing Barnaby's key

question that births his vision for the film: what if there was a zombie apocalypse and only Indigenous

peoples survived? Echoing Thomas King's critique of colonialism in "I'm not the Indian you had in mind"

(2007), where he ponders: "I wonder how things might have been, had you followed, had we led."

In "Face to Face," the Canadian government and media favoured the narrative of the peaceful

soldier and a frightening warrior coming face to face, representing equal measure with a 1:1 ratio in the

frame, which was not at all accurate with soldiers outnumbering Indigenous resistors by far. The

Indigenous warrior is imposing, threatening, and anonymous in the mask, like a criminal disguising their

identity. This image taps into the very essence of colonial othering. In the concept sketch, Barnaby crafts

a narrative of survival, where the face mask transforms from one of striking terror *in* the enemy to

protection *from* the enemy, who is an external threat. Survival is something Indigenous peoples are all

too familiar with. "Zombie apocalypse or not, our realities wouldn't be all that different, which I think

says a lot," noted cast member Elle-Maija Tailfeathers, who plays Joss, at the Toronto International Film

Festival (Wong, 2019), and when survival is at stake there is going to be a fight. Tailfeathers states the

obvious from the perspective and lived experience of Indigenous peoples across lands claimed by

Canada, but however valid and tangible this may be, many Canadians who need to hear it, see it and feel

it, have not – so far. Barnaby's film bridges this gap, inviting settlers and non-Indigenous people to

acknowledge the violent dynamics of colonialism, while inverting its usual power structure.

When the zombie daze settles, *Blood* reveals itself to be an environmental apocalypse film that

considers Indigenous bodies and land as ongoing sites of struggle and Barnaby complicates dichotomy

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[27] Concept sketch, now t-shirt logo for *Blood Quantum* (2017).
https://www.facebook.com/BloodQuantumMovie/photos/zombie-stare-down-an-early-concept-sketch-for-jeff-barnabys-blood-quantum/107400143136940/

again, positioning land as both primary protagonist and villain. The apocalypse in *Blood* is also one of

environmental destruction, signified by polluted water and infected food sources. After the prologue,

the first act begins with an animated sequence showing a pregnant woman connecting directly with the

Earth by a long root like an umbilical cord. First, I thought Barnaby was showing us the past or maybe

even the future suggesting that the answers to healing lie in the remembrance of home, in connection

to Mother Earth, and in the resurgence of matrilineality. Barnaby's take is much more complex. A

moment later we see a harmful dark substance delivered from the Earth to the woman, affirming the

Earth's autonomy. The relationship is reciprocal; the medicine sometimes bitter. The imagery brings me

back to a question posed by Daniel Heath Justice in his book, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018),

"[W]hat is it to behave and live as a good relative?" (p. 73). This question paired with Barnaby's

animation invites reflection on the ways in which Indigenous peoples recognize the relationship

between the living and the dead.

In *Blood*, Barnaby envisions the Earth as a living, breathing organism carrying out its own plan.

He explains, "I've always viewed the Earth as an animal [. . .] If you start looking at things like viral

outbreaks as the planet's immune system, what would be better for our planet than just turning all

these parasites into fertilizer? It's like it's turning the stupid fucking white man into something it could

use" (Crucchiola, 2020). Masterfully, he adds another layer to the pervasive news stories of global

climate change and of the ways human behaviour has inflicted environmental devastation. Yes, human

beings are a major threat to the environment, but before this film, I had not considered that through

devastation the Earth might be attempting to get rid of humans. Barnaby reminds his audience again of

a pattern, violence matching violence. A central line spoken in the film articulates how the Earth is

spitting white people back out. How does this perspective inform or change how non-Indigenous/settler

peoples approach so-called reconciliation efforts? From the colonial standpoint the greatest threat to

mankind is (other) man, but Barnaby offers another perspective at a critical time. Our Earth mother

needs us all: she calls out for Indigenous and settler peoples to align with her as warriors with and of the land. Her efforts against us have always been an extraordinary demonstration of resilience and like any good mother, she teaches us how to live.

For Indigenous peoples in a post-colonial world, "What more is there to fear when you've already faced governments who have tried for centuries to wipe you out, who have used biological warfare and forced starvation to create apocalypse for your people?" asks Tuscarora writer Alicia Elliot (2019). Considering that most non-Indigenous zombie stories "depict situations that Indigenous people have already weathered" what could possibly unsettle the colonial narrative long enough for white settlers to: 1) face "the reality that they have built their entire country on literal Indian burial grounds" (Elliot, 2019), 2) engage with their own shame and respond ethically to the various lived experiences of oppression and violence that Indigenous peoples have endured and continue to endure, and 3) disrupt further continuations of such atrocities by refusing to (mis)represent Indigenous peoples and stories, stepping aside to consciously make space for Indigenous voices in mainstream media that unpack colonial trauma and imagine possible futures? What new insights will emerge when non-Indigenous, settler Canadians are asked, "How does it feel to live in an asylum you built bone by sooty bone?" (Belcourt, 2019) when they think they have tuned in for a fun zombie flick? Who knew an answer would come in the form of a zombie apocalypse film that depicts white settlers as flesh-eating monsters?

"Still Here"

Echo-Hawk and Barnaby both use gas masks worn by Indigenous peoples in their work to symbolize living under external threat and in biological warfare. The toxicity of the present is framed by the aftermath of a near-genocide of a not-so-distant past, and possible threats in an unknown future. Echo-Hawk in particular, is provoking discussions about the on-going struggle for social and environmental justice for Indigenous land. Jackson and Barnaby both use zombie imagery to represent

the dystopian wasteland of the residential school experience in Canada. Indian residential schools might

have strived to 'kill the Indian in the child' and in many ways, they accomplished violent and shaming

acts on Indigenous bodies that have led to intergenerational trauma, but Jackson and Barnaby reclaim

space to declare the narrative that they want to voice to the world: colonialism failed in suppressing

Indigenous bodies and beings. Amidst the bleakness and on-going violence Indigenous artists are rising,

not from the dead, but from personal and community resilience and resistance, as *living* proof that

zombie apocalypse or not, they are "Still Here[28]" and for every Indigenous child born, they reinforce the

lineage, legend, and legacy of this survivance.

IF mobilizes this survivance further to reclaim Indigenous space in the future, a concept that

only exists in the present; therefore, it can be shaped by the same colonial narratives that shape colonial

Canada or it can be authored by Indigenous voices and imaginaries that restore na(rra)tive sovereignty.

For Indigenous authors, artists, and creators, "[T]his means understanding our roles as embodied visions

of our ancestors of the past, as well as our manifest of both celestial and earth-bound responsibilities to

our peoples and lands of today, and finally, the models and myths we leave behind as ancestors to the

future. If you could send a message to the future, what would it be?" (Cinema Politica, n.d.). This

question and framework are vital for educators, who as our primary teachers within the colonial

construct of schooling, are responsible for imparting truth and reconciliation. Colonial Canada embraces

the reconciliation part (it sounds forward moving) but everything, including institutions of education,

has been built on colonial structures and belief systems that were meant to exclude Indigenous peoples.

This is one of the truth parts that is too often missing from popular discourse, and it is difficult to accept,

embody, and change. What I have learned from studying IF stories about zombies is that the truth about

so-called reconciliation is that it begins with settler society stepping aside and listening to Indigenous

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[28] "Still Here" by Bunky Echo-Hawk. Facebook Post. 14 November, 2018c.
https://www.facebook.com/180456158653449/photos/pb.100044443719181.2207520000../1421064274592625/?type=3

voices. These voices hold "templates of survival" (Justice, 2018) and are imagining futures in which the current structures of oppression are dismantled. Where settler society can begin to work from is *with* Indigenous peoples leading the way.

The zombie in each of these artists' work has a story to tell. Reflecting on these stories can provoke one to think differently about the legacy of what is to come, of future settler-Indigenous relationships without losing sight of a legacy of inherited trauma; to think differently about future lineages and the inheritance of healing medicines; and to think differently about the Indigenous zombie counter-narratives that offer healing powers and hope as opposed to singular apocalyptic imaginings of the wounded and lost. As Canavan (2010) so eloquently writes, "Zombies are our only possible future, our already actual present; zombies inherit the earth" (p. 441). IF occupies this space to reimagine the zombie figure as no longer the enemy, but instead, a transitional symbol of a culture that has survived – their children are evidence of this – and the possible futures that these children will story.

CHAPTER FOUR: IMAGINARY INDIAN TO SPACE NDN: THE FUTURE IS NOW

Conceptualizing the Multiplicity of Space

Space has multiple meanings: this multiplicity is in part what inspired this chapter, although the problem with space is precisely its ambiguity and polysemic nature. Is space a definition of something, a tangible physical place, a continuum, a zone, a vacuum or the namesake of our universe (and beyond)? Is it something small or large, contained or limitless, everything or nothing, outside or inside? I am drawn to the concept of space because it is all of these things and more. Like the zombie, space is often used as a metaphor. For example, in educational theory metaphors of space are used in drawing boundaries to divide up knowledge into fields or subjects, and metaphors of learning as movement through space are concerned with how a learner moves between said fields of knowledge (Paechter, 2004).

When I think about space within an Indigenous philosophy, I see space as recognized by the relationship between an individual to another person/group or to something else (beyond human) and meaning as fluid and changing according to positionality, thus defined by relationship. In concert with this consideration, I work with two metaphors of space in this chapter related to positionality. One is the notion of *outer* space, as in a destination within the cosmological realm, where stars and celestial beings, including one's ancestors and guides, are located. I will refer to this outer space as 'Space,' capitalized as a place name, a proper noun. When I use space as an adjective, as the first part of a noun phrase such as 'space NDN' or 'space ship,' I will not capitalize it. Second is the notion of *inner* space, as in the parts of ourselves that are not normally accessible to consciousness. I will refer to this inner space as lowercase 'space,' because there is little differentiation between inner space and a general understanding of all space that is relational; space comes into being because of the relationship between entities, often characterized by intangibility, liminality, or emptiness. I accent this space, with *inner* to emphasize the abstract terrain it references (emotional/mental/spiritual), as opposed to a land-

place (physical), which I reference with specificity. Inner 'space' is a bit of an oxymoron because it can have boundaries, when it is interiorly defined and contained within, as in the terrain of the soul, but it can be exteriorly defined and boundless, as in the imagination or one's love, which cannot be measured or contained. However, in both framings space remains abstract and part of an emotional, mental, or spiritual experience. Both space and Space exist in relationship with each other and it is very likely that they could be used interchangeably; however, the distinctions I make in describing their different articulations is an important nuance to my exploration of Space as a tangible, even if imaginary location and a metaphor for Land reclamation on Earth as well as relational space as Indigenous sovereignty and healing from within, both of which are features of and themes within Indigenous Futurism (IF).

In this chapter I set the stage for how the theme of space/Space in IF is a philosophical inquiry that provides the foundational insight required to engage in a wider conversation about reconciliation movements across Canada through radical Land reclamation and self-determination. Stories of inner space and outer Space exploration in IF are important contributions to Indigenous resistance, resurgence, and living presence. These stories substantiate that "colonialism is as much about the symbolic diminishment of Indigenous peoples as the displacement of [Indigenous] physical presence" (Justice, 2018 p. xviii). I espouse that IF stories of Indigenous living-presence in space/Space provide a central and invaluable method to explore the two key questions of this chapter. How might IF construct space for Indigenous cosmology, philosophy, and science to help settler-Canadians conceive of land restitution now? How might Space travel simultaneously mobilize the space NDN on an interior space exploration of self that activates healing? For me, these thoughts arise from my reading of the Anishnaabemowin concepts, "Inaendumoowin," transformation from willing into being (kimiwan, 2014), and "Biskaabiiyang," returning to ourselves (Simpson, 2011; Dillon, 2012). This chapter is *a call to imagine* the future and identify the innate life giving and sustaining philosophies that Indigenous peoples' work already embody; philosophies that inform a direct path towards relationality.

The coloniality of space

As outlined in chapter two, time travel, space/Space exploration, and relationships with extraterrestrial/cosmological beings are not unusual themes or characteristics in Indigenous stories and have been integral aspects long before the genre of colonial sci-fi took form. However, as established in chapter three, the belief that Indigenous peoples live only in the past is a legacy of colonialism that enables Western culture to control a dominant narrative of an 'imaginary Indian' who was tragically consumed by their 'savage' and 'primitive' ways (Francis, 1992). In this false but prevalent colonial myth, many Indigenous peoples fatefully disappeared from the imaginary landscape, failing to adopt settler doctrine. From the colonial imaginary emerged a fantasy that Indigenous peoples need to be converted and saved (Francis, 1992). In this scenario, the 'imaginary Indian' is confronted by the white man and surrenders his autonomy and culture rather than face death. Racist and fictional stereotypes of the 'imaginary Indian,' developed in colonial expansionist propaganda and popularized by the western genre, eventually made an appearance on the silver screen[29] and infiltrated pop culture (Indigenous tribal names for vehicles, i.e., the Jeep Cherokee and Indigenous caricatures as team mascots, i.e., the Washington Redskins recently renamed the Washington Football Team in 2020), all of which contribute to the widespread misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples and cultures by non-Indigenous peoples in power. That withstanding, a multigenerational Indigenous resurgence is continuously demonstrated to those who are paying attention, among which are Indigenous artists acknowledging Indigenous communities as sites of power and regeneration, and sometimes using the colonial tools to do so.

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[29] Tonto in *The Lone Ranger* tv series (1949-1957) is an example of the loyal sidekick, an Indigenous man who never masters the English language, uses a fake Indigenous word that is supposed to mean 'faithful friend' and is completely devoted to his white friend who 'rescued' him. Old Lodge Skins in *Little Big Man* (1970) is an example of the medicine man, a wise Indigenous character with 'magical' powers that serves little purpose other than to guide white characters in the right direction. Jacob Black in the *Twilight* franchise (film series, 2008-2012) is an example of the modern 'Native warrior' representing a fierce and formidable threat to society, the duty of the white man is to civilize him. In the *Twilight* series Jacob Black is a fictional character depicted as a werewolf of the Quileute tribe (an existing sovereign nation mentioned by name in the saga) who must be controlled and tamed from harming the white woman.

For example, in Tlingit artist Nicholas Galanin's art series, *Imaginary Indian* (2011; 2016) a wooden totem pole and ceremonial Westcoast Native masks made of white ceramic protrude from a toile de jouy (pastoral printed fabric, popular in the late eighteenth century) wallpaper background. The ceremonial masks and totem, similar to ones that were appropriated and commodified for colonial tourism, are camouflaged by the colonial wallpaper. The title *Imaginary Indian* points to Galanin's critique of how Indigenous aesthetic and ceremonial objects are (mis)appropriated and exist in this form, only in the imagination of the colonizer. In sociology, the imaginary "are ways of understanding the social that become social entities themselves, mediating collective life" (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 4). In this way, I see Galanin reimagining the collective social life, offering an Indigenous counter-narrative of an experience that engages with the past while expressing Indigenous representation in the colonial present. Galanin is part of an Indigenous community of artists that contend with how Indigenous peoples are having to reclaim and reimagine traditional ways of being against a prevailing history of colonialism and within a precipitously changing modern milieu, which is a central relationship in IF as well (Whyte, 2017).

A space NDN emerges

Many Indigenous creators are working to change the colonial narrative, and IF artworks and stories in particular are reclaiming recognition in public and virtual spaces, which are becoming critical sites of resistance and imagination. For instance, a new type of 'NDN' (Cornum, 2015), as imagined by many Indigenous artists and activists, is launching into cyberspace, rocket-fueling mass media, and decolonizing the digital landscape. NDN is a reclamation of the colonial term 'Indian,' informally though radically adopted by a number of Indigenous artists and activists, particularly in online and virtual communities. The *space* NDN depicted in IF takes this concept a step further by asserting an Indigenous *living* presence in 'spaces' they have previously been omitted from. The power of the space NDN is

encapsulated in Kiowa/Choctaw artist Steven Paul Judd's recent painting turned graphic T-shirt design

for his clothing line titled, "Dare to Dream[30]". The image appears to be a space NDN: a human being (I

assume) suspended in space against a black backdrop dotted with distant white stars is wearing an

American astronaut suit adorned with traditional Indigenous aesthetic, complete with moccasins instead

of space boots and a quiver holding arrows in place of the astro-backpack formally called the Primary

Life Support Subsystem. From a Western perspective, there is something seemingly contradictory about

the space NDN that is found in the symbolism of traditional culture projected into the future. However,

the space NDN projects a complex narrative, one that imagines and reclaims Indigenous peoples as

technologically advanced, financially prosperous, and culturally strong. Space NDNs affirm Indigenous

presence – *now*, and into an imagined future[31].

The space NDN, as both traditional and contemporary, explores a multi-dimensional reality

through stories of *re*-connection, of past, present, and future. The space NDN reminds me that the

universe out there and the universe within are not separate. Conceptually, the space NDN is engaging

Biskaabiiyang. In *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* (2011) Leanne Simpson describes Biskaabiiyang as a

process not unlike decolonization whereby Indigenous peoples "pick up the things [they] were forced to

leave behind, whether they are songs, dances, values or philosophies, and bring them into existence in

the future" (p. 50). The return highlights the ways in which Indigenous peoples re-claim "the fluidity

around [Indigenous] traditions, not the rigidity of colonialism; it means encouraging the self-

determination of individuals within our national and community-based contexts; and it means re-

creating an artistic and intellectual renaissance within a larger political and cultural resurgence" (p. 51).

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[30] "Dare to Dream" by Steven Paul Judd. Instagram Post. (21 November, 2017).
https://www.instagram.com/p/BbxsxlqBfq1/
[31] Curriculum scholars may want to investigate the notion of fiction as reparative not only as a way of enacting Indigenous resurgence and resistance through IF, but also as an aesthetic response to the circulation of shame differently experience by artists. For example, see Aparna Mishra-Tarc (2011) "Reparative Curriculum" Curriculum Inquiry, 41(3), pp. 350-372.

Drawing on Indigenous scholars who use Biskaabiiyang as a research methodology, Simpson (2011) adds

that Biskaabiiyang is "an ongoing individual process" where "the personal is always embedded

intrinsically into [Indigenous] thought ways and theories; and it is always broadly interpreted within the

nest of the collective" (p. 51). Simpson (2011) also emphasizes the importance of understanding

language within its local meaning, noting that Biskaabiiyang may not have local resonance within other

Indigenous communities until it is culturally located "within the web of relationships" of that community

(p. 52). I situate the space NDN as a representation of Biskaabiiyang as it speaks more broadly to

Indigenous resistance. Like Biskaabiiyang, the space NDN "is a constant continual evaluation of

colonialism" and "encompasses a visioning process" (Simpson, 2011, p. 52). Carrying the essence and

process of Biskaabiiyang within, the space NDN projects the evaluation and vision into space, reminding

the collective that "We must act to create those spaces – be they cognitive or spatial, temporal or

spiritual – even if those spaces only exist for fragments of time" (Simpson, 2011, p. 52).

     With the space NDN as our guide, and an understanding of space/Space and Biskaabiiyang

under the launchpad, with your own imagination, I invite you to "dare to dream" with me and board the

mother ship as we blast off into Space. *May the Force be with you*. The chapter that follows is organized

into four episodes. In episode one, I put on my space goggles and set the channel to NASA, "Native

American Space Adventuring," (Meland, 2017, p. 57) to look at current Indigenous artists who are

reimagining space NDNs within the lexicon of *Star Wars*, featuring specific works by Nicholas Galanin,

Steven Paul Judd, and Andy Everson. These artists weave conversations of the past with imaginations of

the future while recreating spaces for Indigenous representations of Indigenous presence. In episode

two I flip on 'warp speed' and time travel to an IF creation story. I turn to Indigenous cosmology,

philosophy, and science to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous conceptions of place, space,

and time-space and show how relationship is key to this understanding. While my spaceship refuels and

undergoes routine maintenance, I shuttle back to Earth in episode three and apply the philosophical

conceptions identified so far to recenter an Indigenous understanding of land. Drawing on Brian Yazzie

Burkhart's (2016; 2019a; 2019b) work I argue that the re-contextualization of 'locality' within settler-

colonial rhetoric is a necessary condition for Indigenous liberation through land. Back aboard the

mother ship, I travel deep into the starry sky in episode four. The space NDN has been collecting data

from this tour and a pattern has emerged in the shape of a "kinstellation" (Recollect, 2019b). I propose

that situated within a 'kinstillatory' web of relationalities lies the possibilities of a collective future.

Episode I: Indigenous "Image-in-nation" Infiltrates the Death Star

> Kill the Indian, save the dreamcatcher. Hang it from your spaceship's rearview window.
> – Rebecca Roanhorse, *Postcards from the Apocalypse* (2018)

Returning to oneself (Biskaabiiyang) may be assisted by *seeing* oneself in media, but how one is

portrayed in said media, and who is the creative force behind that portrayal, is of astronomical

importance. Until recently, representations of colonially constructed, minority populations have largely

been voiced from the dominant population's perspective, which too often carries ideological

connotations portraying colonial stereotypes, thereby perpetuating the problem of colonial "Othering"

in media practices from production and regulation to audience consumption. One antidote to this

problem is for so-called minority populations to author their own stories. Another is for pre-existent

gatekeepers working in mainstream media to step aside and use their positions of power and privilege

to support diversity in storytelling. As Rachel D. Godsil and Brianna Goodale state in their resource for

overcoming the legacy of racism, "the ability to imagine a world that is different than the present is the

beginning of any movement for change: to be able to communicate the world one imagines to others

and have it feel possible is the power of narrative" (2013, p. 11).

Nehiyaw artist Kent Monkman's cunning demonstration of the art of subverting a narrative and

imagining dominant stories of history otherwise resonates with the heart of IF to bring multiple

timelines, such as history and the present, into relation with one another. Throughout his career

Monkman has appeared as his alter ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle in various performance pieces. In his series *The Emergence of a Legend* (2006), a set of five studio portraits, Monkman explores Miss Chief in different performative roles across time. In his own words Monkman explains, "The photos trace the history of Aboriginal performance culture — more specifically "Indians" performing for a European audience.[32]" By re-making historical photos, such as those produced by Edward S. Curtis, which have since been used to stereotype Indigenous peoples, Monkman subverts history as an omniscient truth-teller, sharply exposing history as a composite of fact and fiction.

While some Indigenous artists, like Monkman, bring past and present into relation and reference colonial imagery with a few key alterations in order to disrupt and expand a counter narrative, others bring future and present into relation, like those who are integrating iconic images of *Star Wars* in what is increasingly becoming known as 'Native Pop Art.' An example is Judd's digital collage, titled "Hopi Princess Leia[33]". He remixes Edward S. Curtis's 1921 photograph "Pulini and Koyame" from his multivolume collection, The North American Indian, (Volume 12: "The Hopi,") and a still shot of Princess Leia pointing a blaster from the iconic film *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (Lucas, 1977). Princess Leia appears in the center of the frame, two Hopi women from Curtis' photograph are superimposed behind her. The three women are arranged as if in a line, one in front of the other, highlighting their influence and similarities. I interpret this framing as a nod to morphogenesis images that depict evolution – in this case, of colonial appropriation.

"Hopi Princess Leia" advances a theory that Leia is a Hopi princess, a conversation that has long been held within Indigenous communities since the beginning of the *Star Wars* franchise in 1977. First, the visual cue: Princess Leia's hairstyle resembles the squash-blossom hairdo worn by Hopi women at

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[32] A written description from his website,
https://www.kentmonkman.com/photo/1r103764530vzl0au4milf3kmbnok8
[33] "Hopi Princess Leia" by Steven Paul Judd. https://theworld.org/stories/2016-12-29/little-known-link-between-princess-leia-s-iconic-hairstyle-and-mexican-revolution

the time of the Mexican Revolution (Fight, 2019). Then there is the explicit narrative arc of Leia's character: she is an Indigenous person (from the future, albeit a long, long time ago) who watched her home planet be destroyed by the Imperial Army that has also taken her as a prisoner. However, Judd's digital collage does more than exemplify these connections. Keep in mind that Curtis was well known for editing out any objects that show signs of modernity in his staged photographs, many of which have now been used in establishing stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, especially the 'Vanishing Indian' trope. Judd's collage counters these attempts to characterize Indigenous peoples within a historic past, instead placing Indigenous peoples at the center of contemporary popular culture and far into the future. Images like this establish an Indigenous living presence in 'mainstream' media and pop culture, spaces in which Indigenous peoples have either been omitted or included from a colonial-setter perspective.

Similar to Judd's piece, Nicholas Galanin produced a black and white photographic composition, "Things Are Looking Native, Native's Looking Whiter[34]," of Princess Leia and an Edward S. Curtis image from 1906 of a young Hopi-Tewa woman mirroring each other to highlight colonial cultural appropriation. Galanin describes the piece in his own words: "In borrowing from an Indigenous aesthetic, the image projects settler claims to Indigenous culture into the future. The title speaks to consumer culture's desire to claim 'Native inspired' looks, while simultaneously refusing Indigenous people the agency to define Indigenous culture in an increasingly hybrid world[35]." With this piece Galanin demonstrates how Indigenous artists are reclaiming power of representation as creators and makers of Indigenous history. Métis activist and filmmaker Marjorie Beaucage (2005) writes about the importance of this reclamation: "It is not enough to refuse, to protest against what is. We must also be

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[34] "Things Are Looking Native, Native's Looking Whiter" by Nicholas Galanin (2012).
https://www.artsy.net/artwork/nicholas-galanin-things-are-looking-native-natives-looking-whiter
[35] A written description from Eazel, an online platform for artworks courtesy of various museums,
https://eazel.net/artworks/5701

willing to change, to woo new combinations, to present a new option whose power of attraction is so strong that it creates desire and image-in-nation. To develop new forms for what we see, what we embody" (p. 141). A ground-breaking example of the "image-in-nation" that Beaucage calls for was the re-release of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* on DVD in 2013 dubbed in Navajo, becoming the first major Hollywood film made available in an Indigenous language. Six years later, Indigenous author, Rebecca Roanhorse was appointed to write the new *Star Wars* novel *Resistance Reborn* after publicly calling for an Indigenous author to write a *Star Wars* story[36]. These are opportunities that are due primarily to Indigenous-led discussions and artwork being created, posted online, and shared across virtual spaces. Although there are implicit references to Indigenous peoples in the *Star Wars* franchise, Indigenous voices are making the connections visible – the artwork created represents the convergence of past and future, and the living presence of Indigenous peoples today. It is the future oriented optic that reminds Indigenous and settler peoples alike that "Indigenous artists in Canada are a contemporary people, creating contemporary art, with contemporary context…" (Townsend, 2005, p. xiii).

Another example of "image-in-nation" comes from K'ómoks/Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw artist Andy Everson. In the mid-2000s he started creating limited edition prints of pop culture characters from *Star Wars* adorned with Northwest Coast Indigenous design to raise awareness of ongoing political issues. It is a blending of two childhood passions – growing up watching *Star Wars* and dancing in the potlach, which led to creating his own regalia. His reimagined *Star Wars* pieces are deeply intentional and help to reclaim Indigenous defiance and resilience amidst colonialism. In the short film, *Andy Everson – Indigenous Musings in a Digital Age* (Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2014), Everson explains how the concept originated while protesting against the Trans Mountain oil pipeline:

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[36] See "Rebecca Roanhorse's Star Wars writing gig began with a tweet," CBC Radio, 2020, January 10. https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/in-a-galaxy-far-far-away-exploring-star-wars-through-an-indigenous-lens-1.5420783/rebecca-roanhorse-s-star-wars-writing-gig-began-with-a-tweet-1.5420866

I had this vision of a Stormtrooper walking through the crowd all dripping with oil – this stark

white, faceless individual covered in this oil, kind of represented what will ultimately happen on

our coastlines if these pipelines go through and then it kind of got me thinking, why not

transform that? Why not change it into something that's really a positive message?[37]

There are two other factors at play in this act. First is the integral role of the oral storytelling tradition in

Indigenous culture and its relationship to artwork. Everson's acknowledgment that artwork is often a

visual representation of stories already told and from long ago led him to ponder the kind of stories

Indigenous peoples know today and what kind of stories have been forgotten (Comox Valley Art Gallery,

2014). Then, by starting with *Star Wars,* a story with universal themes, Everson uses an idea or one

might say an experience that many different people have in common to disseminate another story.

Star Wars iconic characters are preloaded with meaning. By adorning these characters with

traditional formline design, Everson changes the Stormtrooper from the faceless solider who blindly

follows the Galactic Empire's orders to a re-imagining of a Westcoast Warrior, defender of the land

(Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2014). For Everson, the Westcoast Warrior teaches that warfare is about

using one's voice and remembering one's weapon of choice. The first of his many images of a

Stormtrooper is titled, "Warrior[38]" or "Harbinger of the Treaty Empire." Everson explains, it is the "real

idea that our people could kind of go both ways on the fight of the treaty and what part of you is going

to come up: are you going to defend the land? Who are you?" (Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2014).

Each reimagined *Star Wars* piece subverts original meaning and tells a story within a story.

"Rise[39]" depicts the iconic image of Darth Vader adorned with Raven imagery. It tells a story about

leadership. Darth Vader, a Sith Lord in service of the Galactic Empire and chief enforcer of total

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[37] I have edited this excerpt from the video for readability, omitting extraneous syllables like 'um.'
[38] "Warrior (or Harbinger of the Treaty Empire)" by Andy Everson (2011).
http://www.andyeverson.com/2011/warrior_or_harbinger_of_the_treaty_empire.html
[39] "Rise" by Andy Everson (2017). http://www.andyeverson.com/2014/rise.html

domination, represents the imperialist connotations or dark side of politics, which "generally have good intentions, but a lot of it gets corrupted," Everson explains (Ferreras, 2012). Raven is personified as Umeł, "Chief-of-the Ancients," a trickster and transformer who created river systems by emptying out a sea lion's bladder so the salmon could return and feed the people. Here, Raven represents community interest, nobility, responsibility and humility at the heart of Indigenous leadership, where the divergence of past and future bring us to the present moment to re-imagine leadership today.

In the description of "Rise" Everson (2017) explains, "We want leaders who are not afraid to wear the mantle of Umeł…those who are able to bring light into the darkness…those who are driven to lead their people to Rise!" Thinking about the role of warrior in Indigenous history, and in defending the land, Everson re-imagines the Stormtrooper again in "Northern Warrior[40]" (2015), a Stormtrooper helmet topped with a traditional Chilkat weaver's hat, and in "Defiance[41]," a Stormtrooper re-imagined as Blue Heron, representing his first ancestor, Namugwis, who descended from the sky wearing the feathered garment of Blue Heron. Everson speaks to "Defiance" (2016) on his website:

> We now live in an age where we must balance modern life with traditional teachings. An age where we must choose between the trappings of a capitalist society and of one steeped in giving and sharing. An age where we're compelled to miss work in order to potlatch. An age where we drive cars and use petroleum-based products and feel compelled to say "NO!" to pipelines. An age where the only salmon some of us see is in the grocery store…and it's farmed. If it is one thing that our ancestors taught us, it was to remain defiant: to use our voice when there is injustice; to use our actions when they are sorely needed; and to use our hearts, minds and consciousness in order to make the important decisions. These decisions we face are not easy ones. Sometimes it's just plain easier to "Netflix and chill" than to be defiant and stand up

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[40] "Northern Warrior" by Andy Everson (2015) http://www.andyeverson.com/2014/northern_warrior.html
[41] "Defiance" by Andy Everson (2016). http://www.andyeverson.com/2014/defiance.html

for what you believe. In this day and age—as much as ever—we need to be the people our

ancestors would want us to be.

It is a message for all people across Turtle Island, starting with something in common – *Star Wars*, and

supposed universal themes that inscribe colonial binary, such as good and evil, light and dark. Everson

then pushes this forward, advocating through his artwork that Indigenous perspectives can interrupt

colonial binaries, and reinstate agency in the many more options offered through relationships.

The Mandalorian (2020) is the most recent television installment of the *Star Wars* franchise,

which introduced the world to Baby Yoda (whose species name is currently unknown). It did not take

long before Indigenous artists began sharing their Baby Yoda art through memes all over social media[42].

For example, Victoria Ransom "created an image of Baby Yoda wearing a Mohawk-style Haudenosaunee

headdress, or *kastowa*, sitting in a splint basket traditionally made from the black ash tree" in memory

"of her uncle, Joe Barnes, who was also an artist and big *Star Wars* fan, which inspired one of his last

pieces of Yoda wearing a *kastowa*"" (Johnson, 2019). Lakota Sioux artist Jana Schmieding aptly draws

the connection between Baby Yoda and a reverence not only for elders, but also for children, pointing

out that the medium of meme-ing is "…actually a really important digital movement moment for non-

Natives to get to know Native culture, rez culture, philosophies and ways of thinking, ways of being"

(Johnson, 2019).

Memes help to communicate what words sometimes cannot. Oglala Lakota/Chicano writer

Simon Moya-Smith (2019) points out in their article about Baby Yoda's popularity with Indigenous

peoples that in the pop culture pandemonium, there is very little Indigenous content, so Indigenous

peoples make it themselves. One interviewee explains, "When I see Baby Yoda, I see an indigenous baby

at ceremony learning the wisdom of our ancestors, wisdom that has been passed down for thousands of

years" (Moya-Smith, 2019 n.p). In another Baby Yoda fandom article, Dene artist Melaw Nakhek'o is

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[42] Search Twitter #NativeBabyYoda for several examples.

quoted, "I often imagined my grandparents were like Jedi masters and teaching me the way of the force

which was kind of like our Dene way of doing things," as they explain the similarities between the Force

(the metaphysical energy field) and the Dene philosophy of being one with land, animals and plants

(Blake, 2020). For Johnnie Jae, founder of media platform A Tribe Called Geek, Baby Yoda, who is sought

by bounty hunters to exploit his knowledge, represents stories of exploitation, colonization, the

residential school system, and child welfare (Blake, 2020). The Indigenous artwork representing these

ideas is important, particularly within the plethora of what Moya-Smith (2019) calls "legacy media,"

referring to mainstream media, which often fails to include Indigenous voices. Incidentally, Indigenous

artists are asserting their agency in the present through their imaginings of NDNs in Space and a new

hope is bestowed to the living generations about what the future can hold.

Episode II: Always Pass on What you Have Learned[43]

Mohawk multi-media artist Skawennati's re-imagines the future through a Haudenosaunee

Creation story in her machinima,[44] *She Falls for Ages* (2017). This creation story usually begins in Sky

world, which is traditionally regarded as the middle realm extending from Earth (the below realm) up

through the Sky before entering into the above realm, celestial Space (Irwin, 1994). Skawennati (2017)

reimagines the story taking place in a "futuristic, utopic space," on a planet that is familiar yet distinctly

different from Earth, with its rainbow-tinted land. Here, we are introduced to Sky Woman, a "brave

astronaut and world-builder" with supernatural powers, named Ancient Flower and a beautiful, energy-

producing Celestial Tree that must be cared for and nourished with great reverence, for it sustains all life

on this planet (Skawennati, 2017). When Ancient Flower learns that the Tree is dying, she knows that

she must become the seed of the new world and plummets herself into the void of Space. She falls for

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[43] In Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi Yoda utters these words to Luke Skywalker before he dies.
[44] The term machinima is a contraction of 'machine' and 'cinema.' It refers to a new media technique using game engines to make films in immersive virtual environments.

ages, praying and dreaming until a flock of birds breaks her fall into the waters and, as in the traditional

story, on the back of Turtle she plants her seeds on a mound of earth retrieved by Otter. As the seeds

grow into sunflowers, the Earth expands into the land we now call Turtle Island. The story is told in the

present tense noting a shift away from traditional legends about the past that are told from the present,

reframing the idea that this is an *ongoing* story of a "living memory of accumulate mystical experiences"

(Grim, 2001, p. 124) that are cocreated "over time by mythic and living individuals within the

community" (Grim, 2001, p. 125).

Like cosmography, the science of mapping the universe as a *whole system*, Indigenous

cosmology "begins by analyzing the process dynamics of an *undivided wholeness* from which

identifiable, stable and recurrent patterns of only relative autonomy (rather than strict hierarchy) can be

identified" (Irwin 1994, p. 23, emphasis added). It is a "lifeway mysticism" (Grim, 2001) situated in the

interconnectedness of all people and all things, where spiritual visions and mystic traditions have

implications for the whole community. It is "both local and cosmic, individual and communal, ordinary

and extraordinary" (Grim, 2001, p. 140). Mohawk and Anishinaabe scholar Vanessa Watts (2013) refers

to this understanding of the world as "Place-Thought" arguing that Indigenous "cosmological

frameworks are not an abstraction but rather a literal and animate extension of Sky Woman's and First

Woman's thoughts . . . So it is not that Indigenous peoples do not theorize, but that these complex

theories are not distinct from place" (p. 22). The "Place-Thought" paradigm counters the

epistemological-ontological divide in Euro-Western philosophy where "one's perception of the world [is]

distinct from what is in the world" (Watts, 2013, p. 24). If place is "undivided wholeness" (Irwin, 1994, p.

28) comprised of distinct parts then it serves as both a geopolitical location marked by power relations

as well as an epistemological site from where the spiritual is manifested and practiced. In this regard,

outer Space is simultaneously another physical location and epistemological site within Indigenous

cosmology where place and space/Space are woven together.

An Indigenous perception of *place* is coloured by relational space: the gathering of various

entities into relation, and the "interactive relationships between many beings, both visible and invisible"

(Irwin, 1994, p. 29). Philosophy and religious studies scholar Lee Irwin (1994) concurs that the centrality

of place is that place is inseparable from the spiritual elements of Indigenous visionary experience,

where the visionary (dreams and imaginings of any sort) is to be regarded as *real* and obtains validation

through community recognition in the demonstration of a specific result, which "is not attributed to the

visionary per se, but to the power of the mysterious being who reveals the dream or vision" (p. 28). The

key difference is, "The mythical charged world transfers its spiritual potential to the dreamer, who in

turn manifests that power in a communally recognized situation" (Irwin, 1994, p. 28). For instance, in

"She Falls for Ages" (2017) Sky Woman's visionary experience results in the creation of Turtle Island.

However, Western philosophy has asserted itself as the dominant metaphysical and epistemic

model on how the world and humanity is conceived (Welch, 2019). There are several implications and

consequences for the lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous philosophical frameworks by mainstream

Euro-Western philosophy. One has resulted in the exclusion of Indigenous philosophers within the

discipline itself (Welch, 2019); another is the distinction that such fields are treated apart (as in

separate) rather than a part (as in distinct within a unified whole). Watts (2013) explains how in this

need to differentiate aspects of Euro-Western philosophy, there is a significant misrepresentation of

Indigenous philosophy:

> Our understandings of the world are often viewed as mythic by "modern" society, while our
>
> stories are considered to be an alternative mode of understanding and interpretation rather
>
> than "real" events. Colonization is not solely an attack on peoples and lands; rather, this attack
>
> is accomplished in part through purposeful and ignorant misrepresentations of Indigenous
>
> cosmologies. (p. 22)

Stories are imbued with multiple meanings and are an important part of Indigenous cosmology. Watts (2013) affirms that "Indigenous cosmologies would be examples of symbolic interconnectedness, a way to view the world, more than a lesson, a teaching or historical account, their conscious and knowing directly extends to the philosophies, thoughts and actions as Indigenous peoples" (p. 26). Noting the visual, experiential, and shapeshifting characteristics of Indigenous cosmology, activist and scholar Vine Deloria Jr. wrote, "The greatest difficulty in exploring the religious world of the Plains Indians is getting the reader and/or scholar to take the material seriously" (as cited in Irwin, 1994, p. viii). In a world of fractured truths, it is important to call attention to the broader issues of (mis)representation here, and rather than comparing or defining Indigenous cosmology in relation to Euro-Western cosmology, I attend to differences in spatiality and temporality specifically in order to situate how Indigenous paradigms of Space and space foreclose settler colonialism and settler epistemologies (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). The inclusion of Indigenous spatiality and temporality within IF is thereby an extension of this colonial foreclosure, which liberates space for otherwise possible futures.

Indigenous paradigms of time and space

Ultimately, different notions of time and space reveal different methods of understanding and organizing social systems. A geo-politicization of time and space emerges with the forceful introduction of a settler-colonial articulation of time and space in which the two are separated. Although the politics of time and space in Euro-western philosophy has been hotly debated (see Massey, 2005), the core argument is that time matters more than space because time is implicated in the production of what counts as History. Primarily concerned with "progress", through design, purpose, and achievement, Euro-Western ideologies of history and geography emphasize notions of chronological, linear development within a precise location. It is assumed that there was a point in time, as in a quantifiable measure, from "which society moves from prehistoric to historic," and at that same point in time,

"tradition breaks with modernism" (Smith, 2012, p. 58). Systems of classification such as "binary

oppositions, dualisms, and hierarchical orderings of the world" became organizing structures that

greatly influenced ideas about time and space, and the individual and community (Smith, 2012, p. 58).

Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou (Māori) scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) highlights distance as key to

understanding colonial power because "…the individual can be distanced, or separated, from the

physical environment, the community," (p. 58) and distance is used to separate "individuals in power

from the subjects they governed" (p. 58). Like distance, time can also be measured, and manipulated

and consumed within human-made spatially closed systems that exist separate from cyclical time as

observed in nature, such as the change in seasons (Massey, 2005). Now, within these precisely defined

times, space becomes measurable too, and Western conceptions of space work to radically transform

the Indigenous world view (Smith, 2012). Succinctly, Smith (2012) concludes, "…indigenous space has

been colonized" (p. 53).

Contrary to Western spatiality, Tewa philosopher Gregory Cajete, wrote that from an Indigenous

perspective, "[s]pace generates time, but time has little relationship to space" (2000, p.70). Similarly,

Deloria (2003) concludes that the main philosophical difference between Western religions and 'tribal

spirituality' is that the first is centered on the temporal logic of *time* whereas the second is based on a

philosophy of *space*. Time is inherently limited if it is believed to "begin and end at some real points" but

when conceived as cyclical in nature, endless patterns of possibilities emerge (Deloria, 2003, p.70).

Many Indigenous ideologies follow this temporal framing to conceive of spatiality, which emphasizes the

importance of relationship and orientation to place, where history and geography then, are based on a

nonlinear *lived experience* in relation to place, which includes three interrelated realms that constitute

the wholeness of the natural world: Earth (below), Sky world (middle) and the cosmos (above). A

fundamental difference emerges, where history and ancestry are not something that we inherit from an

untethered past, but rather as something animate (living) that coexists with our experience of the

present. Deloria (2003) proposes that this "geography of ancestry," is grounded in the idea of space as something that is in constant flux, resulting in what Leroy Little Bear refers to as a "spider web network of relationships" where "all of creation is related" (Cajete, 2000, p. x). From this Indigenous perspective, relation includes the interactions between worlds and nonhumans, "not solely interactions amongst human beings" (Watts, 2013, p. 21). For instance, "She Falls For Ages" (2017) "speaks to the common intersections of the female, animals, the spirit world, and the mineral and plant world" (Watts, 2013, p. 21).

Accompanying this notion of relation are Indigenous ideas of animism, the belief that all things are imbued with spirit (Cajete, 2000) and ensoulment, the belief that people maintain a "soulful, embodied and emotional connection with the natural environment" (2bears, 2010, p. 147). Mohawk artist and scholar Jackson 2bears (2010) clarifies that animism applies to obvious things like animals and plants, but equally to seemingly inanimate things like mountains and rivers, as well as things that are human made. Thus, 2Bears (2014) aptly maintains that technology is also "something alive and filled with spirit" (p. 14). This aliveness is attributed to habitats and ecosystems, which are thought to "have ethical structures, inter-species treaties and agreements" (Watts, 2013, p. 23) where nonhuman beings are active members of society and "directly influence how humans organize themselves into that society" (Watts, 2013, p. 23).

For many Indigenous people, human agency is an extension of the sovereignty that place possesses, thereby connecting people intrinsically and inseparably to Mother Earth. Earth exists in all her faculties at once, as the provider of place, the landmass we know as Turtle Island, and within all the variations of land including the soil; for, in all these manifestations life is created and sustained. The importance lies in the ideology of land as first mother (Simpson, 2011) whom all living beings share an obligation to take care of. Taking care of place becomes a physical geographical practice, but also the

relational ontology of *all* things (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2010) accentuates the importance of this relationship and its resonance:

> It is a profound misunderstanding to think of land or place as simply some material object of profound importance to Indigenous cultures (although it is this too); instead it ought to be understood as a field of relationships of things to each other. Place is a way of knowing, experiencing, and relating with the world – and these ways of knowing often guide forms of resistance to power relations that threaten to erase or destroy our senses of place. (p.79)

Coulthard (2010) highlights that it is not only physical displacement through dispossession of lands that is at risk, but also Indigenous thought and autonomy (inner spaces) are jeopardized when Indigenous land is violently colonized.

In this section I have sought to distinguish place from space within an Indigenous cosmology and philosophy, where place is the gathering of distinct entities into relation and space is the result of those interrelations. However, I am working through these ideas based in my readings of Indigenous authors as a non-Indigenous/settler person, therefore what I write is tentative and risky and my learning is ongoing. Spaces are created by complex networks of relations at every scale and are intrinsically connected to place. Indigenous healing traditions like Biskaabiiyang and practices of decolonization operate within these spaces, within relationships, in below, middle, and above realms. If the collective of Indigenous and non-Indigenous/settler peoples are going to talk about decolonizing land, then it might begin with decolonizing place and space. Following this relational logic, Indigenous land reclamation then, begins with recognition of one's ongoing relationship to Mother Earth.

Episode III: Join me, and Together we can Rule the Galaxy as Father and Son[45]

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[45] In Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back, Darth Vader (Sith Lord of the dark side) makes a proposal to Luke Skywalker.

When … the European scientist studies the physical features of our land, when he mensurates our fields, trignometrates our altitudes and undulations, investigates our animal, our vegetable or our mineral kingdoms, the records of his study are accepted as true and authoritative.

–Bipin Chandra Pal, as cited in Loomba (1998)

It is important to distinguish between place and land, particularly if you follow IF stories about land in the territory of Space. Sometimes they are used interchangeably and while related, they are certainly not the same. Place is the gathering of distinct entities into relation; entities such as people, plants, animals, all sentient beings and non-sentient beings, which includes land, in any combination. Styres et al. (2013) capture the wisdom of what constitutes land in their definition. They write, "*Land* encompasses all water, earth, and air and is seen simultaneously to be an animate and spiritual being constantly in flux" (p.191, original emphasis). The authors make an intentional choice to capitalize the 'L' in Land to honor the animate and I follow suit from here when speaking about Land informed by Indigenous philosophies. If we must talk about Land in a general way, the least we can do is acknowledge it as we would all place names. Echoing Styres et al. (2013) and Watts' (2013) assertion that Land is alive and thinking, I move forward with an understanding that Land is a sentient being. Like all beings, it is best to be as specific as possible and call them by their name, like you would when addressing a friend or family member. Human beings can offer respect to their Earth mother by acknowledging her in all her varied forms and speaking of her or to her with as much specificity as possible. You might be wondering what her name is exactly, have you ever asked her?

It is tricky to find an appropriate term that embodies the intimate and co-creating relationship that many Indigenous peoples maintain with Land within a broader context of colonialism – custodians, caretakers, occupiers, owners – none of which express the layers and implications of forced colonization, unless perhaps taken altogether. Better still, Yankunytjatjara Elder Rob Randall invites one to begin from the understanding that the Land owns us (Global Oneness Project, 2009), a teaching recognizable in the observations of plant, animal, and human life coming and going while the Land endures, not unchanged but ever present. To understand the depth of this relationship is to distinguish

the difference between living with the Land or living off it. To live with Land is to honour place as a "carefully nurtured web of reciprocity between people and land" (Grignon & Kimmerer, 2017, p. 68), where "being-in-the-land" and "being-from-the-land" (Burkhart, 2019, p. 26) is more than a material or physical connection: it is an ontological kinship as well as a spiritual, moral and social "system of reciprocal relations and obligations" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 13) that support Indigenous lifeways in "nondominating and nonexploitive terms" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 13). To live off Land is to conceive of oneself as "being-apart-from-the-land" (Burkhart, 2019a, p. 27), which predicates the concept of property, a foothold of colonialism, and as Burkhart (2016) points out "in order to own land one must become the kind of being that dominates the land in such a way as to deny access to others" (p.6).

Extending from my discussion of settler-colonialism in chapter two, I recall that the settler-colonizer's motivation was greed for land, *terra nullius* was the colonial logic that justified their invasion; their intention was to displace (and re-place) Indigenous peoples from Land in order to develop their settlements; and settler colonies were founded on the elimination of Indigenous societies, where survival became a matter of not being assimilated (Wolfe, 1999). In this section I explain how Indigenous survivance (Vizenor, 2008) was and continues to be explicitly connected to an Indigenous conception of Land to give further evidence that any kind of reconciliation must address the Land.

In colonialism, when it comes to Land, the settler colonial logic has instilled the underlying belief that Land belongs to no one. According to the Doctrine of Discovery, European explorers believed they were at liberty to claim territory on behalf of their sovereigns. The principle of discovery is an integral aspect of colonialism, used as a tool to extinguish Indigenous rights on an ongoing basis. However, Fitzmaurice (2007) reminds us that the dispossession of Indigenous peoples "occurred through myriad different processes and events in everyday life and not through a body of legal and philosophical writings and court judgements completely removed from the colonial frontier" (p. 1). It is too simplistic to say that colonial ideology of terra nullius and the principle of discovery were used to justify

dispossession of Indigenous peoples or to say that settler colonizing was simply an act of conquering (Burkhart, 2019b). Settler colonialists understood that undiscovered land, i.e., land that they had not seen before, was not the same as uninhabited land; however, according to the colonial conception of land, Land inhabited by Indigenous peoples *was* uninhabited Land "in such a way that no sovereignty and very little property had been established" (Fitzmaurice, 2007, p. 4). Smith (2012) offers a very astute analysis of how the vocabulary of colonialism was used to control and define space through three concepts: the line, the centre and the outside. She explains: "The 'line' is important because it was used to map territory, to survey land, 'centre' is important because orientation to the centre was an orientation to the system of power. The 'outside' is important because it positioned territory and people in an oppositional relation to the colonial center" (Smith, 2012, p. 55). The implication for Indigenous peoples meant that "to be in an 'empty space' was to 'not exist'" (Smith, 2012, p.55). Brian Burkhart's work on theories of Indigenous liberation through the Land helps to unpack this further.

In his book *Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land* (2019b) Burkhart shows how Western philosophical coloniality creates and maintains the subjectivity of domination, which manifests itself in a relationship to land by reframing history and time as detached from the land. He writes:

> Time and history are organized as the completion of world history (meaning Europe) that becomes so by operating on a fundamentally new America . . . American, as an undeveloped landscape, can only be acted upon, and it is through such action (both on people and the land) that European subjects and European history as world history actualize their self-awareness and so become human subjects and world history. (Burkhart, 2019b, p. 21)

Land is seen as concrete and material, defined as either developed or undeveloped, and tracked through the development of world history. From this assessment, people are tied to land "but not as a place in space but as a place in [Colonial] time" (Burkhart, 2019b, p. 22). When separated from space (and therefore land), "time and history can be globalized and universalized . . . Particular needs, values, and

knowledge can be universalized across time and space and forced onto people of other places at any time (Burkhart, 2019b, p. 24). The settler colonizer employs these methods of delocalization and universalization to colonize 'uninhabited' Land according to their restructuring of it. Deloria (2003) referred to this process as the colonization of space, which is achieved through the restructuring of time and history by imposing "delocalized ideologies onto Indigenous, non-European localities" (Burkhart, 2019b, p.25). Burkhart (2019b) explains how the process works:

> ...it requires colonization as an act of cultivation to achieve the rooting out of the local history. It requires rigorous tilling (colonizing) of Indigenous land to root out its locality. It requires settler colonizing the land, cultivating, tilling the soil (removing the Indigenous people, history, knowledge), in short an attempted tilling out the locality of the land in order to supplant that locality with a delocalized European locality . . . In this way the land itself is understood to be conquered; it is thought to become European land… (p. 32)

The settler coloniality of power employs a delocalized system: first, 'discover' localized land, likely inhabited by Indigenous peoples, erase Indigenous locality in order to claim universality, then, through a series of ideological conceptions of domination enclose so-called universalized Land in order to claim European locality to control space and settle said land (Burkhart, 2016). I can trace the many examples of how this process succeeded; however, one major problematic continued to distract me. To create the coloniality of power via land control, the attempted erasure and removal of Indigenous peoples was necessary and yet, Indigenous survivance exists in spite of rather than as a result of colonization. Burkhart's conception of locality as "being-from-the-land and knowing-from-the-land" (2019b, p. xiv) emphasizes this point.

> Burkhart (2019b) positions locality as the defining characteristics of our identity, where:
>
> The reality is that cultural or national authorities of Native-ness, white-ness, or American-ness can only really be speaking from their own particular experiences of being human in the world,

from their own locality in its present place. What we call cultural or national authority in the

abstracted sense might arise from a cluster of experiences around a particular locality that is

used to construct concepts of culture or nationhood, but to reify the cultural or national

authority is to reify culture or nationhood beyond their social and political underpinnings. What

allows us to conceptualize this reification of culture and nationhood is the delocalization of

locality, which is the attempted unmooring of the roots of being, meaning, and knowing from

out of the land itself, or the attempted breaking apart of being-from-the-land and knowing-

from-the-land. (Burkhart, 2019b, p. xv)

In other words, the Land had power – power because of its locality – and locality is not simply an

Indigenous concept. It is, as argued by Burkhart (2016), a metaphysical fact. Coloniality actually depends

on this fact in order to restructure it in the settler colonizer's favour, where de-locality "is the attempt to

hide all locality, both Indigenous and European" (Burkhart, 2016, p. 6). However, "the being of the land

itself resists colonization" and therefore, "the colonization of our subjectivity and of land is never

complete" (Burkhart, 2016, p. 6). The Land can be abstracted and imposed upon ideologically but never

truly colonized, and because human beings are inherently extensions of the Land, people can never be

colonized. The significance of the Land is that its sanctity and power is inherently woven within the

bodies of all living things, all human beings. The reclamation of Land in this transition is very much an

ideological liberation.

Burkhart's philosophical re-contextualization of locality is key to understanding Indigenous

liberation through the Land, but he admits it can be challenging for Indigenous peoples to see what

hope remains in the post-apocalyptic aftermath of colonialism when "toxic waste is dumped in the rivers

of our localities, when a burial mound is bulldozed, when a pipeline is placed around our valleys and

over our mountains" (2016, p. 6). Nevertheless, steady waves of Indigenous-led movements rise up:

Land rights activists seek recognition of Indigenous people's inherent right to protect sacred Lands, fight

for climate justice and water restoration, and obtain control over food production, to name a few. I see IF as another example of Indigenous resurgence, and one that holds specific transformative potential in the pursuit of decolonizing Land and enacting Biskaabiiyang. I maintain that IF provides a hopeful response to the challenges Burkhart highlights because stories of NDNs in Space re-claim an Indigenous conception of Land in a space that is not (yet) colonized.

When IF takes settlers to Space we move away from the colonial notions of property and land ownership, and we can begin to imagine Land differently. To live in a world where being-in-the-land and being-from-the-land is acknowledged and practiced, requires imagining it into existence. Rocketing through the universe, the space NDN is another example of what it means to be Land-based, not Land-locked, to be untethered while maintaining deep connections. The space NDN is a call to Indigenous peoples for Biskaabiiyang and a gateway for non-Indigenous peoples/settlers to challenge Eurocentric ideologies and reimagine their world too. Recentering an Indigenous conception of Land deconstructs and redefines Indigenous healing that is intrinsically Land-based and calls for imaginaries of resurgent Indigenous futurities that foster the renewal of relationships between people and Land.

The premise that Land is alive and thinking and that both humans and non-humans derive agency as extensions of the Land generates a relational space between people and Land. A Place-Thought cosmology emerges where place and thought are never separated and human beings live in a state of interdependence on the already e-existing habitats and ecosystems, better understood as societies (Watts, 2013). This circular process of understanding and lifeway (being-from-the-land) demonstrates that relationships to Space (as it is physically manifested) is both an individual decolonizing practice as well as a collective one that generates healing within Indigenous communities. A deep relationship with the Earth determined the positionality of people and place as one of agency through interconnection, as opposed to the Euro-settler idea of human agency through dominance over nature. It also meant that Earth, as provider of all life giving and sustaining things became a central

tenet of Indigenous identity and belonging. In this interconnected web of life, naturally she was and

continues to be revered as Mother Earth, therefore substantiating relational spaces are of equal

importance. But it is not just a non-specific relationship, it is one of direct kinship. In the next section I

explore how IF is looking to ancestral space among the Stars to reimagine the continuation of strong and

dynamic kinship relations as another example of a decolonizing practice for individuals and

communities.

Episode IV: In a Dark Place We Find Ourselves, and a Little More Knowledge Lights our Way[46]

      Carter Meland's (2017) short story, *Stories for a Lost Child*, makes visible the importance of

kinship extending through the three realms, below, middle and above, in the following excerpt:

      "Historic moment," Amos observed. "The first two Indians in space. You should say

something profound, like Neil Armstrong did on the moon. "That's one small step for man . . ."

"I don't know," Wayne said. "I didn't prepare anything."

"We're Indians. No need to prepare. Just speak from the heart."

      Wayne could tell it was important to the young man, so he thought a moment, cleared

his throat, and said, "It's cold out here, eh?"

Amos shook his head. "This vast mystery and that's all I get. Everyone knows space is cold and

dark."

      Wayne looked through the visor at Amos. "It's not really dark, though. It's just that

there's not a lot for the light to reflect off of."

"Howah," Amos laughed. "Now that's profound!"

---

[46] Yoda's advice to Anakin Skywalker in Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith.

The two bobbed at the end of their lines for a long moment. Amos raised his hand to

shield his eyes and looked off toward the horizon, only there was no horizon to look off towards.

He turned to Wayne. "It's tough to be an Indian with no horizon." (54)

It was Sky world, and the meeting of the middle realm with the above realm, that lured me into

considering my intimate relationship with beyond human relations. When looking up at the vast

universe I feel a gravitational invitation to acknowledge a world beyond the only one I have ever known

physically here on Earth. Having always been interested in liminal spaces, I wondered what that space

was between the Earth and Sky, between physical and spiritual, between the sense of home I feel

through my feet and the home I feel when looking to the Stars, and between individual thoughts and

universal maps.

Meland's (2017) short story brought the horizon into focus as a portal for our being-ness

together. It is through horizon that we move from the whole to (a)part and back to the whole. It is the

meeting place of known and unknown where knowing gets all mixed up and there is no binary

imposition, as one moves into the other freely without restraint. Earth does not resist the transition into

Sky nor does Sky resist Earth and yet in the full expression of one, the other comes into form too. When

I look to the horizon I wax like the moon and practice coming into relationality through the expansion of

relationships, the spider-web becoming more intricate and fuller.

I have witnessed what happens to Indigenous bodies and beings when the horizon is forcibly

obstructed by settlers. I imagine it might feel like the sensations of vertigo, feeling so off balance you

cannot tell if the world is spinning or if you are the one spinning in the world. In this section I ask, what

happens to spirituality when spirit is no longer confined to the physical location which it occupied? This

is not a simple question of Space; it is of a more intimate and personalized inner space but not one that

can be accessed alone; for it is through social spaces that we often come to know our interior self. It is

also then, a continuing question of relationships inspired by Lou Cornum's (2015) poignant question

"Might [Indigenous] collective visions of the cosmos forge better relationships here on earth and in the present than colonial visions of a final frontier?" The short of it is yes and so the question becomes a matter of how. How does an Indigenous conception of space, as landless everchanging territory and invisible connections, help construct space for Biskaabiiyang and a decolonial future? What might kinship ontology articulated by Indigenous philosophies offer in the reimagining of Space and therefore, Land, as relationship – as something in constant negotiation and requiring consistent attending to?

The space NDN knows we are guided by "kinstellations," our relatives in the sky

When night falls the horizon dissolves, and a Star map appears. In some creation stories Stars are creators of the Earth and human beings (Cajete, 2000). There are stories about "visitations by extraterrestrial beings, that the stars are their ancestors or carry the spirits of their ancestors, and that when people die they become the stars or go among the stars" (Cajete, 2000, p.231). Other Star stories contain the wisdom of moral development, ceremonies or seasonal traditions, and often such stories are about "journeying to the center, to . . . the place of spirit both within ourselves and in the world as a whole" (Cajete, 2000, p. 250). Cajete (2000) further expands on this journeying to center explaining, "It is a place of spiritual vision, a place that one must learn how to seek, a place whose inherent message is to be found in the landscape of our souls and that of the wondrous multiverse in which we live" (p. 250-251). Today this Star literacy includes a source "for knowledge and flight paths out of settler colonialism" (Simpson, 2011, p. 213).

The beauty of the Stars is that they are visible to anyone with clear sight, however it is only through relationship that one comes to read and receive Star knowledge. In Nishnaabeg thought Stars "are beacons of light that work together to create doorways . . . into other worlds" (Simpson, 2011, p. 212). These constellations are not unlike humans in that when a group or cluster of related beings come together, it is through their relationship that knowledge is formed, preserved, and transferred. LaPensee

(2019) echoes this sentiment: "The ways in which we communicate shape the connections between us, much like the plasma running between stars. Pathways of reciprocity activate how we relate" (p. vii). IF honours "relationships with more-than-human entities across domains of land, water, sky and spirit," therefore extending the possibilities of home and home-*land* to include celestial kinships (Recollet & Johnson, 2019, p. 179). The space NDN knows the Stars are relatives.

Drawing on this ancestral relationship, Nehiyaw scholar Karyn Recollet (2019a; 2019b) reconceives of constellations as 'kinstellations,' recognizing that the ways in which kinship is built, maintained, and transported through time and space produce 'kinstillatory' lineages much like relational constellations of Stars. Recollet brings attention back to relationship rather than a strict idea of location, which speaks to the way Cornum (2015) introduced and conceived of the space NDN as "secure in their indigenous identity even while rocketing through dark skies far from their origins" (n.p). Furthermore, Cornum (2015) adds, ". . .The space NDN supports those who are able and choose to remain on the land, while also hoping to broaden understandings of indigeneity outside simple location" (n.p.). From this perspective, IF is illustrative of how "Kinstillations allow [Indigenous peoples] to refuse the maps that have been determined by settler-coloniality and anti-Blackness. Kinstillations remind [Indigenous peoples] that we can move…" (Recollet, 2019b, p. v).

Recollet's (2019a) re-conception of "land-ing" explains how kinstillations center and even rupture movement through what she calls "choreographies of the fall." Land-ings are embodied provocations and gestures responding to atmospheric forms of flight, such as being exiled from traditional homelands and "the mass removal/trafficking of Indigenous bodies from their kin" (Recollet, 2019a, p. 89). Inspired by the fall of Sky Woman and her personal experience of dislocation caused by the 60s scoop, Recollet (2019a) traces how forms of flight "refuse settlement, stillness and landedness" helping us to re-envision land-based as 'relationship' and not land-locked (p. 92). Choreographies of the fall "describe motion when one's point of origin is not solely rooted in terrestrial scales, reminding us

that grounding can also originate from the stars/the celestial" (Recollet, 2019a, p.93). In the foreword to LePensee's edited collection of graphic poetry and reimagined fiction Recollet (2019b) speaks of the grounding as, "rhizomatically rooted upwards . . . as a kinstillatory connection – a radical reorientation toward all of lands' overflow" (p. v).

This celestial grounding is dynamic and requires effort the same way kinship is more than assumed; it is participatory in that it "is best thought of as a verb rather than a noun, because kinship, in most Indigenous contexts, is something that's done more than something that simply is" (Justice, 2008 p. 150). Relationships are *formed* between people, plants, animals, celestial bodies and beings, and other elemental forces, and relational space is based on the recognition of the ongoing and sustaining contours of kinship in alternate dimensions and non-linear time. The erasure of Indigenous kinship lineages in colonial-settler systems violently undermines the dynamic system of relationships in which Indigenous self-determination and cultural identity are cultivated and sustained. This severing disconnects Indigenous peoples from their ancestors and even the memories held inside their DNA, as depicted in Chief Lady Bird's (Nancy King) digital print "Blood Memory[47]". DNA (internal) and relationship (external) are different forms of kinship that act as a direct line to restoration and healing. Therefore, the intersections of Indigenous personhood, self-determination, and healing through kinship are so hopeful in their coming together in Indigenous futurism – rocket fueling remembrance and catalyzing Biskaabiiyang.

LaPensee's digital print "Returning to Ourselves[48]" captures this catalytic process in her description of the piece: "Returning to Ourselves reflects our cyborg selves of the future in a spacetime when we activate interstellar travel by recognizing the depth of teachings from the past. Blood memory echoes as thought initiates form and the triangulation of breath ignites the connections of planetary

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[47] "Blood Memory" by Chief Lady Bird (2019). https://www.bloodmemoryvr.com/
[48] "Returning to Ourselves" by Elizabeth LaPensee (2015).
https://www.flickr.com/photos/obxstudios/27515711104

traplines." What I hear in LaPensee's words is that Biskaabiiyang is a heartfelt practice, not an ideology or

theory, for personal empowerment carried by dreams and visions that "begin at home" where self is in

relation to the whole (Simpson, 2011, p. 144). Dreams reconnect the dreamer to their ancestors. The

convergence of past, present and future is reflected here in Biskaabiiyang and again in Dillon's discussion

of the term 'Inaedumoowin,' which "suggests simultaneously thinking, imagination, and will" in her

writing for the zine, kimiwan (2014, p.7). Dillon explains the teaching she received from this term is in the

importance of dreaming as imagination "willed into being" (kimiwan, 2014 p. 7).

Imagination is medicine for Biskaabiiyang. I hear again the resonance of the relationship between

practice and imagination in Dillon's discussion of Inaedumoowin, which is further emphasized by Watts

(2013) in her own words: "We possess the ability to access the pre-colonial mind through the ability to

travel in dreams, to shapeshift, to understand what might happen tomorrow, etc. Our teachings tell us

that we travel through, under, above. So it is not a question of accessing something, which has already

come and gone, but simply to listen. To act" (p. 32). To act is to return to self; to that inner space where

Spirit and living ancestral memory is held deep within and up above.

In their own words Kaylynn Sullivan TwoTrees and Sayra Pinto (2019) speak to the innate power

of Spirit as another place of Indigenous resistance:

> Our indigeneity operates beyond the particular cultural contexts into which we have been born
>
> and from which we have emerged. It cannot be stripped from us by oppression, erasure,
>
> genocide, forced migration, or the politics of authenticity. It is centered in the core of the
>
> Teachings we have received from our elders as well as from the cosmos and the Earth itself…
>
> The Sacred cannot be colonized. Any separation we feel from the Sacred is the expression of
>
> colonization. (p. 198)

Spirituality was never and cannot be colonized because it is free from colonial ideology of temporal and

spatial boundaries. I extrapolate then, that like the Earth, the Spirit can be exploited and forced into

dormancy, but never colonized. This is an important distinction because with Land and within Spirit lies

a direct path to healing, and when one's ability to see that connection is unblocked and relationships are

actively cultivated, this becomes the medicine of Biskaabiiyang. Separation from Land and self are

ultimately a *perceived* separation imagined, produced, and enforced by colonial ideology. Perceived

separation is how colonization operationalized the dismantling of Indigenous lifeways, and yet, despite

the violence enacted upon Land and Spirit via the separation of relationships, something transformative

happens when Indigenous identity is no longer tied to Earthly territories exclusively; the possibility of

hope emerges when the space NDN teleports to the present carrying within the dream of a "future that

is decidedly Indigenous" (Roanhorse, 2018, n.p.). Embodying Indigenous Place-Thought, the space NDN

in particular and IF more broadly "maps a way out of colonial thinking by confirming Indigenous lifeways

or alternative ways of being in the world" (Simpson, 2011, p.31). I turn to IF as a source of hope and

pathway into relationality because it does the work of dismantling colonialism while dreaming up and

creating alternatives in a way that is not linear (one then the other) or oppositional (dismantling and

dreaming are simultaneously engaged). In this way IF advocates for the self-determining; "It dares to let

Indigenous creators define themselves and their world not just as speaking back to colonialism, but as

existing in their own right" (Roanhorse, 2018, n.p.).

May the Force Be With You[49] in All Your Kinstillatory Relations

Space has a way of shapeshifting in its meaning. In the context of this chapter, Space is

experienced in the physical and material realm as earth-bound embodied beings living with the Land

and also in the symbolic and spiritual spaces encapsulating our inner experiences of self and connection

to one's ancestors. This conceptualization provides a critical understanding of a complex and multi-

dimensional relationship between time and space, and people and place. The space NDN moves the

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[49] The phrase originated in Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope, which has since become a popular catch phrase.

conversation beyond survival in the limited sense of having survived colonial violence (past tense) to Indigenous survivance, a critical term in Indigenous studies denoting an active presence, as something ongoing, where imagined future(s) are yet to be (self)determined. Indigenous survivance is essential to foreclosing settler-colonial ideology that has governed Indigenous imaginaries, identities, bodies and Lands. The inclusion of Indigenous spatiality and temporality within IF is thereby an extension of this colonial foreclosure.

IF embodies the wisdom shared in Audre Lorde's (2018) well-known speech where she said, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (n.p.) and addresses Leanne Simpson's (2011) insertion that dismantling might not be as transformative as how Indigenous peoples rebuild their own house(s). IF reimagines non-Indigenous frameworks to dismantle settler-colonialism but it does not stop there. IF provides insight into what a decidedly Indigenous *alternative to colonialism* might look like, and the space NDN is a visual symbol of that process. IF artists are using the tools of colonial sci-fi to rupture colonial stereotypes and disrupt the genre parameters to reconceive, create, and introduce Indigenous representations of living presence in public spaces. Moreover, they are subverting and reimagining a colonial conception of history and future as a linear continuum into a morphogenic collage that recenters an Indigenous conception of relational space. The space NDN offers a way into thinking through the emergence of new space for future place, and how to live within separateness, honoring distinctions while engaging with the interrelations of all things. Indigenous *presence* in Space and spaces is an example of the radical reclamation needed on Turtle Island. When we move from time capsule to space capsule, what futures can emerge?

This chapter started with "image-in-nation" and a dare to dream of alternative futures outside of and despite the colonial imposition of a singular and thereby exclusionary future. I invited you to board the mother ship and take a tour of recent Indigenous "image-in-nations" of *Star Wars* because these visual stories embody the complex nature of Indigenous philosophy, cosmology and science

denoting a hyper-present now. Indigenous temporal and spatial dimensions create ideologies that greatly influence the possibilities for social and physical interactions with humans, more-than humans, and all sentient beings. With my space goggles programed to Indigenous philosophy, I circled back to Earth to uncover the colonial ideological trappings that obstruct an Indigenous perception of Land. It was not until I was passing through the horizon back to the Stars that the connection dawned on me: just like the Force in *Star Wars* is an energy field created by all living things and is what gives a Jedi his power, kinship is the relational force connecting *all* beings and is what gives Land and people its innate resistance against colonialism. The Force and kinship are one; Land (Space) and kinship are one. Land is an external and visible manifestation of the familial relationships that create and sustain life; kinship is the invisible connective tissue, the in between space, that brings entities into relation to one another. The work of Land reclamation then, is a continuation of Biskaabiiyang and Spiritual (re)emergence where the return to self is also a return to kinship, a cyclical process supported by the return to living-with and living-from the Land.

Ultimately, the Force is the ability of a Jedi to use their mind to affect the world around them. Settler-colonialists (the Empire) used imperialism (the dark side of the Force) to forcibly separate people from Land and disconnect and decenter kinship connections. Indigenous peoples (the Rebel Army) called on the Spirit within and of their ancestors (the light side of the Force) to access their medicines and healing practices, sustaining cultural continuance for seven generations before and seven generations ahead. In *Star Wars* the Force exists in two forms, the Living Force representing the energy of life, and the Cosmic Force representing the Spirit of the galaxy or the inter-galactic and all-encompassing connection of all things. Another literary trope has emerged: the answer I was searching for in Space/space was with me all along. The Force was as present in the space NDN as the mother was in the *mother* ship carrying me through the galaxy. The message from the space NDN to humans on Earth is that kinship is the North Star; attending to kinship relations reorients humans back home to themselves

and by extension to the Land. Burkhart's (2019a) words might resonate differently now, as they did for

me:

> When human beings put themselves back into relation with the originary and ongoing life-
>
> generating kinship complex, and they give the water from their body in the form of sweat back
>
> to the rocks from which this water originated, and when they sing the requested songs of
>
> gratitude and encouragement that were given to them by those elements, they are operating
>
> from and participating in that space of their being that is intertwined with the land, their being-
>
> from-the-land and their being-in-the-land. (p. 29)

As noted earlier (see p. 9 footnote), I follow many Indigenous scholars in emphasizing the critical

importance of Indigenous wisdom teachings that maintain relational responsibilities to both peoples and

place and beyond human kin as an ethos. From this philosophical orientation I am seeking to emphasize

ways in which IF can summon non-Indigenous/settler peoples to come into relationality through Space

as a metaphor of place, and through an understanding of space as inherently relational. Kinship is an

embodied ideology, therefore, cultivating a relational practice must inform and shape future trajectories

in which decolonization is folded in as a possible objective. In my conclusion I revisit relationality to look

back, consider being here, and the possibilities of re-imagining the future.

CONCLUSION: LOOKING BACK, BEING HERE, & RE-IMAGINING FUTURE

I started this dissertation with a critique of reconciliation as a sanitized and hollowed out concept to problematize the way in which reconciliation is often used as a rhetorical device to maintain colonial misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples. This enactment of reconciliation thus becomes an ambiguous practice that bypasses or softens settler responsibility thereby oscillating within a continuous liminal space where restitution is always within reach but rarely actualized. Searching for a way to unearth or recover something meaningful, I was looking for a direction, a footing, a hospitable place to ground my theoretical framework and to retrieve something tangible that challenges a singular colonial vision of future. Through this project, I have come to understand that reconciliation is a government term, a colonial fantasy. The term reconciliation obscures and directs attention away from settler-responsibility and impedes possibilities of developing relationships guided by ethics for the whole. What then is salvageable from hollowed out notions of reconciliation? Nothing, however, because we are in this so-called era of reconciliation, the possibilities of non-Indigenous/settler governing bodies and human beings are in a position to work toward redress over continued violence and for the embodiment of relational modes of living in post-apocalypse landscapes. This potential rests on non-Indigenous/settler governing bodies and peoples, willingness to do the work of redress through an ethics of responsibility through relationality.

In a poem titled, "Our revolution," Nēhiyaw writer Erica Violet Lee (2017) describes how the weight of responsibility is skewed towards Indigenous peoples. She writes: "We're half the world/ but carry the rest of it on our backs." Striking a chord within me, these words plucked internal strings of guilt and privilege, composing a melody of settler-shame. There was a part of me compelled to work *with* Indigenous people to *fix it*. If I look deeper into the recess of this urge, was *it*: settler-responsibility within the macrocosm of colonialism; or my own feelings of discomfort; or both? For my research, I envisioned a path of working directly with Indigenous youth, creators, and activists to build better

relations. It was not until an encounter with my shame, called into being by Curtis' encounter with

shame described in chapter two, that I came to question who the recipient of all this "decolonizing

good" was to be. The answer was unsettling and equally shame-inducing, for it was me and *only* me. I

found myself enacting exactly what Lee's poem explicitly calls out. I was placing the responsibility of

purging my settler-shame on the backs of Indigenous peoples whom I was in relation with. I was

exposed. I had fallen into the trap of enacting colonial othering in which colonial salvation rests in

'knowing' the Other. The shift in my work towards IF comes out of understanding the unbalanced

responsibility articulated by Lee in her poem.

Emmanuel Levinas and Richard A. Cohen (1987) write, "the Other as Other is not only an alter

ego: the Other is what I myself am not. The Other is this, not because of the Other's character, or

physiognomy, or psychology, but because of the Other's very alterity" (p. 83). Therefore, shame can be

generated as a personal failure in the eyes of the Other, where Other is not only to a singular other, but

to all that is Other to oneself. In this way, the Other is unknowable and to assume that I could come to

know my own responsibility by extracting it from Indigenous youth exposed in a glaring, disturbing way

my own coloniality. Ironically, it was the immobilization of shame that moved me towards

understanding that my and other non-Indigenous/settler people's obligation is to take responsibility for

our half of the world and not expect Indigenous peoples to carry the weight of responsibility on their

backs alone. As Lee puts it in an article, titled "Reconciling in the Apocalypse," "Indigenous peoples are

no longer the only ones responsible for the well-being of this land…" (2016, n.p.).

I see this responsibility in Levinasian terms as an obligation, which Sharon Todd (2009) asserts

you cannot teach. She explains:

> …the obligation we have toward others is not something one learns as a piece of knowledge.
>
> Responsibility is a response to the command of the other; it is a prescriptive to a prescriptive. In
>
> no way can responsibility be instilled or inculcated in a direct fashion and thus it cannot be

systemized into any curricula or teacher manual. But this is not to say that it has no bearing upon education. (Todd, 2009, p. 76)

The sense of responsibility becomes educational when one begins to question their own complicity within the colonial project. This sense of responsibility becomes an ethical endeavour through which one understands themselves in relation to others and thus their responsibility to and for others. Therefore, it is an ethical responsibility to examine how non-Indigenous/settler peoples relate to colonial otherness. As non-Indigenous peoples, we cannot keep showing up expecting Indigenous peoples to carry us through decolonizing and into relationship or out of colonial ways of knowing into relational ways of being. It is incumbent that non-Indigenous/settler peoples speak truth to power because Indigenous subversion can only go so far when the DNA is corrupted by coloniality, when non-Indigenous/settler peoples fail to recognize this and inadvertently reinforce the ongoing exploitation.

I propose that part of the responsibility of doing the work of decolonizing settler-isms, that non-Indigenous/settler peoples must do, begins with learning *from* Indigenous peoples through Indigenous texts and images, Indigenous thought and knowledge, and Indigenous ways of being and doing. I am making an intentional distinction that learning *from* comes before learning *with*. Following Lee, I make this distinction to clarify that non-Indigenous/settler peoples responsibility rests on their own backs. Although, my intention is not to make this prescriptive, I have come through my own work the dangers of expecting and assuming Indigenous peoples will lead me through – which is my own responsibility. The totality of this dissertation lays bare to non-Indigenous/settler others how and why relationality begins with taking responsibility for one's own (un)learning. IF offers a way of doing just that. By engaging with texts and images, *instead* of living Indigenous peoples, through Indigenous stories in imagined spaces or futures, non-Indigenous peoples can engage with what it means to be responsible, ethical, and human now. IF is the canoe that carries passengers to a decolonial land if such passengers

are to pick up and dip their paddles in water. As Brayboy (2005) remarks apropos the trajectory of this journey:

> For some Indigenous scholars (and others), theory is not simply an abstract thought or idea that explains overarching structures of societies and communities; theories, through stories and other media, are roadmaps for our communities and reminders of our individual responsibilities to the survival of our communities." (p. 427)

If I could make only one request of non-Indigenous peoples, it would be to return to the canoe and paddle again, and again. The art of living together is dependent upon the renewal of our individual commitments to sustaining life, over simulating it.

As a multifaceted collective of diverse groups of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples inhabiting lands claimed by Canada, we are living in a multidimensional and dynamic, though often contradictory, present. This convoluted present is where I find myself teaching in the realm of Indigenous education as a non-Indigenous scholar in settler universities across Canada. IF has helped me to step into doing this work responsibly. IF is a foray into what the future might hold. And what IF has taught me, what Bunky Echo Hawk, Jeff Barnaby, and the other Indigenous artists and scholars have taught me, is that the future is not hopeful, it is relational. Hope, in and of itself does not generate togetherness; it is relationality that renews the possibility of hope. Therefore, if we live now, believing the future to be relational, then the future is increasingly Indigenous and that is hopeful.

When your job is to teach university students what reconciliation means, hope is an important part of that conversation, *only* if students are willing to recognize as well as problematize settler-colonization as the core foundational aspect of that undertaking. Hope exists when students are willing to take responsibility for their complicity in the ongoing colonial project. Otherwise, such courses become placebos, administrating in-active medicine. Courses which engage Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing cannot be tokenistic. Despite education's attempts to enact the

recommendations of truth and reconciliation from the TRC, studies and stories continue to indicate that

Canadian schooling is failing Indigenous students (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Vowel, 2016). In the way

that this dissertation challenges decolonizing rhetoric, I contend it is also failing non-Indigenous students

from enacting responsibility.

Incorporating Indigenous worldviews, knowledges and ways of being and doing into curriculum

(e.g. Indigenizing) is not meaningful when schooling remains compartmentalized and alienated from

everyday community life (e.g. relationships and interactions with Elders and children of all ages).

Indigenizing the curriculum within colonial institutions then, becomes an example of "settler moves to

innocence" as per Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández' (2013) critique. In this way, settler-educators claim

"Indigenizing" to assuage guilt and wrongdoing while securing their own ongoing entitlements to lands,

resources, and colonial privileges. This approach amounts to diversions: under the guise of

multiculturalism, settler-educators eagerly adopt Indigenizing as a concept in an attempt to liberate

themselves from guilt through methods that maintain state-driven settler control and oppression (Tuck

& Yang, 2012). Furthermore, this Indigenizing approach lends itself to settler-colonial appropriation of

Indigenous content, pedagogy, and perspectives.

Where Indigenizing does excel as a concept is when it is used in the context of Indigenous-led

education, premised on self-determination that involves Indigenous planning, development, and

control. Indigenous education is rooted in Indigenous peoples lives and cultures and serves as the

foundation of learning and growing as a whole person, body, mind, and spirit (Little Bear, 2000). In this

case, Indigenizing is inherently tied to land and lineage; it is about educating Indigenous students in

traditional learning systems, philosophies, and methodologies as part of cultural continuance, the

transmission of Indigenous knowledges and practices from generation to generation as well as

Indigenous vision-building, drawing on the wisdom of the past to humanize the present moment to

cultivate a desired future. However, there has been less action from the Canadian government to back

Indigenous system of education in Canada, even though section 35 (1) of The Constitution Act of 1982

"recognizes Aboriginal and treaty rights and affirms First Nations inherent right to self-government

including the creation of laws and systems for the provision of lifelong learning for First Nations

communities." Yet, Indigenous education persists and includes both land-based learning that is shared

through story-telling and ceremony, among other ways, despite genocidal efforts to eradicate this kind

of education *and* sovereign First Nations schools such as Kapapamahchakwew[50] and First Nations

University[51]. Therefore, Indigenous education does not live only in the imaginary as part of Indigenous

futurity but is already being realized. Meanwhile, the predictable arrival of a settler future, premised on

a past that intended for the erasure of Indigenous peoples, is also visioned into reality and the persistent

denial and suppression of Indigenous people's truths by settler-state dominant structures remain.

Since I entered the academic world as a student, now researcher and instructor, my interests,

intentions, and endeavours have been to identify the imperceptible things that push and pull

colonialism into being and unravel how to move beyond the impasse. This push/pull dynamic is not

unlike the insatiable hunger of the "monster" articulated by Basil Johnston (2001). The hunger of

colonialism persists, partly because fragmentation is the all-encompassing force that upholds coloniality.

The separation of thoughts and ideas (mind), from presence and being (body), from "cosmic

consciousness" (Cornum, 2015) and inherent value of human and beyond-human life (spirit) in

coloniality sustains an interminable search for wholeness. When I began this research project, I had not

considered myself fragmented, until engaging with Indigenous knowledge led me to relationality and

brought all the pieces together.

Relationality is the pebble that falls into the quiet pond and sends ripples out. Relationality is

the core concept from which the possibilities of otherwise futures reverberates. Relationality is a

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[50] https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Find-your/Schools/schno/5360
[51] https://www.fnuniv.ca/about-us/

provocative space to be as a non-Indigenous person and researcher interested in thinking with place, in

being a responsible being, and in studying Indigenous futurisms, "not so much for progress as balance,

and not power but relation" (Cornum, 2015). Through IF I have realized that relationality is a lifeway and

that I too can subvert misguided colonial intentions by enacting *my* responsibility, and choose to live in

relation with Indigenous peoples, knowledges, and histories without centering my participation. I

concluded the introductory chapter of this dissertation with Ronald Gamblin's message to non-

Indigenous/settler peoples to "go and learn and unlearn what is necessary to work on this relationship."

Likewise, I will end with Vine Deloria Jr.'s compelling prophecy:

> The future of humankind lies waiting for those who will come to understand their lives and take
>
> up responsibilities to all living things. Who will listen to the trees, the animal and birds, the
>
> voices of the places of the land? As the long-forgotten peoples of respective continents rise and
>
> begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the meaning of the land of their
>
> ancestors. That is when the invaders of the North American continent will finally discover that
>
> for this land, God is red. (1973, p.ix)

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